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City of Las Cruces[®]
 PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE

Council Action and Executive Summary

Item # 6 Ordinance/Resolution# 13-161

For Meeting of _____
 (Ordinance First Reading Date)

For Meeting of June 3, 2013
 (Adoption Date)

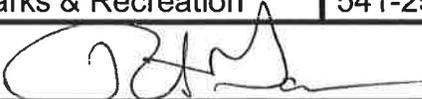
Please check box that applies to this item:

QUASI JUDICIAL LEGISLATIVE ADMINISTRATIVE

TITLE: A RESOLUTION APPROVING UPDATES TO THE PARK DEVELOPMENT FEES, PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN, LAND USE ASSUMPTIONS, AND PARK CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN; AND REPEALING RESOLUTION NO. 07-342 AND RESOLUTION NO. 12-204, ALL EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2013.

PURPOSE(S) OF ACTION:

To approve updates to the Park Development Fees, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Land Use Assumptions, and Park Capital Improvement Plan.

COUNCIL DISTRICT: All		
<u>Drafter/Staff Contact:</u> Mark Johnston, Director	<u>Department/Section:</u> Parks & Recreation	<u>Phone:</u> 541-2550
<u>City Manager Signature:</u>		

BACKGROUND / KEY ISSUES / CONTRIBUTING FACTORS:

In pursuance to Resolution No. 95-368, over the past couple of years staff has been in the process of updating the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Land Use Assumptions, and the Park Capital Improvement Plan for consideration of updated Park Development Fees (Park Impact Fee). In accordance with recent action by the City Council in adopting Resolution 12-204, which was the most recent extension to maintain the current fee structure including a deadline of June 30, 2013, action must be taken to update the plans and Park Development Fees or make a determination that no updates are needed at this time.

Throughout the process, staff worked with consultants, boards, commissions and the general public refining the draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan, updates to the Land Use Assumptions, Park Capital Improvement Plan, and updated Park Impact Fee. (City Council approved Land Use Assumptions January 3, 2011), The Park Impact Fee Study refines the population projections identified in the Land Use Assumptions and thus, approval of the updates to the Land Use Assumptions are needed.

The Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (P&R) approved the draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan during their regular scheduled

(Continue on additional sheets as required)

meetings of February 2013 (P&Z) and May 2013 (P&R), correspondingly. The Capital Improvement Advisory Committee (CIAC) began the process of reviewing the draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Land Use Assumptions and Park Impact Fee Study in January 2012. At their regular meeting on January 17, 2013 the CIAC approved the Land Use Assumptions, Park Capital Improvement Plan, draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan and recommended a new Park Impact Fee.

Over the past several months staff has provided Council with several options for consideration in an effort to address Park Impact Fees and park development, examples of which included; continue the collection of Park Impact Fees at the current rate reducing the level of service for neighborhood parks, require developers to build neighborhood parks through regulatory action and collect Park Impact Fees to develop community parks, adopt a new Park Impact Fee and remove the CBD from collections, eliminate the collection of Park Impact Fees and seek other funding sources for park development.

During the City Council Work Session held on April 8, 2012 Council directed staff to simplify the Park Impact Fee recommendation and bring forth a resolution. The recommended Park Impact Fee of \$1,300 per dwelling unit will continue the same current level of service, in today's dollars for neighborhood parks. The Park Impact Fee is further defined in Exhibit "B". A 30-day public review process was also completed, in accordance with the City's Development Impact Fee Ordinance, including a public hearing held May 16, 2013. The advertisement for the public review process included the language "The City is considering adjusting the Park Impact Fee assessed to new residential housing units", which allows Council flexibility in adopting the resolution.

SUPPORT INFORMATION:

1. Resolution.
2. Exhibit "A", Draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
3. Exhibit "B", Proposed Park Impact Fees (\$1,300 per dwelling unit).
4. Exhibit "B1", Proposed Park Impact Fees (\$2,600 per dwelling unit).
5. Exhibit "C", Proposed Park Capital Improvement Plan.
6. Exhibit "D", Updates to the Land Use Assumptions.
7. Attachment "A", Minutes of the May 16, 2013 Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting recommending approval of the Draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
8. Attachment "B", Minutes of the May 16, 2013 Public Input Meeting.
9. Attachment "C", Capital Improvement Advisory Committee Action Memo, dated January 17, 2013.
10. Attachment "D", Las Cruces Home Builders Association letter on their position about impact fees, dated May 4, 2013.

(Continue on additional sheets as required)

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Is this action already budgeted?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	See fund summary below
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	If No, then check one below:
	<i>Budget Adjustment Attached</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Expense reallocated from: _____
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Proposed funding is from a new revenue source (i.e. grant; see details below)
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Proposed funding is from fund balance in the _____ Fund.	
Does this action create any revenue?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Funds will be deposited into this fund: <u>4106</u> in the amount of <u>\$755,040</u> for FY <u>13/14</u> .
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is no new revenue generated by this action.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The \$755,040 revenue projection is based on a Park Impact Fee set at \$1,300 per dwelling unit and continued construction calculated at 48.4 new dwelling units per month. The generated revenue will be utilized to add new levels of service constructing parks as identified in the Park Capital Improvement Plan.

FUND EXPENDITURE SUMMARY:

Fund Name(s)	Account Number(s)	Expenditure Proposed	Available Budgeted Funds in Current FY	Remaining Funds	Purpose for Remaining Funds
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES:

- Vote "Yes" for Option 1 to approve the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, updates to the Park Development Fees (\$1,300 per dwelling unit, as per Exhibit "B"), the Park Capital Improvement Plan and updates to the Land Use Assumptions, all effective July 1, 2013.
- Vote "Yes" for Option 2 to approve the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, updates to the Park Development Fees (\$2,600 per dwelling unit, as per Exhibit "B1", to increase the level of service for neighborhood parks), the Park Capital Improvement Plan and updates to the Land Use Assumptions.
- Vote "Yes" for Option 3 to approve the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the Park Capital Improvement Plan, the updates to the Land Use Assumptions, and eliminate the Park Impact Fee.

(Continue on additional sheets as required)

4. Vote "No"; this will not approve the Resolution and may result in the violation of the City's Development Impact Fee Ordinance if further action is not taken by June 30, 2013.
5. Vote to "Table"; this may result in the violation of the City's Development Impact Fee Ordinance if further action is not taken by June 30, 2013.

REFERENCE INFORMATION:

1. Resolution No. 07-342.
2. Resolution No. 12-204.
3. Resolution No. 95-368.

RESOLUTION NO. 13-161

A RESOLUTION APPROVING UPDATES TO THE PARK DEVELOPMENT FEES, PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN, LAND USE ASSUMPTIONS, AND PARK CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN; AND REPEALING RESOLUTION NO. 07-342 AND RESOLUTION NO. 12-204, ALL EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2013.

The City Council is informed that:

WHEREAS, the City previously enacted Park Development Impact Fees effective July 1, 1995 in Resolution No. 95-368, in compliance with the Las Cruces Development Impact Fee Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, Las Cruces Municipal Code (LCMC) Sections 33-24 and 33-26 of this Ordinance require that the City either update the Land Use Assumptions and the Park Capital Improvement Plan, or determine that no update is needed, at least every five years; and

WHEREAS, LCMC Section 33-32 of the Ordinance requires that the City either update the Park Development Impact Fees or determine that no update is needed at least every five years; and

WHEREAS, City Council Resolution No. 06-269 approved updates to the Land Use Assumptions, as recommended by the Capital Improvements Advisory Committee; and

WHEREAS, the Park Impact Fee Study prepared by Tischler Bise refines population projections identified in the Land Use Assumptions requiring approval of the updates; and

WHEREAS, the Capital Improvements Advisory Committee has recommended approval of an adjusted Park Development Fee, and approval of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, updates to the Land Use Assumptions, and the Parks Capital

Improvement Plan, effective July 1, 2013; and

WHEREAS, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board reviewed the Parks and Recreation Master Plan at their regular meeting on May 16, 2013 and sent forward a recommendation to City Council for approval.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the governing body of the City of Las Cruces:

(I)

THAT the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, as shown in Exhibit "A", attached hereto, is adopted effective July 1, 2013.

(II)

THAT in accordance with LCMC Section 33, the adjusted Park Development Impact Fees, shown in Exhibit _____, attached hereto, is adopted effective July 1, 2013.

(III)

THAT in accordance with LCMC Section 33, the updated Park Capital Improvement Plan, as shown in Exhibit "C", attached hereto, is adopted effective July 1, 2013.

(IV)

THAT the updates to the Land Use Assumptions, prepared by Tischler Bise, as shown in Exhibit "D", attached hereto, are adopted for the purposes of the establishment of the Park Development Fee effective July 1, 2013.

(V)

THAT City staff is hereby authorized to do all deeds necessary in the

accomplishment of the herein above.

DONE AND APPROVED this _____ day of _____ 2013.

APPROVED:

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk

(SEAL)

VOTE:

Mayor Miyagishima:	_____
Councillor Silva:	_____
Councillor Smith:	_____
Councillor Pedroza:	_____
Councillor Small:	_____
Councillor Sorg:	_____
Councillor Thomas:	_____

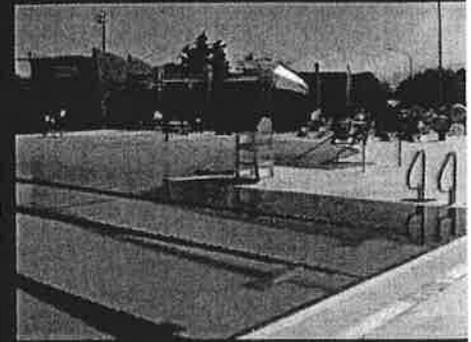
Moved by: _____

Seconded by: _____

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



City Attorney



Las Cruces Park & Recreation Department
**Parks & Recreation Master Plan &
Park Impact Fee Update**

April 2013

DRAFT



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

City Council

Ken Miyagishima - Mayor

Sharon Thomas - Mayor Pro-Tem

Greg Smith

Miguel Silva

Olga Pedroza

Gill Sorg

Nathan Small

Parks & Recreation Advisory Board

Ron Camunez - Board Chair

Dawn Rue - Vice-Chair

Eli Guzman

Laura Haas

Elizabeth Brown

Mark O'Neill

Kevin R. Kay

Capital Improvements Advisory Committee

Lonnie Hamilton, Chair

Eugene Suttmitter, Vice-Chair

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Executive Summary

Imagine Las Cruces in 10 years, an energetic community with many options for healthy activity and facilities that serve as exceptional public gathering places and foster a sense of pride. Consider an expanded aquatic center with a 50-meter pool to enable regional competitions and an East Mesa recreation center that acts as a community living room and is a focal point for events and entertainment. Consider a pedestrian and bicycle friendly network of recreational trails that connect public spaces, such as schools, parks and shopping centers, and that are built with safe routes, clear signage and access to regional trails beyond city limits. Consider updated local parks and special event venues to accommodate expanded tournaments, festivals and tourism.

As a strategic road map for the future, this Parks & Recreation Master Plan (PRMP) envisions a City park system that will continue to provide high-quality recreational opportunities for residents and visitors during the next decade and beyond. To provide planning and policy framework to support these efforts, the 2012 Las Cruces Parks & Recreation Master Plan includes:

- Goals and objectives for providing and maintaining City services
- Review of the existing parks, programs and past planning efforts
- Summary of public outreach and assessment of recreational needs
- Detailed analyses of the existing inventory including current conditions and management issues, along with a service area assessment and park gap analysis
- Capital improvements plan with projects ranked in order of priority
- Recommended implementation and action strategies
- Updated Park Impact Fee rate and methodology study

Core Considerations

Access to recreational opportunities, both programmed and self-directed, is a hallmark of the quality of life in Las Cruces, as well as a defining element of Las Cruces' legacy. The community engagement process for this Plan revealed a number of key issues that may impact the Department's parks and recreation offerings and provided a foundation for the overall focus and direction of this Plan. In moving the City's parks and recreation system forward, several existing considerations must be addressed.

- **Changing Demographics.** Las Cruces has experienced significant growth in the past 40 years, with a 258% change from 1970 to 2010. The City's projected population in 2020 will approach 120,000 residents, which represents an additional 23% increase over today's population. The Department will need to continue to stay abreast of its program offerings and recreation trends to be responsive to the changing needs and interests of residents, while also balancing how to meet the needs of youth and teens as a core area of focus.
- **Coordination with Community Partners.** The recreational interests of residents exceeds the services provided solely by the City, and several core community interests (i.e., dog parks, athletic field enhancements, East Mesa recreation center, etc.) will require



coordinated, cooperative effort with and between multiple community partners for such projects to come to fruition.

- **Maintaining & Developing Facilities.** Residents voiced concerns with maintenance levels and the lack of modernization. The need to reinvest in parks and facilities (i.e., restrooms) was a recurring theme in public meetings, along with upgrading or replacing the City's indoor recreation centers. Significant interest was voiced in improving the distribution of neighborhood parks across the City and for the provision of specialty facilities such as dog parks. Any inability to address these issues will erode resident support for the park and recreation system over time.
- **Funding Issues.** Expectations for parks and recreation services remain high in the minds of residents, and deservedly so, but revenues are generally inadequate to meet public demand. The Department must secure alternative or additional funding to improve park maintenance, acquire and develop additional parkland, and renovate and refurbish facilities to serve the growing and diverse community.
- **Identity & Information.** Through discussions with stakeholders and from the information gathered through the community survey, the issues of communication, visibility and brand identity were frequently cited. For example, survey respondents were not aware of programs and facilities; twenty-four (24%) did not know the programs offered, and twelve (12%) did not know the location of parks in the City. While the data do not specify the reason for this disinformation, it does reinforce the need for more focused or direct marketing and branding efforts to improve public understanding of and information about the City's programs and facilities.

While these challenges exist, they also provide a context to a set of new opportunities for enhancing the City's parks and for expanding its recreation programming.

Major Recommendations

The key recommendations applied to the overall park and recreation system include the following:

- Provide a distributed network of parks, such that all residents live within one-half mile of a developed neighborhood park and one mile of a developed community park.
- Reinvest in existing parks and facilities to address maintenance concerns and re-establish a strong positive sentiment among City residents toward the overall park and recreation system.
- Grow and mature the City's athletic programs through the promotion of youth sport camps and access to NMSU staff and athletes; Continue to foster the partnership with the Las Cruces Public School District to utilize school sites to provide recreation facilities.
- Implement the recreational component (Phase 1B) and the 50-meter lap pool (Phase 2) of the Las Cruces Regional Aquatic Center; Replace the Apodaca Pool with a water park feature or splash pad.
- Expand swim lesson offerings and partner with area swim clubs to provide supplemental or additional swim lessons.



- Explore partnership opportunities with regional healthcare providers and services to promote wellness activities, healthy lifestyles and communications about local facilities and the benefits of parks and recreation.
- Expand and update the Department's webpages to offer quick links to popular activities or topics and redesign it with mobile internet users (iPhone, Android, etc) in mind, to include posting park system and trail maps to enhance the experience of the on-the-go user.
- In partnership with the MPO and other City departments, develop more detailed trail signage standards, route and wayfinding signage for parks, trails and facilities and an informational brochure identifying existing and planned trail facilities.
- Review and consider long-term, dedicated funding sources to expand the City's capacity to accommodate tournaments, special events and festivals in support of local economic development, including such tools as bonds and a percentage of the Gross Receipts Tax.
- Adopt and implement updated park impact fee rates as a means to finance new park and facility acquisition and development.

This Plan establishes a clear vision and direction for providing high-quality, community-driven parks, trails, open space and recreation facilities in Las Cruces during the next five years and beyond. It articulates the City's road map for parks and recreation, provides tangible support for policies in the City's comprehensive plan and sets reasonable priorities for the coming years. The Plan is also a repository of critical community data and assessments that will serve as a valuable benchmark in future planning efforts. Continued collaboration, commitment and creativity by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and staff, and with the community, are essential for turning recommended actions into future success stories for Las Cruces.



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Chapter 1. Introduction

Purpose of this Plan

The purpose of this project is to prepare a guiding document for the Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department generated through an extensive community input process, a citizen's survey, needs assessment and an evaluation of needs within the acquisition, site development, operations and maintenance, and recreation program areas. This Parks and Recreation Master Plan is an update of the previous plan adopted in 2005, and it also includes a review of the Park Impact Fee policy and methodology.

As a five-year guide and strategic plan for enhancing park and recreation services for the community, this Plan proposes updates to City service standards for parks and trails, identifies probable costs of the capital improvements program and addresses departmental goals, objectives and other management considerations toward the continuation of quality recreation services and potential upgrades to benefit the residents of Las Cruces.

Vision Statement

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

- Effectively promote compatibility among differing land uses;
- Preserve desirable vistas/views and open space as appropriate;
- Allow for efficient travel through the use of adequate transportation routes;
- Communicate through building and landscape design, aesthetic quality and established Southwest architectural vernacular and heritage, whether through traditional or contemporary expressions;
- Promote the creation of safe neighborhoods that offer affordable housing opportunities for all socio-economic groups;
- Convey a unified planning strategy with adjacent communities; and finally,
- Provide opportunities for growth in all vital economic sectors of our community in order to sustain the types of services needed to preserve and strengthen community vitality.

The goal of the Parks and Recreation Department is to expand park and recreational opportunities throughout the City and to provide competent, responsive and efficient maintenance services to enhance the appearance and functionality of City parks and recreation fields. Within the Recreation division, the Department aims to enhance the quality of life through the provision of leisure programming, services and facilities to ensure customer satisfaction by meeting social, emotional and physical wellness needs of citizens.



History of Parks & Recreation in Las Cruces

The first “City Plan” was adopted in 1955, which was subsequently updated in 1960-61 to embellish upon the recreation opportunities available in the City. In 1968, a Comprehensive Plan was adopted for Las Cruces that contained eight key elements, including Land Use, Economic Development, Housing, Transportation, Community Facilities, Urban Design, Utilities and Environment. Some issues regarding parks and recreation were either summarily addressed or neglected entirely. The continued growth of the City necessitated plan updates that were completed and adopted in 1985 and 1998. These planning efforts established a framework for city-wide planning which contains five “levels.” The Parks and Recreation Master Plan is a Level 3 document that represents planning documents drawing from the individual elements of the City Plan, while developing more detailed policy regarding a specific geographic area or issue.

The Parks and Recreation sections of the City were established over 50 years ago. The City of Las Cruces and its citizens historically have supported the construction of parks, sport complexes and other recreation facilities, and this commitment continues to enhance the quality of life for the City’s 97,000 citizens, neighbors in the surrounding community and the many tourists who come to enjoy this beautiful City.

In the summer of 2009, organizational changes were made which have brought about an improvement in serving the park and recreation needs of Las Cruces. The Recreation section, which was formerly a part of the Public Services Department, was merged together with the Parks section within the Facilities Department. This combination into one department has allowed for easier collaboration and less confusion for our citizens. Within the combined Park & Recreation Department, responsibilities have been delegated across six divisions: Park Construction/Right-of-Way, Park Maintenance, Athletic Fields, Aquatics, Athletics and Recreation Programming.

Since the adoption of the 2005 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, numerous parks projects have been completed and recreation programs implemented.

- Las Cruces aquatic facilities received a large focus in the past several years, including the opening of two outdoor pools (Laabs and East Mesa Bataan Memorial), as well as a new indoor pool facility (Las Cruces Regional Aquatic Center).
- Several parks have been improved, such as Apodaca Park and Grandstand, Burn Lake (Phase I) and the Butterfield Shooting Range. Other projects have created brand-new parks such as Entrada del Sol, La Placita, Jardín de Esperanza, Desert Trails Community Park, North Las Cruces Park, Vista De La Montana, Las Cruces Dog Park and the award-winning Heske Gardens. In 2009, 2010 and 2011, Las Cruces was named a Playful City USA by Kaboom.org for the City’s commitment to taking action for play.
- Within Athletics, Las Cruces has seen the Vaqueros professional baseball team, NBL BMX Southwest National competition and the largest 24 hour softball tournament come to town. Local participation in youth leagues has also increased dramatically.
- The Recreation programming section also implemented an Employee Wellness program to increase the level of fitness within City employees.



Community Profile

Setting

Las Cruces is located in the scenic Mesilla Valley in south-central New Mexico. Located at the junction of three major highways, Interstate 10, US Highway-70, and Interstate 25, Las Cruces is 45 miles north of El Paso, Texas and Juarez, Mexico and 225 miles south of Albuquerque. At nearly 100,000 residents, Las Cruces is the second largest city in New Mexico, the largest city in Doña Ana County and the county seat.

Nestled within the Chihuahuan Desert, Las Cruces encompasses a panoramic natural landscape inclusive of picturesque desert mesas set against a green Rio Grande valley with fields of chile and cotton, groves of pecan trees and acres of vineyards and vegetables. Desert mesa and river valley blend with dramatic mountain ranges: the Organs, San Andres and Franklin Mountains to the east, the Caballo Mountains to the north and the Robledo Mountains to the northwest.

The City of Las Cruces began as a small village in the Mesquite District Area. The establishment of the railroad in 1881 turned the village into a small commercial center. The creation of the Elephant Butte Dam in 1916 transformed the valley into a prime agricultural center. In 1955, a central business district was established, and Main Street became a major commercial corridor. After the establishment of the White Sands Proving Ground and NASA Research Facility in 1950's and 60's, the City saw a large increase of population. Development expanded northeastward along US 70. New Mexico State University developed its campus to the south of the City. Commercial corridors grew along Lohman Avenue, El Paseo Rd, Picacho Avenue, and Solano Drive. In the 1970's, large single-family residential developments were established on the east side of the Las Cruces Dam.

Las Cruces is home to many events which include, the Whole Enchilada Fiesta, the International Mariachi Conference, the Renaissance Artsfaire and Feria de Arte Picante. Also, the City maintains a variety of recreational programs and opportunities, ranging from organized league sports for adults and youth to picnicking, playing and walking at the City's parks and trails. In addition to City-sponsored or supported activities, numerous other public and private facilities, ventures and events provide recreation and entertainment opportunities.

Population

The City of Las Cruces has experienced significant growth in the past 40 years, with a 258% change from 1970 to 2010. According to the 2010 Census, the current population of 97,618 indicates a growth rate of 31.4% since 2000. Similarly, the total population for Doña Ana County increased by 19.8% between 2000 and 2010 to be 209,233 people. Growth in the local population is expected to continue at a double-digit rate through 2020. According to the 2010 Impact Fee Land Use Assumptions Report developed by Duncan & Associates, the City's projected population in 2020 will approach 120,000 residents, which represents an additional 23% increase over today's population.



Table 1. Population Change – Actual & Projected: 1970 - 2020

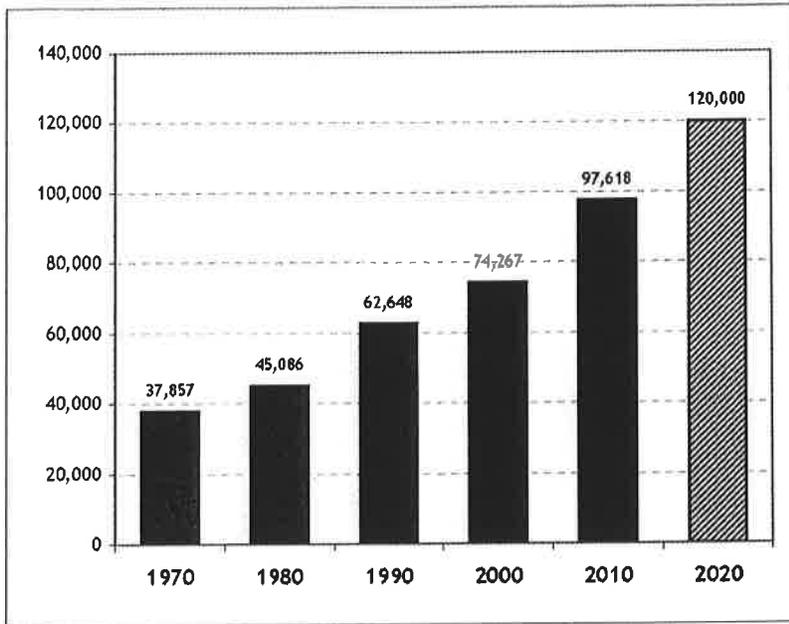


Table 2. Population Characteristics: Las Cruces, Doña Ana County & New Mexico

Demographics	Las Cruces	Dona Ana County	New Mexico
Population Characteristics			
Population (2000)	74,267	174,682	1,819,046
Population (2010)	97,618	209,233	2,059,179
Percent of Change (2000-09)	31.4%	20%	13%
Hispanic / Latino	56.8%	65.7%	46.3%
Persons w/ Disabilities	10,676	21,027	269,338
Persons w/ Disabilities (%)	11.1%	10.2%	13.3%
Household Characteristics			
Median Income	\$36,202	\$35,230	\$42,090
Average Household Size	2.43	2.71	2.55
Average Family Size	3.04	3.25	3.13
Home Ownership Rate	56.3%	64.2%	68.5%
Age Groups			
Median Age	32.4	32.4	36.7
Population < 5 years of age	7.1%	7.4%	7.0%
Population < 18 years of age	24.3%	26.7%	25.2%
Population > 65 years of age	13.6%	12.4%	13.2%



Age Group Distribution

Compared with Doña Ana County, the City of Las Cruces is very similar in percentages for all age cohorts. The median age of City residents is 32.4 – compared with the averages for Doña Ana County (32.4), the State of New Mexico (36.7) and the nation (37.2).

The City's largest "20-year" population group is comprised of 15- to 34-year-olds, representing 32.9% of the population in 2010. This is somewhat older than that of Doña Ana County, which has more 5- to 24-year olds (32.4%), and the City has a slightly higher percentage of residents over 55 years of age.

The availability of urban recreation amenities, inexpensive living costs and good medical care probably account for the slightly higher percentage of persons 55 years and older living in Las Cruces versus the rest of Doña Ana County. These are attractive features for retirees seeking to relocate to the City. Aging of the general population can also be expected due to trends which extend life expectancies.

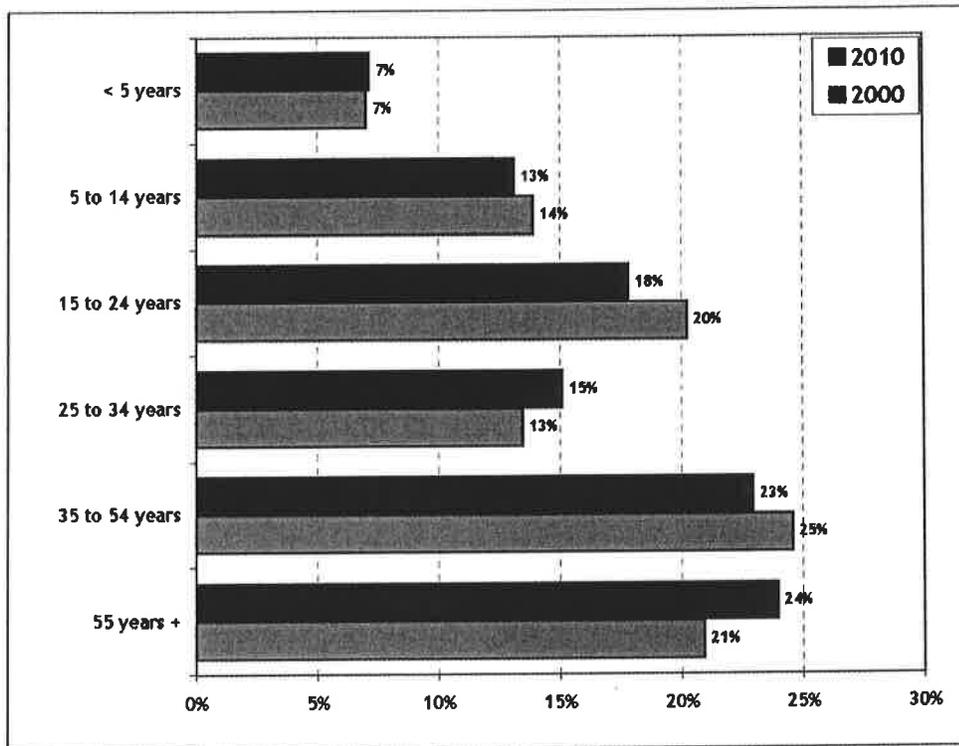
The following breakdown is used to separate the population into age-sensitive user groups.

- **Under 5 years:** This group represents users of preschool and tot programs and facilities, and as trails and open space users, are often in strollers. These individuals are the future participants in youth activities.
- **5 to 14 years:** This group represents current youth program participants.
- **15 to 24 years:** This group represents teen/young adult program participants moving out of the youth programs and into adult programs. Members of this age group are often seasonal employment seekers.
- **25 to 34 years:** This group represents involvement in adult programming with characteristics of beginning long-term relationships and establishing families.
- **35 to 54 years:** This group represents users of a wide range of adult programming and park facilities. Their characteristics extend from having children using preschool and youth programs to becoming empty nesters.
- **55 years plus:** This group represents users of older adult programming exhibiting the characteristics of approaching retirement or already retired and typically enjoying grandchildren. This group generally also ranges from very healthy, active seniors to more physically inactive seniors.

Table 3 illustrates the age distribution characteristics of these cohorts and provides a comparison to 2010 Census data.



Table 3. Age Group Distributions: 2000 & 2010



Household Characteristics

The 2010 average household size in the City of Las Cruces is 2.43 people. Nationally, the average size is 2.58 and in the State of New Mexico it is 2.55.

According to the 2010 Census, the 2010 median household income in the City of Las Cruces was \$36,202. This figure is about \$13,840 (27%) below the median income for residents across the United States and \$5,890 (14%) below the State of New Mexico's median. Sample data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey released in 2006 reported the City's median household income as \$36,818, showing that median household income has remained virtually flat in the last five years.

Based on the 2010 American Community Survey, Las Cruces' households income differ significantly at each end of the earning scale as compared to statewide and nation income figures. At the lower end of the household income scale, over two-thirds (36.6%) of Las Cruces households earn less than \$25,000 annually, which is significantly more than households of the State of New Mexico (30%) and the United States (24.9%). On the other end, there are fewer City households (9.9%) in the higher income brackets (\$100,000 and greater) than both the State (15.2%) and National (19.9%) figures.



Poverty

According to 2010 American Community Survey, Las Cruces has over 3,700 families living below the poverty level, representing 16.5% of the population. This percentage is on par with the statewide figure (15.7%) and higher than the national statistic (11.3%). A review of subgroups shows that poverty affects 25.6% of those under 18 and 7.3% of those 65 and older, which is comparable to statewide and national figures. However, the percentage of local families accessing food stamp or SNAP benefits (14.6%) is higher than state and nation averages (13% and 11.9%, respectively). The poverty threshold was an income of \$22,113 for a family of four.

Employment & Education

The 2009 work force population (16 years and over) of Las Cruces is 43,256 (62.6%). The primary occupation of the working population is management, professional and related at 65.6%, while services and blue collar occupations comprise the remaining 34.4% of the workforce.

The City of Las Cruces is slightly ahead of the State of New Mexico in educational attainment. According to the 2010 Census, 30.4% of the City residents had earned a Bachelor's degree or higher (16.5% having a Bachelor's degree and 13.9% having a Graduate degree), as compared to 25% statewide.

Persons with Disabilities

The 2010 Census reported 11.1% of the population 5 years and older (10,676 persons) as having a disability that interferes with life activities. This is slightly lower than state and national averages (13.3% and 11.9%, respectively). Among residents 65 and older, the percentage rises to 39.2%, or 4,967 persons, and is generally on par with percentages found in the general elderly population.

Review of Other Community Plans

To supplement community outreach, seven community plans were reviewed for past policy direction and goals as they pertain to the provision and planning for parks, trails and recreation facilities and programs for Las Cruces. The development of each involved public input and final adoption by their respective responsible legislative body.

2005 Las Cruces Parks & Recreation Master Plan

The 2005 Parks and Recreation Master Plan guided the Department's park system planning efforts and policies for the past five years and represented a significant update to the City's planning from the previous plan. The 2005 Plan included an extensive needs assessment, community input process, a citizen's survey and a comprehensive evaluation of all existing facilities and future land acquisition, park development, operations maintenance and recreation programming needs. It provided an analysis of programs and policy recommendations, as well as a revision to the Park Impact Fee methodology and rate.



1999 City of Las Cruces Comprehensive Plan (City Plan)

The Las Cruces City Plan is promotes the City by identifying the many favorable characteristics or amenities available within the community. It provides the policy foundation from which the Comprehensive Plan's elements and subsequent planning efforts are derived. The City Plan establishes a vision and identifies the supporting core goals within each element of the Plan. With regard to parks and recreation, the Plan identifies three primary objectives and 19 policies to support the provision of park and recreation services in the community.

2005 Las Cruces Strategic Plan

The 2005 Strategic Plan identified 25 core goals in five major categories of focus including affordable housing, economic development, infrastructure, natural resources and public safety. Specific objectives included establishing a regional open space authority, developing a regional open space master plan, updating the parks, recreation and open space master plan, and assessing opportunities to preserve open space for informal, recreational, aesthetical, agricultural and natural uses.

2010 Las Cruces Strategic Plan

The 2010 Strategic Plan outlines seven core strategic objectives for the City within the context of service delivery, sense of community and government responsiveness. Areas of strategic focus are listed as items of a two-year plan and include a number of park and recreation elements, such as expanding recreational opportunities for youth and seniors, supporting community festivals and a community garden program, and renovating and opening new recreation centers.

2010 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

The 2010 Metropolitan Transportation Plan represents a continuous transportation planning effort through identified goals, objectives and policies for all modes of transportation within a 30-year planning horizon. The plan identifies current transportation needs and challenges through public and stakeholder input and technical analyses. It prioritizes short and long-term strategies for maintaining and enhancing the area's transportation system, including pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The plan identifies specific trail system improvements by location, type of improvement and connections to recreation areas.

A Vision: Open Space and Trail System for Doña Ana County (2005)

Prepared by the Citizens' Task Force for Open Space Preservation, this Vision document outlines an interconnected open space and trail system for Doña Ana County designed to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the region. The Vision describes the components of the open space and trail system and provides implementation recommendations. To the extent possible, the Vision document builds upon existing protected areas, planned projects or agency plans that have already been approved.



One Valley, One Vision 2040 Regional Plan (2012)

This planning document represents the collaborative effort of various governmental, non-profit, community and industry organizations. The process included approximately 120 public meetings and a 45-member invited advisory committee to guide development of the plan. Some of the organizations that took part in the process included the American Society of Landscape Architects, Building Industry Association of Southern New Mexico, Bureau of Land Management, City of Las Cruces, Doña Ana County, Las Cruces Public Schools, and New Mexico State University. This document identifies a series of goals pertaining to community facilities, recreation opportunities and intergovernmental coordination. The City of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County approved a resolution endorsing this plan as its comprehensive regional planning tool.

2009 Comprehensive Plan Inventory: Doña Ana County & City of Las Cruces

This plan inventories and documents the various land use and comprehensive plan elements for Doña Ana County and the City of Las Cruces. The plan includes a summary of parks and recreation facilities, service providers and planning goals. The document also includes a list of findings that highlight the conditions of and challenges of providing for recreational opportunities across the county.

Contents of the Plan

The remainder of the Las Cruces Park & Recreation Master Plan is organized as follows:

- **Chapter 2: Definitions & Inventory** – describes the existing park and recreation system in the City.
- **Chapter 3: Community Engagement** – highlights the methods used to engage the Las Cruces community in the development of the Plan.
- **Chapters 4 - 6: Needs Assessments by Functional Area** – discusses survey results, stakeholder feedback and other recreation trend data and provides context to the identification of potential park and recreation system enhancements.
- **Chapter 7: Goals & Objectives** – provides a policy framework for the parks and recreation system grouped by major functional or program area.
- **Chapter 8: Capital Improvements Plan** – details a 6-year program for addressing park and recreation facility enhancement or expansion projects.
- **Chapter 9: Implementation & Funding** – describes a range of strategies and alternatives to consider in the implementation of the Plan.
- **Appendices:** Provides technical or supporting information to the planning effort and includes a summary of the community survey, stakeholder notes, funding options, among others.



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Chapter 2. Definitions & Inventory

This chapter is segmented into two sections. The first section defines the various facility classifications in use in Las Cruces, and the second is an inventory of existing facilities.

Definitions & Standards

There are seven basic park and open space classifications in Las Cruces:

- Pocket Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks
- Athletic Fields
- Public Grounds
- Trails
- Special Facilities

Pocket Parks

Pocket parks are very small and are the smallest park classification used to address limited or isolated recreational needs. These parks serve a limited radius (up to ¼-mile) from the site; they provide passive and play-oriented recreational opportunities. Passive uses may include picnic areas, community gardens and sitting areas. Examples of pocket parks can include a tot lot with play equipment such as a climber, slide or swings, a small urban plaza or civic recognition project. Locating pocket parks adjacent to other park system components, such as recreational trails, is also desirable. Parking is not provided at pocket parks, although lighting may be used for security and safety. This Plan proposes a revised, combined acreage standard for neighborhood and pocket parks of 1.00 acre per 1,000 residents – a reduction from the existing standard of 1.54 acres per 1,000.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are generally considered the basic unit of traditional park systems. They are small park areas designed for unstructured play and limited active and passive recreation. They are generally 3-5 acres in size, depending on a variety of factors including neighborhood need, physical location and opportunity, and should meet a minimum size of 2 acre in size when possible. This Plan proposes a revised, combined acreage standard for neighborhood and pocket parks of 1.00 acre per 1,000 residents – a reduction from the existing standard of 1.54 acres per 1,000.

Neighborhood parks are intended to serve residential areas within short walking distance (up to ½-mile radius) of the park and should be geographically distributed throughout the community. Access is mostly pedestrian, and park sites should be located such that persons living within the service area will not have to cross a major arterial street or other significant natural or man-made



barrier, such as an arroyo and railroad tracks, to get to the site. Additionally, these parks should be located along road frontages to improve visual access and community awareness of the sites.

Generally, developed neighborhood parks typically include amenities such as pedestrian paths, picnic tables, benches, play equipment, a multi-use open field for youth soccer and baseball, sport courts or multi-purpose paved areas, landscaping and irrigation. Restrooms are not provided due to high construction and maintenance costs. Parking is also not usually provided; however, on-street, ADA-accessible parking stall(s) may be included.

Community Parks

Community parks are larger sites developed for organized play, contain a wider array of facilities and, as a result, appeal to a more diverse group of users. Community parks are generally 15 to 50 acres in size, should meet a minimum size of 20 acres when possible and serve residents within a 1-mile radius of the site. In areas without neighborhood parks, community parks can also serve as local neighborhood parks. This Plan proposes an acreage standard of 3 acres per 1,000 residents for community parks.

In general, community park facilities are designed for organized or intensive recreational activities and sports, although passive components such as pathways, picnic areas and natural areas are highly encouraged and complementary to active use facilities. Since community parks serve a larger area and offer more facilities than neighborhood parks, parking and restroom facilities are provided. Community parks may also incorporate community facilities, such as athletic fields, recreation centers, senior centers or aquatic facilities.

Athletic Fields

Athletic fields and facilities are distinguished from other parks by the intensive and scheduled nature of their use. These facilities serve the entire City of Las Cruces, and through partnerships with the school district and athletic leagues they also serve the needs of the wider region. Access to these facilities is by car, transit, foot or bicycle. Off-street parking is provided.

Public Grounds

Public grounds are the landscaped portion of properties upon which public facilities sit. Some examples include the downtown mall, the lawn and landscaped areas around the library and the grounds associated with recreation centers. These grounds are considered public spaces for use by residents and are maintained by Parks Maintenance staff.

Trails

Recreational trails are non-motorized transportation networks generally separated from roadways. Trails can be developed to accommodate multiple uses or shared uses, such as pedestrians, inline skaters, bicyclists and equestrians. Trail alignments aim to emphasize a strong relationship with the natural environment and may not provide the most direct route from a practical transportation viewpoint.

Bikeways are different than recreational trails in that their principal focus is on safe, efficient and direct non-motorized transportation. Bikeways serve distinctly different user groups than trail users. Typical bikeway user groups would include bicycle commuters, fitness enthusiasts and



competitive athletes. Their emphasis is on speed, which can create conflicts with recreation-type trails and their respective user groups.

For shared-use trails, it is important that the alignment and cross sections be designed with flexibility to accommodate higher speeds, passing zones and greater widths. Surfaces will vary with intended use and environmental considerations. Additionally, parking, consistent signage (wayfinding, access, use hierarchy) and interpretive markers or panels should be provided as appropriate.

In Las Cruces, trail and bikeway planning and development is shared between different divisions of the City and with the MPO. The newer “Transport 2040 Plan” and the older “A Vision: Open Space and Trail System” provide additional guidance on the region’s efforts to plan and implement an interconnected trail network. This Plan proposes a mileage standard of 0.25 miles per 1,000 residents for recreational trails – a reduction from the existing standard of 0.65 miles per 1,000.

Special facilities

Special facilities include single-purpose recreational areas such as the skatepark, BMX course or the shooting range, along with recreation centers, aquatic centers and plazas in or near the downtown core. No standards exist or are proposed concerning special facilities, since facility size is a function of the specific use.



Facility Inventory

The park and open space inventory identifies the recreational assets within Las Cruces. The City provides nearly 680 acres of public parkland and recreation facilities distributed among 94 city-owned sites. The following tables summarize the available land inventory in Las Cruces. The following maps locates the existing parks, trail and recreation areas within and around the City.

Table 4. Existing Inventory: City-owned Parks (Community & Special Facilities)

Park Name	Classification	Acreage
Apodaca Park	Community	27.09
Burn Lake	Community	48.01
Desert Trails Community Park	Community	34.42
Frenger Park	Community	9.95
Legends West Park	Community	11.26
Lions Park	Community	6.63
Lions Park	Community	1.03
Meerscheidt Rec Center	Community	3.91
Mesilla Park Rec Center	Community	4.38
North Las Cruces Park	Community	8.16
Oro Vista Park / Pad	Community	15.86
Outlet Channel Park	Community	6.01
Valley View Park	Community	5.45
Valley View Park	Community	4.20
Veterans Memorial Park	Community	9.00
Young Park	Community	19.43
Subtotal		214.77
Butterfield Shooting Range	Special Facilities	200.00
East Mesa Bataan Memorial Pool	Special Facilities	1.50
East Mesa Rec Center	Special Facilities	4.03
East Side Community Center	Special Facilities	0.80
Henry Benavidez Community Center	Special Facilities	6.48
Las Cruces Bmx Track	Special Facilities	1.37
Las Cruces Dog Park	Special Facilities	1.08
Skate Park	Special Facilities	0.81
Unidad Park	Special Facilities	2.47
Subtotal		218.54



Table 5. Existing Inventory: City-owned Parks (Neighborhood & Athletic)

Park Name	Classification	Acreage
Four Hills Park	Neighborhood	1.90
Northridge Park	Neighborhood	1.01
Country Club Estates Park	Neighborhood	2.15
Sagecrest Park	Neighborhood	2.20
Camelot Gardens Park	Neighborhood	1.24
Villa Encantada	Neighborhood	1.71
Albert Johnson Park	Neighborhood	3.37
Camunez Park	Neighborhood	2.66
Pioneer Women's Park	Neighborhood	2.07
Hermosa Heights Park	Neighborhood	1.08
Gus Vlachakis Park	Neighborhood	4.08
Rose Village Park	Neighborhood	1.09
College Manor Park	Neighborhood	2.05
Salopek/Stull Park	Neighborhood	2.24
Klein Park	Neighborhood	1.73
Cardon Park	Neighborhood	0.77
Las Colinas Mini-Park	Neighborhood	0.57
Sunset Hills Park	Neighborhood	1.41
Jason Jiron Park	Neighborhood	3.33
Sunrise Terrace Park	Neighborhood	4.34
Tellbrook Park	Neighborhood	5.00
San Jose Park	Neighborhood	1.14
Sam Graft	Neighborhood	2.83
Valley Verde	Neighborhood	2.82
Unnamed Park	Neighborhood	1.09
Vista De La Montana	Neighborhood	2.11
Las Colinas Park	Neighborhood	2.18
Subtotal		58.19
Soldados Multi Purpose Field	Athletic	9.45
High Noon Soccer Complex	Athletic	17.92
Provencio Van Dame Multipurpos	Athletic	9.95
Maag Ball Park	Athletic	9.13
Ronald D. Galla T-Ball Field	Athletic	3.75
Paz Ball Park	Athletic	18.23
Harty Ball Field	Athletic	7.99
Field Of Dreams Soccer	Athletic	21.04
Subtotal		97.45



Table 6. Existing Inventory: City-owned Parks (Pocket, Grounds & Trails)

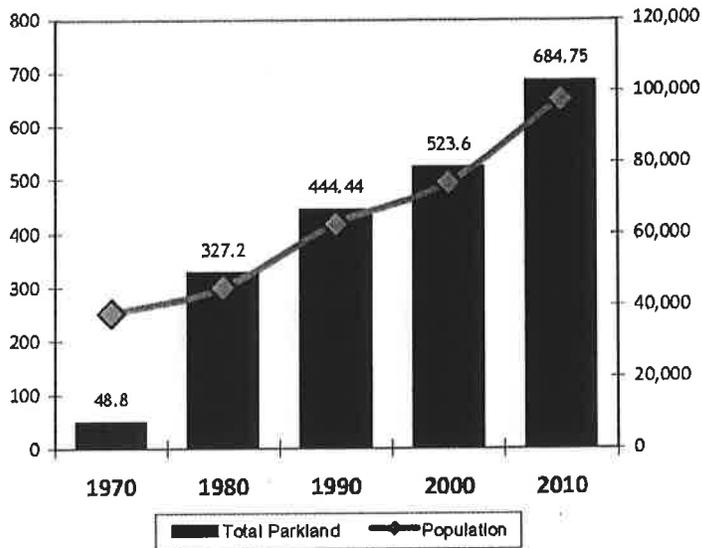
Park Name	Classification	Acreage
Bon Burt Park	Pocket	0.33
Camelot Gardens Mini-Park	Pocket	0.36
Candlelight Knolls Mini Park	Pocket	0.28
East Cambridge Mini Park	Pocket	0.11
El Encanto Parquite	Pocket	0.27
Hess Terrace Mini Park	Pocket	0.90
Hillrise Mini Park	Pocket	0.14
Jardin De Esperanza	Pocket	0.25
Jardin De Mesquite	Pocket	0.25
La Fonda Mini Park	Pocket	0.57
Las Colinas Retention Pond	Pocket	1.42
Main & El Paseo Mini Park	Pocket	0.18
Majestic Terrace Mini Park	Pocket	0.41
Mesa Heights Park	Pocket	0.33
Mesquite Community Garden	Pocket	0.20
Miranda Mini Park	Pocket	1.97
Mission Mini Park	Pocket	0.19
Ponderosa Mini-Park	Pocket	0.67
Rotary International Park	Pocket	0.06
Sacramento Mini Park	Pocket	0.10
Three Crosses Cactus Garden Park	Pocket	0.05
Tierra Del Sol	Pocket	0.38
Tony Gomez Park	Pocket	11.69
Water Wise Community Garden	Pocket	0.30
West Gallagher Mini Park	Pocket	0.12
Subtotal		21.51
Branigan Park	Public Grounds	4.44
Club Fusion	Public Grounds	0.50
Downtown Mall Bicentennial Park	Public Grounds	0.91
Las Cruces Regional Aquatic Center	Public Grounds	7.12
Munson Senior Rec Center	Public Grounds	2.70
Subtotal		15.67
La Buena Vida Park	Trails	8.74
La Llorona Park	Trails	2.81
Legends West Trail	Trails	7.00
Triviz Multi Use Path	Trails	33.00
Subtotal		51.55
Total Acreage		677.67

The Las Cruces parks system has grown significantly over the past fifty years, in line with local population growth. While the park system may not yet meet all the needs expressed by residents, the City should be applauded for its past efforts to grow the system and provide space for community recreation. Table 7 illustrates the total parkland acreage growth in the Las Cruces



park system since 1970, along with the relative population change. The map on the following page identifies all of the City's existing parkland.

Table 7. Parkland Inventory Changes over Time



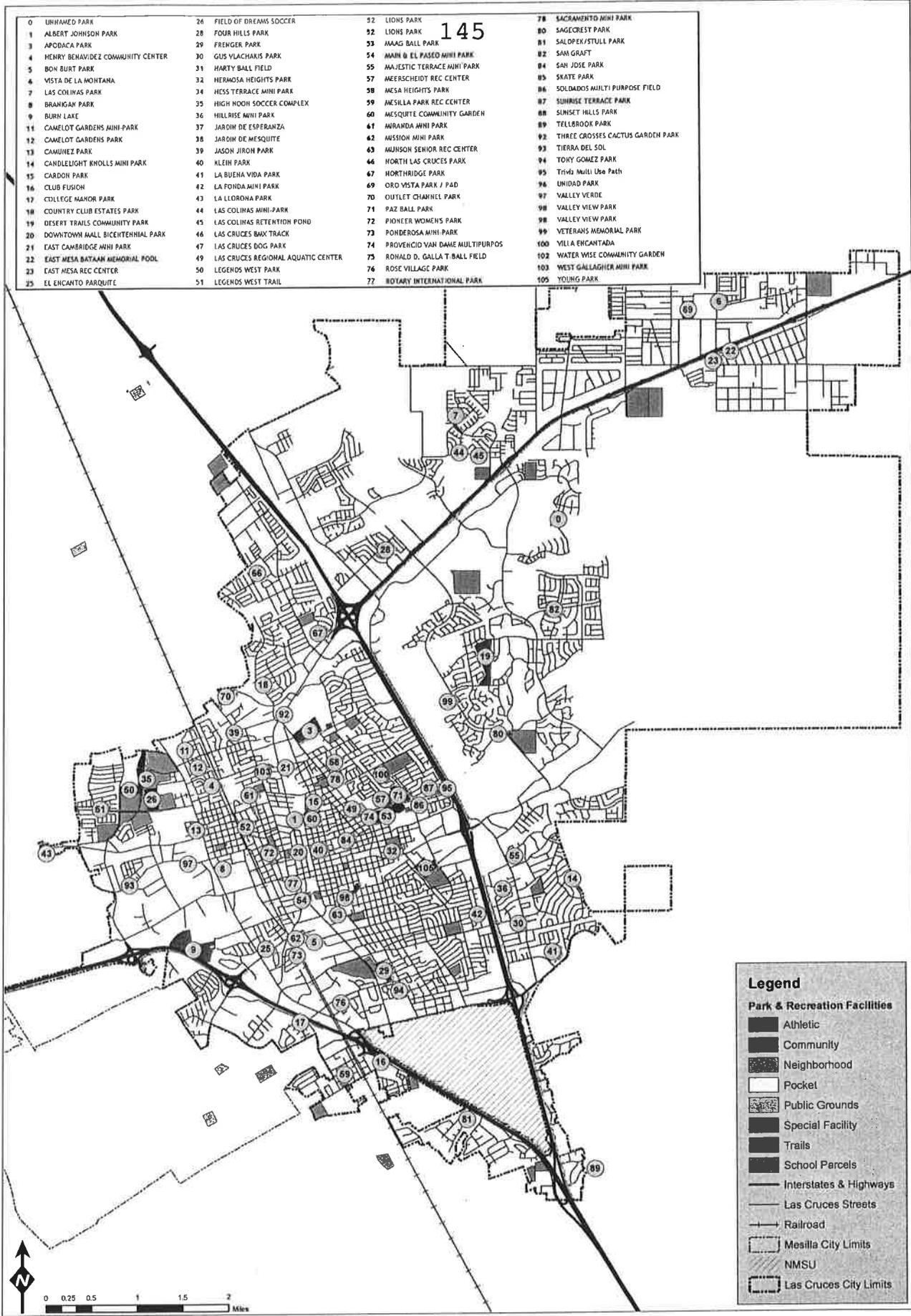
Additionally, the local trails network has grown in recent years, and four trail projects are currently under construction that will add nearly 7 miles to the system of recreation trails. Table 8 lists the existing and pending trail corridors, with identification references to locate these corridors on the following trails map.

Table 8. Existing Inventory: Recreational Trails

Map ID	Trail Corridor	Mileage w/in City
1	La Llorona Multi Use Path	0.19 mi.
2	Triviz Multi Use Path	4.67 mi.
3	University Multi Use Path	1.05 mi.
4	Union Multi Use Path	1.1 mi.
5	Sonoma Ranch Trail	3.64 mi.
6	Legends West Trail	0.5 mi.
7	Las Cruces Outfall Channel Trail *	4.25 mi.
8	Burn Lake Trail *	0.65 mi.
9	Engler Road Trail *	1 mi.
10	Alameda Arroyo Trail *	0.78 mi.
TOTAL		17.83 mi.

* Under Construction





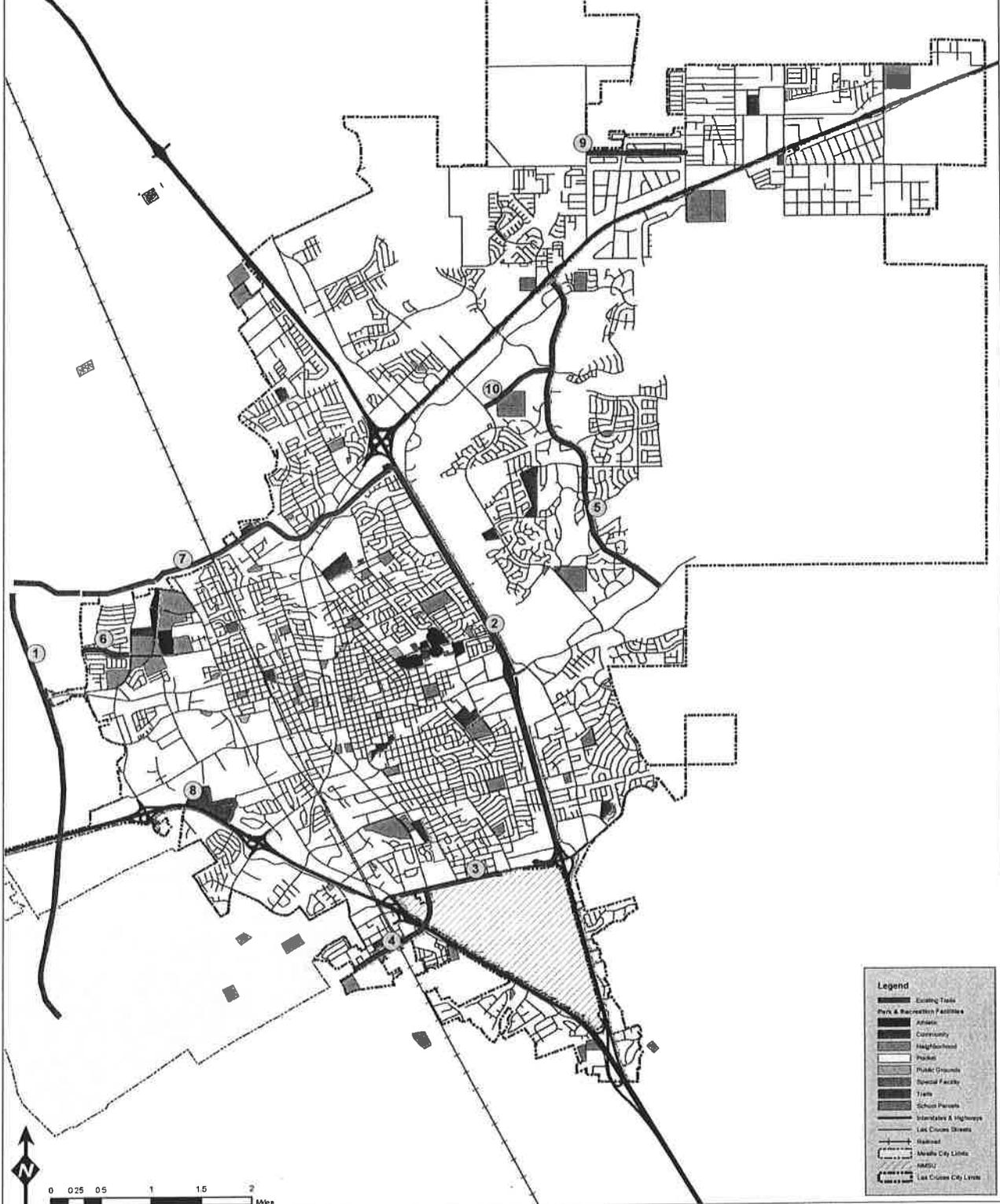
Las Cruces Parks & Recreation Master Plan

Map 1: Existing Parks & Facilities

Data Source: City of Las Cruces GIS
Date: October 2011

ID	Trail Corridor	Mileage w/in City
1	LA LLORONA MULTI USE PATH	0.19 ml.
2	TRIVIZ MULTI USE PATH	4.67 ml.
3	UNIVERSITY MULTI USE PATH	1.05 ml.
4	UNION MULTI USE PATH	1.10 ml.
5	SONOMA RANCH TRAIL	3.64 ml.
6	LEGENDS WEST TRAIL	0.50 ml.
7	LAS CRUCES OUTFALL CHANNEL TRAIL *	4.25 ml.
8	BURN LAKE TRAIL *	0.65 ml.
9	ENGLER ROAD TRAIL *	1.00 ml.
10	ALAMEDA ARROYO TRAIL *	0.78 ml.

* Under Construction



Legend

- Existing Trails
- Park & Recreation Facilities
 - Atkins
 - Community
 - Neighborhood
 - Park
 - Park Grounds
 - Special Facility
 - Trail
 - School Parks
- Interstates & Highways
- Las Cruces Streets
- Roadway
- Municipal City Limits
- IMD/J
- Las Cruces City Limits



Las Cruces Parks & Recreation Master Plan

Map 2: Existing Trail Facilities

Other Recreation Providers in Las Cruces

Las Cruces Public School District

The Las Cruces School District provides recreation facilities associated with its schools:

- 25 elementary schools have limited access for playgrounds and fields and no inside access, except for special programs authorized by the individual school
- 8 middle schools have limited access for playgrounds and fields and no inside access, except for special programs authorized by the individual school
- 5 high schools disallow community access, aside from sanctioned school activities and the Field of Dreams by agreement with the City of Las Cruces
- 2 alternative schools (one Early College High School and one vocational high school) disallow community access, aside from sanctioned school activities

New Mexico State University

New Mexico State University provides a variety of recreation facilities for its students, faculty and alumni. Additionally, some facilities are open to the public or for a fee.

- Tennis Center with 12 courts, a small office and locker area. This facility is open to the public for a fee.
- 15 acre Preciado Park in center of campus with picnic tables and playgrounds
- The large Open Space in the triangle is 900 acres (500 acres is developed) 100 acres is turf
- Memorial Stadium and Fieldhouse (30,000 seats – university football, and high school) 50 acres of fields used extensively by the intramurals programs, which holds 30,343 football fans, was built in 1978.
- Pan American Center 12,000 seats basketball and multipurpose venue
- Fulton Athletic Center dedicated to department of intercollegiate athletics, with limited restaurant facilities.
- NMSU 18-hole golf course and clubhouse with meeting space, food service and a bar. This is open to the public with green fees.
- The natatorium, which has indoor 25 meter and outdoor 50 meter swimming pools, was built in 1962. This is open to the public with fees.

Boys and Girls Club of Las Cruces

The Boys and Girls Club of Las Cruces is an activity club for boys and girls between the ages of 6 to 18. Their mission is to enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens. Core programs include: Power Hour (homework and tutoring), seasonal sports, arts, crafts, and reading, computer skills and internet safety training, special field trips and playground activities. The club operates after school programs during the school year and all-day programs during the summer. After school programs are offered at the main clubhouse on Las Cruces Avenue, Mesilla Park Elementary School and Cesar Chavez Elementary School.

Several other sports and fitness centers exist in Las Cruces that offered through the private sector, such as Tom Young's Fitness Center, Curves, World Gym, among others.



Chapter 3. Community Engagement

Community engagement and involvement played a vital role in establishing a clear framework for park and recreation planning that reflects upon the current priorities of the community. Most residents care deeply about the future of park and recreation services in the community and appreciated the opportunity to offer feedback in the development of this Plan. Public outreach methods were varied and extensive, including:

- A mail- and phone-based community survey
- 6 community meetings
- 9 small group stakeholder meetings
- 2 Parks & Recreation Advisory Board meetings

Throughout this process, the public provided information and expressed opinions about their needs and priorities for parks, trails and recreation facilities and programs in Las Cruces. The response from citizens of all interests areas was passionate, and this feedback played an important role in preparing and organizing policy statements and prioritizing the capital improvements project list contained within this Plan.

Community Survey

The City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department conducted a Community Interest and Opinion Survey during May and June of 2011. The purpose of the survey was to gather input to help determine parks, trails, open space and recreation priorities for the community. The survey was designed to obtain statistically-valid results from households throughout the City of Las Cruces and was administered by a combination of mail and phone responses.

In collaboration with staff, the project team designed a 25-question community survey to assess residents' recreational needs, preferences and priorities. This allowed the survey to be tailored to issues of strategic importance to effectively plan the future system.

The seven-page survey was mailed to a random sample of 2,000 households in the City of Las Cruces. Approximately three days after the surveys were mailed, each household that received a survey also received an automated voice message encouraging them to complete the survey. In addition, about two weeks after the surveys were mailed, households were contacted by phone. Those who indicated they had not returned the survey were given the option of completing it by phone.

The goal was to obtain a total of at least 400 completed surveys from households throughout the city. This goal was accomplished, with a total of 403 surveys having been completed, which is a sufficient sample size to assess community opinions generally and to review findings by subgroups including gender and age. The results of the random sample of 403 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least $\pm 4.7\%$.

A detailed discussion of community survey results appear in the Needs Assessment chapters of this Plan. The survey instrument and a summary of the response data are provided in Appendix B.



Major Findings

- **Visitation of Parks.** Eighty-one percent (81%) of households indicated that they have visited any of the city parks during the past 12 months. Of this 81% of households, 75% indicated that they would rate the overall condition of ALL parks visited as either “excellent” (19%) or “good” (56%). It should also be noted that 23% of respondents rated the condition of ALL parks as “fair”, while only 2% rated them as “poor”.
- **Use or Visitation of Recreation Facilities.** Playgrounds, at 46%, were the most frequently mentioned city recreation facility used or visited over the past 12 months by respondent households. Other frequently mentioned recreation facilities used or visited over the past 12 months include: walking, hiking, and biking trails (42%) and picnicking areas (36%). Based on the sum of their top three choices, the three parks and recreation facilities that respondents visit most often include: walking, hiking, and biking trails (31%) and playgrounds (31%).
- **Use or Visitation of Recreation Facilities by Households.** The highest percentage of households indicated the Las Cruces Regional Aquatic Center (31%) as a recreation facility their household has used or visited over the past 12 months. The second most frequently mentioned recreation facility was the Meerscheidt Recreation Center (28%). Based on the sum of their top three choices, the recreation facilities households indicated that they visited the most often include: Las Cruces Regional Aquatic Center (56%) and Meerscheidt Recreation Center (53%).
- **Participation in Recreation Programs.** Twenty-eight percent (28%) of respondents indicated that household member(s) participated in recreation programs offered by the City. Of this 28%, 81% of households indicated that they would rate the overall quality of the recreation programs as either “excellent” (23%) or “good” (58%).
- **Reasons Preventing Households From Using Parks, Trails, Recreation Facilities or Programs.** “I do not know what is being offered” (24%) was the most frequently mentioned reason that prevents households from using parks, trails, recreation facilities or programs.
- **Need for Parks and Recreation Facilities.** There are four parks and recreation facilities that over 50% of households have a need for: walking and biking trails (65%), small neighborhood parks (63%), picnic areas and shelters (53%), and large community-wide parks (52%).
- **Most Important Parks and Recreation Facilities.** Based on the sum of their top four choices, the parks and recreation facilities that households rated as the most important are: walking and biking trails (43%) and small neighborhood parks (42%).
- **Need for Sports and Recreation Programs.** The sports and recreation programs that the highest percentage of households have a need for include: adult fitness and wellness programs (41%), programs for adults 50 years and older (33%), and adult water fitness programs (32%).
- **Most Important Sports and Recreation Programs.** Based on the sum of their top four choices, the sports and recreation programs that households rated as the most important include: programs for adults 50 years and older (42%) and adult fitness and wellness programs (41%).



- **Sports and Recreation Programs Participated in Most Often.** Based on the sum of their top four choices, the sports and recreation programs that households indicated that they participate in most often include: youth sports programs (43%) and adult fitness and wellness programs (37%).

Other Findings

- Most frequently mentioned ways households learn about Parks and Recreation Department programs and activities:
 - Newspaper articles (57%)
 - From friends and neighbors (47%)
 - Newspaper advertisements (37%)
 - Radio (25%)
- Sixty-four percent (64%) of respondents indicated that they would be willing to pay at least \$10-\$19 per year in additional property taxes to build and operate the types of parks, trails, aquatics, sports and recreation facilities most important to their household.
- Fifty-nine percent (59%) of respondents indicated that they would either “vote in favor” (37%) or “might vote in favor” (22%) if an election were held for a bond issue to be used ONLY for open space and parkland acquisition, construction of amenities and trails development in Las Cruces.
- Fifty-six percent (56%) of respondents indicated that the City should require developers to create neighborhood parks within their new developments.

Stakeholder Discussions

To more broadly assess the opportunities for partnership and coordination, along with the challenges of program implementation and facility usage, a series of external stakeholder interviews was conducted. The stakeholder meetings were held at the Las Cruces City Hall on June 28, 29, and 30, 2011 and were held with 9 different interest groups with involvement or interest in the future of the City’s Park and Recreation facilities or programs. Within each of the stakeholder groups, the following organizations/representatives were invited to participate:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Development Community Group ■ Neighborhood Representatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Paseo de Oñate/So Alameda</i> <i>Alameda / Train Depot</i> <i>High Range</i> <i>Dos Suenos</i> <i>Sonoma Ranch</i> <i>Las Esperanzas</i> <i>University area</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Senior Advisory Committee ■ Special Events Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Kiwanis Cars for Kids</i> <i>Renn Faire</i> <i>Farmers Market</i> <i>TWEF</i> <i>Spring Fest 101 Gold</i> <i>Play City USA</i> <i>Dept of Health</i> |
|---|--|



- **Youth Sports Group**
 - Youth Coach*
 - Roller Derby*
 - Bantam Weight Sports*
 - LC Youth Soccer*
 - Girls Softball*
 - Baseball*
 - BMX*
- **Adult Sports Group**
 - Softball / slow pitch*
 - Mesilla Valley Soccer*
 - USSSA*
 - Senior Softball*
 - Sports Talk*
- **Community Partners Group**
 - Las Cruces Public Schools*
 - Keep Las Cruces Beautiful*
 - Convention & Visitor Bureau*
 - NMSU*
 - Farm and Ranch*
 - Metropolitan Planning Organization*
 - Downtown Partnership*
- **Special Programs Group**
 - Therapeutics*
 - After School Parent*
 - Community Garden*
 - Home Schooled Parent*
 - Wellness Program*
 - Dog Park*
 - Teen Participant*
- **Aquatics Group**
 - Lap swimmer*
 - Senior Olympics*
 - Swim Coach*
 - Senior Programs Fitness*
 - Swim participant*

Individual stakeholders for the nine interest groups were invited to participate by an initial phone call in late May and early June 2011 with follow-up e-mails on June 8 and June 24, 2011 reminding of the dates, time and place of their stakeholder group.

Comments were often specific to the particular program area or perspective of the stakeholder interest group. Overall, comments ranged from favorable to mixed with regard to City facilities and the direction of the Parks & Recreation Department. Stakeholders recognized the limited financial capacity of the City and were often quick to offer suggestions for potential partnerships or other means to accomplish specific projects. Suggested projects or program enhancements ranged from participating in the completion of the lap pool at the Aquatic Center, recreation center upgrades, the development of an East Mesa recreation complex and expanded recreation programming opportunities. Specific recommendations are also reflected in the Needs Assessment chapter, and stakeholder discussion summaries are provided in Appendix C.

Community Open House Meetings

A series of six community meetings were held in connection with the Park and Recreation Master Plan Update at various locations throughout the City. The intent was to elicit feedback from residents on the future vision for the City, explore program and facility opportunities and identify local recreation needs critical to plan development. Newspaper ads, newspaper articles and e-mail announcements were used to publicize the events (see below). Held during the second half of July, one session was scheduled for each of the City Council member districts. The following was the schedule of community meetings:



District	Council Member	Date	Location
1	Silva	July 28, 2011	Las Cruces City Hall - Council Chambers
2	Connor	July 27, 2011	Mesilla Park Recreation Center - Auditorium
3	Pedroza	July 26, 2011	Meerscheidt Center - Multi-Purpose Room
4	Small	July 19, 2011	Picacho Middle School - Cafeteria
5	Sorg	July 20, 2011	East Mesa Recreation Center - Multi-Purpose Room
6	Thomas	July 21, 2011	Camino Real Middle School - Cafeteria

These sessions began with a brief introductory presentation that included an overview of the planning process and a summary of the findings from the city-wide survey. Following the presentation either in the original group or in break-out sessions, attendees were requested to comment on the City's park facilities or recreation programs to identify needs and requested changes from the citizen's standpoint. Additionally, display stations provided eleven graphic and narrative information boards for residents to review, comment and discuss. The stations covered the following topic areas: Las Cruces Parks & Recreation Department overview and mission, summary results of community survey, recreation programs & events, parks, trails and facility priorities.

The break-out or large group discussions were organized around general and specific questions pertaining to parks and facilities, recreation and community needs. Comments were noted during each session and attendees were also invited to provide written comments as well. Those in attendance were also encouraged to indicate their priorities from the suggestions generated at each meeting by indicating a first or second choice on what they perceived as the most important items. Sign-in sheets for each meeting were completed, and overall approximately 60 people attended the Parks and Recreation Master Plan community meeting series. The meetings lasted up to two hours, and summary responses from the meetings are provided in Appendix D.



Park & Recreation Advisory Board Meetings

The Park and Recreation Advisory Board provided feedback on the Plan during two regularly scheduled public sessions. The Board provided insight on the community survey results and offered guidance on community needs and core issues. The Board reviewed and discussed the



draft plan and provided direction on facility and program enhancements, along with proposed capital improvements.

Other Outreach

In addition to the direct outreach opportunities noted above, the Las Cruces community was informed about the planning process through a variety of venues. The following methods were used to alert residents about the project and about opportunities to participate and offer their input and comments. News articles and sample promotional material are located in Appendix E.

General Public Notification - Newspaper Notices and Information

Three formal newspaper advertisements were placed in local papers during the two weeks prior to the community meeting series. Public information notices in the newspapers provided additional notification and outreach. Also, an article highlighting the Park and Recreation Master Plan Update project was prepared by Reyes Mata III, entitled “Public Input Sought on Plans for Las Cruces Parks” which was published on July 20, 2011. A list of these notices is as follows:

- July 15, 2011 – City Advertisement – Las Cruces Bulletin
- July 19, 2011 – Notice in “Community Notices” – Las Cruces Sun-News
- July 20, 2011 - Article by Reyes Mata III, “*Public Input Sought on Plans for Las Cruces Parks*” – Las Cruces Sun-News
- July 22, 2011 –Notice in the “Coming Up” section – Las Cruces Bulletin
- July 23, 2011 – City Advertisement – Las Cruces Sun-News
- July 24, 2011 – City Advertisement – Las Cruces Sun-News

Master Plan Update Flyer

The City of Las Cruces also prepared a color flyer with information about the six community meetings. The flyer was published on July 15, 2011 and was distributed as a poster or with copies available to the public in the following locations:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ■ Las Cruces City Hall | ■ Meerscheidt Recreation Center |
| ■ East Mesa Recreation Center | ■ Branigan Memorial Library |
| ■ East Mesa Pool | ■ Frenger Pool |
| ■ Mesilla Park Recreation Center | ■ Las Cruces Regional Aquatic Center |
| ■ Munson Senior Center | ■ City Hall |



Copies of the Flyer were also distributed by City Park and Recreation Staff by e-mail to athletic groups and other community contacts. The Flyer was also made available to the public at each of the six Community Meetings. Additionally, a color slide with information on the community meetings was also run on CLC-TV between July 14-28, 2011.



Community Meetings Outreach - Stakeholders Notification

Initial outreach for the community meeting series began by providing each of the nine stakeholder groups a schedule of the dates, times and locations of each of the six community meetings with an invitation to have them invite representatives from their groups to attend the meetings. This was followed by an email invitation circulated to stakeholder representatives on July 8 and July 15, 2011. In addition, the community meeting flyer prepared by the City was forwarded to the stakeholders on July 18, 2011.



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Chapter 4. Needs Assessment: Administration

Program Area Overview

The Administration division of the Department provides support, leadership and direction for all Park and Recreation sections. Administrative staff manage the overall planning and coordination of daily operations, programs, equipment and budgeting for the Department. This division is responsible for management, professional development, resource management, volunteer and non-profit youth sport associations support and the annual departmental work plan. Additional support is provided through City Administration and the Community Development, Legal and Finance departments. Marketing efforts including the departmental webpage and seasonal recreation program brochures are led by Administrative staff and coordinated through the Information Technology department and the Public Information Office.

Since the completion of the 2005 Master Plan, the City has been honored with recognitions from several national publications and organizations. The following examples illustrate the importance and relevance of parks and recreation services in the overall quality of life in Las Cruces.

- One of AARP's 2010 "Best Places to Retire" – Previously selected by AARP Magazine as one of America's "Dream Towns" for seniors, Las Cruces is set at the foot of the Organ Mountains and enjoys a relatively mild climate and picturesque landscape. Although it is New Mexico's second most populous city, residents describe the small-town feel, relaxed pace and affordable prices.
- One of Kaboom.org's most "Playful City USA" (2009, 2010 & 2011) – Playful City USA is a national recognition program honoring cities and towns across the nation committed to taking action for play.
- One of AARP's 2006 "Dream Towns" to Retire – Las Cruces topped AARP's first list of great places to retire based on factors such as: the cheapest states to live in as a retiree (based on income, property, and sales taxes), weather, recreational opportunities and livability (access to health care and transportation).

Staff

The Administration division currently has 7 full-time staff positions (1 of which is vacant) and 2 part-time employees, who provide clerical support. The following positions exist within the Administration division.

- Director – responsible for the direction, operation and overall success of Park & Recreation services to the City of Las Cruces; Works closely with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.
- Executive Administrative Assistant – responsible for clerical support of the director and coordination of other clerical functions.
- Clerical Staff – responsible for clerical support of all P&R functions and customer service interactions.



- Reservations – responsible for special use reservations of all park, recreation and special events; collects fees; communicates reservations to appropriate departmental divisions; schedules additional staffing as needed to support reservations.
- Landscape/Horticulture – responsible for plant material growth, planning, installation and overall health and care.
- Analyst – responsible for improvement of section efficiencies; tracks budgets and expenditures, collects and analyses data to determine ROI and recommends programmatic changes.

Budget

The overall budget for the Park & Recreation Department is \$9,290,669 for fiscal year 2011/2012. The budget for the Administration division is \$1,102,519 (12% of departmental budget), of which salaries and benefits comprise \$467,460 (42%) of expenses. Revenues are expected to be \$847,000 from facility and program fees, advertising and the gift and memorial program. Projected revenues were decreased by 21% from the previous fiscal year in an effort to better align the revenue projections with actual collection of revenues.

Community Feedback

As was noted in the Community Engagement chapter, a statistically-valid survey was conducted in Spring 2011, in addition to numerous stakeholder discussions and other outreach. The community comments and feedback from the public participation program that are geared toward specific divisions and service areas of the Department appear in subsequent chapters of this Master Plan. The following responses are reflective of the broader Parks and Recreation Department or represent issues appropriate to the Administration division.

- Overall, household sentiment indicates modest satisfaction with the perceived value received from the Parks and Recreation Department. Only a slight majority are satisfied (16% very satisfied and 36% somewhat satisfied), with over one-third of survey respondents (24% neutral and 11% don't know) having little or no opinion on the value proposition of the Department. When combined with other survey responses, these perceptions may be significantly improved through more direct and explicit communication from the Department about services and opportunities and with facility upgrades.
- A high degree of park use exists in the community, with approximately four out of five (81%) of households having visited a City park in past 12 months.
- Participation in recreation programs is low, with 21% of survey respondents indicating that they participated in recreation activities offered by the City. The lack of knowledge about program offerings was the most cited (24%) reason preventing households from using parks, trails, recreation facilities or programs.
- Most frequently mentioned ways that households learn about Parks and Recreation Department programs and activities are as follows:
 - Newspaper articles (57%)
 - From friends and neighbors (47%)
 - Newspaper advertisements (37%)
 - Radio (25%)



- With regard to specific park and recreation infrastructure, sixty-five percent (65%) of survey respondents said they had a need for walking and biking trails and, in addition, noted the need for access to small neighborhood parks with basic amenities such as play equipment and picnic tables.

Regarding overall enhancements to the City’s parks and recreation system, survey respondents indicated the following a core needs:

- o Walking & Biking Trails
- o Small Neighborhood Parks
- o Distributed Parks to Serve Neighborhoods
- o Picnic Areas, Shelters & Shaded Areas
- o Updated & Expanded Facilities
- o Adult Fitness & Wellness Programs
- o Enhanced Communication & Promotional Materials

In addition to having more need for recreation infrastructure, residents also may be more willing to pay for certain types of improvements.

- When asked to allocate \$100 among a list of different parks and recreation enhancements, over one-third of the money (\$36) was directed toward maintenance and improvements of existing facilities. Almost evenly split was public interest in securing new lands for parks and trails (\$29) with constructing facilities for active recreation (\$30). This data, in addition to responses regarding park amenities and recreation facilities, suggests a deep desire for facilities upgrades that will likely drive a future increase in facility use and program participation.

Table 9. Allocation of \$100 on Parks & Recreation Enhancements (Phone Survey)

Parks and recreation facilities	Allocation of funds (Mean)
Improvements/maintenance of existing parks, pools, and recreation facilities	\$36
Development of new indoor facilities (indoor walking track, fitness centers, pool, gyms, etc.)	\$21
Acquisition and development of walking and biking trails	\$18
Acquisition of new park land and open space	\$11
Construction of new sports fields (softball, soccer, baseball, etc.)	\$9
Other	\$5
TOTAL	\$100

Source: Leisure Vision / ETC Institute, August 2011

- Sentiment from the stakeholder discussions mirrored the survey results. Stakeholders were quick to mention their desires for facility enhancements and the need to “maintain what you have” in many cases before expanding the system. However, these remarks were balanced with the recognition that the City can and should do more to secure new parklands and build new facilities for resident of the East Mesa, in addition to focusing on economic development drivers such as improved accommodations for tournaments and special events.



- Over one-half (64%) of respondents indicated that they would be willing to pay at least \$10-\$19 per year in additional property taxes to build and operate the types of parks, trails, aquatics, sports and recreation facilities most important to their household.
- Fifty-nine percent (59%) of respondents indicated that they would either “vote in favor” (37%) or “might vote in favor” (22%) if an election were held for a bond issue to be used only for open space and parkland acquisition, construction of amenities and trails development in Las Cruces.

Other common themes from both the stakeholder discussions and the public meeting series related to the overall efforts and activities of the Department include the following:

- Provide website that offers more information on facilities, amenities and programs.
- Coordinate with the neighborhood associations more.
- Develop a “Welcome” newcomers program; Externalize the “Know your City” program.
- Focus on long-term, stable funding; Consider a Quality of Life Tax as a 1/8 cent to 1/2 cent GRT tax.
- Create a “Friends of Parks” benefactors program.
- Put the event permitting process online.
- Provide balance and equity in maintenance efforts; Monitor facility use to create metrics for new facilities and funding.

Recreation Trends

The trend in park and recreation management is toward outcome-based management, reflecting the effect on quality of life of those who participate or benefit from parks and recreation opportunities. Outcome-based management is useful in establishing the benefit to the community and to individuals¹. The level of subsidy for programs has been declining and more “enterprise” activities are being developed, thereby allowing the subsidy to be used where deemed appropriate. Agencies across the United States are increasing revenue production and cost recovery. Pricing is often done by peak, off-peak and off-season rates. More agencies are often structured into service divisions for athletics, seniors, facilities, parks, planning, and the like rather than by geographic unit, and they are partnering with private, public, and non-profit groups.

Park and Recreation professionals face many challenges including:

- Doing more with less, requiring partnership development
- Partnering between non-profit and public forms of service
- Increasing the quality and diversity of services
- Moving toward a more business-like model while not competing with the private sector
- Increasing parks and open space versus decreasing ability to maintain it
- Providing support for the socially and economically disadvantaged through programs in areas such as childcare, nutrition, etc
- Increasing responsibility for measurement and evaluation (van der Smissen et al.)

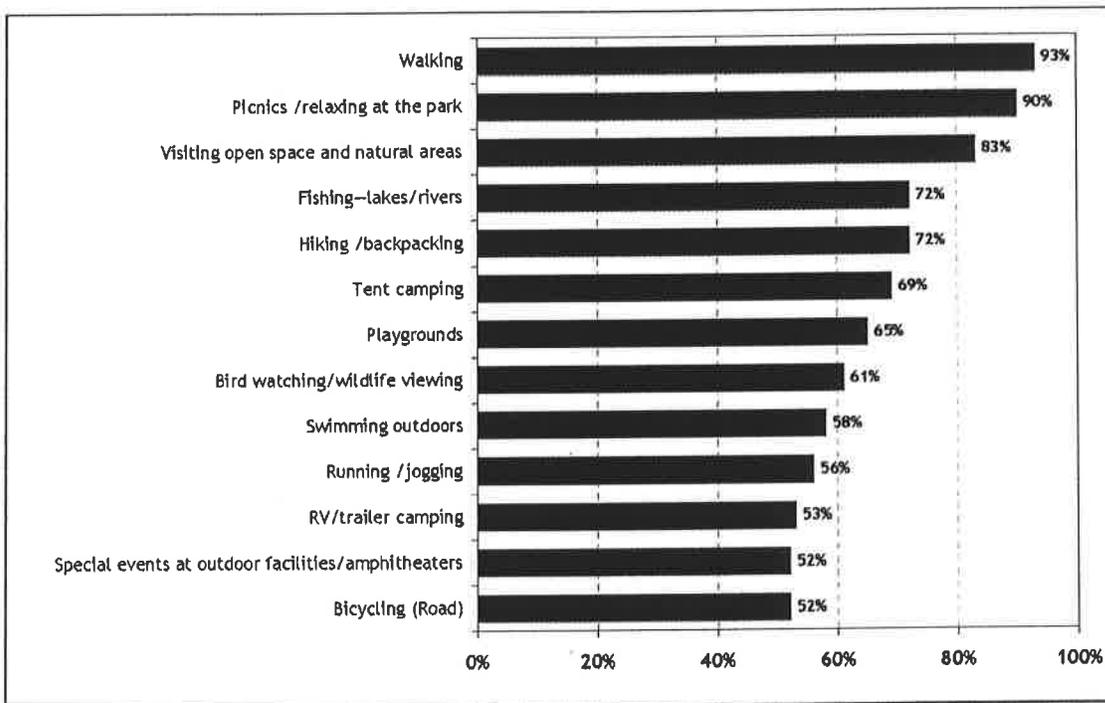
¹ Van der Smissen



New Mexico SCORP

The 2010 New Mexico State Park Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning (SCORP) document guides decision-makers in better understanding statewide recreation issues and is required to help maintain New Mexico's eligibility for federal Land and Water Conservation Fund dollars. In the last 40 years, New Mexico has leveraged and invested over \$80 million in outdoor recreation from LWCF program funds and grant match from state, local and tribal governments - with every county in the state benefiting from LWCF funding since 1965. The SCORP included a listing of outdoor activities by frequency, as shown below in Table 8. Broad similarities exist between the most popular statewide activities and those documented in the Las Cruces community survey, such as the popularity of walking/hiking, nature activity and picnicking.

Table 10. Popular Outdoor Activities from 2010 NM SCORP



Through a community survey conducted as part of the SCORP update process, responses were segmented based on the unique needs of the four quadrants of the state. In the Southwest Service Area, the following needs were identified:

- Aspects of Outdoor Recreation in New Mexico Most in Need of Improvement:**
 Restroom availability and maintenance was ranked as the single highest priority in need of improvement in the Southwest service area (43%), consistent with the other service areas. Mentioned more often compared to the other service areas, however, was overall maintenance of parks (40% - much greater compared to the other areas), trail maintenance (39% - also a much greater response), quality and maintenance of open space/natural areas (24%), and customer service of staff (20%).



- **Activities/Facilities/Amenities Most in Need of Addition, Expansion or Improvement:** Similar to the statewide response, fishing on lakes and rivers was the top response for expansion/improvement in the Southwest (42%), followed by walking (29%), playgrounds (27% - more than any service area), hunting (20%), and road biking (20% - more than any service area).
- **Most Important Trails and Open Space Facilities/Amenities:** Consistent with the other service areas, preserving wildlife habitat was considered most important (47%), followed by protecting rivers/arroyos/wetlands (39% - one of the strongest responses), preserving cultural and historic land uses (38%), and improving trail connectivity between towns and neighborhoods (22% - slightly greater response than the other service areas). Respondents from the Southwest were also more likely, compared to the other service areas, to mention building more paved trails (17%).

The SCORP also noted five core trends impacting outdoor recreation:

- Health and Obesity
- Need for Diverse Recreation Opportunities
- Urban and Rural Recreation
- Growing Support for Outdoor Recreation
- Diminished Connection to Nature

National Recreation Data

Additionally, three recent recreation studies were reviewed to compare to the local, community data and gain an understanding of participation trends occurring at the national level. These studies included:

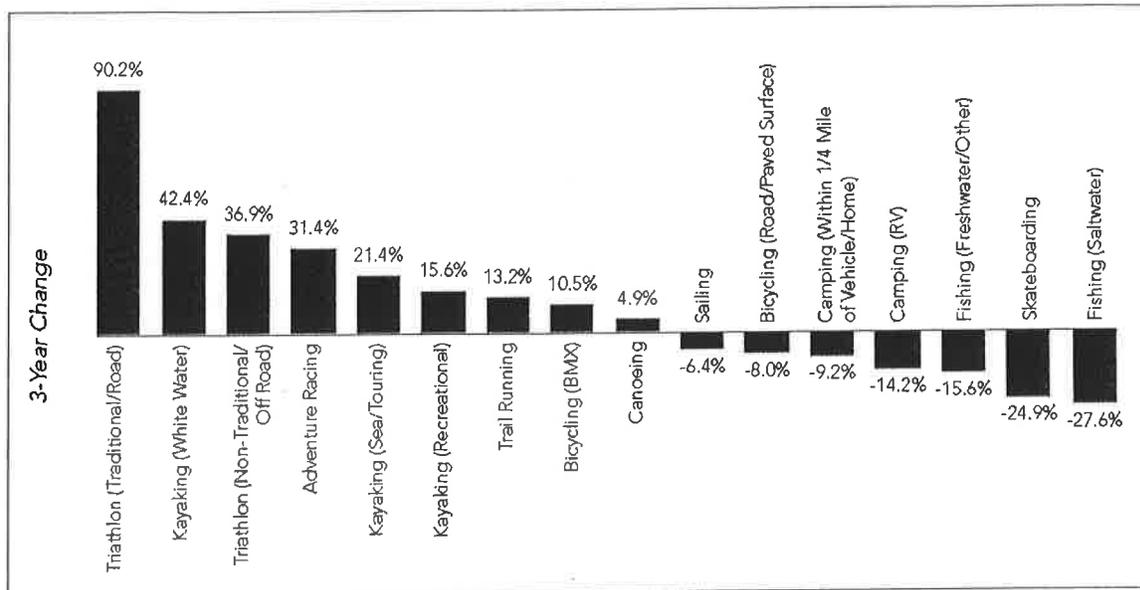
- 2010 Sports Participation Survey; National Sporting Goods Association
- 2011 Outdoor Recreation Participation Report; The Outdoor Foundation
- 2010 State of the Managed Recreation Industry Report; Recreation Management Magazine
- Outdoor Recreation Participation in 2003; The Recreation Roundtable

These sources also supported hiking and walking as the most popular form of outdoor recreation. Additionally, bicycling, swimming, fishing and camping consistently appeared in the list of top ten activities.

The Outdoor Foundation's Participation Report also noted 3-year trend data showing the change in participation among youth in a number activities, as shown in the following chart.



Table 11. 3-Year Change in Outdoor Recreation Participation of Youth (6-24)



Recreation Management magazine's 2011 State of the Industry Report listed the top 10 program options most commonly planned for addition over the next three years, along with their positions in last year's top 10 programs:

1. Fitness programs, including cardio, strength, aerobics, etc. (2)
2. Teen programs (6)
3. Educational programs (1)
4. Mind-body/balance programs like yoga, tai chi, pilates and martial arts (3)
5. Active older adults programming (7)
6. Day camps and summer camps (3)
7. Environmental education (10)
8. Individual sports activities like running clubs, swim club, etc.
9. Adults sports teams (7)
10. Sports tournaments and races (10)

The same report identified the most popular recreation amenities planning to be added in the next three years:

1. Park structures, such as shelters, sun structures and restrooms
2. Splash play areas
3. Trails
4. Playgrounds
5. Synthetic turf sports fields
6. Bleachers and seating
7. Fitness center, with weight and cardio equipment



8. Dog park
9. Open spaces, including gardens or natural areas
10. Concession areas

The American College of Sports Medicine's Health and Fitness Journal recently published summary results from its annual survey assessing health and fitness programming trends. The Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends for 2011 identified their top ten fitness trends predicted for 2011:

1. Educated and experienced fitness professionals
2. Fitness programs for older adults
3. Strength training
4. Children and obesity
5. Personal training
6. Core training
7. Exercise and weight loss
8. Boot camp
9. Functional fitness
10. Physician referrals

Management Considerations

The following considerations impact the entire Department and can be best addressed at the Administration level of the organization.

Departmental Communications

Through discussions with stakeholders and from the information gathered through the survey, the issues of communication, visibility and brand identity were frequently cited. For example, survey respondents were not aware of programs and facilities; twenty-four (24%) did not know the programs offered, and twelve (12%) did not know the location of parks in the City. While the data do not specify the reason for this disinformation, it does reinforce the need for more focused or direct marketing and branding efforts to improve public understanding.

To broaden the public awareness, the website should be expanded to facilitate quick links to popular activities or topics and also be redesigned with mobile internet users (iPhone, Android, etc) in mind. This includes posting park system and trail maps to enhance the experience of the on-the-go user. In developing new materials, the City should prepare visually attractive materials (print and electronic) that have consistency of graphic style and theme. Additionally, the City should consider expanding the use of email marketing with periodic e-newsletters and developing a social media presence.

Also, the City should consider acting as the local hub of information about recreation, programs, events and activities in the community. This may include information about the benefits of active lifestyles and available recreation resources, but it may also include information about high school sports, special recreation program offerings and other general fitness or health information. The City should continue to strengthen its partnerships with local businesses, sport



leagues, NMSU, the school district and the Chambers of Commerce to facilitate the promotion and distribution of this information to the community. The City should consider inviting groups or businesses to present to staff and/or city commissions about local services, health trends and opportunities in an effort to expand awareness of services and to encourage and promote opportunities to cross-market programs and events.

Special Event Permitting and Facility Rental

As was noted during several stakeholder discussions, the existing special events permitting process is problematic for hosts/vendors. At the present, the permit requests are routed between City departments and divisions, with the requestor responsible for tracking and follow-up. The City should consider establishing a coordinated process for event sponsors to obtain permits, whereby Parks & Recreation staff act as the clearinghouse for event permits and track all internal coordination in support of a completed permit. A revised permit process should also track all associated permits necessary for the event and include the business registration as part of the event permit. The Department should also consider creating a multi-year or carry-over permit program for annual events and create a City wide calendar listing all special events and functions. Developing an online event/concession application and tracking process should be included as well.

Budgeting & Division Performance

As a frontline provider of direct City services, the Department should explore the potential to initiate performance-based or enterprise oriented budgeting.

Unlike the traditional line-item budget system that allocates resources based on organizational units and line item expenses, Performance Based Budgeting allocates resources based on service performance; both planned and actual performance are measured in terms of service effectiveness and efficiency. Funds can be shifted by the program manager to those areas that provide the greatest return toward meeting the desired outcomes. This flexibility allows responsiveness to changing service needs or unanticipated demands, providing a data driven mechanism to direct government decisions or actions to prioritize services and allocate funding on the basis of in-depth programmatic and financial analysis.

The use of enterprise oriented budgeting provides a greater degree of flexibility and control by the section manager to adjust services to enhance net revenues. In essence, a division working within an enterprise fund is isolated from broader budget impacts, but must also raise sufficient revenue to at least break even with expenses. One limitation of an enterprise arrangement is that it tends to create internal tensions around coordination and competition due to the need to maximize revenue.



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Chapter 5. Needs Assessment: Recreation Programs

Program Area Overview

The purpose of the Recreation division is to promote healthy lifestyles through high-quality, organized group programs and individual leisure activities for residents. Aquatic, athletic and other recreational programming activities are available at recreation facilities throughout Las Cruces. Program registrations are coordinated manually through the recreation centers. The CLASS recreation management software program is used for program scheduling and includes the point of sale module. At the present, online registrations cannot be accepted. The Recreation division offers programs, activities and services in 3 major programming categories as shown below.

Table 12. Recreation Programming Categories

Recreation	Aquatics	Athletics
Community Special Events	Swim teams/lap swim	Adult Sports
Summer Recreation	Water recreation	Youth Sports
Youth After School	Swim classes	Running Events
Therapeutics	Water Exercise/sport	
Fitness	Water Safety/Lifeguarding	
Special Camps		
Teens		
Youth classes		
Pre-school		
Employee Wellness		

Seniors are often very active in recreation programs, and the ways in which they participate in and are engaged with athletics, aquatics and recreation programming will be included in this plan. As a City division, Senior Programs is responsible for senior activities and services, and the division is housed within the Public Services Department and will not be addressed in this Plan.

Budget

The three programming categories that comprise the Recreation division have an annual, combined budget of \$3,721,058 in FY 11/12. Due to the recent re-organization of Department and this division, long-term budget comparisons are not available. As compared to the previous fiscal year, the division witnessed a 8% reduction (-\$833,500) in budget. Additionally, revenue projections from programs and facilities was lowered by 21% to better reflect actual revenue collected during the past fiscal year.



Recreation Services Cost Recovery

Cost recovery goals are set by City Council. The targeted cost recovery bottom line for recreation programs is 85-100% of direct costs², 33% for Aquatics, 85% for Youth (not to go below 75%) and 100% recovery for Adult programs and Special Recreation Programs. For Special Recreation Programs, cost recovery funds are intended to be utilized for the introduction of new programs, classes and special events. There is no stated goal for facility operations and indirect costs.

Table 13. Cost Recovery Categories

Category	Recovery Goal	Examples
Minimal Cost Recovery	0 - 20% of direct cost	Therapeutic Activities Summer Recreation
Partial Cost Recovery	≥ 85% of direct costs	Teen Dances Youth Classes Youth Athletics
Full Cost Recovery	100% of direct costs	Adult Recreation Adult Classes Adult Athletics
Special Recreation Programs	100% of direct costs	

The Parks and Recreation Section Fees and Charges / Facility Use Policy is adopted annually by Council and establishes the price or fee for classes by type. The Department should continue to re-examine periodically its fees and charges in line with these cost recovery goals, while balancing community demographics, program's benefits and its mission of service.

Recreation Trends

The current national trend is toward a "one-stop" recreation facility to serve all ages. Large, multi-purpose regional centers help increase cost recovery, promote customer retention and encourage cross-use of the facility by other City departments and community groups. Amenities that are becoming common in large multi-purpose regional centers (65,000 to 125,000+ sq. ft.) include:

- Gymnasium space
- Indoor walking tracks
- Leisure and therapeutic pools
- Weight and cardiovascular equipment
- Outdoor recreation and education centers
- Interactive game rooms
- Playgrounds
- Community, event or party rooms

² Direct costs include the following items directly tied to the provision of a program or activity: instructor/leader, supplies, materials, building rental, advertising, etc



Sports and Health Trends

Highlights from the 2010 National Sporting Goods Association participation survey include:

- Yoga participation led the overall growth in recreation participation with a 28% increase to 20.1 million participants.
- Exercise walking was the number one recreation activity with 95.8 million participants and grew 2.6% in 2010.
- Among fitness activities, weight lifting, work out at club and exercising with equipment witnessed participation declines (8.8%, 5.3% & 3.4%, respectively).
- Among team sports, several saw significant declines between 2006 and 2010, including baseball (-14%), tackle football (-22%), Softball (-13%) and volleyball (-5%). Soccer and basketball participation have remained relatively unchanged.
- Female participation in team sports has also been decreasing since 2006. In each of the major team sports, overall female participation and the relative percentage of female players by sport have decreased: baseball (-19%), basketball (-24%), soccer (-16%), softball (-32%) and volleyball (-14%).
- Other sports and recreation activities showing less than 3% growth in 2010 include target shooting (+0.3% to 19.8 million participants); exercise walking (+2.6% to 95.8 million participants); and fishing (+2.8% to 33.8 million participants).

Overall, team sports continue to experience an overall trend of declining participation.



Recreation Programs

The Recreation Programs segment oversees a range of recreation programs offered by the City, including community special events, therapeutics, fitness, special camps, teens, youth classes, pre-school and senior (50+) recreation programs. Therapeutic Recreation assists adults, youth, and children with and without disabilities in using their leisure time to enhance their physical, social, emotional, intellectual and artistic abilities by providing a wide variety of activities throughout the community.

Recreation Programs has seen an increase in the number of participants and the number of activities being offered. The recent influx can be attributed to three key components: philosophy, customer service and cost. By focusing on programming and shifting away from facility monitoring, staff has been allowed to showcase areas of expertise and provide a wider range of activities to the community. Recently, recreation programming staff received certification in many fitness areas, which will allow for more opportunities for customers. Additionally, the Therapeutic Program won the Community Involvement Award in 2007 awarded by the NM Governor's Commission on Disability.

The Recreation Programs segment has established partnerships with NMSU, State of New Mexico Department of Health, Southern New Mexico Diabetes Coalition, Ciclovía, NMSU Extension Services, Las Cruces Public Schools, Department of Transportation, Wal-Mart, Roberto's, Kohl's, Pepsi, Weaver's Welding and Friends groups, in addition to in-house partnerships with Police, Fire, Finance, Utilities, Human Resources and the Animal Shelter. These partnerships have financial and promotional benefits. Other partnerships that may be developed include the private sector, to include beverage corporations, military, government contractors and the health industry.

Budget

The Recreation Programs budget for FY 11/12 is \$1,021,080, which represents a 14% reduction from the prior year. Until recently, actual expenditures in the Recreation Program segment have increased minimally over the past three years, while attendance and programming needs have increased considerably. To help address this reality, the Department is undergoing a reorganization and is changing its focus from facility coverage to that of programming for better utilization of personnel and increase efficiency and productivity.

The Recreation Programs section currently produces an estimated \$70,000.00 in revenue annually that goes to the overall General Fund and not specifically toward offsetting the Recreation Programs budget expenditures. A review of the revenue data shows that cost recovery goals are being met in some categories. In order to reach these goals in the future the following strategies may be considered for implementation.

The Recreation Programs section should continue to evaluate new programming opportunities with an emphasis on community needs, cost recovery metrics and return on investment. Each program, class and activity is reviewed annually to ensure attendance trends are up and that facility availability and funding are available prior to program initiation.

Staff

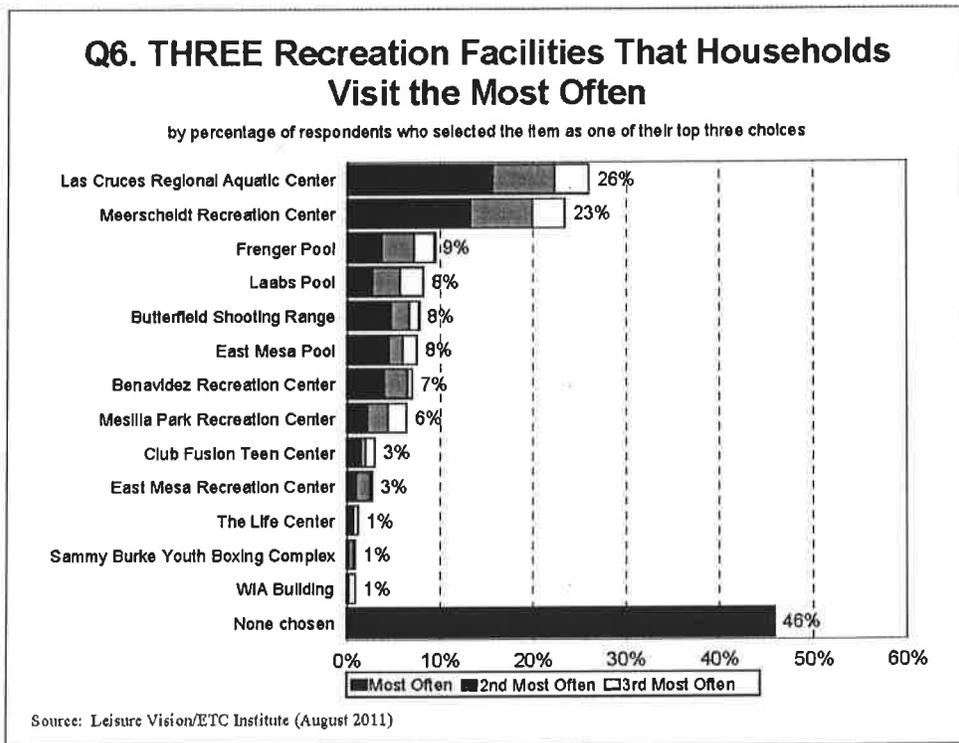
The Recreation Section is supported by many contracted instructional and seasonal positions. The Recreation Programs segment currently has 10 full-time positions (including 1 vacant),



which includes 1 Recreation Programs Manager, 2 Recreation Supervisors and 7 Recreation Service Leader Seniors. Recreation Programs also has 16 part-time positions for 2 Recreation Service Leader Seniors, 6 After-School Lead Supervisors and 8 After-School Leads. The Recreation Programs segment also budgets for 14 part-time seasonal workers who assist with the summer recreation. Staff levels are trending down based on economic factors, and current staff levels are low according to the national average.

Community Feedback

In looking at the visitation of recreation facilities by Las Cruces households, the highest percentage of households indicated the Las Cruces Regional Aquatic Center (31%) as a recreation facility their household has used or visited over the past 12 months. The second most frequently mentioned recreation facility was the Meerscheidt Recreation Center (28%). Based on the sum of their top three choices, the recreation facilities households indicated that they visited the most often include: Las Cruces Regional Aquatic Center (26%) and Meerscheidt Recreation Center (23%).



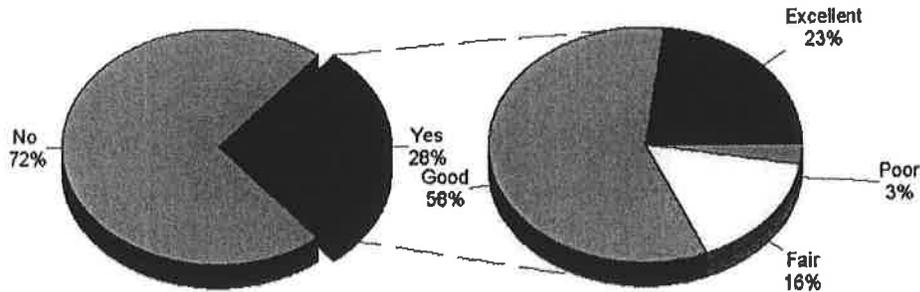
Regarding participation in recreation programs, twenty-eight percent (28%) of respondents indicated that household member(s) participated in programs offered by the City. Of this 28%, a strong plurality (81%) indicated that they would rate the overall quality of the recreation programs as either “excellent” (23%) or “good” (58%).



Q7. Whether Respondent Households Participated In Any Recreation Programs Offered by the City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department

by percentage of respondents (excluding "don't know" responses)

Q7a. How Would You Rate the Overall Quality of the Recreation Programs You and Members of Your Household Have Participated In?



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (August 2011)

Adult fitness and wellness programs (41%), programs for adults 50 years and older (33%), and adult water fitness programs (32%).

Participation in and need for sports and recreation programs was asked in the community survey. The highest rated programs that households deemed as most important include were programs for adults 50 years and older (42%) and adult fitness and wellness programs (41%). The sports and recreation programs that households indicated that they participate in most often include youth sports programs (43%) and adult fitness and wellness programs (37%).

Additionally, comments about recreation programs and facilities were frequent during the stakeholder discussions and public meetings. Community interest exists for the following recreation program issues:

- Offer classes early and late, before and after work (after 6:00 pm and before 7:00 am). Most classes are now during the day.
- Consider using a single recreation card (pass) common fee for access to all facilities.
- Continue to gear activities to youth for overall community improvement including facilities and programs, sports and arts. Connect with the 11-13 year old age group.
- Offer more water aerobics, zumba, yoga, tai chi.
- Offer more or expand fun runs/races.

The community also voiced their interest in enhancements to recreation centers and facilities, including the following:

- Provide additional indoor gym space; Meerscheidt is not enough.
- Build a new "Hadley/Meerscheidt type center in the East Mesa Area.



- The Benavidez Community Center has ample property to build upon and should be expanded; Use the Benavidez site for a “Meerscheidt” type center.
- Consider improvements at Mesilla Park Community Center to include a dedicated kitchen and dining room; Expand the Eastside Community Center and parking.
- Improve coordination with Tennis Association to help with maintenance at Lions Tennis Court Complex.

Specific to senior customers, the following outlines common remarks:

- There is a need for another dedicated senior center like Munson with morning and afternoon use where people come participate in activities and stay for the lunch.
- Provide more cultural events are needed during the day including plays, artistic events and theatre to be held at the Munson or other community centers.
- Consider intergenerational programs for grandparents and grandchildren.
- Provide more lap swimming, hikes, dance, exercise programs, aquatics and painting courses.
- Coordinate for dedicated bus transportation for seniors; there are not enough Dial-a Ride.
- Provide more programs geared to particular age groups, 85+, 70’s, and 50’s - 60’s.

Management Considerations

As noted above, the division should continue to stay abreast of its program offerings and recreation trends, as well as re-evaluate programs based on participation and cost recovery. Additionally, the division should work within the overall Department to prioritize facility upgrades or amenities to enhance customer retention.

The division should also consider bringing more programming out to the parks and activating the City’s parks with programs and outdoor classes. This will help to cross-pollinate recreation customers with the offerings of the Parks division and improve overall community awareness of recreational opportunities within Las Cruces. In planning for new or updated programs, staff should consider emphasizing cross-programming and multiple benefits opportunities to connect with other divisions of the Department. Recreation programs can provide users with a variety of experiences. For example, a program can provides an environmental experience can also provide a fitness opportunity, thereby achieving multiple benefits.

With the steady rise in participation in self-guided recreation, staff should consider opportunities to further promote activities, such self-guided nature walks, geocaching with environmental curriculum or fitness trails with signage at strategic points.

Aquatic Programs

The Aquatic Programs segment oversees the aquatic programs offered at various indoor and outdoor locations. Indoor facilities include Frenger Pool and the newly opened Las Cruces Regional Aquatic Center. Outdoor facilities include Laabs Pool, East Mesa Bataan Memorial Pool and Apodaca Pool (*closed*). Aquatic Programs services include swim teams, lap swimming, water recreation, swim classes, water exercise/sport and water safety training/life guarding. Significant changes have occurred within this segment since the 2005 Master Plan, with the



construction of new facilities and a renewed focus to offer aquatic programs that are inexpensive and create a safe and fun environment for all ages.

The Aquatic Programs section has seen increased participation in recent years that is attributable to extended facility hours and the opening of the new Regional Aquatic Center. Aquatic programs has a goal of generating \$350,000 per year, with an orientation toward offering a variety of classes that are trending, inexpensive and available for all ages; marketing and partnering with community groups; and enhancing revenue through expanded programming. Other partnerships that may be developed include collaborations with New Mexico State University and White Sands for shared staffing and consistency in lifeguard training programs.

Budget

The Aquatic Programs annual budget has remained relatively unchanged between FY 10/11 and FY 11/12. The total segment budget is \$2,060,000, which represents a 3% decrease from the prior year. The Aquatic Programs section currently produces \$350,000 in revenues annually that are utilized to directly offset a portion of the operational costs associated with Aquatic programs.

Staff

The Aquatic Programs segment currently has 15 full-time positions (7 of which are vacant), including 1 Recreation Services Manager, 1 Aquatics Supervisor, 4 Lifeguard/Instructors, 2 Custodians, 2 Pool Maintenance Workers, 4 Site Attendant Cashiers and 1 Office Manager. Aquatic Programs also has 56 part-time positions with 8 Cashiers and 48 Lifeguards, along with 13 part-time, seasonal lifeguards. Staff levels have trended up based upon staffing the Aquatic Center, overall attendance rates and training factors.

Community Feedback

As was noted in the previous section, the single most visited facility in the past year was the Aquatic Center, in part due to its grand opening. In looking at overall usage of recreation facilities, the City's aquatic venues ranked in the second tier of an aggregate of the most visited facilities. The Aquatic Center ranked 4th overall at 14%, with outdoor pools ranking 7th at 10%. Frenger Pool was not specifically identified in the list of choices.

In addition to survey responses, a stakeholder discussion was held specifically with aquatics facility users and program representatives. Their comments follow.

- Many do not know how to swim in Las Cruces. There is a great need for aquatics facilities and programs. The demand is so high that selection for the swim classes is by lottery. Swim lessons are currently limited to City-sponsored classes only. Swim clubs could also provide these classes as a lifeline for the City, as well as increase the number of residents having access to the swim lessons.
- The new Regional Aquatics Center is not really an 'aquatics center' as it lacks the Olympic size (50-meter) pool and associated amenities that go with it. An Olympic size/50-meter pool is needed as it would increase the opportunity for people to return to the water from childhood to senior age. Without the 50-meter pool, the City cannot hold the types of events that would generate the revenues both from the pool use, but from tourism (hotel and restaurant use).



- Senior water aerobics did not transfer well from Frenger Pool. The Aquatic Center cannot accommodate the demand for aerobics in only the therapeutic pool.

Other comments included:

- Frenger Pool is needed for lap swim and teams, but its future is tenuous.
- Expand aquatic exercise programs.
- The requirement to have lifeguards for swim clubs has increased expenses unnecessarily.
- The Apodaca Pool could be repaired and used by a swim club, but in order for the costs to work, the pool would need to be gifted.
- Provide zero-depth splash pads or water play areas.

Additionally, residents attending the community meetings also remarked on the desire for enhancements within the aquatics program area.

- The number and hours of existing facilities are limited for certain activities, such as team practices. The new LAABS pool is mostly a playground and does not alleviate pool demand.
- The attempts of painting on top of old paint for the pool deck at Frenger Pool has not worked. Swim clubs now expect that it is shutdown two months each year.
- Doggy Days was a fun activity at the end of summer.
- Consider adding solar heating for City pools.
- Consider providing dedicated pool (or pool time) for seniors at the Aquatic Center. A good time would be 6:30 to 8:30 a.m. for Senior Aquatic use.

Management Considerations

The core challenge for the Aquatic Programs segment is that of facilities. Community comments were fairly direct about the availability and quality of pools. With the guidance of the Department administration, Aquatics should seek funding to expand the Aquatic Center to include the 50-meter lap pool. Once built, this facility can become a revenue driver from teams, tournaments and other programming. Furthermore, significant improvements should be made at Frenger Pool to refurbish this facility and minimize future maintenance closures that affect programming and usage. The City should also consider replacing the Apodaca Pool with a large splash pad, which will take advantage of the existing mechanical infrastructure to reduce the initial development cost for the conversion.

Additionally, the Aquatic Programs segment should seek ways to expand swim lessons and classes to accommodate the significant demand for these programs. Expanding lessons will help the segment maintain and increase revenues. Partnerships with NMSU and local swim teams should be pursued to aid in the expansion of programs.

Athletic Programs

The Athletic Programs segment oversees the athletic programs offered by the Department and includes youth sports, adult sports, youth and adult fitness classes, City wellness program, summer sports camps (summer recreation) and after school programs. The Athletic Programs segment has experienced remarkable growth in its youth sports programs in the recent past.



Youth leagues have grown by over 60% across the board in the past eight months. Two programs in particular, T-Ball and Youth Basketball, have seen the most growth, adding a combined 750 new participants this past season.

The segment recently re-assessed its league philosophy and aligned it with its mission. As a result, Athletic Programs responded by standardizing all youth programming to consistently offer cost-effective programming with every child in mind regardless of ability or gender. Early results have been extremely positive. A strong emphasis has been placed on sportsmanship, teamwork and fundamentals of the games, which is what parent's have commented that they appreciate the most. The segment will continue to evolve and stay proactive in identifying trends and future community needs and will adjust programming accordingly.

The Athletic Program segment has established partnerships with the NMSU College of Business, NMSU Athletics, NMSU Golf course, Las Cruces Public Schools, Las Cruces Police Department, Las Cruces Fire Department and the City of Las Cruces Wellness program, which have all provided financial or promotional benefits.

Budget

The Athletic Programs annual budget was reduced by over 13% to \$639,211 from the previous FY 10/11, despite strong demand and participation in programmed athletics. Also, the segment produces approximately \$15,000 to \$20,000 in annual revenue that goes to the overall General Fund and not specifically toward offsetting the expenditures for Athletic Programs.

Athletic Programs will continue to evaluate new leagues and programming with an emphasis on community needs and return on investment. Each program and league will be reviewed annually to ensure that attendance trends are up and that facility availability and funding are available prior to program initiation.

Staff

The Athletic Programs segment currently has 10 full-time staff positions including; 1 Recreation Program Manager, 2 Supervisors (athletics and after school), 1 Wellness Coordinator and 6 Senior Recreation Services Leaders. The segment also has 7 part-time positions including 1 Senior Recreation Services Leader, 1 Office Assistant and 5 Scorekeepers, along with 15 part-time, seasonal staff to aid during the year. Staff levels have trended down due to local economic factors.

Management Considerations

Community feedback regarding youth athletics was geared more toward league-sponsored sports and physical facility enhancements. Comments about the City's athletic programs were very few, which can be indicative of strong performance of this segment – especially given the recent growth in participation.

In an effort to grow and mature athletic programs, staff should continue to provide and promote youth sport camps and access to NMSU staff and athletes, while also maintaining a focus on sportsmanship, rules of the game, personal development and exposure to positive team experiences.



Chapter 6. Needs Assessment: Parks & Trails

Program Area Overview

The role of the Parks division is to plan, construct and maintain the City's parks, athletic fields and recreational trails, in addition to maintaining the vast network of road rights-of-way, medians, parkways and gateways. The Parks division segments workload and responsibility into three major categories: Parks Construction & ROW Maintenance, Parks Maintenance and Athletic Fields.

Budget

The three functional segments that comprise the Parks division have an annual, combined budget of \$4,467,093 in FY 11/12. As compared to the previous fiscal year, the division's budget was relatively unchanged with a minor budget increase of 2.4% (+\$97,816). The Parks division has very little cost recovery associated with recreational activities. The local youth leagues and City of Las Cruces recreational programs do not pay for field maintenance, preparation, set up or associated lighting costs. Only the independent, outside vendors who rent park facilities pay the fees outlined by the Fees and Rentals policy. The cost of providing parks maintenance services is absorbed in the Parks division's operating budget, along with maintenance staff assistance for many aspects of the special events held throughout the City.

Recreation Trends

According to the Outdoor Industry Association, 138 million people over the age of 6 participated in at least one outdoor activity in 2010. These activities promote wellness, fitness and a connection to the outdoors and are being led by the Baby Boomer and the millennial generations. With the continued demands of family and work, people are looking for more ways to be active in cities and urban areas. Cities that offer outdoor activities, programs and facilities that are close-to-home and engaging will have a strategic advantage in retaining and attracting active residents.

Aside from the recreational activity and sports participation figures noted earlier in this Plan, a number of organizations and non-profits have noted the overall health and wellness benefits provided by parks, open space and trails. The Trust for Public Land published a report in 2005 called "The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space." This report makes the following observations about the health, economic, environmental, and social benefits of parks and open space.

- Physical activity makes people healthier.
- Physical activity increases with access to parks.
- Contact with the natural world improves physical and physiological health.
- Residential and commercial property values increase.
- Value is added to community and economic development sustainability.
- Benefits of tourism are enhanced.
- Trees are effective in improving air quality and act as natural air conditioners.



- Trees assist with storm water control and erosion.
- Crime and juvenile delinquency are reduced.
- Recreational opportunities for all ages are provided.
- Stable neighborhoods and strong communities are created.

Another significant, recent trend is that of the relationship between child development and access to nature or nature play. Stemming from Richard Louv's book "Last Child in the Woods," a relative network of organizations and agencies have come together to discuss the impacts of nature play and seek funding and partnerships to facilitate ways to connect kids to their local environment. Recent studies show that children are smarter, cooperative, happier and healthier when they have frequent and varied opportunities for free and unstructured play in the out-of-doors, according to the Children & Nature Network, a national non-profit organization working to reconnect children with nature and co-founded by Louv.

Park Construction & ROW Maintenance

The Park Construction & Right-of-Way (ROW) Maintenance segment is responsible for the installation and maintenance of playground structures, maintenance of all play surfaces and repairs to park buildings. The segment is also responsible for the maintenance of trails, medians, parkways and ROW's throughout the City, including landscaping and irrigation installation.

The Parks Construction & ROW Maintenance segment maintains over 500 miles of road right-of-way, medians and parkways, which represents an increase of 100 road miles (+25%) since the 2005 Parks Plan. The segment oversees 3 - 4 new park construction projects and 5 - 6 improvement and renovation projects annually. The Park Construction & ROW Maintenance segment also partners with Keep Las Cruces Beautiful for litter and community beautification service programs. Other possible collaborations could be with New Mexico Game and Fish, Mesilla Valley Shotgun Sports and the Picacho Gun Club for running youth sporting events and programs at the Butterfield Shooting Range.

Budget

The Park Construction & ROW Maintenance budget for FY 11/12 is \$1,782,920, which is flat from the prior year. The budget covers staff, materials and utilities for daily operations and construction projects. This segment does not produce revenue from its operations.

Staff

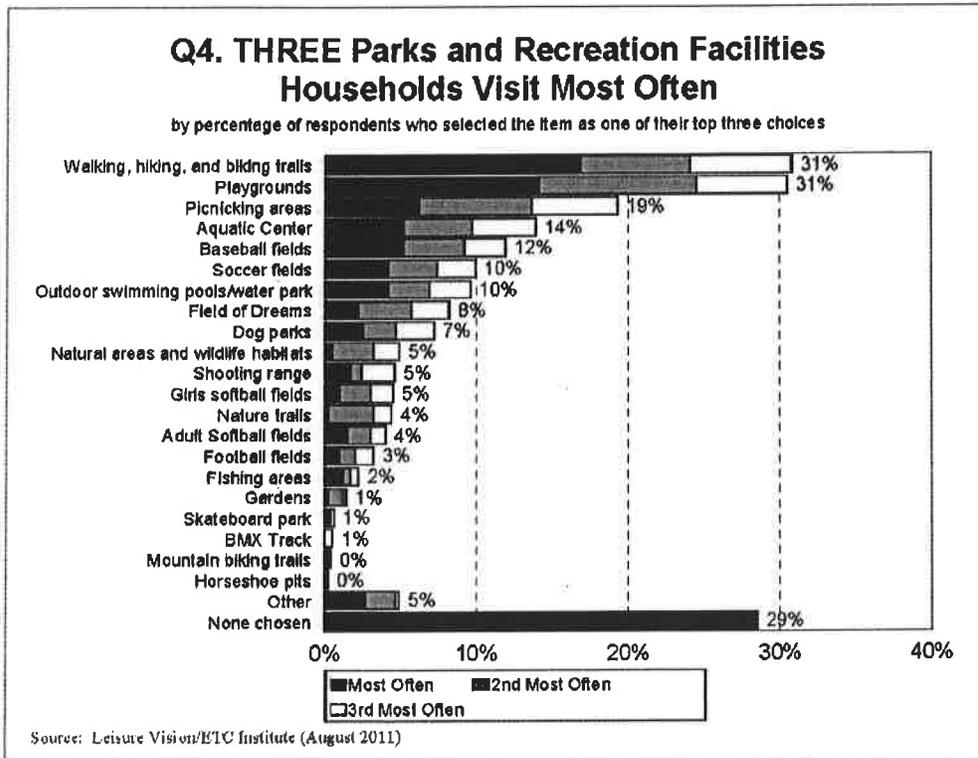
The Park Construction & ROW Maintenance segment currently has 20 full-time staff positions (5 of which are vacant) and includes a Section Manager, Warehouse Specialist, Irrigation Worker, 2 Crew Leaders, 3 Construction Workers, 3 Equipment Operators, 3 Pesticide Applicators, and 6 Park Maintenance Workers. Relative to the miles of ROW maintenance and other duties of this segment, current staffing levels are lower than the national average.



Community Feedback

Based on the community survey, there are four parks and recreation facilities that over 50% of households have a need for: walking and biking trails (65%), small neighborhood parks (63%), picnic areas and shelters (53%), and large community-wide parks (52%).

Also, in looking at survey respondents' remarks about the parks facilities that they use the most and those that they deem the most important, there are strong correlations. The following charts illustrate the responses regarding usage and need.

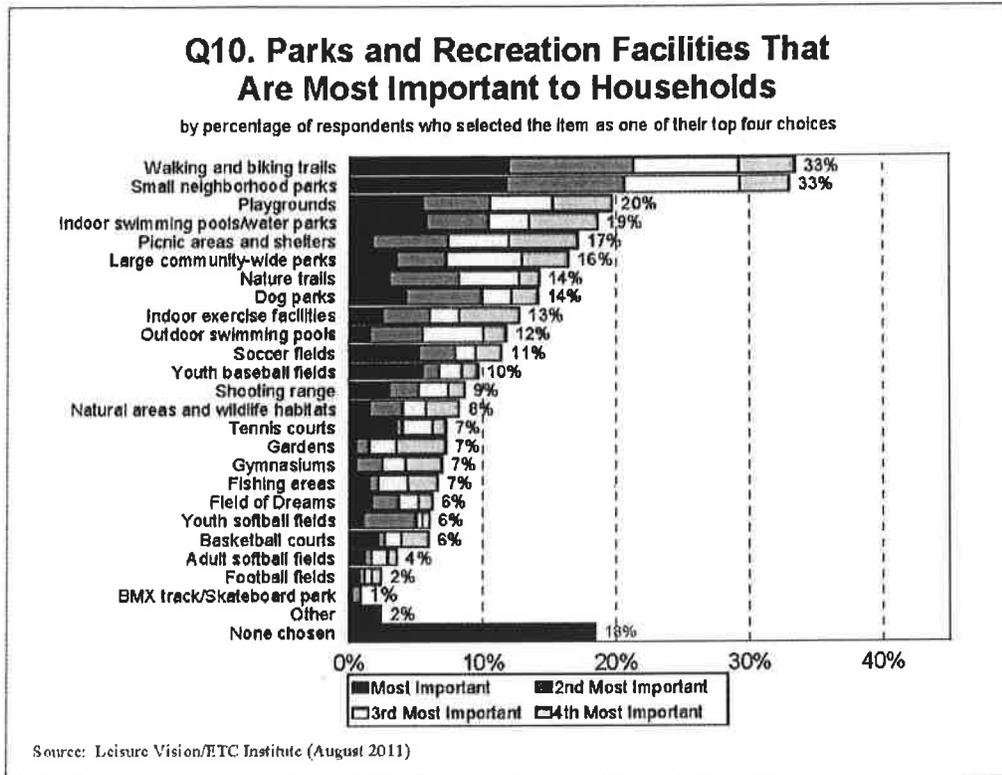


These data also illustrate that there is significant community interest in facilities that enable self-directed recreation. Of the facilities most important to residents, seven of the top ten responses are for facilities that accommodate unprogrammed activities, and include:

- Walking and biking trails
- Small neighborhood parks
- Playgrounds
- Picnic areas and shelters
- Large community-wide parks
- Nature trails
- Dog parks
- Recent interest is growing surrounding special interest groups for facilities relating to Archery, Remote Control cars/trucks and remote control airplanes



In addition to survey responses, stakeholders and residents who participated in the planning process for this Plan had numerous remarks about their needs for, and improvements to, different elements of the City’s parks and trails system.



Securing Parkland

In general, residents voiced interest in the City being more proactive in securing new parkland in advance of residential development or at least obtaining land for parks with new developments. Specific comments included:

- Plan for and secure a 40-50 acre site in undeveloped areas to the east before development arrives
- The City needs to set land aside before new areas are developed. Establish a “park bank,” and funds could be allocated as part of park impact mitigation. Make it so developers cannot wiggle out of providing parks with new developments
- Provide variety of park facilities (i.e. no cookie cutter parks)
- Create more “Green Zones” with grass, trees and shade, even if they are small
- Convert other city-owned lands to park use

Interest was noted in the possible acquisition of the Country Club site at Solano Drive and Main Street. This site has the advantage of being next to Apodaca Park. It was mentioned that this site could be used for athletics, as a venue for special events and as a large “central park” with walking trails and other community park-type amenities.



Other comments included:

- Provide more areas for people to get out and enjoy especially walking
- Add more parks that are more accessible to neighborhoods throughout the City.
- Need parks in outlying areas (i.e., Picacho and East Mesa)
- Expand La Llorona Park

Special Use Parks

Supporters of the City's dog park attended each of the community meetings and were also vocal during the stakeholder discussions. A strong base of support seems to exist for the City to take an expanded role in providing additional dog park acreage. In some cases, residents wanted the City to simply provide the land for dog park advocates to develop and maintain, and in other instances, the desire was for the City to buy/provide land and make improvements to new facilities and the existing one. The core interest was to have more dog parks (3-4) distributed throughout City, including East Mesa and West Mesa. Also, residents want to see better surfacing, restrooms and shade at the existing dog park.

Aside from dog parks, some residents voiced a need for a location to operate radio-controlled craft (possibly at the landfill) and for more botanical gardens and areas like Heske Garden.

Park Amenities & Facilities

From the point of view of event providers and promoters, there is a problem of both the types and number of facilities (i.e., lacking an Olympic pool, bowling, and shooting facilities) the City has that limits its ability to secure and host events and tournaments that can provide an economic development stimulus. For example, the Convention Bureau is trying to bring more sporting events into the City, but they cannot serve certain groups/tournaments due to the limited facilities. In a related comment, it was noted that the City should do more to encourage baseball and other tournaments to stimulate the local economy.

The issue of restrooms was also a popular topic. Some residents feel that parks need restroom facilities for the general public and also for special events. It was remarked that the Hadley Fields/Meerscheidt Center public restroom and facilities are poor, and that the restroom facilities at the Llorona Park are more like that of a rustic park and does not fit the urban setting with which it is in.

Some residents want to see more playground equipment geared toward smaller children. A common sentiment was noted that the City does a poor job of advertising what and where is age-appropriate playground equipment, with a suggestion to provide this type of information on the City's website.

Additional comments regarding park facilities included:

- Continue to add warm-up/exercise stations to the parks and trails
- Build a bocce ball court(s)
- Increase trees within parks
- Provide water play amenities in the parks; Add splash pads/wading pools



- Provide shading for courts and over play structures
- Build more basketball courts
- Find funding for The Life Center, which needs repair, rehabilitation and improved maintenance

Management Considerations

The range of resident comments regarding parks and park amenities suggests that there is a need for both the on-going upgrades and enhancements to City parks, as well as a desire for more and new amenities to enrich the system. The issues related to expanding park acreage is addressed later in this chapter.

Design Continuity & Standards

Upon review of the City's existing developed parks, it was noted that a general lack of design continuity exists throughout the City. For example, neighborhood park furnishings vary considerably from park to park. The adoption and implementation of updated design standards will benefit the City in several ways. By providing continuity in furnishings and construction materials, there will be consistency in the methods used to maintain, repair and replace them as they become worn or are vandalized. Parks will be more efficiently maintained and more aesthetically appealing.

Separately, specific attention should be placed on the privately-held parks with regard to minimum design criteria or standards as new facilities are permitted and constructed. While these parks are neither owned nor operated by the City, public perceptions about their appearance and level of development might become an issue in the future. One near-term approach to address privately developed park sites is to prepare and adopt City design standards to be placed on the site development at the time of development review, with minimally-acceptable maintenance requirements placed either on the tract title or in a written development agreement with the City. Additionally, these steps are more crucial in the event the developer is building the park in lieu of paying park impact development fees; such agreements and design criteria will help ensure that the broader goals of the City's parks system are met.

Park Maintenance

The Park Maintenance segment provides maintenance activities associated with City Parks, public spaces, and the Downtown Mall. These activities include the daily operational needs of irrigation systems, garbage and litter services, turf care and landscaping requirements. Additionally, the Park Maintenance segment collaborates with Keep Las Cruces Beautiful, a portion of City's Codes department, for assistance with park maintenance. Through the "Adopt-A-Spot" program, community groups, businesses and families formally adopt community spaces to beautify and maintain areas in their neighborhoods. Adopted areas include City parks and right of way locations.



Budget

The Park Maintenance budget for FY 11/12 is \$1,367,907, which is slightly up (+6%) from the prior year. Revenues are incidental and go directly to the General Fund. The budget covers staff, materials, supplies and utilities for the daily operation of the Park system.

Staff

The Park Maintenance segment currently has 20 full-time staff positions, consisting of 1 Section Manager, 2 Crew Leaders, 4 Irrigation Workers, 2 Light Equipment Operators and 11 Park Maintenance Workers, who provide park maintenance responsibilities including mowing, litter removal, park restroom servicing, irrigation system installation/maintenance and park permit event support.

Community Feedback

Comments from the stakeholder sessions included remarks that there was great City support on the clean-up after the Kiwanis Cars for Kids event. It was noted how clean the parks are before and after a park is reserved for an event. The City should be complimented on allowing the Park and Recreation staff to innovate and try new activities and events.

Other comments include:

- Take better care of the City's existing parks
- Focus maintenance and upgrade of facilities on those that have an economic benefit to the City
- Establish a maintenance sinking/reserve fund
- Utilize Master Gardeners for landscaping entries, rights-of-way and community gardens

Management Considerations

The City parks in general are very well used on a year-round basis. The continued population growth as well as the economic downturn is having a direct affect on how citizens are using the park facilities and their level of use. The maintenance division should focus on new ways to improve efficiencies and strive to find funding to update and modernize equipment for lawn/turf care.

Athletic Fields and Programmable Outdoor Facilities

The Park Athletics division is responsible for field maintenance, litter control and restroom maintenance of all City of Las Cruces athletic facilities. The athletics facilities include 18 baseball/softball fields, 35 soccer fields, 4 sand volleyball courts, 10 horseshoe pits, Unidad Park, the dog park, BMX track and the skate park.

In addition to routine maintenance of these facilities for regular season games, there are yearly tournaments and special events. During the year there are at least 20-25 adult and youth tournaments, some of which are state, regional and national events. Each year there is an AKC certified dog trial, the annual Fourth of July celebration and the Whole Enchilada Fiesta, also



assist with several other city sponsored special events. Not only does the Park Athletic District maintain the facilities, they also collaborate with sport organizations and leagues. These leagues include ASA, USSSA, BMX Sports, youth and adult soccer, youth and adult baseball/softball, youth football and one independent minor league baseball team.

Budget

The Athletic Fields segment budget for FY 11/12 is \$1,316,266, which is relatively flat (+1.5%) from the prior year. As previously noted, cost recovery and fee generation is minimal for the overall Parks division; any revenues brought in are incidental and are transferred to the General Fund.

Staff

The Athletic Fields segment currently has 16 full-time staff positions (4 of which are vacant), and this segment employs an additional 6 - 10 part-time seasonal workers to aid with field maintenance during the peak season.

Community Feedback

The most significant comment regarding athletic fields in Las Cruces has to do with the relationship between the City and the Las Cruces Public School District. Stakeholders involved with youth and adult sports were vocal about recent changes by LCPS toward community sports. For example, one stakeholder commented that the Las Cruces Public Schools District wants \$180 per game on their fields (#1-5), so their fields were not used all season except for their (school) programs. The existing field deficit could be remedied by the LCPS fields if they were put into play for the community (without the fee). According to one stakeholder, liability concerns (insurance) and politics cloud the use of LCPS courts or other facilities by leagues.

Many believe that sports are the heart of Las Cruces tourism. Tournaments are, and can be, an incredible contribution to the local economy. Several stakeholders desire to see the City dedicate a portion of the Gross Receipts Tax (GRT) to be set aside for sport field development and maintenance. It was also suggested that a portion of the motel tax could be used for this purpose.

Other comments include:

- Field fees seem to have precluded planning local tournaments; there are not enough lighted fields for any tournaments. Three more fields with lights are needed. Only soccer fields # 6 & 7 are lighted, while all the baseball fields have lights.
- Field lights at Burn Lake would help alleviate the field shortage, along with the reprogramming of baseball fields for interim soccer use.
- Install artificial turf on high demand fields
- Provide concessionaires at the sport venues
- The County is a big part of this and should help subsidize the City facilities
- Explore establishing an overarching 'sports authority' as they have in El Paso to establish field development and programming priorities. In Las Cruces, it is based on field form submittals.



- With regard to basketball, the Meerscheidt court is used for games only. There are 400 on a waiting list. There is a definite need for additional courts.

Management Considerations

Athletic Fields staff should continue to prioritize upgrades on facilities that foster economic development opportunities, such as athletic tournaments and special events. With the support of Administration, they should also seek further sponsorships to aid with field maintenance costs.

Trails

While the recreational trails program is not a discrete work segment within the Parks & Recreation Department, this Plan calls special attention to this facility type in response to the significant level of community interest in trails. Within the Department, organizational support for the trails function is provided through the Parks division. As such, no unique budget line items or staff positions exist dedicated solely to trails, rather the planning, construction and maintenance of recreational trails throughout the City are managed by staff within Parks.

Trail System Background & Classifications

The Citizens' Task Force for Open Space Preservation, with input from the Open Space and Trail Network, created a vision document in 2005 for an interconnected open space and trail system for Doña Ana County designed to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the region. The document contained goals, a description of the components of the envisioned system and some implementation recommendations.

More recently, the MPO led a planning process for the Transport 2040 Plan, which included pedestrian and bicycle trail routes and an overall trail system plan. The plan prioritizes trail facilities into three tiers to create a trail network across the region.

- Tier 1 trail routes represent the arterial network that connects major destinations and provides continuous routes across the region.
- Tier 2 routes are minor arterials to complete the network of intra-regional travel.
- Tier 3 routes acts as collectors between neighborhoods and the trail arterial network.

The trails are intended to augment the roadway system by providing additional routes for bicyclists and pedestrians, with the broader goal of establishing a loop trail system around central Las Cruces that extends into Mesilla and Doña Ana County. The proposed loop trail includes the following routes:

- Triviz Multi-use Path
- Outfall Channel
- La Llorona Trail
- Calle del Norte
- New Mexico Highway 28
- University Avenue



Community Feedback

Community comments regarding trails can be organized into two major groups: general comments about trails and trail amenities, and specific recommendations for trail improvements or linkages.

General Comments

- Find ways to connect parks to the trail network
- Add more walking and bicycling trails within parks with access from different areas of the City
- Provide a path that goes to the major centers of the City
- Provide interconnected, multi-use trails that go beyond walking and biking and include equestrian use
- Provide exercise stations in the parks and along trails
- Utilize desert areas to create walkways with links east and west through the City
- Provide additional dedicated bike lanes and dedicate certain streets for biking

Site-Specific Comments

- Increase coordination between the City and Elephant Butte Irrigation District (EBID) to provide trails along EBID ditches throughout the City
- Trails are needed to connect East Mesa to Downtown
- Triviz Trail is an excellent example of a multi-use trail, but it needs east/west and north/south connections to it
- Connect the Triviz Trail with La Llorona Park and downtown
- Improve the trail on Las Cruces Dam
- Improve the Acequia Madre Trail and leave acequias/ditches open (not piped) for trail opportunities

Management Considerations

Currently many of the existing bicycle and pedestrian pathways are limited in length and few connect to the regional trail network, parks, downtown or other key destinations. The recreational trail system is further hindered by physical barriers, such as I-25 and numerous arroyos, which segment the City. Building on the work of the MPO, the proposed trail system will provide logical pathway connections to key destinations, and these pathways should be comfortable and convenient for the community to use.

Survey respondents and community meeting participants commented that there is little information about trails within the City, and this Plan recommends the development of more detailed trail signage standards, route and wayfinding signage for parks, trails and facilities and an informational brochure identifying existing and planned trail facilities.



Service Standards & Levels of Service

Acquisition Gap Analysis

To better understand where acquisition efforts should be directed, a gap analysis of the park system was conducted to examine and assess the current distribution of parks throughout the City. The analysis reviewed the locations and types of existing facilities, land use classifications, transportation/access barriers and other factors as a means to identify preliminary acquisition target areas. In reviewing parkland distribution and assessing opportunities to fill identified gaps, residentially zoned lands were isolated, since neighborhood and community parks primarily serve these areas. Additionally, primary and secondary service areas were used as follows:

- Community parks: 1/2-mile primary & 1-mile secondary service areas
- Neighborhood parks: 1/4-mile primary & 1/2-mile secondary service areas
- Pocket parks: 1/8-mile primary & 1/4-mile secondary service areas

Maps 3 and 4 illustrate the application of the distribution standards from existing, publicly owned community, neighborhood and pocket parks, and they show that the core area of western Las Cruces between I-25 and I-10 is well served with reasonable access to public parkland. Significant gaps exist in the northern and eastern areas of the City. A composite service area map (Map 5) represents in aggregate those areas with existing access to public park lands.

Resulting from this assessment, the parkland service gap and priorities map (Map 6) highlights those regions of the City that will require special focus for park acquisition and development in the coming years. A total of 15 potential acquisition areas are identified and include four proposed community parks, ten proposed neighborhood parks and two proposed pocket parks. The greatest documented need is for additional community park sites to provide the land base for a blend of passive and active recreation opportunities, such as sport fields, picnicking and walking. Secondly, new neighborhood parks are needed to improve overall distribution and equity throughout the City, while promoting recreation within walking distance of residential areas.

Table 14. Parkland Service Gap Areas by District & Park Type

Gap Analysis Area	Neighborhood / District	Park Type
1	Las Alamedas	Community
2	Del Rey / Rinconada	Community / Neighborhood
3	Englar Rd. / Las Colinas	Community
4	Mesa Grande / Northrise	Neighborhood
5	Porter Road South	Community
6	Porter Road North	Neighborhood
7	Mountain View Hospital Area	Neighborhood
8	Hillrise	Neighborhood
9	Dripping Springs	Neighborhood
10	University / Triviz	Pocket
11	South Las Cruces	Neighborhood
12	Triviz / Spruce	Neighborhood
13	Elks Road	Neighborhood
14	Elks Road North	Neighborhood
15	Three Crosses / Hoagland	Pocket



While the targeted acquisition areas do not identify a specific parcel(s) for consideration, the area encompasses a broader region in which an acquisition would be ideally suited. These acquisition targets represent a long-term vision for improving parkland distribution throughout Las Cruces. The park service area gaps represent priority areas for addressing the overall distribution of and access to lands for use as pocket, neighborhood and community parks. Additionally, while land purchase opportunities and the identification of willing sellers are difficult to predict, it is the City’s desire to acquire new or develop existing land into a premiere park.

Level of Service Assessment

In addition to and in support of the gap analysis, a level of service review was conducted as a means to understand the distribution of parkland acreage by classification and for a broader measure of how well the City is serving its residents with access to parks and open space.

Using the proposed service standards discussed in this Plan, Table 15 illustrates the current and projected levels of service for parks for the City. Today, the current level of service for community parks is 2.2 acres per 1,000 residents, resulting in an existing, current deficit of nearly 78 acres. The deficit for community parkland is expected to grow to approximately 145 acres by 2020. The current level of service is 0.82 acres per 1,000 residents for the combined category of neighborhood and pocket parks. A small current deficit of 18 acres exists, which is expected to grow to approximately 40 acres by 2020. With regard to recreational trails, the current level of service is 0.18 miles per 1,000 residents. A deficit of 6.6 trail miles exists today and is expected to grow to approximately 12 miles by 2020. The proposed capital projects noted in the CIP chapter ameliorate the projected acreage needs and maintain service levels to meet the proposed standards.

Table 15. Current & Projected Level of Service by Park Type

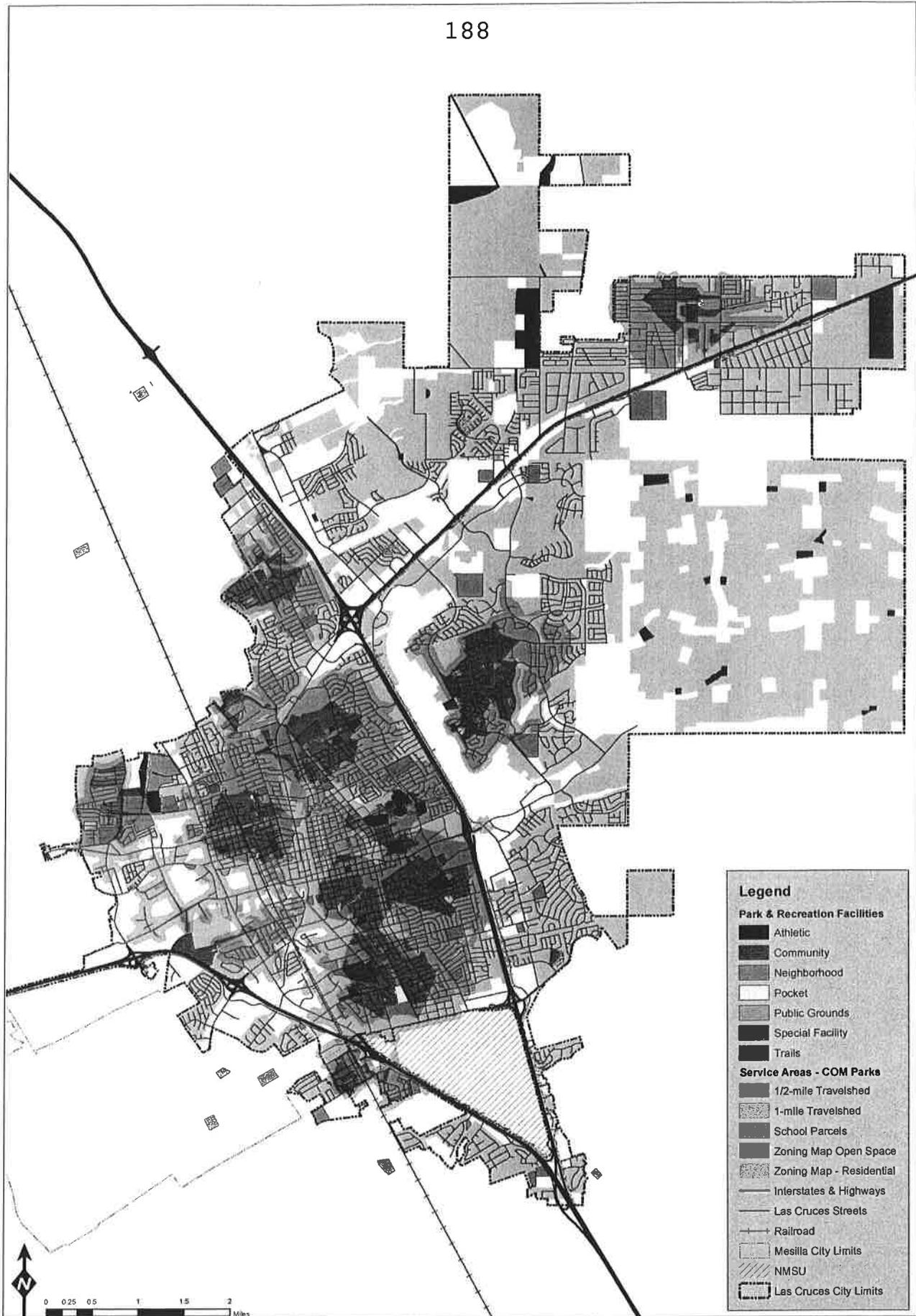
Facility Type	Proposed Service Standard	Existing Inventory	Current Surplus / (Deficit)	Projected Surplus / (Deficit) (2020)
Community Parks	3 acres / 1,000	180.3 ac.	(78.1) ac.	(145.2) ac.
Neighborhood & Pocket Parks	1 acre / 1,000	79.7 ac.	(17.9) ac.	(40.3) ac.
Trails	0.25 miles / 1,000	17.8 mi.	(6.6) mi.	(12.2) mi.

Table 16. Proposed Service Standards by Facility Type

Classification	Size Guideline	Proximity Guideline	Service Standard
Community Parks	15-50 acres; 20-acre minimum desired	up to 1-mile radius	2 acres / 1,000
Neighborhood Parks	3-5 acres; 2-acre minimum desired	up to 1/2-mile radius	1 acre / 1,000
Pocket Parks	NA	up to 1/4-mile radius	
Recreational Trails & Bikeways	NA	NA	0.25 miles / 1,000

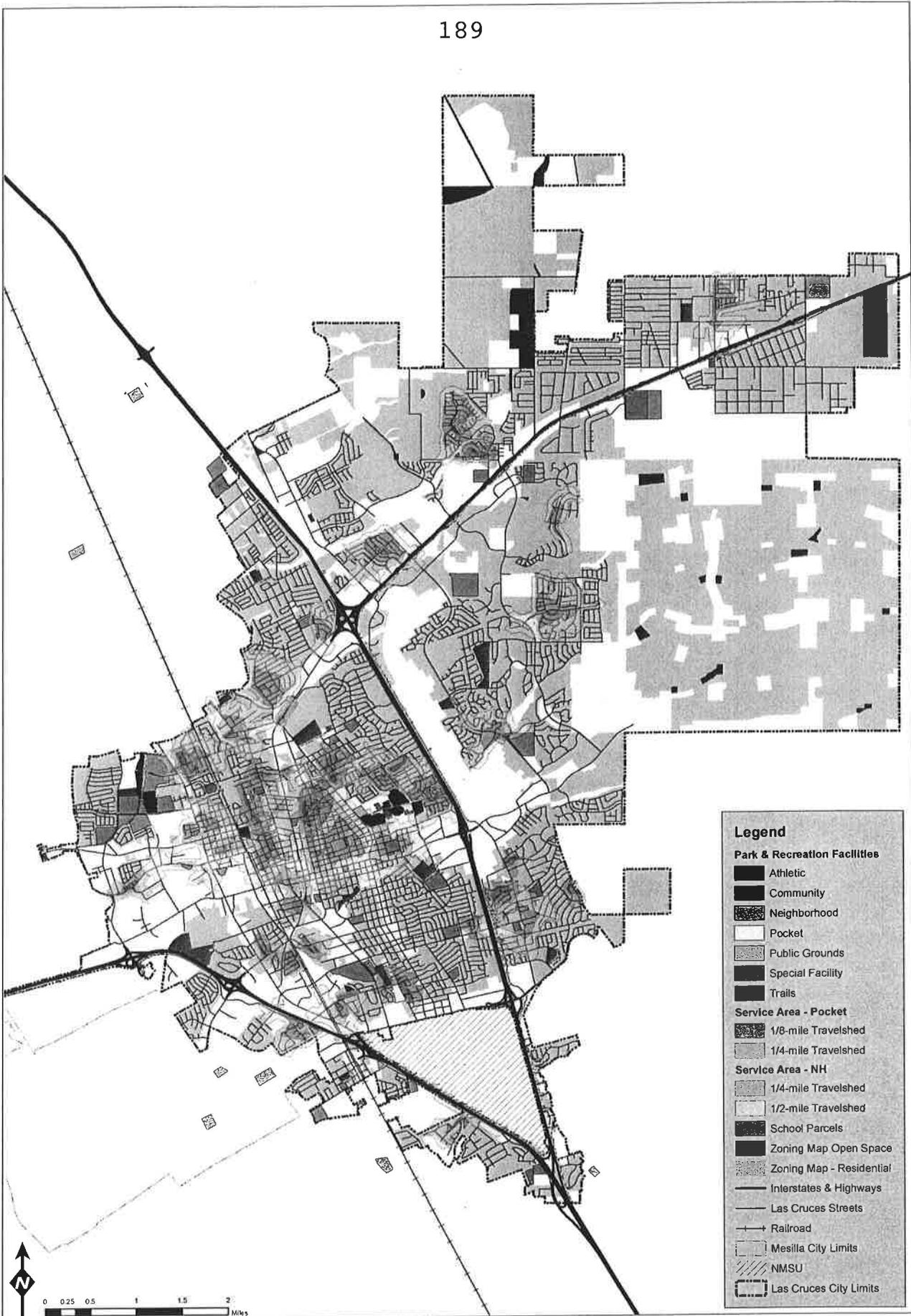
Neighborhood and pocket parks are combined for a service standard of 1.00 acres per 1,000 residents.





Las Cruces Parks & Recreation Master Plan

Map 3: Community Park Service Areas



Legend

Park & Recreation Facilities

- Athletic
- Community
- Neighborhood
- Pocket
- Public Grounds
- Special Facility
- Trails

Service Area - Pocket

- 1/8-mile Travelshed
- 1/4-mile Travelshed

Service Area - NH

- 1/4-mile Travelshed
- 1/2-mile Travelshed

- School Parcels
- Zoning Map Open Space
- Zoning Map - Residential

- Interstates & Highways
- Las Cruces Streets
- Railroad
- Mesilla City Limits
- ▨ NMSU
- Las Cruces City Limits



0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles



Las Cruces Parks & Recreation Master Plan

Map 4: Neighborhood & Pocket Park Service Areas

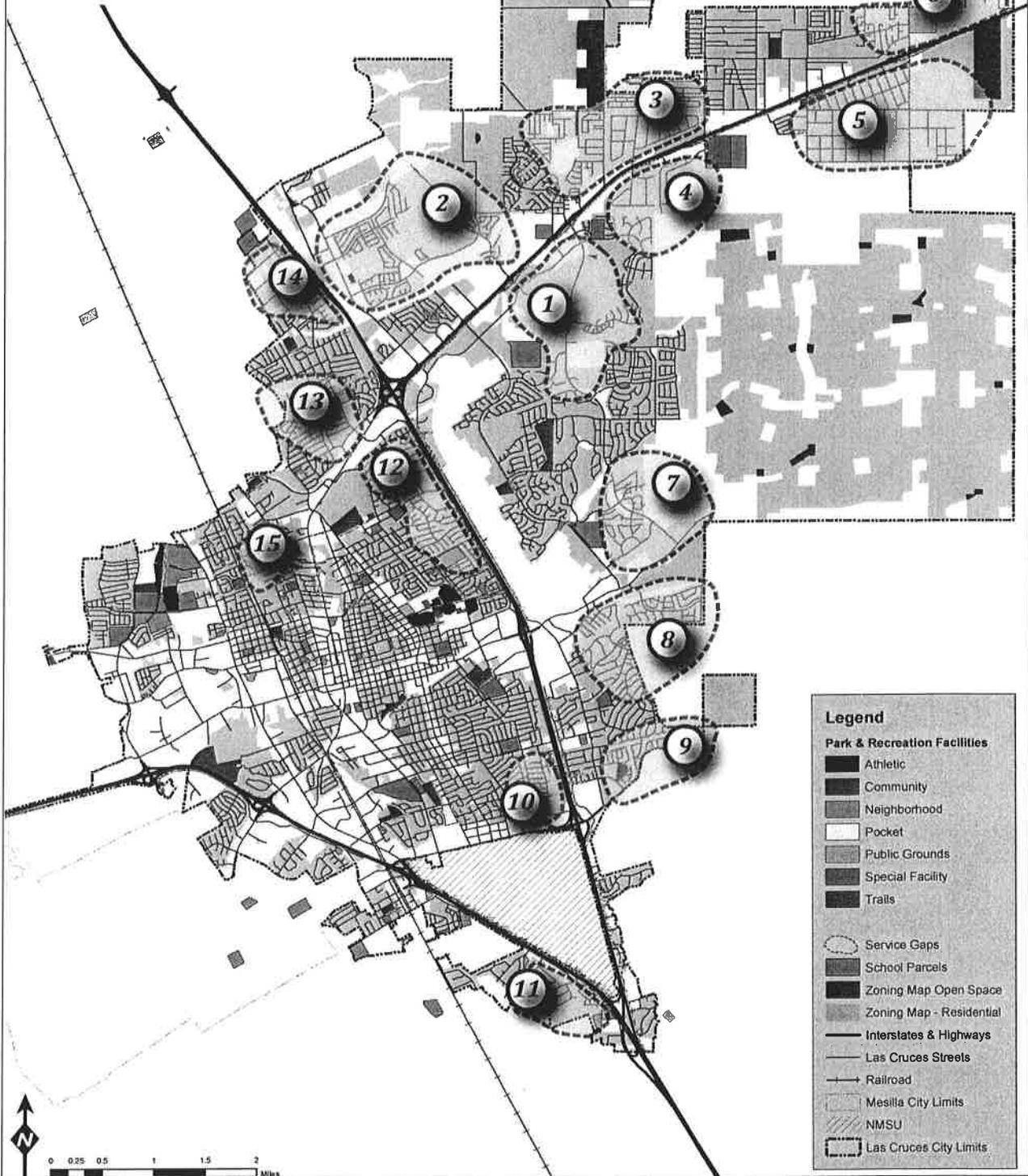
Data Source: City of Las Cruces GIS
Date: October 2011



Las Cruces Parks & Recreation Master Plan

Map 5: Composite Park Service Areas

Gap Analysis Area	Neighborhood / District	Park Type
1	Las Alamedas	Community
2	Del Rey / Rinconada	Community / Neighborhood
3	Englar Rd. / Las Colinas	Community
4	Mesa Grande / Northrise	Neighborhood
5	Porter Road South	Community
6	Porter Road North	Neighborhood
7	Mountain View Hospital Area	Neighborhood
8	Hillrise	Neighborhood
9	Dripping Springs	Neighborhood
10	University / Triviz	Pocket
11	South Las Cruces	Neighborhood
12	Triviz / Spruce	Neighborhood
13	Elks Road	Neighborhood
14	Elks Road North	Neighborhood
15	Three Crosses / Hoagland	Pocket



Las Cruces Parks & Recreation Master Plan

Map 6: Service Gaps

Comparable Cities Review

While all park systems, including specific adopted service standards, are intrinsically local and direct comparisons between jurisdictions is challenging, a review of similar cities can highlight critical differences and provide insight to support adjustments to the local park system. During the review of Las Cruces' park inventory and standards, a comparable cities analysis was completed to gauge Las Cruces against similar cities and to explore consideration of service standard modifications. The following factors were considered to identify comparable cities: population, population change, population density, median income, poverty level, departmental budget per capita and geographic location in the Southwest.

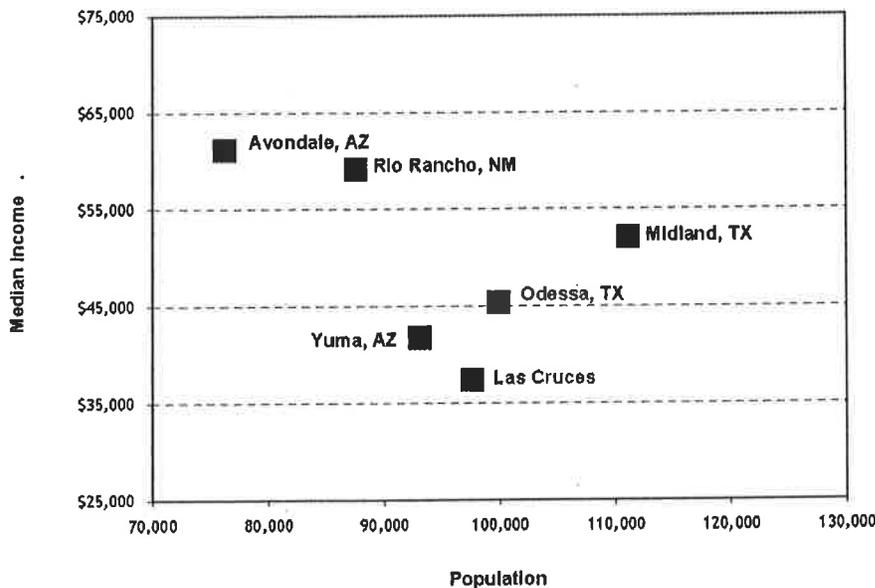
Table 17. Comparable Cities: Demographics

Jurisdiction	Population (2010 Census)	Population (2000 Census)	Pop Change	Median Income (05-09 ACS)	Percent Pop in Poverty (05-09 ACS)	Persons per sq. mile (2010 Census)	Parks & Rec Budget (GF 10/11)	P&R Budget per resident
Las Cruces	97,618	74,267	31.4%	\$ 37,441	21.2%	1,276	\$ 9,290,669	\$ 95
Rio Rancho, NM	87,521	51,765	69.1%	\$ 59,182	6.9%	847	\$ 5,312,654	\$ 61
Yuma, AZ	93,064	77,515	20.1%	\$ 41,750	18.1%	774	\$ 11,848,730	\$ 127
Avondale, AZ	76,238	35,883	112.5%	\$ 61,173	14.1%	1,672	\$ 2,152,866	\$ 28
Odessa, TX	99,940	90,943	9.9%	\$ 45,369	16.1%	2,382	\$ 4,048,263	\$ 41
Midland, TX	111,147	94,996	17.0%	\$ 52,054	12.6%	1,542	\$ 6,210,578	\$ 56

SOURCES:
 US Census; Decennial Census 2010 and 2005-09 American Community Survey
 Standards data from Individual city's land use or parks plans or direct communication with staff
 Budget data from each city

Each of the comparable cities, except Odessa, experienced significant double-digit population growth during the past decade. Las Cruces is in the mid-range of the noted population densities and has the highest relative poverty rate of the comparables.

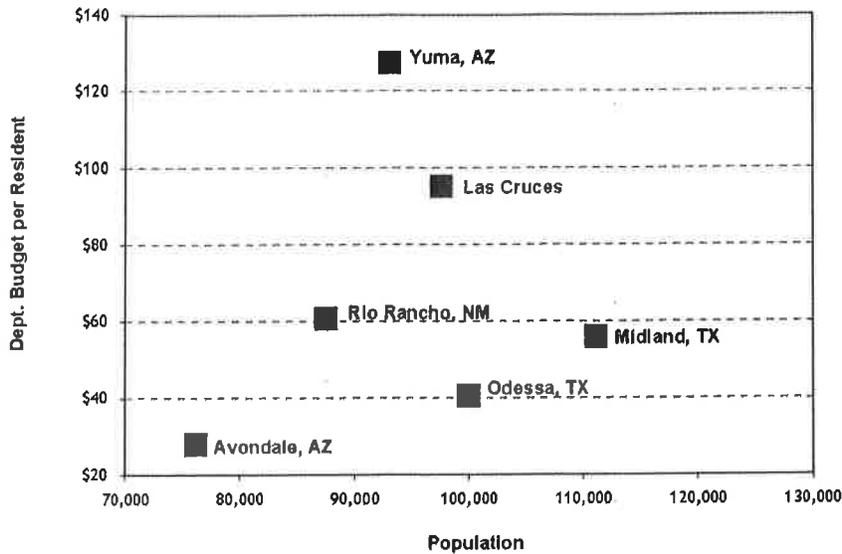
Table 18. Comparable Cities: Median Income to Population



Las Cruces has the lowest median income relative to its population size, among the comparable cities.



Table 19. Comparable Cities: Department Budget per Capita to Population



Las Cruces has no direct comparable regarding its departmental budget per capita, and the robustness of its recreation program elevates it above many of the comparable cities.

Additionally, the adopted service standards for parkland per 1,000 residents varied greatly within the selection of comparable cities from a low of 1.54 acres/1000 in Las Cruces to a high of 15.5 acres/1000 in Midland. Furthermore, limited data exists to specifically compare subcategories (e.g., community parks, open space, trails) on an acres per person basis, and local variations exist in the ways in which the local service standard is defined. As a result, the analysis also included the current level of service for each jurisdiction, defined as total parkland acres per 1,000 and the number of residents per total parkland acre, as a snapshot in time to compare Las Cruces to these other cities.

Table 20. Comparable Cities: Parkland Metrics

Jurisdiction	Adopted Service Standard					Acres Maintained	Parkland Acres per 1000	# Residents per Acre
	Overall Parkland Ac./1000	Community Parks	Neighborhood Parks	Open Space	Trail Miles/1000			
Las Cruces	1.5		1.5		0.7	677	6.9	144.2
Rio Rancho, NM	7.0					276	3.2	317.1
Yuma, AZ	3.7	2.1	1.6			611	6.6	152.3
Avondale, AZ	10.0	3.5	2.0	2.0		279	3.7	273.3
Odessa, TX	7.1	na	2.1	5.0		630	6.3	158.6
Midland, TX	15.5	6.5	2.0			1,272	11.4	87.4
Comparable Cities: Average	8.7	4.0	1.9	3.5	0.0			

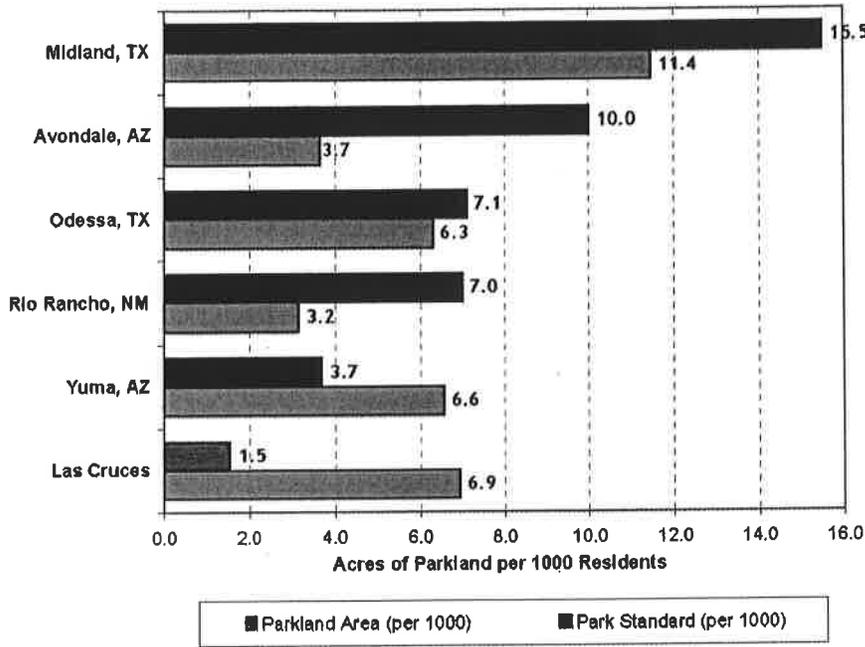
SOURCES:
 US Census; Decennial Census 2010 and 2005-09 American Community Survey
 Standards data from individual city's land use or parks plans or direct communication with staff
 Budget data from each city

Las Cruces currently provides 6.9 acres of total parkland per 1,000 residents across the entire park system, which include the 200-acre Butterfield Shooting Range and approximately 100 acres of dedicated athletic fields. This figure is on par with the comparable cities for the average total



acreage per 1,000 residents, but the City’s adopted standard of 1.54 acres/1000 is the lowest among all of the cities reviewed.

Table 21. Comparable Cities: Level of Service



While valuable insight is provided through a review of comparable cities, the proposed modifications to the City’s service standards are more due to a reflection upon Las Cruces’ unique park system, community needs and interests and the potential revenues to support implementation.

Management Considerations

Park Impact Fees and the Development Code

The City should adopt and utilize updated park impact fee (PIF) rates to help fulfill the demands placed on the park system by new residential growth. The current rates have been held to an artificially low level over the past several years, which has created an unbalanced public-share burden and the need for additional public funding to support recent population growth. As described in the PIF study in Appendix G, the proposed, revised fees are calculated so as to help the City meet its current level of service going forward into the future, not to the recommended level of service outlined elsewhere in this Plan. Options exist for the final implementation and approval of these fees by City Council with regard to how they are applied and for which City priorities. The approval of City Council is required to adopt the impact fee rate(s) and should be initiated as soon as practicable (i.e., concurrently with adoption of this Plan, or shortly thereafter).

Another option to address the existing and growing deficiency of certain facility types is to negotiate more aggressively with residential developers and/or establish additional regulations pertaining to a combined approach of land transfers and impact fee payments. The current City code accommodates impact fee credits for transferred land, but it does not facilitate a combined



approach whereby the developer would be obligated to build a small park to serve the subdivision in addition to paying a lesser, pro-rated impact fee to fund community-wide capital facility improvements (i.e., community parks, recreation facilities, etc). The City should explore an amendment to its development code to establish regulations pertaining to such a combined approach for parkland dedication/development and pro-rated impact fees.

Concerning both the proposed impact fees and the potential for additional exactions from developers, the land use requirements outside City limits are less burdensome and restrictive, and the potential exists for developers to continue to expand residential development within the jurisdiction of Doña Ana County in close proximity to the City. Residents of these areas will still likely utilize City park and recreation facilities, but they will have not supported the system through impact fees, dedications or other concessions. The City should consider an arrangement with the County to extend a park impact fee to the ETZ or some other geographic boundary representing close-in, developable land to lessen and/or mitigate the impacts of proximate, non-city residential development.

Alternative funding

Throughout the public engagement process, residents and facility users have remarked on the range and extent of capital improvements required to update and enhance the park system. New, dedicated funding may be necessary to support such system improvements. Two near-term options are available for Council consideration:

- A short-term bond or levy could be structured to maximize voter support to include parkland acquisitions and development, trail development and general park element upgrades.
- The dedication of all or a portion of the available Gross Receipt Tax increments to support system renovations and/or provide the local match to the park impact fee program.

If either or both of these funding mechanisms are enacted, capital improvement projects could be prioritized to maximize the increased potential for local tourism and economic stimulus (i.e., athletic tournament facility improvements, special event venues, etc).



Chapter 7. Goals & Objectives

Goals and objectives provide the policy framework for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The following goals have been derived by assessing the strengths and capacity of the Las Cruces parks and recreation system as it is today and identifying opportunities for strategic progress during the next 5 years.

The following goals and objectives also are directed in large measure by the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan, which addresses natural resources, public facilities and transportation, among others. The City Plan identifies 7 core planning objectives related to the provision of parks, recreation and open space that serve as a driving force behind this master planning effort:

- Objective 1 (Community Facilities; Goal 1): Provide a variety of recreational opportunities to meet the various needs of our community.
- Objective 2 (Community Facilities; Goal 1): Provide attractive open spaces, parks, landscaped areas, trail corridors and other natural areas that promote diversified outdoor activities.
- Objective 3 (Community Facilities; Goal 1): The City should seek to maximize the number of and/or enhance our parks, programs, and associated facilities to satisfy the recreational, cultural, and educational needs of our residents.
- Objective 5 (Urban Design; Goal 2): Protect those natural resources and features unique to our region.
- Objective 8 (Economic Development; Goal 3): Continue to promote existing and create new tourist activities and events in Las Cruces.
- Objective 10 (Land Use; Goal 1): Provide a comprehensive, attractive, cost- and resource-efficient system of parks and recreation facilities responsive to the needs and desires of the community.
- Objective 11 (Land Use; Goal 1): Establish urban and rural open space networks in the area.

The One Valley, One Vision 2040 Regional Plan provides an additional policy framework in support of the parks and recreation system. The Plan includes five community recreation facility and service goals that relate to many of the aspects in this master plan. These 2040 Plan goals differ slightly from the comprehensive plan goals listed above.

- (Goal 6-7-1) Provide community facilities and services that are necessary or desirable to support the future land use plan.
- (Goal 6-7-2) Meet the existing and projected needs of residents through location, access, extent and timing, staffing, and category of community facilities and services.
- (Goal 6-7-3) Coordinate with other local government, special districts, school districts, and state and federal agencies on the provision of community facilities that have multijurisdictional impacts.
- (Goal 6-7-4) Ensure that local governments provide adequate, properly located recreational and leisure opportunities.



- (Goal 6-7-5) Provide a variety of opportunities for outdoor recreation to utilize open spaces to a greater extent.

In addition, the Las Cruces City Council adopted a city-wide Strategic Plan to establish key priorities regarding service delivery, sense of community and government responsiveness. A number of objectives have been completed since adoption of the Strategic Plan in 2010 by Council. The as-of-yet unfulfilled objectives related to parks and recreation services also provided a foundation for the development of specific goals and policies provided within this Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Recently Achieved

- 1.3.6 Promote vector control/mosquito hotline
- 2.3.3 Create policy to define Parks & Recreation board authority over leagues
- 2.3.4 Implement and fund Out-of-School Time Program
- 2.3.5 Open Regional Aquatic Center – Phase 1A
- 3.4.3 Complete agreements with Las Cruces Public Schools for joint use of facilities and operations
- 6.3.8.5 Clarify responsibilities and involvement of community partners (Review and revise recruitment for lifeguards)
- 3.2.3 Evaluate Park and Recreation Policy [Combination of impact fees and regulatory requirement for park development]

Still in Progress

- Expand recreation opportunities for youth
- Expand recreation opportunities for seniors (Establish senior aquatic program at LCRAC)
- Complete identification of locations and partners for community gardens and begin implementation of the program
- Promote energy conservation (Begin an urban forestry pruning program)
- Encourage and promote active wellness program opportunities
- Pursue recreational component – Phase 1B
- Pursue multi-purpose/competitive pool. Phase II
- Plan, design, and construct Alameda Arroyo trail system from Sonoma Ranch to Roadrunner Parkway
- Renovate and open East Mesa Sage Café.
- Maintain open space and recreational areas as our community grows (public property.)



Community Engagement & Information

Goal 1: Continue meaningful public involvement in park and recreation planning and engage residents through City communications.

- 1.1 Involve residents and stakeholders in park and recreation facility planning and design and recreation program development to solicit community input, facilitate project understanding and engender public support.
- 1.2 Continue to use a variety of methods and media to increase resident awareness about Las Cruces activities; Coordinate with the Public Information Office to expand and update the City's web site to enhance citizen communication, expand access to information and improve public outreach and marketing.
- 1.3 Prepare, publish and promote a comprehensive park and trail facilities map for online and print distribution to highlight existing and proposed sites and routes, while promoting Las Cruces as an active-lifestyles community.
- 1.4 Conduct periodic joint sessions between the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and other standing City boards, such as the Planning and Zoning Commission, Senior Programs Advisory Board, Convention and Visitors Bureau Advisory Board and Capital Improvement Advisory Committee, and with the City Council to improve coordination and discuss policy matters of mutual interest pertaining to recreational resources, opportunities and funding.

Recreation Programming

Goal 2: Maintain a varied and inclusive suite of recreation programs that accommodate a spectrum of ages, interests and abilities.

- 2.1 Emphasize recreation program offerings for youth, teens and seniors that are responsive to the unique needs and interests of local residents.
- 2.2 Conduct a feasibility study for the addition of a recreation center facility to replace the existing East Mesa Recreation Center, expand the Benavidez Community Center, address deficiencies in gymnasium and multipurpose/meeting room space and add recreation program space to meet needs of the community.
- 2.3 Expand activities and programs for active adults and new "seniors" who seek experiential activities and have little interest in traditional senior programs.
- 2.4 Continue to monitor and adjust length, time and scheduling of programs, with special focus on before work and after work hours.
- 2.5 Expand the relationship with NMSU for students to instruct or enhance recreation programs.
- 2.6 Periodically undertake a comprehensive evaluation of existing recreation program offerings in terms of persons served, customer satisfaction, cost/subsidy and availability of similar programs via other providers.
- 2.7 Establish a fully integrated, system-wide ID card/pass program; Expand or replace the CLASS recreation software to add online registration and pass management modules.



- 2.8 Use program tracking and evaluation tools to capacity by designing reports to readily identify life cycle of programs, identify programs not meeting minimum capacity (review all program minimums for cost effectiveness), identifying waiting lists, etc.
- 2.9 Develop and maintain a database of current and past program users for marketing and information sharing via targeted email.
- 2.10 Align with the “America on the Move” effort to respond to the national obesity epidemic.
- 2.11 Research potential grant opportunities and federal programs such as the Healthy Communities Program to advance healthy lifestyle choices.
- 2.12 Review and update cost recovery guidelines for existing and planned recreation programs and services.
- 2.13 Continue to promote and expand family-oriented programming, special events, festivals and concerts, such as The Whole Enchilada Festival and Spring Fest, to enhance community identity, activity and education. Utilize the City’s parks, trails and recreation facilities as settings to provide and/or facilitate a wider array programs and activities.
- 2.14 Continue to foster the partnership with the Las Cruces Public School District to utilize school sites to provide recreation facilities. Explore additional opportunities to co-develop facilities on school property or property adjacent to schools as the city grows.
- 2.15 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.

Aquatics

- 2.16 Expand swim lesson offerings; Consider partnering with area swim clubs to provide supplemental or additional swim lessons.
- 2.17 Consider offering adult-specific times for pool use during non-peak hours to accommodate the need for “less hectic” and slower pace programming.
- 2.18 Replace the Apodaca Pool with a water park feature or splash pad.
- 2.19 Renovate and upgrade the Frenger Pool.
- 2.20 Implement Phase 1B recreational component of the Las Cruces Regional Aquatic Center.
- 2.21 Implement Phase 2 of the Las Cruces Regional Aquatic Center to add the 50-meter lap pool.
- 2.22 Consider upgrading the mechanical systems to add solar heating for City pools.
- 2.23 Continue or increase community use and competitive use through partnership opportunity with NMSU for natatorium.



Athletics Programming

- 2.24 Leverage City resources by forming and maintaining partnerships with other public, non-profit and private recreation providers to deliver athletics programming.

Parks & Park Maintenance

Goal 3: Acquire and develop a high-quality, diversified system of parks, recreation facilities and open spaces that provides equitable access to all residents.

- 3.1 Provide a distributed network of parks that are accessible by multiple modes to the areas they serve to provide increased opportunity for residents to walk or bike, such that all city residents live within one-half mile of a developed neighborhood park and one mile of a developed community park.
- 3.2 Provide a combined service standard of 1 acre per 1,000 persons of developed neighborhood and pocket parks.
- 3.3 Provide a service standard of 3 acres per 1,000 persons of developed community parks.
- 3.4 Enhance existing parks in underserved areas to increase the level of service by adding or upgrading amenities that have a high value to neighborhood residents.
- 3.5 Continue to examine, identify and prioritize lands that have potential value for inclusion in the open space system based on factors such as level of service, connectivity, preservation, scenic and recreational opportunities to residents.
- 3.6 Identify and develop areas for archery, remote control cars/trucks, remote control airplanes and rocketeering.
- 3.7 Continue to expand recreational opportunities, amenities and programs along the Rio Grande that are accessible by different modes of travel and cater to a variety of interests.
- 3.8 Continue to foster partnership opportunities on state and federal lands promoting outdoor activities including shooting sports, hunting, hiking, camping, wildlife viewing, rock climbing, off-road sports and similar activities in a way that does not adversely affect other resources.
- 3.9 Actively plan and coordinate with Doña Ana County for the acquisition of parks and open space within or in close proximity to the ETZ.
- 3.10 Pursue low-cost and/or non-purchase options to preserve open space, including the use of conservation easements and development covenants.
- 3.11 Encourage and support the participation of community-based or non-profit conservation organizations, which offer options and alternatives to development in the interest of preserving desirable lands as a public benefit.



- 3.12 Continue to negotiate for improvements to the Oro Vista Detention Pond site as a multi-purpose facility that includes active and passive recreation, as well as drainage and flood control.
- 3.13 Create regional development and conservation guidelines for resources that cross jurisdictional boundaries, such as an Arroyo Protection Plan, a Hillside and Escarpment Protection Plan, a Wildlife Conservation Plan and a Farmland Conservation Plan.
- 3.14 Prepare and adopt an Urban Forestry Plan to articulate a long-term strategy for tree protection, urban forestry management and public education and outreach.
- 3.15 Consider creating community-based volunteer and stewardship opportunities as ways to inform and engage residents about urban forestry issues, such as tree planting, tree care and management and the benefits of urban trees.
- 3.16 Promote the installation and management of street trees to provide green infrastructure benefits.
- 3.17 Pursue Tree City USA status.

Goal 4: Provide a parks and recreation system that is efficient to maintain and operate, while providing a high level of user comfort, safety, aesthetic quality and protection of capital investment.

- 4.1 Maintain all parks and facilities in a manner that keeps them in safe and attractive condition; Repair or remove damaged components immediately upon identification.
- 4.2 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 the newly adopted ADA Standards for Accessible Design (*effective March 15, 2012*) for requisite upgrades.
- 4.3 Evaluate opportunities to provide multiple uses in single locations, as well as share facilities and coordinate maintenance responsibilities with other agencies.
- 4.4 Evaluate special event needs to determine capacity of staff to perform set up, tear down and other tasks unrelated to general park/civic area landscape maintenance and assure adequate staffing and funding exists for event support.
- 4.5 Encourage and promote volunteer park improvement and maintenance projects from a variety of individuals, service clubs, churches and businesses.
- 4.6 Establish and monitor recordkeeping procedures to document the actual hours and materials costs for each maintenance operation
- 4.7 Consider satellite shop facilities to supplement the central maintenance yard.

Parks - Construction & ROW Maintenance

Goal 5: Provide high-quality care for play structures and surfaces and maintenance of trails, medians, parkways and ROW's throughout the City.



- 5.1 When developing new facilities or redeveloping existing facilities, review and consider the projected maintenance and operations costs prior to initiating design development; Emphasize the maintenance, enhancement and renovation of existing parks prior to the development of new facilities.
- 5.2 Incorporate sustainable development and low impact design practices into the design, planning and rehabilitation of new and existing facilities; Consider the use of native vegetation for landscaping in parks and ROWs to minimize maintenance requirements.
- 5.3 Formulate illustrative master plans for the development or redevelopment of each park, as appropriate, to take maximum advantage of grant or other funding opportunities.
- 5.4 Develop and implement minimum design and development standards for park and recreation amenities within private developments to maintain minimally-acceptable standards of development and to address community facility needs, equipment types, accessibility and installation procedures.
- 5.5 Require plan review, final inspection and acceptance (including as-built drawings) of all developer-provided parks and medians projects installed per City guidelines and standards.
- 5.6 Recognize that designating private property for open space uses does not establish or promote any public access rights to such property.
- 5.7 Standardize the use of graphics and signage to establish a consistent identity at all parks and facilities.
- 5.8 Standardize park furniture (trash cans, tables, benches, fencing) to reduce inventory costs and improve appearance of, and maintenance consistency within, parks.
- 5.9 Plan for and implement overall central irrigation control and standardize irrigation equipment and installations; Include flow control and multiple weather station or large site rain/wind sensing capability.
- 5.10 Establish and utilize standard specifications and details for future irrigation installations and upgrades.
- 5.11 Prioritize irrigation system upgrades and replace the oldest and inefficient systems first.
- 5.12 Convert flood irrigated systems to pipe and rotor systems.

Parks - Athletic Field Management

Goal 6: Provide, manage and maintain an inventory of high-quality athletic fields that support local youth and adult leagues and enable regional, state and national tournaments.

- 6.1 Establish and maintain carrying capacities for athletic fields and special events areas to optimize field conditions and playability.
- 6.2 Prioritize upgrades on facilities that foster economic development opportunities such as athletic tournaments and special events.
- 6.3 Establish preventative maintenance program and funding.



Trails

Goal 7: Support and promote the efforts of the MPO to create a network of interconnected trail opportunities including hard- and soft-surfaced trails and right-of-way trails and bikeways.

- 7.1 Acknowledge and support the trail planning policies of the Las Cruces Metropolitan Planning Organization as outlined in Transport 2040.
- 7.2 Coordinate with the Metropolitan Planning Organization and Doña Ana County for the joint planning, development and maintenance of priority trail corridors.
- 7.3 Foster the development and capacity of local volunteer trail advocates to help with trails planning efforts, garner community support, leverage community resources and play a role in stewardship and maintenance of trail facilities.

Goal 8: Develop a high-quality system of shared-use recreational trails and bicycle & pedestrian corridors that connect significant local landscapes, public facilities, neighborhoods and the downtown core.

- 8.1 Expand the network of shared-use recreational trails for walking, hiking and cycling to promote connectivity between parks, neighborhoods and public amenities.
- 8.2 Provide a recreational trails service standard of 0.25 miles per 1,000 persons.
- 8.3 Integrate the siting of proposed trail segments into the development review process; Require development projects along designated trail routes to be designed to incorporate the trail as part of the project.
- 8.4 Increase coordination between the City and Elephant Butte Irrigation District (EBID) to provide trails along EBID drains and laterals throughout the City.
- 8.5 Coordinate with the Bureau of Land Management and others to identify and provide for trails along arroyos.
- 8.6 Work with local agencies, utilities and private landholders to secure trail easements and access to open space for trail connections; Assist and support the work of local agencies to secure trail easements and access to open space for trail connections.
- 8.7 Provide trailhead accommodations, as appropriate, to include parking, wayfinding signage, restrooms and other amenities.

Administration & Management

Goal 9: Provide clear and direct leadership that supports and promotes the Department to the community, stakeholders, partners and City Council.

- 9.1 Provide sufficient financial and staff resources to maintain the overall parks and recreation system to high standards.
- 9.2 Inform all levels of staff of the direction of the Master Plan and allow for staff input, encouraging buy-in and knowledge from all staff members.



- 9.3 Assign responsibilities, resources and timeframes in annual work plans as necessary to progress on the goals and policies of the Master Plan.
- 9.4 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) and the New Mexico Recreation and Park Association.
- 9.5 Develop a comprehensive and cohesive marketing image, i.e. style, formats, message, etc. in marketing materials.
- 9.6 Periodically evaluate user satisfaction and numerical use of parks, facilities and programs; Share this information with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board as part of the decision making process to revise program offerings or renovate facilities.
- 9.7 Work with the Convention and Visitors' Bureau and the Chamber of Commerce to development information packets that promote city services to tourists and new residents.
- 9.8 Prepare an annual report providing information to the public about parks and recreation funding and stewardship of tax dollars and fees and charges and distribute the report as widely as possible.
- 9.9 Continue to seek partnerships with other public agencies, such as the school district, county and MPO, and the private sector to meet the demand for recreational facilities in Las Cruces.
- 9.10 Pursue alternative funding options and dedicated revenues for the acquisition and development of parks and facilities; such as increased GRT and modifications to development regulations requiring a process and criteria to dedicate/construct parks with new subdivisions, as well as through private donation, sponsorships, partnerships, county, state and federal grant sources, among others.

Goal 10: Ensure that new park and recreational facilities are provided concurrent with new development.

- 10.1 New development shall provide funds or parkland for concurrent park development and maintenance.
- 10.2 Coordinate with the Community Development Department to prepare a policy that requires on-site (or nearby off-site) development of recreation facilities or appropriate and usable parkland in conjunction with the approval of any development project involving more than a determined number of new dwelling units.
- 10.3 Maximize the multiple-use aspects of arroyos, detention ponds, utility easements, etc. by preserving and enhancing the natural and ecological value of these lands.



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Chapter 8. Capital Improvements Plan

The following Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) lists all park and facility projects considered for the next six years. The majority of these projects entail the acquisition and development of parks and athletic fields, renovating or repairing existing facilities and expanding trail corridors. Based on survey results and other feedback, Las Cruces residents have indicated an interest in park facility upgrades and expansion as short-term priorities, and the proposed CIP is reflective of that desire. The following table summarizes the aggregate capital estimates by park types for the next six years.

Table 22. Capital Improvements Plan Expenditures Summary

Park Type	Acquisition	Development	Renovation	Sum
Athletic Fields	\$ -	\$ 1,005,000	\$ 9,835,000	\$ 10,840,000
Community Parks	\$ 12,000,000	\$ 8,680,000	\$ 2,575,000	\$ 23,255,000
Facilities	\$ -	\$ 23,000,000	\$ 850,000	\$ 23,850,000
General Upgrades	\$ -	\$ 2,060,000	\$ 5,730,000	\$ 7,790,000
Neighborhood Parks	\$ 2,825,000	\$ 4,485,593	\$ 1,400,000	\$ 8,710,593
Pocket Parks	\$ 350,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 350,000
Special Use Parks	\$ -	\$ 2,760,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 2,800,000
Trails	\$ -	\$ 696,000	\$ -	\$ 696,000
TOTAL	\$ 15,175,000	\$ 42,686,593	\$ 20,430,000	\$ 78,291,593

Also, the CIP adds a significant land acquisition program to ensure that sufficient lands are available for outdoor recreation as the Las Cruces area continues to grow in population. Acquisition target areas have been identified and ranked in priority. Emphasis has been placed on securing community park acquisitions to serve the greatest population and then on filling gaps in neighborhood and pocket park lands distribution within the city limits.

The following CIP project list provides brief project descriptions and priority ranking to assist staff in preparing future capital budget requests.



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**Las Cruces Parks & Recreation Master Plan
6-Year Capital Improvement Plan
2013-2018**

Park Type	Park Site	Project Description	Activity	Funding	2013	2014	2015	2015	2015	2017	2018	Sum
Athletic	Apodaca Ball Fields	Irrigation system upgrade and replacement	R	B, GF	\$ 275,000	\$ 400,000						\$ 400,000
Community	Apodaca Park	Repair existing grandstands, new shade canopy, conduit for future new sound system.	R	CIR								\$ 275,000
Community	Apodaca Park	Irrigation Replacement	R	B			\$ 150,000					\$ 150,000
Community	Apodaca Park	Walking path surrounding park connecting amenities	D	PIF, GF, B		\$ 75,000	\$ 50,000					\$ 125,000
Athletic	Bellfield/Soccer Field	Replace pool with splash pad	R	TBD		\$ 2,500,000	\$ 250,000				\$ 2,000,000	\$ 250,000
Athletic	Brangan Ball Field	Field Renovations & Upgrades	R	B			\$ 125,000		\$ 250,000			\$ 475,000
Athletic	Field of Dreams Soccer	Irrigation system upgrade and replacement	R	B, GF				\$ 35,000		\$ 1,500,000		\$ 1,500,000
Athletic	Hadley Complex	Bleacher Replacement	R	B		\$ 200,000				\$ 125,000		\$ 325,000
Athletic	Hadley Complex	Electrical (special events)	D	CIR			\$ 250,000					\$ 250,000
Athletic	Hadley Complex	Parking Phase II	D	B			\$ 30,000					\$ 30,000
Athletic	Hadley Complex	Additional street trees and irrigation on Hadley, Walnut and Hermosa	D	B								\$ 100,000
Athletic	Harty Field	Restroom Additions	D	TBD		\$ 175,000						\$ 175,000
Athletic	High Noon Soccer Complex	Irrigation system upgrade and replacement	R	B, GF				\$ 900,000				\$ 900,000
Athletic	High Noon Soccer Fields	Includes bleachers, complex entry plaza, parking improvements, restroom, storage, concession stand.	D	B, PIF					\$ 250,000			\$ 250,000
Athletic	Meag Park	Irrigation system upgrade and replacement	R	B, GF			\$ 600,000					\$ 600,000
Athletic	Paz Park	Irrigation system upgrade and replacement	R	B, GF			\$ 575,000					\$ 575,000
Athletic	Proverbio / Van Dams Multi-Purpose Field	Irrigation system upgrade and replacement	R	B, GF					\$ 350,000			\$ 350,000
Athletic	Soldados Multi-Purpose Field	Irrigation system upgrade and replacement	R	B, GF			\$ 3,200,000					\$ 3,200,000
Community	Burn Lake/Esslinger Park	Phase II to include picnic shelters, parking, ADA access to water, walking trail, erosion control and aerators. Future phases may include sport courts, dog park, additional walking trails, group picnic shelter, specialty gardens, demonstration garden and improved access.	D	B, SAP, FED, PIF, CP#8	\$ 815,000							\$ 815,000
Community	Chandler Tank Park	Working with developer, may include soccer fields, tennis courts, disc golf course, parking, restrooms. (Gap Area #3)	D	TBD						\$ 375,000		\$ 375,000
Community	Community Park Acquisition	Acquire 40 - 50 acres (Gap Area #1)	A	PIF		\$ 4,000,000						\$ 4,000,000
Community	Community Park Acquisition	Acquire 40 - 50 acres (Gap Area #2)	A	B			\$ 3,500,000					\$ 3,500,000
Community	Community Park Acquisition	Acquire 40 - 50 acres (Gap Area #5)	A	PIF				\$ 150,000			\$ 4,500,000	\$ 4,500,000
Community	Desert Trails Community Park	Includes parking lots, picnic facilities, restrooms, play equipment, native vegetation restoration.	D	PIF, B	\$ 340,000	\$ 150,000	\$ 150,000				\$ 4,500,000	\$ 790,000
Community	Frerger Park	Irrigation system upgrade and replacement	R	PIF				\$ 500,000				\$ 500,000
Community	Legends West Phase II	Additional walking path and street trees, picnic area, play equipment, lighting, sport facilities.	D	PIF	\$ 50,000							\$ 50,000
Community	North Las Cruces Park	Drinking fountain, picnic shelter, lighting, security camera, future basketball court and entry landscape planning.	D	PIF	\$ 75,000							\$ 75,000
Community	Valley View Park	Irrigation system upgrade and replacement	R	B		\$ 500,000						\$ 500,000
Community	Veterans Park	Walls & Pathways	D	B				\$ 150,000				\$ 150,000
Community	Veterans Park	Playground	R	B							\$ 75,000	\$ 75,000
Community	Veterans Park	Irrigation system upgrade and replacement	R	B								\$ 75,000
Community	Waterfalls Park	Community park design and development	R	PIF, B		\$ 350,000	\$ 1,000,000			\$ 750,000		\$ 2,350,000
Community	Young Park	Pond and Structures	D	B							\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000
Community	Arc Life Center	Restrooms	R	B								\$ 325,000
Facility	Benavidez Community Center	Building renovations	R	B, GF								\$ 40,000
Facility	East Mesa Community Center	Phase 2 expansion to include multi-purpose space and gymnasium	D	B, SAP, G, Priv								\$ 8,000,000
Facility	Frerger Pool	Multi-purpose community center with gymnasium	D	B, SAP, G, Priv								\$ 5,000,000
Facility	Regional Rec & Aquatic Center	Outdoor patio space with furnishings.	R	TBD			\$ 5,000,000				\$ 8,000,000	\$ 8,000,000
General	Community Gardens		D	B, GF				\$ 685,000				\$ 685,000
General	Downtown Gateways		D	TBD						\$ 125,000		\$ 125,000
General	Gateway Entry Points Signage	"Welcome to Las Cruces" monumental signage at entries to the City.	D	B, SAP, FED							\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000
General	General Park Renovations		D	B, SAP, FED								\$ 2,000,000
General	General Park Tree Planting		D	CIR		\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000			\$ 50,000		\$ 250,000
General	General Playground Upgrades		R	TBD		\$ 200,000	\$ 200,000			\$ 500,000		\$ 1,500,000
General	Parking Lot/Trail Renovations		R	B		\$ 10,000	\$ 15,000					\$ 45,000
General	Tennis/Sport Court Resurface/Lights		D	B, GF				\$ 1,275,000			\$ 1,125,000	\$ 2,400,000
General	Utilities/Irrigation Upgrades		R	B, CIR				\$ 580,000				\$ 630,000
General		Central Irrigation Control Implementation Study	R	TBD		\$ 50,000						\$ 50,000

Park Type	Park Site	Project Description	Activity	Funding					Sum		
				2013	2014	2015	2016	2017		2018	
General	Utilities/Irrigation Upgrades	Standardized Parks and Recreation Department Specifications, details, design guidelines	R	TBD	\$ 150,000	\$ 150,000				\$ 300,000	
Neighborhood	East Mesa Area Park	Nature trails, sport fields, parking lots, restrooms.	D	PIF	\$ 100,000					\$ 100,000	
Neighborhood	East Mesa Area Park	Design	D	PIF	\$ 191,000					\$ 191,000	
Neighborhood	Neighborhood Park Acquisition	Acquire 3 - 5 acres (Gap Area #2)	A	PIF	\$ 300,000					\$ 300,000	
Neighborhood	Neighborhood Park Acquisition	Acquire 3 - 5 acres (Gap Area #4)	A	PIF						\$ 250,000	
Neighborhood	Neighborhood Park Acquisition	Acquire 3 - 5 acres (Gap Area #6)	A	PIF	\$ 225,000	\$ 225,000				\$ 450,000	
Neighborhood	Neighborhood Park Acquisition	Acquire 3 - 5 acres (Gap Area #7)	A	PIF	\$ 300,000					\$ 300,000	
Neighborhood	Neighborhood Park Acquisition	Acquire 3 - 5 acres (Gap Area #8)	A	PIF			\$ 300,000			\$ 300,000	
Neighborhood	Neighborhood Park Acquisition	Acquire 3 - 5 acres (Gap Area #9)	A	PIF			\$ 300,000			\$ 300,000	
Neighborhood	Neighborhood Park Acquisition	Acquire 3 - 5 acres (Gap Area #11)	A	B				\$ 200,000		\$ 200,000	
Neighborhood	Neighborhood Park Acquisition	Acquire 3 - 5 acres (Gap Area #12)	A	B				\$ 250,000		\$ 250,000	
Neighborhood	Neighborhood Park Acquisition	Acquire 3 - 5 acres (Gap Area #13)	A	PIF				\$ 225,000		\$ 225,000	
Neighborhood	Neighborhood Park Acquisition	Acquire 3 - 5 acres (Gap Area #14)	A	PIF				\$ 250,000		\$ 250,000	
Neighborhood	Neighborhood Park Development	Park master plan and development (Gap Area #2)	D	PIF	\$ 500,000					\$ 500,000	
Neighborhood	Neighborhood Park Development	Park master plan and development (Gap Area #4)	D	PIF			\$ 625,000			\$ 625,000	
Neighborhood	Neighborhood Park Development	Park master plan and development (Gap Area #7)	D	PIF				\$ 450,000		\$ 450,000	
Neighborhood	Neighborhood Park Development	Park master plan and development (Gap Area #11)	D	B				\$ 450,000		\$ 450,000	
Neighborhood	Neighborhood Park Development	Park master plan and development (Gap Area #13)	D	B				\$ 500,000		\$ 500,000	
Neighborhood	Neighborhood Park Development	Park master plan and development (Gap Area #14)	D	B				\$ 550,000		\$ 550,000	
Neighborhood	North Del Rey Park	Neighborhood park design	D	PIF	\$ 35,000					\$ 35,000	
Neighborhood	Messila Park	Complete amenities	D	PIF	\$ 47,000					\$ 47,000	
Neighborhood	Paseo de Onate Park	Design and construct neighborhood park including play equipment, picnic shelter, trail improvements, sidewalk, crosswalks, lighting.	D	PIF	\$ 238,000					\$ 238,000	
Neighborhood	Pioneer Park	Gazebos	R	B			\$ 150,000			\$ 150,000	
Neighborhood	Pioneer Park	Amenities	R	B			\$ 150,000			\$ 150,000	
Neighborhood	Pueblos at Alameda	Neighborhood park.	R	B						\$ 49,563	
Neighborhood	Undeek Park	Reconstruction	D	TBD						\$ 1,000,000	
Neighborhood	Valley Verde	ADA Pathway	R	B			\$ 50,000			\$ 50,000	
Neighborhood	West Mesa Park		D	B						\$ 600,000	
Pocket	Pocket Park Acquisition	Acquire 1 - 2 acres (Gap Area #10)	D	A				\$ 200,000		\$ 200,000	
Pocket	Pocket Park Acquisition	Acquire 1 - 2 acres (Gap Area #15)	D	A						\$ 150,000	
Special	Aerthry Ranges		D	TBD						\$ 100,000	
Special	Airplane / Vehicle Remote Control Park	Install/replace lighting	D	TBD	\$ 50,000					\$ 50,000	
Special	BMX lighting		R	Prv, G, B						\$ 40,000	
Special	Butterfield Shooting Range		D	B						\$ 125,000	
Special	Dog Park #2	East Mesa area, 1-3 acres	D	Prv, B						\$ 20,000	
Special	Dog Park #3	North Las Cruces area, 1-3 acres	D	Prv, B						\$ 20,000	
Special	Dog Park #4	West Las Cruces area, 1-3 acres	D	Prv, B						\$ 20,000	
Special	North Alameda Arroyo Trail	Walking and biking trail, accessible signage, trail head, native vegetation restoration.	D	PIF, SAP	\$ 321,000			\$ 20,000		\$ 341,000	
Trail	Outfall Channel Trail	Walking and biking trail, street crossings, signage, site furnishings.	D	PIF						\$ 225,000	
Trail	Twin Parks	Design and construct recreational trail in medians on Engler Road. Include trail, fitness stations, drinking fountains, site furnishings, signage, curb extensions, crosswalks, irrigation, landscape planting.	D	PIF	\$ 150,000					\$ 150,000	
					\$ 2,300,563	\$ 10,676,000	\$ 19,315,000	\$ 18,415,000	\$ 3,245,000	\$ 23,740,000	\$ 78,291,563

Code Funding Source
 SAP State Appropriations
 PIF Park Impact Fees
 CIR City of Las Cruces Infrastructure Rehabilitation
 B Bonds funds
 Prv Private funds; Donations
 G Grants
 FED Federal Legislative Appropriations
 GF General Fund / Local Share
 TBD To Be Determined: Other funding sources needed for replacement, rehabilitation and general maintenance

Chapter 9. Implementation & Funding

Implementation in Context

Several strategies exist to improve service delivery for the Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department; however, clear decisions must be made in an environment of competing interests and limited resources. A strong community will is necessary to bring many of the projects listed in this Plan to life. The following considerations are presented to offer near-term direction on implementation and as a means to continue dialogue between the City and its stakeholders.

Given that the operating and capital budgets for the Department are limited, the implementation measures identified below look primarily to non-General Fund options. Additionally, a review of likely funding options is attached as Appendix F and includes local financing, federal grants, acquisition methods and others.

Action Plan & Funding

Volunteer & Community-Based Action

The public process for this Plan has demonstrated that many residents want to be involved in improving the City's park system and want to have their energies guided through coordination with the Department. Community sponsored park beautification, clean-ups and planting projects should continue to be used to engage residents and create a stronger sense of identity and ownership in the park system. The parks program can benefit from on-going coordination and involvement from local service and civic groups, such as Kiwanis, Rotary and scout troops. The City should also prepare a revolving list of potential small works or volunteer-appropriate projects to post on its website, while also reaching out to the university and high schools to encourage student involvement.

Interagency Coordination & Collaboration

Specific projects and goals identified in this Plan demand a high degree of coordination and collaboration with other City departments and outside agencies. Coordination with the Public Works and Community Development departments and with the Elephant Butte Irrigation District can increase the potential of discrete actions toward the implementation of the proposed trail network, which relies heavily on street right-of-way or irrigation channel enhancements, and in review of development applications with consideration toward potential parkland acquisition areas, planned trail corridors and the need for easement or developer set-aside requests. However, to more fully extend the extent of the park system and recreation programs, additional partnerships and collaborations should be sought and maintained.

As was noted through discussions with stakeholders and the general public, the existing relationship between the City and school district has become strained and continued efforts are necessary to re-establish a collaborative relationship centered around the broader community and youth benefits derived from joint use of athletic fields and recreational facilities.



Additionally, the City should engage local health care service providers, such as MountainView Regional Medical Center, Memorial Medical Center and the Doña Ana County Health and Human Services Department, along with private fitness clubs and others for support and funding to promote programming and marketing collateral geared toward active and healthy lifestyles. For example, working collaboratively this group could more directly cross-market services and programs and help expand resident understanding of local wellness and fitness options. A clearinghouse-type effort could help reduce any confusion or lack of awareness about the programs offered and which agency is sponsoring them. As another example of how to promote health and wellness, some municipalities have invested in recreation “passport” programs where users obtain stamps from different classes and activities as a means to increase enrollment and encourage residents to stay fit. The printing and promotion of the passport can be sponsored by local health care providers and can be linked to incentives or discounts on other services. Separately, other agencies have partnered with regional hospitals or clinics to fund walking guides and trail maps highlighting the health benefits of these activities.

Local Funding

The broader assessment of community needs suggests that additional, dedicated funding will be required to finance growth in and critical renovations to the parks system. A short-term bond or levy could be structured to maximize voter support to include parkland acquisitions and development, trail development and general park element upgrades. This will require additional review for the compilation of a specific funding package, along with an assessment of potential revenue, political willingness and potential voter support. Another option is to consider the dedication of all or a portion of the available Gross Receipt Tax increments to support system renovations and/or provide the local match to the park impact fee program. Based on the 2010/11 Budget, the City currently imposes 1.25% of the allowable 1.5% GRT. The remaining ¼ percent could generate approximately \$4.2 million annually. If enacted, this percentage could be shared between broader system enhancements and those improvements directly related to tourism and economic stimulus (i.e., sport tournament upgrades and improvements).

Park Impact Fees

Impact fees are one-time payments used to construct system improvements needed to accommodate new development. An impact fee represents new growth’s fair share of capital facility needs. By law, impact fees can only be used for capital improvements, not operating or maintenance costs. Impact fees are subject to legal standards, which require fulfillment of three key elements (need, benefit, and proportionality) and are further defined in the New Mexico Development Fees Act. The City of Las Cruces periodically updates its park impact fees (PIF), per state statute and to maintain a current rate schedule.

TischlerBise, a member of the project team for the broader Parks and Recreation Master Plan, led and prepared a park impact fee study to re-assess the City’s potential impact fees in support of park and recreation facilities. The analysis was organized to address the requirements of state statute and included an equitable and proportionate assessment to help fund the requisite facilities. TischlerBise documented appropriate demand indicators by type of development for the capital improvement plan and park impact fees. Specific capital costs were identified using local data and costs. It is important to note that this Parks and Recreation Master Plan contains recommended levels of service for various park facilities; however, the proposed impact fees are based on the actual level of service for parks and recreation facilities, which are lower than recommended levels of service. The complete study is provided in Appendix G.



As described in the PIF study, the proposed fee is outlined to help the City meet its current level of service into the future. Options exist for the final implementation and approval of these fees by City Council with regard to how they are applied and for which City priorities. For example, the study establishes rates for each major capital development category, and Council may elect to implement specific elements (i.e., Neighborhood Park Land, Special Facility Land, Trails, etc) or any combination thereof. Using the projected population estimate for 2020 and the full PIF rate as outlined in the study, the revenue from the proposed impact fees may generate up to \$29 million to support the expansion of park, recreation and trail facilities in direct response to community growth. Coordination with and express approval of City Council is required to adopt the impact fee rate(s) as proposed in the accompanying study.

Developer Regulations

Another option to address the existing and growing deficiency of certain types of parkland and trails is to negotiate more aggressively with residential developers and/or establish additional regulations pertaining to a combined approach of land transfers and impact fee payments. The current City code accommodates impact fee credits for transferred land and a payment-in-lieu option; however, the code does not directly accommodate a combined approach whereby the developer would be obligated to provide and build a neighborhood or pocket park to serve the subdivision in addition to paying a lesser, pro-rated impact fee to fund community-wide capital facility improvements (i.e., community parks, recreation facilities, etc). Such an approach would facilitate an improved distribution of small, walk-to parks which represent the backbone of the park system, while also supporting payment for larger community parks which represent the workhorses of the system and accommodate athletics, tournaments and special events. The City should explore an amendment to its development code to establish regulations pertaining to such a combined approach for parkland dedication/development and pro-rated impact fees. This approach could be focused toward larger development projects involving more than 20 or 25 new dwelling units. It could also be limited to exempt large mixed-use developments in the downtown area from developing on-site park or recreation facilities. Instead, in-lieu fees may be accepted for such mixed-use developments, to be spent on designated park, recreation or open space resources within the City that serve the development.

Grants

Several federal grant programs are available on a competitive basis, including those available through U.S. Departments of Transportation, Fish & Wildlife and Agriculture, among others. Pursuing grants is not a panacea for park system funding, since grants are both competitive and often require a significant percentage of local funds to match the request submitted to the granting agency, which depending on the grant program can be as much as 50% of the total project budget. The City of Las Cruces should continue to leverage local resources to the greatest extent by pursuing grants independently, and in cooperation with Doña Ana County departments and other agencies (e.g., MPO) as appropriate to best position itself for competitive review. Joint pursuit of funding for recreational trail project implementation would be an ideal opportunity for such collaborations.



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Appendix A. References



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Appendix B. Survey Results

The following report provides an overview of the community survey conducted as part of this Plan.



2011 Community Interest and Opinion Survey for the City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department Executive Summary Report

Overview and Methodology

The City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department conducted a Community Interest and Opinion Survey during May and June of 2011. The purpose of the survey was to gather input to help determine parks, trails, open space and recreation priorities for the community. The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout the City of Las Cruces. The survey was administered by a combination of mail and phone.

Leisure Vision worked extensively with the City of Las Cruces officials in the development of the survey questionnaire. This work allowed the survey to be tailored to issues of strategic importance to effectively plan the future system.

The seven-page survey was mailed to a random sample of 2,000 households in the City of Las Cruces. Approximately three days after the surveys were mailed, each household that received a survey also received an automated voice message encouraging them to complete the survey. In addition, about two weeks after the surveys were mailed, Leisure Vision began contacting households by phone. Those who indicated they had not returned the survey were given the option of completing it by phone.

The goal was to obtain a total of at least 400 completed surveys from City of Las Cruces households. This goal was accomplished, with a total of 403 surveys having been completed. The results of the random sample of 403 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least $\pm 4.7\%$.

The following pages summarize major survey findings:



Major Findings

- **Visitation of Parks.** Eighty-one percent (81%) of households indicated that they have visited any of the City of Las Cruces parks during the past 12 months. Of this 81% of households, 75% indicated that they would rate the overall condition of A.L. parks visited as either "excellent" (19%) or "good" (56%). It should also be noted that 23% of respondents rated the condition of A.L. parks as "fair", while only 2% rated them as "poor".
- **Use or Visitation of City of Las Cruces Recreation Facilities in City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Parks.** Playgrounds, 46%, was the most frequently mentioned City of Las Cruces recreation facility used or visited over the past 12 months by respondent households. Other frequently mentioned recreation facilities used or visited over the past 12 months include: walking, hiking, and biking trails (42%) and picnicking areas (36%).

Based on the sum of their top three choices, the three City of Las Cruces parks and recreation facilities that respondent households visit most often include: walking, hiking, and biking trails (31%) and playgrounds (31%).
- **Use or Visitation of Recreation Facilities by Las Cruces Households.** The highest percentage of households indicated the Las Cruces Regional Aquatic Center (31%) as a recreation facility their household has used or visited over the past 12 months. The second most frequently mentioned recreation facility was the Meerscheidt Recreation Center (28%).

Based on the sum of their top three choices, the recreation facilities households indicated that they visited the most often include: Las Cruces Regional Aquatic Center (56%) and Meerscheidt Recreation Center (53%).
- **Participation in Recreation Programs.** Twenty-eight percent (28%) of respondents indicated that household member(s) participated in recreation programs offered by the City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department. Of this 28%, 81% of households indicated that they would rate the overall quality of the recreation programs participated in as either "excellent" (23%) or "good" (58%).
- **Reasons Preventing Households From Using Parks, Trails, Recreation Facilities or Programs.** "I do not know what is being offered" (24%) was the most frequently mentioned reason that prevents households from using parks, trails, recreation facilities or programs.
- **Need for Parks and Recreation Facilities.** There are four parks and recreation facilities that over 50% of households have a need for: walking and biking trails (65%), small neighborhood parks (63%), picnic areas and shelters (53%), and large community-wide parks (52%).

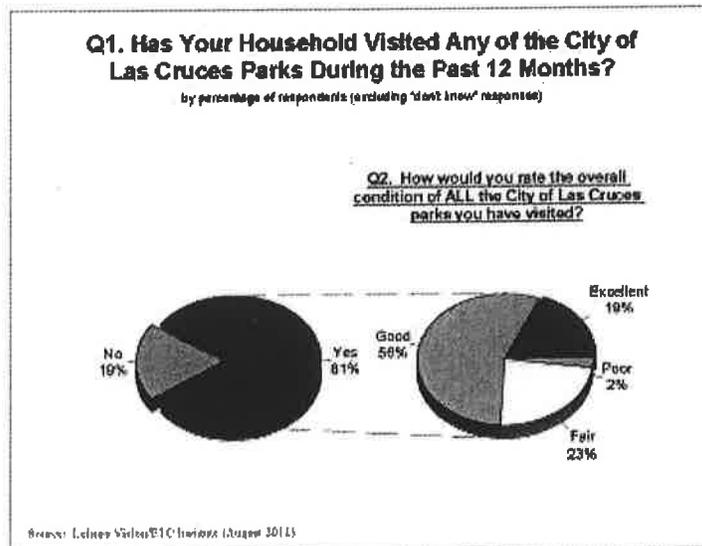
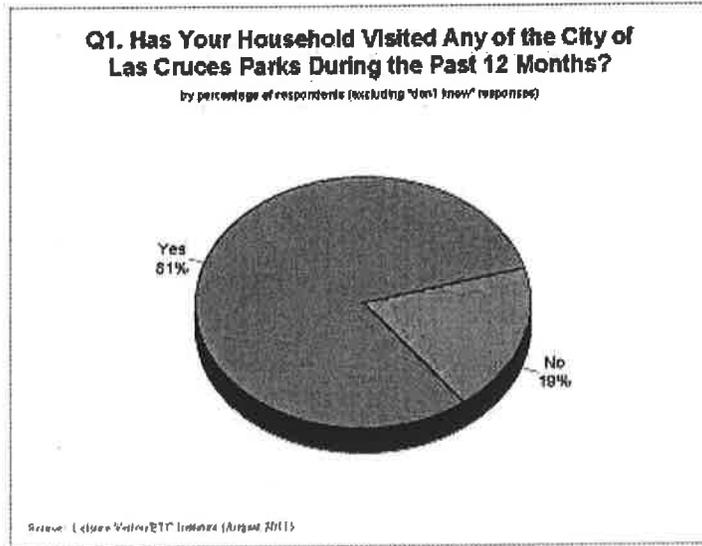


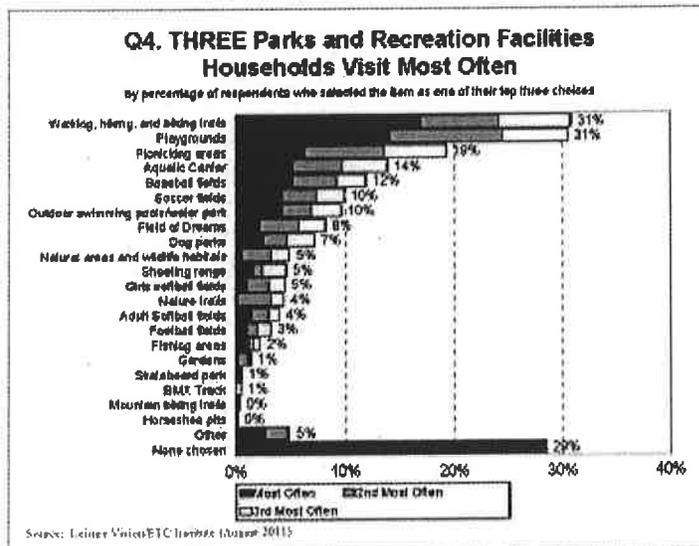
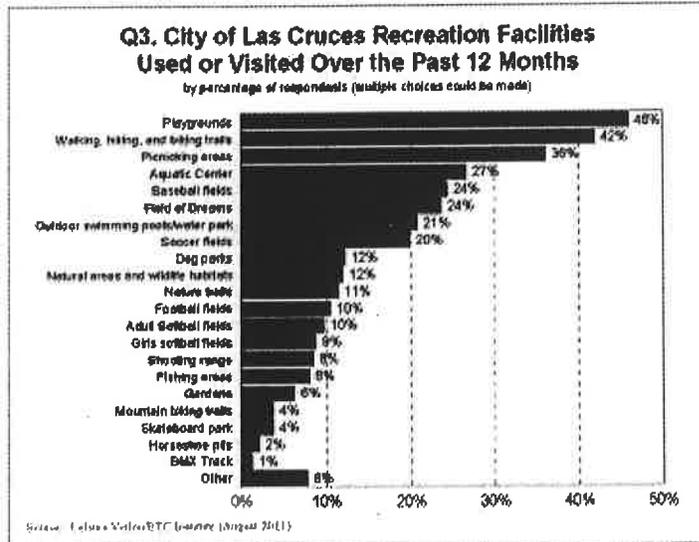
- **Most Important Parks and Recreation Facilities.** Based on the sum of their top four choices, the parks and recreation facilities that households rated as the most important are: walking and biking trails (43%) and small neighborhood parks (42%).
- **Need for Sports and Recreation Programs.** The sports and recreation programs that the highest percentage of households have a need for include: adult fitness and wellness programs (41%), programs for adults 50 years and older (33%), and adult water fitness programs (32%).
- **Most Important Sports and Recreation Programs.** Based on the sum of their top four choices, the sports and recreation programs that households rated as the most important include: programs for adults 50 years and older (42%) and adult fitness and wellness programs (41%).
- **Sports and Recreation Programs Participated in MOST OFTEN.** Based on the sum of their top four choices, the sports and recreation programs that households indicated that they participate in most often include: youth sports programs (43%) and adult fitness and wellness programs (37%).

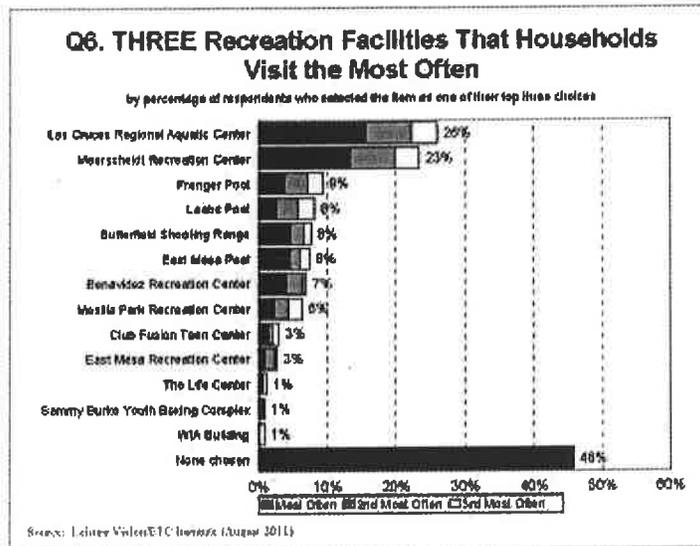
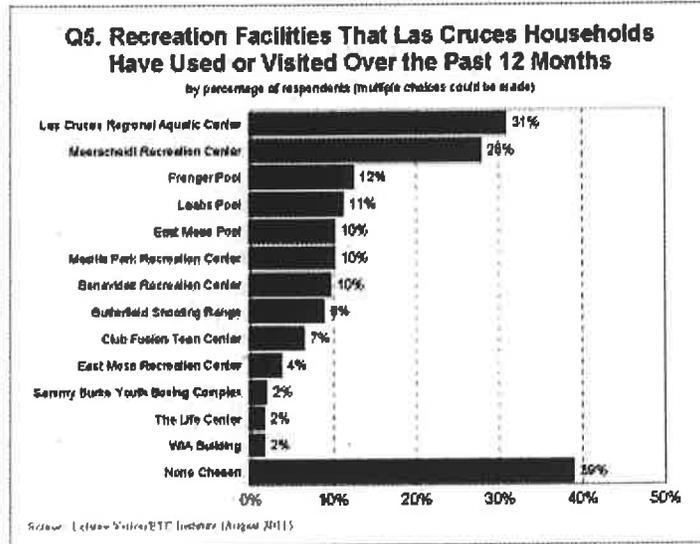
Other Findings.

- Most frequently mentioned ways households learn about City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department Programs and Activities:
 - Newspaper articles (57%)
 - From friends and neighbors (47%)
 - Newspaper advertisements (37%)
 - Radio (25%)
- Sixty-four percent (64%) of Respondents indicated that they would be willing to pay at least \$10-\$19 per year in additional property taxes to build and operate the types of parks, trails, aquatics, sports and recreation facilities most important to their household.
- Fifty-nine percent (59%) of respondents indicated that they would either "vote in favor" (37%) or "might vote in favor" (22%) if an election were held for a bond issue to be used ONLY for open space and parkland acquisition, construction of amenities and trails development in the City of Las Cruces.
- Fifty-six percent (56%) of respondents indicated that the City of Las Cruces should require developers to create neighborhood parks within their new developments.





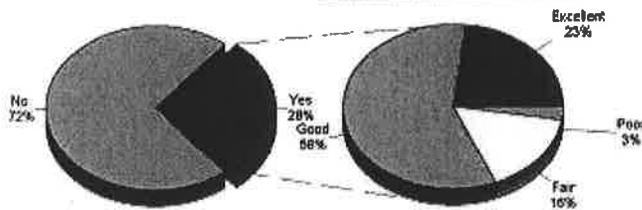




Q7. Whether Respondent Households Participated In Any Recreation Programs Offered by the City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department

by percentage of respondents (excluding "don't know" responses)

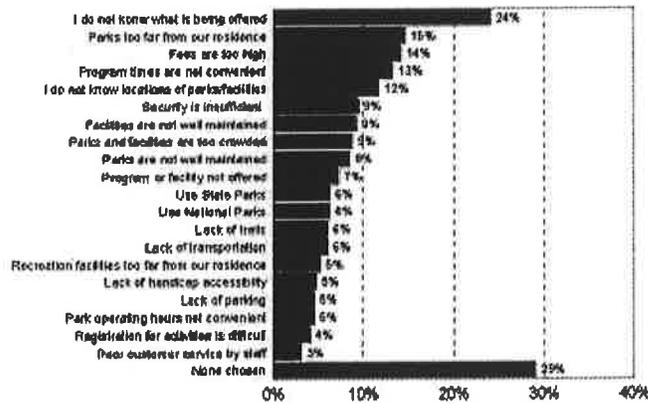
Q7a. How Would You Rate the Overall Quality of the Recreation Programs You and Members of Your Household Have Participated In?



Source: Leisure Values/ETC Institute (August 2011)

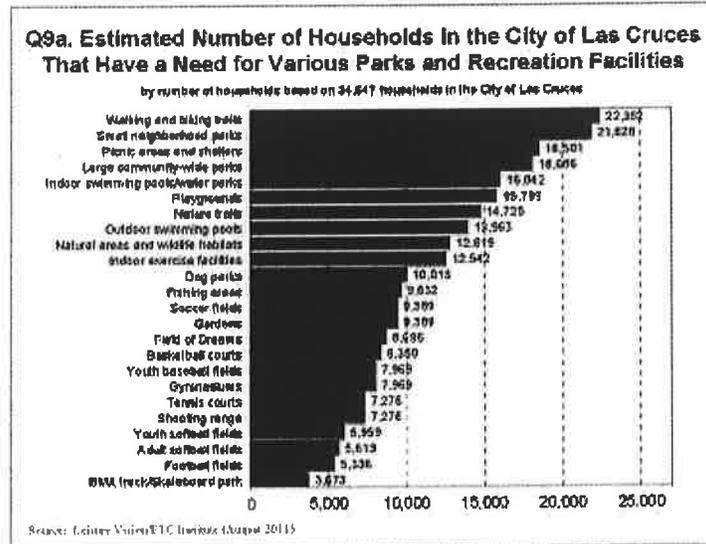
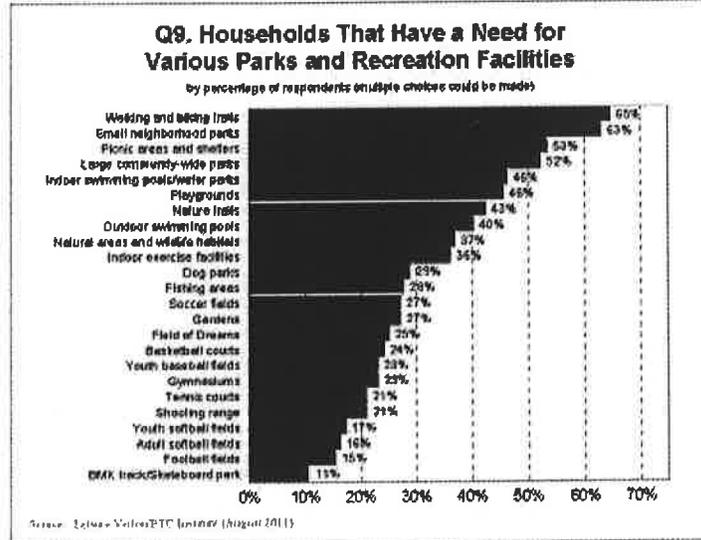
Q8. Reasons That Prevent Households From Using Parks, Trails, Recreation Facilities or Programs

by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



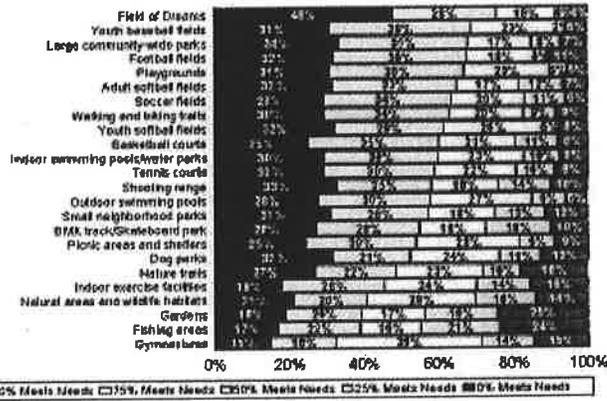
Source: Leisure Values/ETC Institute (August 2011)





Q9b. How Well Parks and Recreation Facilities in the City of Las Cruces Meet the Needs of Households

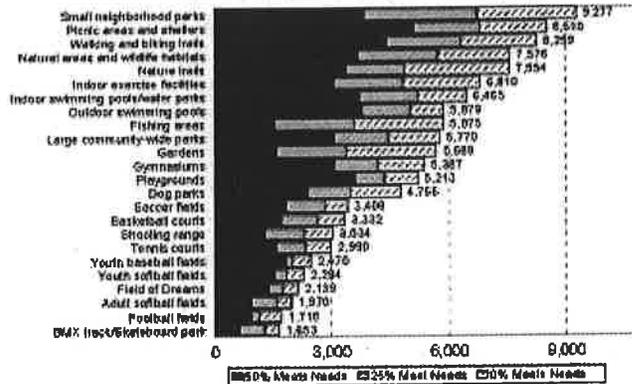
by percentage of respondents with a need for parks/facilities



Source: Survey of City of Las Cruces (August 2011)

Q9c. Estimated Number of Households in the City of Las Cruces Whose Needs for Parks and Recreation Facilities Are Only Being 50% Met or Less

by number of households based on 24,647 households in the City of Las Cruces

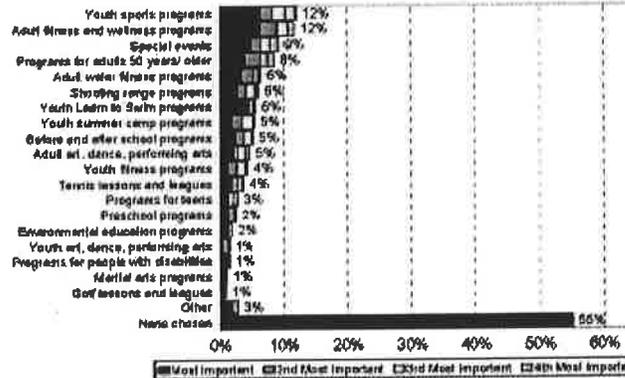


Source: Survey of City of Las Cruces (August 2011)



Q13. Sports and Recreation Facilities That Households Currently Participate In MOST OFTEN at Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department Facilities

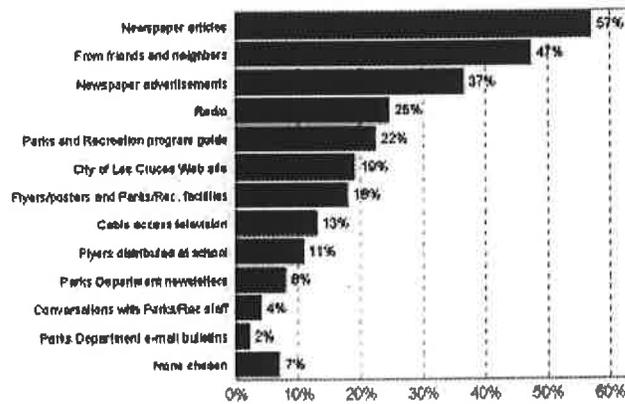
by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top four choices



Source: Las Cruces Values/EIC Survey (August 2011)

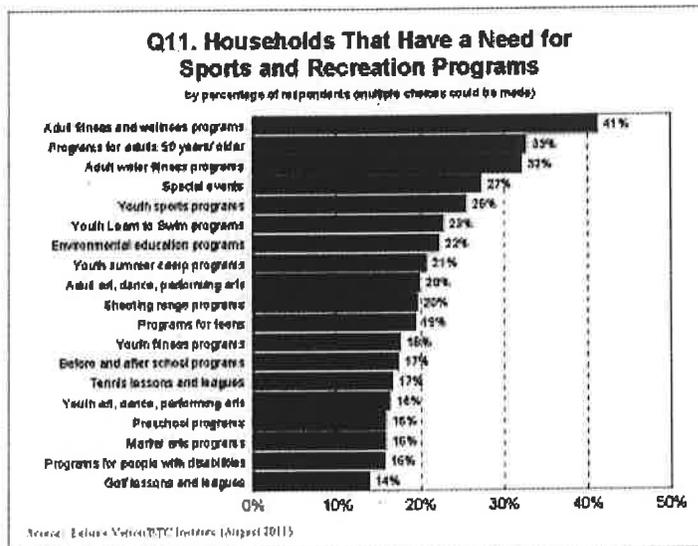
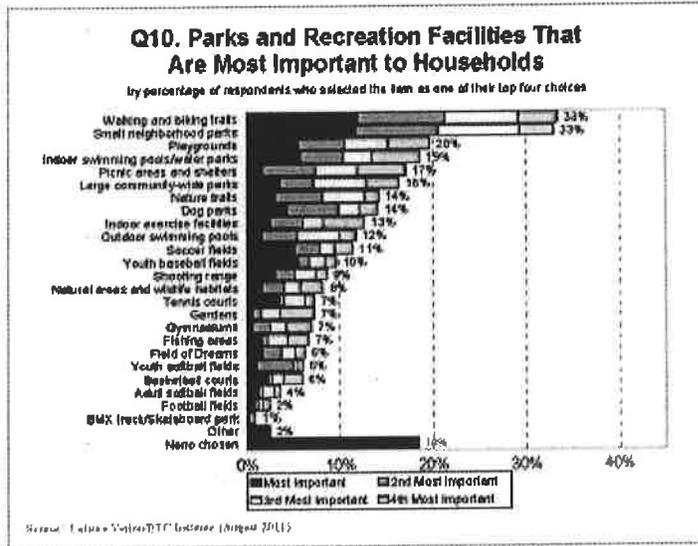
Q14. Ways Households Learn About City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department Programs and Activities

by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



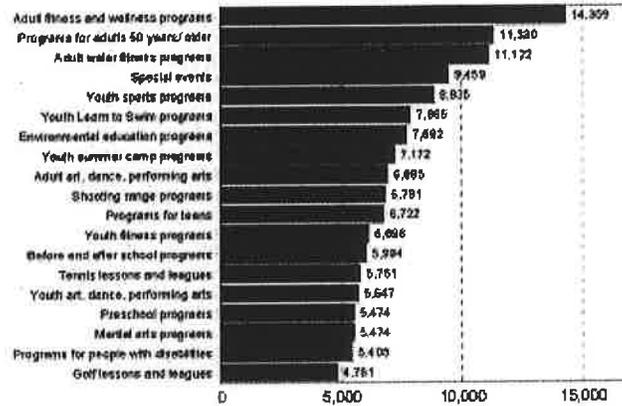
Source: Las Cruces Values/EIC Survey (August 2011)





Q11a. Estimated Number of Households in the City of Las Cruces That Have a Need for Various Sports and Recreation Programs

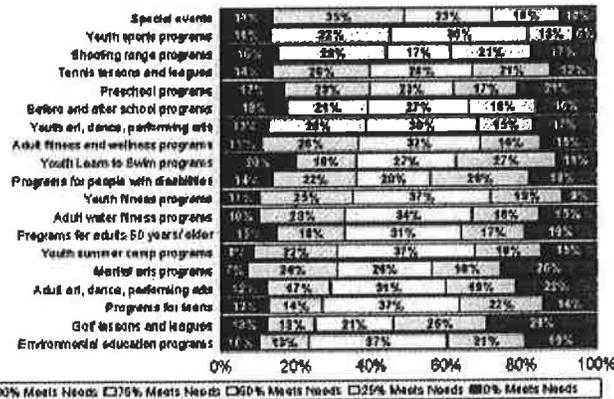
by number of households based on 34,647 households in the City of Las Cruces



Source: Estima ValuePAC Institute (August 2011)

Q11b. How Well Sports and Recreation Facilities in the City of Las Cruces Meet the Needs of Households

by percentage of respondents with a need for parks/facilities

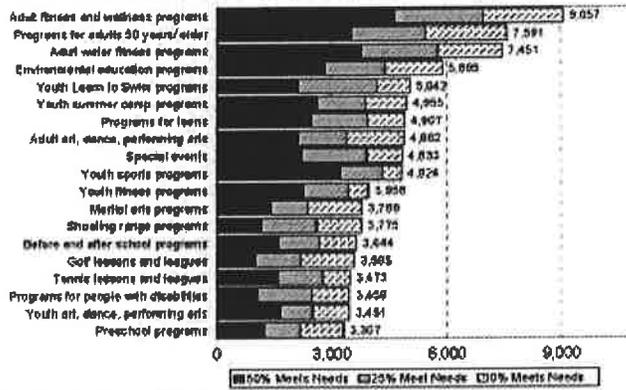


Source: Estima ValuePAC Institute (August 2011)



Q11c. Estimated Number of Households in the City of Las Cruces Whose Needs for Sports and Recreation Facilities Are Only Being 50% Met or Less

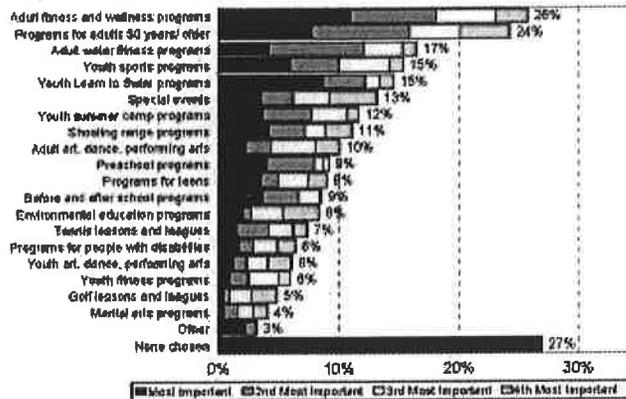
by number of households based on 24,847 households in the City of Las Cruces



Source: Leisure Values/EIC Surveys (August 2011)

Q12. Sports and Recreation Facilities That Are Most Important to Households

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top four choices

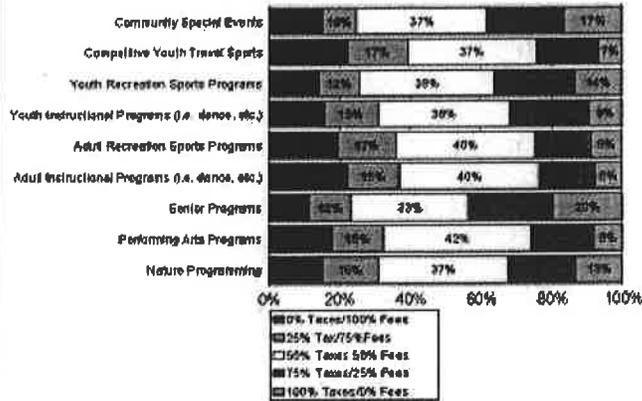


Source: Leisure Values/EIC Surveys (August 2011)



Q15. How Households Believe the Direct Costs Required to Run Activities/Programs Should Be Paid

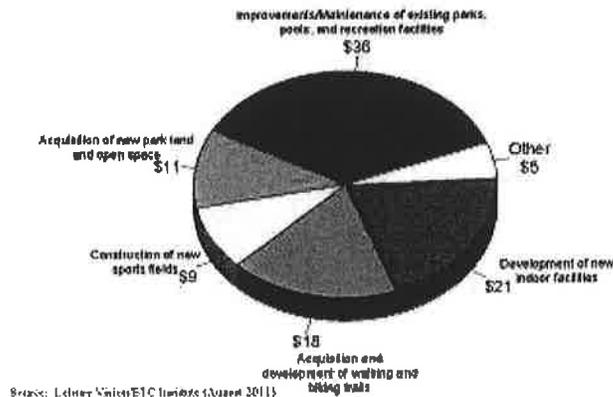
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Values/ETC Institute (August 2011)

Q16. If You Had An Additional \$100 to Invest in the City of Las Cruces Parks, Trails, Sports, and Recreation Facilities, How Would You Allocate the Funds?

by percentage of respondents

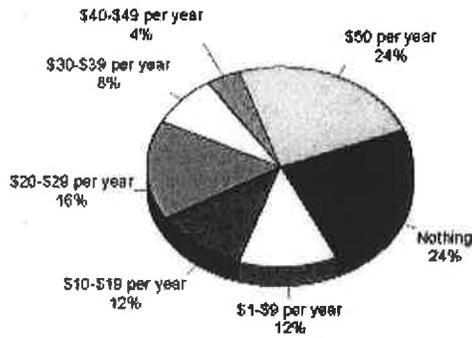


Source: Leisure Values/ETC Institute (August 2011)



Q17. The MAXIMUM Amount Respondents Indicated they Would Be Willing to Pay PER MONTH in Additional Property Taxes to Build and Operate the Types of Parks, Trails, Aquatics, Sports and Recreation Facilities Most Important to Their Household

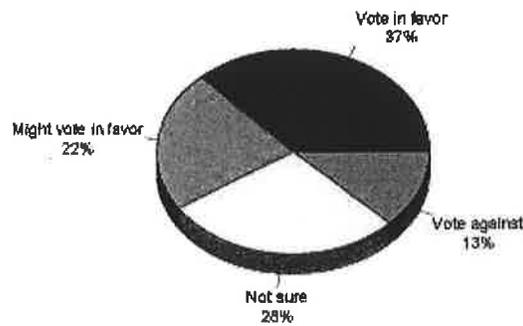
by percentage of respondents (excluding "don't know" responses)



Source: Leisure Values/EIC Issues (August 2011)

Q18. If an Election Were Held For a Bond Issue To Be Used ONLY for Open Space and Parkland Acquisition, Construction of Amenities and Trails Development in the City of Las Cruces, How Would You Vote in the Election?

by percentage of respondents (excluding "don't know" responses)

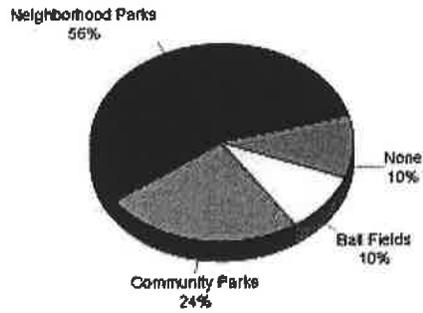


Source: Leisure Values/EIC Issues (August 2011)



Q19. The Way Households Feel the City of Las Cruces Should Require Developers to Create Within their Developments

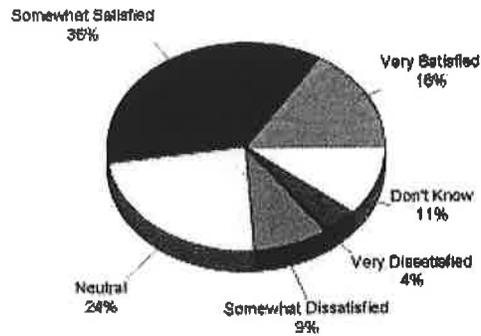
by percentage of respondents (excluding "don't know" responses)



Source: Latino Voices/ETC Institute (August 2011)

Q20. Household Value Received From the City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department

by percentage of respondents

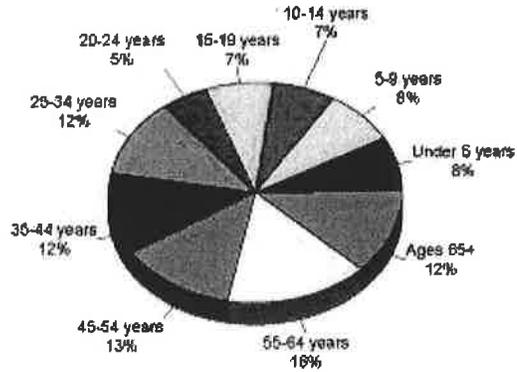


Source: Latino Voices/ETC Institute (August 2011)



Q21. Demographics: Ages of People In Household

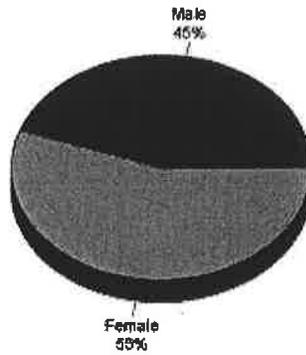
by percentage of household occupants



Source: Lehigh Valley/ETC Institute (August 2011)

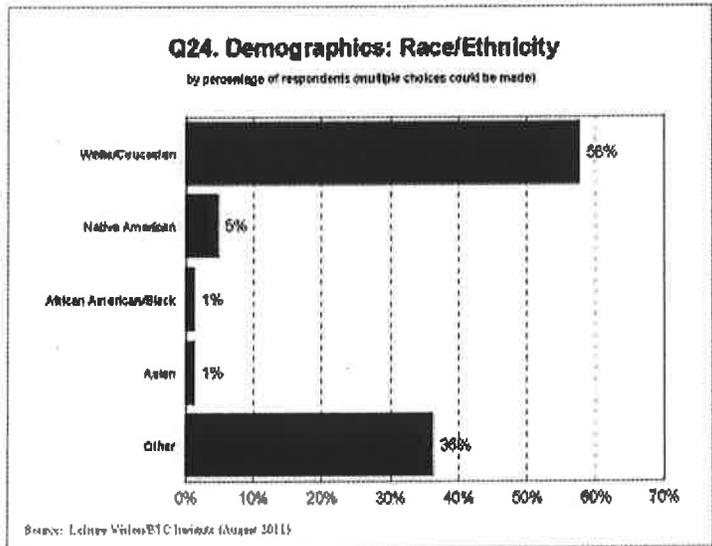
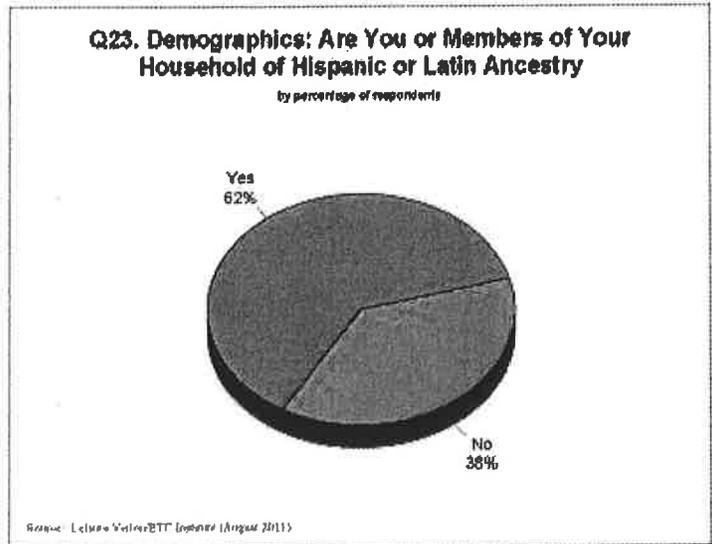
Q22. Demographics: Gender

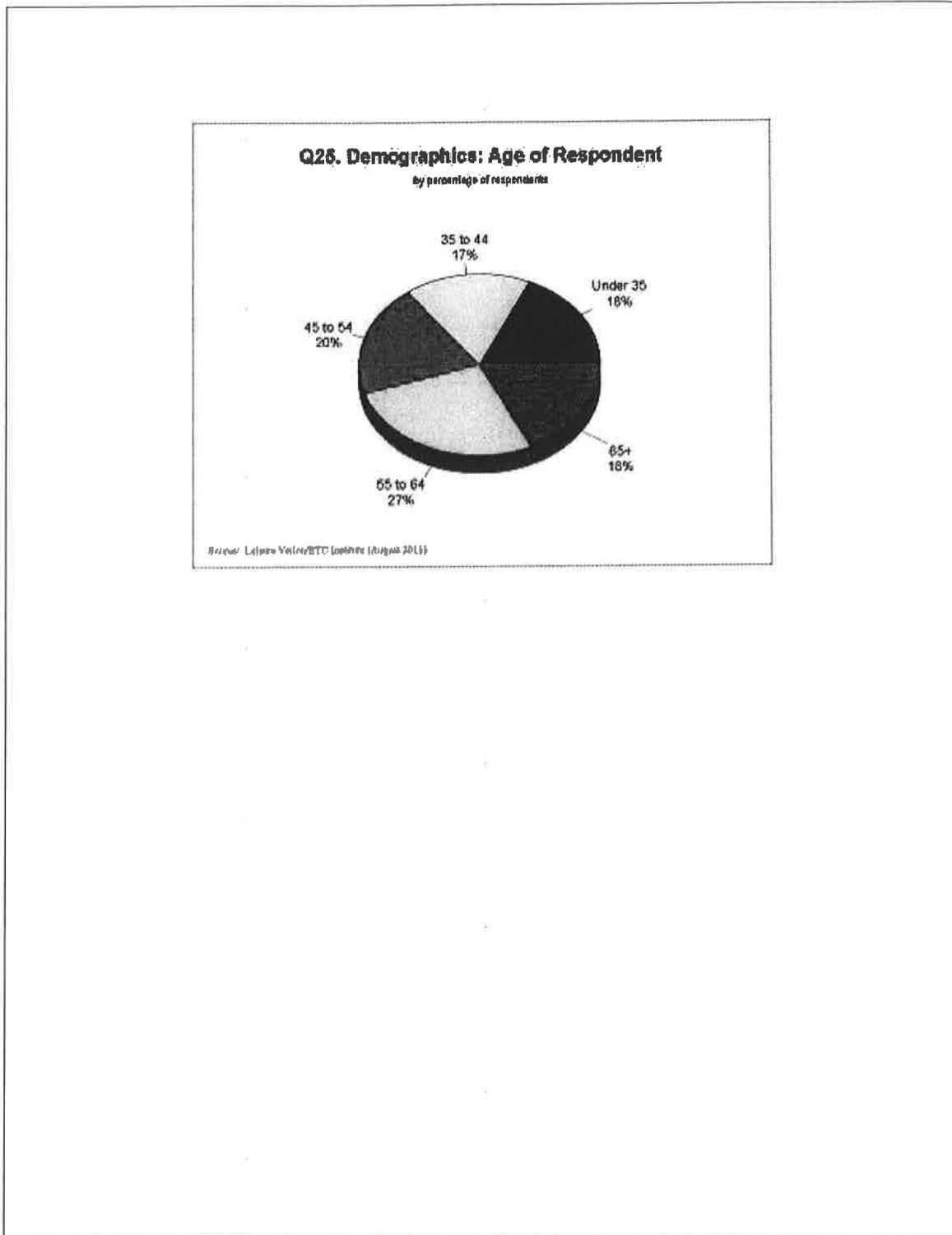
by percentage of respondents



Source: Lehigh Valley/ETC Institute (August 2011)







Community Interest and Opinion Survey: *Let your voice be heard today!*

The City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department would like your input to help determine parks, trails, open space and recreation priorities for our community. This survey will take 10-15 minutes to complete. When you are finished, please return your survey in the enclosed postage-paid, return-reply envelope. We greatly appreciate your time and efforts to improve the quality of life in the City of Las Cruces.

Do you live in the City of Las Cruces?

- _____ (1) Yes [Please continue with the survey.]
- _____ (2) No [Please discontinue the survey. This survey is only for residents of Las Cruces.]

1. Has your household visited any of the City of Las Cruces parks during the past 12 months?

- _____ (1) Yes [Please answer Questions #2, #3, and #4.]
- _____ (2) No [Please skip to Question #5.]

2. How would you rate the overall condition of ALL the City of Las Cruces parks you have visited?

- _____ (1) Excellent
- _____ (2) Good
- _____ (3) Fair
- _____ (4) Poor

3. From the following list, please check ALL the City of Las Cruces recreation facilities you or members of your household have used or visited in City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation parks over the past 12 months.

- | | |
|---|--|
| _____ (01) Walking, hiking, and biking trails | _____ (12) Baseball fields |
| _____ (02) Nature trails | _____ (13) Girls softball fields |
| _____ (03) Mountain biking trails | _____ (14) Adult softball fields |
| _____ (04) Outdoor swimming pools/water park | _____ (15) Soccer fields |
| _____ (05) Fishing areas | _____ (16) Football fields |
| _____ (06) Playgrounds | _____ (17) Natural areas and wildlife habitats |
| _____ (07) Picnicking areas | _____ (18) Dog parks |
| _____ (08) Horseshoe pits | _____ (19) Skateboard park |
| _____ (09) Gardens | _____ (20) Shooting range |
| _____ (10) Field of Dreams | _____ (21) BMX Track |
| _____ (11) Aquatic Center | _____ (22) Other: _____ |

4. Which THREE of the parks and recreation facilities listed in Question #3 do you and members of your household visit the most often? [Please write in the numbers below for your 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choices using the numbers in Question #3 above, or circle NONE.]

1st Most Often 2nd Most Often 3rd Most Often NONE



5. From the following recreation facilities operated by the Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department please check ALL the facilities you or members of your household have used or visited over the past 12 months.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (01) Benavidez Recreation Center | <input type="checkbox"/> (08) Las Cruces Regional Aquatic Center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (02) Butterfield Shooting Range | <input type="checkbox"/> (09) Meerscheidt Recreation Center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (03) Club Fusion Teen Center | <input type="checkbox"/> (10) Mesilla Park Recreation Center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (04) East Mesa Pool | <input type="checkbox"/> (11) Sammy Burke Youth Boxing Complex |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (05) East Mesa Recreation Center | <input type="checkbox"/> (12) The Life Center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (06) Frenger Pool | <input type="checkbox"/> (13) WIA Building |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (07) Laabs Pool | |

6. Which THREE of the recreation facilities listed in Question #5 do you and members of your household visit the most often? [Please write in the numbers below for your 1st, 2nd and 3rd choices using the numbers in Question #5 above, or circle NONE.]

<u> </u> 1 st Most	<u> </u> 2 nd Most	<u> </u> 3 rd Most	NONE
Often	Often	Often	

7. Have you or other members of your household participated in any recreation programs offered by the City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department during the past 12 months?

- (1) Yes [Please answer Questions #7a.]
 (2) No [Please skip to Question #8.]

7a. How would you rate the overall quality of programs in which you and members of your household have participated?

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (1) Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> (3) Fair |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (2) Good | <input type="checkbox"/> (4) Poor |

8. Please CHECK ALL the reasons that prevent you or other members of your household from using parks, trails, recreation facilities or programs of the City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department more often.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (01) Parks are not well maintained | <input type="checkbox"/> (11) Poor customer service by staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (02) Facilities are not well maintained | <input type="checkbox"/> (12) I do not know locations of parks/facilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (03) Program or facility not offered | <input type="checkbox"/> (13) I do not know what is being offered |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (04) Security is insufficient | <input type="checkbox"/> (14) Use State Parks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (05) Lack of trails | <input type="checkbox"/> (15) Lack of parking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (06) Parks too far from our residence | <input type="checkbox"/> (16) Park operating hours not convenient |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (07) Parks and facilities are too crowded | <input type="checkbox"/> (17) Registration for activities is difficult |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (08) Fees are too high | <input type="checkbox"/> (18) Recreation facilities too far from our residence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (09) Program times are not convenient | <input type="checkbox"/> (19) Lack of transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (10) Lack of handicap accessibility | <input type="checkbox"/> (20) Use National Parks |



9. Please indicate if YOU or any member of your HOUSEHOLD has a need for each of the parks and recreational facilities listed below by circling the YES or NO next to the park/facility.

If YES, please rate ALL the following parks and recreation FACILITIES of this type in the City of Las Cruces on a scale of 5 to 1, where 5 means "100% Meets Needs" and 1 means "Does Not Meet Needs" of your household.

Type of Facility	Do You Have a Need for this Facility?		If YES You Have a Need, How Well Are Your Needs Being Met?				
	Yes	No	100% Met	75% Met	50% Met	25% Met	0% Met
A Youth baseball fields	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
B Youth softball fields	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
C Adult softball fields	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
D Soccer fields	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
E Football fields	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
F Field of Dreams	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
G Tennis courts	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
H Basketball courts	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
I Fishing areas	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
J Dog parks	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
K Walking and biking trails	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
L Nature trails	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
M Natural areas and wildlife habitats	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
N Small neighborhood parks	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
O Large community-wide parks	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
P Picnic areas and shelters	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
Q Playgrounds	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
R Outdoor swimming pools	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
S Gardens	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
T BMX track/Skateboard park	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
U Shooting range	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
V Indoor exercise facilities	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
W Indoor swimming pools/water parks	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
X Gymsnasiums	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
Y Other	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1

10. Which FOUR of the facilities from the list in Question #9 are most important for the City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department to provide for your household? [Using the letters in the left hand column of Question #9 above, please write in the letters below for your 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th choices, or circle 'NONE'.]

1st: _____ 2nd: _____ 3rd: _____ 4th: _____ NONE



11. Please indicate if **YOU or any member of your HOUSEHOLD** has a need for each of the sports and recreation programs listed below by circling the YES or NO next to the recreation program.

If YES, please rate the following recreation PROGRAMS on a scale of 5 to 1, where 5 means "100% Meets Needs" and 1 means "Does Not Meet Needs" of your household.

Type of Program	Do You Have a Need for this Program?		If YES You Have a Need, How Well Are Your Needs Being Met?				
	Yes	No	100%	75%	50%	25%	0%
			Met	Met	Met	Met	Met
A. Youth Learn to Swim programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
B. Preschool programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
C. Before and after school programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
D. Youth summer camp programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
E. Youth sports programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
F. Youth fitness programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
G. Programs for teens	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
H. Martial arts programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
I. Adult fitness and wellness programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
J. Adult water fitness programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
K. Tennis lessons and leagues	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
L. Youth art, dance, performing arts	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
M. Adult art, dance, performing arts	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
N. Programs for adults 50 years/ older	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
O. Programs for people with disabilities	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
P. Environmental education programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
Q. Shooting range programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
R. Golf lessons and leagues	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
S. Special events	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
T. Other _____	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1

12. Which FOUR of the programs from the list in Question #11 are most important to your household? [Using the letters in Question #11 above, please write in the letters below for your 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th choices, or circle 'NONE'.]

1st: _____ 2nd: _____ 3rd: _____ 4th: _____ NONE

13. Which FOUR of the programs from the list in Question #11 do you currently participate in MOST OFTEN at City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department facilities? [Using the letters in Question #11 above, please write in the letters below for your 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th choices, or circle 'NONE'.]

1st: _____ 2nd: _____ 3rd: _____ 4th: _____ NONE



14. Please check ALL the ways you learn about City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department programs and activities.

- (01) Parks and Recreation program guide (07) From friends and neighbors
 (02) City of Las Cruces Web site (08) Flyers distributed at school
 (03) Newspaper articles (09) Parks Department e-mail bulletins
 (04) Radio (10) Conversations with Parks/Rec staff
 (05) Cable access television (11) Newspaper advertisements
 (06) Flyers/posters at Parks/Rec. facilities (12) Parks Department newsletters

15. From the following list, please circle the ONE option that best describes how you believe the direct costs required to run the activity/program should be paid.

Activity/Program	100% Taxes	75% Taxes	50% Taxes	25% Taxes	0% Taxes
	0% Fees	25% Fees	50% Fees	75% Fees	100% Fees
A. Community special events	5	4	3	2	1
B. Competitive youth travel sports	5	4	3	2	1
C. Youth recreation sports programs	5	4	3	2	1
D. Youth instructional programs (i.e. dance, arts, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1
E. Adult recreation sports programs	5	4	3	2	1
F. Adult instructional programs (i.e. dance, arts, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1
G. Senior programs	5	4	3	2	1
H. Performing arts programs	5	4	3	2	1
I. Nature programming	5	4	3	2	1

16. If you had an additional \$100 to invest in City of Las Cruces parks, trails, sports, and recreation facilities, how would you allocate the funds among the categories of funding listed below? [Please be sure your total adds up to \$100.]

- \$ _____ Improvements/maintenance of existing parks, pools, and recreation facilities
 \$ _____ Acquisition of new park land and open space
 \$ _____ Construction of new sports fields (softball, soccer, baseball, etc.)
 \$ _____ Acquisition and development of walking and biking trails
 \$ _____ Development of new indoor facilities (indoor walking track, fitness centers, pool, gyms, etc.)
 \$ _____ Other: _____
 \$ 100 TOTAL



17. From the following list, please check the MAXIMUM amount of additional property taxes you would be willing to invest to fund operation and maintenance of existing trails, sports, recreation and aquatic facilities.

- (1) \$50 per year
- (2) \$40-\$49 per year
- (3) \$30-\$39 per year
- (4) \$20-\$29 per year
- (5) \$10-19 per year
- (6) \$1-9 per year
- (7) Nothing

18. If an election were held for a bond issue to be used ONLY for open space and parkland acquisition, construction of amenities and trails development in the City of Las Cruces, how would you vote in the election?

- (1) Vote in Favor
- (2) Might Vote in Favor
- (3) Not Sure
- (4) Vote Against

19. Please indicate which of the following you feel that the City of Las Cruces should require developers to create within their new developments.

- (1) Neighborhood Parks
- (2) Community Parks
- (3) Ball fields
- (4) None of the Above

20. Please rate your satisfaction on a scale of 5 to 1, where 5 means "Very Satisfied" and 1 means "Very Dissatisfied", with the overall value your household receives from the City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department.

- (5) Very Satisfied
- (4) Somewhat Satisfied
- (3) Neutral
- (2) Somewhat Dissatisfied
- (1) Very Dissatisfied
- (9) Don't Know

Demographics

21. Counting yourself, how many people in your household are?

- | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------|
| Under 5 years | 15 - 19 years | 35 - 44 years | 65+ years |
| 5 - 9 years | 20 - 24 years | 45 - 54 years | |
| 10 - 14 years | 25 - 34 years | 55 - 64 years | |

22. Your gender: (1) Male (2) Female

23. Are you or members of your household of Hispanic or Latin ancestry?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No



24. Check ALL of the following that describes your race/ethnicity. (Check all that apply.)

____(1) Native American

____(4) Asian

____(2) African American/Black

____(5) Other: _____

____(3) White/Caucasian

25. What is your age? _____

Please share any additional comments that can assist the City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department in improving parks, trails, open space, or recreation facilities and service.

This concludes the survey. Thank you for your time.

Please Return Your Completed Survey in the Enclosed Return-Reply Envelope Addressed to: ETC Institute, 725 W. Frontler Circle, Olathe, KS 66061

Your response will remain Completely Confidential.
The address information on the sticker to the right will
ONLY be used to help identify areas with special interests.





Appendix C. Stakeholder Summaries

The following report provides an overview of the community survey conducted as part of this Plan.





Las Cruces PRMP Update Stakeholder Interview Summaries

Introduction

On June 28, 29, and 30, 2011, a series of stakeholder meetings were held at the City of Las Cruces City Hall in connection with the Park and Recreation Master Plan Update. The meetings were under the direction of Mr. Steve Duh with Conservation Technix, primary consultant for the project with assistance from Mr. Jeffrey Mann of Parametrix, the sub-consultant for public involvement. The meetings were held with 9 different interest groups with involvement or interest in the future of the City's Park and Recreation facilities or programs. The following stakeholder groups were involved (See attached listing of individuals invited):

- Neighborhood Representatives
- Special Events Group
- Youth Sports Group
- Special Programs Group
- Community Partners Group
- Aquatics Group
- Adult Sports Group
- Development Community Group
- Senior Advisory Committee

Stakeholder Meeting Summaries

Mr. Duh conducted the sessions and organized the discussion around general and specific questions for each group. The following is a summary of the comments and discussion of each of the groups:

Neighborhood Representatives Group :: June 28, 2011

Location: City Hall

Time: 5 – 6:00p

Three neighborhood representatives attended the small group discussion. After brief introductions and an overview of the PRMP Update and planning process, participants were asked for their feedback about City parks and recreation opportunities. The following comments were noted:

- Increase exercise opportunities
- Provide more areas for people to get out and enjoy especially walking
- Create more "Green Zones" with grass, trees and shade, even if they are small
- Coordinate with the neighborhood associations more
- Convert other city-owned lands to park use
- Add warm-up/ exercise station to the parks and trails
- Extend a trail from Triviz Trail to the La Llorona Park
- The area behind the dam is an unused resource

While the group discussion was dynamic and touched upon numerous issues, the following summary organizes comments by topic.



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Regarding Facilities

Provide opportunities for places to sit with grass and trees, walk the dog, walk the kids. Many places in Sonoma Ranch could be utilized as green areas. When asked about the role of developers in providing park spaces, Sam Craft Park in Sonoma Ranch was mentioned and how the park was designed with equipment for small children; as a result, it attracted families with small children into the housing in the surrounding area. There is an increased demand due to the societal trend toward healthier things. It was recommended that the Dona Ana Mountains be developed into a Wilderness Park or a preserve with walking trails.

Regarding Funding & Partnerships

The 2005 Plan has great objectives but needs money to implement. The City is not doing enough, and money is going elsewhere (to other programs). Create enthusiasm, interest and ways to let people know about City amenities, and show what you have to offer. People need to see what's here in order to move here. The City needs a soul.

It is a quality of life issue. There has been an influx of people moving here from areas with stronger quality of life, and that might offer opportunity to improve services. A Quality of Life Tax, 1/8th of 1 cent GRT, was once proposed. We need to try and create a quality of life for the residents.

It was mentioned that all three of the Chambers of Commerce should be involved, i.e. The Las Cruces Chamber, the Hispanic Chamber and the Green Chamber.

Regarding Planning for the Future

The goals and objectives of the 2005 Master Plan should be pursued and still look good. Las Cruces needs an industrial base to provide more revenue to support parks and other public improvements. Focus on creating more GRT. Plan for and secure a 40-50 acre site in undeveloped areas to the east before development arrives. Copy the Meersheidt complex to East Mesa – a center with tennis, BBQ, skate park, sports, rec center, dog park. Utilize desert areas to create walkways with links east and west through the City.

Special Events Group :: June 28, 2011

Location: City Hall

Time: 6 – 7:00p

Six local event coordinators attended the small group discussion. The following comments were noted:

General Comments

While there is an agreement in place for joint use with the Las Cruces Public Schools, it is not easy to use school facilities – lots of bureaucracy, pre-conditions and insurance requirements as well as scheduling issues. Connelly Elementary provides great opportunity. There are lots of park programs that need to use these (school) facilities. Healthy Kids Las Cruces can help the City work with the schools to expand school facility usage.



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The events permitting process is a problem. There should be a coordinated process for event sponsors to get permits. Parks & Recreation should act as the clearinghouse for event permits and track all internal coordination in support of a completed permit. It would be helpful if the business registration was included as part of the event permit. Create a multi-year or carry-over permit for annual events; right now, a new permit has to be secured each year for the same events at the same venues with the same street closures and outdoor noise permits. Also there is no need to provide an extensive letter to the PIO office, if it did not result in any coordination among the departments as a result. An online event application process was also suggested.

Regarding Parks & Facilities

There is a basic need for amenities to enhance the actual recreation facilities. The Hadley Fields/Meerscheldt Center public restroom and facilities are poor. The Branigan/Valley facilities are poor. The restroom facilities at the Llorona Park are more like a National Park rustic setting and not fitting for the urban setting it is in.

There are plentiful opportunities for walking - enhancing health as a result. More playground equipment is needed for smaller children. The City does a poor job of advertising what and where is age appropriate playground equipment. It would be nice if this were provided on the City's website.

The City needs to set land aside before new areas are developed. Establish a "park bank," and funds could be allocated as part of park impact mitigation. Make it so developers cannot wiggle out of providing parks with new developments.

Regarding a Dedicated Events Venue

Interest was noted in the possible acquisition of the Country Club site at Sokano Drive and Main Street. This site has the advantage of being next to Apodaca Park. There would also be certain benefits for the Farmers Market with an open park layout. There would however be locational change issue for the vendors.

Specific Events & Festivals

Spring Fest uses Young Park and had space issues this year due to inclusion of carnival rides. It will shortly outgrow the park. Parking congestion is also a problem on the streets around Young Park during events. Apodaca Park is larger, but there are problems with access and locating the different events in the park. Also it is mostly grass, and the City is very picky about event uses on grass.

The Whole Enchilada Festival (WHEF) uses Meerscheldt Center. They have capped the event due to the limited number of fields and the space along Hadley Avenue. The greatest need is for permanent electricity, however the City has been very good providing temporary solutions. Mr. Treviño has been especially helpful. WHEF needs more help letting the public know what streets are closed in advance (i.e., public service announcements).

Concerning the Farmers Market, the challenge with the Downtown is, now that it is improved, that there are multiple partners and multiple schedules and an increased potential for conflict between the Dona Ana Arts Council, Downtown Center Partnership and the City Park and Recreation Department, as well as the Economic Development Department. The Dona Ana Arts Council schedules the Rio Grande Theater and events in front. The Downtown Partnership orchestrates such



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events as Winterfest. The Park Department schedules the La Placita Venue and the Economic Development Department oversees the Farmers Market. Issues such as potential conflicts if events are going on in at both the Rio Grande Theater and La Placita. Closure of the street for the Farmers Market and potential conflicts with restaurants and retail such as Iguana Restaurant and fire and safety access still need to be resolved. A difference in the maintenance of the Downtown corridor exists, wherein the areas south of Griggs are maintained by the City while the area between Griggs and Las Cruces is by private contractor and did not seem as well maintained.

Youth Sports Group :: June 28, 2011

Location: City Hall

Time: 7 - 8:00p

Three local youth sport representatives attended the small group discussion. The following comments were noted:

Regarding Field Demand & LCPS

There is a shortage of fields. Different age groups overlap and are not well served. Field lights at Burn Lake would help alleviate this shortage and the reprogramming of baseball fields for interim soccer use.

Liability concerns (insurance) and politics cloud the use of LCPS courts or other facilities by leagues. It is known that the City and LCPS do not get along in terms of coordination of use and maintenance. City told LCPS that they were not paying for water, so LCPS went to charge for league use on Fields 1-5, and they are now building new baseball fields. The result of the LCPS charge was that leagues started paying a fee per kid.

Regarding Funding & Partnerships

There should be a greater partnership with NMSU for coaches for the local youth teams.

Sports is the heart of Las Cruces tourism. Tournaments, etc. are an incredible contribution to the local economy. Dedicate a portion of the Gross Receipts Tax (GRT) to be set aside for sport field development and maintenance. Also a portion of the motel tax could be used. Also, the County is a big part of this and should help subsidize the City facilities.

Explore establishing an overarching 'sports authority' as they have in El Paso to establish field development and programming priorities. In Las Cruces, it is based on field form submittals.

Specific Facilities

The Pangroinds building was being used for Roller Derby, but it is not big enough.

With regard to basketball, the Meerscheidt court is used for games only. There are 400 on a waiting list. There is a definite need for additional courts.



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There is a lack of coordination and communication from the City with BMX community. Bleachers were removed without communication. The BMX course is only half lighted. Most all other features have been provided privately.

A new upper area (top) is needed at Mang Park as the wood is rotted and falling through.

General Comments

Communication with the soccer organization has seemed to improve over the years.

Secure the Country Club site, and it could fit everything that the youth sports could need.

Youth sports is especially important in the economic downturn, since it is for many their only spectator sport.

Special Programs Group :: June 29, 2011

Location: City Hall

Time: 4:30 - 5:30p

Seven local representatives attended the small group discussion. The following comments were noted:

- Need for shaded areas for the concerts in Yung Park
- Park maintenance is not really good
- Many of the median or walking parks look very good
- Need for a bocce ball court(s)
- Add more shade over play structures
- more shade is needed at the dog park
- need for additional indoor and outdoor facilities for special needs population
- Thrilled to have the exercise stations in the Median Park
- Rehabilitate some parks to meet special needs and offer inclusion
- Additional dog parks are needed in the NW and East Mesa areas of the City
- Increase trees within parks
- add splash/wading pools
- Need more indoor gym space; Meerscheidt is not enough
- Add more walking/bicycling within parks with access from different areas of the City

General Comments

There was great City support on the clean-up after the Kiwanis Cars for Kids event. It was noted how clean the parks are before and after a park is reserved for an event. The City should be complimented on allowing the Park and Rec staff to innovate and try new activities and events.

The City received a number of compliments for its facilities, programs and staff, such as:

- The Wellness program and how it emphasizes working out for free
- The proposed Linear Park on Englar
- Doggy Daze event at pools at the end of the season was a great idea
- Installing a higher fence on one side of the dog park to increase safety
- How the City responded positively to the need to integrate special needs children with regular children's programs



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- Young Park is nice but the need for another large park

It feels as though there are scattered smaller parks throughout the City accentuated by the Hadley Complex. Add pocket parks as new development goes in.

A number of challenges facing the City to provide park and recreation facilities were noted, such as:

- Need for long-term, stable funding
- Providing water at parks
- Problem with the local attitude that everything should be for free
- Need for practice fields, using schools is problematic
- Problem with proprietary use of the school properties
- As the population gets better off and can afford it, the City should charge for the use of facilities, but this is offset by possible impact to low income populations

Instead of larger more expensive facilities like the Aquatic Center, it might be better to do walking/nature parks.

Re direct transit routes so that they would go from park to park particularly on the weekends.

Consider special hours for kids, sponsorship days, coupons at East Mesa pool.

Adult Sports Group :: June 29, 2011

Location: City Hall

Time: 7:30 – 8:30p

A representatives from Mesilla Valley Soccer was the only attendee of the small group discussion. The following comments were noted:

General Comments

- There is pretty good communication with the City, and it has improved over the years.
- Field fees seem to have precluded planning local tournaments; there are not enough lighted fields for any tournaments.
- Comment that there is a good working relationship with the Youth soccer league.
- With regard to practice fields, it was noted that the NMSU Intramural fields are used for practice.

Regarding Field Needs

- Field 3 at Burn Lake is in very bad condition and it holds water.
- Three more fields with lights are needed.
- Las Cruces Public Schools District wants \$180 per game on their fields (#1-5), so their field were not used all season except for their (school) programs. The 3 field deficit could be taken care of by the District fields if they were put into play for the community (without the fee).



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There has been a difference of maintenance levels of ballfields and soccer fields. The soccer fields are not maintained as well as ballfields. Also, only soccer fields # 6 & 7 are lighted, while all the baseball fields have lights.

Development Community Group # June 30, 2011

Location: City Hall

Time: 9 - 10:00a

Two local developers attended the small group discussion. The following comments were noted:

Regarding Impact Fees

Developers would rather be required to build parks in subdivisions, rather than paying an impact fee and waiting for the City to do it. It is a problem that surrounding jurisdictions do not have impact fees and that the impact fees have negative market impacts for subdivisions within the City. Development will go where there are no fees. There is no support for impact fees.

Given that developers of small tracts (sub 200 units) do not generate sufficient impact fees to provide park space or finance a new park via fees, there should be a different way for them to contribute to the system. Only developers of larger tracts (over 200 units) should be invited to the table for the discussion of the impact fees as part of the Park and Recreation Master Plan Update.

General Comments on Park Development

There is a belief that the City owns enough land, and that it should not be an issue of a need for new land for parks but rather how to develop existing properties.

Recreational facilities should be allowed in storm drainage facilities. They used to be allowable, but now there is separation of drainage facilities and park facilities. Detention ponds can be engineered with a tiered approach that can leave park/sports facilities usable alongside drainage facilities. Spitz Park was noted as one where the two uses were combined. In the Sand Hill Arroyo, 40 acres were acquired for a combination park and drainage facility, but in the end, the City would not contribute toward the park development. Thurston Homes secured 125 acres via a State land lease for a combined drainage facility and park; however, it is in some uncertainty due to the policy on separation of parks and drainage. It was represented that this would be developed into a major park facility.

Community Partners Group # June 29, 2011

Location: City Hall

Time: 5:30 - 6:30p

Six representatives from local agencies or community partner affiliates attended the small group discussion. The following comments were noted:



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Regarding Specific Program Areas

The Convention Bureau is trying to get sporting events into town, but there are limited facilities and they cannot serve certain groups/tournaments. It is a problem of both the types and number of facilities (i.e., lacking an Olympic pool, bowling, and shooting facilities). A lot of sporting events coming to Las Cruces are asking the Convention Bureau to cover the cost of field fees, since the costs are high. Other cities are leading out front by bringing the muscle to make some events happen. City should be the leader.

The Farm and Heritage Museum indicated that there is minimal interaction with City Park and Recreation. There have been some discussions regarding some trails and connection to the museum from the surrounding areas including the new high school. They are routing a sidewalk to the new high school. They would like to reduce development around the farm, looking at BLM land and an evangelical church site.

The MPO indicated that they use the City parks for such events as the Bike-to-Work Day. Some related planning was done as part of the Transport 2040 Plan. There was planning for in-road and multi use trail systems as part of the transportation planning for Mesilla Valley.

NMSU is working with Jake Gutierrez. They are working on an agreement for partnership to help bridge gaps for personnel. Each has a database of people. NMSU has been getting students out to City sponsored sports camps as a community service effort.

The Downtown Partnership spoke regarding the La Placita event location downtown and the difficult permit process with Park and Rec and other agencies. It should be a coordinated City process.

Keep Las Cruces Beautiful is working to get volunteer involvement for litter control on streets, greening efforts, education and putting up murals to reduce graffiti. Comment was made that volunteers are available for project, but they still need support from Park and Recreation staff.

Regarding Funding and Future Priorities

- Focus on a 1/8 cent to 1/2 cent GRT tax. The opinion was that most people would support a funding source such as a gross receipts tax allocation.
- Create a "Friends of Parks" benefactors program.
- More dog parks
- Provide bigger parks with more interest/ more excitement and opportunities
- Promote recreational assets; the City does not advertise its parks and what is available
- Put the event permitting process online. The Convention Bureau provides some assistance to event holders to secure their permits with the City, but most often they have to run down various agencies to get approvals/conditions.
- Expand the trail network. The City just received the Bronze award for being Bicycle Friendly. The focus has been on in road bike facilities. In Albuquerque, multi-use trail development has exploded; they have shown the political will to go after fees and gross receipts tax to help with the quality of life improvements.



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Aquatics Group : June 29, 2011

Location: City Hall

Time: 6:30 – 7:30p

Three aquatics facility users and program representatives attended the small group discussion. The following comments were noted:

Many do not know how to swim in Las Cruces. There is a great need for aquatics facilities and programs. The demand is so high that selection for the swim classes is by lottery. Swim lessons are currently limited to City-sponsored classes only. Swim clubs could provide and would be a lifeline for them as well as increase the number who would have access to the swim lessons.

The Aquatics Center is not really an 'aquatics center' as it lacks the Olympic size pool and associated pools and amenities that go with it. Senior water aerobics did not transfer well from Frenger Pool. The new Aquatic Center cannot accommodate the demand for aerobics in only the therapeutic pool.

An Olympic size/50 meter pool is needed as it would increase the opportunity for people to return to the water from childhood to senior age. Without the 50-meter pool, the City cannot hold the types of events that would generate the revenues both from the pool use, but from tourism (hotel and restaurant use).

Other comments included:

- There are limited facilities and limited hours for certain activities, such as team practices.
- The Apodaca Pool could be used by a swim club, but in order for the costs to work, the pool would need to be gifted
- Munson Center should have a pool for senior swim time
- The new LAABS pool is just another playground and does not alleviate pool demand
- It is now expected that Frenger Pool is shutdown two months each year. The attempts of painting on top of old paint for the pool deck is not working
- Doggy Days was a fun activity at the end of summer
- Add solar heating for City pools
- The requirement to have lifeguards for swim clubs increased expenses unnecessarily

Senior Advisory Committee Group : June 29, 2011

Location: City Hall

Time: 10 – 11:00a

Ten residents affiliated with the Seniors Advisory Committee attended the small group discussion. The following comments were noted:

Regarding Facilities

- Need for the natatorium at the Aquatic Center



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- Need to expand the Eastside Community Center and parking
- The Betavidez Community Center has ample property to build upon and should be expanded
- Mesilla Park Community Center needs dedicated kitchen and dining room
- There is a need for another dedicated senior center like Munson; use this center as the template – with AM to PM use, where people come and participate and stay for the lunch.
- parks need exercise paths and trails, as well as exercise stations. A draw back to many parks is that there are no restrooms facilities and no parking
- Burn Lake should either be used for something else or fixed up significantly
- additional dedicated bike lanes are needed also the need to dedicate certain streets for biking
- Provide a path that goes to the major centers of the City
- Increase coordination between the City and Elephant Butte Irrigation District (EBID) to provide trails along EBID ditches throughout the City
- There is not enough shading at outdoor City pools for parents whose children are swimming. Possibly also install misters
- A putt-putt golf venue is needed

Regarding Programming

- Provide lap swimming, hikes, dance, exercise programs, aquatics and painting courses
- There is a problem of not having dedicated transportation to and from Munson and Meerscheidt for classes
- Provide a dedicated pool (or pool time) for seniors. Look at senior hours at the Aquatic Center. A good time would be 6:30 to 8:30 a.m. for Senior Aquatic use
- Provide more cultural events are needed during the day including plays, artistic events and theatre. They wouldn't necessarily have to be at Munson, but could also be at the Community Centers
- Consider intergenerational programs for grandparents and grandchildren
- education of drivers particularly youth about sharing the road with bicyclists

Other Comments

- There is a need for dedicated bus transportation for seniors; there are not enough Dial-A Ride services
- Obtain a blanket permit to play cover songs by miscellaneous bands in the parks or at facilities
- More outdoor events are needed particularly at the park by Munson Center
- Consider a liquor license for the Munson Center for beer and wine

Regarding what they would like to see in the next 5 years, the following comment were made:

- More bicycle trails
- Parking and dedicated transportation for seniors to parks and city recreation facilities
- Shade
- Licensing for music (cover songs)
- Additional park facilities in the East Mesa



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- Improvements at the Mesilla Park Community Center
- Addition of adequate facilities (restrooms, water fountains, etc.)
- Taking what is there at existing parks and making them better or as good as possible.
- More programs geared to particular age groups, 85+, 70's, and 50's - 60's
- Quit cutting down trees
- Movies in the park programs



Appendix D. Public Meeting Summaries

The following report provides an overview of the community survey conducted as part of this Plan.





Las Cruces PRMP Update Community Meeting Summaries

Introduction

On July 19, 20, and 21 and again on July 26, 27, and 28, 2011, a series of Community Meetings were held in connection with the Park and Recreation Master Plan Update at various locations throughout the City, one each City Council member district. The following was the schedule of Community Meetings:

Date	Council Member	District	Where
July 19, 2011	Small	4	Picacho Middle School - Cafeteria
July 20, 2011	Sorg	5	East Mesa Recreation Center - Multi-Purpose Room
July 21, 2011	Thomas	6	Camino Real Middle School - Cafeteria
July 26, 2011	Pedroza	3	Meerscheidt Center - Multi-Purpose Room
July 27, 2011	Connor	2	Mesilla Park Recreation Center - Auditorium
July 28, 2011	Silva	1	Las Cruces City Hall - Council Chambers

Community Meeting Summaries

The meetings were under the direction of Mr. Steve Duh with Conservation Technix, primary consultant for the project with assistance from Mr. Jeffrey Mann of Parametrix, the sub-consultant for public involvement. Mr. Duh gave a brief introductory presentation which included a summary of the findings from the city-wide survey. Following the introductory presentation either in the original group or in breakout sessions, attendees were requested to comment on the City's park facilities or recreation programs identifying needs and changes from the citizen's standpoint. Mr. Duh and Mr. Mann conducted the breakout sessions and organized the discussion around general and specific questions for each group. Comments were noted during each session and attendees were also invited to provide written comments as well. Those in attendance were also allowed to indicate their priorities from the suggestions generated by indicating a first or second choice on what they perceived as the most important items. Sign-in sheets for each meeting were completed. The following is a summary of the comments and discussion of each meeting. Items noted with ** represent those that were flagged as priorities by attendees.

District 4 Community Meeting :: July 19, 2011

Location: Picacho Middle School

Time: 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Eleven people attended the community meeting including Council members Nathan Small and Dolores Connor. Councilmember Small gave a brief welcome. After the introductory presentation and an overview of the PRMP Update and planning process, participants were asked for their feedback about City parks and recreation opportunities.

Neighborhoods Needs

- Expansion of the La Llorona Park
- Use the Benavidez site for a "Meerscheidt" type center
- Trail system utilizing the EBD access and levee road system



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- Increase the sharing of resources between jurisdictions (i.e. school district, County)

Number and Accessibility of Parks

- Add more parks that are more accessible to neighborhoods throughout the City.
- Take better care of the existing parks that the City has.

Recreation Programs

- More programs for after-work participation
- "Welcome" newcomers programs
- "Know your City" programs
- Exchange road improvements for park lands/improvements with NMSU involving the old driving range.

Dog Parks

- Dog Parks need improvements, particularly shade areas and sitting areas for pet owners.
- Suggestions for new dog park locations: Old NMSU Driving Range, fence off part of Apodaca Park, a portion of Burns Lake.
- The existing dog park is too far away from the west and northwest areas of the City.
- A significant amount of maintenance of the dog park is being done by users.

What would you like to see?

- Fitness Centers possibly including salt water therapy pools.
- Concessionaires at the venues
- Artificial turf on high demand fields
- Obtain land for parks with new developments
- Need parks in outlying areas (i.e., Pieacho and East Mesa)

City Budget for Parks

- Focus maintenance and upgrade of facilities on those that have an economic benefit to the City.
- Build a new "Hadley/Meerschoudt type center in the East Mesa Area.
- Question regarding whether the City will be able to maintain or upgrade existing park facilities. Comment was made that a sinking fund is being established.
- Explanation was made of a potential incentive-based budgeting approach for the Park and Recreation Department.

District 5 Community Meeting on July 20, 2011

Location: East Mesa Recreation Center

Time: 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Seventeen people attended the community meeting including Councilor Gill Sorg, who gave a brief welcome. After brief introductory presentation and an overview of the PRMP Update and planning process, participants were asked for their feedback about City parks and recreation opportunities.



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General Comments

- Development – require developers to provide larger and more parks and meet specific requirements for usability.
- What have you planned for parks in areas of new development – frustration about developers providing or paying for pocket parks only? How can we find information about developer/development provided open space?
- Enable joint facilities for stormwater and parks; Use stormwater facilities for open space (i.e. cleared, benches and trees installed, used for walking, dogs, shade, etc.)
- Require that parks are integrated into new development**
- Buy park land in advance of development
 - Larger parks/community parks
 - Recreation Centers
 - Pools
 - Botanical Gardens
 - Trails with connections to other facilities
- Ask for land donations from developers for city/ for dog parks
- Provide for wildlife corridors
- Find location for radio controlled craft – landfill? – Possible to promote events
- Has there been a decision to purchase the Country Club adjacent to Apodaca Park
- Use Master Gardeners for landscaping entries, rights of way and community gardens
- Provide variety of park facilities (i.e. no cookie cutter parks)
- Better information about facilities – website

Recreation Programs

- Recreation Fees – use single recreation card for access to all facilities
- Offer classes early and late, before and after work (after 6:00 pm and before 7:00 am). Most classes are now during the day.
- Offer water aerobics, zumba, yoga, tai chi
- Offer gun permit classes
- Build new recreation center with fitness facilities in the East Mesa; Travel time to recreation facilities is a deterrent/Need accessible, central locations
- Build new aquatic center on the East Mesa – the existing facility is very popular/busy and need another
- Renovate indoor facilities, especially the East Mesa Recreation Center
- Provide indoor walking track – safer than outdoor in the mornings

Trail Facilities

- Need interconnected multi use trails that go beyond walking and biking and include equestrian use**
- Trails are needed to connect East Mesa to Downtown
- Bridge designs for trails – provide pedestrian access under arroyo bridges
- Trails/Access along arroyos not always passable (i.e. bridges over the arroyos are too low to allow pedestrian passage). Use Tucson model – trails along creek/arroyo corridors



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- Offer exercise / workout stations for trails and parks
- Not all trails need to be paved
- On-street bike lanes are dangerous

Specific Parks Facilities

- Dog Parks – Existing one is adequate for now, needs better surfacing, need more dog parks (3-4) distributed throughout City – East Mesa/West Mesa. Need restroom facilities.** Need dog park as part of the La Llorona Park; Need dog stations at all parks
- Need trees for shade and picnic benches/tables at parks – especially the East Mesa Park/Pool**
- Park field lighting needs shielding
- Provide more parking at Apodaca Park
- Provide more restroom facilities in the parks
- Provide more barbeque facilities in the parks
- Parks need to provide accessibility for senior citizens
- Offer more small neighborhood parks
- Need Pistol/Shooting Range*
- Add bus runs for Special Events, TWEF, Fourth of July, etc.

Neighborhood Needs

- Pocket parks are OK, but need seating/shade and walking facilities – Las Colinas mentioned
- Need larger “Meerscheidt” type facility in the East Mesa**
- Need more parking along multi-use trails, such as the Triviz Drive trail

Partnerships

- Convert the Metro Verde Golf Course into a municipal golf course
- Maximize shared facilities
- Arrange for the use of school facilities during the summer

District 6 Community Meeting on July 21, 2011

Location: Camino Real Middle School

Time: 6:00 pm to 8:00pm

Two people attended the community meeting. After brief introduction and overview of the PRMP Update and planning process, participants were asked for their feedback about City parks and recreation opportunities.

General Comments

- “The Guide” the City’s publication on parks and recreation programs is very useful. There are lots of programs and activities to choose from.
- Trails – need to make drinking water available
- Aquatic Center is more for children than adults/seniors
- Need better dog enforcement for parks and concerts



Community Meeting Summaries
Las Cruces Parks & Recreation Master Plan
 Page 5 of 7

- Need another "Munson" type center – reference made to the Sage Café/Center in the East Mesa.
- Lunch programs – would like to see a greater diversity in menu
- Need more classes
- Build another skate park
- Rebuild the recreation center at East Mesa
- Provide additional dog park – East Mesa/other locations
- Build additional basketball courts
- Need to move or create trails, so not adjacent to traffic. Walking trails are a priority with connections to parks
- Add shading in the parks and their parking areas

District 3 Community Meeting :: July 26, 2011

Location: Meerschmidt Recreation Center

Time: 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Ten people attended the community meeting including Councilor Pedroza, who gave a brief welcome. After brief introductory presentation and an overview of the PRMP Update and planning process, participants were asked for their feedback about City parks and recreation opportunities. The following comments were noted:

General Comments

- Parks need to be connected to trail systems**
- Treviz Trail is an excellent example of a multi-use trail, but need east/west and north/south connections to it
- Improve trail on Las Cruces Dam
- On-road bike lanes receive very little use
- Provide exercise stations in the parks and along trails**
- Provide water play amenities in the parks
- Parks need restroom facilities for general public and also for Special Events**
- Find funding for Are Life Center. It needs repair, rehabilitation and improved maintenance. The programs, staff and location are good.
- On the East Mesa, look for opportunities for park facilities before development occurs in the future.
- Developer contributions need to be made to larger community parks
- Impact fee has a negative impact on real estate
- Develop properties that the City already owns
- City needs to provide balance and equity in its maintenance efforts.** Monitor facility use to create metrics for new facilities and funding
- Encourage baseball and other fields that allow tournaments – it seems some tournaments are trailing off.**
- Dog Park
 - No restroom facilities provided which is very inconvenient**



Community Meeting Summaries
Las Cruces Parks & Recreation Master Plan
 Page 6 of 7

- Need second dog park **
- Need public golf course

District 2 Community Meeting :: July 27, 2011

Location: Mesilla Park Recreation Center

Time: 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Ten people attended the community meeting including Councilor Dolores Connor, who gave a brief welcome. After the introductory presentation and an overview of the PRMP Update and planning process, participants were asked for their feedback about City parks and recreation opportunities. The following comments were noted:

General Comments

- Improve baseball field and stands at Apodaca Park. Fencing needs to be constructed to prevent balls from reaching the street
- Upgrade park equipment and facilities; they feel sterile
- Expand funding options for parks
- Sell off city owned properties to help finance parks
- Maintain what we have at a C+ to B level before expanding the number of parks
- Incorporate computer systems into park facilities

Recreation Programs

- City has great Summer program activities
- Not enough parking during major activities at Mesilla Park Recreation Center
- Offer senior exercise programs at Mesilla Park Recreation Center, which had been moved to Alonson Center
- Offer more early morning programs
- Get input from younger park users – teenagers
- Continue to gear activities to youth for overall community improvement including facilities and programs, sports and arts. This will help offset the gang mentality. ** Connect with the 11-13 year old age group**

District 1 Community Meeting :: July 28, 2011

Location: City Hall – City Council Chambers

Time: 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Ten people attended the community meeting including Councilmember Miguel Silva. Councilor Silva gave a brief welcome. After the introductory presentation and an overview of the PRMP Update and planning process, participants were asked for their feedback about City parks and recreation opportunities. The following comments were noted:



Community Meeting Summaries
Las Cruces Parks & Recreation Master Plan
 Page 7 of 7

General Comments

- Improve the Acequia Madre Trail ** Leave acequias/ditches open (not piped) for trail opportunities**
- Connect the Triviz Trail with La Llorona Park and Downtown
- Suggestion to use the Lake Havasu model for dog park design**
 - Grass Area
 - Fountain
 - Big Trees
 - Dedicated areas
 - Trailer with caretaker
- Do not emphasize on a Premier Park until other parks are well maintained. City should carefully consider the purchase of the Country Club**
- Build more basketball courts
- Provide shading for courts and playgrounds
- Improve coordination with Tennis Association to help with maintenance at Lions Tennis Court Complex **

Specific Facility Needs

- Offer more community facilities
- Provide website that offers more information on facilities/amenities and programs at that park
- Frenger Pool is needed for lap swim and teams, but its future is tenuous **
- Build the lap pool (phase 2) at the Aquatic Center **
- Build a network of trails/paths between parks** Connect the Outfall Trail from Las Cruces Dam to La Llorona Park
- Make park/trail improvements at Las Cruces Dam
- East Mesa 125-acre drainage/park space – develop into multi-use area**
- Provide zero-depth splash pads or water play areas
- Provide pavilions in the parks for group reservation/rental

Recreation Programs

- Offer more fun runs/walks, need to expand, still a demand**
- Expand aquatic exercise programs
- Need programs for at-risk youth. Offer children reading programs as way to involve teenagers
- Offer bicycle education programs
- Build partnership with campus service organizations at NMSU



Appendix E. Promotional Materials

The following report provides an overview of the community survey conducted as part of this Plan.



PUBLIC MEETINGS • PARKS & RECREATION

MASTER PLAN UPDATE

All meetings listed below will be held at 6 p.m.

The City of Las Cruces is holding several community meetings in each city council district to gather your ideas and comments on the Parks & Recreation Master Plan update. The City wants to hear from as many people as possible about what the Parks & Recreation needs are and what priorities should there be for the next 10 years.

Be part of the plan!

- Tuesday, July 19**
District 4
Picacho Middle School
1040 N. Motel Blvd.
- Wednesday, July 20**
District 5
East Mesa Recreation Center
5589 Porter Drive
- Thursday, July 21**
District 6
Camino Real Middle School
2961 Roadrunner Pkwy.
- Tuesday, July 26**
District 3
Meerscheidt Recreation Center
1600 E. Hadley
- Wednesday, July 27**
District 2
Mesilla Park Recreation Center
304 Bell Avenue
- Thursday, July 28**
District 1
Las Cruces City Hall
700 N. Main Street

We invite everyone to attend!

An open house will be held from 6 p.m., followed by a presentation at 6:30 p.m. For any questions or to make arrangements for those needing special assistance, contact Jeff Mann with Parametrix at (575) 522-7400.

www.las-cruces.org

 **City of Las Cruces**
PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE





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PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE

— PUBLIC MEETINGS —

PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN UPDATE

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District 2
Mesilla Park
Recreation Center
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Thursday, July 21
District 6
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Middle School
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SUN-NEWS

LOCAL/STATE



RONA DETLAFF/SUN-NEWS

BABYSITTER DIANNA LUERAS, 21, left, spins round and round Monday on a visit to Young Park fast enough to keep her niece, Liliana Sanchez, 8, from launching torso firms. Lueras said she brought Sanchez and her other niece to the park because they "don't want to stay stuck inside the whole summer."

Public input sought on plans for Las Cruces parks

By Reyes Mata III
REYNOLDS@SUN-NEWS.COM

LAS CRUCES — Claudia Felix scooped the last of 10 children off the park grass and into a blue passenger van that was waiting in the shade.

"We like the park. It's always clean and bathrooms are close by," said Felix, a co-worker at a Las Cruces day care who regularly brings kids to city-run parks.

"And whenever we see the park workers for such long days always have them," she said, hazing the last kidling home into the van.

Felix is fluent in park etiquette and quick with an opinion. She's exactly the type of Las Cruces that the City Parks and Recreation Department — head who's public outreach campaign — would like to hear from.

Every five years the city taps into the opinions of Las Cruces to find out what they like, don't like and want to see in their parks and recreation facilities. Then, using that data, the city creates the master plan and goes after the funds needed to implement it.

The first of six community meetings to gather this public input was 6 p.m. Tuesday at Picnic the Middle School. It had a turnout of about 15 people, including City Councilor Nicholas

If you go

Upcoming meetings to give input for the 2011 Parks and Recreation Master Plan:

— Today at the East Mesa Recreation Center, 5589 Porter Drive.

— Tuesday at the Camino Real Middle School, 2961 Roadrunner Parkway.

— Tuesday, July 26, at the Meerschmidt Recreation Center, 1530 E. Hatley.

— Wednesday, July 23, at the Middle Park Recreation Center, 304 Bell Ave.

— Thursday, July 28, at the Las Cruces City Hall, 700 N. Main St.

Smith, the city representative for that district, and City Councilwoman Dolores Cisneros, who is representing District 3 and campaigning for mayor.

"My main capacity is to be an listening mode," Smith said. "I look forward to hearing opinions on the positives and some of the challenges that kids face in our parks."

Earlier on Tuesday, Christopher McKay was crouching in the shallow end of a Las Cruces swimming pool with his 8-month-old son balanced in his hands and slapping at the water.

The 43-year-old father — under a 1980s-era brown wauk cap with Ray-Bans — was one of

about 30 people in bathing suits at Laas Pool on Tuesday afternoon who was looking for relief from the 99.7-degree weather. He was skeptical about the city asking residents for input.

"Well, it seems pretty nice. It's a good power," he said. "But I wonder how fun or engaging that offer is. What's going to come from our input?"

A lot, said Abel Johnson, director of parks and recreation. "People can really take charge of what parks are going to look like for the rest of many generations," said Johnson.

Reyes Mata III can be reached at (505) 348-5452.

LCPS offers reward for tips on vandalism

SUN-NEWS REPORT

LAS CRUCES — The Las Cruces school district is offering a \$1,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and prosecution of the person or persons who vandalized and graffitied the Cooke Elementary School building and roof on June 18 or 19 and again on July 14, 2003, said LCPS Coordinator for Safety and Security Todd Gregory.

"One or more people climbed up onto the roof of the school

(located at 2301 Barton Drive) and spent a long time committing these crimes," said Gregory. He said the Las Cruces Police Department's Gang Unit is assisting LCPS with the investigation.

"LCPS battles graffiti vandalism and theft throughout the school year and especially in the summer," said Gregory. "I can't emphasize enough the need for our night-time patrols and coordinate with local police and security agencies for patrols. The school district also deploys

graffiti/vandalism cameras to try and capture pictures of suspects to be given to police."

Anyone with information about the vandalism/graffiti at Cooke Elementary School is urged to call the Las Cruces Police Department at 375-518-4200 or contact the school district at 375-927-0653, or email safeschools@lcpssd.net or use the LCPS Safe Schools Tip Line email at tip@lcpssd.net or <http://lcpssd.net/Departments/Safety/ReportVandalism>.

Legislators suggest Sept. 12 for special session

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SANTA FE — Legislative leaders are suggesting Sept. 12 for the start of a special session of the Legislature on redistricting.

A spokesman for Gov. Steven Lujan said Monday she has not settled on a session date but

is looking at calling lawmakers back to work in early September.

It's up to the governor to set the session agenda and Martinez wants lawmakers to consider issues besides redistricting, including a ban on driver's licenses for illegal immigrants.

The Legislative Council has voted to recommend a Sept. 12

session start date.

The council's co-chairman sent a letter to the governor asking the session be dedicated to redistricting. They suggested that potentially divisive legislation should be handled separately in a second special session, which could be held immediately after the redistricting session.

WANTED advertisement for AccuQuest Hearing Centers. The ad features a large 'WANTED' banner at the top, followed by a photograph of a person's ear. Below the photo, there is text describing the company's services, including hearing evaluations and hearing aid fittings. The ad also includes the company's name, 'AccuQuest Hearing Centers', a phone number '(888) 375-5260', and a website 'www.1800hearing.com'. At the bottom, there is a large graphic with the text 'WHAT ARE YOU HEARING?' and 'www.1800hearing.com'.



A71 News

Las Cruces Bulletin

Friday, July 22, 2011

Coming Up

Donate Life car show July 23

The fifth annual Donate Life Car Show will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, July 23, at Young Park, 1905 P. Nevada Ave. For more information, call 495-2627.

After school program registration

The City of Las Cruces is accepting registration applications for the After School Program. 2011 fall and spring sessions from noon to 3 p.m. through Friday, July 22, at Mesavista Recreation Center, 1600 E. Hadley Ave.

The fall session will be held Aug. 5-Dec. 15, and the spring session will be held from Jan. 4-May 27, 2012, at Hermosa Heights, Conlee, Abundia, Highland, Fuertes and Monte Vista elementary schools. Each site can accept 60 participants for children in kindergarten through fifth grade.

Program sites and dates may be subject to change. Registration for the program is by lottery only. Cost is \$288 per child for the fall session and \$150 for the spring session. Only parents or legal guardians will be allowed to enter an

application per family (with up to five children). The lottery process will count the number of participants in order, until enrollment has reached maximum capacity. Any duplicate tickets found will automatically disqualify that participant from any program site.

For more information, call 541-2455.

Input sought on parks and recreation plan

Las Cruces City Council has scheduled a series of meetings to provide for citizen input into the Park and Recreation Master Plan Update. Six meetings are scheduled, one in each council district. Each meeting is scheduled at 6:30 p.m. with an open house preceding the meeting at 6 p.m. Council members are expected to attend meetings in their district.

- Tuesday, July 19, Picoacho Middle School, 1040 N. Motel Blvd., District 4
- Wednesday, July 20, East Mesa Recreation Center, 5549 Pomer Road, District 5
- Thursday, July 21, Camino Real Middle School, 2961 Roadrunner Parkway, District 6

- Tuesday, July 26, Mesavista Recreation Center, 1600 E. Hadley Ave., District 3
 - Wednesday, July 27, Mesilla Park Recreation Center, 304 W. Bell Ave., District 2
 - Thursday, July 28, Las Cruces City Hall, 700 N. Main St., District 1
- For more information, call Jeff Mann at 522-7400.

Audubon field trip July 23

The Mesilla Valley Audubon Society will guide a field trip to Percha Dam State Park Saturday, July 23. Anyone interested should meet at Lowe's Home Improvement, 3200 N. Main St., in the southeast parking lot near the Boater Patrol Station at 6:45 a.m. Binoculars, hat, sunscreen, sunglasses and plenty of water are recommended provisions. The park charges a \$5 per vehicle entry fee for vehicles without an annual pass.

For more information, contact Wayne Thron at 526-3696 or waythron@audubon.com

DACDC holds graduation

The Dona Ana County Detention Center will graduate 12 detention officer cadets at

10 p.m. Friday, July 22, in the Commissions Chamber of the Dona Ana County Government Center, 845 N. Motel Blvd.

The graduating cadets have completed the seven-week Basic Detention Officers' Academy, which consists of physical training, classroom instruction and field experience. All training is done in-house at the county's detention center, under the supervision of Sgt. Luis Contreras.

The graduating cadets are David Austin, Jon Blanco, Gustavo Gutierrez, Thomas Hill, Gregory Madrox, Ruben Nutez, Daisy Ramirez, Juan Roman, Chantilly Sanchez, Jason Saucedo, Elijian Shane and Humberto Zamora.

District 3 Dona Ana County Commissioner Karen Perez will deliver the commencement address, and Dona Ana County Probate Judge Alice Sedwick will administer the oath of service. The public is encouraged to attend.

National Night Out is Aug. 2

The City of Las Cruces will present National Night Out, "America's Night Out Against Crime," from 2 to 6 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 2, at Downtown Main Street. This free, family-friendly event is filled with games, entertainment and giveaways, and is a chance to spend an evening outdoors with neighbors and members

of local law enforcement agencies and the Las Cruces Fire Department.

Youth center bike run set

The Count Youth Center's third Annual Bike Run to raise funds for after-school art programs will be at 10:30 a.m. Sunday, July 24, at Bassett's Las Cruces Harley Davidson, 2600 Lakeside Drive. Cost is

\$15 for the first rider \$10 for the second rider. Registration is available at Bassett's before the run. Snacks include Hotel Encanto, Pop Quik Popcorn, Buffalo Wild Wings, the Blue Moon Bar and Beverage. A bonus-keep happy hour is at Mesavista Recreation

Center. For more information, call Paul at 652-3556 or Gary at 202-1158 or show up to register on Sunday at Las Cruces Harley Davidson.

SWQHA in action

Events set Saturday and Sunday

Southeast Quarter Horse Association (SWQHA) events will show off their animals' breed characteristics and abilities Saturday, July 23, and Sunday, July 24, at Southern New Mexico State Fairgrounds, coordinators announced.

Saturday's performance events will feature reining, working cow horse, ranch sorting, barrel racing, pole bending, team roping and tie-down roping.

Sunday's show will feature showmanship and hunter under saddle, hunter seat, trail and Western horsemanship.

The Fall Futurity, scheduled Sept. 1-6, will provide owners an initial showing for their young horses and a chance to earn premiums, show coordinators said.

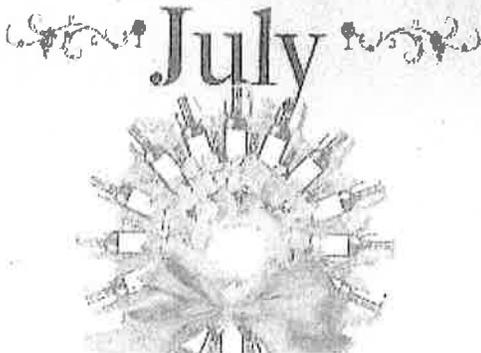
More than 30 owners have entered horses for the futurity.

The futurity show also will present a performance program, including Western pleasure, reining, yearling lunge line and hunter under saddle, which has drawn about 250 entries.

The SWQHA sponsors 21 American Quarter Horse Association-sanctioned shows a year and offers clinics and educational programs throughout the year. The SWQHA holds its awards banquet for members and youth the first Saturday in December.

CHRISTMAS IN

July



Shopping around to replace your old energy hungry washer and dryer?

When you choose a natural gas appliance you can receive \$300 in savings and a long term savings in the bargain.

Go to www.nagas.com under the Energy Conservation tab for the Zin Gas Back's application program description or call 375-526-4427 and ask our friendly and knowledgeable staff for more information to convert today!



Appendix F. Funding Alternatives

The following report provides an overview of the community survey conducted as part of this Plan.



Local Funding Options

The City of Las Cruces possesses a range of local funding tools that could be accessed for the benefit of growing, developing and maintaining its parks and recreations program. The sources listed below represent likely potential sources, but some also may be dedicated for numerous other local purposes which limit applicability and usage. Therefore, discussions with city leadership is critical to assess the political landscape to modify or expand the use of existing city revenue sources in favor of park and recreation programs.

Dedication/Development Fees - Impact Fees

These fees are assessed for the development of residential and/or commercial properties with the proceeds to be used for parks and recreation purposes, such as open space acquisition, community park site development, neighborhood parks development, regional parks development, etc. Las Cruces currently has a procedure for the assessment of Development Impact Fees for Parks against residential development.

Revenue Bonds

Bonds used for capital projects that will generate revenue for debt service where fees can be set aside to support repayment of the bond.

General Obligation Bonds

Bonded indebtedness issued with the approval of the electorate for capital improvements and general public improvements. The City of Las Cruces has not been successful gaining public support for General Obligation Bonds for many years.

Bond Referendum

The plan recommends massive capital needs, renovation and new facilities, to meet the needs and demands of residents of the City. A bond referendum would be utilized for the capital improvements identified in the plan. These bonds would be general obligation bonds initiated through City Council approval and citizen vote.

Real Estate Transfer Fees

As City expands, the need for infrastructure improvements continues to grow. Since parks add value to neighborhoods and communities, some cities and counties have turned to real estate transfer fees to help pay for needed renovations. Usually transfer fees amount to ¼ to ½ % on the total sale of the property.

Sales Tax

The revenue source is very popular for funding park and recreation agencies either partially or fully. The normal sales tax rate is 1cent for operations and one half cent for capital. This tax is very popular in high traffic tourism type cities and with counties and state parks. The City of Farmington, New Mexico has utilized this method of funding for a variety of improvements and construction of facilities.



Federal & State Grants and Conservation Programs

Land and Water Conservation Fund

These funds are awarded for acquisition and development of parks, recreation and supporting facilities through the National Park Service and State Park System. The City of Las Cruces has not seen any benefits from this funding source since for approximately 20 years as the funds are being utilized by the New Mexico Parks system. Many states have elected to share these funds with local Park and Recreation Departments.

Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Grants

The Urban Park and Recreation Recovery (UPARR) program was established in November 1978 to provide matching grants and technical assistance to economically distressed urban communities for rehabilitation of critically needed recreation facilities. Only cities and urban counties meeting established criteria are eligible for assistance. Three grant categories are available: rehabilitation (30% local match requirement), innovation (30% local match requirement), and planning (50% local match requirement). This grant program has been unfunded by Congress since 2002, but recent deliberations by Congress in late 2009 may facilitate renewed program funding in the near future.

Community Development Block Grants

These funds are intended to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment, and by expanding economic opportunities, principally for low and moderate income persons. The City of Las Cruces provides annual grant assistance through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) entitlement funds received from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as a part of the continuing objective to assist Public Service agencies and eligible construction activities that serve low and moderate-income city residents. The City of Las Cruces offers two types of CDBG programs each year: Public Services and Construction/Infrastructure.

National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council (NUCFAC) Grant

The National Urban and Community Advisory Council has overhauled their criteria for the US Forest Service's Urban and Community Forestry challenge cost share grant program for 2009. Grants will be solicited in two categories: innovation grants and best practices grants. As with the previous grant program, a 50% match is required from all successful applicants of non-federal funds, in-kind services and/or materials.

Other Methods & Funding Sources

Special Improvement District/Benefit District

Taxing districts established to provide funds for certain types of improvements that benefit a specific group of affected properties. Improvements may include landscaping, the erection of fountains, and acquisition of art, and supplemental services for improvement and promotion, including recreation and cultural enhancements.



APPENDIX F.

Inter-local Agreements

Contractual relationships entered into between two or more local units of government and/or between a local unit of government and a non-profit organization for the joint usage/development of sports fields, regional parks, or other facilities. There is currently an inter-local agreement between the school district and the City of Las Cruces.

Surplus Sale of Equipment by Auction

The City has surplus auctions to get rid of old and used equipment that generate some income on a yearly basis.

Cigarette Tax

Sales tax gained by the state for cigarettes is redistributed to City for programs to teach and curb youth smoking through effective prevention recreation programs.

Booth Lease Space

The City sells booth space to sidewalk type vendors in parks or at special events. For a flat rate based on volume received. The booth space can also apply to farmers markets, art schools, and antique type fairs. Events such as the Farmers and Craft Market and the Renaissance Fair can utilize this funding source and the renovation of the downtown mall could bring additional booth type events to the City of Las Cruces.

Hotel, Motel and Restaurant Tax

Tax based on gross receipts from charges and meals services, which may be used to build and operate sports fields, regional parks, tennis courts, and other special park and recreation facilities. Currently these funds are being collected by the Convention and Visitor Bureau and are intended to be used for the capital and operations of a Convention Center.

Rental Car Tax

This tax is designated for land acquisition purposes. Some cities have used a percentage of rental car taxes to support land acquisition or improvements in parks.

The Mello-Roos Act

The 1982 Mello-Roos Community Facilities Act (Government Code Sections 53311 et seq.) enables cities, counties, special districts, and school districts to establish community facilities districts (CFDs) and to levy special taxes to fund a wide variety of facilities and services. The proceeds of a Mello-Roos tax can be used for direct funding and, in the case of capital facilities, to pay off bonds. Mello-Roos financing has similarities to special taxes and special assessments, and in some situations, it has advantages over both.

Food and Beverage Tax

The tax is usually associated with convention and visitor bureaus. However, since parks and recreation agencies manage many of the tourism attractions, they receive a portion of this funding source for operational or capital expenses.



Gaming Tax

This tax is very popular in many states that have gambling. These dollars come in a form of a percentage of what the City and state receive. This is a very popular revenue source that is typically shared with schools, libraries and parks.

Integrated Financing Act

This legislation creates an alternate method for collecting assessments levied under the Landscaping and Lighting Act, the Vehicle Parking District Law and the Park and Playground Act. This act applies to all local agencies. This act can be used to pay the cost of planning, designing, and constructing capital facilities authorized by the applicable financing act, pay for all or part of the principle and interest on debt incurred pursuant to the applicable financing act and to reimburse a private investor in the project. It serves two unique properties: (1) it can levy an assessment which is contingent upon future land development and payable upon approval of a subdivision map or zone change or the receipt of building permits; (2) it allows the local agency to enter into an agreement with a private investor whereby the investor will be reimbursed for funds advance to the agency for the project being financed.

Business Excise Tax

This tax is for new business that settles into a community on products sold based on the wholesale cost. Park Districts in Illinois use this source as one of its revenue sources.

Wheel Tax on Cars/Vehicles

Many cities have a City sticker tax on vehicles based on the type of vehicle. This allows for park agencies to receive a portion of this money to cover the costs of roads, hard surface paths and parking lots associated with parks.

Utility Roundup Programs

Some park and recreation agencies have worked with their local utilities on a round up program whereby a consumer can pay the difference between their bill up to the even dollar amount and they then pay the department the difference. Ideally, these monies are used to support utility improvements such as sports lighting, irrigation cost and HVAC costs.

Franchise Fee on Cable

This allows cities to add a franchise fee on cable to be designated for parks. The normal fee is \$1.00 a month or \$12.00 a year per household. Fees are usually designated for open space acquisition or capital improvements.

Solid Waste Fee

Cities are able to add cost for land fills and drop stations that are designated to provide space and facilities for both. Once these fees cover the cost of buildings and landfills they can re-dedicate a percentage to other City services and several cities have opted to finance park improvements from solid waste fees.



APPENDIX F.

Water Utility Fee

Cities have added a special assessment on to water utility fees paid by homeowners and businesses to cover the costs of water street trees, landscaping, fountains, and pools. The fee is usually a percentage of the bill (2 or 3%).

Earnings Fee

This fee taxes communities who have high population of workers who do not live in the City but work in the City. The employees pay 1/2% of their total salary earned to the City to cover safety forces, streets, public works, and park and open space services.

Insurance Tax

Cities can tax insurance payments as it applies to insurance premiums on homes, cars, inventory and equipment. Parks and Recreation Departments can receive a percentage of the City's tax collected on insurance premiums. This tax is for Parks and Recreation and is typically used for dedicated purposes to reduce liability in Parks and Recreation Facilities but some cities have used it for new capital improvements.

Room Over Rides on Hotels for Sports Tournaments and Special Events

Cities have begun to keep a percentage of hotel rooms that are booked when the City hosts a major sports tournament or special event. The overrides are usually \$5.00 to \$10.00 depending on what type of room. Monies collected help offset operational costs for the City in hosting the events.

Recreation Surcharge Fees on Sports and Entertainment Tickets, Classes, MasterCard, Visa, etc.

This fee is a surcharge on top of the regular sports revenue fee or convenience fee for use of MasterCard and Visa. The fee usually is no more than \$5.00 and usually is \$3.00 on all exchanges. The money earned is used to help pay off the costs of improvement or for operational purposes.

Alcohol Tax

A percentage of alcohol tax gained by the state is made available for individual city park systems to retain support efforts to develop programs and services targeted for youth to assist in skill development programs, after-school programs, summer camps, and other family type programs.

Tax On Sporting Goods

In some states, the states collect a sales tax on sporting goods equipment as it applies to fishing and boating supplies and recreation equipment. This revenue is redistributed to cities and counties on a population basis and from licenses sold.

Manufacturing Product Testing and Display

This funding source is where the City works with specific manufacturers to test their products in parks, recreation facilities and in program services. The City tests the product under normal conditions and reports back to the manufacturer how their product is doing. Examples are in lighting, playgrounds, tires on vehicles, mowers, irrigation systems, seed & fertilizers (etc.). This City gets the product for free but must pay for the costs of installation and for tracking results.



Film Rights

Many cities permit out their sites such as old ballparks or unique grounds or sites for film commissions to use. The film commission pays a daily fee for the site plus the loss of revenue the City will incur if the site generates income.

Sale of Mineral Rights

Many cities sell their mineral rights under parks for revenue purposes to include water, oil, natural gas and other by products for revenue purposes.

Corporate Sponsorships

This revenue-funding source allows corporations to invest in the development or enhancement of new or existing facilities in park systems. Sponsorships are also highly used for programs and events. The City of Las Cruces has used this type of funding in the past for the scoreboards at White Sands, Coke / Sprite backboards and the activity brochure.

Partnerships

Partnerships are joint development funding sources or operational funding sources between two separate agencies, such as two government entities, a non-profit and a City department, or a private business and a City agency. Two partners jointly develop revenue producing park and recreation facilities and share risk, operational costs, responsibilities, and asset management based on the strengths and weaknesses of each partner. Currently there is a partnership agreement with the school district for the fields of dreams complex.

Foundation/Gifts

These dollars are raised from tax-exempt, non-profit organizations established with private donations in promotion of specific causes, activities, or issues. They offer a variety of means to fund capital projects, including capital campaigns, gifts catalogs, fundraisers, endowments, sales of items, etc.

Friends Associations

These groups are formed to raise money typically for a single focus purpose that could include a park facility or program that will better the community as a whole and their special interest.

Volunteerism

The revenue source is an indirect revenue source in that persons donate time to assist the department in providing a product or service on an hourly basis. This reduces the City's cost in providing the service plus it builds advocacy into the system.

Family Tree Program

Many cities have worked with local hospitals to provide cash to the parks system to buy and plant a tree in honor of every new born in the City. The hospitals invest \$250.00 to \$300.00 and receive the credit from the parents of the newborns. The parks system gets new trees of ample size. This could be coordinated and marketed with the existing parks memorial tree and bench program.



APPENDIX F.

Maintenance Endowments

Maintenance Endowments are set up for organizations and individuals to invest in ongoing maintenance improvements and infrastructure needs. Endowments retain money from user fees, individual gifts, impact fees, development rights, partnerships, conservation easements, and for wetland mitigations.

Ticket Sales/Admissions

This revenue source is on accessing facilities for self-directed activities such as pools, ballparks and entertainment activities. These user fees help offset operational costs.

Membership and Season Pass Sales

The City sells memberships to specific types of amenities to offset operational costs. These membership fees can apply to recreational and fitness centers and pools.

Lighting Fees

Some cities charge additional fees for the lighting charges as it applies to leagues, special use sites, and signature type facilities that require lighting above a recreational level. This includes demand charges.

Reservations

This revenue source comes from the right to reserve specific public property for a set amount of time. The reservation rates are usually set and apply to group picnic shelters, meeting rooms for weddings, reunions and outings or other type of facilities for a special activity. Currently reservations can be made by the public at pools, shelters, and recreation centers.

Merchandising Sales

This revenue source comes from the public or private sector on resale items from gift shops and pro shops for either all of the sales or a set gross percentage. Currently, vendors pay the City of Las Cruces a nominal park permit fee to utilize park and recreation facilities to make profits that are not shared with the City.

Reverse Sponsorships

This revenue source allows agencies to receive indirect revenue from cross promoting their current sponsors with professional sporting events such as in racing with cars and drivers and significant sports heroes. Indirect sponsorships provide up to 15% of the sponsorship value back to the City for linking their parks and recreation sponsors with professional sports.

Signage Fees

This revenue source taxes people and businesses with signage fees at key locations with high visibility for short term events. Signage fees range in price from \$25.00 per signs up to \$100.00 per sign based on the size of the sign and location.

Parking Fee

This fee applies to parking at selected destination facilities such as sports complexes, pools, and other attractions to help offset capital and operational cost. Special Events and Tournaments can typically utilize a parking fee to support the activity.



Licensing Rights

This revenue source allows the Department and City to license its name on all resale items that private or public vendors use when they sell clothing or other items with the city's name on it. The normal licensing fee is 6 to 10% of the cost of the resale item.

Concession Management

Concession management is from retail sales or rentals of soft goods, hard goods, or consumable items. The City either contracts for the service or receives a set percentage of the gross revenue or the full revenue dollars that incorporates a profit after expenses.

Advertising Sales

This revenue source is for the sale of tasteful and appropriate advertising on park and recreation related items such as in the City's program guide, on scoreboards, dasher boards and other visible products or services that are consumable or permanent that exposes the product or service to many people.

Permits (Special Use Permits)

These special permits allow individuals to use specific park property for financial gain. The City either receives a set amount of money or a percentage of the gross service that is being provided. A policy is in place although the fees are nominal with no percentage of gross sales realized by the City.

Catering Permits and Services

This is a license to allow caterers to work in the park system on a permit basis with a set fee or a percentage of food sales returning to the City. Also many cities have their own catering service and receive a percentage of dollars off the sale of their food.

Equipment Rental

The revenue source is available on the rental of equipment such as tables, chairs, tents, stages, bicycles, roller blades, skate boards, etc. that are used for recreation purposes. Currently the City of Las Cruces has a fee structure in place for the rental of bleachers and recreational equipment.

Special Fundraisers

Many park and recreation agencies have special fundraisers on an annual basis to help cover specific programs and capital projects.

Entertainment Tax

This tax is on ticket sales for major entertainment venues such as concert facilities, golf tournaments, car races type of venues to help pay for traffic control and sports stars who come into the City based on the earnings they receive from their winnings. This tax also applies to video game machines.

Leasebacks on Recreational Facilities Can Produce Revenue

Many cities do not have capital dollars to build revenue-producing facilities but they will hire a private investor to build the facility according to the specifications they want and the investment company will finance the project and the City will lease it back from them over 20 years. This can be reversed where by



APPENDIX F.

the City builds the facility and leases to private management to operate it for a percentage of gross dollars to pay off the construction loans through a subordinate lease.

Gift Catalogs

Gift catalogs provide organizations the opportunity to let the community know on a yearly basis what their needs are. The community purchases items from the gift catalog and donates them to the City.

Security and Clean-Up Fees

Cities will charge groups and individuals security and clean-up fees for special events other type of events held in parks.

Patron Cards

This allows patrons of a specific recreational facility to purchase patron cards for a month or a year that allows them special privileges above the general public. These privileges include having rights to early registration times, reservations, and special tours, shows or events. The patron cards can range in price from \$15.00 a month to \$150.00 a year.

Hospitality Centers

These types of recreation facilities are developed by cities for use by the public for wedding, reunions, and special gatherings. The recreation facilities are not subsidized but operate at a profit. Some facilities are managed by outside caterers.

Dog Park Fees

These fees are attached to kennel clubs for the right for their club to have their own dog park facilities for their exclusive use. Fees are on the dogs themselves and on people who take care of people's dogs.

Recreation Service Fees

This is a dedicated user fee, which can be established by a local ordinance or other government procedures for the purpose of constructing and maintaining recreation facilities. The fee can apply to all organized activities, which require a reservation of some type, or other purposes as defined by the local government. Examples of such activities include adult basketball, volleyball, and softball leagues, youth baseball, soccer, and softball leagues, and special interest classes. The fee allows participants an opportunity to contribute toward the upkeep of the facilities being used.

Private Concessionaires

Contract with a private business to provide and operate desirable recreational activities financed, constructed, and operated by the private sector with additional compensation paid to the City. The City of Las Cruces currently owns many concession stands within the system and does not collect any revenue from these venues.

Naming Rights

Many cities have turned to selling the naming rights for new buildings or renovation of existing buildings and parks for the development cost associated with the improvement. This opportunity exists in the City of Las Cruces by expanding the process for naming buildings and parks.



Acquisition Tools & Methods

Direct Purchase Methods

Market Value Purchase

Through a written purchase and sale agreement, the city purchases land at the present market value based on an independent appraisal. Timing, payment of real estate taxes and other contingencies are negotiable.

Partial Value Purchase (or Bargain Sale)

In a bargain sale, the landowner agrees to sell for less than the property's fair market value. A landowner's decision to proceed with a bargain sale is unique and personal; landowners with a strong sense of civic pride, long community history or concerns about capital gains are possible candidates for this approach. In addition to cash proceeds upon closing, the landowner may be entitled to a charitable income tax deduction based on the difference between the land's fair market value and its sale price.

Life Estates & Bequests

In the event a landowner wishes to remain on the property for a long period of time or until death, several variations on a sale agreement exist. In a life estate agreement, the landowner may continue to live on the land by donating a remainder interest and retaining a "reserved life estate." Specifically, the landowner donates or sells the property to the city, but reserves the right for the seller or any other named person to continue to live on and use the property. When the owner or other specified person dies or releases his/her life interest, full title and control over the property will be transferred to the city. By donating a remainder interest, the landowner may be eligible for a tax deduction when the gift is made. In a bequest, the landowner designates in a will or trust document that the property is to be transferred to the city upon death. While a life estate offers the city some degree of title control during the life of the landowner, a bequest does not. Unless the intent to bequest is disclosed to and known by the city in advance, no guarantees exist with regard to the condition of the property upon transfer or to any liabilities that may exist.

Option to Purchase Agreement

This is a binding contract between a landowner and the city that would only apply according to the conditions of the option and limits the seller's power to revoke an offer. Once in place and signed, the Option Agreement may be triggered at a future, specified date or upon the completion of designated conditions. Option Agreements can be made for any time duration and can include all of the language pertinent to closing a property sale.

Irrevocable Remainder Trusts

These trusts are set up with individuals who typically have more than a million dollars in wealth. They will leave a portion of their wealth to the City in a trust fund that allows the fund to grow over a period of time and then is available for the City to use a portion of the interest to support specific park and recreation facilities or programs that are designated by the trustee. Currently the City of Las Cruces is a recipient of a portion of the Heske Trust intended to fund some park amenities.

Right of First Refusal

In this agreement, the landowner grants the city the first chance to purchase the property once the landowner wishes to sell. The agreement does not establish the sale price for the property, and the landowner is free to refuse to sell it for the price offered by the city. This is the weakest form of agreement between an owner and a prospective buyer.



APPENDIX F.

Conservation and/or Access Easements

Through a conservation easement, a landowner voluntarily agrees to sell or donate certain rights associated with his or her property (often the right to subdivide or develop), and a private organization or public agency agrees to hold the right to enforce the landowner's promise not to exercise those rights. In essence, the rights are forfeited and no longer exist. This is a legal agreement between the landowner and the city that permanently limits uses of the land in order to conserve a portion of the property for public use or protection. The landowner still owns the property, but the use of the land is restricted.

Conservation easements may result in an income tax deduction and reduced property taxes and estate taxes. Typically, this approach is used to provide trail corridors where only a small portion of the land is needed or for the strategic protection of natural resources and habitat. Through a written purchase and sale agreement, the city purchases land at the present market value based on an independent appraisal. Timing, payment of real estate taxes and other contingencies are negotiable.

Subordinate Easements – Recreation / Natural Area Easements

This revenue source is available when the City allows utility companies, businesses or individuals to develop some type of an improvement above ground or below ground on their property for a set period of time and a set dollar amount to be received by the City on an annual basis.

Landowner Incentive Measures**Density Bonuses**

Density bonuses are a planning tool used to encourage a variety of public land use objectives, usually in urban areas. They offer the incentive of being able to develop at densities beyond current regulations in one area, in return for concessions in another. Density bonuses are applied to a single parcel or development. An example is allowing developers of multi-family units to build at higher densities if they provide a certain number of low-income units or public open space. For density bonuses to work, market forces must support densities at a higher level than current regulations.

Transfer of Development Rights

The transfer of development rights (TDR) is an incentive-based planning tool that allows land owners to trade the right to develop property to its fullest extent in one area for the right to develop beyond existing regulations in another area. Local governments may establish the specific areas in which development may be limited or restricted and the areas in which development beyond regulation may be allowed. Usually, but not always, the "sending" and "receiving" property are under common ownership. Some programs allow for different ownership, which, in effect, establishes a market for development rights to be bought and sold.

IRC 1031 Exchange

If the landowner owns business or investment property, an IRC Section 1031 Exchange can facilitate the exchange of like-kind property solely for business or investment purposes. No capital gain or loss is recognized under Internal Revenue Code Section 1031 (see www.irc.gov for more details).

Other Land Protection Options**Land Trusts & Conservancies**

Land trusts are private non-profit organizations that acquire and protect special open spaces and are traditionally not associated with any government agency. The New Mexico Land Conservancy is a local conservancy serving the Las Cruces area, and NMLC has protected over 54,000 acres of land in New Mexico's southwest region and will continue working to preserve significant agricultural land, wildlife habitat and open space in this unique part of the state.



Appendix G. Park Impact Fee Update

The following report reviews the Park Impact Fee policies and rate methodology.



***Capital Improvement Plan,
Land Use Assumptions,
and Parks and Recreation
Impact Fees
City of Las Cruces, New Mexico***

Submitted to:
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April 2012



PARKS AND RECREATION IMPACT FEE STUDY
Las Cruces, New Mexico

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN, LAND USE ASSUMPTIONS, AND IMPACT FEES
City of Las Cruces, New Mexico

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

TischlerBise was retained by the City of Las Cruces, New Mexico, to prepare an update of the City's parks impact fee methodology, capital improvements plan, and land use assumptions. This update is being conducted as part of the City's update to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, which is being completed by a multi-discipline consulting team that includes Parametrix, Conservation Technix, TischlerBise, Sites Southwest, and ETC.

The purpose of this study is to meet the requirements of the New Mexico Development Fees Act. The Act provides local government the authority to impose fees and controls the amount, timing, method of assessment, and use of the funds. This analysis is organized to address the requirements of the Development Fees Act, and in so doing, define an equitable and proportionate assessment that will help fund the requisite facilities, without undue burden on new or existing development.

Impact fees are one-time payments used to construct system improvements needed to accommodate new development. An impact fee represents new growth's fair share of capital facility needs. By law, impact fees can only be used for *capital* improvements, not operating or maintenance costs. Impact fees are subject to legal standards, which require fulfillment of three key elements: *need, benefit, and proportionality*.

- First, to justify a fee for public facilities, it must be demonstrated that new development will create a need for capital improvements.
- Second, new development must derive a benefit from the payment of the fees (i.e., in the form of public facilities constructed within a reasonable timeframe).
- Third, the fee paid by a particular type of development should not exceed its proportional share of the capital cost for system improvements.

• Fiscal Impact Analysis • Impact Fees • Revenue Strategies • Economic Impact Analysis • Fiscal Software •



**PARKS AND RECREATION IMPACT FEE STUDY
Las Cruces, New Mexico**

TischlerBise documented appropriate demand indicators by type of development for the capital improvement plan and park impact fees. Specific capital costs have been identified using local data and costs. This report includes summary tables indicating the specific factors used to derive the park impact fees. These factors are referred to as level of service standards.

SUMMARY OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLANS AND IMPACT FEES

The impact fees calculated for the City of Las Cruces represent the highest amount feasible for each type of applicable land use, or *maximum allowable amounts*, which represents new growth's fair share of the cost for the appropriate parks and recreation capital facilities. The City may adopt fees that are less than the amounts shown. However, a reduction in park impact fee revenue will necessitate an increase in other revenues, a decrease in planned capital expenditures, and/or a decrease in levels of service.

The Parks and Recreation impact fee is based on information contained in the City's *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* and information provided by the City's Parks and Recreation Department. It is important to note that the *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* contain recommended levels of service for various park facilities. The impact fees are based on the *actual level of service* for parks and recreation facilities, which is lower than recommended levels of service. Components include both land and improvements, and the fee is only calculated for residential development.

A summary of methodologies used in the analysis is provided below in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Summary of City of Las Cruces Impact Fee Methodologies

Components	Methodologies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Neighborhood Park land acquisition ▪ Community Park land acquisition ▪ Athletic Facility land acquisition ▪ Trail land acquisition ▪ Special Facility land acquisition ▪ Park Improvement development ▪ Recreation Center space ▪ Aquatics improvements 	<p>Incremental Expansion</p>



PARKS AND RECREATION IMPACT FEE STUDY
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MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE PARKS AND RECREATION IMPACT FEES

Figure 2 provides a schedule of the *maximum allowable Parks and Recreation impact fees* for the City of Las Cruces. The fees represent the highest amount allowable for each type of housing unit, which represents new growth's fair share of the cost for parks and recreation capital facilities. The City may adopt fees that are less than the amounts shown. However, a *reduction in impact fee revenue will necessitate an increase in other revenues, a decrease in planned capital expenditures, and/or a decrease in levels of service.*

Figure 2. Summary of Maximum Allowable Impact Fees

Unit Type	Persons per Housing Unit	Proposed Fee	Current Fee	Increase (Decrease)
Single Family	2.65	\$4,126	\$800	\$3,326
Multifamily	1.90	\$2,958	\$800	\$2,158

CREDITS AND GEOGRAPHIC AREA

A general requirement common to impact fee methodologies is the evaluation of *credits*. Two types of credits should be considered, *future revenue credits* and *site-specific credits*. Revenue credits may be necessary to avoid potential double payment situations arising from a one-time impact fee plus the payment of other revenues (e.g., property taxes) that may also fund growth-related capital improvements. Because new development may provide front-end funding of infrastructure, there is a potential for double payment of capital costs due to future payments on debt for public facilities. No credits for existing or future principal and interest payments are necessary for the City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation impact fees because there is no outstanding debt for the infrastructure categories in the fee program after the current fiscal year. If the City were to issue debt for growth-related parks and recreation capital improvements, the impact fee methodology would have to be revised to reflect the necessary credit.

The second type of credit is a *site-specific credit* for system improvements that have been included in the Parks and Recreation impact fee calculations. Policies and procedures related to site-specific credits for system improvements should be addressed in the ordinance that establishes the development fees. However, the general concept is that developers may be eligible for site-specific credits only if they provide system improvements that have been included in the impact fee calculations. Project improvements normally required as part of the development approval process are not eligible for credits against impact fees.



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Please note, calculations throughout this report are based on an analysis conducted using Excel software. Results are discussed in the memo using one- and two-digit places (in most cases). Figures are typically either truncated or rounded. In some instances, the analysis itself uses figures carried to their ultimate decimal places; therefore the sums and products generated in the analysis may not equal the sum or product if the reader replicates the calculation with the factors shown in the report (due to the rounding of figures shown, not in the analysis).



INTRODUCTION TO IMPACT FEES

DEFINITION

Development impact fees, also known as impact fees or development fees, are one-time payments used to fund capital improvements necessitated by new growth. Impact fees have been utilized by local governments in various forms for at least fifty years. Impact fees do have limitations, and should not be regarded as the total solution for infrastructure financing needs. Rather, they should be considered one component of a comprehensive portfolio to ensure adequate provision of public facilities with the goal of maintaining current levels of service in a community. Any community considering development impact fees should note the following limitations:

- Impact fees can only be used to finance capital infrastructure and cannot be used to finance ongoing operations and/or maintenance and rehabilitation costs;
- Impact fees cannot be deposited in the local government's General Fund. The funds must be accounted for separately in individual accounts and earmarked for the capital expenses for which they were collected; and
- Impact fees cannot be used to correct existing infrastructure deficiencies unless there is a funding plan in place to correct the deficiency for all current residents and businesses in the community.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

U.S. Constitution. Like all land use regulations, development exactions—including impact fees—are subject to the Fifth Amendment prohibition on taking of private property for public use without just compensation. Both state and federal courts have recognized the imposition of impact fees on development as a legitimate form of land use regulation, provided the fees meet standards intended to protect against regulatory takings. To comply with the Fifth Amendment, development regulations must be shown to substantially advance a legitimate governmental interest. In the case of impact fees, that interest is in the protection of public health, safety, and welfare by ensuring that development is not detrimental to the quality of essential public services.

There is little federal case law specifically dealing with impact fees, although other rulings on other types of exactions (e.g., land dedication requirements) are relevant. In one of the most important exaction cases, the U. S. Supreme Court found that a government agency imposing exactions on development must demonstrate an "essential nexus" between the exaction and the interest being



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protected. (See *Nollan v. California Coastal Commission*, 1987.) In a more recent case (*Dolan v. City of Tigard, OR*, 1994), the Court ruled that an exaction also must be "roughly proportional" to the burden created by development. However, the *Dolan* decision appeared to set a higher standard of review for mandatory dedications of land than for monetary exactions such as development impact fees.

REQUIRED FINDINGS

There are three reasonable relationship requirements for impact fees that are closely related to "rational nexus" or "reasonable relationship" requirements enunciated by a number of state courts. Although the term "dual rational nexus" is often used to characterize the standard by which courts evaluate the validity of development impact fees under the U.S. Constitution, we prefer a more rigorous formulation that recognizes three elements: "impact or need," "benefit," and "proportionality." The dual rational nexus test explicitly addresses only the first two, although proportionality is reasonably implied, and was specifically mentioned by the U.S. Supreme Court in the *Dolan* case. The reasonable relationship language of the statute is considered less strict than the rational nexus standard used by many courts. Individual elements of the nexus standard are discussed further in the following paragraphs.

Demonstrating an Impact. All new development in a community creates additional demands on some, or all, public facilities provided by local government. If the supply of facilities is not increased to satisfy that additional demand, the quality or availability of public services for the entire community will deteriorate. Impact fees may be used to recover the cost of development-related facilities, but only to the extent that the need for facilities is a consequence of development that is subject to the fees. The *Nollan* decision reinforced the principle that development exactions may be used only to mitigate conditions created by the developments upon which they are imposed. That principle clearly applies to impact fees. In this study, the impact of development on improvement needs is analyzed in terms of quantifiable relationships between various types of development and the demand for specific facilities, based on applicable level-of-service standards.

Demonstrating a Benefit. A sufficient benefit relationship requires that facility fee revenues be segregated from other funds and expended only on the facilities for which the fees were charged. Fees must be expended in a timely manner and the facilities funded by the fees must serve the development paying the fees. However, nothing in the U.S. Constitution or the State enabling Act requires that facilities funded with fee revenues be available *exclusively* to development paying the fees. In other words, existing development may benefit from these improvements as well.



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Procedures for the earmarking and expenditure of fee revenues are typically mandated by the State enabling act, as are procedures to ensure that the fees are expended expeditiously or refunded. All of these requirements are intended to ensure that developments benefit from the fees they are required to pay. Thus, an adequate showing of benefit must address procedural as well as substantive issues.

Demonstrating Proportionality. The requirement that exactions be proportional to the impacts of development was clearly stated by the U.S. Supreme Court in the *Dolan* case (although the relevance of that decision to impact fees has been debated) and is logically necessary to establish a proper nexus. Proportionality is established through the procedures used to identify development-related facility costs, and in the methods used to calculate impact fees for various types of facilities and categories of development. The demand for facilities is measured in terms of relevant and measurable attributes of development. For example, the need for school improvements is measured by the number of public school-age children generated by development.

UNIQUE REQUIREMENTS OF THE NEW MEXICO IMPACT FEE ACT

Impact fees in New Mexico are governed by Article 8, Chapter 5 of New Mexico Statutes Annotated (NMSA) – the *Development Fees Act*. The Act imposes certain requirements for impact fee assessment in New Mexico, including:

- Capital facility types that are eligible for impact fee assessment;
- Categories of allowed and prohibited expenses;
- Impact fee administrative procedures and capital facilities plan update requirements, including conditions under which fees must be refunded (impact fees must, for example, be spent within seven years of collection or refunded);
- Requirements guiding the City's definition of an impact fee service area (the area within which fees will be assessed);
- Impact fee analytical requirements that call for preparation of two reports to support the assessment – impact fee Land Use Assumptions, and this Impact Fee Capital Improvement Plan (the IFCIP), which documents the calculation methodology and includes a schedule of impact fees by property type.

The IFCIP includes the following:

- The definition of the impact fee service unit – a standard unit of measure for capital facilities demand planning;



PARKS AND RECREATION IMPACT FEE STUDY
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- A demand equivalency table that shows the rate of service unit generation (capital facility capacity demand), by property type;
- The number of projected service units attributable to new development (which is a way to quantify the “impacts” of new development);
- The cost per service unit (cost to meet demand from a unit of new development);
- The net cost per service unit (total cost less impact fee reductions);
- An impact fee net cost schedule that shows the net payable impact fee amount, by property type.

The *Development Fees Act* includes three other noteworthy provisions:

1. Platted (and un-built) lots are guaranteed, for a period of four years, the impact fee rate in effect at the time of platting. This protection expires at the end of four years, after which the current fee rates apply. Lots platted prior to the adoption of the impact fees in this report have no such protection (because fees in this report have not been assessed in the past). Future impact fee updates will have effect only for lots platted after enactment of the new fees (along with lots platted more than four years before the update).
2. Impact fee exemption is specifically disallowed for public entities.
3. The City may waive fee assessment for “qualified affordable housing.” Qualified units are those affordable to households earning 80% or less of HUD area median income, and which have total monthly shelter costs of less than 30% of gross household income.

METHODOLOGIES AND CREDITS

Any one of several legitimate methods may be used to calculate impact fees. The choice of a particular method depends primarily on the service characteristics and planning requirements for the facility type being addressed. Each method has advantages and disadvantages in a particular situation, and to some extent can be interchangeable, because each allocates facility costs in proportion to the needs created by development.

Reduced to its simplest terms, the process of calculating impact fees involves two main steps: (1) determining the cost of development-related capital improvements and (2) allocating those costs equitably to various types of development. In practice, though, the calculation of impact fees can become quite complicated because of the many variables involved in defining the relationship



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between development and the need for facilities. The following paragraphs discuss three basic methods for calculating development impact fees and how those methods can be applied.

Plan-Based Fee Calculation. The plan-based method allocates costs for a specified set of improvements to a specified amount of development. The improvements are identified by a facility plan and development is identified by a land use plan. In this method, the total cost of relevant facilities is divided by total demand to calculate a cost per unit of demand. Then, the cost per unit of demand is multiplied by the amount of demand per unit of development (e.g., housing units or square feet of building area) in each category to arrive at a cost per specific unit of development (e.g., single family detached unit).

Cost Recovery or Buy-In Fee Calculation. The rationale for the cost recovery approach is that new development is paying for its share of the useful life and remaining capacity of facilities already built or land already purchased from which new growth will benefit. This methodology is often used for systems that were oversized such as sewer and water facilities.

Incremental Expansion Fee Calculation. The incremental expansion method documents the current level of service (LOS) for each type of public facility in both quantitative and qualitative measures, based on an existing service standard (such as square feet per student). This approach ensures that there are no existing infrastructure deficiencies or surplus capacity in infrastructure. New development is only paying its proportionate share for growth-related infrastructure. The level of service standards are determined in a manner similar to the current replacement cost approach used by property insurance companies. However, in contrast to insurance practices, the fee revenues would not be for renewal and/or replacement of existing facilities. Rather, revenue will be used to expand or provide additional facilities, as needed, to accommodate new development. An incremental expansion cost method is best suited for public facilities that will be expanded in regular increments, with LOS standards based on current conditions in the community.

Credits. Regardless of the methodology, a consideration of "credits" is integral to the development of a legally valid impact fee methodology. There are two types of "credits" each with specific, distinct characteristics, but both of which should be addressed in the development of impact fees. The first is a credit due to possible double payment situations. This could occur when contributions are made by the property owner toward the capital costs of the public facility covered by the impact fee. This type of credit is integrated into the impact fee calculation. The second is a credit toward the payment of a fee for dedication of public sites or improvements provided by the developer and for which the facility fee is imposed. This type of credit is addressed in the administration and implementation of a facility fee program.

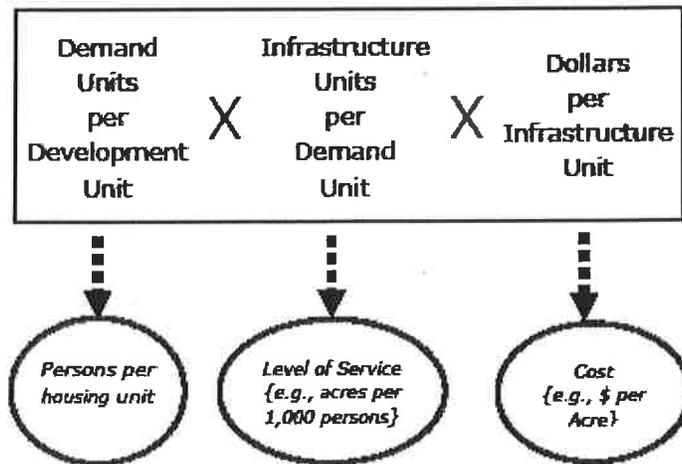


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GENERIC IMPACT FEE CALCULATION

In contrast to development exactions, which are typically referred to as project-level improvements, impact fees fund growth-related infrastructure that will benefit multiple development projects, or the entire jurisdiction (often referred to as "system-level" improvements). The basic steps in a generic impact fee formula are illustrated in Figure 3. The first step (see the left box) is to determine an appropriate demand indicator, or service unit, for the particular type of infrastructure. The demand/service indicator measures the number of demand or service units for each unit of development. For example, an appropriate indicator of the demand for parks is population growth and the increase in population can be estimated from the average number of persons per occupied housing unit. The second step in the generic impact fee formula is shown in the middle box below. Infrastructure units per demand unit are typically called Level-Of-Service (LOS) standards. In keeping with the park example, a common LOS standard is park acreage per thousand people. The third step in the generic impact fee formula, as illustrated in the right box, is the cost of various infrastructure units. To complete the park example, this part of the formula would establish the cost per acre for land acquisition and/or development.

Figure 3. Generic Impact Fee Formula



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SUMMARY OF LAND USE ASSUMPTIONS/DEMAND INDICATORS

The State's *Development Fees Act* states that land use assumptions should include a description of the service area and projections of changes in land uses, densities, intensities, and population in the service area over at least a five-year period (see Section 5-8-2.J). Specifically, the *Development Fees Act* requires that two analytical documents be prepared before impact fees can be assessed:

1. Land use assumptions must be defined in order to project the quantity of new development in terms of new service units anticipated over a 5-10 year period.
2. An impact fee capital improvements plan must be prepared to show how demand for added capital facility capacity generated by new development is translated into costs, and specifically, cost per new service unit.

For purposes of this park impact fee analysis, the land use assumptions prepared by Duncan Associates for the recently adopted public safety, roads, and drainage impact fees are utilized for this analysis to ensure consistency between the different impact fees (please see *2010-2020 Impact Fee Land Use Assumptions for Major Roads, Drainage and Public Safety*, October 10, 2010, prepared by Duncan Associates).

POPULATION AND HOUSING GROWTH TRENDS

The City of Las Cruces has experienced consistent population growth over the past decade. This has been a result of both annexation and natural population growth resulting from new development. As Figure 4 illustrates, the City's population estimates are consistent with the U.S. Census Bureau's population estimates over the last ten years. The City estimated its 2010 population at 96,994, while the Census estimate was 97,618, a difference of 624 persons. The City's growth rate has been higher than Dona Ana County's over the same period.



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Figure 4. Population Growth, 2000 to 2010

Year	City of Las Cruces		Dona Ana County
	City*	Census	
2000	73,539	73,539	174,682
2001	75,016	75,230	176,460
2002	76,352	76,697	178,473
2003	78,204	79,056	182,147
2004	81,057	81,252	184,935
2005	83,649	84,610	189,265
2006	87,697	87,744	193,779
2007	91,730	90,060	198,205
2008	93,910	91,865	201,428
2009	95,128	93,570	206,419
2010†	96,994	97,618	209,233
Net Increase	23,455	24,079	34,551
Annual Increase	3.19%	3.27%	1.98%

*City of Las Cruces Community Development Department. From 2010 Duncan Associates Study

†TischlerBise updated 2010 Census for City and County

As shown in Figure 5, the City's housing stock grew by 13,149 units from 2000 through the end of 2010. Single family housing units accounted for 63.6% of new units built. Total housing units in the City of Las Cruces is 44,801.

Figure 5. New Housing Units, 2000 to 2010

Year	New Dwelling Units Permitted				Total Units
	Single Family	Multi Family	Mfg. Home	Total	
2000	271	242	215	728	32,380
2001	307	273	186	766	33,146
2002	520	291	191	1,002	34,148
2003	755	499	204	1,458	35,606
2004	808	301	260	1,364	36,970
2005	1,460	381	169	2,010	38,980
2006	1,459	395	165	2,019	40,999
2007	952	83	161	1,196	42,195
2008	632	36	98	766	42,961
2009	627	285	76	988	43,949
2010	576	169	107	852	44,801
Total	8,362	2,955	1,882	13,149	
% of New Units	63.6%	22.5%	13.9%	100.0%	

Source: Annual dwelling units permitted from the Community Development.



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PERSON PER HOUSEHOLD FACTORS

Household size (persons per housing unit (PPHU)) is an important demographic factor that helps account for variations in service demand by type of housing. The Duncan Associates impact fee study conducted in 2010 utilized persons per household factors from the 2000 U.S. Census. Given the fact these numbers are now eleven years old, TischlerBise suggests updating these factors using information available from the 2006-2010 U.S. Census American Community Survey 5-Year estimate, which is shown below.

Figure 6. Persons per Household in Las Cruces

Type of Unit	Persons	Occupied Households	Persons Per Household
Single Family*	70,984	26,762	2.65
Multifamily	18,460	9,715	1.90

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

*Includes Single Family Attached, Detached and Mobile Homes

PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH, 2010 TO 2020

As stated previously, TischlerBise has utilized the land use assumptions (with the exception of updated persons per household factors) prepared by Duncan Associates for the recently adopted public safety, roads, and drainage impact fees for this analysis to ensure consistency between the different impact fees (please see *2010-2020 Impact Fee Land Use Assumptions for Major Roads, Drainage and Public Safety*, October 10, 2010, prepared by Duncan Associates).

As shown in Figure 7, Citywide population is projected to by 1,971 persons annually from 2010 to 2020, to a total of 116,704. This projection is a linear trend based on the range of estimated population growth forecasts used by the City and County in the Vision 2040 regional planning project.



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Figure 7. Population Growth, 2010 to 2020

Year	Citywide	Growth Area
2010	96,994	58,802
2011	98,805	60,559
2012	100,650	62,345
2013	102,529	64,164
2014	104,443	66,015
2015	106,393	67,901
2016	108,380	69,820
2017	110,404	71,774
2018	112,465	73,765
2019	114,565	75,789
2020	116,704	77,853

Source: Duncan Associates 2010-2020 Impact Fee Land Use Assumptions for Major Roads, Drainage and Public Safety, October 10, 2010.

PARKS AND RECREATION IMPACT FEE SERVICE AREA

An impact fee service area is a region in which a defined set of improvements provide benefit to an identifiable amount of new development. Within a service area, all new development of a type (single-family, commercial, etc.) is assessed at the same impact fee rate. Land use assumptions and the IFCIP are each defined in terms of this geography, so that parks and recreation capital facility demand, projects needed to meet that demand, and capital facility cost are all quantified in the same terms. Impact fee revenue collected within a service area is required to be spent within that service area.

According to the *Development Fees Act*, service areas are defined based on "...sound planning and engineering standards." This gives local government considerable discretion. Basic objectives are that subject facilities be accessible to development throughout the area, and that roughly the same level of service (LOS) prevails throughout the area.

Implementation of a large number of small service areas is problematic. Administration is complicated and, because funds collected within the service area must be spent within that area, and spent within a seven-year period, multiple service areas may make it impossible to accumulate sufficient revenue to fund any projects within the time allowed.

As part of our analysis of the City's park system and the type of facilities and improvements included in the impact fee calculation, TischlerBise has determined that a citywide service area is appropriate for the City of Las Cruces.



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IMPACT FEE METHODOLOGY

The Parks and Recreation impact fee is based on the incremental methodology. Although the City has an adopted Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the impact fee methodology assumes the City will may acquire additional park land and construct additional recreation improvements to serve future growth to maintain current levels of service incrementally over time. This is a conservative approach, taken as a result of the present economic uncertainty that exists, which limits the City's General Fund exposure. If a plan-based approach were utilized, reliance on long-range growth projections would be likely, which could force to City to spend more General Fund dollars to implement the plan if growth does not occur as projected.

Parks and recreation capital improvements are allocated 100 percent to residential development. Per the *Development Fees Act*, a service unit for purposes of the parks and recreation impact fee is a person. Facilities The *Development Fees Act* restricts capital improvements to those with a cost of \$10,000 or and having a useful life of at least ten years, therefore parks and recreation vehicles and equipment are excluded from the fee calculations. Included in the fee calculation are:

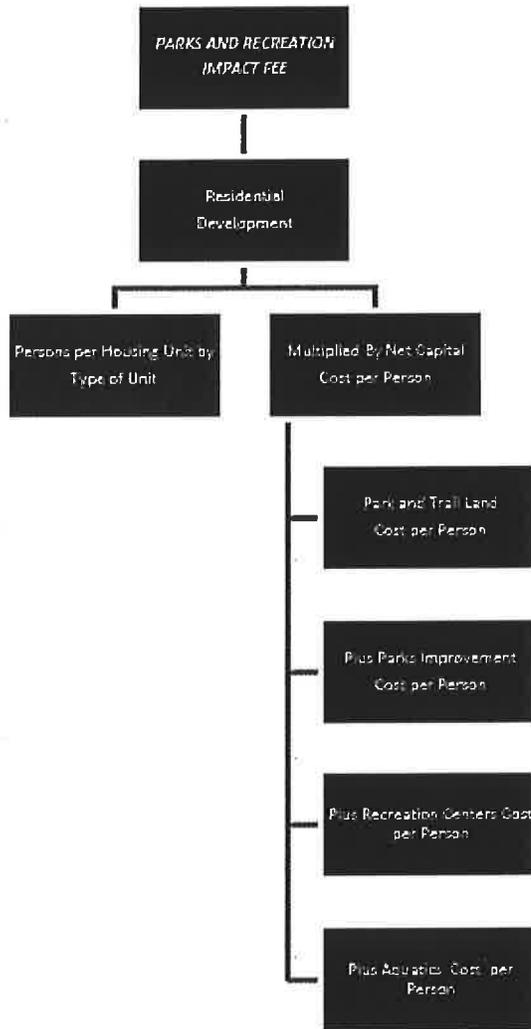
- Park land acquisition
- Park improvements
- Recreation Center space
- Trails
- Aquatics facilities

Figure 8 diagrams the general methodology used to calculate the Parks and Recreation impact fee. It is intended to read like an outline, with lower levels providing a more detailed breakdown of the impact fee components. The Parks and Recreation impact fee is derived from the product of persons per housing unit (by type of unit) multiplied by the net capital cost per person. The boxes in the next level down indicate detail on the components included in the fee.



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Figure 8. Parks and Recreation Impact Fee Methodology Chart



PARKS AND RECREATION IMPACT FEE STUDY
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PARKS & RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE STANDARDS AND COST FACTORS

Park and Recreation impact fees are based on an inventory of existing citywide Parks and current values of recreation improvements in the City's park system. The use of existing standards means there are no existing infrastructure deficiencies. New development is only paying its proportionate share for growth-related infrastructure. Costs and acreages have been provided by City staff.

Neighborhood Park Land

As shown in Figure 9, the City has a total of 58.17 acres of neighborhood park land. When compared to the current City population estimate of 98,805, this equates to a current level of service of .59 acres per 1,000 persons. The City has a recommended level of service as part of the *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* set at 1 acre per 1,000 persons. The impact fee calculations utilize a conservative approach and are based on the actual (existing) level of service. This level of service is used to determine future needs and costs for park land purchases and development.

To determine the cost per service unit, TischlerBise utilized information provided by the City for average cost per acre, which was estimated at \$130,680. Based on the current level of service standard for neighborhood park land (0.59 per 1,000 persons) and the City's estimate of the cost per acre (\$130,680) to purchase park land, the cost per capita is \$76 (0.59 acres per 1,000 persons x \$130,680 per acre = \$76 per person (truncated)).



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Figure 9. Neighborhood Park Level of Service Standards and Cost Factors

Site	Total Acres
Four Hills Park	1.90
Northridge Park	1.01
Country Club Estates Park	2.15
Sagecrest Park	2.20
Camelot Gardens Park	1.24
Villa Encantada Park	1.71
Albert Johnson Park	3.37
Camunex Park	2.66
Pioneer Women's Park	2.07
Hermosa Heights Park	1.08
Gus Vlachakis Park	4.08
Rose Village Park	1.09
College Manor Park	2.05
Salopek/Stull Park	2.24
Klein Park	1.73
Cardon Park	0.77
Las Colinas Mini-Park	0.57
Sunset Hills Park	1.41
Jason Iron Park	3.33
Sunrise Village Park	4.34
Tellbrook Park	5.00
San Jose Park	1.14
Sam Graft Park	2.83
Valley Verde Park	2.82
Unnamed Park	1.09
Vista De La Montana Park	2.11
Las Colinas Park	2.18
TOTAL	58.17

Level of Service (LOS) Standards

Las Cruces Population In 2011	98,805
LOS: Acres Per 1,000 Persons	0.59

Cost Analysis

LOS: Acres Per 1,000 Persons	0.59
Land Cost per Acre*	\$130,680
Land Cost per Person	\$76

*Source: City of Las Cruces Parks Department

Community Park Land

As shown in Figure 10, the City has a total of 205.47 acres of community park land. When compared to the current City population estimate of 98,805, this equates to a current level of service of 2.08 acres per 1,000 persons. The City has a recommended level of service as part of the *Parks and*



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Recreation Master Plan set at 3 acres per 1,000 persons. The impact fee calculations utilize a conservative approach and are based on the actual (existing) level of service. This level of service is used to determine future needs and costs for park land purchases and development.

To determine the cost per service unit, TischlerBise utilized information provided by the City for average cost per acre, which was estimated at \$130,680. Based on the current level of service standard for community park land (2.08 per 1,000 persons) and the City's estimate of the cost per acre (\$130,680) to purchase park land, the cost per capita is \$271 (2.08 acres per 1,000 persons x \$130,680 per acre = \$271 per person (truncated)).

Figure 10. Community Park Level of Service Standards and Cost Factors

Site	Total Acres
Apodaca Park	27.09
Burn Lake	48.01
Desert Trails	34.42
Frenger Park	9.95
Legends West	11.26
Lions Park	6.63
North Las Cruces Park	8.16
Oro Vista	15.86
Outlet Channel Park	6.01
Valley View Park	5.45
Valley View Park	4.20
Veterans Memorial Park	9.00
Young Park	19.43
TOTAL	205.47

Level of Service (LOS) Standards

Las Cruces Population in 2011	98,805
LOS: Acres Per 1,000 Persons	2.08

Cost Analysis

LOS: Acres Per 1,000 Persons	2.08
Land Cost per Acre*	\$130,680
Land Cost per Person	\$271

*Source: City of Las Cruces Parks Department

Athletic Facility Land

As shown in Figure 11, the City has a total of 76.42 acres of athletic field land. When compared to the current City population estimate of 98,805, this equates to a current level of service of 0.77 acres per 1,000 persons. The impact fee calculations utilize a conservative approach and are based on the actual



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(existing) level of service. This level of service is used to determine future needs and costs for park land purchases and development.

To determine the cost per service unit, TischlerBise utilized information provided by the City for average cost per acre, which was estimated at \$130,680. Based on the current level of service standard for athletic facility land (0.77 per 1,000 persons) and the City's estimate of the cost per acre (\$130,680) to purchase park land, the cost per capita is \$101 (0.77 acres per 1,000 persons x \$130,680 per acre = \$101 per person (truncated)).

Figure 11. Athletic Field Level of Service Standards and Cost Factors

Site	Total Acres
Soldados Multi Purpose Field	9.45
High Noon Soccer Complex	17.92
Provenio Van Dame Multi Purpose Field	9.95
Maag Ball Park	8.13
Ronald D. Galla T-Ball Field	3.75
Pax Ball Park	18.23
Harty Ball Field	7.99
TOTAL	76.42

Level of Service (LOS) Standards	
Las Cruces Population In 2011	98,805
LOS: Acres Per 1,000 Persons	0.77

Cost Analysis	
LOS: Acres Per 1,000 Persons	0.77
Land Cost per Acre*	\$130,680
Land Cost per Person	\$101

*Source: City of Las Cruces Parks Department

Special Facility Land

As shown in Figure 12, the City has a total of 205.73 acres of special facility land. When compared to the current City population estimate of 98,805, this equates to a current level of service of 2.08 acres per 1,000 persons. The impact fee calculations utilize a conservative approach and are based on the actual (existing) level of service. This level of service is used to determine future needs and costs for park land purchases and development.

To determine the cost per service unit, TischlerBise utilized information provided by the City for average cost per acre, which was estimated at \$130,680. Based on the current level of service standard for athletic facility land (2.08 per 1,000 persons) and the City's estimate of the cost per acre (\$130,680) to purchase park land, the cost per capita is \$272 (2.08 acres per 1,000 persons x \$130,680 per acre = \$272 per person (truncated)).



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Figure 12. Special Facility Level of Service Standards and Cost Factors

Site	Total Acres
Butterfield Shooting Range	200.00
Las Cruces BMX Track	1.37
Las Cruces Dog Park	1.08
Skate Park	0.81
Unidad Park	2.47
TOTAL	205.73

Level of Service (LOS) Standards	
Las Cruces Population in 2011	98,805
LOS: Acres Per 1,000 Persons	2.08
Cost Analysis	
LOS: Acres Per 1,000 Persons	2.08
Land Cost per Acre*	\$130,680
Land Cost per Person	\$272

*Source: City of Las Cruces Parks Department

Trails

As shown in Figure 13, the City has a total of 16.20 miles of trails. When compared to the current City population estimate of 98,805, this equates to a current level of service of .16 miles per 1,000 persons. The impact fee calculations utilize a conservative approach and are based on the actual (existing) level of service. This level of service is used to determine future needs and costs for park land purchases and development.

To determine the cost per service unit, TischlerBise utilized information provided by the City for average cost per mile (based on actual bids for the Outfall Channel Multi Use Path), which was estimated at \$375,000. Based on the current level of service standard for trails (.16 per 1,000 persons) and the City's estimate of the cost per mile (\$375,000) to purchase trail land, the cost per capita is \$61 (.16 miles per 1,000 persons x \$375,00 per mile = \$61 per person (truncated)).



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Figure 13. Trails Level of Service Standards and Cost Factors

Site	Total Miles
Union (west) Multi Use Path	0.50
Union (east) Multi Use Path	0.60
La Llorona	4.50
Outfall Channel Multi Use Path	4.30
University Multi Use Path	1.10
Sonoma Ranch Multi Use Path	0.70
Triviz Multi Use Path	4.50
TOTAL	16.20

Level of Service (LOS) Standards

Las Cruces Population in 2011	98,805
LOS: Miles Per 1,000 Persons	0.16

Cost Analysis

LOS: Miles Per 1,000 Persons	0.16
Land Cost per Mile*	\$375,000
Trails Cost per Person	\$61

*Source: City of Las Cruces Parks Department, based on bid costs for Outfall Channel Multi Use Path

Recreation Improvements

Figure 14 lists the current improvements at City parks. The value to these improvements total \$41,034,200. The total inventory and value of park improvements is based on the inventory of park improvements provided by City staff. As discussed above, the value of park improvements is allocated 100% to residential development. To determine the cost per demand unit for recreation improvements, the total value of park improvements (\$41,034,200) is divided by the current City population (98,805 persons) for a cost per demand unit of \$415 per person.



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Figure 14. Recreation Improvement Level of Service Standards and Cost Factors

Improvement Type	Total Units	Unit Cost*	Replacement
			Cost
Pavilions	2.0	\$45,000	\$90,000
Gazebos	67.0	\$10,000	\$670,000
Concession Stands	5.0	\$175,000	\$875,000
Bandstand	2.0	\$35,000	\$70,000
Shade Structures/Canopies	32.0	\$3,500	\$112,000
Drinking Fountains	47.0	\$3,500	\$164,500
Shooting Range	7.0	\$100,000	\$700,000
Benches	178.0	\$500	\$89,000
Bleachers	71.0	\$5,000	\$355,000
Huacha Court	10.0	\$500	\$5,000
Frisbee Court	1.0	\$3,000	\$3,000
Picnic Tables	206.0	\$950	\$195,700
Play Structure	52.0	\$105,000	\$5,460,000
Restroom	16.0	\$250,000	\$4,000,000
Volleyball Court	5.0	\$50,000	\$250,000
Tennis Court	18.0	\$110,000	\$1,980,000
Handball Courts	4.0	\$35,000	\$140,000
Baseball/Softball Field	18.0	\$750,000	\$13,500,000
Multi Use Field	1.0	\$700,000	\$700,000
Soccer Field	35.0	\$250,000	\$8,750,000
Basketball Court	19.0	\$150,000	\$2,850,000
Horseshoe Court	15.0	\$5,000	\$75,000
TOTAL	811.0		\$41,034,200
Level of Service (LOS) Standards			
Number of Improvements			811.0
2011 Las Cruces Population			98,805
Current LOS: Improvements Acres Per 1,000 Persons			8.2
Cost Analysis			
Total Value of Park Improvements			\$41,034,200
Average Cost per Improvement			\$50,597
Improvements per 1,000 Persons			8.2
Citywide Park Improvements Cost per Person			\$415

*Provided by City of Las Cruces Parks Department

Recreation Centers

Figure 15 lists the City's current inventory of recreation centers. As Figure 15 indicates, the City has four Recreation Centers. According to information provided by the City, the land associated with these facilities totals 15.02 acres. When compared to the current City population estimate of 98,805, this equates to a current level of service of .15 acres per 1,000 persons. Actual building space totals 61,827 square feet. When compared to the current City population estimate of 98,805, this equates to a current level of service of 625.75 square feet per 1,000 persons. As discussed above, the parks and recreation costs are allocated 100% to residential development.



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To determine the cost per service unit, TischlerBise utilized information provided by the City for average cost per acre, which was estimated at \$130,680. Based on the current level of service standard for recreation center land (0.15 per 1,000 persons) and the City's estimate of the cost per acre (\$130,680) to purchase park land, the land cost per capita is \$19 (0.15 acres per 1,000 persons x \$130,680 per acre = \$19 per person (truncated)).

A similar calculation is used to determine the cost per service unit for building space. To determine the replacement cost per service unit for recreation center square footage, TischlerBise utilized information published by the Marshall Valuation Service, using Good Class C construction for the Government Building category, which is estimated at \$165 per square foot. Based on the current level of service standard for recreation center space (625.75 per 1,000 persons) and the estimated replacement cost per square foot (\$161), the recreation center space cost per capita is \$100 (625.75 square feet per 1,000 persons x \$161 per square foot = \$100 per person (truncated)). This results in a total Recreation Center cost per person of \$119 (truncated).

Figure 15. Recreation Center Level of Service Standards and Cost Factors

Site	Total Acres	Total Square Footage
Meerscheidt Recreation Center	3.91	29,650
Frank O'Brien Pápen (Mesilla) Recreation Center	4.38	23,335
East Mesa Recreation Center	0.25	3,260
Henry Benavidez Community Center	6.48	5,582
TOTAL	15.02	61,827

Level of Service (LOS) Standards

Las Cruces Population in 2011	98,805
LOS: Acres Per 1,000 Persons	0.15
LOS: Square Feet Per 1,000 Persons	625.75

Cost Analysis

LOS: Acres Per 1,000 Persons	0.15
Land Cost per Acre*	\$130,680
Building Cost per Square Foot**	\$161
Land Cost per Person	\$19
Recreation Center Space Cost per Person	\$100
Total Recreation Center Cost per Person	\$119

*Source: City of Las Cruces Parks Department

**Source: Marshall Valuation Service, Assumes Good Class C Construction, Government Building Category

Aquatics

Figure 16 lists the City's current inventory of aquatics facilities. As Figure 16 indicates, the City has four aquatics facilities. According to information provided by the City, the replacement value for these four



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facilities totals \$24 million. To determine the cost per service unit, the replacement cost (\$24 million) is divided by the current population estimate (98,805) for an aquatics cost per capita of \$242.

Figure 16. Aquatics Level of Service Standards and Cost Factors

Site	Replacement Cost
Las Cruces Regional Aquatics Center	\$14,000,000
Frenger Pool	\$4,000,000
East Mesa Bataan Memorial Pool	\$3,000,000
Laabs Pool	\$3,000,000
TOTAL	\$24,000,000

Level of Service (LOS) and Cost Analysis

Las Cruces Population in 2011	98,805
Aquatics Cost per Person	\$242

**Source: City of Las Cruces Parks Department*

CREDIT EVALUATION

No credits for existing or future principal and interest payments are necessary for the City of Las Cruces parks and recreation impact fees because there is no outstanding debt for the infrastructure categories in the fee program after the current fiscal year. If the City were to issue debt for growth-related parks and recreation capital improvements, the impact fee methodology would have to be revised to reflect the necessary credit.

PARKS AND RECREATION INPUT VARIABLES AND DEVELOPMENT IMPACT FEES

Infrastructure standards used to calculate Park and Recreation impact fees are shown in the top portion of Figure 17. For park impact fees, a "service unit" is a person. Figure 17 summarizes service units, conversion factors, and cost factors per service unit for parks and recreation impact fees for the City of Las Cruces as detailed above. As indicated elsewhere, the impact fees are based on the City's actual level of service for park land and improvements. The total capital cost per person is the sum of the individual cost factors at the top of the figure.

The Parks and Recreation impact fee is the product of persons per housing unit multiplied by the total net capital cost per person. Fees are presented by type of housing unit. Each household size is multiplied by the net capital cost per person to derive the impact fee per unit. Also shown is a comparison with the City's current fees.



PARKS AND RECREATION IMPACT FEE STUDY
Las Cruces, New Mexico

Figure 17. Parks and Recreation Input Variables and Maximum Allowable Impact Fees

Infrastructure Costs per Person

Neighborhood Park Land	\$76
Community Park Land	\$271
Athletic Facility Land	\$101
Special Facility Land	\$272
Park Improvements	\$415
Trails	\$61
Recreation Center	\$119
Aquatics	\$242
Principal Payment Credit	\$0
Total Net Cost Per Person	\$1,557

Park Impact Fee Schedule

Unit Type	Persons per Housing Unit	Proposed Fee	Current Fee	Increase (Decrease)
Single Family	2.65	\$4,126	\$800	\$3,326
Multifamily	1.90	\$2,952	\$800	\$2,152



Appendix H. Parks Operations & Maintenance Assessment

The following memorandum highlights core maintenance issues within the Las Cruces parks system and offers near-term recommendations.



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DESIGN
 CONSULTING ARCHITECTURE
 NUMBER 8845040

sites
 southwest

Sites Southwest, LLC

191 Third NE, Suite 3100

Albuquerque, NM 87102

Phone: 505.272.9200

Fax: 505.272.8200

Website: www.sites-sw.com

www.sites-sw.com

MEMORANDUM

TO: STEVE DUB

FROM: PATRICK GAY 

DATE: 11-29-2011

RE: LAS CRUCES PARKS & REC FIELD INVENTORIES - CORE ISSUE
 AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on field inventories and interview conducted by Sites Southwest personnel June 29-July 1, 2011, the following core issue and general recommendations have been developed to assist Conservation Technix in the Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Master Plan update.

Core Issue

There appears to be reasonable access to facilities within the community with limited exceptions, but many facilities are old, overused, and in dire need of upgrades and/or renovations. As noted in the project survey, 81% of Las Cruces households have utilized Parks and Recreation facilities in the past year. This demand and use has overburdened maintenance resources and taken a toll on older facilities. It was noted during interviews that the land area devoted to parks and recreation facilities has increased by over 100 acres in the past five years without additional maintenance resources. In addition, it was noted during interviews that maintenance equipment is typically old and breaks often. When equipment breaks, it is hard to get parts and there are no backups.

Respondents to the project survey also indicated they would allocate a majority of additional P&R funding to improvements and maintenance of existing facilities. This fact should be recognized when developing future funding and capitalization strategies such as bond issues, etc. It is critical that Parks and Recreation be recognized and promoted as the essential services that they are. This is especially true during difficult economic times, where the public tends to use these facilities more in lieu of other types of entertainment and travel. The dilemma is that as more of the public requires the use of Parks and Recreation facilities, the harder it is for the City to meet all needs. Parks and recreational facilities are loved to death in a sense.

Recommendations

1. Guidelines and processes must be developed to establish facility development and maintenance standards as well as to prioritize maintenance activities and enhance operational efficiency within the maintenance group. A focus on irrigation upgrades and efficiencies could be a logical first step toward this goal. There are two big issues or opportunities here:

PLANNING & COMMUNITY DESIGN CONSULTING ARCHITECTURE NUMBER 8845040

Page 1



- a. **Prioritize Existing Facilities Irrigation Renovation** This is justified for the reduced maintenance hours required to fix old systems as well as for the water savings from both a resource and cost conservation standpoint. The priority projects could be established as the heaviest used economic development or revenue generator facilities for obvious reasons. Sports complexes or special events facilities etc. Estimated costs would be approximately \$50,000/acre including central control upgrades.
1. First Priority option is Oldest to Newest - minimum 10 years old.
 2. Second Priority option is Largest to Smallest (for above)

Both the above scenarios priority lists are attached at the end of this document. The P&R Department may have additional or different ranking criteria and/or they may want a complete list for all facilities, however this strategy can help to identify and establish an annual budget set aside for this purpose. For example, if funding were established to commit a million dollars a year toward this purpose, then the list would serve as a ten year plan to complete renovations. The other option is to work backwards to establish how much money is needed per year to get it done in ten years. Based on the limitations of our field work we make some assumptions about certain facilities that they were large enough to hold certain events or sports practices etc. Some irrigation systems renovations may have already occurred at some facilities. There may be some smaller facilities that also provide these functions that were missed or were unknown.

- b. **Other Projects/Opportunities - Non-facility projects identified that will help to accomplish goal of overall water/maintenance reductions.**
1. A move toward overall central irrigation control should be planned. This effort can begin with a Central Irrigation Control Implementation Study assuming phased implementation (per above prioritization criteria). Estimated cost of such a study is \$50,000.
 2. In addition, standardization of irrigation equipment and installations should be codified. The Parks and Recreation Department can facilitate this by creating and utilizing standard specifications and details for future installations and upgrades. (also see Recommendation # 3). Project to provide standardized Parks and Recreation Department specifications, details, design guidelines, and codify approval process. Estimated cost for this work is \$125,000.
- c. A seasonal approach to in-house upgrades can be utilized to reduce impacts of taking facilities off-line during peak use seasons and also reduce the amount of "busy work" provided during winter months. For example, time spent by crews for mowing and native shrub pruning during dormant periods could be spent upgrading irrigation systems while water and use requirements are minimal. Major irrigation



City of Las Cruces Parks & Facilities

	Park/Facility	Address	Average Age	Type	Year to Newest	Original Estimate	Upgrades Costs	Not New
2	Apodaca Ball Fields	801 E. Madrid	8	Athletic Fields	1963	\$400,000.00		
105	Young Park	1825 E. Nevada	17	Community	1968	\$850,000.00		
53	Maag Park	1706 E. Hadley	12	Athletic Fields	1973	\$500,000.00		
20	Downtown Mall	300 S. - 400 N. Downtown Mall	7	Public Grounds	1976	\$0.00		N/A new
71	Paz Park	1975 E. Hadley	11.5	Athletic Fields	1979	\$575,000.00		
35	High Noon Soccer Complex	2004 Brink Lane	18	Athletic Fields	1980	\$800,000.00		
74	Provenzo / Van Dornie Multi-Purpose Field	820 N. Solano	7	Athletic Fields	1980	\$350,000.00		
98	Valley View Park	750 S. Espina	10	Community	1981	\$500,000.00		
29	Fringier Park	800 Parkview Drive	10	Community	1983	\$500,000.00		
8	Burn Lake	1955 W. Amador	5.25	Community	1988	\$282,500.00		Turf Area Only
86	Soldados Multi-Purpose Field	1877 E. Hadley	7	Athletic Fields	1991	\$850,000.00		
99	Veterans Park	2851 Roadrunner Parkway	15	Community	1999	\$750,000.00		
28	Field of Dreams Soccer	2302 Teahurt	30	Athletic Fields	2000	\$1,500,000.00		
27	Field of Dreams Softball	1801 Brink Lane	17.5	Athletic Fields	2003	\$875,000.00		
			Total Acres:	175.25		\$8,412,000.00		not new 7411.6%

	Park/Facility	Address	Average Age	Type	Year to Newest	Original Estimate	Upgrades Costs	Not New
26	Field of Dreams Soccer	2302 Teahurt	36	Athletic Fields				
35	High Noon Soccer Complex	2004 Brink Lane	18	Athletic Fields				
27	Field of Dreams Softball	1801 Brink Lane	17.5	Athletic Fields				note less than 10 years at this time
105	Young Park	1906 E. Nevada	17	Community				
99	Veterans Park	2851 Roadrunner Parkway	15	Community				
53	Maag Park	1706 E. Hadley	12	Athletic Fields				
71	Paz Park	1975 E. Hadley	11.5	Athletic Fields				
98	Valley View Park	750 S. Espina	15	Community				
29	Fringier Park	800 Parkview Drive	10	Community				
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74	Provenzo / Van Dornie Multi-Purpose Field	820 N. Solano	7	Athletic Fields				
20	Downtown Mall	300 S. - 400 N. Downtown Mall	7	Public Grounds				N/A new
86	Soldados Multi-Purpose Field	1877 E. Hadley	7	Athletic Fields				
9	Burn Lake	1855 W. Amador	5.25	Community				Turf Area Only
			Total Acres:	175.25				



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Park Impact Fee – effective July 1, 2013

Year 2013:

- \$1,300 per single family residential dwelling unit
- \$1,300 per multi-family residential dwelling unit if no park related improvements are made as a part of development
- \$650 per multi-family residential dwelling unit if park related improvements are made as a part of development

Fee Collection:

- Throughout the city, except the Central Business District (CBD)
- Fees may be used within any geographic area of the city

Level of Service (LOS):

Neighborhood Park

1.54 acres/1,000 persons, approximately 400 dwelling units

Minimum Standards:

Neighborhood Park

- 1.5 to 2.5 acre range or above
- Greater the acreage, the less in expected amenities
- Design to be approved by the City
- Timing for construction/completion must be identified
- Minimum number of amenities to be defined in order to meet minimum standards. For example:
 - 1.5 – 2.0 acres: 12 improvements amenities required from the following list:
 - 2.1 – 2.5 acres: 6 improvements amenities required from the following list:
 - 2.6 acres and above: Case by case and negotiable between developer and the City:

Amenities List:

Grading and Irrigation*	Trees / shrubs
Playground equipment	Plant ground cover
Pathways	Water fountains
Shade structures	Rock cover
Trash receptacles	Parking lot
Basketball court	Tennis Court
Pathway system	Park ID sign
Picnic areas	Art displays
Restrooms	Sod / lawn

*Required

Multi-Family Recreation Improvements

- Minimum standards to receive 50% credit on park fee:

- Minimum, usable space requirements: ½ acre
- Play area
- Picnic area
- Walking paths
- Bar-b-q area
- Lawn and/or landscaped area
- Recreational component (minimum of one amenity)
 - Swimming pool
 - Tennis courts
 - Basketball court (full)
- Design to be approved by the City

Park Fee Assessment:

Park fees fully assessed for all new single family and multi-family residential development including mobile home/manufactured home installations. Exceptions to the full assessment of a park impact fee include:

1. Partial or complete waiver of the fee if developer builds a neighborhood park and/or open space trail system to minimum standards and LOS standards
2. Partial waiver of the fee if developer provides land dedication and/or partial improvements of a park or open space system
 - a. Land - value based on type and condition of land dedicated and intended use
 - b. Construction
 - c. Land and basic improvements - percentage varies dependent upon improvements
3. Park Fee Credits may be obtained in cases where a developer exceeds minimum and LOS standards
 - a. Developer obtains credits that can be sold to other developers within adjacent defined areas that don't have the capability to develop a park
 - b. Developer responsibility to obtain and/or sell credits
 - c. The City will assess full impact fee unless developer provides proof of obtained credits
 - d. Park Fee Credits available only within defined area adjacent to the development of the park. For example, credits usable within ½ mile of developed park (CIAC will need to determine recommended distance)
4. Fees will not be assessed to new development in the Central Business District (CBD).

Park Impact Fee – effective July 1, 2013

Year 2013:

- \$2,600 per single family residential dwelling unit
- \$2,600 per multi-family residential dwelling unit if no park related improvements are made as a part of development
- \$1,300 per multi-family residential dwelling unit if park related improvements are made as a part of development

Fee Collection:

- Throughout the city, except the Central Business District (CBD)
- Fees may be used within any geographic area of the city

Level of Service (LOS):

Neighborhood Park

3.0 acres/1,000 persons, approximately 400 dwelling units

Minimum Standards:

Neighborhood Park

- 1.5 to 2.5 acre range or above
- Greater the acreage, the less in expected amenities
- Design to be approved by the City
- Timing for construction/completion must be identified
- Minimum number of amenities to be defined in order to meet minimum standards. For example:
 - 1.5 – 2.0 acres: 12 improvements amenities required from the following list:
 - 2.1 – 2.5 acres: 6 improvements amenities required from the following list:
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Amenities List:

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Pathways	Water fountains
Shade structures	Rock cover
Trash receptacles	Parking lot
Basketball court	Tennis Court
Pathway system	Park ID sign
Picnic areas	Art displays
Restrooms	Sod / lawn

*Required

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- Play area
- Picnic area
- Walking paths
- Bar-b-q area
- Lawn and/or landscaped area
- Recreational component (minimum of one amenity)
 - Swimming pool
 - Tennis courts
 - Basketball court (full)
- Design to be approved by the City

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4. Fees will not be assessed to new development in the Central Business District (CBD).

**City of Las Cruces
Parks, ICIP - Project Summary (FY 2013/14)**

Project Title	Funding Projections by Year					Funding Source
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
Airplane/Vehicle Remote Control Park	100,000	200,000	100,000			PIF GEN
Archery Range	50,000		125,000			PIF GEN
Burn Lake/Esslinger Park - Additional Phases	781,150	3,200,000				Bond Cycling, SAP, PIF, CP#6
Desert Trails Park / Additional Phases	100,000					PIF GEN
East Mesa Area Park - Construction	100,000					PIF GEN
Highland Park	50,000					PIF 1
Mesilla Park - Court yard	30,000					PIF 4
North Alameda Arroyo Trail	508,392					PIF GEN, SAP, Flood Control
Parkhill Estates Neighborhood Park	150,000					PIF GEN
Del Rey Neighborhood Park				250,000		PIF GEN
Pueblos at Alameda	50,000					PIF PA
Future Neighborhood Parks					250,000	
Total Projects	\$1,919,542	\$3,400,000	\$225,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$6,044,542

SUMMARY OF LAND USE ASSUMPTIONS/DEMAND INDICATORS

The State's *Development Fees Act* states that land use assumptions should include a description of the service area and projections of changes in land uses, densities, intensities, and population in the service area over at least a five-year period (see Section 5-8-2.J). Specifically, the *Development Fees Act* requires that two analytical documents be prepared before impact fees can be assessed:

1. **Land use assumptions** must be defined in order to project the quantity of new development in terms of new service units anticipated over a 5-10 year period.
2. An **impact fee capital improvements plan** must be prepared to show how demand for added capital facility capacity generated by new development is translated into costs, and specifically, cost per new service unit.

For purposes of this park impact fee analysis, the land use assumptions prepared by Duncan Associates for the recently adopted public safety, roads, and drainage impact fees are utilized for this analysis to ensure consistency between the different impact fees (please see *2010-2020 Impact Fee Land Use Assumptions for Major Roads, Drainage and Public Safety*, October 10, 2010, prepared by Duncan Associates).

POPULATION AND HOUSING GROWTH TRENDS

The City of Las Cruces has experienced consistent population growth over the past decade. This has been a result of both annexation and natural population growth resulting from new development. As Figure 4 illustrates, the City's population estimates are consistent with the U.S. Census Bureau's population estimates over the last ten years. The City estimated its 2010 population at 96,994, while the Census estimate was 97,618, a difference of 624 persons. The City's growth rate has been higher than Dona Ana County's over the same period.

Figure 4. Population Growth, 2000 to 2010

Year	City of Las Cruces		Dona Ana
	City*	Census	County
2000	73,539	73,539	174,682
2001	75,016	75,230	176,460
2002	76,352	76,697	178,473
2003	78,204	79,056	182,147
2004	81,057	81,252	184,935
2005	83,649	84,610	189,265
2006	87,697	87,744	193,779
2007	91,730	90,060	198,205
2008	93,910	91,865	201,428
2009	95,128	93,570	206,419
2010#	96,994	97,618	209,233
Net Increase	23,455	24,079	34,551
Annual Increase	3.19%	3.27%	1.98%

*City of Las Cruces Community Development Department. From 2010 Duncan Associates Study

#TischlerBise updated 2010 Census for City and County

As shown in Figure 5, the City's housing stock grew by 13,149 units from 2000 through the end of 2010. Single family housing units accounted for 63.6% of new units built. Total housing units in the City of Las Cruces is 44,801.

Figure 5. New Housing Units, 2000 to 2010

Year	New Dwelling Units Permitted				Total Units
	Single Family	Multi Family	Mfg. Home	Total	
2000	271	242	215	728	32,380
2001	307	273	186	766	33,146
2002	520	291	191	1,002	34,148
2003	755	499	204	1,458	35,606
2004	803	301	260	1,364	36,970
2005	1,460	381	169	2,010	38,980
2006	1,459	395	165	2,019	40,999
2007	952	83	161	1,196	42,195
2008	632	36	98	766	42,961
2009	627	285	76	988	43,949
2010	576	169	107	852	44,801
Total	8,362	2,955	1,832	13,149	
% of New Units	63.6%	22.5%	13.9%	100.0%	

Source: Annual dwelling units permitted from the Community Development.

PERSON PER HOUSEHOLD FACTORS

Household size (persons per housing unit (PPHU)) is an important demographic factor that helps account for variations in service demand by type of housing. The Duncan Associates impact fee study conducted in 2010 utilized persons per household factors from the 2000 U.S. Census. Given the fact these numbers are now eleven years old, TischlerBise suggests updating these factors using information available from the *2006-2010 U.S. Census American Community Survey 5-Year estimate*, which is shown below.

Figure 6. Persons per Household in Las Cruces

Type of Unit	Persons	Occupied Households	Persons Per Household
Single Family*	70,984	26,762	2.65
Multifamily	18,460	9,715	1.90

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2006-2010 American Community Survey
5-Year Estimates

*Includes Single Family Attached, Detached and Mobile Homes

PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH, 2010 TO 2020

As stated previously, TischlerBise has utilized the land use assumptions (with the exception of updated persons per household factors) prepared by Duncan Associates for the recently adopted public safety, roads, and drainage impact fees for this analysis to ensure consistency between the different impact fees (please see *2010-2020 Impact Fee Land Use Assumptions for Major Roads, Drainage and Public Safety*, October 10, 2010, prepared by Duncan Associates).

As shown in Figure 7, Citywide population is projected to by 1,971 persons annually from 2010 to 2020, to a total of 116,704. This projection is a linear trend based on the range of estimated population growth forecasts used by the City and County in the Vision 2040 regional planning project.

Figure 7. Population Growth, 2010 to 2020

Year	Citywide	Growth Area
2010	96,994	58,802
2011	98,805	60,559
2012	100,650	62,345
2013	102,529	64,164
2014	104,443	66,015
2015	106,393	67,901
2016	108,380	69,820
2017	110,404	71,774
2018	112,465	73,765
2019	114,565	75,789
2020	116,704	77,853

Source: Duncan Associates 2010-2020 Impact Fee Land Use Assumptions for Major Roads, Drainage and Public Safety, October 10, 2010.

PARKS AND RECREATION IMPACT FEE SERVICE AREA

An impact fee service area is a region in which a defined set of improvements provide benefit to an identifiable amount of new development. Within a service area, all new development of a type (single-family, commercial, etc.) is assessed at the same impact fee rate. Land use assumptions and the IFCIP are each defined in terms of this geography, so that parks and recreation capital facility demand, projects needed to meet that demand, and capital facility cost are all quantified in the same terms. Impact fee revenue collected within a service area is required to be spent within that service area.

According to the *Development Fees Act*, service areas are defined based on "...sound planning and engineering standards." This gives local government considerable discretion. Basic objectives are that subject facilities be accessible to development throughout the area, and that roughly the same level of service (LOS) prevails throughout the area.

Implementation of a large number of small service areas is problematic. Administration is complicated and, because funds collected within the service area must be spent within that area, and spent within a seven-year period, multiple service areas may make it impossible to accumulate sufficient revenue to fund any projects within the time allowed.

As part of our analysis of the City's park system and the type of facilities and improvements included in the impact fee calculation, TischlerBise has determined that a citywide service area is appropriate for the City of Las Cruces.

330
"DRAFT EXCERPT"

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
May 16, 2013

1 The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting was held on May 16, 2013, at City
 2 Hall, 700 Main Street, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

3
 4 **PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

5 Mr. Ron Camunez, Board Chair, Mr. Eli Guzman, Ms.
 6 Elizabeth Brown, Mr. Mark O'Neill, and Mr. Kevin Kay

7
 8 **ABSENT:** Ms. Dawn Rue and Ms. Laura Haas

9
 10 **OTHERS PRESENT:**

11 Mr. Mark Johnston, Director Parks & Recreation; Ms.
 12 Veronica Quezada, PRAB Acting Recording Secretary; Ms.
 13 Sonya Delgado, Recreation Administrator; Mr. Rudy
 14 Trevino, Parks District Manager; Mr. Bob Pofahl,
 15 Community Builders Int'l.; Ms. Karen Pofahl, Community
 16 Builders Int'l.; Mr. Francisco Urueta, Zia EEC LLC and
 17 Griselda Velez, Zia EEC LLC.

18 Meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Mr. Camunez, and he recognized the
 19 meeting as having a legal quorum.

20
 21 **I. Public Hearing from 6:00 – 6:05 pm**

22
 23 **II. Introductions**

24
 25 Board Members introduced themselves and stated the district they represent.

26
 27 **III. Conflict of Interest**

28
 29 No conflict of interest

30
 31 **IV. Approval of Minutes**

32
 33 Ms. Brown - stated on page 1, line 39 language states she did not vote and she was
 34 present and voted.

35
 36 Mr. O'Neill – on page 13 line 10 the name he was referring to is Michael Stevens.

37
 38 Ms. Brown moved to approve as corrected and Mr. O'Neill seconded.

39
 40 Mr. Ron Camunez voted YES Ms. Elizabeth Brown voted YES
 41 Mr. Mark O'Neill voted YES Mr. Eli Guzman voted YES
 42 Mr. Kevin Kay voted YES

1 Chair- All those opposed. Motion is carried.
2 It was agreed that since the New business guests were set to arrive at 6:30, we would
3 move on to Old Business until their arrival.
4

5 **V. New Business**

6
7 A. *Park Ridge Development / Country Club ----- Information*
8

9 **VI. Old Business**

10
11 A. *Parks & Recreation Master Plan Approval ----- Action Item*
12

13 Mr. Johnston – The Parks and Recreation Master Plan was an on-going process and
14 has been an on-going process for about 2 years. Some of the members of this board
15 weren't here in the beginning and some are new to the process. Essentially what a
16 Parks & Recreation Master Plan does is gives us a vision. It tells us what we're doing
17 right, where we're going and where we need to go based on the input and comments
18 that we received from the general public. Developing this plan we went through
19 extensive public process. We held meetings in each one of the council districts. We
20 held meetings with different user groups, the groups that utilize our facilities, our
21 athletic programs about 9 different public venues and we received a great deal of
22 information.

23
24 Another thing, we did a statistical analysis with a survey. The information that came
25 back was proven statistically correct. That information was correlated with our general
26 public and our user groups.

27
28 A couple of things that I do need formal action on from the Board tonight, but what I did
29 want to go through are the core considerations, the findings of what Parks and
30 Recreation is all about and what the General Public wanted.

31
32 Mr. Camunez – Is there a copy of that book, I have not seen that.

33
34 Mr. Johnston – Mr. Chairman, members of the board, on Monday once this gets
35 approved you will get a final copy of it. Right now it is in draft state, which will be good.
36 Right now Mr. Kevin Kay will be recognized in the body of the book.

37
38 A couple of the major components that I think need to be pointed out, the changing
39 demographics, our consultant found out that we had a significant change from 1970 to
40 2010 of 258% in the population, significant. And with the new population projections
41 we're looking at 2020, of approaching 120,000 residents. That's reflected in the land
42 use assumption updates that will be going to council.

43
44 They're recommending community partners, the recreation interest of residents are
45 beyond what we can provide as city staff within our own budgetary. Staff has already
46 started doing this. We're reaching out to our local entities, for swimming, NMSU for

1 partnerships, the business community, the local groups that run our athletic leagues,
2 BMX track, roller hockey. So we've already undertaken this in a big way and will
3 continue to move forward with that.

4
5 Maintaining and developing facilities. The residents voice concern over the
6 maintenance of some of our areas. They want to make some of our well established
7 parks and maintained well. It has been a struggle for staff over the last several years,
8 in particular during the downturn of the economy. The budget shrunk over 1 million
9 dollars over the last three years which is 10 percent of the budget. With that said, the
10 staff stretched everything we could. I will share that we were the beneficiary of
11 \$100,000 for our utility bills. As you well know mother nature has not been cooperating
12 with rain levels so our water bills were quiet high.

13
14 Also significant interested was voiced in improving the distribution of parks throughout
15 the city. When we took a look at the GAAP analysis maps, we'll bring those back and
16 share them. It showed that some portions of our cities were well parked and other
17 portions of our cities were not very well parked.

18
19 Mr. Camunez – Since you said maps, will someone note to give him (Mr. Kay) a map of
20 his district?

21
22 Mr. Johnston – Yes. So that is one of the things that the general public when they
23 move into a new neighborhood, they expect a neighborhood park and they expect it
24 fairly close.

25
26 Funding issues, expectations for parks and recreation services remain high in the
27 minds of residents, deservedly so, but revenues are generally inadequate. This
28 defines that folks want the current parks that we have now refurbished. And as the city
29 grows they want new amenities in the new areas built.

30
31 There was thorough discussion with the stakeholders. From the information gathered
32 through the community survey, the issues with the communications visibility. A couple
33 of the things that were major recommendations; almost in every single group that we
34 have, connectivity, ability to get to parks, trails, pedestrian pathways, picnic areas
35 always came to the forefront.

36
37 Folks want us to reinvest in existing parks and facilities, address maintenance
38 concerns and establish strong positive sentiment among city residents. People are
39 taking ownership in their neighborhood parks and they want us to promote that.

40
41 Grow and mature the city's athletic programs through promotion of youth sports camps
42 and access NMSU staff and athletics, continue to foster the partnership. Implement a
43 recreation component of building a 50 meter lap pool. That came out in a couple of
44 different sessions.

45

1 Establish swim lessons, and partner with area swim clubs. I'm happy that that has
2 already started and is under way. Sonya has made contact with NMSU to see if we
3 can't expand the NMSU program. So that's working well.

4
5 Explore partnerships and opportunities with regional health care providers and
6 services. We work very close with the Department of Health, for healthy kids,
7 childhood obesity and playful city USA. We'll continue to expand that.

8
9 Update and expand the departments web pages. At this point I'd like to have Sonya to
10 give you just a brief report on the success of our web pages.

11
12 Ms. Delgado – Mr. Chairman, members of the board. Currently the website is doing
13 really, really well. We just had our first report on the last 2 months. They take the top
14 fifty pages for the City of Las Cruces and Parks and Recreation has six of those top
15 fifty; the Aquatic Center, Meerscheidt Recreation Center, Youth Services, Amenities
16 and Programs for youth and Adult. So it's doing extremely well. We get 7200 hits per
17 month which is very high for us. And not only that we have people staying on our web
18 pages for at least 2 minutes and on average people stay on webpages for a few
19 seconds. People are getting information from our web pages, they're staying around
20 looking and seeing what else we have to offer. So things are going really well. And
21 we're in the process of adding more stuff

22
23 Mr. Camunez – I'm bringing it up because I saw it the other night, and I thought oh it
24 looks good, but there was something missing or wrong. I'll have to look at it again. Go
25 ahead Sonya with your report

26
27 Ms. Delgado – Well you'll probably find some information that's not going to come
28 through on the i-pad or cell phone. But they're working on that. So you'll have some
29 glitches but we're working on that. When they updated the Site-core program that runs
30 it we had some of those glitches come through but we're trying to fix them. It will take
31 us a bit longer but we're almost there.

32
33 Mr. Johnston – Mr. Chairman, members of the board, as you're well aware we're a bit
34 antiquated in some of our technologies here. But it's ramping up rather nicely. And
35 most of us don't have the newest toys like Mr. Chair.

36
37 Mr. Camunez – This is old, this is number one. I thought he was going to call me
38 antiquated. (laughter) If you haven't all seen the site, this is the site. Have you seen
39 it?

40
41 Mr. Johnston – Mr. Chairman, members of the board, what we may want to do at a
42 future meeting when we're at city hall, is to do a run through and I'll have Sonya put a
43 run through together for our website; because it does have a tremendous amount of
44 information on it as you dig into it. Staff has done a wonderful job.

1 Another consideration was working with MPO, that's the Metropolitan Planning
2 Organization and other departments in the city to develop a more detailed signage way
3 finding for trails and routes. As you well know we opened up the new outfall channel
4 trail. Folks wondered where does it go? So the thought is at the beginning of it, you've
5 all see the state parks that show you are here and the trail goes to here. I can see
6 those way finding signs in a few of the key areas around the city which may allow folks
7 to maybe choose a different form of transportation.

8
9 Mr. O'Neill – Would that take action from our board to recommend that?

10
11 Mr. Johnston – I think that would be a good thing to do after we go through the new
12 fiscal.

13
14 Review and consider long term dedicated funding sources to expand the city's capacity
15 to accommodate tournaments, special events and festivals. As I was saying earlier,
16 we spend about \$600,000 on Special Events. However, they bring a tremendous
17 amount of tourism to town; and really getting that correlation between Parks and
18 Recreation as an economic driver for the city. We're starting to beat that door down
19 and people are understanding that there's a direct correlation between the stuff that we
20 offer and how many folks are coming out. Even the offerings for our locals; the movies
21 in the Park is a prime example. Mr. Chair was there the other night, was quite a hit.

22
23 And then finally adopt and implement updated Park Impact Fee Rates as a means to
24 finance new park and facility acquisition and development. That's the action we'll be
25 taking before City Council on Monday. With that Mr. Chairman, I'll stand for any
26 questions. I will look for the board for a motion of approval of the Parks and Recreation
27 Master Plan so we can move forward.

28
29 Mr. Camunez – Before we do that, let's have a motion in a second so we can open it
30 up in a second. Will someone move to approve the Master Plan as presented.

31
32 Mr. O'Neill – I'll make a motion to approve the Master Plan as presented.

33
34 Mr. Camunez – Mr. O'Neill has motioned, do I hear a second.

35
36 Mr. Guzman – Second.

37
38 Mr. Camunez – Mr. Guzman second the motion. I'll now ask if there's any discussion
39 from the board, any questions to ask.

40
41 Mr. O'Neill – Just had a question on the surveys which I've seen and they were very
42 good surveys. I wondered if they were just sent to the residents of Las Cruces, the
43 90,000 or so, or was it also the surrounding areas, the county areas and so forth that
44 got to participate in those.

45
46 Mr. Johnston – Mr. Chairman, Mr. O'Neill, only city residents.

1
2 Mr. Camunez – You can't go out of the boundary. Any other, Mr. Kay do you have any
3 comments, questions regarding the Master Plan? I know you're new and you've sat on
4 this board before, many years back.

5
6 Mr. Kay – No I don't have any questions. It was pretty straightforward and was an
7 easy read. I don't have any questions.

8
9 Ms. Brown – No questions.

10
11 Mr. Guzman – No Sir

12
13 Mr. Camunez – Anything else? Mr. O'Neill

14
15 Mr. O'Neill – Approving this Master Plan, the way I understand it has nothing to do with
16 Impact Fees right now, is that correct.

17
18 Mr. Camunez- That's correct. We don't do that, Council does that.

19
20 OK, you've heard the motion to approve the Master Plan as presented by the Parks
21 and Recreation Department to this board. It's been moved and seconded, all those in
22 favor as presented by Parks and Recreation.

23
24 Mr. Ron Camunez voted YES Ms. Elizabeth Brown voted YES
25 Mr. Mark O'Neill voted YES Mr. Eli Guzman voted YES
26 Mr. Kevin Kay voted YES

27
28 Chair- All those opposed. Motion is carried, 5 to 0.

29
30 Mr. Camunez – Mr. Johnston, do you have anything more to add to that?

31
32
33 *B. Report of Senior Advisory Board Meeting ----- Discussion*

34
35 *C. Planned June 13th Joint Meeting with Senior Advisory Board at Munson Center -*
36 *----- Discussion*

37
38 **VII. PUBLIC COMMENT**

39
40 **VIII. MEMBER COMMENT**

41
42 **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

43

336

**City of Las Cruces
– Public Review and Hearing –
Proposed Plans and Park Impact Fees
May 16, 2013**

A Public Review and Hearing regarding the Proposed Plans and Park Impact Fees was held on May 16, 2013 at 6:00 pm at City Hall, 700 Main Street, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

PRESENT: Mr. Ron Camunez, Parks & Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) Board Chair, Mr. Eli Guzman, PRAB Board Member; Ms. Elizabeth Brown, PRAB Board Member; Mr. Mark O'Neill, PRAB Board Member; Mr. Kevin Kay, PRAB Board Member; Mr. Mark Johnston, Director Parks & Recreation; Ms. Veronica Quezada, PRAB Acting Recording Secretary; Ms. Sonya Delgado, Recreation Administrator; Mr. Rudy Trevino, Parks District Manager

PUBLIC PRESENT: None

Mr. Ron Camunez, PRAB Board Chair started the meeting at 6:00 PM and introduced the speaker, Mr. Mark Johnston, Parks and Recreation Director.

Mr. Mark Johnston explained of the process of a public hearing. He described the elements of the Parks and Recreation process. The Park Development Impact Fees or Park Impact Fees (PIF) are fees that Builders and Construction Developers pay for every new dwelling unit, enacted in 1995 and updated every 5 years.

On Monday, June 4th we will be going to City Council with a recommendation to implement a \$1300 per dwelling unit impact fee. It only covers neighborhood parks and does not cover community parks, regional parks, swimming pools, trails, etc. The recommendation from our consultant was \$4400. Council gave direction that \$4400 was too much, thus \$1300 is the suggested Park Impact Fee which covers only neighborhood parks. Council will be looking at four things:

They can vote yes and approved the Master Plan, the Capital Improvement Plan, the Park Impact Fee of \$1300 and the Land Use Assumptions.

They can vote no and not approve any of it.

They can vote to amend and actually raise the Park Impact Fee level to double, or \$2600 and raise the level of service and approve the Master Plan, the Impact Fee at double, and approve the land use assumptions.

Then last, they can vote to table. If they vote to table, it puts us in jeopardy of being against the law of the ordinance, because we have an impact fee that has to be updated every 5 years. Last year in June we said no updates are needed for the next twelve months. So we have to act.

With that, since there are no members of the public present, if there are questions from the Board members present they will be taken during the Board meeting to follow.

Mr. Camunez announced that the Public Hearing was hereby closed at 6:05 pm.

January 17, 2013

Las Cruces City Council
700 North Main
Las Cruces, NM 88004

Attention: Robert Garza, City Manager
Ken Miyagishima, Mayor and City Council

Reference: Five year review of City of Las Cruces, New Mexico Parks and Recreation proposed Capital Improvement Plan, Land Use Assumptions and Impact Fees by the Capital Improvements Advisory Committee (CIAC)

Dear Mr. Garza
Mayor Miyagishima and City Council:

The Capital Improvements Advisory Committee (CIAC) members have reviewed through presentations by the Mark Johnston, Director of Parks and Recreation along with his Staff, the current reports of Duncan and Associates along with the TishlerBise, fiscal, economic and planning consultants to draw the following recommendations:

1. Las Cruces, New Mexico population growth creates an environment of providing changing levels of service along with addressing quality of life issues through the City Parks and Recreation department in a cost effective yet marketable standard. The Parks and Recreation equipment and facilities are in part funded through Development Impact Fees generated by subdivision development. The Development Impact Fee initially began at \$249 per single family housing unit in 1995 remaining at this level until 2006 when the Development Impact Fee was increased to \$550; in 2007 the Development Impact Fee was increased to the present \$800. THE RECOMMENDATION OF CIAC IS TO INCREASE THE IMPACT FEE TO A LEVEL OF \$900 BEGINNING FISCAL YEAR 2013-2014, \$1000 BEGINNING FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015, AND \$1100 BEGINNING FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016 REMAINING AT THIS LEVEL (\$415 PER PERSON X 2.65 PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD AT THE FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016 OR \$1100). *These funds are to be RESTRICTED to Neighborhood Park facilities. Other Park needs, such as, trails, regional parks, etc will have to be funded by other capital fund sources. To maintain the proposed level of service the consultants have provided through their research of similar communities and comparisons of Las Cruces internal guidelines the fee will not necessarily help with the existing neighborhood park gap but will keep us from falling further behind.
2. *The Multi-family fee will remain at the \$800.00 currently assessed through fiscal year end 2012-2013. THE RECOMMENDATION OF CIAC IS TO INCREASE IN THE IMPACT FEE TO A LEVEL OF \$900 BEGINNING FISCAL YEAR 2013-2014, \$1000 BEGINNING FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015 AND \$1100 BEGINNING FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016 REMAINING AT THIS LEVEL, LEAVING THE OPTION FOR THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE DEVELOPER IF HE INSTALLS PARK-LIKE AMENITIES ON SITE AND MAY QUALIFY FOR A 50% REDUCTION IN THE PARK DEVELOPMENT IMPACT FEE FOR THE PROVISION OF PARK LIKE AMENITIES AS DESCRIBED IN EXHIBIT "B". GENERALLY THE DEVELOPER/BUILDERS ARE IN A POSITION TO BUILD IN A TIMELY AND COST EFFECTIVE MANNER.

3. The creation of new Parks and Recreation facilities places a fiscal burden on Parks and Recreation department in terms of maintenance and repair that is funded primarily from the general operating funds of the City of Las Cruces and cannot be supported by the Impact Fees. The funding of these expenses has declined substantially over the years past leaving Parks and Recreation in a position of needing a dedicated funding source. The CIAC recommends seeking other traditional and alternative funding options such as: General Fund, Revenue/G.O. Bonds, Gross Receipts Tax, returning all fees collected by use of Parks and Recreation facilities to the department, Grants, Philanthropic Gifts (Donor Programs and Capital Campaigns, Volunteer/In-Kind), Partnerships (Single Agency, Multi-Party, Marketing Partnerships and Sponsorships), et al.
4. Parks and Recreation Master Plan was approved by CIAC with assurances from Parks and Recreation Director Mark Johnston that there are only minor grammatical and personnel adjustments.
5. Parks and Recreation Land Use Assumptions were also approved by CIAC with updated population components adjusted for current population growth to the Public Works Consultant report rendered earlier.
6. Parks and Recreation ICIP items were approved by CIAC for 2012-2013 fiscal year: the 2013-2014 budget process is beginning December 2012 and continuing through April 2013 at which time adjustments will be introduced to existing ICIP.

Sincerely,

Lonnie Hamilton, Chairman CIAC

Las Cruces Home Builders Association
Government Affairs Committee

May 4, 2013

Las Cruces City Council

Esteemed City Council Member,

Thank you for your service to our community. We appreciate the hard work and dedication you have for our community. The Las Cruces Home Builders Association (LCHBA) shares your concerns about our City and we hope to be good neighbors.

We are writing regarding the proposed increase in Impact Fees, scheduled to go into effect on July 1, 2013. The purpose of this letter is to explain our opposition to these fees, offer alternatives, and explain why these alternatives are a better solution for our community.

The LCHBA has expended significant time and effort to develop our positions, with the intent of doing the right thing for our community. We hope that this position statement can serve as a basis for the impact fee conversation and that if there are points of disagreement, you will take the time to elucidate your views as we have ours.

The Problem

Las Cruces experienced rapid growth followed by a severe economic recession. The rapid growth of the 2000s led to massive development of subdivisions all over the city, especially on the East Mesa. This explosion of development was assisted by lax subdivision regulations which allowed for the issuance of building permits without subdivision completion or performance bonding. When the recession hit, many developers abandoned projects and the City was forced to remedy the problems.

After fixing subdivisions and settling with developers, the City implemented the Substantial Completion rule in the Subdivision Code, which prevents the purchase or occupancy of homes in new subdivisions that lack essential services. Although a major improvement, many problems remain for both existing and future infrastructure, including substandard roads, unfinished drainage work, incomplete arterial connections, and a lack of park amenities.

The City has no dedicated funding source to pay for these services. Instead, the City has provided these services via cooperation from the development community. This method has served Las Cruces very well over the years, with one important exception: developers have not provided infrastructure fast enough to satisfy public expectations. This is particularly true in the case of arterial roads and public

park amenities. This timing problem has been worsened by the recession and lack of development for the past several years.

The City today is faced with angry residents demanding better infrastructure, but the City lacks an adequate funding source. This is the problem and the proposal to increase impact fees is just one possible solution.

The City's duty and the LCHBA Position

The City must decide how to react to these complaints. One option which deserves at least some consideration is to make no changes, and continue to wait for the economy to improve and development to provide additional infrastructure. There is ample justification for this position. The City does not provide free services. It is unreasonable for the public to demand service if it is not willing to pay for it. This approach would shift responsibility back on developers and the citizens. Residents would be forced to accept responsibility for choosing to live in a neighborhood with poor infrastructure.

While this option is probably not very palatable for the City Council, it nonetheless is consistent with choice and accountability. Homeowners are free to choose where they want to live, and what amenities they are willing to pay for. If a homeowner is willing to purchase a home with no neighborhood park (and likely pay less), they are free to do so.

Councilman Sorg, at the recent Work Session, made an important statement. He said that neighborhood parks will be more popular with homebuyers, and that it is in the developer's best interest to include them. We agree wholeheartedly. But if the incentive already exists, then we do not agree that a minimum standard should be mandated. Rather, we believe that giving developers the freedom to choose which amenities will be most appropriate for their subdivisions will yield the most efficient results and the greatest variety of choices for residents.

We can see several developments that have voluntarily added parks, lush right-of-way landscaping, and other amenities, including Sonoma Ranch, APG developments, Picacho Hills, Tierra Verde, etc. These neighborhoods have higher appeal and property values, while subdivisions with poor amenities have lower values. Under the current regime, the City does not mandate a minimum level of service, giving the public the full freedom of choice. This is the default position of the LCHBA.

However, we presume that the City will not take this position, but instead wishes to raise the level of service for infrastructure.

Options to fund Infrastructure

The LCHBA recognizes the City's goal to improve the level of service provided to their residents, and we don't intend to oppose it. The question is how to pay for it.

The following are some of the several options available to the City:

- Subdivision regulation
- General Obligation Bonds
- Voluntary Special Assessment Districts (SADs)
- Infrastructure Development Zones (IDZ)
- Impact Fees

Of the options listed above, the City currently utilizes only subdivision regulations and impact fees. Las Cruces has no general obligation bond program, nor does it have policy to allow for voluntary SADs or IDZ financing. It is rare indeed that a City the size of Las Cruces lacks these important financing tools. The following sections give the LCHBA's position regarding these options.

The following is the LCHBA's position for each option:

Subdivision regulation

The LCHBA believes that increased subdivision regulation reduces freedom in the marketplace, and therefore our default position is to oppose it. However, compared to increased impact fees, it is the more acceptable alternative.

Increased subdivision regulations can solve many of the City's problems with roads, drainage, parks, etc. A major benefit to the regulatory approach is that it does not require the City to spend any money on development projects. The City is burdened with inefficiencies, such as prevailing wage laws, budgeting pressures, etc. And, regulations do not require additional City administration for revenue collection or payment. More importantly, it keeps the money in the hands of the developers who have the strongest interest in the value of their development.

The developer's financial interest, in most circumstances, produces the greatest quality and value for a subdivision. However, we recognize the valid reasons for establishing minimum development standards, and that not all developers meet these standards.

For this reason, we can support a regulation requiring reasonable park and other amenities for new subdivisions, appropriate for the surrounding neighborhood, instead of the City collecting park impact fees and then either building the park or crediting the developer for building it. This is better than the City functioning as a middle man, because if a developer knows that the City will reimburse his park project expenses, the developer has less of an incentive to efficiently build the park.

The LCHBA believes subdivision regulations are the best remedy for subdivision infrastructure problems. However, they don't provide a solution for the larger community issues of connectivity and drainage.

General Obligation Bond

The LCHBA believes that any tax increase is harmful to our economic prosperity, and our default position is to oppose general obligation bonds backed by tax increases. However, when compared to impact fees, which are unfairly paid by buyers of new homes, we support obligation bonds as a more equitable means of raising revenue. Because new roads and infrastructure will benefit the entire community, it is fair that all residents pay contribute to this effort.

A general obligation bond, via a very small increase in property taxes, generates significant funds for public ROW improvements, drainage crossings, regional parks, etc. The obligation bond must be approved by the voters, which allows residents the freedom to choose the level of service they want from the City.

Las Cruces is the largest City in NM with zero obligation bonds. All of our smaller peer cities, including Farmington, Roswell, Rio Rancho, etc., have an obligation bond program. We also enjoy the lowest property tax rates in the state and nation. This is one of the primary reasons that City services are lacking—because no one is paying for it.

Albuquerque has a very progressive GO Bond program that runs on a two year cycle. On even years they plan capital improvements; on odd years they approve the plan and put it to the voters. This gives them great flexibility to provide services such as roads, parks, libraries, museums, etc. This year alone, Albuquerque has approved \$35 million in funding for new road construction. The Capital Improvements Plan manager Barbara Taylor says that without their GO Bond, “they would be in terrible trouble.”

Las Cruces has nothing. A general obligation bond puts the decision to the voters, and makes the voters responsible for the level of service provided by the City. We believe that the socio-economic makeup of Las Cruces has changed in the past decade, and that a reasonable obligation bond program, correctly packaged, will have a good chance of being approved by the voters. This would provide needed funds. We also strongly believe an obligation bond is more equitable than impact fees.

One of the glaring problems with relying on an impact fee approach to remedy infrastructure problems is that, by statute, Impact Fees can only be used to invest in NEW CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS. For this reason, many of the issues and/or proposed projects related to the current complaints surrounding poor or incomplete development of parks, roads and drainage (especially on the East Mesa) would not be eligible for financing via Impact Fees. A GO Bond program would be a much better solution for these problems. Not only would the current problems associated with incomplete development be remedied by a GO Bond program, but other projects in the older areas of the City will enjoy the benefits of this bond financing as well.

Voluntary Special Assessment District (SAD)

This powerful tool would provide for efficient development of arterial corridors and other major improvements. The City has used this successfully in the past, for example with Northrise Dr., however,

there is no policy in place to allow developers access to tool. The major risk with voluntary SADs is that the City is responsible to clean up the mess if the project fails. Although there is a need for caution, the City should not abandon this valid financing tool because of potential risks.

We encourage the City to develop policy that permits the creation of voluntary SADs. To minimize risks, the City should establish underwriting criteria and security mechanisms, through personal guarantees, letters of credit, and performance bonds. With proper oversight and a collaborative effort between the City and the development community, such projects could be completed using a phased in approach that would minimize the risk and would only strengthen the working relationship between the City and private development.

Infrastructure Development Zone (IDZ)

IDZ is another financing mechanism similar to a SAD. This tool is has been successfully used throughout Colorado. It would be another important addition to infrastructure finance.

Impact Fees

Impact fees are another source of revenue for the City which can be bonded for capital improvements.

There are many problems with impact fees.

First, they unfairly burden home buyers. This is not understood by the public, which believes that impact fees are paid by homebuilders and developers. This is false. Like any other tax, impact fees are passed on to home buyers, which reduce their purchasing power. They get less home for their money. It is also regressive, with the lower income home buyers paying a disproportionate share of the impact fees.

Currently, the City of Las Cruces charges each homeowner \$1,189 for water impact fees, \$832 for wastewater impact fees, a public safety impact fee of \$639, and a park fee of \$800, for a total of \$3,460 per home. These fees are charged at the time of building permit, and are passed on to the home buyer. In addition, the City charges varying amounts for utility impact fees that are spread over 10 years on a homeowner's utility bill. The City has proposed to add yet another impact fee for roads and drainage, in the amount of \$1,300, which would bring the impact fee total to \$4,760, not including the utility bill amount. This is a significant burden shouldered by new home buyers.

The LCHBA does not dispute the impact fees for water, wastewater, or public safety, but we are absolutely opposed to park fees or road and drainage fees.

Second, impact fees put added burdens on a vital industry. Las Cruces has a huge competitive advantage against other cities because of our great climate, excellent health care, and affordable costs of living, which makes Las Cruces is a very appealing destination for new residents. Consequently, construction and development is one of our core industries, and one that is vital for our community.

The industry has suffered huge losses in recent years. Las Cruces single family permits have dropped from 1,535 in 2006, to 390 in 2012, for a total industry contraction of 75%. 2012 was the lowest number of single family permits since 2001. So far 2013 is tracking evenly with 2012. Raising fees in the current state of the market is very illogical.

Instead of an increase, a reduction or elimination of impact fees would enhance the competitive advantages of Las Cruces against other destination cities, and result in improved economic activity and prosperity. Many of our peer cities, including Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and Rio Rancho, have done this with successful results. Raising the costs of home ownership through additional impact fees will put additional burdens on an already struggling industry.

Third, impact fees are an administrative burden for the City. The City must manage the collection and expenditure of these funds. City staff has already indicated that they don't want this management problem.

Fourth, impact fee money is spent less efficiently than private money. With impact fees, the public gets less for their money. The City is burdened by state and federal requirements, including the prevailing wage laws and the regulatory pressure to spend monies within a specified timeframe, all of which combine to make City expenditures much less efficient than the private market. In addition, the City's incentive to efficiently produce a high quality product is different than private parties, who must market and sell their finished product.

We cite to one recent example. In order to satisfy angry homeowners in the Dos Suenos subdivision, the City decided to build Twin Parks. This park is currently under construction, and consists of attractive landscaping, a bike path, and outdoor exercise equipment. It is a very nice park, except for one important detail. The park is located in the median of a 4-lane arterial road. And, there is already an existing sidewalk or bike path on either side of the park's new bike path in the median.

We understand that the City was under pressure from homeowners to provide a park amenity, and that the City had insufficient funds to purchase a better park site. Given the circumstances, this "park" was a reasonable and creative solution. But the problem still remains. A park in the middle of a median is a poor use of money. The park offers no safe open space for children, and is in fact a very dangerous place for children and even for adults. The potential for accidents, injuries, and the fact that there are now 3 bike or walking paths on this same section of Engler Rd. are prime examples of why projects funded through impact fees produce poor results. Private money would have never built this park. Impact fees are inefficient.

City staff has proposed to Council that park impact fees be eliminated, and that neighborhood parks be required in the Subdivision Code. We agree that this is the better approach. The only exception would be for small subdivisions, where a small park fee could be charged in lieu of a neighborhood park requirement. This park fee is then credited to developers of larger subdivisions with parks.

For regional parks, impact fees are not appropriate. Regional parks benefit the entire community, and should therefore be paid by the community at large, whether through obligation bonds, or other methods. Forcing new residents to pay for parks that will be used by the community is simply not fair.

Fifth, the impact fee ordinance has strict parameters that are difficult to manage and utilize.

1. The revenue may only be used for new improvements, not deficiencies. Many of the City's most common infrastructure complaints are for street sections that do not fall within the scope of the impact fee ordinance (Roadrunner, Del Rey, etc.).
2. The ordinance also creates an obligation for the City to build infrastructure and a liability to reimburse developers that build infrastructure.
3. The revenue must be spent within a certain time period, or it may be demanded from the homeowners. This time requirement leads to inefficient use of the money.

Sixth, the revenue generated by the proposed road and drainage impact fee is insufficient for the massive needs of City infrastructure. Given the current trend in number of building permits issued, the City would have to increase the impact fee many times to provide the required capital. Such an increase would be devastating to the building industry and to affordability.

For the above reasons, the LCHBA strongly opposes any proposed increase in the impact fees.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The City is faced with residents angered by incomplete roads, drainage, and other infrastructure. The City has two choices, either to deflect responsibility back to the developers and home buyers, or two, find a way to improve its level of service for infrastructure. If the City decides to raise the level of service, it has several options at its disposal, including increased subdivision regulation, obligation bonds, special district financing (SAD, IDZ, etc.) and impact fees.

The LCHBA prefers minimal taxation and regulation. But if the City is determined to increase each, then based on the evidence presented above, the LCHBA recommends the following approach:

1. Subdivision requirements should be revised as follows:
 - a. Eliminate loopholes for arterials;
 - b. Require neighborhood parks as part of the Subdivision Code;
 - c. Require a small park fee for small subdivisions, which will be credited to larger subdivisions.
2. Propose a revolving general obligation bond to fund specific projects.
 - a. The proposal must provide benefits to broad voter groups;
 - b. The revolving fund should allow for capital planning and approval on a biannual basis. The capital planning will likely rotate projects based on location and priority;

3. Develop City policy for voluntary SADs and IDZs.
 - a. With these tools in place, many arterial projects will be built without City funds;
 - b. The City can require letters of credit, personal guarantees, or other bonding, to secure SAD and IDZ financing;
4. Impact fees should be revised as follows:
 - a. Eliminate the proposed road and drainage impact fee;
 - b. Eliminate the park fees, with the exception of small subdivisions;

By implementing the recommendations of this report, the City can raise its level of service in a fair and equitable manner. This approach will aid the depressed construction and development industry by allowing greater freedom to developers to build parks and arterial infrastructure. By eliminating impact fees, it will increase the quality and options available to home buyers, providing better homes and attracting more residents. The LCHBA stands ready to assist and advise the City on the development of the above proposed ideas.

Impact fees are not a necessary component of infrastructure development. As shown above, impact fees are inequitable, require careful management, carry unintended consequences, and produce inefficient results. Tony Lloyd, Impact Fee Administrator for the City of Albuquerque, stated that Albuquerque has grown primarily without impact fees, and that under the impact fee regime, they are never enough. We hope that the above points have provided convincing evidence that impact fees are not the answer to our infrastructure problems. However, if members of the City Council still believe that impact fees are appropriate, we respectfully request an opportunity to meet with you in the coming weeks to discuss our points of disagreement.

Sincerely,

Las Cruces Home Builder's Association

Kimball Hakes
Government Affairs

Max Bower
Government Affairs

John Moscato
Government Affairs