

THE CITY OF CERES, CALIFORNIA



PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN



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River Bluff Regional Park

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

The City of Ceres began the process of developing this Parks and Recreation Master Plan in 2012. At that time, City leadership identified the need to inventory and assess existing facilities in order to determine opportunities for future expansion of its Parks and Recreation offerings. This master plan is written with these goals in mind and provides recommendations for continued development toward achieving these goals.

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan is designed to capture a specific range of information for strategic planning purposes. The Plan provides an analysis of the context and presents an inventory of Ceres park facilities. It outlines community input and suggestions gathered and synthesizes these results into a set of recommendations. Finally, the Plan provides an outline for implementation and identifies potential funding mechanisms and opportunities.

1.2 ROLE OF PARKS & RECREATION

Parks and recreation facilities are invaluable parts of a vibrant community. Studies continue to demonstrate the benefits of urban parks for both individual and community health. Children are increasingly separated from nature and the outdoors due to concerns about safety and the isolating effects of technology. Trends toward obesity and associated health risks among American adults and youth emphasize the need for parks and recreation services not only to improve the well-being of today's citizens but also to ensure the long-term health of both individuals and the community.

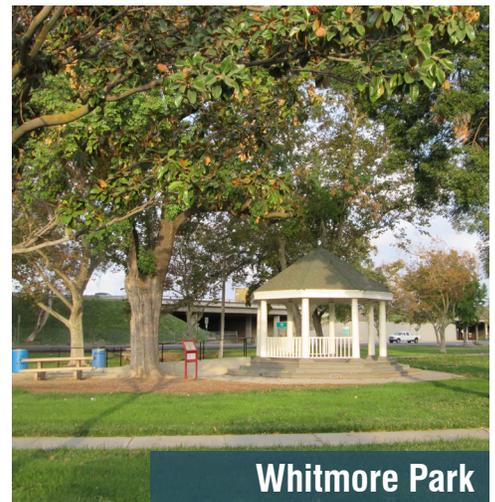
The City of Ceres Recreation Division lists its purpose through the following nine goals:

- Increase cultural unity
- Strengthen community image and sense of place
- Support economic development
- Strengthen safety and security
- Promote health and wellness
- Protect environmental resources
- Facilitate community problem solving
- Provide recreational experiences
- Foster human development

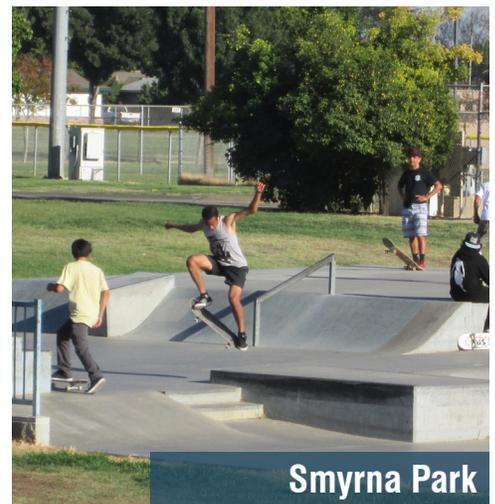
These goals provide a vivid image of the opportunities available for the City as it continues to develop its parks and recreation facilities and programming. Build-out of the River Bluff Regional Park will provide expanded interface with the natural ecosystem and native landscape typology. Opportunities for education about cutting-edge water saving technology and traditional water management practices may be introduced at existing parks. Overall health, safety and well-being of the community can be supported by the introduction of phased improvements at both new and existing facilities.



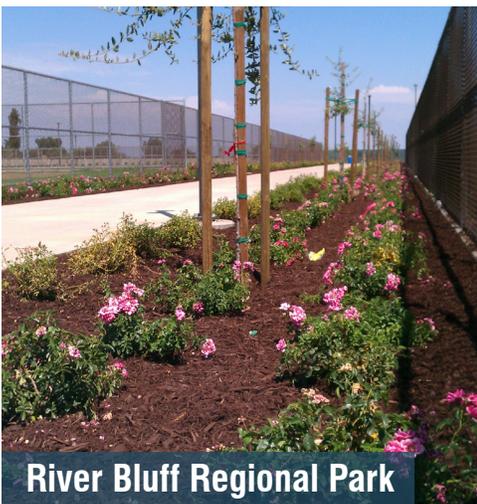
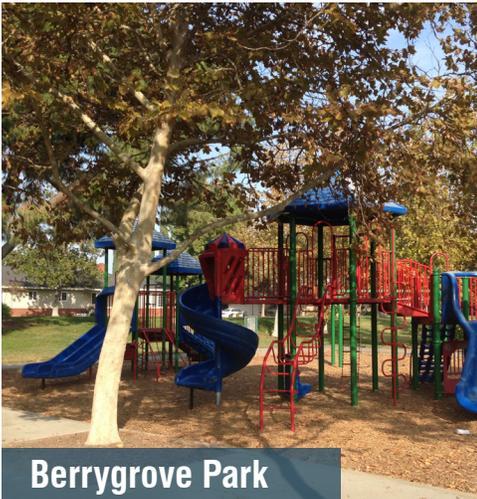
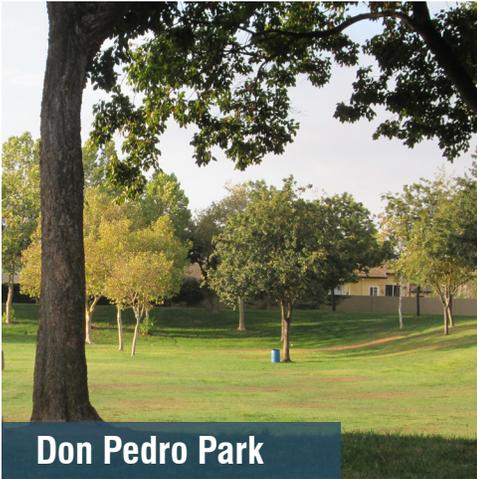
Roeding Heights Park



Whitmore Park



Smyrna Park



1.3 REPORT SUMMARY

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter introduces the purpose of the Master Plan, the mission of City of Ceres Recreation Division, and the structure of the document.

Chapter 2: Context

This chapter examines the local context of Ceres, including population demographics and regional character.

Chapter 3: Inventory

This chapter includes a survey of existing parkland within the City of Ceres Parks and Recreation system. It also includes an overview of recreation facilities and other facilities used by the Recreation Division. It closes with a review of programs currently offered and identifies any outstanding program needs.

Chapter 4: Needs Assessment

This chapter reviews community outreach involved in the creation of this Master Plan document. It describes the survey methodology and summarizes initial findings.

Chapter 5: Best Practices

This chapter provides guidance for design and construction of future parks and recreation facilities. It considers the City's goals as well as current trends and standards for municipal parks and recreation development.

Chapter 6: Recommendations

This chapter synthesizes identified needs with the City's goals to propose recommendations for the development of Ceres Parks and Recreation's facilities and programming.

Chapter 7: Funding Mechanisms

This chapter discusses the funding needs and opportunities included in proceeding with the recommendations as documented.

Appendix A

This Appendix contains raw results from the community outreach survey.

Appendix B

This Appendix includes an itemized inventory of the City's current parks facilities.



Sam Ryno Park

Chapter 2

CONTEXT

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CONTEXT

2.1 PHYSICAL SETTING

The City of Ceres is centrally located in the San Joaquin Valley along State Route 99. Ceres is 80 miles south of Sacramento and 95 miles east of San Francisco, in the heart of Stanislaus County. Modesto lies immediately to the North and Turlock to the South. The City of Ceres covers an area of 9.35 square miles.

Ceres has a rich agricultural history and derives its name from the Roman goddess of agriculture. Ceres is home to the Stanislaus County Agricultural Center and its largest employers include the Ceres Unified School District, WinCo Foods, and M.A. Garcia Agrilabor.¹

2.2 DEMOGRAPHICS

Population growth has a direct impact on increasing demands for parks and recreational opportunities. Demographic qualities like age, ethnicity, and income levels can have an impact on recreational interests and participation. Due to this connection, demographic characteristics are listed below.

Existing Population and Anticipated Growth

The population in Ceres has continued to rise from 26,314 in 1990 to 46,989 in 2015. Growth between these two censuses shows a 44% population growth over fifteen years. Population growth appears to have slowed, however, in the past five years. The 2010 census shows the population at 45,417, indicating a 3% growth rate in the past five years.²

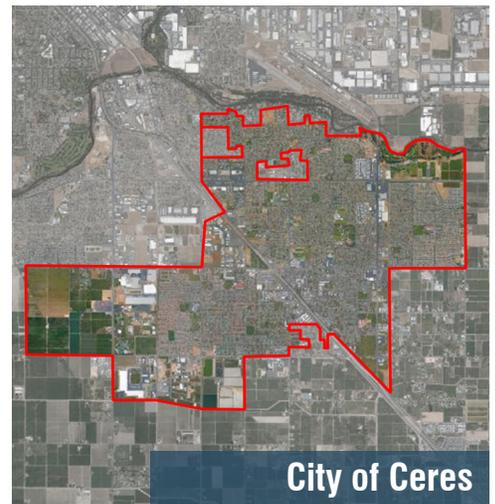
This has resulted in a significantly lower current population than was projected in the City’s 1997 General Plan. The General Plan projected a population of 73,200 by 2015, based upon a 1993 number provided by the Stanislaus Area Association of Governments.

Age

Age will often determine the types of activities in which people choose to participate. For example, youth are generally interested in more traditional competitive sports such as baseball, soccer, and basketball, or extreme sports such as skateboarding, BMX, and rock climbing. As people age, their participation in competitive sports generally decreases, although many older adults and seniors continue to participate in activities that promote healthy living, socialization, and learning. Table 2.1 shows the age distribution in Ceres.³



Community Center



City of Ceres



Sam Ryno Park

1 Ceres Chamber: <http://cereschamber.com/10-largest-employers.html>
 2 City Data: <http://www.city-data.com/city/Ceres-California.html>
 3 US Census: <http://factfinder.census.gov>

	AGE GROUP	TOTAL IN 2010	% IN 2010
CHILDREN 35.8%	Under 5 years	3,946	8.7%
	5-9	3,956	8.7%
	10-14	4,176	9.2%
	15-19	4,190	9.2%
ADULTS 47.9%	20-24	3,463	7.6%
	25-29	3,381	7.4%
	30-34	3,058	6.7%
	35-39	2,948	6.5%
	40-44	3,119	6.9%
	45-49	2,989	6.6%
	50-54	2,818	6.2%
SENIORS 16.3%	55-59	2,173	4.8%
	60-64	1,687	3.7%
	65-69	1,160	2.6%
	70-74	871	1.9%
	75-79	684	1.5%
	80-84	445	1.0%
	85+	353	0.8%
	TOTAL	45,417	100%

Table 2.1: City of Ceres Age Distribution as of the 2010 US Census

Race and Ethnicity

Race and Ethnicity also affect people’s recreation preferences and participation. For example, adult soccer tends to be more popular among Hispanic groups than other cultural groups. Ceres has shifted from a predominantly white community to one that has become more ethnically diverse and more heavily Hispanic. The number of residents reporting Hispanic or Latino as their race grew from 37.9% in the 2000 US Census to 57.9% in 2013. This 20% jump placed the Hispanic and Latino population in the majority of the City of Ceres demographic. Table 2.2 shows a more detailed breakdown of racial distribution in the City of Ceres as reported in 2013 on the City Data website.

RACE/ETHNICITY	TOTAL IN 2013	% IN 2013
Hispanic	27,086	57.9%
White	14,523	31.0%
Asian	2,794	6.0%
Two or More Races	1,746	3.7%
Black or African American	545	1.2%
American Indian	252	0.5%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	43	0.9%

Table 2.2: City of Ceres Racial Distribution as of 2013

As of 2013, 12,309, or 26.3%, of the residents of Ceres were born outside of the United States. This is slightly below the average for the state of California, which is 26.9%. The majority of foreign-born residents indicated they were born in Latin America.⁴

4 City Data: <http://www.city-data.com/city/Ceres-California>

Income and Household Type

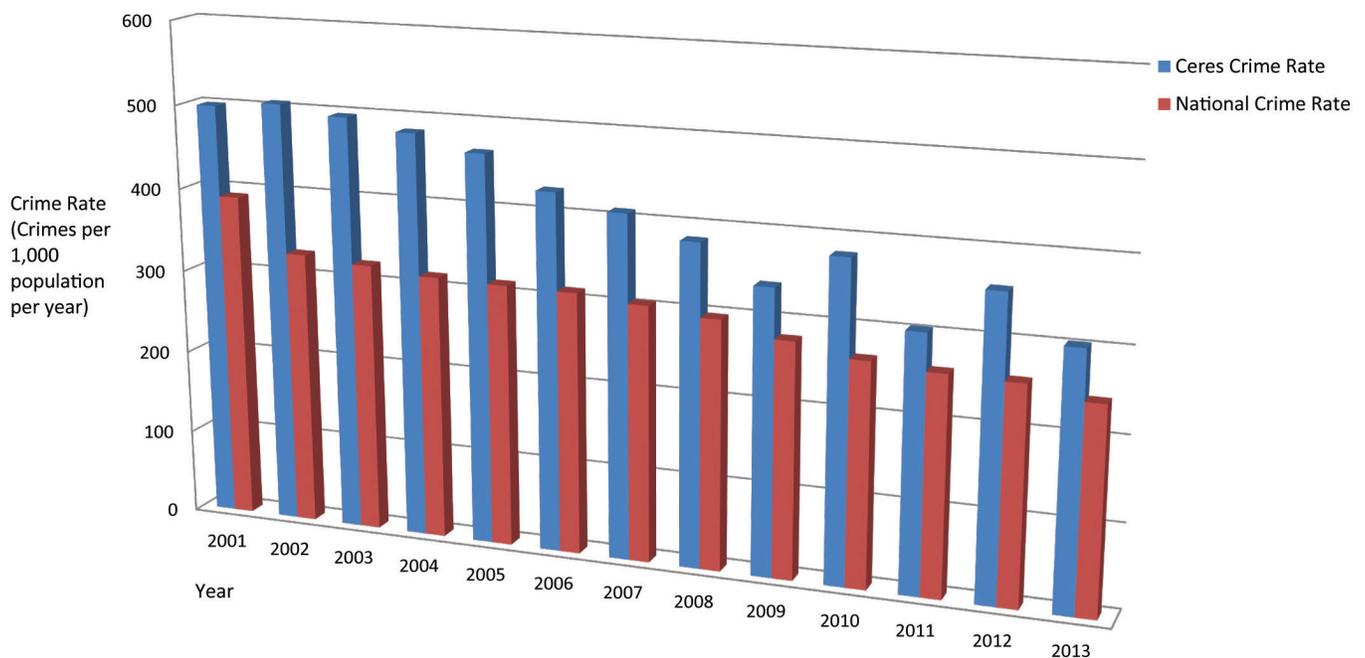
Income has a major impact upon participation in recreational opportunities. Those with higher incomes and more disposable income tend to be more active and participate in more expensive types of recreation, whereas those with lower incomes tend to take advantage of low cost recreational opportunities. In Ceres, the median household income is \$47,306, 22.5% lower than the California average income of \$61,094. During the years 2009-2013, 20.5% of the population was below poverty level, 15.9% greater than the state average.⁵

Furthermore, as of 2010 the adult labor force in the City of Ceres was estimated at 19,000. 4,400 of those persons, or 23%, were unemployed. This was a drastic increase from the 2008 estimate of 14% unemployment.⁶

Family households make up 83.3% of the Ceres community and 64.2% of households have children under the age of 18. As of 2013 the average household size was 3.84 persons. Further, 74.2% of housing units have a mortgage, which suggests current homeowners intend to stay in the City.⁷ This information emphasizes the need for family-oriented, multigenerational recreational opportunities.

Crime Rates

While 2013 records indicated a drop in overall crime rates from 2012, the rate was still slightly higher than the national average.⁸ Nevertheless, the City of Ceres rate supports the responses to the community outreach survey which indicated high sensitivity to the presence or possibility of crime. 20% of respondents indicated that concerns about crime kept them from visiting City parks more often. Moreover, 14% of respondents reported the thing they disliked most about City recreation facilities was the presence or possibility of crime. The Ceres Police Department indicates no significant crime rate for parks facilities within the City compared to non-park facilities, so the reported concerns seem to be more a matter of perception versus reality. Nevertheless, there are actions that may be taken to reduce the perception of danger in parks and increase user participation. These will be discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.5.



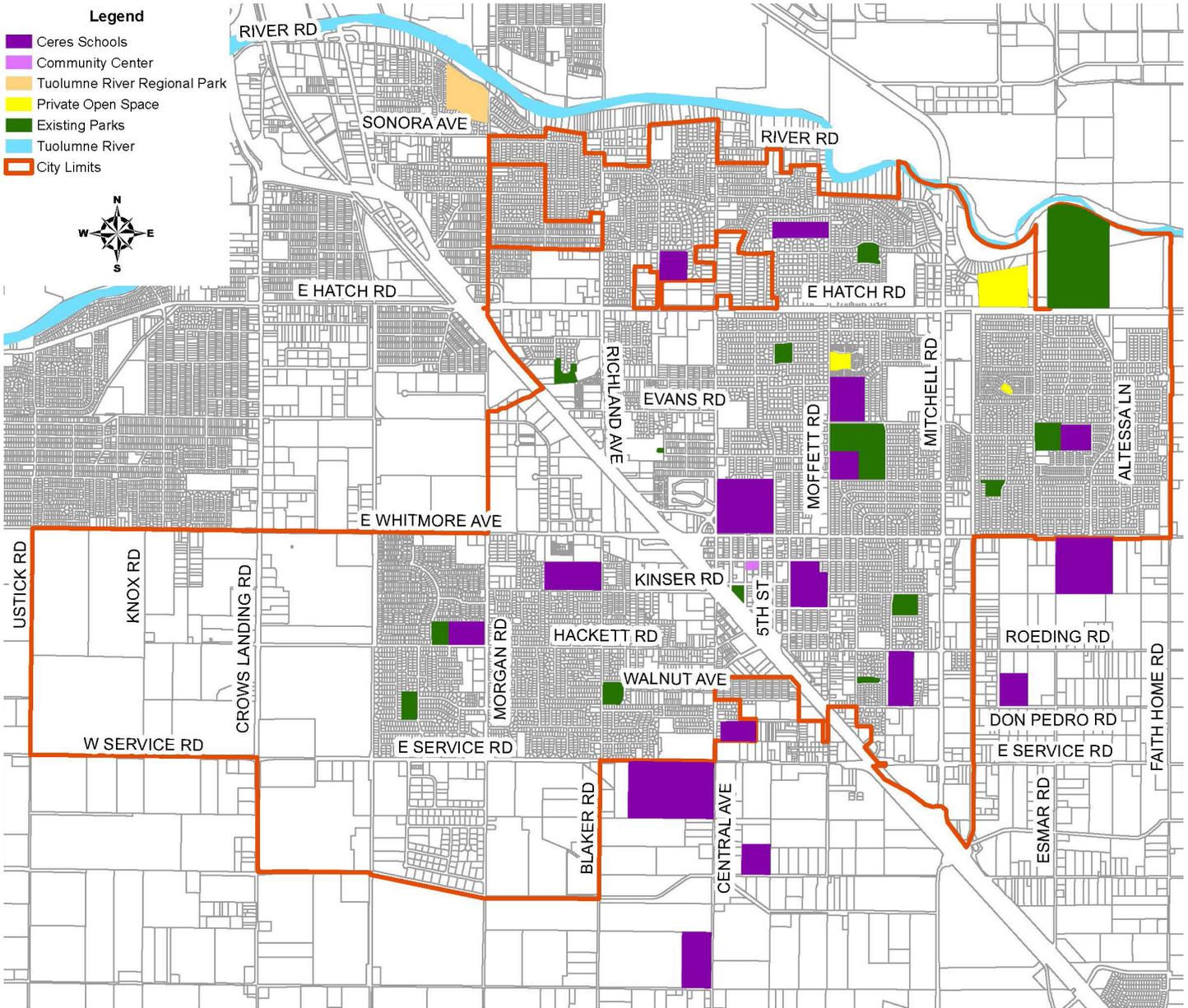
Ceres Crime Rate Compared to the National Crime Rate

5 US Census: <http://factfinder.census.gov>
 6 City of Modesto Office of Economic Development
 7 US Census: <http://factfinder.census.gov>
 8 City Data: <http://www.city-data.com/crime/>

Educational Facilities

Ceres Unified School District maintains 23 educational facilities. These include one Pre-School/Head Start, thirteen Elementary Schools, one K-8 Charter School, three Junior High Schools, four High Schools, and one adult education facility.

The City Recreation Division currently partners with Ceres High School, Central Valley High School, Cesar Chavez Junior High School, Mae Hensley Junior High School, and Blaker Kinser Junior High School to use the facilities at these schools for Recreation programs. The distribution of these and other schools in comparison to City parks and recreation facilities is important to understand the accessibility of City recreation facilities for youth and family after-school programming. The geographic distribution of these schools is mapped below.



Ceres Unified School District Schools Shown in Relation to Existing City Parks

Commuting

The amount of time people spend traveling to and from work impacts their recreational participation. Although commute times for the Ceres community vary, most of them (69.4%) have commute times under thirty minutes and therefore work locally. Of those with longer commute times, 12.1% spend sixty minutes or more traveling to work. Considering the average 8-9 hour workday, these extra 2+ hours per day spent commuting mean that these residents are out of the City for at least ten to eleven hours per day. Particularly in the winter season, this schedule limits participation at recreation facilities during daylight hours. It also limits the ability to drive their children to early-evening activities on weeknights.

Commuting statistics can provide an indication of how feasible it is for citizens to utilize recreational facilities. They also help demonstrate, as mentioned above, the number of youth who would benefit from nearby after-school activities, programs, or summer camps that do not require private transportation to and from the facility.⁹ A 2006 study by the UCLA Anderson School of Management indicated that available leisure time has more impact on participation in recreational pursuits than does variation in income.¹⁰ Furthermore, the community outreach to be discussed in Chapter 4: Needs Assessment indicates that many Ceres residents feel lack of time is a major prohibitive factor to their participation in City Recreation programs.

Health Trends

The County Health Status Profiles 2015 showed that Stanislaus County has higher death rates than the state average in every cause of death category except for two (AIDS and Breast Cancer in women). California State Health Officer Dr. Karen Smith cites the problems for many Californians being poor diet, lack of physical activity, and the use of tobacco.¹¹ The adult obesity rate in Stanislaus County is 28%, compared to the California state average of 21.3%. Adult diabetes is reported at 8.9% compared to the state average of 7.3%. Preschool obesity rates, are 17.1% for Stanislaus County, slightly below the state rate of 17.9%.¹²

The US Census estimated in 2013 that as much as 13% of the population of Ceres suffered from a disability. About 35% of those disabilities were ambulatory.¹³

Linguistics

The US Census from 2010 reveals that 47% of the population of Ceres uses English as the primary language spoken at home. 53% of the population uses a language other than English at home, and the majority of these households speak Spanish. This is consistent with population trends toward a Hispanic and Latino majority in the city.

“71% of male and 64% of female Hispanics report that they do not participate in outdoor activities due to lack of time... Broken down by income levels, 52% of those stating more time was a factor were from the \$75k plus income group and 49% of those stating more time was a factor were from the <\$15k income groups. This shows that regardless of income level, those with the highest and lowest levels of income believe leisure time is a constraint.”

“The Hispanic Community and Outdoor Recreation,” UCLA Anderson School of Management, 2006

9 City of Modesto Office of Economic Development
 10 UCLA Anderson School of Management “The Hispanic Community and Outdoor Recreation.” 2006.
 11 Stafford, Sabra. “County Residents’ Health Falls Below State Average.” Ceres Courier, 15 April 2015.
 12 City Data: www.city-data.com/city/Ceres-California
 13 US Census. Disability Characteristics: 2009-2013 American Community Survey.

2.3 ROLE OF PARKS AND RECREATION IN CITY OF CERES

The mission statement for the City of Ceres Recreation Division emphasizes the Division's focus on providing "diverse and innovative programming" and "safe and secure spaces." The City currently provides 150 acres of developed park space for its 46,989 residents, or 3.3 acres per 1,000 residents. This is approaching the 4 acres per 1,000 residents goal recorded in the 1997 Ceres General Plan. It is, however, significantly less than the National Recreation and Park Association's 1983 recommended standard of 6.25 to 10.5 acres per 1,000 population.¹⁴

The City of Ceres General Plan states, "Ceres' quality of life and diversity is reflected in its recreational and cultural services." Recent improvements and initiatives by the City's Recreation Division, such as the completion of the Ceres Community Center and continued build-out of River Bluff Regional Park, are bolstering the City's recreational and cultural services. The City has also increased its park land from 68.5 acres in 1995 to 150 acres in 2015.

Due to the City's promotion of partnerships with community organizations, those parks with programming amenities such as regulation-sized sports fields, experience heavy usage by youth and adult community sports leagues. Community outreach efforts showed that the usage by leagues at these parks has nearly hit its maximum, with leagues reporting difficulty scheduling games, practice times, and tournaments. In contrast, outreach showed that smaller neighborhood parks are seeing less use as a variety of factors have deterred local residents from using the facilities. The methodology and results of the community input portion of this document will be discussed in Chapter 4: Needs Assessment.

In addition to outdoor recreation opportunities, the City of Ceres Recreation Division offers youth, adult and senior programs at its Community Center and at other partner facilities. These options are reviewed in more depth in Chapter 3: Inventory. Community outreach data gathered in regard to this portion of the Recreation Division's programming will be explained in Chapter 4: Needs Assessment.

2.4 PLANNING CONTEXT

The City of Ceres has engaged in several planning and implementation efforts to improve City facilities within the past five years. In 2007, the City retained a group of consultants to complete the Downtown Specific Plan. This document was completed in 2011. Design and construction of several park facilities have been contracted and begun, including the River Bluff playground and soccer field expansions and expanded restroom facilities at Whitmore and Smyrna parks, Costa ball field renovation, and Ryno park renovation.

Altogether, the City of Ceres is currently engaged in a dynamic period of growth for the planning and development of its municipal facilities. This Parks and Recreation Master Plan will complement these efforts and provide recommendations for future phases of building projects and facility improvements.

14 National Recreation and Park Association. "Recreation, Park, and Open Space Standards and Guidelines." 1983.



Redwood Park

Chapter 3

INVENTORY

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INVENTORY

The contents of this chapter cover existing parks, community facilities, special use facilities, third party providers and existing programs as of 2014. A summary of the inventory data is found in Appendix B

3.1 EXISTING PARKS

The City of Ceres currently provides residents with thirteen City parks and owns parkland totaling over 170 acres of land. River Bluff Regional Park is the largest of these with a total of 76 acres of property, both developed and undeveloped. Densely programmed Smyrna Park follows as the second largest City park at 27.88 acres. Many City parks are less than five acres and serve the immediately surrounding neighborhoods. Private parks contribute approximately four acres to the City's total parkland.

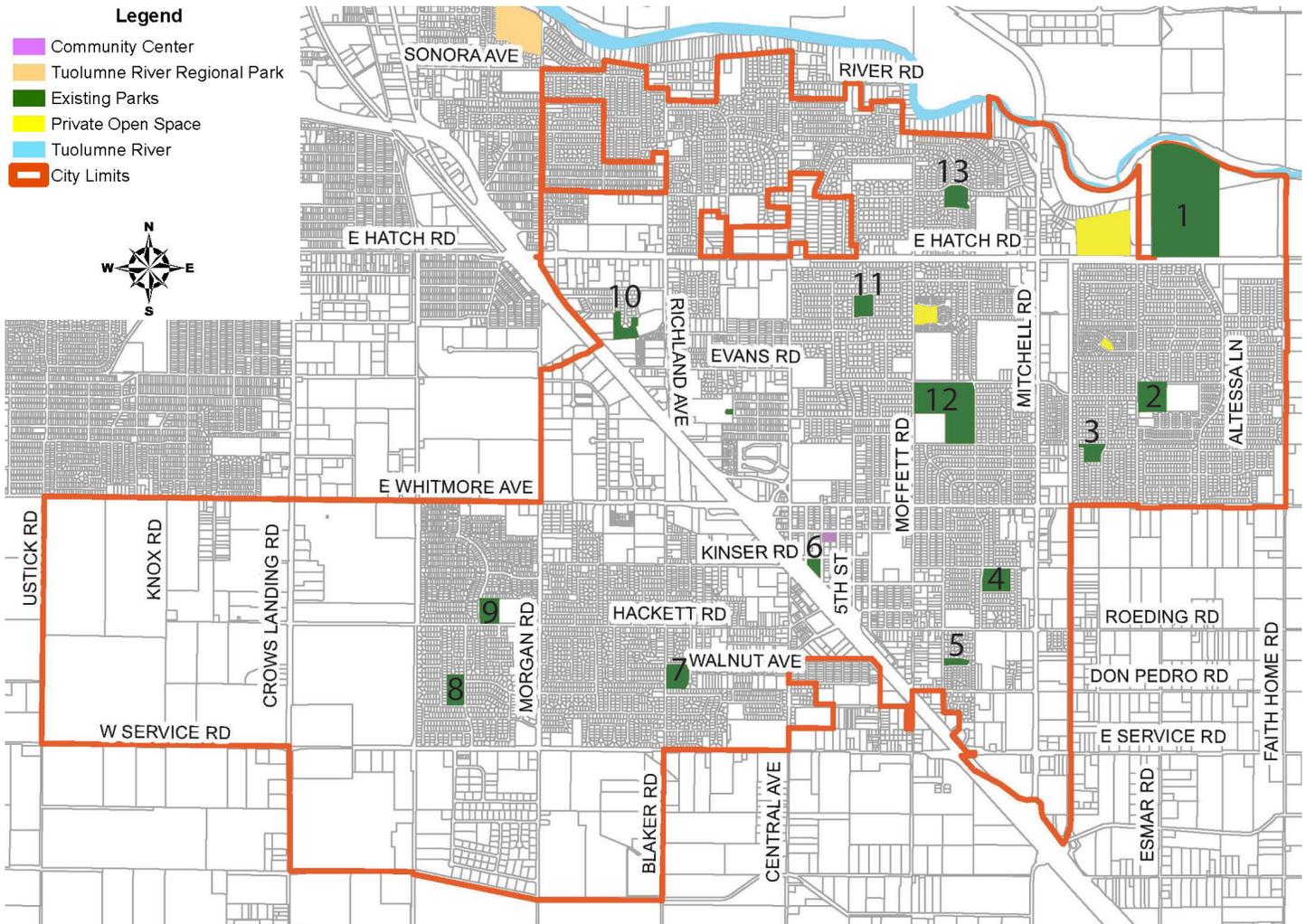


Exhibit 3.1: Existing City Parks

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. River Bluff Regional Park | 8. Sam Ryno Park |
| 2. Neel Park | 9. Strawberry Fields Park |
| 3. Persephone Park | 10. Independence Park |
| 4. Roeding Heights Park | 11. Berrygrove Park |
| 5. Redwood Park | 12. Smyrna Park |
| 6. Whitmore Park | 13. Riverview Park |
| 7. Don Pedro Park | |

As support for this document, a Geographic Information System (GIS) database was created to inventory data associated with the City's parks. This GIS database allows data to be quickly and succinctly pulled to support available grants and queries as needed. As a tool with this capacity, the City's GIS database will become a valuable tool in future searches to identify appropriate funding for the development of parks and recreation facilities, and to assist with maintenance records. The City will update and edit the content of GIS files continuously to ensure data remains accurate into the future.

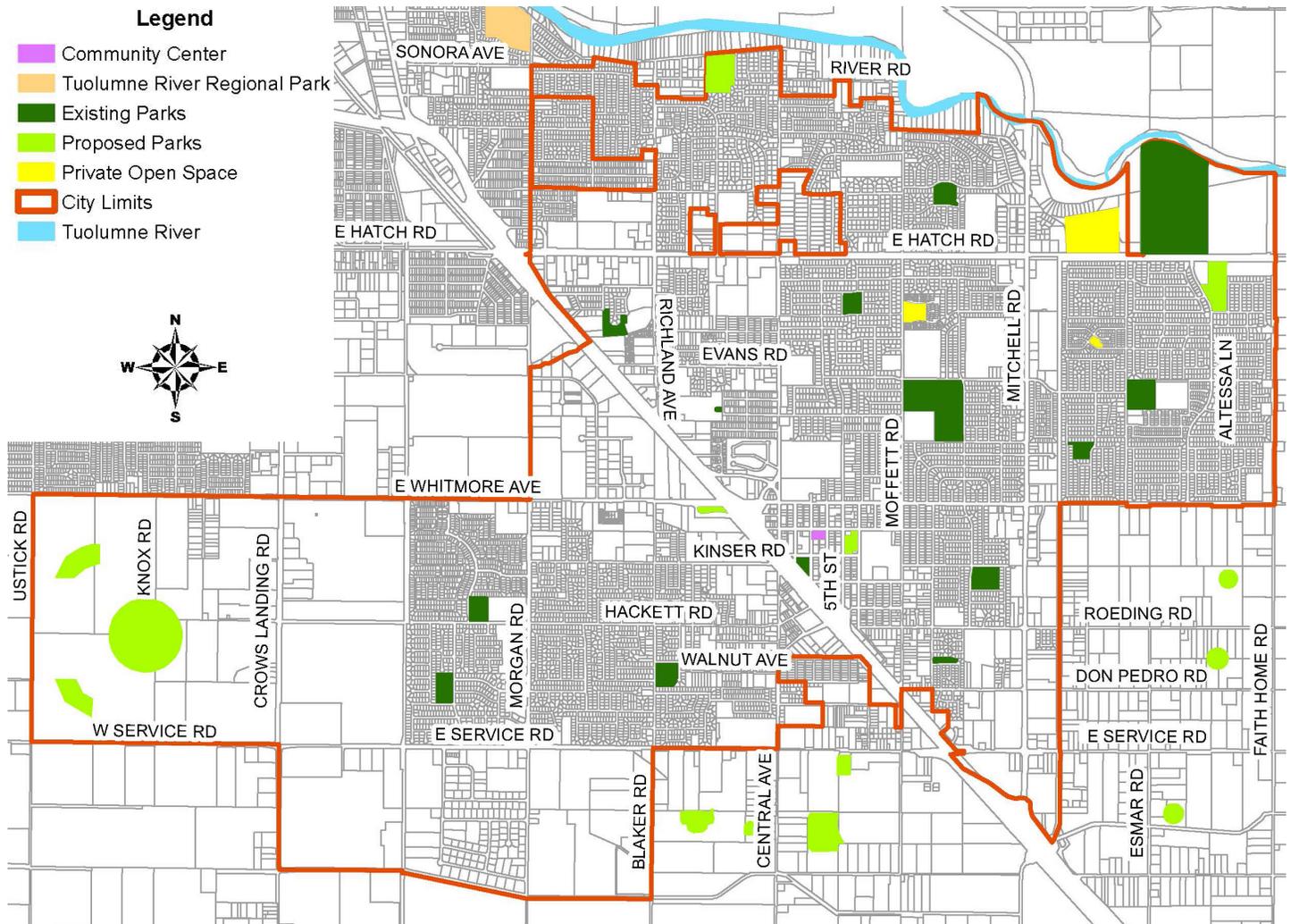


Exhibit 3.2: Existing and Proposed City Parks

The following pages inventory each existing park facility. A context map, character images, and summary of acreage, amenities, and utilities is provided for each park. The final three parks inventoried include properties that are City-owned and designated for future parks but are as-yet undeveloped. A matrix containing this inventory data is included in Appendix B.

BERRYGROVE PARK



PARK AMENITIES:

- Picnic: Yes. Tables, benches.
- Shade structures: No
- Sports fields: Yes. Multi-use turf area.
- Sports courts: No
- Play equipment: Yes. 2-5 yr., 5-12 yr., swings.
- Aquatics and spray features: No
- Other features: Rose garden
- Basin: Yes. Detention basin.
- Utilities: Yes. Irrigation pump, transformer.

COMMENTS:

This park is bounded on all sides by roads. Parking is on-street.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK 3.65 ACRES



DON PEDRO PARK



NEIGHBORHOOD PARK 5.00 ACRES



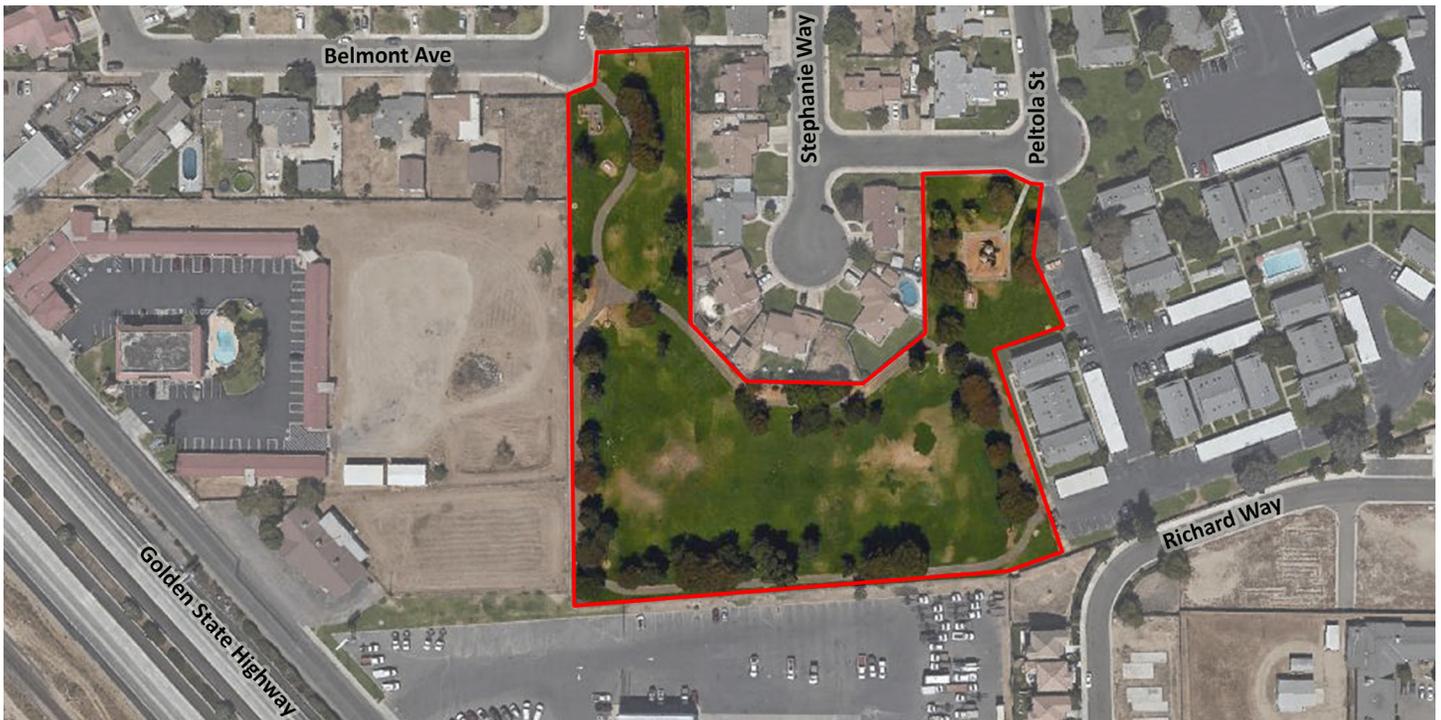
PARK AMENITIES:

- Picnic: Yes. Barbecues, tables, benches.
- Shade structures: No
- Sports fields: Yes. Multi-use turf area.
- Sports courts: No
- Play equipment: Yes. 5-12 yr.
- Aquatics and spray features: No
- Other features: None
- Basin: Yes. Detention basin.
- Utilities: Yes. Transformer.

COMMENTS:

This park is bounded on the North, West and East sides by roads. The South side of the park abuts single-family homes. Parking is on-street.

INDEPENDENCE PARK



PARK AMENITIES:

Picnic: Yes. Tables, benches.

Shade structures: No

Sports fields: Yes. Multi-use turf area.

Sports courts: No

Play equipment: Yes. 5-12 yr.

Aquatics and spray features: No

Other features: Paved walking path around perimeter of park.

Basin: Yes. Detention basin.

Utilities: Yes. Irrigation pump, transformer.

COMMENTS:

This park is bounded on the North and East sides by single- and multi- family residential units, while the South and West sides are bordered by commercial properties. There are two formal pedestrian entrances, one off of Peltola Avenue and the other at the corner of Belmont and Paramount. Parking is on-street.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK 4.27 ACRES



NEEL PARK



NEIGHBORHOOD PARK 8.15 ACRES



PARK AMENITIES:

- Picnic: No
- Shade structures: No
- Sports fields: Yes. Multi-use turf area.
- Sports courts: No
- Play equipment: No
- Aquatics and spray features: No
- Other features: Paved walking path around perimeter of park.
- Basin: Yes. Detention basin.
- Utilities: Yes. Irrigation pump.

COMMENTS:

The Northwest Corner of the park is separated from the main portion of the park by Helen Perry Road. The park is bounded to the West by Boothe Road. The North and South edges abut single-family homes. There is a pedestrian entrance into the park at White Fall Court. The East edge of the park is fenced at the property line of Samuel Vaughn School. Parking is on-street.

PERSEPHONE PARK



PARK AMENITIES:

- Picnic: Yes. Barbecues, tables, benches.
- Shade structures: No
- Sports fields: Yes. Multi-use turf area.
- Sports courts: No
- Play equipment: Yes. 2-5 yr., 5-12 yr.
- Aquatics and spray features: No
- Other features: Paved walking path around park.
- Basin: Yes. Detention basin.
- Utilities: Yes. Irrigation pump.

COMMENTS:

This park is bounded on the East by Lunar Drive. The North, West, and South edges abut single-family homes. There is a formal pedestrian entrance on the West side of the park between two residential lots off of Venus Drive. Parking is on-street.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK 3.14 ACRES



REDWOOD PARK



NEIGHBORHOOD PARK 1.00 ACRES



PARK AMENITIES:

Picnic: Yes. Barbecues, tables, benches.

Shade structures: No

Sports fields: No

Sports courts: No

Play equipment: Yes. 2-5 yr., 5-12 yr., lighted.

Aquatics and spray features: No

Other features: None

Basin: Yes. Detention basin.

Utilities: Yes. Irrigation pump, transformer.

COMMENTS:

This park is bounded on the West and South by roads. The North and East edges abut single-family homes. Parking is on-street.

RIVER BLUFF REGIONAL PARK



PARK AMENITIES:

Picnic: Yes. Tables, benches.
 Shade structures: Yes. Group shade in picnic area.
 Sports fields: Yes. Soccer (7 fields), unlighted.
 Sports courts: No
 Play equipment: Yes. 2-5 yr., 5-12 yr.
 Aquatics and spray features: No; planned in future phase.
 Other features: Restrooms, concessions, hiking trails, wayfinding/signage, key card entry fields.
 Basin: Yes. Detention basins.
 Utilities: Yes. Irrigation pump, domestic water well; water tank planned in future phase.

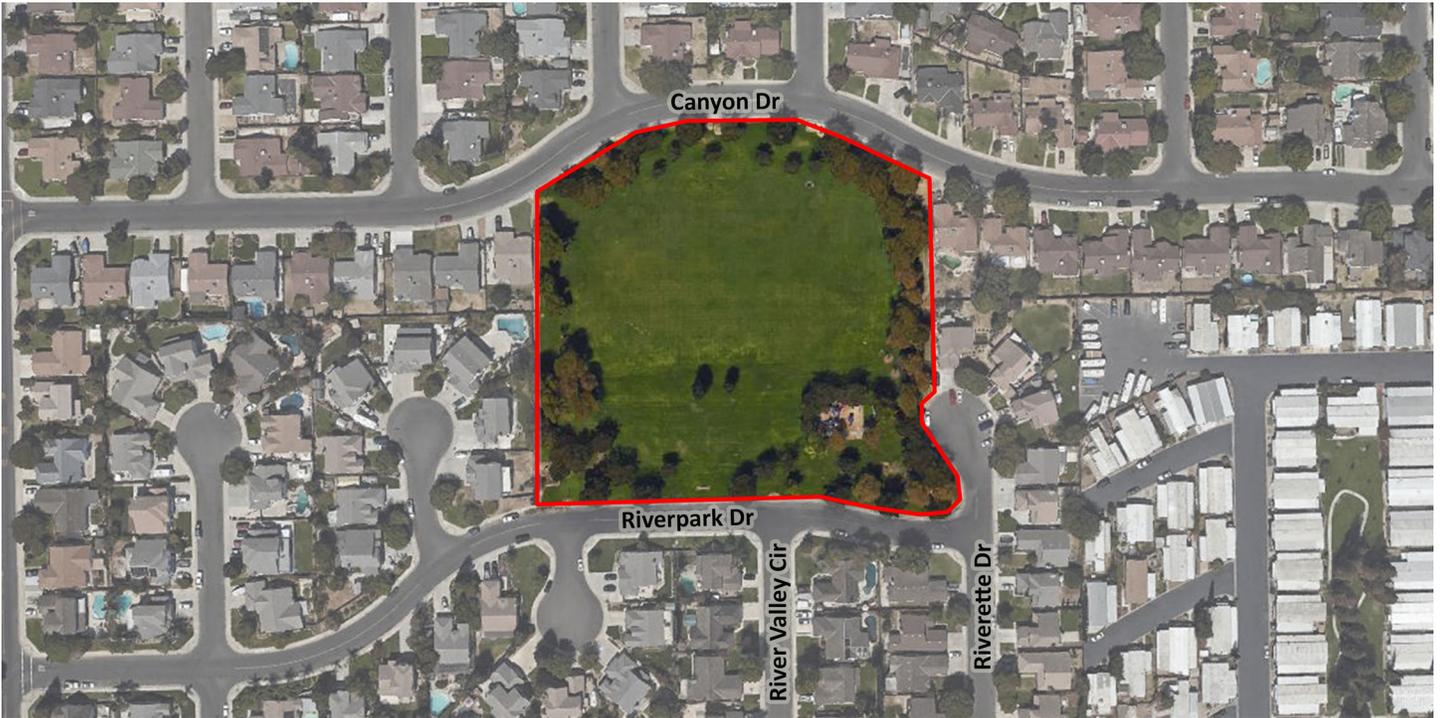
COMMENTS:

This park is bounded by East Hatch Road to the South. The park abuts the River Oaks Golf Course along its Western edge and agricultural fields to the East. The Tuolumne River forms the Northern border of the park. There are two parking lots within the park which is accessible from East Hatch Road. Future phases of development include: Lower terrace revegetation, scenic overlook, splash pad, TOP soccer field (artificial turf field for youth with disabilities).

REGIONAL PARK
50 ACRES DEVELOPED
26 ACRES UNDEVELOPED



RIVERVIEW PARK



NEIGHBORHOOD PARK 5.60 ACRES



PARK AMENITIES:

Picnic: Yes. Barbecues, tables, benches.

Shade structures: No

Sports fields: Yes. Multi-use turf area.

Sports courts: No

Play equipment: Yes. 2-5 yr., 5-12 yr.

Aquatics and spray features: No

Other features: None

Basin: Yes. Detention basin.

Utilities: Yes. Irrigation pump.

COMMENTS:

This park is bounded on the North and South by roads. The West and East sides are bordered by single-family homes. Parking is on-street.

ROEDING HEIGHTS PARK



PARK AMENITIES:

- Picnic: Yes. Barbecue, tables, benches.
- Shade structures: Yes. Group shade structure near picnic tables.
- Sports fields: Yes. Baseball fields, Little League fields, non-lighted.
- Sports courts: Yes. Full-court basketball, (2) tennis courts, lighted
- Play equipment: Yes. 5-12 yr.
- Aquatics and spray features: No
- Other features: Restrooms.
- Basin: Yes. Detention basin.
- Utilities: Yes. Irrigation pump, transformer.

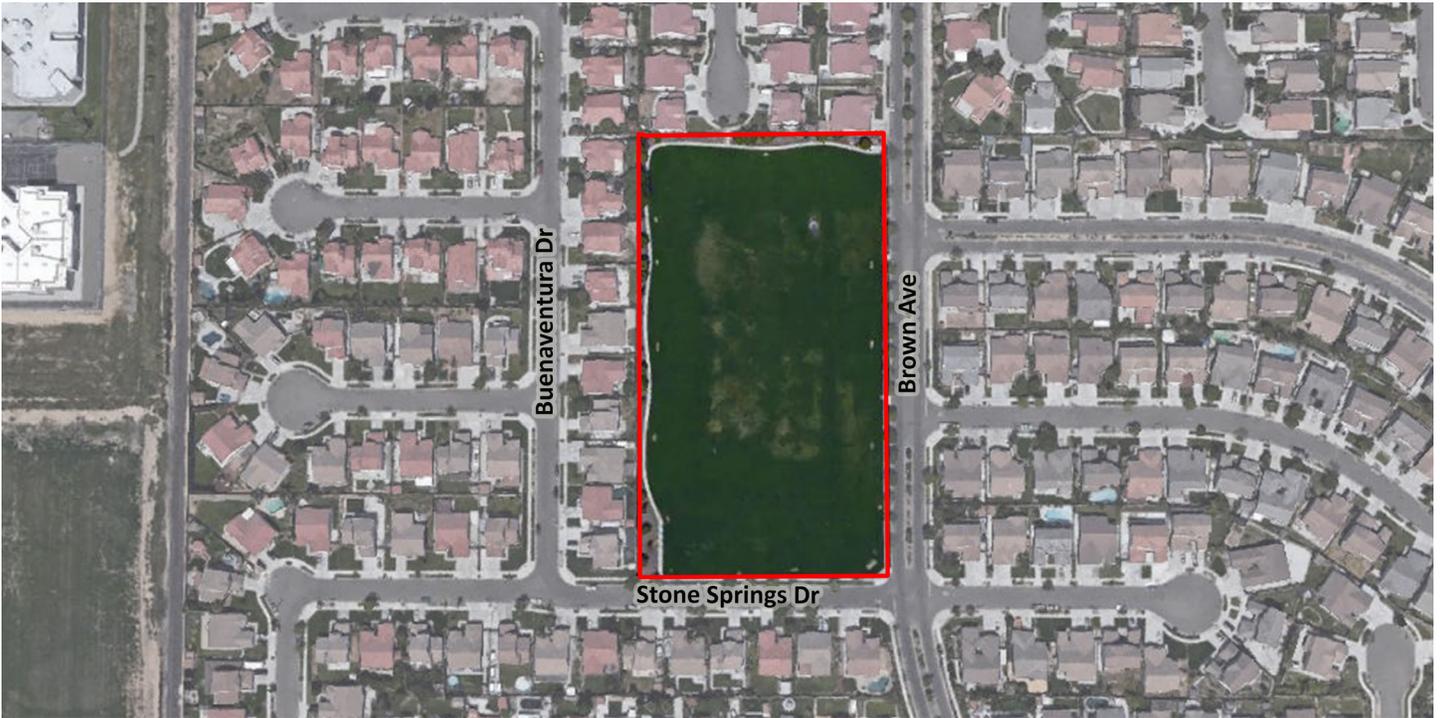
COMMENTS:

This park is bounded on the South, West and North by roads. The Eastern edge abuts single-family homes. Parking is on-street.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK 6.10 ACRES



SAM RYNO PARK



NEIGHBORHOOD PARK 5.20 ACRES



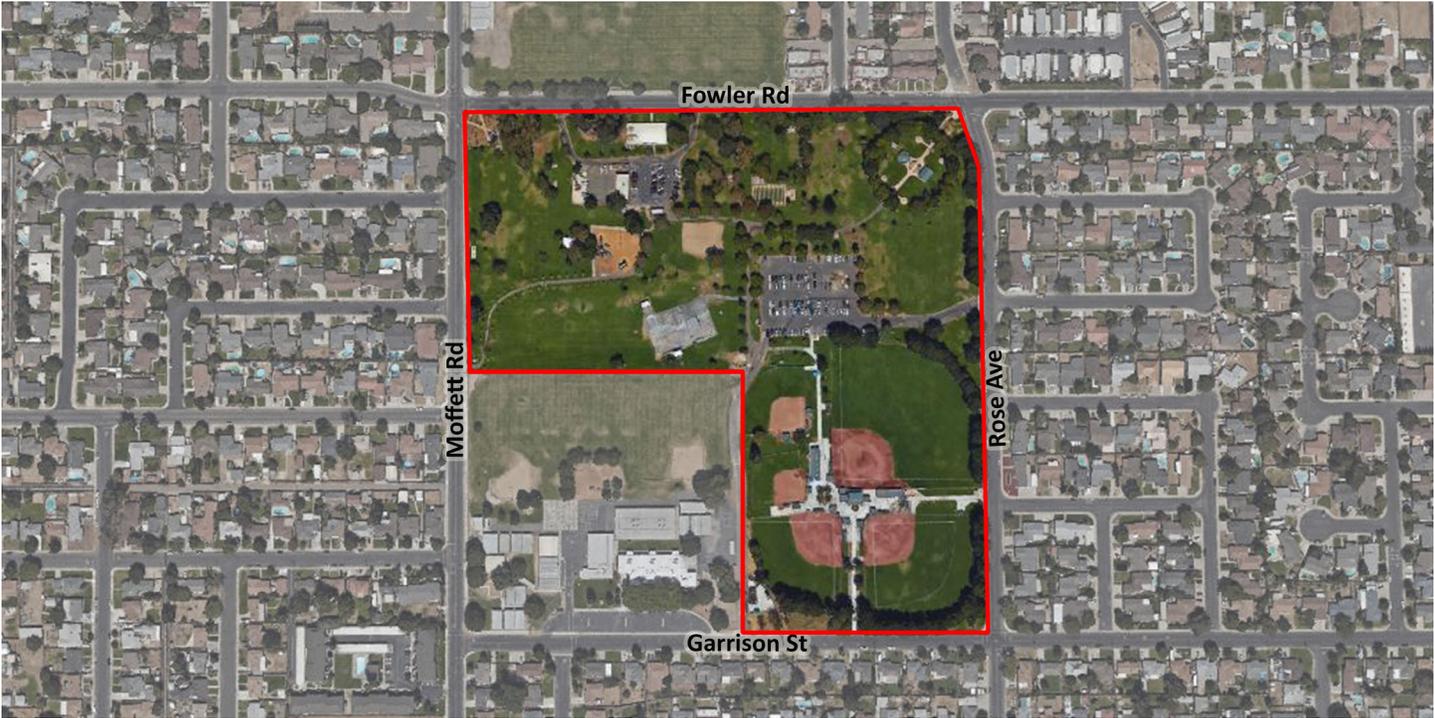
PARK AMENITIES:

- Picnic: Yes. Barbecue, tables, benches.
- Shade structures: Yes.
- Sports fields: Yes. Multi-use turf area, lighted.
- Sports courts: Yes. Basketball.
- Play equipment: Yes. 2-5 yr, 5-12 yr, swings.
- Aquatics and spray features: No
- Other features: Paved walking path around park.
- Basin: Yes. Detention basin.
- Utilities: Yes. Irrigation pump, transformer.

COMMENTS:

This park is bounded on the East and South by roads. The North and West are bounded by single-family residential neighborhoods. Parking is on-street.

SMYRNA PARK



PARK AMENITIES:

- Picnic: Yes. Barbecues, tables, benches.
- Shade structures: Yes. Group shade and large/small options in picnic area.
- Sports fields: Yes. Baseball (1 field), Softball (3 fields), Little League (1 field), lighted.
- Sports courts: Yes. Sand Volleyball (2 courts), Horseshoe pits (8 courts).
- Play equipment: Yes. 2-5 yr, 5-12 yr, swings.
- Aquatics and spray features: No
- Other features: Skate Park, restrooms, concessions, storage, rose garden.
- Basin: Yes. Detention basin.
- Utilities: Yes. Irrigation pump.

COMMUNITY PARK 27.88 ACRES



COMMENTS:

This park is bounded on the West, North, and East by roads. Mae Hensley Junior High is across Fowler Road immediately to the North. The Southern edge of the park is fenced between the grounds of Carroll Fowler Elementary and the Park. There are two parking lots within Smyrna Park, with entrances off Fowler Road and Rose Avenue.

STRAWBERRY FIELDS PARK



NEIGHBORHOOD PARK 4.62 ACRES



PARK AMENITIES:

Picnic: Yes. Barbecue, tables, benches.

Shade structures: No

Sports fields: Yes. One baseball backstop, multi-use turf area.

Sports courts: Yes. Half-court basketball court, non-lighted.

Play equipment: Yes. 5-12 yr.

Aquatics and spray features: No

Other features: Drinking fountain, restrooms.

Basin: Yes. Detention basin.

Utilities: Yes. Irrigation pump.

COMMENTS:

This park is bounded on the South and West sides by roads. The North is bounded by a single-family residential neighborhood and the Eastern edge is fenced at the Sinclear Elementary property line. Parking is on-street.

WHITMORE PARK



PARK AMENITIES:

- Picnic: Yes. Barbecue, tables, benches.
- Shade structures: Yes. Gazebo.
- Sports fields: No
- Sports courts: No
- Play equipment: No
- Aquatics and spray features: No
- Other features: Drinking fountain, restrooms, gazebo with dance floor, rose garden, memorial.
- Basin: No
- Utilities: Yes. Irrigation pump

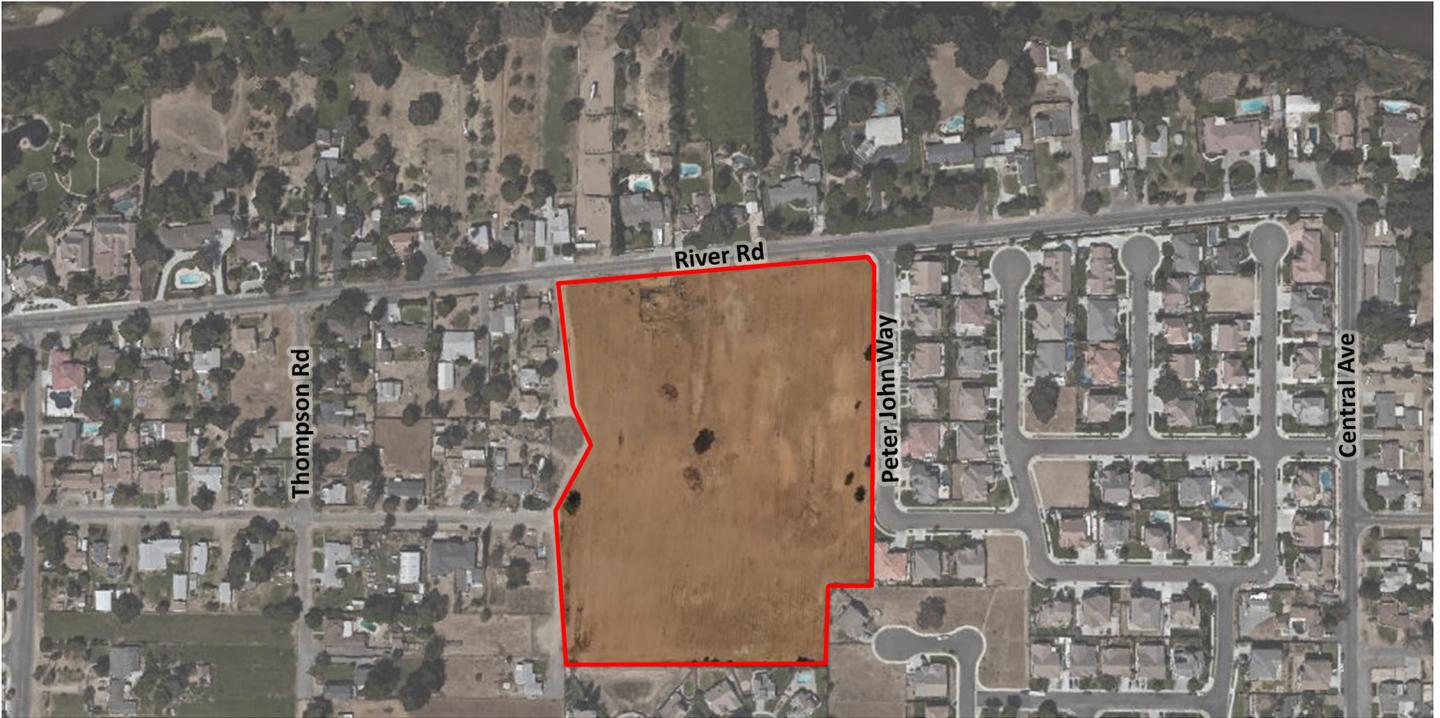
COMMENTS:

This park is bounded on all sides by roads. Parking is on-street.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK 1.48 ACRES



CERES LIONS PARK



NEIGHBORHOOD PARK 10.00 ACRES

PARK AMENITIES:

NONE: As-yet undeveloped.

COMMENTS:

The City of Ceres currently owns the full ten acres planned for park development.

EASTGATE PARK



PARK AMENITIES:

NONE: As-yet undeveloped.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK
10.00 ACRES

COMMENTS:

Eight acres of the ten acre goal are currently owned by the City of Ceres. Residents of the Eastgate neighborhood currently have park access to Neel Park and River Bluff Regional Park. This parcel is bounded by Eastgate Boulevard to the West, Kiwi Drive to the South, and Fiddleleaf Lane to the East, with the main irrigation canal and East Hatch Road to the North.

WHITMORE MANSION PARK



NEIGHBORHOOD PARK 2.60 ACRES

PARK AMENITIES:

NONE: As-yet undeveloped.

COMMENTS:

This parcel is bounded by the Whitmore Mansion to the North and by North Street along the Southern boundary. 5th Street is to the West and 6th Street to the East. The central, downtown Ceres location offers benefits such as proximity to the new Community Center, schools, and the well-used Whitmore Park.

3.2 EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The City of Ceres maintains a joint-use agreement with the Ceres Unified School District for shared use of school grounds outside of school hours for the benefit of the community. This agreement provides the City's only access to an aquatic facility, the Ceres High School pool. The Parks and Recreation Division also currently utilizes the following facilities for events and programming:

- Ceres City Hall: Meeting and event space.
- Ceres American Legion Memorial Building: Rental availability for meetings and events.
- Ceres High School: Classes, workshops, and athletic programming.
- Central Valley High School: Classes, workshops, and athletic programming.
- Mae Hensley Junior High School: Classes, athletic programming.
- Edwards Black Belt Academy (Modesto): Athletic programming.
- Blaker Kinser Junior High School: Classes, athletic programming.
- Ceres Community Center: Includes 26,500 square feet of classroom and community space. The Community Center hosts fitness classes, social lounges for teens and seniors, community events and is available for individual and corporate rental.

3.3 CITY RECREATION FACILITY RENTAL

City park picnic areas at Smyrna Park, Roeding Heights Park, Whitmore Park, and River Bluff Regional Park are available for reservation. Facilities reservations can be completed in person at the City of Ceres Community Center. Fees for park facility rentals as of October 2015 were consulted in the writing of this document. Please refer to the City's webpage (www.ci.ceres.ca.us) if interested in a further review of these rates as they are subject to change.

The Ceres Community Center and American Legion Building are both available to rent for special events and meetings. The Community Center rents the Large and Small Assembly Rooms, the Conference Room, Classroom, and Meeting Rooms, as well as the Kitchen.

The Ceres Community Center also offers themed parties for children. These parties cost a flat fee, for which the Community Center provides limited supplies, programming, and facility space for the event.

3.4 EXISTING PROGRAMS

Recreation and Community Services

The City of Ceres Recreation Division provides formal programs for youth, teen, adults and seniors. Youth programming is diverse and includes sports leagues, training camps, dance classes, and creative workshops. The Ceres Youth Commission is a group of interested teens which meets monthly to generate ideas for programming and outreach to the Ceres teen community. Adults are supplied with exercise classes, team sports opportunities, and first aid training courses. Senior programming includes exercise classes and social meetups, as well as a dedicated Senior Lounge at the Community Center.

Aquatics programs are offered at the Ceres High School pool. Aquatics programming is robust, with extensive youth classes, adult classes, open swim, and specialized lifeguarding and water sports training courses.

In addition to providing and maintaining park services and programming for its residents, the City of Ceres plans and conducts community events. Events are often supported in conjunction with local educational, cultural, and volunteer groups. A selection of annual events includes the Ceres High School Dinner Theater, the Lions and Rotary Clubs' Crab Feeds, the Street Faire, the Concerts in the Park series, National Night Out, the Halloween Festival, and the Christmas Festival. Furthermore, community outreach associated with this master planning process indicated strong community support for these community and cultural programs. The City should look to expanding the number and depth of these partnerships in order to maximize resources and best serve the community.

The City of Ceres collaborates with all approved local youth sports groups in Ceres, including Ceres Youth Soccer, Ceres Dolphins Swim Team, Ceres Youth Baseball, Ceres Cowboys Football, Ceres Seahawks Football, Ceres Hawks Wrestling, and Ceres Junior Bulldogs. The City also partners with the Ceres Street Faire Committee, Ceres Community Foundation, Ceres Community Collaborative, Ceres Athletic Committee, and Ceres Unified School District. The City also collaborates with the Central Valley Organizing Committee to host the annual charity softball tournament and barbecue. The City partners with Challenger Sports camps, which supports youth soccer education with summer camps and spring/fall academy options. The City offers a link to the Challenger Sports website directly from its Recreation web page.

Program User Fees per Program

As of October 2015, most regular programs offered by City Recreation incur a fee per participant. Senior exercise and social programming is free of charge. Adults may choose from several 6-week long exercise classes, while youth programming includes day workshops, week-long swimming courses, multi-week dance courses, and summer camp options.

The City of Ceres Recreation Brochure lists the opportunity for "Recreation Scholarships" on the second page of the brochure, immediately following the table of contents. Despite this prominent location for the scholarship information, many respondents in the community outreach survey indicated that cost was a deterrent to participating in the City's programming.



3.5 OTHER PROVIDERS

Outside the City's Recreation Division and partner programs/facilities, local recreational facilities are limited. There are four indoor fitness facilities in Ceres. The largest of these is the 30,000 square foot InShape fitness center on Mitchell Road. This club includes an indoor pool, group classes, child care facilities, and amenities such as free wifi, steam rooms, and tanning beds. Club memberships at InShape average \$50 per month, making this a comparable option for residents who would otherwise pay usage fees and class fees at City of Ceres Recreation facilities.

Stanislaus County manages Parklawn neighborhood park in North West Ceres. This park is approximately four acres and includes barbecues, picnic tables, shelters, basketball courts, a playground, and restroom facilities.

The Tuolumne River Regional Park, currently under development, will become a valuable amenity to the Ceres community as progress continues. This natural area will provide user interface with the natural riparian system and opportunities for exercise opportunities such as biking and water sports. The Tuolumne River Trust currently offers educational outdoor programs focused on the river for youth and teens.

Local Sports Groups

- Ceres Youth Soccer
- Ceres Youth Baseball/Softball
- Ceres Dolphins Swim Team
- Ceres Cowboys Football
- Ceres Seahawks Football
- Ceres Seahawks Cheer
- Ceres Hawks Wrestling
- Ceres Junior Bulldogs
- Ceres Adult Softball League

Collaborative Partnerships

- Ceres Lions
- Ceres Rotary Club
- Ceres Street Faire Committee
- Ceres Community Foundation
- Ceres Community Collaborative
- Central Valley Organizing Committee
- Challenger Sports Camps
- Ceres Athletic Committee
- Ceres Unified School District
- Concerts in the Park Series
- National Night Out

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Neel Park

Chapter 4

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This document was heavily informed by primary research including site visits, public meetings, and a community survey. This chapter will explain the methodology and results of this primary research, as well as research into benchmark communities. These combined findings will be summarized in section 4.4, Current Needs and Deficiencies.

4.1 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Methodology

The community input portion of this study began with meetings in November of 2014. Discussion highlighted strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges experienced by the Recreation division. The following are some of the questions reviewed:

- What are the positive features of the City Parks and Recreation program?
- What areas of Parks and Recreation could use improvement?
- How are current programs funded?

Key Findings

- City staff agree that current facilities strengths include the new soccer complex at River Bluff and the Costa Ball Fields at Smyrna Park.
- Staff also feel that the lower bluff of River Bluff Regional Park will be a positive amenity for its educational and natural characteristics when fully developed.
- The joint use agreement with Ceres Unified School District was also named a strength. Specifically, the City's aquatics program is self-sustaining due to the benefits provided by the joint use agreement.
- There is a need for facilities and programs to target the troubling childhood obesity epidemic. Staff feel there is a lack of walking trails, multi-generational play opportunities, and an overall lack of connection to the outdoors as major challenges.
- There are acknowledged facility shortfalls for robust community sports programs including soccer, basketball, tennis and aquatics.
- An overall lack of programming and materials available in Spanish was named as a major challenge currently facing the Recreation Division.
- Staff noted a desire to see more diverse programming within park facilities. Suggestions included water play ("splash pad") elements, features highlighting culture and art, and a wider selection of exercise and play equipment for different user ages and abilities.
- Overall, there is consensus that City staffing was low. There is also a need for more focused marketing and community outreach campaigns.

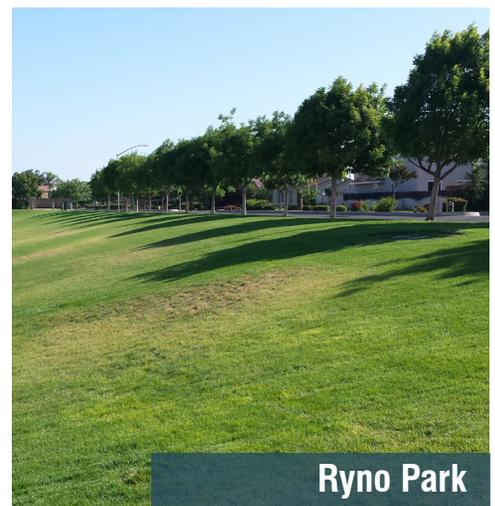
In all, City staff agree on a positive outlook for the future of City Parks and Recreation. Staff has identified major assets to the City, such as the current and future amenities offered by River Bluff Regional Park, as well as existing policies such as the joint use agreement with Ceres Unified School District.



Smyrna Park



River Bluff Regional Park



Ryno Park

Staff are well-informed and realistic about the need to address shortcomings within City facilities. City staff identified opportunities for improvement in community outreach and in providing more Spanish language resources. The City feels more diverse park and open space amenities and increased recreational opportunities for persons with disabilities are high priorities.

Staff suggested the consultant conduct a second interview with Patrick Koepele, Executive Director of the Tuolumne River Trust. This interview was completed via phone on May 6th, 2015. Mr. Koepele indicated support for the planned enhancements at River Bluff Regional Park's lower terrace and noted opportunities for increased educational opportunities this expansion will offer. Specifically, he indicated he would like to see the inclusion of an outdoor classroom in the final build-out of the lower terrace at River Bluff. Opportunities to interact with the river should be maximized to include access points for students to safely gather materials for study. He noted several opportunities for trails linking existing parks with one another and with the Tuolumne River. Altogether, Mr. Koepele indicated his support of a thoughtful project that would make the river an inviting, safe area and increase the local community's use of this resource.

4.2 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION: STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS AND ONLINE SURVEY

Methodology

A survey was developed consisting of 17 questions. This survey was designed to assess the following qualities of City park user experience:

- Identify current usage of parks and recreation facilities
- Survey participation in City recreation programs
- Assess importance of and user satisfaction in different qualities of park experience
- Understand barriers to user participation in City parks and recreation resources
- Evaluate successful elements of the existing parks and recreation system

The survey utilized a variety of evaluation measurements to assess community sentiment. Free response options were available, as well as questions requesting the respondent rank satisfaction in a particular element on a scale. These two questions work in tandem together to generate an opportunity score for several park resources. This example will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

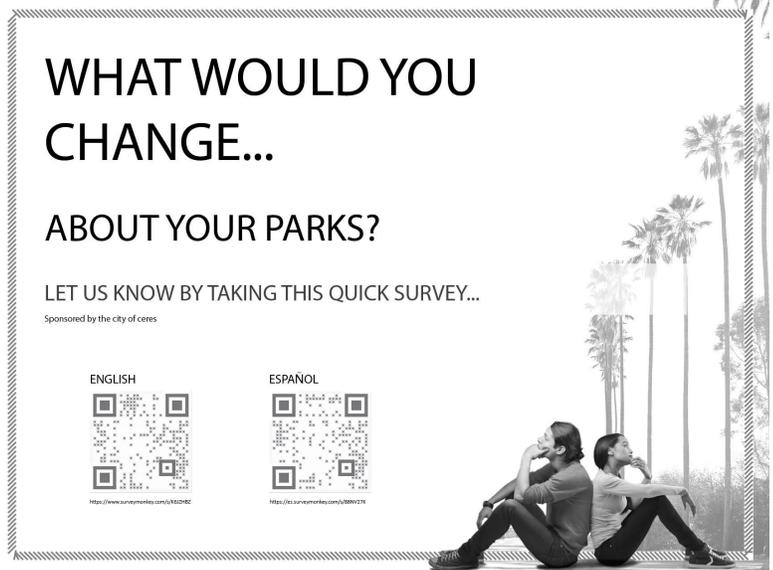
The community outreach survey was translated into Spanish in an effort to extend the planning process to the majority of the community. Both English and Spanish versions of the survey, along with detailed results, are included in Appendix A. The survey was also posted in both Spanish and English on the survey website Survey Monkey. Advertisements for the survey were printed onto 18" by 24" lawn signs, along with QR codes so participants could scan with a mobile device and be routed directly to the survey. Two lawn signs were placed at each City of Ceres Park.

The consultant team conducted a series of public meetings between December 15th, 2014 and April 22nd, 2015. Contacts for each of the local youth sports groups were called and personally invited to meetings in an attempt to increase feedback from current facility users. The meetings were advertised in the Ceres Courier on January 28th, 2015, and February 4th, 2015. Despite this concentrated effort on attracting sports leagues to participate in the public meetings, the attendance of sports league participants was lower than attendance for the general public at the public meetings listed below.

- December 15th, 2014: Senior Citizen Meeting, 9:00 am
- December 16th, 2014: Sports Group Meeting, 5:30 pm
- January 26th, 2015: Ceres Youth/Mothers Public Meeting, 4:15 pm
- February 5th, 2015: Public Forum, 6:00 pm
- April 22nd, 2015: Public Forum, 6:30 pm

Hard copies of both English and Spanish language versions of the survey were distributed at each public meeting. Completed hard copy surveys were entered into the Survey Monkey online option so all results could be tabulated together. The online survey remained active over the course of the meetings and afterward in order to allow adequate time for all interested respondents to participate following the advertising period. The final response added to the survey was dated June 25th, 2015.

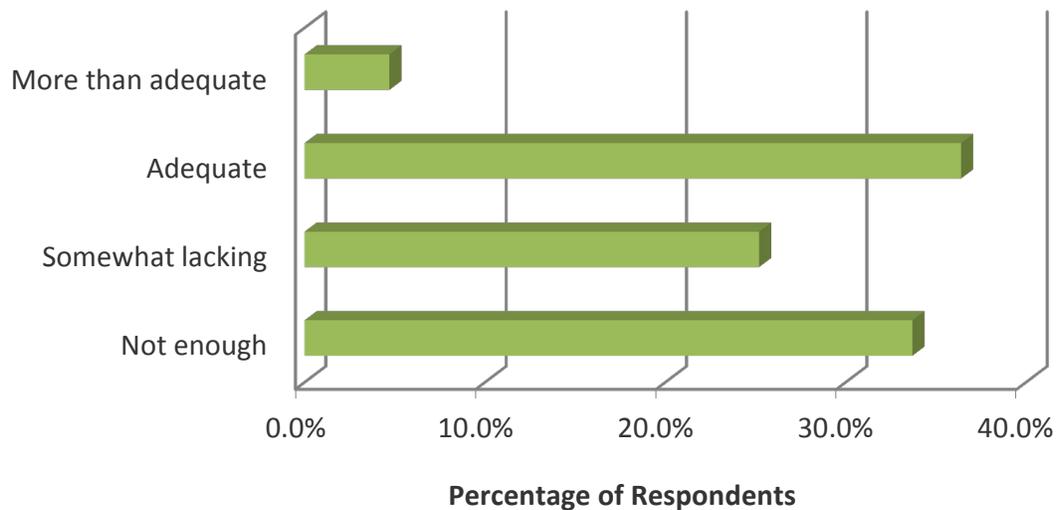
During these six months, 103 respondents (including public meeting attendees) completed the English version of the survey and ten respondents completed the Spanish version. This total of 113 responses to the survey represents .24% of the 46,989 population. These results thereby represent a very small segment of the population of the City of Ceres. This small sample size may indicate sentiment toward the current situation of the City's parks and recreation in and of itself. Namely, it is widely acknowledged that surveys tend to draw responses from persons with particularly strong feelings on a subject. The fact that the survey was not only distributed in-person at targeted public meetings but also advertised via lawn signs to park users and the community at large may indicate that there is simply a lack of strong sentiment toward parks issues. On the positive side, this could mean that the population is complacent with the parks facilities and programming they currently have. From another perspective, the low response rate could indicate an apathy or disengagement of the community from City processes.



Key Findings

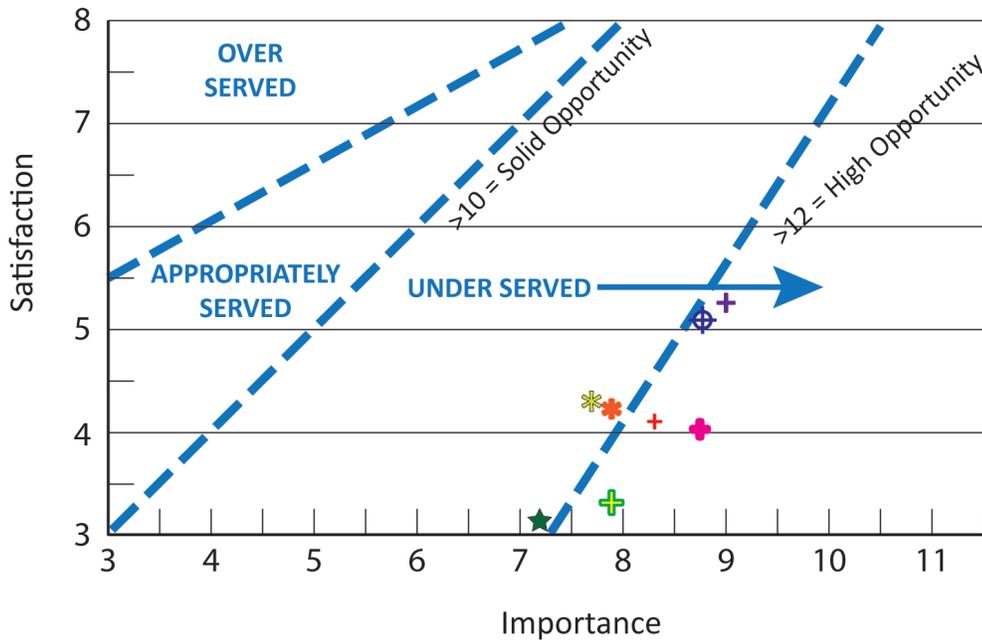
Complete results from the community outreach survey are included in Appendix A.

- Community input shows that residents are overall satisfied with the number of facilities available, with 66% of respondents ranking satisfaction as six or higher on a scale of one to ten.
- The majority of respondents indicated they had participated in at least one City of Ceres recreation program over the past year.
- 70% of respondents ranked their satisfaction with City recreational programs as six or higher on a scale of one to ten.
- Nearly 60% of survey respondents said the number of sports fields is either somewhat lacking or not enough for the needs of the community. Only 4.7% answered they found the number of fields more than adequate.



Are there enough sports fields to meet the needs of the community?

- 22% of respondents said they rarely or never visit their closest park facility.
- In line with the above statistic, 31% of respondents ranked their satisfaction with their closest park facility between one and five on a scale of one to ten.
- Respondents were asked to rank a list of benefits associated with parks according to personal importance, on a scale of one to ten. The survey then asked respondents to rank the same list of benefits according to satisfaction with how well the City has fulfilled those benefits. These two questions together show a clear window of opportunity for items ranked as high personal importance but low satisfaction. The City targeting improvement on these specific items will elicit the most satisfaction from residents and park users. The highest opportunity scores were for the following park benefits:
 - Strengthen families, neighborhoods and community
 - Provide opportunities to enjoy nature and the outdoors
 - Improve health, wellness and fitness
 - Protect our natural environment
- When asked what they disliked most about the City’s recreation facilities, respondents named crime concerns and facility condition/cleanliness issues as the two most common answers.
- 27% of respondents said they would be somewhat unlikely or very unlikely to recommend City recreational programs to a friend.
- Over 50% of survey respondents listed concerns about crime or personal reasons such as lack of leisure time as the main factors keeping them from visiting City parks more often.

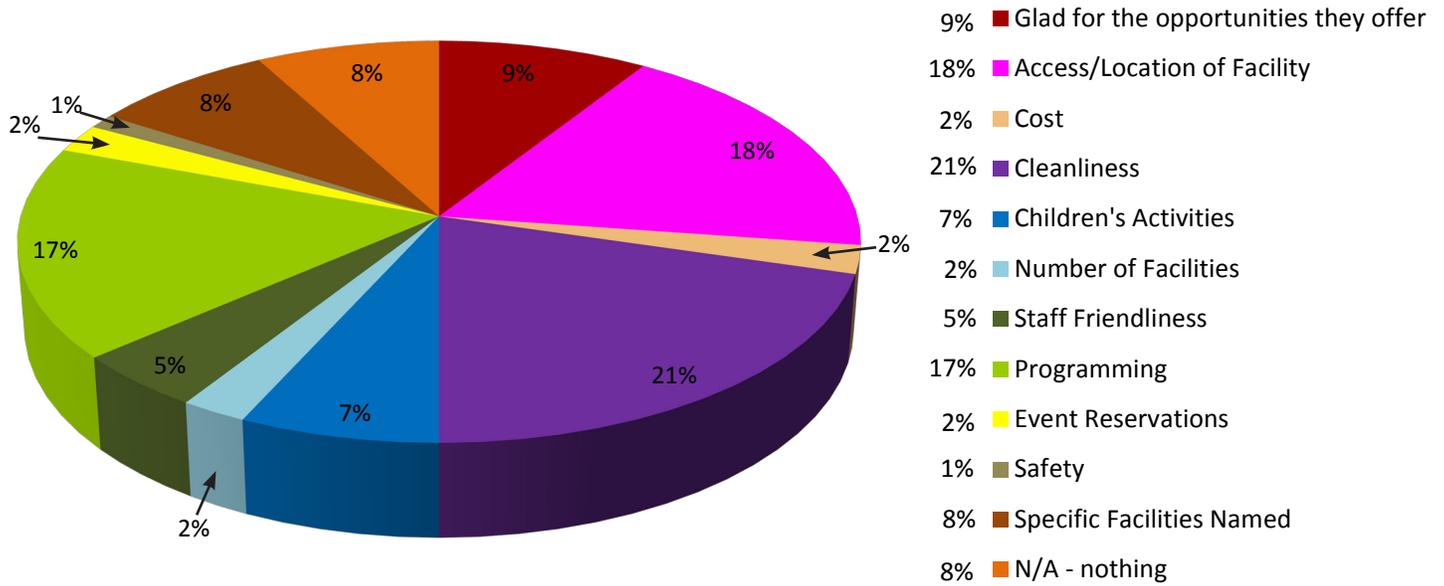


- + Provide opportunities to enjoy nature/outdoors
- + Improve health, wellness and fitness
- + Strengthen family, neighborhoods and community
- + Protect our natural environment
- + Support youth development
- + Provide special events and social opportunities
- + Provide opportunities to learn new things
- + Attract residents and businesses

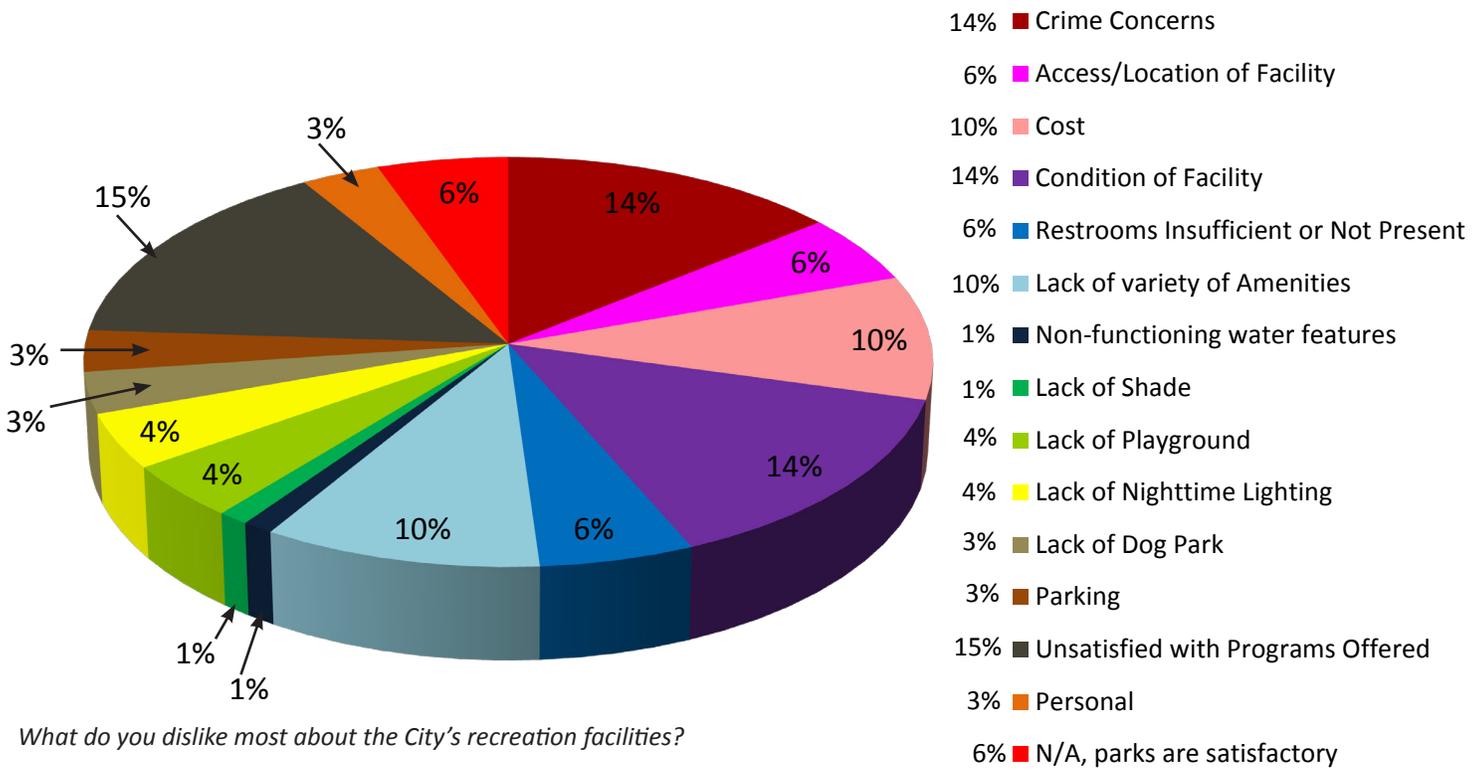
4.3 CURRENT NEEDS AND DEFICIENCIES

Community outreach sampling identified several opportunities for improvement. The needs and deficiencies outlined here include items that could be addressed in the near-term. Other points will be used to inform future design and programming decisions.

- Safety:
 - Respondents reported concerns about crime as a major deterrent from using City parks and recreation facilities. Several parents stated they would not let their children visit parks alone and that they personally felt unsafe in parks after dark.
- Lighting:
 - Directly related to safety concerns above, respondents also noted the lack of nighttime lighting at City park facilities as a deterrent from using the parks in the evenings.
- Facility Amenities:
 - The lack of amenities such as restrooms was a deterrent to families for visiting many of the City parks. Only five of the City’s parks currently have restrooms, and those are mainly regional and community parks.
 - Respondents also cited a lack of shade at City parks as a limiting factor to their use. Five City parks currently provide shade structures.
 - There are currently no dog parks in the City of Ceres. Survey responses showed a desire for a dog park within the City of Ceres as residents who want this amenity must leave the City to use other cities’ facilities.



What do you like most about the City's recreation facilities?



What do you dislike most about the City's recreation facilities?

-
- Program Needs
 - Community feedback shows a desire for increased adult programming options. The highest percentage of answers regarding what respondents disliked the most about the City’s recreation facilities were:
 - Dissatisfaction with programs offered
 - Concerns about crime and illegal activity at facilities
 - Overall condition of facilities
 - Lack of variety in programs and amenities
 - Cost of participating in programs
 - Respondents indicated they often find classes difficult to attend or to drive their children to and from, due to the scheduled hours conflicting with caregivers’ work schedules.
 - Respondents noted that lack of lighting at parks is a further deterrent to visiting parks during the cooler evening hours when they are off work. Lack of appropriate lighting may also contribute to an increase or perceived increase in illegal activity.
 - Play Equipment:
 - Community feedback indicated a desire to see more and varied opportunities for play, both for children and multi-generational opportunities. Ten City parks currently have play equipment, and three parks provide swings.
 - Sports Fields:
 - Respondents indicated a need for more full-size sports fields, particularly for baseball and football. There are currently conflicts between the full-size football field and soccer field at Central Valley High School. Moreover, baseball leagues cannot hold tournaments at the Costa ball fields at Smyrna Park due to the lack of a second full-sized baseball field in proximity to the existing fields.
 - The absence of lighting at sports fields exacerbates the limited space for community leagues, particularly in the winter months when the sun sets earlier. Respondents noted that soccer leagues often moved to the few lighted facilities, including tennis courts, during these months in order to continue their practices.
 - There is a strong sentiment that facilities need to be diversified away from solely expanding soccer facilities. Community members would prefer to see more tennis, volleyball and basketball courts.
 - Maintenance and Regulation:
 - Community feedback indicated dissatisfaction with the maintenance and overall condition of most of the City parks. Vandalism, graffiti and litter were noted as the most prevalent problems.
 - Respondents also felt that existing rules are not enforced. Residents reported drug and alcohol use, and dangerous activity.

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Persephone Park

Chapter 5

BEST PRACTICES

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BEST PRACTICES

The priority of the current Ceres City Council is the consideration of health and wellness opportunities that may be provided at each City park development. A variety of reference materials have been summarized in the following chapter to provide a review of current best practices in parks and recreation planning. The following sections review standards and trends in parks and recreation usage, design guidelines, and sustainable practices.

5.1 TRENDS IN PARKS AND RECREATION

Health Trends

In its “Healthy Parks Healthy People” guide, the National Park Service specifically mentions that connection to local parks will help children “lead healthier, happier, more fulfilled lives,” in addition to connecting them to natural resources. Efforts such as these by the National Park Service and others by State and local entities have made the dialogue surrounding health and parks mainstream. It is now widely acknowledged that increasing exposure to nature and exercise encourages physical and mental health for users of all ages.

As of 2013, the State of California’s adult obesity rate was 24%. The rate for two to four year old children was 16.8%, while 10-17 year olds were at 15.1%. These trends are troubling. While the adult obesity rate is the fifth-lowest in the country, the rate for two to four year old children was ranked first out of forty-one states surveyed.¹ Ceres lies in one of the state assembly districts with the highest childhood obesity rates, estimated in one 2005 report at 26%-30%.² The Centers for Disease Control reports that minorities and groups with low education are at the highest risk for obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.³ Indeed, when one looks at the breakdown for the 24% average of adults suffering from obesity, 22.4% are white, 34.8% are African American, and 30.7% are Hispanic or Latino.

Best practices for parks and recreation development should include maximizing opportunities to engage users in creative forms of exercise. The focus must be on engaging the entire community to participate more actively in parks and recreation opportunities. Parents and grandparents engaged in active pursuits will be likely to encourage the same values in children and youth. An increase in community activity levels is not only an immediate benefit to city parks by increasing users, but also a long-term benefit to the health of the community at large.

Current trends in municipal parks and open space planning also increasingly include opportunities for community gardens. The positive impact of gardening is far-reaching. Families struggling to make ends meet often grow their own vegetables in an attempt to save money for other important food items. This provides a source of fresh produce to adults and children who may otherwise go without. Community



River Bluff Regional Park



Independence Park



Roeding Heights Park

1 The State of Obesity: A project of the Trust for America’s Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. 2014.
 2 California State Parks. “The Health and Social Benefits of Recreation.” 2005.
 3 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). CDC Health Disparities and Inequalities Report - United States. 2013..

gardens also offer an opportunity for many immigrants and their families to build upon cultural connections to farming and agriculture. Finally, gardens may support a sense of community pride and build connections amongst neighbors.

An overall improvement in activity levels not only improves health, but has also been positively correlated with a number of factors including reduction in crime rates, reduction in juvenile delinquency, lower teen birth rates, increased rates of volunteerism and overall sense of community. Moreover, the presence of trails, recreation facilities, and attractive outdoor environments is linked to increased physical activity levels.⁴

Park Usage by Demographic

There are best practices associated with the demographic character of Ceres. As documented in Chapter 2: Context, Ceres is currently 57.9% Hispanic or Latino. This statistic must be acknowledged as a powerful driver for the future of the City’s parks and recreation planning and programming efforts. As with any other demographic group, the Hispanic/Latino population should not be considered a homogeneous group. There are, however, fundamental cultural considerations that should be taken into account for this new majority that will affect the use of recreation facilities.

The UCLA Anderson School of Management’s 2006 study titled, “The Hispanic Community and Outdoor Recreation” should be looked to as a resource for a general overview of cultural and consumer market trends. In this report, the authors emphasize the importance of understanding the Hispanic/Latino population as fundamentally family and community focused. The study quotes data that Hispanic/Latino parents spend significantly more of their total household budget on their children than do non-Hispanic white parents. Hispanic/Latino children are also more likely to grow up in multi-generational homes.⁵

Bearing these statistics in mind, the City of Ceres parks should be made welcoming and usable amenities for citizens of all ages. Exercise apparatuses may be installed adjacent to play equipment so that multiple family members may enjoy the park together. Playgrounds should be integrated into community facilities and social gathering places. Investments in amenities such as shade structures and restroom facilities should take precedent to support community presence at the City’s parks.

The provision of Spanish language materials is perhaps the greatest take-away for increasing presence specifically within the Hispanic/Latino community. 53% of the population of Ceres speaks a language other than English at home, with the majority of these households speaking Spanish. Provisions must be made in the form of bilingual signage, handouts, and other exhibits promoting Ceres Parks and Recreation. The tight-knit Hispanic/Latino community may be relying upon word of mouth recommendations and reports on City facilities in the absence of such print materials.



4 California State Parks. “The Health and Social Benefits of Recreation.” 2005.

5 UCLA Anderson School of Management. “The Hispanic Community and Outdoor Recreation.” 2006.

Benchmarks

The cities of Colton, Turlock, and Delano, California, each consist of similar population size and demographic as Ceres. These cities will provide benchmark data throughout this document.

Benchmark City	Colton, CA	Turlock, CA	Delano, CA	Ceres, CA
Total Population	53,057	70,365	52,403	46,989
Hispanic Population	73%	38%	75%	58%
Median Income	\$38,310	\$51,780	\$33,912	\$46,025

Table 5.1

Level of Service Standards

National Parks and Recreation organizations, including the National Recreation and Park Association, began to shy away from issuing national standards for facilities level of service per population about twenty years ago. Rather, it was deemed appropriate that these level of service standards should be determined by individual municipalities and tailored to the unique needs of each. The City of Ceres 1997 General Plan does not provide localized standards for level of service to be provided by City parks and recreation facilities. This will be an important update item in the General Plan update as it will assist the City in benchmarking and achieving goals for the parks and recreation division.

5.2 PARK DESIGN GUIDELINES

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are defined in the Ceres General Plan as facilities between five and ten acres in size. It should be noted that parks under five acres currently make up 12% of the total parks acreage in the City of Ceres. These “pocket parks,” though unaccounted for in the General Plan, play an important role in connecting City residents to outdoor recreation opportunities.

Neighborhood parks should provide active and passive recreational opportunities and accessible to neighborhood residents traveling on foot and by bicycle.

- The City of Ceres must continue to prioritize the function of park space over detention pond function in dual-use facilities, per the 1997 General Plan. The City will continue to evaluate existing detention basins for feasibility for future park expansion projects.
- City residents should be able to access a neighborhood park within 1/4 mile of their home.
- Neighborhood parks should provide opportunities for active play and exercise in the form of:
 - ADA accessible paths
 - Play equipment for both the 2-5 year old and 5-12 year old activity levels
 - Multi-purpose turf lawns for informal sports activities
- Neighborhood parks should also provide:
 - Shaded seating areas (proximate to play areas)
 - Exercise equipment for adult park users
 - Dog waste stations

Community Parks

Community Parks are larger community facilities. The Ceres 1997 General Plan states that Community parks are between 40 and 60 acres. The General Plan does not include terms or standards for parks between ten acres (maximum stated size for Neighborhood parks) and 40 acres (minimum stated size for Community Parks). This inconsistency is problematic in classifying the current inventory of City parks and differentiating between large community-serving parks and very large parks that serve a regional population, such as River Bluff Regional Park. The upcoming City of Ceres General Plan update will play an important role in clarifying City-approved park terminology to include all City amenities in the current inventory.

Amenities at large parks should be more intensive and may include formal programmatic structure.

- Community Parks should provide facilities and programming such as:
 - ADA accessible paths
 - Barbeques and picnic tables
 - Concessions/vending (case by case)
 - Bike racks
 - Parking lot
 - ADA accessible trails through natural areas
 - Natural area educational signage
 - Fully accessible play equipment for both 2-5 year old and 5-12 year old activity levels
 - Opportunities for alternative creative play, physical challenges, and nature play
 - Shaded seating areas (proximate to play areas)
 - Exercise equipment and/or circuit training with signage for adult exercise
 - Lighted sports fields and courts with a minimum of (2) of each type to support tournament programming
 - Restrooms
 - Dog waste stations
 - Information kiosk
 - Barbeques and picnic tables
 - Concessions/vending

Benchmarks by Park Size

Facilities Count	Colton, CA	Turlock, CA	Delano, CA	Ceres, CA
Pocket Parks (<5 acres)	6	22	3	6
Neighborhood Parks (5-10 acres)	1	2	4	5
Community Parks (10-40 acres)	2	3	0	1
Regional Parks (>40 acres)	0	1	1	1
Total Acreage	43	155	70	151

Table 5.2

5.3 SUSTAINABILITY

Municipal Parks and Recreation divisions are uniquely situated to create fundamental changes in the public’s perception of environment and resource consumption. Cutting edge use of both new technology and tried and true low-impact development methods can be integrated seamlessly into existing facility retrofits and new facility development. The public in turn will experience these technologies close-up. Many low-impact stormwater management techniques can also be integrated into the park user experience to become educational experiences.

There is a misconception that sustainable building alternatives are inherently more expensive than traditional planning and building practices. A 2009 survey by the National Recreation and Park Association, Parks and Recreation leaders noted concerns about keeping up with funding environmental improvements while struggling with budgets cuts and reductions in water supply.⁶ State mandated water usage restrictions should be incorporated into future designs to ensure sustainable long-range water use for park features.

6 Recreation Management. “A Look at Trends in Parks and Recreation.” 2009.

Moving forward, environmental sustainability practices should be incorporated into all retrofits and new developments by the City of Ceres. Best practice guidelines outlining the potential strategies that could be included are listed below.

- Implement Low Impact Development (LID) stormwater management technology into retrofits and new design. Options include permeable pavement, bioswales, and the use of level spreaders to manage water on-site, close to the source, rather than relying upon one large drain and potentially overloading the stormwater system.
- Install hardy, native and adapted plant varieties with retrofits and new developments. Avoid invasive or water-intensive plant varieties.
- Design greywater irrigation systems into new park facilities.
- Existing irrigation system controllers should be retrofitted with weather-based sensors to avoid over-watering.
- Consider partnering with community organizations to test a pilot project community garden. Many cities are moving to incorporate community gardens to foster community ownership of park space and educate the public about food security.

Benchmarks

Sustainable Technology	Colton, CA	Turlock, CA	Delano, CA	Ceres, CA
LID Guidelines	Y	Y	N	N
Greywater Irrigation Recommendations	Y	Y	Y	N
Native Plant Guidelines	Y	Y	Y	Y
Community Garden Recommendations	N	N	Y	N

Table 5.3

5.4 SHADE OPTIONS

The general public has become more educated in recent years about the dangers of sun exposure, particularly the exposure of young children to the sun. In an environment such as Ceres, which can get very hot in the summer months, shade is even more valuable. There are a number of solutions that may be implemented to provide this health and comfort amenity to the users of City parks and recreation facilities:

- To encourage families to visit parks with children during the day, provide shade proximate to play equipment.
- Where possible, shade play equipment or locate out of direct sun.
- Install play equipment that provides shaded play areas underneath raised platforms or other structural elements.
- Provide signs educating the public about safe sun exposure practices.
- Plant more shade trees and design them into areas where people congregate.
- Install temporary shade structure elements until trees grow into maturity.

Benchmarks

Shade Regulations	Colton, CA	Turlock, CA	Delano, CA	Ceres, CA
Shade Required at Park Facilities	Unknown	Y	Unknown	N
Shade Required in Parking Lot Facilities	Y	Y	Y	N

Table 5.4

5.5 SAFETY AND SECURITY

A dominant trend in the feedback from community outreach efforts was city residents’ concerns about safety in City parks. Given the fact that Ceres parks generally do not have any higher incidence of reported crimes than elsewhere in the city, as indicated by both tracking online crime maps and feedback from the Ceres Police Department, this concern is a perception rather than reality. Nonetheless, it is important that the City of Ceres dedicates resources toward mitigation of this perception and to demonstrate the City’s investment in citizen safety. There are a number of best practices that may be incorporated to address this issue. The most widely recognized set of standards are the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.⁷ These include:

Natural Surveillance

The overall goal of CPTED is the idea that a person will be less likely to commit a crime if there is risk of being seen. This principle encourages the “see and be seen” quality in public spaces.

- New parks should be designed such that there are buildings or roads fronting all sides of the park for maximum surveillance. Homes and businesses should face toward the park.
- Design and maintain safe pedestrian routes to the park and clear lines of sight from these routes into major activity zones within the park.
- Follow lighting recommendations and enforce hours of park usage to avoid nuisances that could cause neighbors to close doors and windows facing the park, thereby reducing surveillance. Consider use of motion sensor lighting where feasible.



Exhibit 5.1: Sanders Park in Modesto exemplifies characteristics of CPTED principles. Use of pedestrian-scale lighting, surrounding residential frontages, visual cues announcing territorial reinforcement, and maintenance of clear sight lines into the park activity areas contribute to an increased perception of safety. In this case, the park and adjacent school as an aggregate are surrounded on all sides by residential frontage.

- Residential Frontage
- Lighted Pathways
- ➔ Sight Lines Into Park

7 CPTED Guidelines: www.cptedsecurity.com

Natural Access Control

This principle encourages use of creative access control using pathway alignment, landscape/topographic features, signage or other features to direct the flow of user traffic, rather than traditional but intimidating mechanisms such as fences and wire.

- Avoid using control mechanisms such as barbed wire fences. This aesthetic supports the perception that the facility is dangerous. A combination of eyes-on-the-park, sufficient lighting and patrolling, and other measures should be used where at all possible. Transformer and utility security fencing is excepted from this recommendation.
- Incorporate clear, bilingual signage at the major pedestrian entrance(s) to the park. This signage should include at a minimum information about park hours, maintenance/littering, and emergency contact information.
- Avoid landscape features that create blind spots and prevent adequate surveillance.
- Maintain plant materials to ground cover height (less than 2') and maintain tree canopies to a minimum of 6' above ground level. Keeping the 2' - 6' visual range open will increase surveillance capabilities and reduce perceptions of possible criminal activity areas.

Territorial Reinforcement

Use of visual cues, such as consistent types of pavement, plant materials, or signage to encourage specific usage of park space and to delineate public/private divisions. In the case of public parks, this territorial reinforcement will:

- Encourage community ownership of and presence at parks. Involve community projects such as volunteer days or art installations to support this goal.
- Include community participation in the design of new parks.
- Regularly poll the community regarding satisfaction with park facilities to reinforce community ownership of these public spaces and to assess any new programmatic needs as they develop.
- Consider supporting/encouraging the formation of Neighborhood Watch groups.
- Use varied plant materials to encourage activity in some areas and to discourage unwanted activities. A number of community survey respondents mentioned enjoying the flowers and rose gardens planted at Whitmore and Smyrna parks.
- Support the formation of community service group adoption and maintenance programs.

Maintenance

Maintenance is important to safety in the sense of the “broken window” theory, which is the theory that poorly maintained properties will breed criminal activity.

- Dedicate maintenance staff to low-hanging maintenance needs, including regular clean-up of litter and graffiti.
- Schedule periodic repairs of site amenities such as benches, tables, playground equipment, barbeques and garbage receptacles.
- Post signage requiring dog owners to clean up after their animals.
- Add dog waste bag dispensers at prominent entrances and at intervals along pedestrian pathways at park facilities.
- Ensure all playgrounds receive regular safety inspections by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI).
- Schedule regular maintenance of ball field surfaces where the field is “closed” to repair and replace turf as needed. This may include rotation of fields so that turf can “rest” to recover from year-round use.
- Meet with user groups on a regular basis for ball field use to create buy-in for regular maintenance needs.
- Create outcome-based maintenance standards for landscape and facility maintenance that are developed with community and user group input. Outcome-based standards emphasize “expected and result” maintenance standards.

5.6: SITE FIXTURES

The community survey results underscore the importance of lighting and overall park maintenance as contributors to perceptions of safety at City parks. CPTED principles reinforce this importance and show how investment in basic maintenance and community ownership can change usage patterns for the better. The following guidelines provide best practices for provision of site fixtures to support community goals for safe, usable parks.

Lighting

- Lighting of public spaces should conform to the Illuminating Engineering Society’s guidelines. These include provision of sufficient lighting for users to discern changes in topography and surface type and discern physical details of approaching figures.
- Motion sensor activated security lighting may be considered for all new park construction and existing park renovation as a method of security lighting. Parks may be evaluated for feasibility of dimming or motion sensor activated lighting compliant with California Energy Commission Title 24 on a case-by-case basis.
- The Project for Public Spaces emphasizes the importance of not “over-lighting” an area.⁸ This creates a harsh adjustment for the eyes and deeper shadows just outside the lighting candle for park users.
- Light fixtures should be installed to appropriate heights for usage. For example, neighborhood parks may benefit from lighting focused around the playground and pedestrian paths only, whereas lighting in larger parks may be required to light sports fields and large expanses. The neighborhood parks may therefore require lights installed to an appropriate pedestrian height, 9’-12’, whereas sports field lighting will require greater height. Shields should be installed to direct light.
- Metal halide light is more complementary to the human visual system than other types of lighting and also uses less energy.
- LED and solar lights offer benefits of lower energy consumption with a minimum of construction disruption to the surrounding area. Solar lighting is appropriate for providing light for pedestrian areas and pathways, not large-scale night lighting of parks.
- Refer to local dark sky ordinances for restrictions on up-lighting or other light pollution mitigation requirements.

Benchmarks

Lighting Regulation	Colton, CA	Turlock, CA	Delano, CA	Ceres, CA
Safety Standards	Y	Y	Y	Y
Technology Standards	Y	Y	N	N
Dark Sky Standards	N	Y	Y	N

Table 5.5

Site Furniture

- Site furniture should be attractive and inviting, yet durable enough to withstand heavy use.
- Site furniture may be manufactured to include the city or department logo in order to reinforce the City’s commitment to maintaining its amenities.
- Fixtures should be selected that will discourage lying down. Handrail-divided or curvilinear benches are options.
- Select fixtures that will not create visual obstructions or potential blind spots which could impair surveillance.
- Provide trash receptacles at locations that may be easily monitored and emptied by City maintenance staff.

5.7: ACCESS AND INCLUSION

In addition to complying with ADA standards for playground access, playground areas should include elements appropriate for supporting childhood development. The National Program for Playground Safety recommends standards by age that support physical, emotional, social and intellectual development. Play areas should engage children’s motor skills as well as support social interactions and cooperative play. Cutting-edge studies of children and nature suggest myriad benefits of integrating natural systems and opportunities for spontaneous learning about the natural world into playgrounds. Examples may include unprogrammed areas consisting of varied topography and surface materials, planting of trees within the playground space, and flexible play space edges to encourage play to extend to other natural areas of the park.

8 Project for Public Spaces. “Lighting Use and Design.” 2015. www.pps.org/reference/streetlights



Neel Park

Chapter 6

RECOMMENDATIONS

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Community outreach efforts, primary research, and best practices outlined in the preceding chapters of this document serve as base information for a set of recommendations to guide the development and management of City of Ceres Parks and Recreation. This chapter will provide a snapshot of City Parks and Recreation facilities and opportunities for maximizing existing parks.

6.1 PARK ACREAGE & SERVICE AREA STANDARDS

The City of Ceres 1997 General Plan set the goal for the City to provide a standard of 4 acres per 1,000 residents. That document set the goal as 1.4 acres per 1,000 population to be provided by Neighborhood Parks, and 2.6 acres per 1,000 to be provided by Community Parks. The General Plan also established the standard that there would no longer be deductions allowed for park acreage shared with Ceres Unified School District through the joint-use agreement. Using these guideline standards from the General Plan and including undeveloped city park and private parks within the City, we can calculate a total of 197.75 acres total park space. This number of 197.75 acres of park space for 46,989 residents results in a ratio of 4.2 acres per 1,000 residents.

Ceres Current Level of Service by 1997 General Plan Typology*

Park Size	Current Level of Service	Current Acres
Neighborhood Parks	1.4 acres / 1,000	68.85
Community Parks	2.2 acres / 1,000	103.9
Private Parks	.5/1,000	25
TOTAL	4.2 acres / 1,000	197.75**

Table 6.1

This table shows that, if counting gated private parks and City-owned as-yet undeveloped parkland in the community, the current level of service achieves the General Plan goal of providing 4 acres per 1,000 population.

The Quimby Act was amended in 1982 to allow for park-in-lieu fees to be charged to a new standard of 5 acres per 1,000 residents. Many California municipalities have approved this as the new standard and have found economic benefit in the ability to adjust park in lieu fees to reflect the increased acreage requirement. Below is a chart showing the acres per population parks level of service standards for benchmark communities.

Benchmarks

	Colton, CA	Turlock, CA	Delano, CA	Ceres, CA
Total Population	53,057	70,365	52,403	46,989
Total Parks Acres per Population	5 acres/1,000 goal (public parks only)	4 acres/1,000 goal 2.2 w/o schools / 1,000 current (public parks only)	5 acres/1,000, goal (public parks only)	4 acres/1,000 goal 4.2 acres/1,000 current (public and private parks, total)

Table 6.2

** As the City of Ceres 1997 General Plan defines two options for parks sizes (Neighborhood Park, 5-10 acres, and Community Park, 40-60 acres), the current inventory of parks has been approximated into the categories with which they most closely align.*

*** City-owned, undeveloped, dedicated park land at Ceres Lions Park, Eastgate Park, and Whitmore Mansion has been included in these acreage totals. Private park land owned by private organizations and HOAs is included under Private Parks.*

6.2 RECOMMENDED PARK TYPOLOGY FOR CONSIDERATION IN GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

The following paragraphs explain park-specific recommendations regarding verbiage that may be considered in the upcoming 20-year update to the City of Ceres General Plan. The following park typologies and suggested programming are typical of comparable municipalities and incorporate specific goals of the City of Ceres.

Pocket Parks

Pocket parks are designated as parks under five acres in size. These parks function as a “common backyard” for the community and serve immediately surrounding neighborhoods. They may contain elements of neighborhood parks and will typically not incur infrastructure improvements such as provision for restrooms or lighting. The focus of these spaces is providing social areas such as barbeques and seating, play options for children, and opportunities for relaxation. Additionally, small public open space areas that do not allow sufficient space for active recreation programming may be appropriate for community garden placement. Community gardens may vary in size and with the needs of the surrounding neighborhoods, and are therefore appropriate for inclusion at parks ranging in size from pocket parks through regional parks.

Neighborhood parks

Neighborhood parks may fall between five and ten acres in size and should include both active and passive activities, opportunities for socializing and family recreation. These parks should be accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists without requiring crossing an arterial road or other barrier. The target users are residents of the immediately surrounding neighborhoods, within a 1/4 to 1/2 mile radius. Programmed activities at neighborhood parks should include multi-use turf areas for flexible activity use, play equipment for children, exercise equipment for adults, and walking paths with mile markers. Shaded seating areas should be provided proximate to active play elements for the well-being of supervising adults and to promote social use of the park. Elements such as tennis or basketball courts, horseshoe or bocce pitches, and dog parks may be programmed into different parks to provide individual character. Perimeter lighting should be provided for the evening hours to promote community use and safety.

Community Parks

Community parks range from 10 to 40 acres and include a more robust programmatic schedule than neighborhood parks. These parks are destinations within the community and as such should contain facilities not found at neighborhood parks. Community Parks may include natural areas, dog parks, competition sports fields, spray-grounds, or extreme sports such as BMX or skate parks. Community parks should include adequate lighting for evening use, restroom facilities, play equipment for children, exercise equipment or other options for adult exercise, multi-use and social areas, and adequate parking for daily use. Community parks are ideal locations for expanding the City’s recreational facilities to include options such as bocce, horseshoes, or handball.

Regional Parks

Regional parks function as regional destinations for the programming offered at the location. Opportunities for expansion of existing regional parks in the City of Ceres include development of and linkages to both River Bluff Regional Park and the Tuolumne River Regional Park. These opportunities should be developed to include natural areas for passive activity such as bird watching and outdoor classrooms. There should also be opportunities for outdoor sports such as biking, trail running, and river access. There are opportunities at regional parks for collaborative services and programs such as sports groups, nature clubs, etc.

Greenbelts, Pedestrian and Bicycle Linkages

The development of greenbelts and pedestrian linkages throughout the City’s park system will not only promote the connectivity of the parks system, but will also connect resources and programming. A prominent feature in the City’s 1997 General Plan, the status of this system is addressed in more detail in Section 6.5: Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections.

6.3 DISTRIBUTION OF INVENTORY AT EXISTING PARKS

The inventory of current Ceres park facilities reviewed in Chapter 3 and summarized in Appendix B provides valuable insight into the opportunities for improvement and expansion of the existing parks within the City of Ceres system. In addition to the inventory analysis, GIS maps showing distribution of park amenities were studied to review the geographic spread of the City’s park and recreation assets. The parks system as a whole was therefore analyzed in order to determine which existing parks may be appropriate for future improvements and additional programming.

Maps were created of the Ceres parks system highlighting parks showing the following existing programming assets:

- Baseball/Softball fields
- Basketball courts
- Tennis courts
- Miscellaneous courts (volleyball, horseshoes)
- Multi-use turf fields
- Playgrounds
- Shade structures
- Barbeque amenities

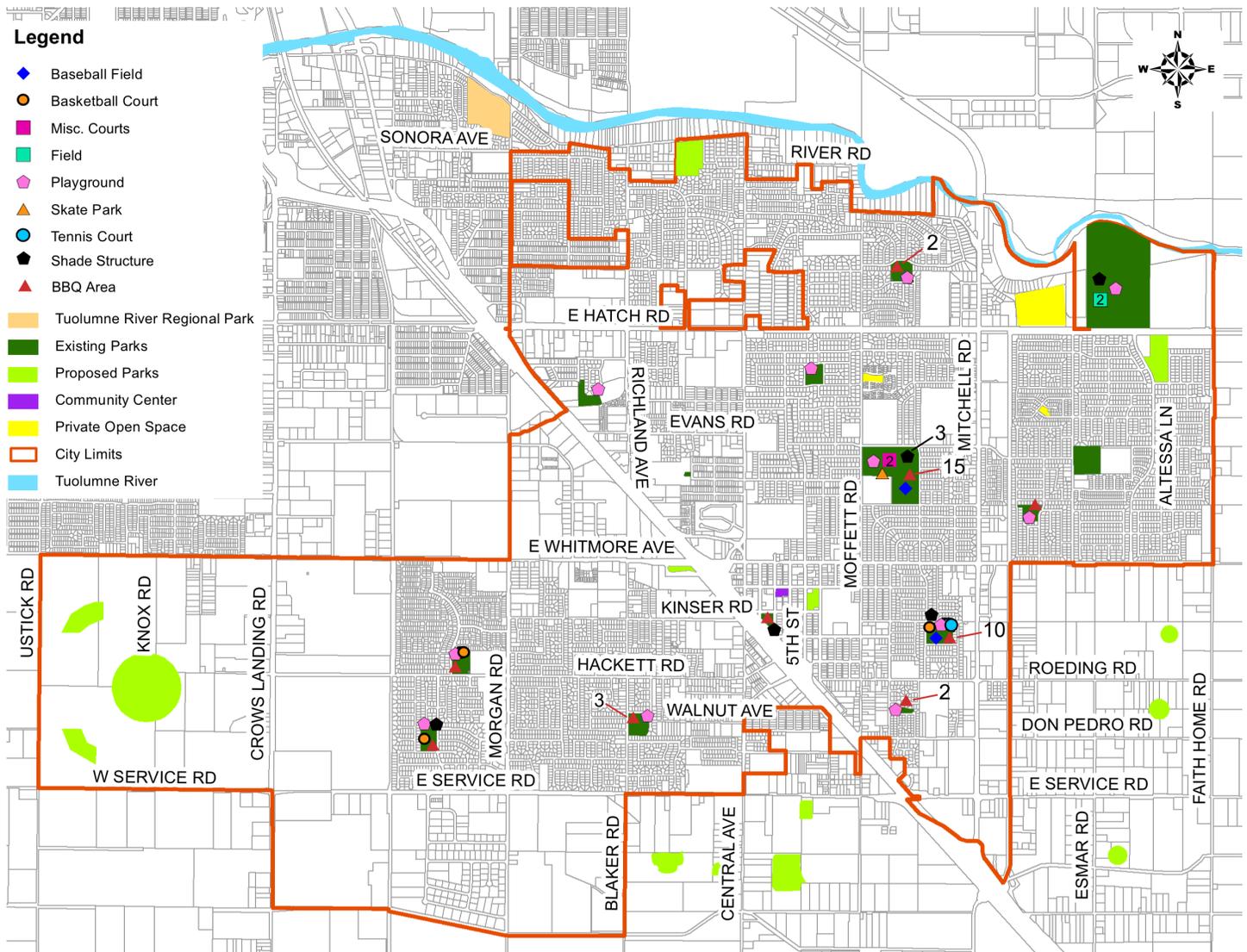


Exhibit 6.1: City Parks Distribution Map: Inventoried Existing Park Amenities

Playgrounds Distribution

Playgrounds are an ever-popular feature in continued high-demand at City parks. In addition to play equipment for children, the installation of exercise equipment for adults may be considered as a future potential asset for active programming. Adult exercise equipment also provides an opportunity for adult socialization and physical activity while supervising children if the equipment is installed proximate to the playground, and therefore may be considered a valuable investment in community health if installed at parks with existing playgrounds. The distribution map indicates playgrounds at most City parks, with the exception of Neel Park and Whitmore Park. Neel Park does have plans for future amenity build-out, which would include a playground and proposed adult exercise equipment. Whitmore Park is likely too small a site to include a formal playground, but provision of a playground and adult exercise equipment at the future planned park at Whitmore Mansion may be appropriate to serve the downtown community.

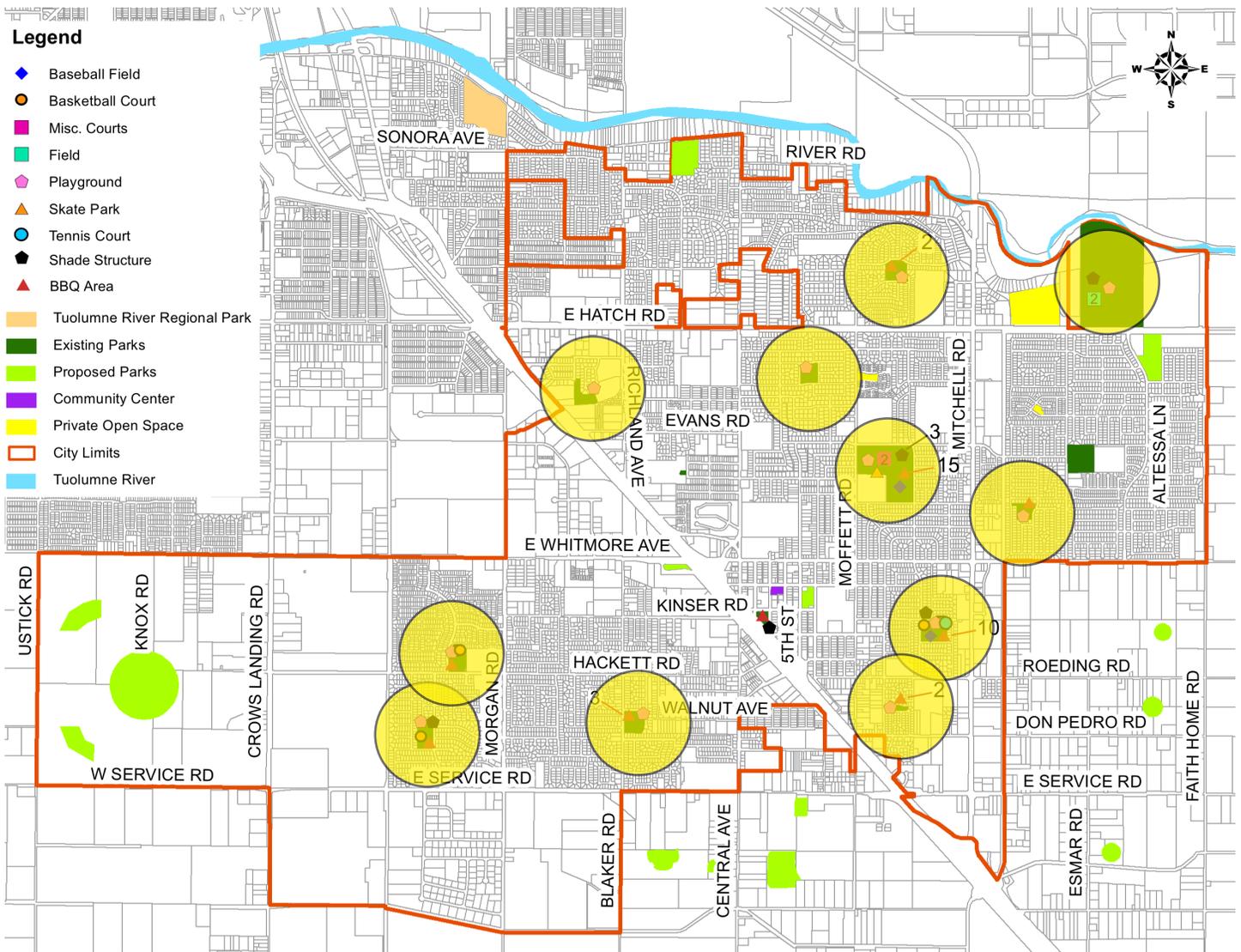


Exhibit 6.2: Playgrounds Distribution Map

Turf Sports Fields

Sports fields are a resource that should be spread throughout the Ceres park system in order to provide recreational opportunities for the City's population. These may be single-use fields, such as soccer, or multi-use fields appropriate for a variety of recreational sports activities. The amenity distribution maps shows only River Bluff Regional Park currently offers formal sports fields. The majority of the City's parks do feature multi-use turf areas that may be used for a variety of field sports. Some of these fields currently include backstops to provide additional options for activity. Parks with multi-use turf fields but not backstops which are suitable for inclusion of a backstop are listed in Table 6.3.

The southwestern portion of the City is currently underserved by formal sports fields. Developer-proposed fields scheduled for annexation into the City parks system in this area might be targeted for programming with sports fields in order to meet this need.

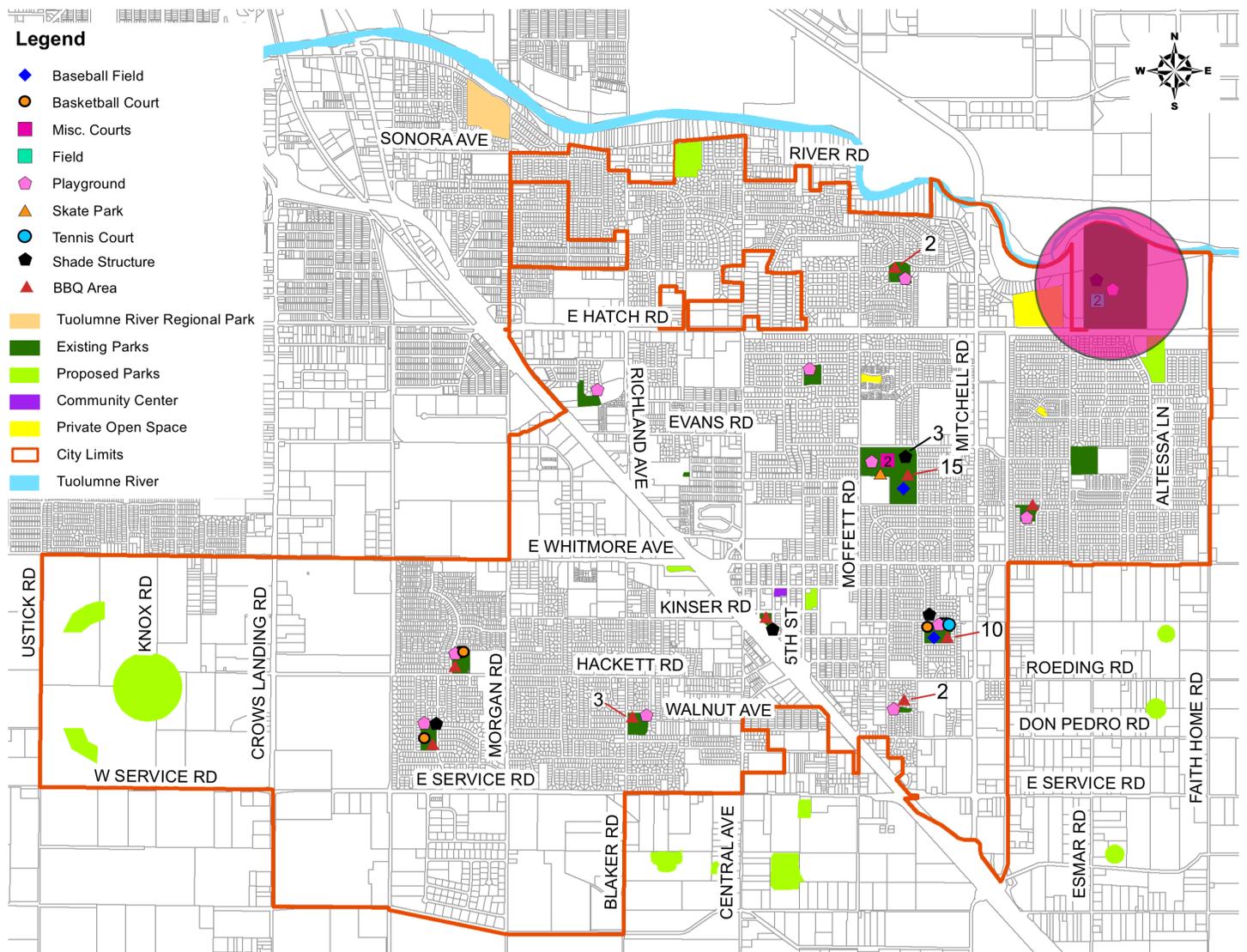


Exhibit 6.3: Turf Sports Fields Distribution Map

Baseball/Softball Diamonds

Baseball and softball diamond fields offer opportunities for a variety of sports leagues including members of all age groups. The current facilities at Costa Fields are the only City-owned formal diamond fields and are heavily used. Formal baseball and softball diamond fields are currently lacking in the southwestern portion of the City. Developer-proposed parks in the southwestern portion would be appropriate locations for formal diamond fields. Furthermore, the addition of two or more full-size baseball fields, open to the public and in the vicinity of Costa Fields, would provide the ability for local leagues to host baseball tournaments.

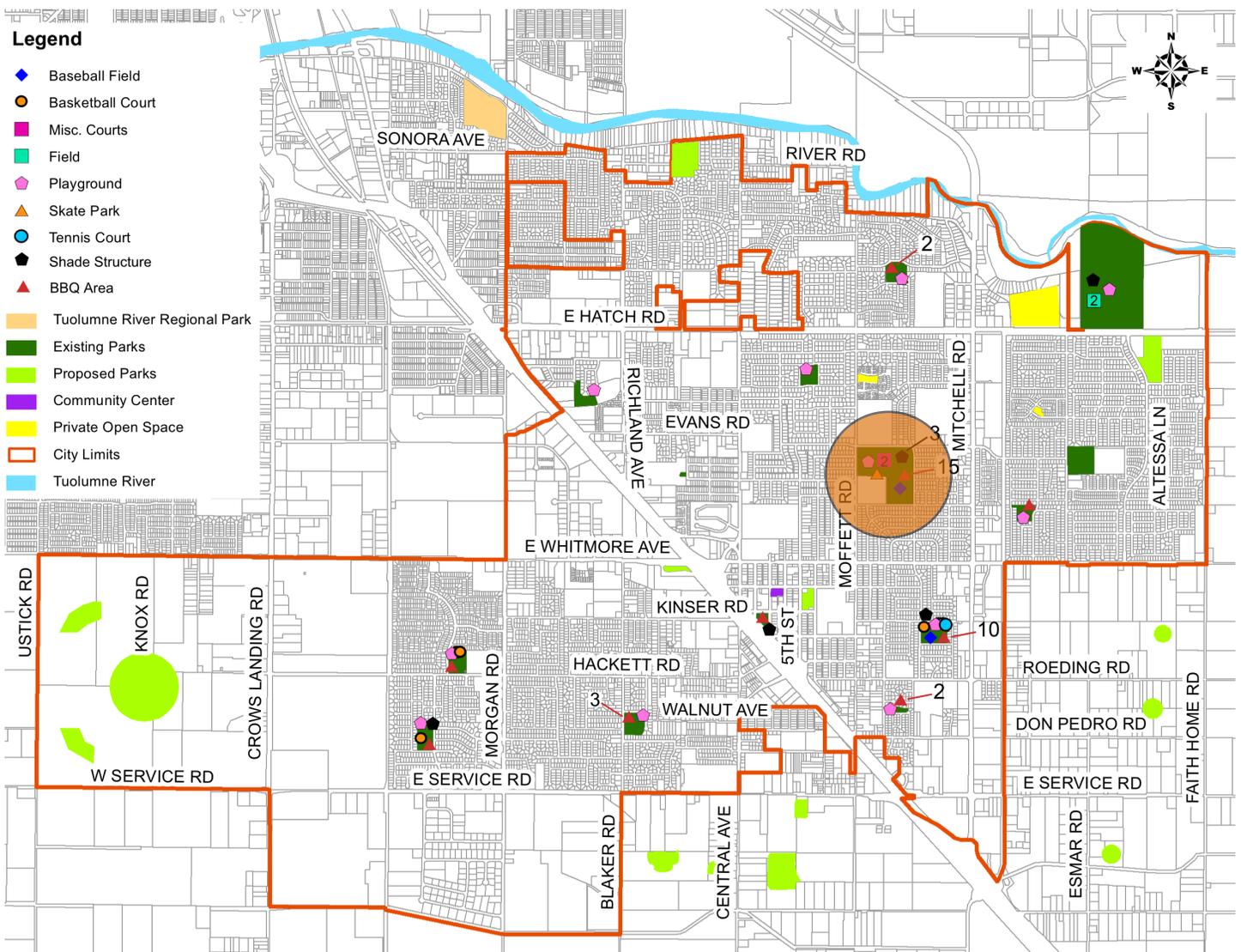


Exhibit 6.4: Diamond Fields Distribution Map

Passive Recreation: Barbeque Facilities, Shade Structures

Passive recreation facilities offer valuable benefits to the population surrounding each park. These amenities entail varied cost, construction timelines, and maintenance requirements.

Shade structures are a valuable amenity that provides protection from the Central Valley weather. Shade structures are of particular importance at newer parks that do not have sufficient shade cover yet due to immature trees. Neel Park is a prime example of this scenario. This new City park is very well-used for children’s soccer practices in the evenings, but parents and caregivers must sit in full sun while waiting for their children and often bring their own portable shade umbrellas. The next phase of improvements at Neel Park would benefit greatly from one or more shade structures to support this constituent group.

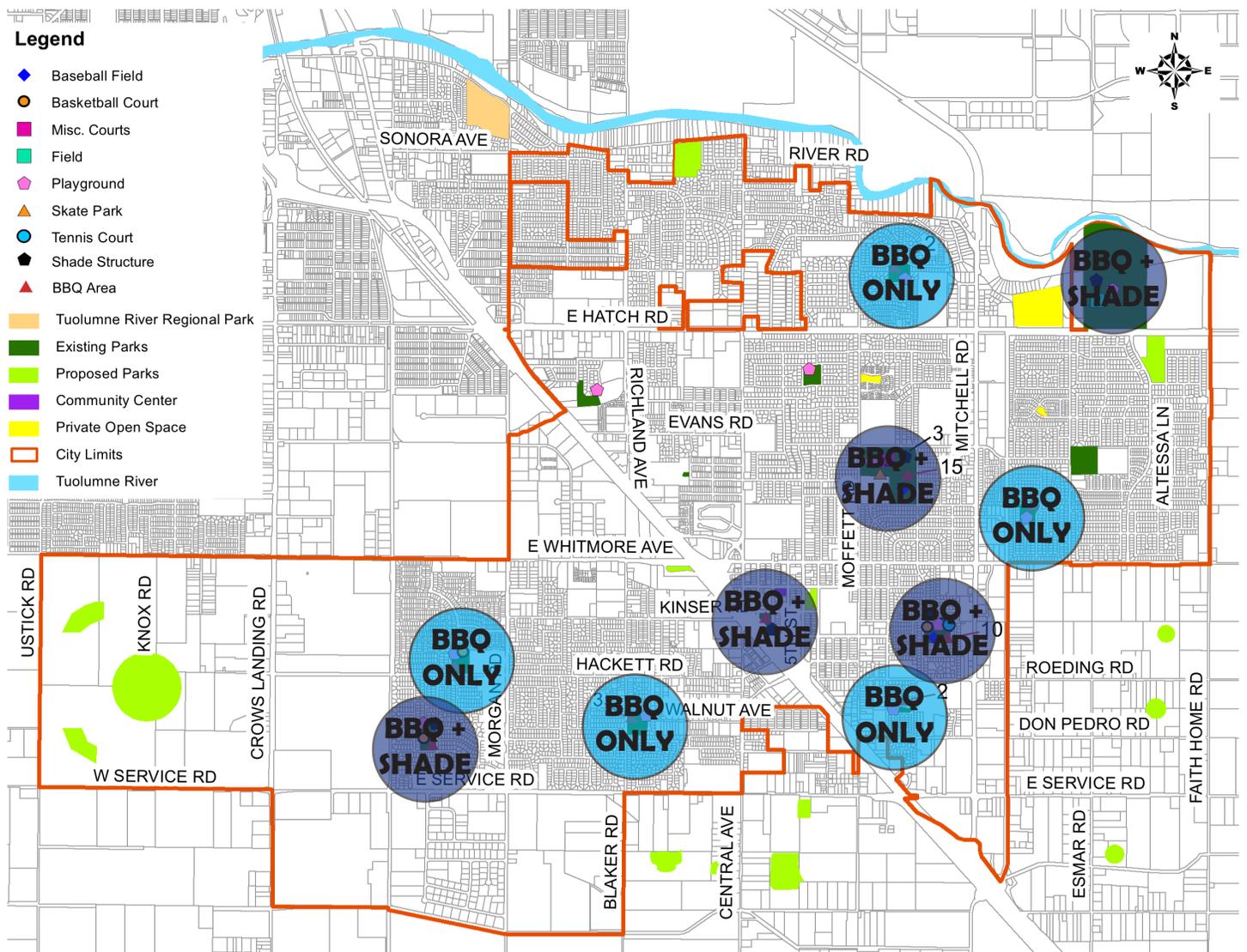


Exhibit 6.5: Passive Recreation Distribution Map

6.4 SUGGESTED DISTRIBUTION OF FUTURE PARKS

The concept for Ceres city parks is to create a mix of park types of complementary program and size that meet the needs of the community. Parks should be easily accessible and evenly distributed throughout the community to encourage walking, biking, and active lifestyles. Current maps of City parks were studied based upon established measurements of user walkability and recommended park programming. Exhibit 6.4 shows the current distribution of City parks and the associated walkability radius of each. Parks are shown with a radius of 1/4 mile, approximately a five minute walk, as the target users of these parks are the residents of the immediately surrounding neighborhoods.

Priority for new park construction lies in completion of scheduled parks, including Eastgate and Lions. These are both appropriately sized for large neighborhood park programming and the purchase of the land is complete, funded by development impact fees already collected. Other priorities for new construction include full build-out of River Bluff Regional Park and the addition of one or more dog parks to the City’s parks system. The following pages include specific information regarding recommendations for new park construction at these sites.

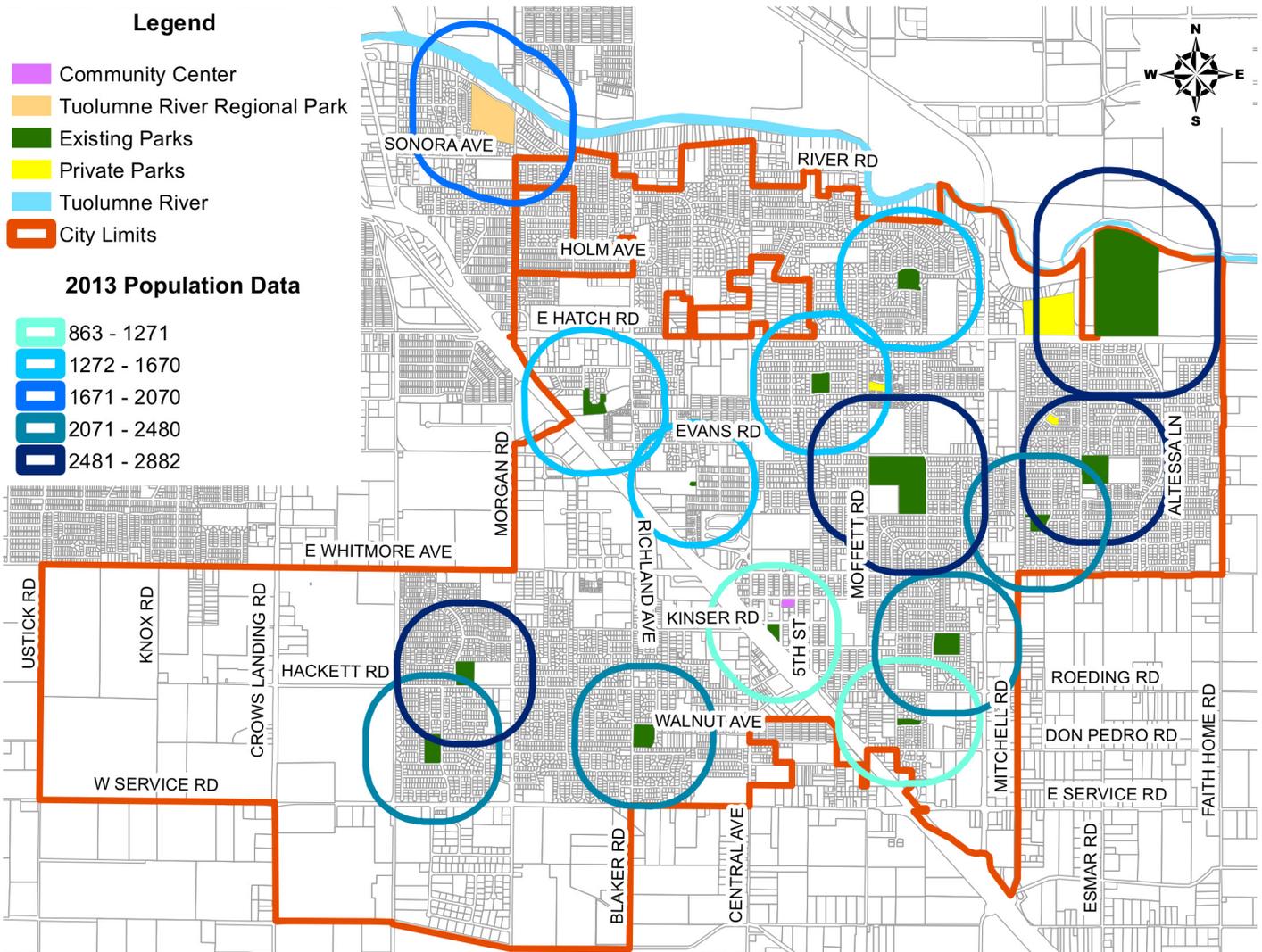


Exhibit 6.6: Population Density within 1/4 mile of City Parks

Ceres Eastgate Park (10 Acres)

The site for Ceres Eastgate Park is located on Eastgate Boulevard immediately south of East Hatch Road. The site is approximately ten acres in size and level. The City currently owns 8 of the 10 planned acres. This site benefits from the proximity of the new and ongoing developments at River Bluff Regional Park but has been listed as a recommended park site since the 1997 General Plan. The surrounding neighborhood is currently underserved by neighborhood park amenities. The only proximate park is Neel Park, currently an un-programmed park space providing a walking path and multi-purpose turf field, with future plans for play, exercise, shade and other amenities. Eastgate Park will support the needs of immediate neighborhoods without overlapping upon the amenities provided by River Bluff Regional Park. Recommended improvements include play equipment with universally accessible passive and active play options. Teen activity options, such as areas for BMX, skating, or parkour, are appropriate. A walking path with mile markers should be included, and fixtures such as dog waste stations would serve walkers and runners who exercise with their dogs.

- Recommended Facilities**
- *Playgrounds (2-5, 5-12 year old areas)*
 - *Bocce / Horseshoe Courts*
 - *Basketball Courts*
 - *Volleyball*
 - *Rock Wall / Adult Exercise Equipment*
 - *Community Garden*
 - *Picnic Facilities/Shade Structure*

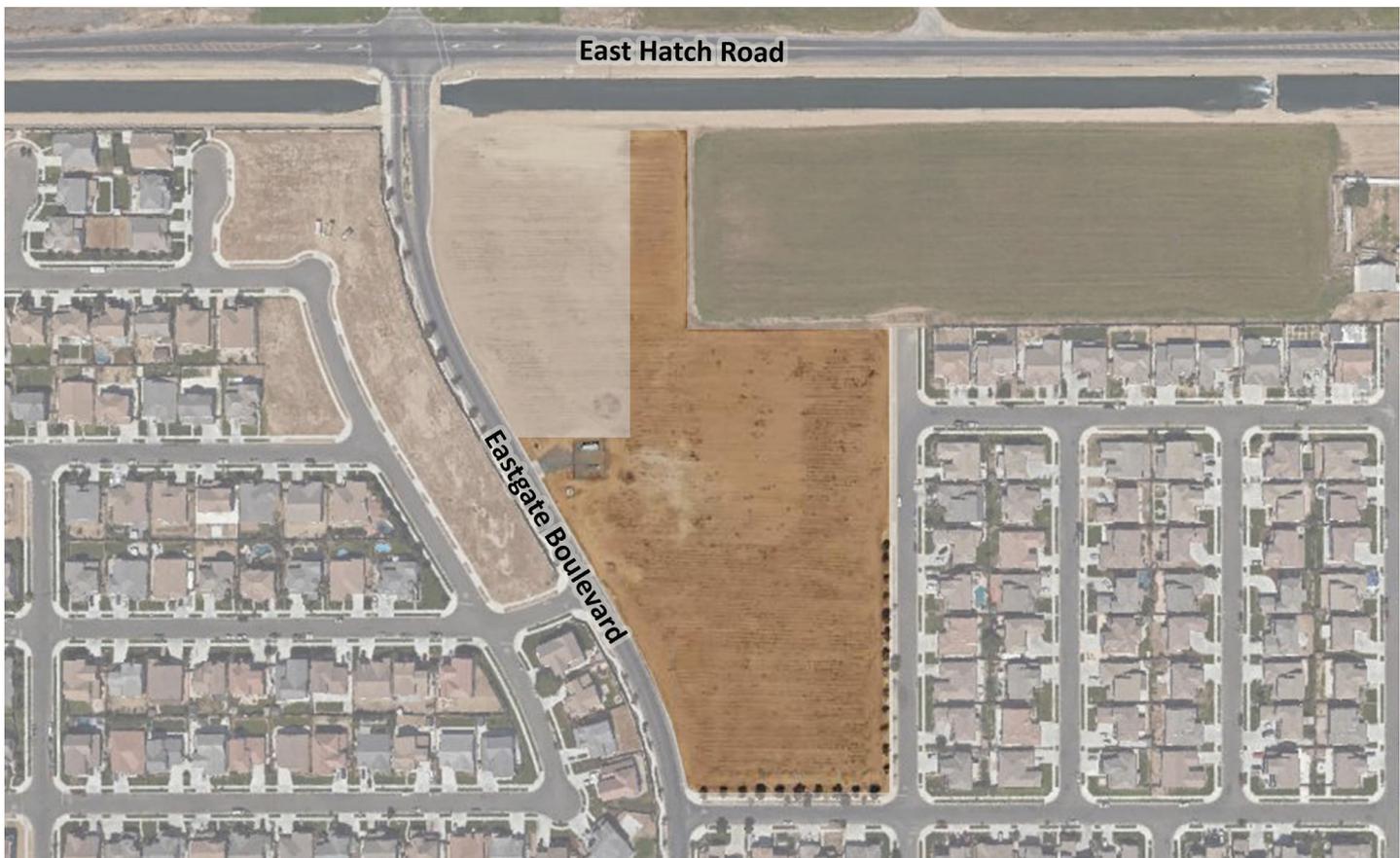


Exhibit 6.7: Eastgate Park Location

Recommended Facilities

- *Shade Structure*
- *Trails Through Natural Area*
- *Multi-Sport Turf Field*
- *Horseshoe / Bocce Courts*
- *Tennis / Volleyball Courts*
- *Nature-themed play opportunities*

Lions Park (10 Acres)

Located on River Road between Central Avenue and Richland Avenue lies the undeveloped parcel scheduled to be built as Lions Park. The site is approximately ten acres and mostly level. Infrastructure, including a transformer station, is currently in place, and a conceptual design (requiring updates) has been created. Lions Park is located in an area with low parks presence but with excellent proximity to shared facilities including Virginia Parks School and the Tuolumne River Regional Park. The characteristic of Lions Park could be developed around this unique character, providing less programmatic and more naturalistic play, exercise, and leisure opportunities.

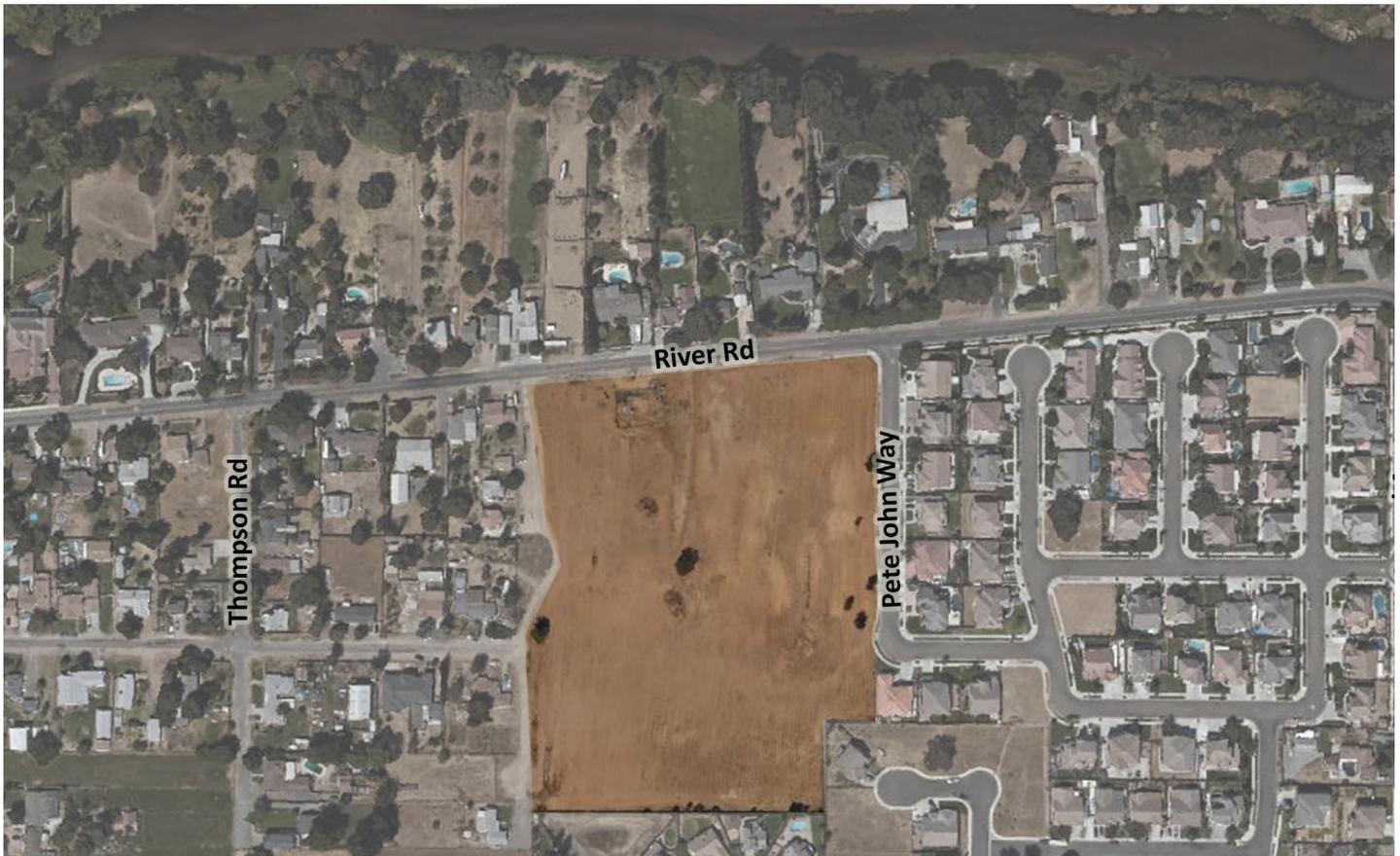


Exhibit 6.8: Lions Park Location

River Bluff Regional Park, Full Program Development (76 Acres)

Full build-out of River Bluff Regional Park will continue with the development of planned phases through complete build-out. The implementation of existing plans will contribute to the level of service goals set forward in this master plan. Future phases include a water play/splash-pad element, trails through natural habitat, motorized boat launch, picnic facilities, and interface with the Tuolumne River.

- Recommended Facilities: Upper Terrace**
- *Splash Pad Water Play Feature*
- Recommended Facilities: Lower Terrace**
- *Shade Structure*
 - *Restored Natural Area*
 - *Educational Signage / Wayfinding*
 - *Trails Through Natural Area*
 - *Access to River*
 - *Picnic Facilities*



Exhibit 6.9: River Bluff Illustrated Plan

Recommended Facilities

- *Separate Park for Small Dogs*
- *Shade Structure*
- *Shaded Seating Areas*
- *Dog Waste Stations*
- *Parking Lot*
- *Double-Gated Entrances to Both Parks*
- *Water Fountain with Low Basin for Dogs*

Neel Park: Recommended Dog Park Option (1 Acre)

Public comments indicated support for a dog park and the Northwestern corner of Neel Park, separated from the body of the park by Helen Perry Road, would provide a location for owners to recreate with their dogs. This parcel is approximately 1 level acre. The site should provide a parking lot, as most dog owners will drive their pets to a dog park facility. The dog park itself should be composed of two separate areas, one for small dogs and one for all dogs. The entire perimeter should be fenced with 6’ fencing and double-gates to prevent escaped dogs should be installed. Adequate dog waste stations and trash bins should be a priority. Shaded areas with seating should be provided for each section, and trees should be installed throughout the park. There is on-street parking and the body of the park is well-used currently by the surrounding neighborhood.



Railroad Avenue: Secondary Dog Park Option (1 Acre)

Another option for location for a dog park is a City-owned parcel at Whitmore and Railroad Avenue. This space could be developed into a dog park consistent with the typology listed above at Neel Park and would service the dog-owning population of Central and West Ceres.

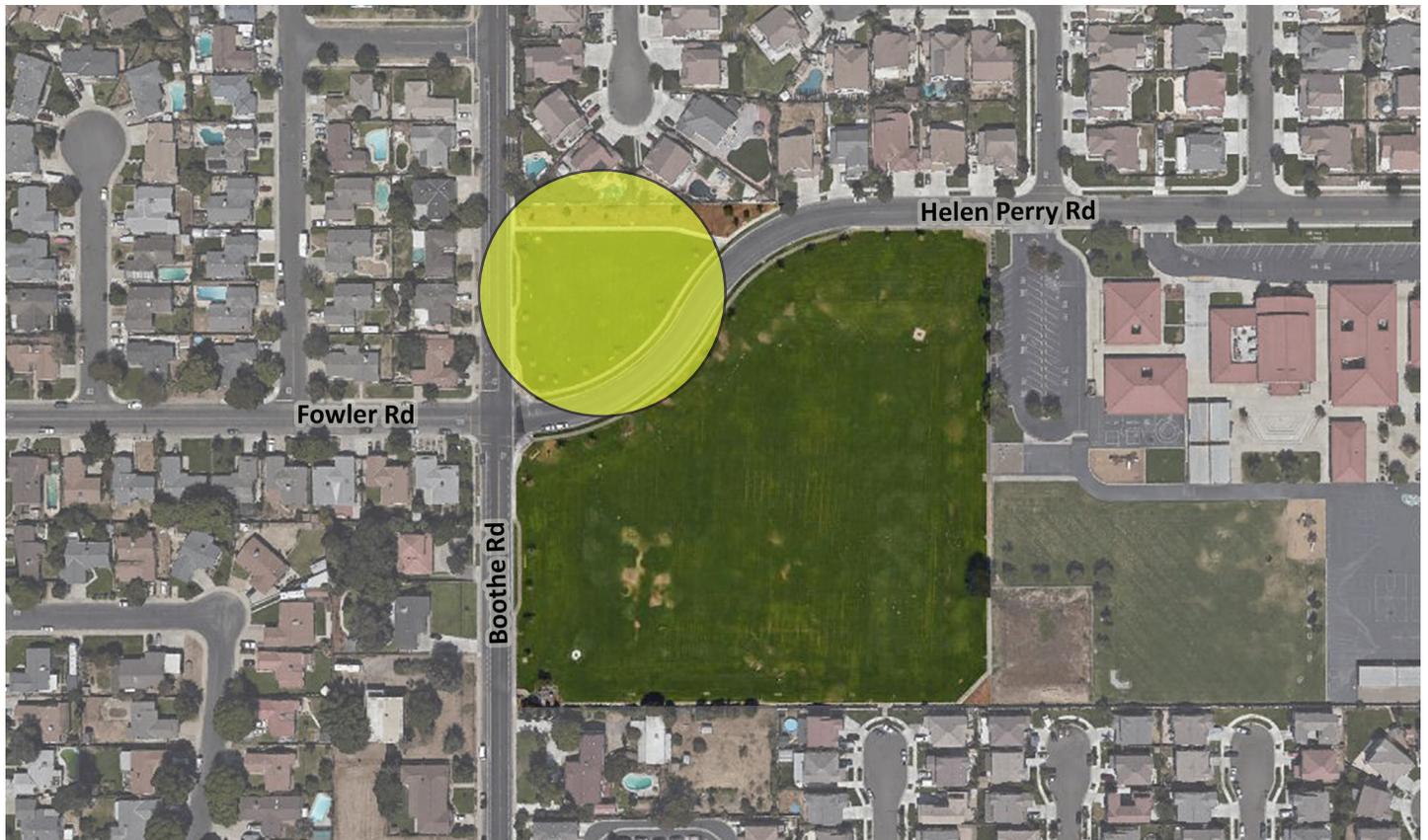


Exhibit 6.10: Neel Park Dog Park Location

Neel Park: Amenities Programming (8.15 Acres)

Neel Park is a well-used park proximate to densely populated neighborhoods. While heavily used as it exists currently, the community would benefit greatly from the addition of programmatic elements such as playgrounds, adult exercise equipment, barbeques, shade structures, lighting, and sports courts. The park is an engineered detention basin, which will limit placement of playground and other programming elements to the high ground at the Northeastern corner of the park, along Helen Perry Road.

Recommended Facilities

- *Shade Structure(s)*
- *Barbeques*
- *Playgrounds*
- *Adult Exercise Equipment*
- *Basketball Court*
- *Water Fountain*



Exhibit 6.11: Neel Park Amenities Programming Location

6.5 RECOMMENDED AMENITIES TO BE INCLUDED AT CITY PARKS

The following table includes a breakdown of amenities suitable for inclusion at existing city park properties.

Park Amenity	Berrygrove	Don Pedro Park	Independence Park	Neel Park	Persephone Park	Redwood Park	Riverview Park	Whitmore Mansion
Security Lighting	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Shade Structure/ Trellis/Gazebo		X	X	X	X	X		X
Drinking Fountain		X	X	X	X	X	X	
2-5 Year Old Playground Features		X	X	X				X
5-12 Year Old Playground Features				X				X
Bocce Court								X
Basketball/Tennis Court	X	X		X			X	
Flower Garden			X			X		X
Backstop	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Walking Path		X					X	
Dog Park				X				
Adult Exercise Equipment	X	X		X	X		X	X

Table 6.3

6.6 PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CONNECTIONS

The City of Ceres continues to prioritize the development of its bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure by full park build-out. The City established non-motorized transportation infrastructure as a priority in the 1997 General Plan, and should continue to identify and approve opportunities for expansion of multi-modal transportation systems. The General Plan emphasized the benefits of non-automotive transportation for promoting greater community interaction. Specifically, the document states, “This is one of the small-town qualities the General Plan seeks to preserve and enhance.”

Connecting parks and recreation facilities to one another will not only demonstrate the City’s investment in its residents’ health, but also connect the diverse programming in neighborhood, community and regional parks to residents regardless of vehicular mobility. The City has begun a bicycle path system, originally laid out in the 1997 General Plan. This network currently includes portions of Hatch Road. The extent of the bicycle system proposed in the 1997 General Plan is shown in Exhibit 6.12 in yellow.

Future development may continue to pursue linking parks and recreation facilities throughout the City to this existing system. New parks would be integrated into the system as they are developed. River Bluff Regional Park and the proposed Ceres Eastgate Park are situated at the Eastern end of the Hatch Road bicycle corridor and should therefore be linked directly to this segment of the path. Parks in the South Eastern region of the City may be linked to the proposed Moore Road canal bicycle path as that project is completed.

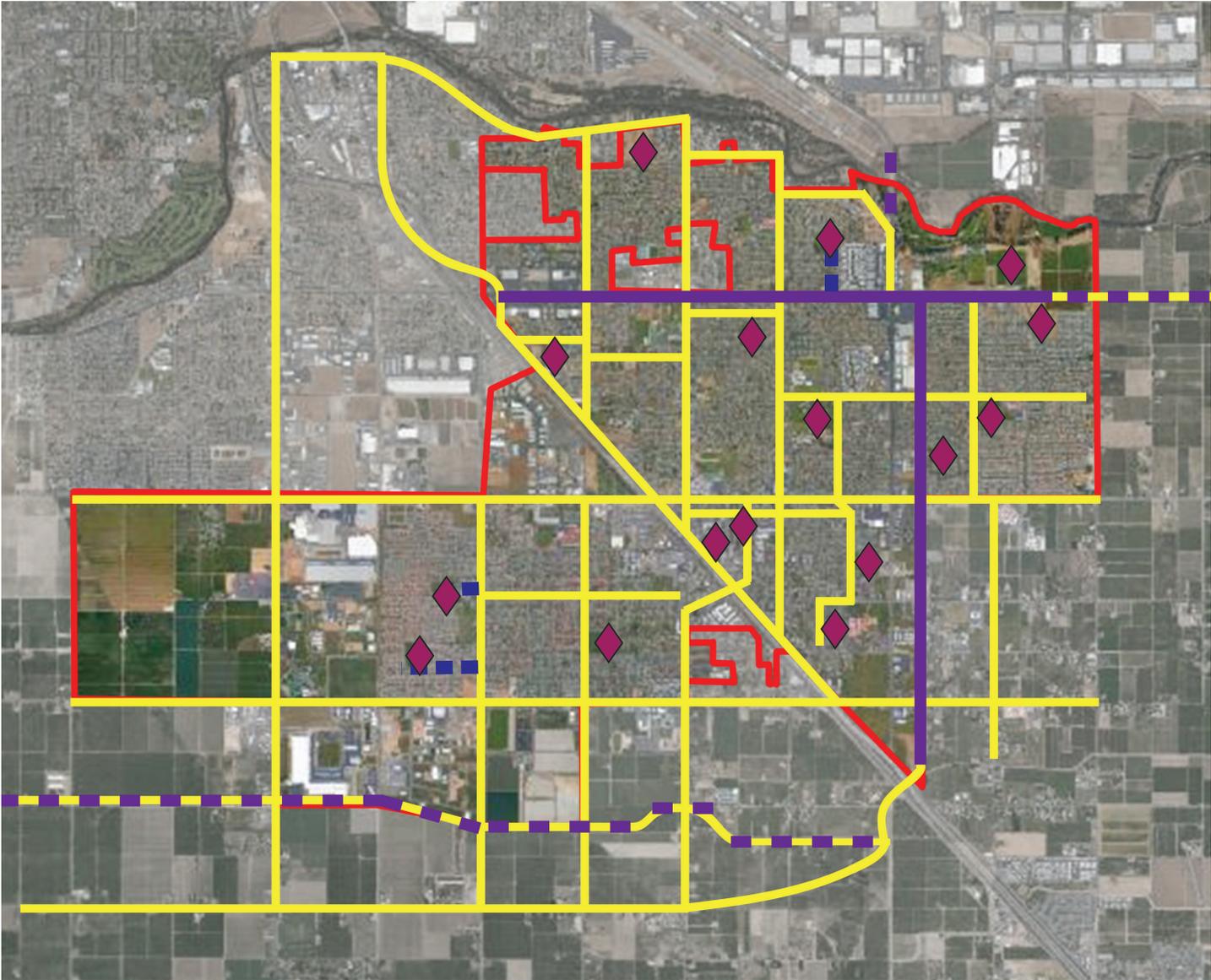


Exhibit 6.12: Bicycle Paths Planned, Executed, and Proposed for Linking to Parks

- █ City of Ceres Boundary
- █ Class 1 Bike System Segments Built or Scheduled for Construction to Date
- █ Class 1 Bike System Segments Proposed in the 1997 General Plan
- █ Proposed Bike System per 1997 General Plan
- █ Extra Segments Needed to Link Proposed System to all City Parks
- ◆ City Parks

New parks will be linked to the City's bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure via formalized multi-use paths and separated bike lanes where possible. Bicycle lanes should be constructed for maximum user-friendliness and safety, including prominent directional striping and signage. Grade- or landscape buffer-separated bicycle and pedestrian networks are preferred for optimal safety. Existing parks may be integrated into the arterial bicycle network using striping and signage. Furthermore, per the General Plan, bicycle parking at recreational facilities could be established for the use of bicyclists. Specific guidelines for typical bikeway and pedestrian walkway design and layout should follow AASHTO guidelines and the Ceres General Plan, Section 2: Non-Motorized Transportation.

6.7 PROGRAMMING AND FEES

Program Recommendations

Community feedback shows a desire for increased adult programming options. The pool of respondents indicated an overall dissatisfaction with the timing and diversity of programs offered by the City's Recreation division. Residents also noted they often find classes difficult to attend or to drive their children to and from, due to the scheduled hours conflicting with the caregiver's work schedule. Altogether, these results reinforce community requests to include more diverse programming at hours that are accessible for the working population.

The City will continue to increase variability in the type of programming offered as well as the hours at which programs are offered to maximize user participation. City programming has already been expanded to include options available at 6:00 pm or later to allow for working adults to participate and to support their dependents' participation. The General Plan recommends the City focus efforts on youth and senior programming, which is demonstrated accurately in the current programs offered.

The City plans to continue to invest in teen programs in order to increase its resources for that demographic. Provision of teen resources, particularly programming in the hours immediately after school, has been shown to provide positive impact on teens' self-awareness and ability to set goals. The City of Ceres may increase programming currently available to teens, for example, by building upon the work of the Ceres Youth Commission and actively engaging teens in after-school activities. There may be further opportunities to increase teen facilities in order to engage more of the teen population, including, but not limited to, providing outdoor spaces for socializing and gardening, providing dedicated dance practice or workout rooms for teens, and/or formalizing overlap between teen and senior programming to engage both groups. Partnerships between the City and other community groups would be an appropriate way to increase and diversify teen programming without placing excessive stress upon the City's staff and funding.

Survey respondents indicated satisfaction with the facilities offered and with the recreation programming available specifically for seniors. The City may consider expanding hours of availability for Senior amenities available at the Ceres Community Center, specifically with regard to the computers provided. Furthermore, the City will look to other providers to collaborate on senior programming. Stanislaus County resources as well as local senior assisted living facilities may provide programs and meeting space for collaborative initiatives.

Benchmarks

City-Provided Facilities	Colton, CA	Turlock, CA	Delano, CA	Ceres, CA
Number of Teen Centers	1 (dedicated stand-alone)	0 (programs offered, no dedicated facility)	0	1 (facility included in City community center)
Number of Senior Centers	0 (programs offered, no dedicated facility)	1 (facility offered for reservation only)	1 (facility attached to City community center)	1 (facility included in City community center)

Table 6.4

Program Fees Recommendations

The City should review facility user fees and charges annually or bi-annually as a part of the Cost Allocation Plan (if that is where their fees are kept and approved) to consider categories of use, fees and charges, market conditions, and appropriateness of fees and charges as it relates to the adopted budget.

6.8 DEVELOPMENT OF “FRIENDS OF PARKS” PROGRAM

Recommendations

The City of Ceres may consider supporting the formation of a “Park Friends” program to maintain and renovate parks. This program should be run by Ceres citizens, with help from the City. Similar programs have developed in other cities into non-profit management bodies and may also serve to support future public-private partnership opportunities for municipal park support. This group would provide valuable community feedback and foster a sense of park ownership and community empowerment that complements the goals of the Ceres General Plan.

6.9 ANNUAL REPORTING AND AMENDMENT FOLLOWING GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

Recommendations

The City may consider establishing a mandatory annual reporting on the status of the goals put forward in this master plan. Parks and Recreation department staff would present the annual report to the City Council on progress made toward these goals and action items for the following year.

For the purpose of this Master Plan document, the consultant used the 1997 General Plan for the City of Ceres to provide direction and measurements established at that time. The City recently concluded a search for a consultant to provide a 20-year update to the General Plan. Upon conclusion of this document, updated projections, goals for the City, and other measurements will be put in place. At that time, the projections and level of service in this master plan should be amended to provide accurate guidance for build-out goals and projections for the next 20 years of parks and recreation planning metrics in the City of Ceres.

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Riverview Park

Chapter 7

FUNDING MECHANISMS

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FUNDING MECHANISMS

Based upon the recommendations put forth in the 1997 General Plan, the City's priority for parks and recreation is to "establish and maintain a public park system and recreational facilities suited to the needs of Ceres residents, employees, and visitors." Priority items under this umbrella include:

1. To continue to develop and expand its park system to include a balance of passive and active recreational opportunities;
2. To develop neighborhood parks to serve as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood, and community parks to meet the recreational needs of large sections of the community; and
3. To continue to explore public, quasi-public, and private partnerships to develop new recreation facilities within the City of Ceres.

The following chapter provides an overview of various funding mechanisms that may be used to achieve these priorities. This is intended as a survey of available options and a feasibility study should be pursued prior to adopting any of the following strategies.

7.1 COST PROJECTIONS

Based upon identified best practices and this plan's needs assessment and recommendations, the list of priority parks for construction/completion include:

- River Bluff Regional Park, to be developed to full build-out;
- Eastgate Park, to be developed as a neighborhood park;
- Lions Park, to be developed as a neighborhood park;
- One or more dog parks, to be distributed at geographically appropriate locations; and
- Neel Park completion and recreational programming.

7.2 GENERAL FUND

The City's General Fund currently supports staffing of the division and maintenance personnel to perform maintenance duties at the City's park facilities.

The City of Ceres 2010 Public Facilities Fee Nexus Study indicates that, as of that date, zero dollars were allocated for park and recreation funding out of the City's General Fund. This indicates the City held zero financial obligation related to development impact fees for Parks and Recreation Facilities.

"Many who are knowledgeable about funding for public parks and recreation believe that economic models for these areas are changing irrevocably, and not always for the better. Certainly this has been true at the state level, and some evidence is pointing to similar trends at the local and municipal levels as well. While recessionary pressures over the past few years led to greater efficiencies and greater adoption of business-oriented models, it also led to what many fear are permanent declines in tax-supported funding devoted to parks and recreation. Moreover, new trends, such as the infusion of private capital into public parks, the growth of public-private partnerships, and the development of privately funded and managed parks and park systems through Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) or Tax-Increment Financing (TIF) mechanisms, have caused a re-evaluation of traditional methods of funding parks and recreation through tax-supported general funds."

National Recreation and Parks Association

7.3 DEVELOPMENT-RELATED FINANCING

The City may consider re-examining the current park mitigation fees required of new commercial, retail, and/or industrial developments. The Quimby Act allows municipalities to increase these standards up to 5 acres per 1,000 residents. At the same time, the City may also study the feasibility of requiring park development fees from new residential development that does not require a subdivision of parcels.

New development and retrofits at existing City parks hold the potential to capitalize upon State or Federal development related infrastructure improvement financing. These opportunities may include reduction in turf areas at existing facilities and the associated benefit of water conservation funds. Alternative energy funding may be available for projects such as incorporation of solar panels onto restroom, concessions, or shade structure rooftops.

7.4 SPECIAL FINANCING DISTRICTS (SFD)

Landscape and Lighting District (L&L)

As its name suggests, a Landscape and Lighting District may be established to provide funding for ongoing maintenance and installation of public amenities including landscaping, lighting, sidewalks, and parks and recreational improvements. The L&L is appropriate for the type of funding required by the City of Ceres in the immediate future to account for any shortfall in funds available for maintenance and safety upgrades to City park facilities. The City has managed a L&L District since 1987 which continues to support park maintenance projects. Most recently, the 2015-2016 report indicates funding allocated to typical maintenance and replacement fees for Sam Ryno Park.

Open Space Maintenance District (OSMD)

Another type of SFD, the Open Space Maintenance District may be formed to support funding specifically for costs associated with the founding entities open space areas. Funds may be dedicated to restoration, landscaping, improvements or regulation. Open space in need of intensive remediation or restoration, such as perhaps the lower terrace of River Bluff Regional Park, would be well-served by the funding of such a district.

Mello-Roos District (or Community Facilities District, CFD)

Also known as a Community Facilities District, a Mello-Roos District is a special tax district that may be created to fund public services, capital improvements, and on-going annual maintenance associated with existing facilities. Mello-Roos Districts may be formed to fund services on an annual basis or for large capital improvement projects. The City has formed CFDs as recently as the past two years to support public safety and maintenance costs for municipal facilities, including parks (i.e. Eastgate). City staff may examine the efficacy of recent CFD measures to assess the feasibility of continuing this strategy for future annual funding.¹

1 Seufert, Tim: NBS Consulting. "Special Financing Districts." 2014.

7.5 BONDS

The City of Ceres should consider the advantages of leveraging a bond to support the creation of new parks and facilities in the event of insufficient revenue in fees from new development. Municipal bond options are levied as taxes and allow for different dedicated uses in different geographic areas of the city. The bond financing options available to municipal entities typically include the following three types of bonds:

- General Obligation Bonds
- Special Tax Bonds/Lease Obligations
- Special Assessment Bonds

While none of these types of bonds may be used for ongoing maintenance or replacement, the option to pursue a bond measure should be considered for specific high-dollar improvements for new community facilities, such as an aquatic center.

The formation of a Ceres Park District may assist with related taxes to help build and maintain City parks. This type of bond measure has been successful in other municipalities. Namely, the East Bay Regional Park District has successfully leveraged park district bonds to acquire municipal park land, restore habitat within natural areas of public parks, and maintain existing parks. The City of Brentwood passed a city-wide park tax to fund park maintenance when faced with inadequate funds to continue to develop its parks system. The park tax allowed the construction of 58 parks over the span of 15 years in Brentwood.

7.6 PROGRAMMING AND RENTAL FEES

There is opportunity to update and revise the fees for programming and facility rental currently charged by the City. First, rental fees should be increased every year based on cost of living increases. This annual adjustment will be more immediately relatable and predictable for the public, rather than variable incremental jumps done at longer intervals. Next, staff costs should be updated on a yearly basis through the City's Cost Allocation Plan. It should be noted that the Community Center rate increase proposal in 2010 indicated hourly rates for staff had not increased from 2004/2005 to 2010/2011.

The City of Ceres should consider dedicating all additional revenue from increased department fees to offset parks maintenance. This policy would benefit the department directly without placing increased demands upon the City's General Fund. It would also assist department staff and the public at large in understanding the reasons for the fee increase.

Facility use fees should also include indirect costs, such as depreciation and replacement costs. The Costa Ball Fields currently incorporate these costs into their fee structure, and this practice should be incorporated into all facility rental fee structures. In addition, the City should consider addition of a standard janitorial fee for Community Center rentals in order to cover incidental costs that may increase the City's standard janitorial services. Days of the week that have been historically low on rental demand may be discounted and available at "value" pricing. Finally, the City should consider adjusting facilities rental fees tiers. Currently, residents pay more than non-local non-profits to rent City facilities. Prioritizing local community ownership over City facilities will demonstrate investment in the local community.

The City would also be well-served to invest in marketing recreation programs to maximize return. Tiered pricing may be appropriate for classes with historically low participation due to class time or time of the year. Volume discounts may also be appropriate for this community, in which high-volume users receive discounted rates. The City of San Ramon has achieved an award-winning program of this type, in which it provides discounts when a family signs up for multiple City recreation programs.

General marketing improvements should be made to the seasonal recreation brochure in order to attract both advertisers and program participants. Advertising opportunities should be expanded to include prime space on the inside front and back covers and the page across from the table of contents/general information page. Options for color advertising and inclusion of color photos within the guide will attract both target groups to the guide as well. The option for a webpage interface and link to the online registration page should also be included prominently in the brochure, as many consumers prefer online registration. Both online and print versions of the brochure should include Spanish translations of key program and contact information. The City should aim to provide at least one bilingual staff person available for questions via phone and/or translation of recreation marketing materials online in the near future.

7.7 COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The importance of community and regional partnerships should not be underestimated. River Bluff Regional Park utilizes this strategy currently for its soccer facilities. Moreover, the community outreach survey indicated enthusiasm for expanding upon this funding mechanism moving forward. The City has several options for expanding upon the success of this technique.



A simple way to encourage sponsorship of recreational facilities would be to offer a reduced per-year fee for sponsors who commit to multiple year sponsorships. Sponsorship of River Bluff Regional Park soccer fields currently consists of a \$5,000 fee annually for five years, which includes a sign installed adjacent to the soccer field with the name of the corporate sponsor. Small fields carry a sponsorship fee of \$2,500 for the same term. To complement this action, the City should consider a yearly or alternate year CPI increase for single-year sponsorships.

A very attractive option to potential sponsors and sponsors who are on the fence about fiscal commitment would be to offer multiple sponsorship levels: one for a field sign; one for a sign and mention in activity guide; one for sign, activity guide, website;

and so on. Most important, it would give options that would appeal to potential sponsors with varying marketing budgets. Key to all sponsorship promotion is to ensure that when a field is sponsored, that name is used on all game schedules and press releases.

Another consideration would be to offer a sponsorship category that includes part of the money going into a youth scholarship program to offset the costs for youth to use the facility. This would demonstrate the City's investment in providing community recreation resources to its citizens while also providing an attractive option to potential sponsors.

The City may also continue to increase its available recreation acreage through joint-use agreements with local properties. The City's current joint-use agreement with the schools could be expanded upon in order to increase the community's access to park resources at little or no added cost to the City.

7.8 GRANTS

The City of Ceres has demonstrated proficiency with locating and attaining grant opportunities. There are a number of opportunities available to municipal parks and recreation departments which may be located on the websites of the National Recreation and Parks Association, American City & County, California Park and Recreation Society, and other organizations.

Grant funding is a high-benefit source of income for capital improvement projects in that grant funding does not require any pay-back or long-term financial commitment on behalf of the City. On the other hand, grant funding is often written for a very specific award purpose and, like bond funding, may be required to be spent within a particular amount of time. Grant funding should be sought for the purpose of specific programming and facility projects. Current needs that would be well-served by grant funding include sourcing and installing shade shelters, outdoor exercise equipment, bilingual signage, or sustainable retrofits such as solar energy or water conservation projects.

7.9 CROWDFUNDING

Crowdfunding has become a widely practiced method of fundraising over the past few years. Recently, the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) began the "Fund Your Park" program. This program is open to NRPA member organizations and allows organizations to publish requests for funding for specific projects. Any member of the public may then access the webpage to contribute to that project. At the end of the pre-determined time that the project request for funding has been posted, the publishing organization gets to keep any funds raised for the purpose of the stated project.²

The City of Ceres may find this type of model helpful for projects the community has identified as high importance but which the City has determined are not priorities or are preclusively expensive. Examples may be dog park or water play/splash pad facilities. Dedicated use facilities, such as dog parks, also lend themselves to partnerships with sponsor organizations or local businesses that cater to target user groups. The City should consider increasing its community partnerships relationships to allow local companies and organizations to partner with the City on crowdfunding efforts. These types of projects provide exciting potential for individual community members who want to see these types of amenities in the community. Further, individual community members may be more likely to contribute to a specific project that is a personal priority than to an umbrella fund for parks.

7.10 PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

The City of Ceres General Plan endorses efforts by the City to partner with both public and private entities to expand its recreational facilities. Transportation and Parks departments across the United States have recently begun to capitalize more creatively upon the possibilities of "P3" endeavors. The nature of the public/private contract may vary from transfer of program management responsibilities to a private firm to the extent that one contract may include design, construction, financing and operation of a facility.³

² Fund Your Park: www.nrpa.org/fund-your-park

³ U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration. "P3 Defined". 2015.

Various recommended Ceres parks improvements may be appropriate for a P3 contract, including the aquatics facility and/or large community park build-out. Other municipalities have found success in partnering with local medical institutions to complete community recreation facilities, with the agreement that facilities may be shared for programming associated with the medical facility. Case studies suggest diversified “portfolios” of different types of P3 relationships are the most effective for cities to manage. Such efforts do require dedicated City staff hours as well as community input and volunteer effort. While a P3 may take cues from similar related efforts in other municipalities, the final partnership should be tailored to the City of Ceres specifically.



7.11 “FRIENDS OF PARKS” PROGRAMS

The City of Ceres should support formation of “Friends of Parks” programs throughout the community. Not only can these groups provide valuable community input, but they also support volunteerism and a sense of community ownership over public park resources.

These programs may also support P3 relationships or other ongoing support of City parks. Community members often can tap into their own networks to find funding sources and/or donations to install parks. In this case, the city may help with seed money, construction, and design costs. The group raises

funds, solicits involvement, and leads discussion on community needs.

7.12 PARKS AND RECREATION FOUNDATION

Finally, the City should support the formation of a non-profit 501(c)3 foundation to support its parks. This type of organization will qualify for grants and funding not typically available to government agencies. It is beneficial in that it can raise money and, if seated with local leaders within the community, can generate support for parks and recreation.



Berrygrove Park

Appendix A

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH

A public outreach survey was created in December 2014 to assess the current community sentiment regarding the City of Ceres Parks and Recreation’s facilities and programming. The survey was disseminated via the methods described in depth in the “Needs Assessment” chapter of this document. Between January and June 2015, 123 respondents filled out the survey. 113 of the respondents chose the English version and 10 respondents chose the Spanish version.

Below are the questions provided, in both English and Spanish. The results from the two surveys have been combined and detailed in the following charts.

English Survey Questions:

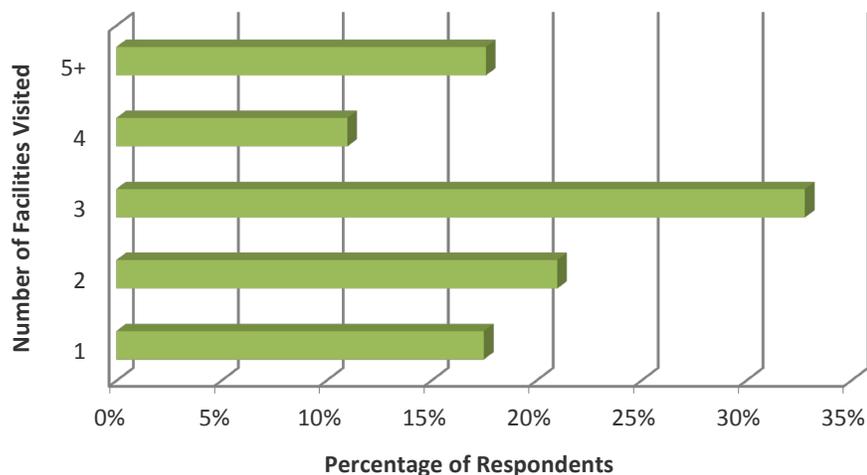
1. How many City recreation facilities have you visited in the past year? (choose one)
Answer Options: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5+
2. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the number of facilities available:
Answer Options: 1=Dissatisfied/10=Completely Satisfied
3. How many City recreation programs have you participated in during the past year? (choose one)
Answer Options: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5+
4. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the recreational programs available:
Answer Options: 1=Dissatisfied/10=Completely Satisfied
5. How many times in the past year have you reserved a facility? (choose one)
Answer Options: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4+
6. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the reservation process:
Answer Options: 1=Dissatisfied/10=Completely Satisfied
7. Are there enough sports fields to meet the needs of the community sports groups? (choose one)
Answer Options: Not enough, Somewhat lacking, Adequate, More than adequate
8. How often do you visit your closest park facility? (choose one)
Answer Options: Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Frequently
9. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the proximity to your closest park:
Answer Options: 1=Dissatisfied/10=Completely Satisfied
10. Please rate your satisfaction of each of the following services provided as they relate to parks and recreation:
Answer Options: 1=Dissatisfied/5=Completely Satisfied
11. Which of the following benefits of parks, recreation and trails are most important to you?
Answer Options: 1=Not important/5=Very important
12. How well does the City fulfill the following?
Answer Options: 1=Don’t Know/5=Excellent
13. What do you like most about the City’s recreation facilities? (Open Answer)
14. What do you dislike most about the City’s recreation facilities? (Open Answer)
15. How likely would you be to recommend City recreational programs to a friend? (choose one)
Answer Options: Very likely, Somewhat likely, Somewhat unlikely, Very unlikely
16. What keeps you from visiting City parks more often? (Open Answer)
17. Because of funding limitations, the City and County currently struggle to staff and maintain their parks and recreation facilities. How do you think park maintenance, programs, and new parks and facilities should be funded? (Select your top two answers.)
Answer Options: User fees (visitors pay more than residents), User fees (same price for everyone), Bond measure, Tax measure, Sponsorship programs by local businesses, Volunteer efforts (Park Partnerships), Efforts by non-profit groups, I don’t know.

APPENDIX A

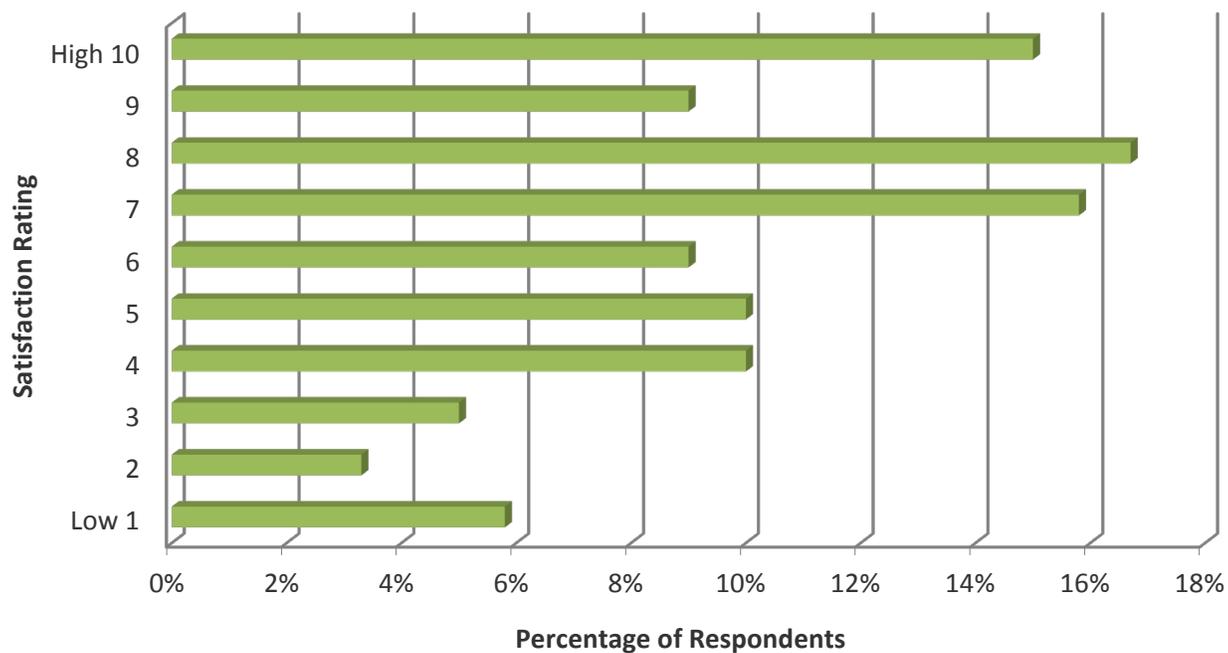
Spanish Survey Questions:

1. ¿Cuántas instalaciones de recreación de la Ciudad ha visitado en el año pasado? (marque uno)
Answer Options: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5+
2. Indique su grado de satisfacción general con el número de instalaciones disponibles:
Answer Options: 1=Insatisfecho/10=Muy Satisfecho
3. ¿En cuántos programas de recreación de la ciudad has participado en el año pasado? (marque uno)
Answer Options: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5+
4. Indique su grado de satisfacción general con los programas recreativos disponibles:
Answer Options: 1=Insatisfecho/10=Muy Satisfecho
5. ¿Cuántas veces has reservado una instalación durante el año pasado? (marque uno)
Answer Options: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4+
6. Indique su grado de satisfacción general con el proceso de reserva:
Answer Options: 1=Insatisfecho/10=Muy Satisfecho
7. Hay suficientes campos deportivos para satisfacer las necesidades de la comunidad o grupos de deportes: (marque uno)
Answer Options: No es suficiente, Algo falta, Adecuado, Más que adecuado
8. ¿Con qué frecuencia visita sus instalaciones del parque más cercano? (marque uno)
Answer Options: Nunca, Casi nunca, A veces, Frecuentemente
9. Indique el grado de satisfacción general a la proximidad de su parque más cercano:
Answer Options: 1=Insatisfecho/10=Muy Satisfecho
10. Califique su satisfacción de cada uno de los siguientes servicios suministrados que son parte de los parques y recreación:
Answer Options: 1=Insatisfecho/5=Muy Satisfecho
11. ¿Cuál de los siguientes beneficios de parques, recreación y senderos son más importantes para usted?
Answer Options: 1=No es importante/5=Muy importante
12. ¿Qué tan bien cumple la ciudad con los siguientes funcionamientos?
Answer Options: 1=No sé/5=Excelente
13. ¿Qué te gusta más de recreación en la ciudad? (Repuesta libre)
14. ¿Qué es lo que no te gusta sobre las instalaciones de recreación de la ciudad? (Repuesta libre)
15. ¿Qué tan probable sería que recomendaras programas recreativos de la ciudad a un amigo? (marque uno)
Answer Options: Muy probable, Algo probable, Algo improbable, Muy improbable
16. ¿Qué le impide visitar los parques de la ciudad más a menudo? (Repuesta libre)
17. Debido a limitaciones de finanzas, la ciudad y el condado actualmente luchan por su personal y por mantener sus parques e instalaciones de recreación. ¿Cómo crees tú que deberían financiarse el mantenimiento de parques, programas y nuevos parques e instalaciones? Seleccione sus dos respuestas preferibles.
Answer Options: Cuotas de usuario (los visitantes pagan más que los residentes), Cuotes de usuario (mismo precio para todos), Una medida fiscal, Una medida de bonos, Programas de patrocinio de las empresas locales, Esfuerzos voluntarios (asociaciones del parque), Esfuerzos de grupos sin fines de lucro, No sé.

1. How many City recreation facilities have you visited in the past year?

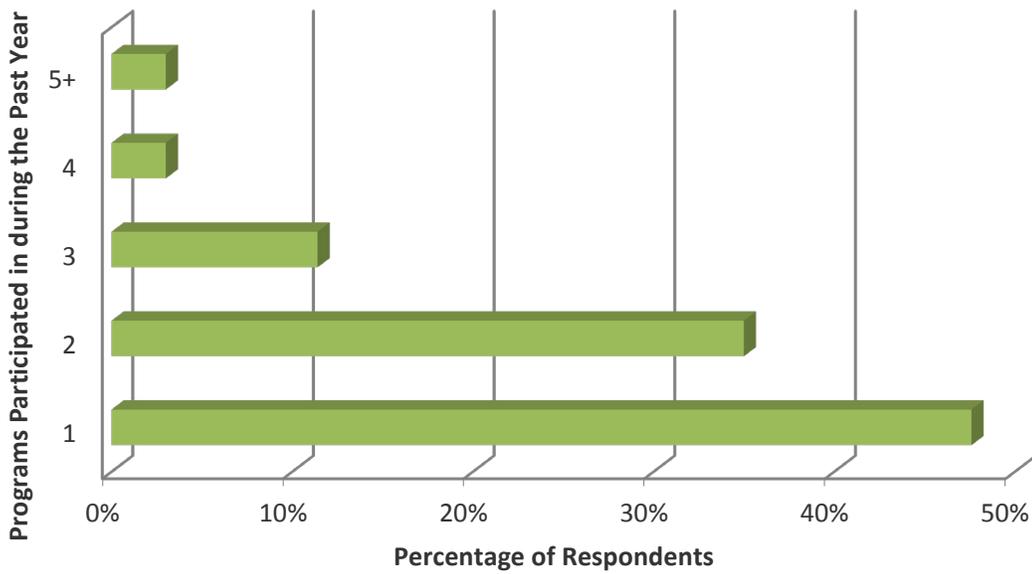


2. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the number of facilities available:

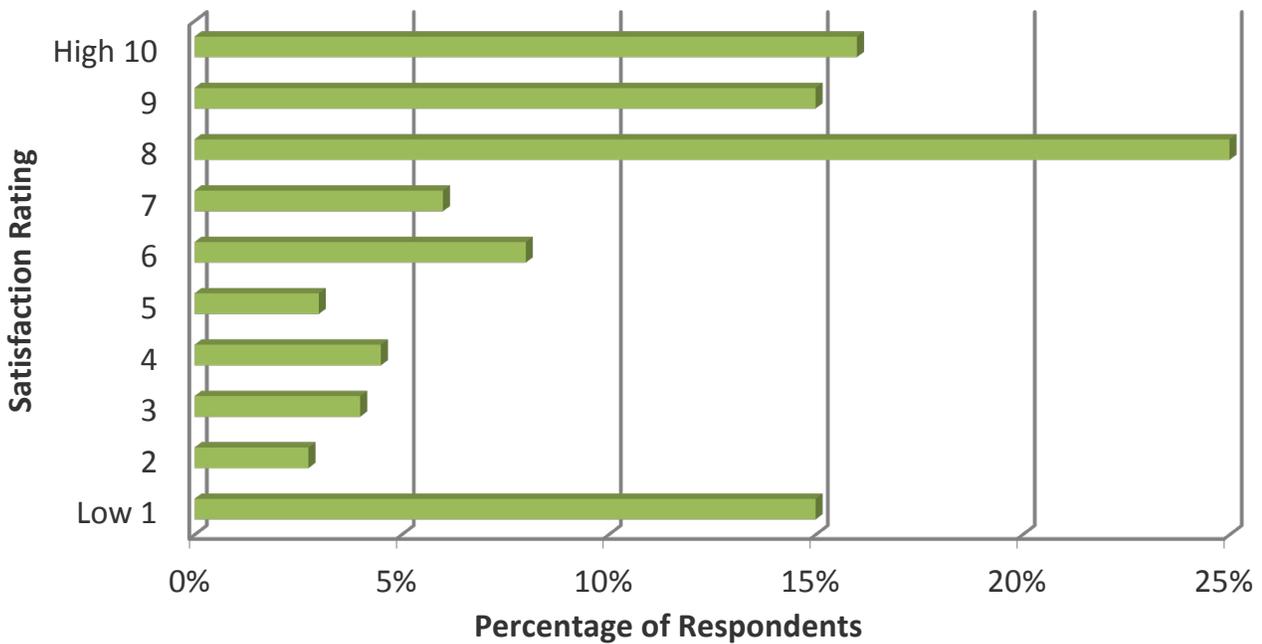


APPENDIX A

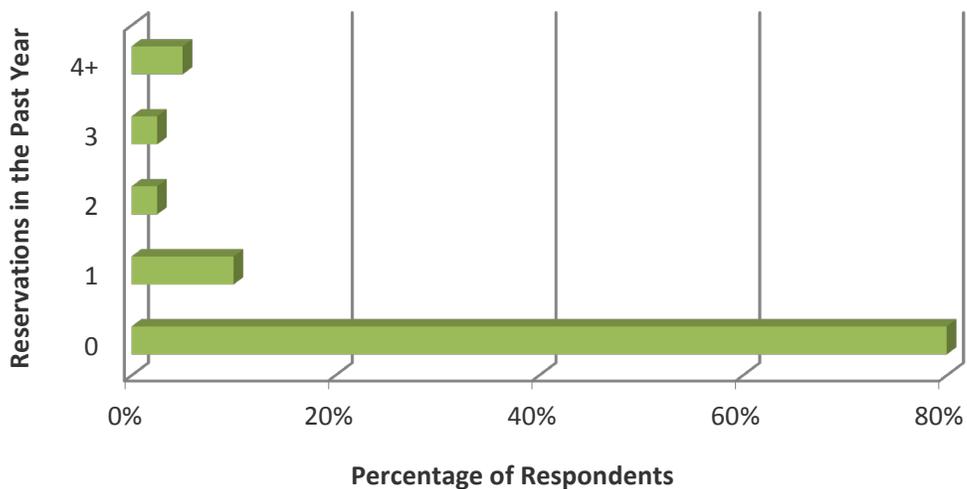
3. How many City recreation programs have you participated in during the past year?



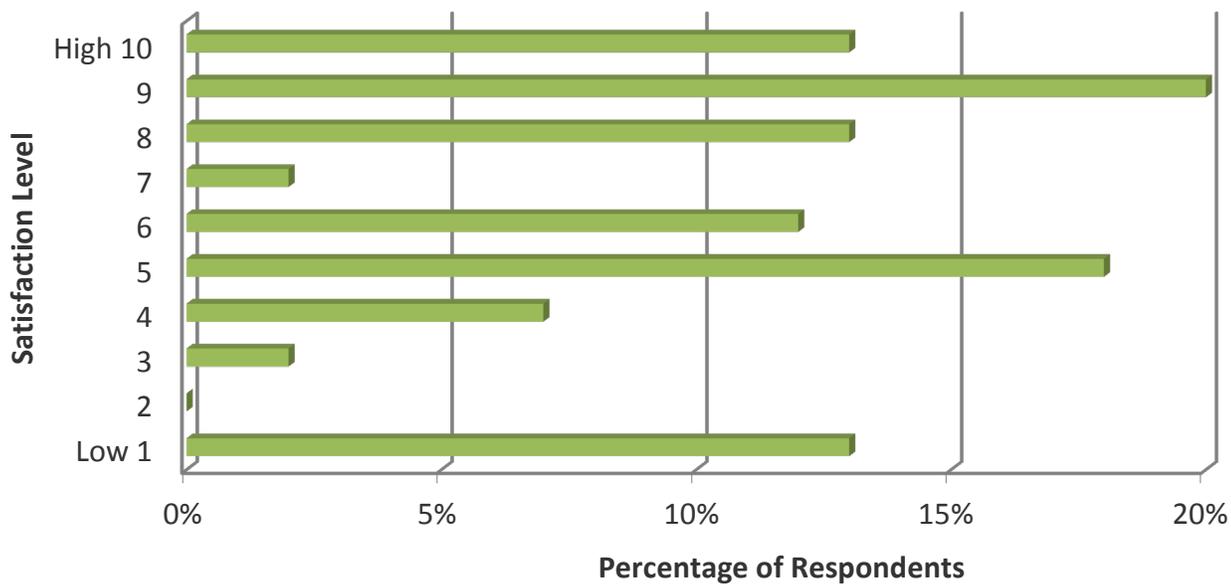
4. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the recreational programs available:



5. How many times in the past year have you reserved a facility?

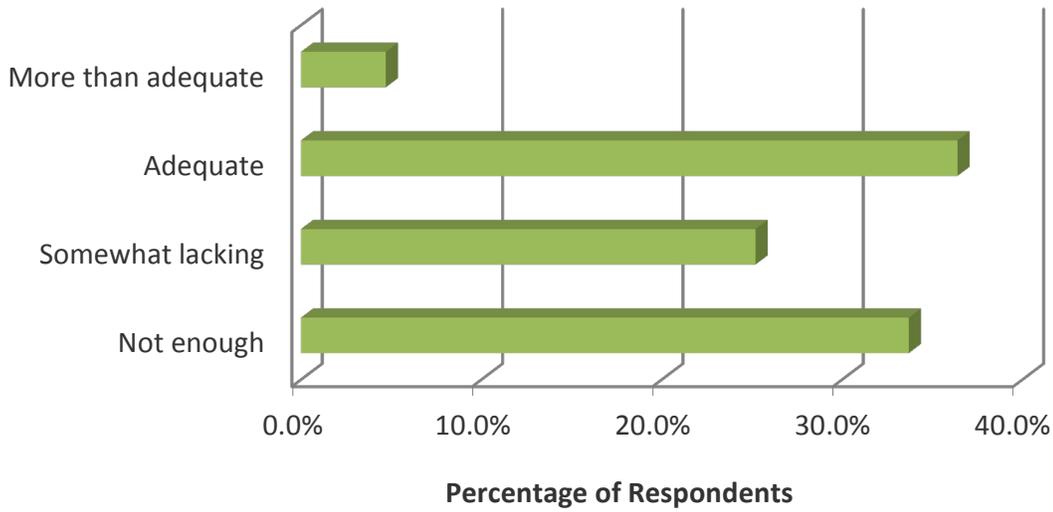


6. If you reserved a facility, then please rate your overall satisfaction with the reservation process:

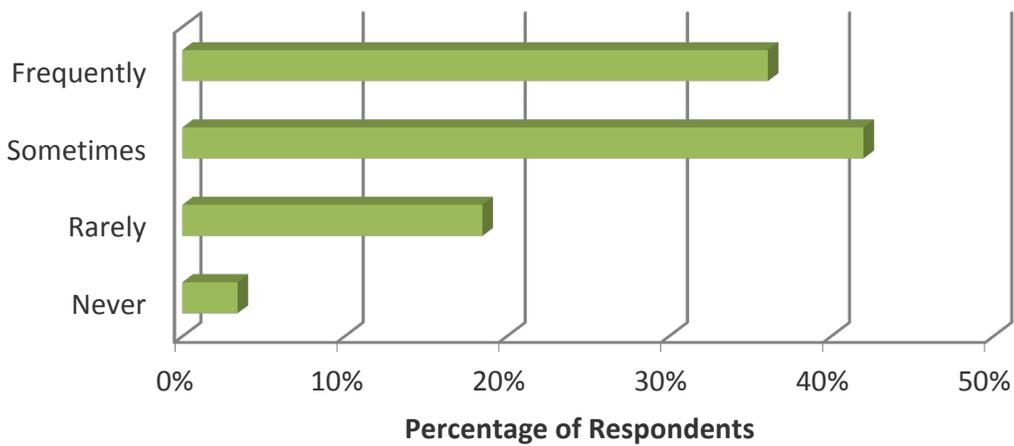


APPENDIX A

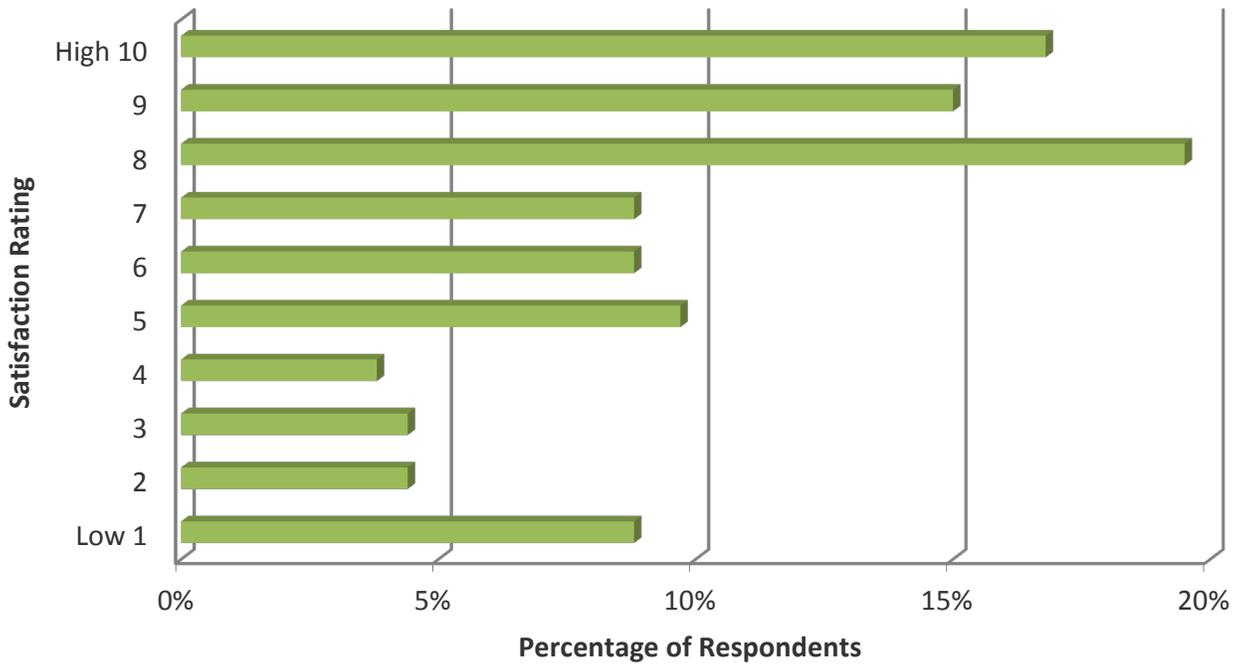
7. Are there enough sports fields to meet the needs of the community?



8. How often do you visit your closest park facility?



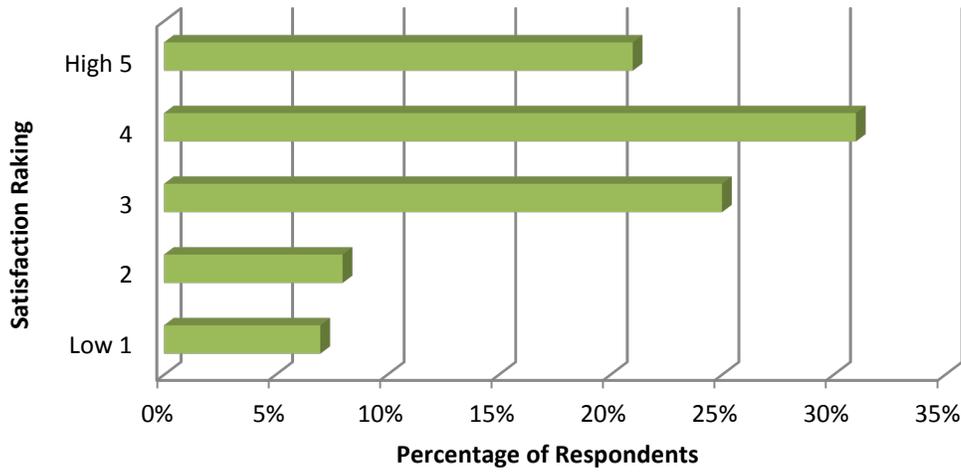
9. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the proximity to your closest park:



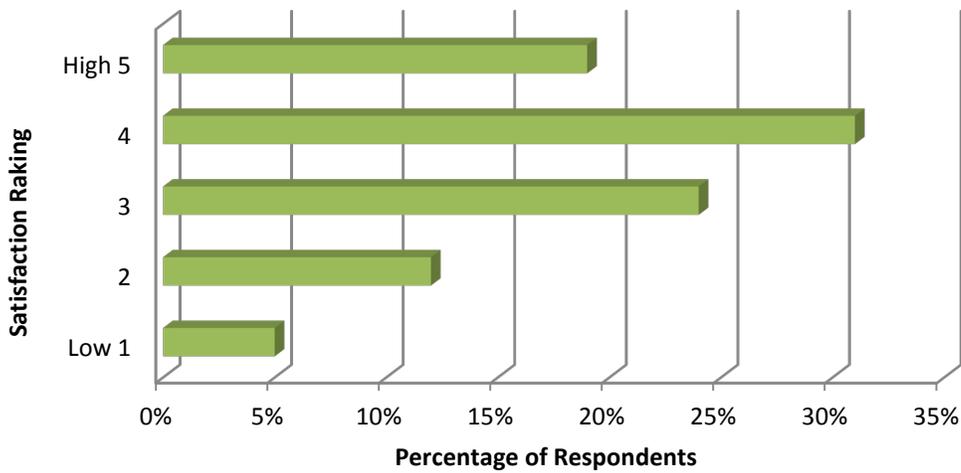
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10. Please rate your satisfaction with each of the following services provided as they relate to parks and recreation:

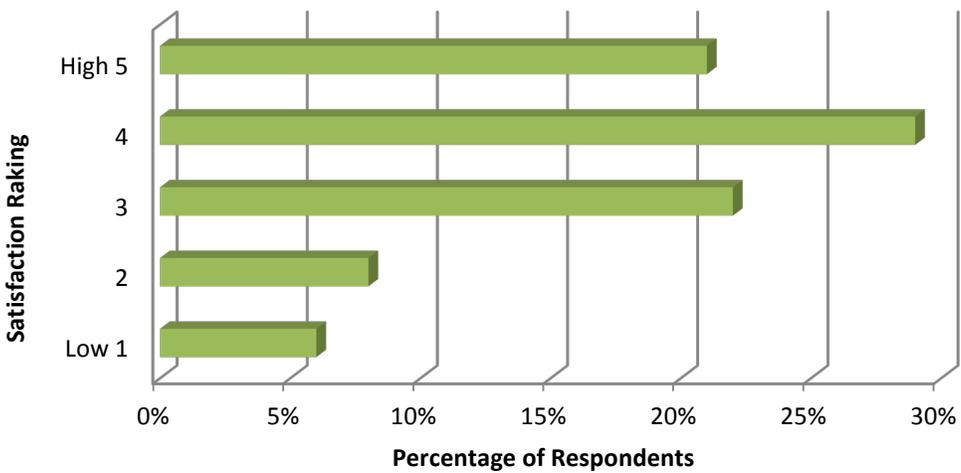
Quality of Services



Recreation Facilities

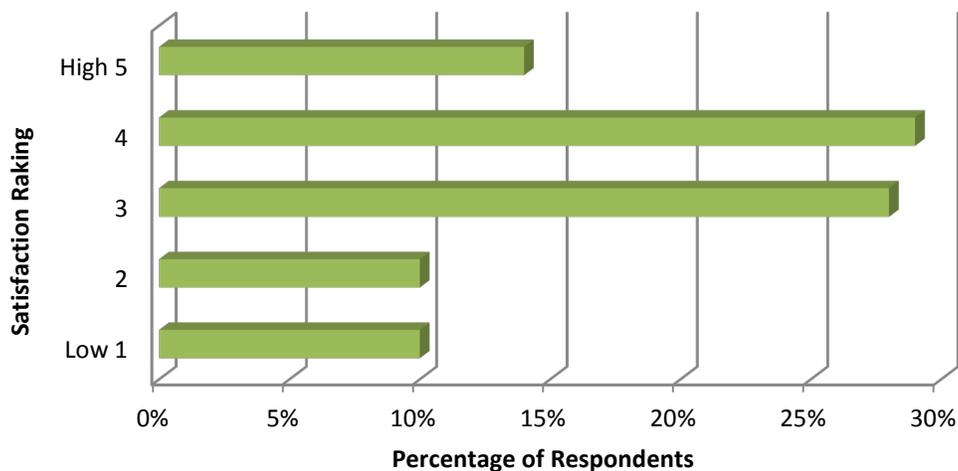


Programs

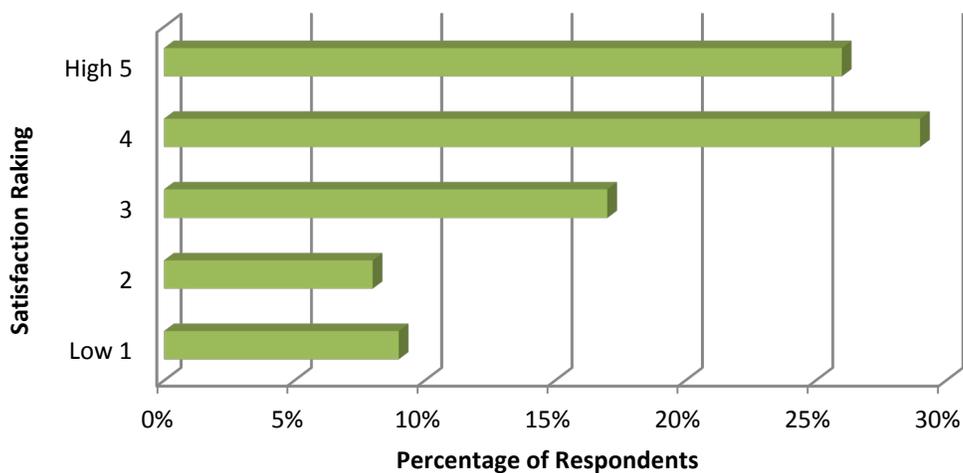


10. (Continued) Please rate your satisfaction with each of the following services provided as they relate to parks and recreation:

Parks



Access to Information



APPENDIX A

11. Which of the following benefits of parks, recreation and trails are most important to you?

12. How well does the City fulfill the following?

Importance and Satisfaction Scale: Each respondent was asked to select on a scale of one to five/poor to excellent how important and how well they feel the City fulfills eight different civic qualities.

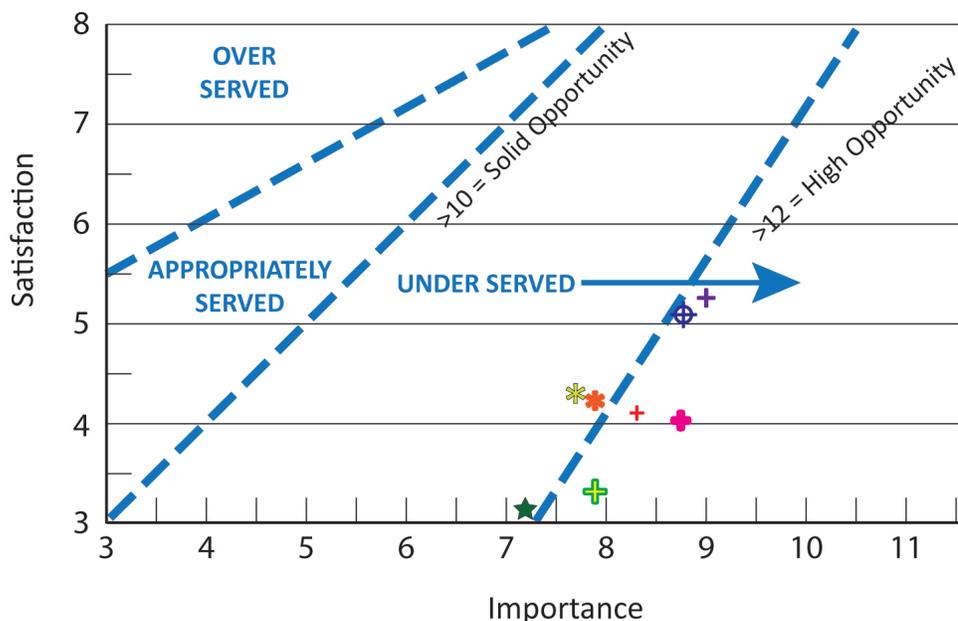
The results from each category were divided by the number of total results and multiplied by ten. Both Importance and Satisfaction numbers were combined to generate an Opportunity Score. The formula for determining Opportunity Scores is $i + ((\max(0, (i-s))))$. The Importance, Satisfaction, and Opportunity Scores are shown in the table below:

City Parks and Recreation Service Features	Importance	Satisfaction	Opportunity Score
Provide opportunities to enjoy nature/outdoors	8.38	4.11	12.65
Improve health, wellness and fitness	8.89	5.23	12.55
Strengthen families, neighborhoods and community	8.78	4.05	13.51
Protect our natural environment	7.93	3.33	12.53
Support youth development	8.71	5.18	12.24
Provide special events and social opportunities	7.95	4.23	11.67
Provide opportunities to learn new things	7.74	4.29	11.19
Attract residents and businesses	7.13	3.06	11.20

An Opportunity Score above 10 is a solid opportunity, anything above 12 is a high opportunity, and anything above 15 is an extreme opportunity. This exercise indicates that each of the factors assessed holds opportunity for improvement. The top four features providing the greatest potential opportunity are:

1. Strengthen families, neighborhoods and community
2. Provide opportunities to enjoy nature/outdoors
3. Improve health, wellness and fitness
4. Protect our natural environment

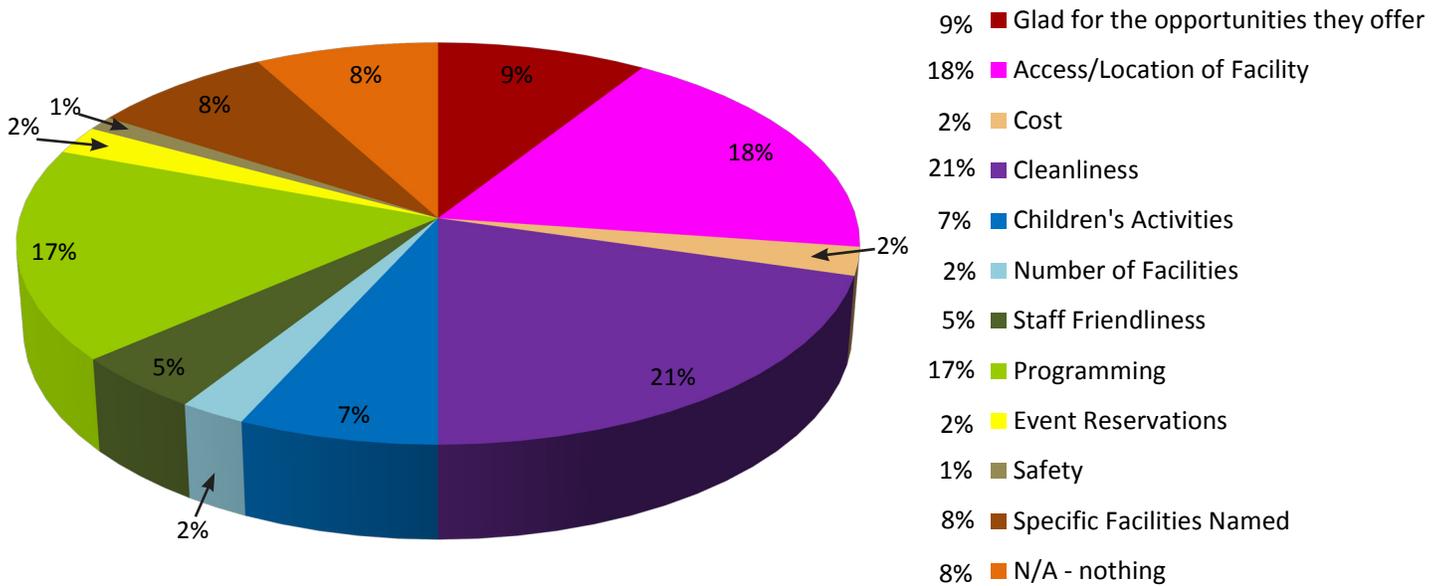
The scatter graph below shows the Importance and Satisfaction results. This shows clearly that the respondents considered all categories surveyed Important. The Satisfaction ratings, however, are low. This places the average score in the “High Opportunity” range of the table.



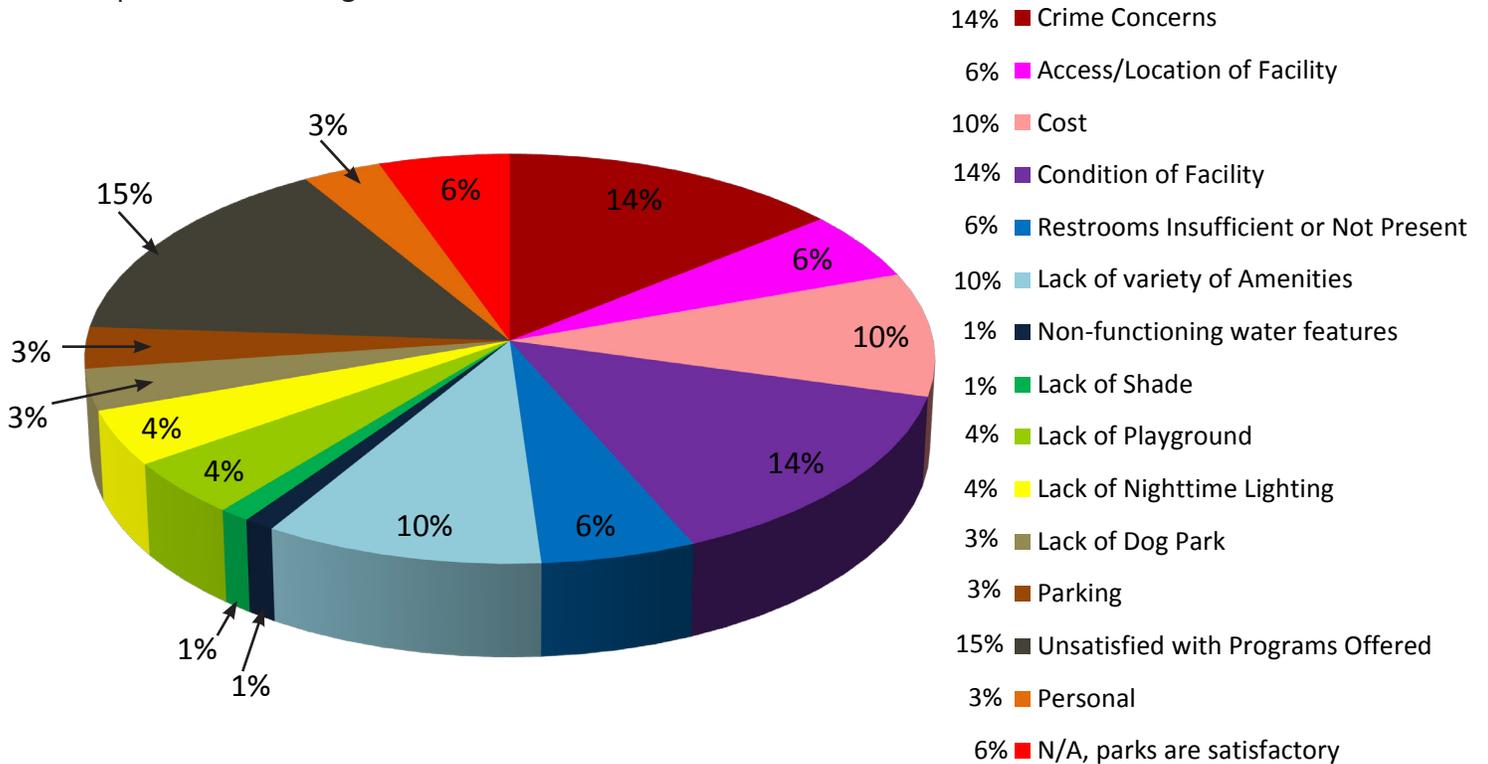
- + Provide opportunities to enjoy nature/outdoors
- + Improve health, wellness and fitness
- + Strengthen family, neighborhoods and community
- + Protect our natural environment
- + Support youth development
- + Provide special events and social opportunities
- + Provide opportunities to learn new things
- + Attract residents and businesses

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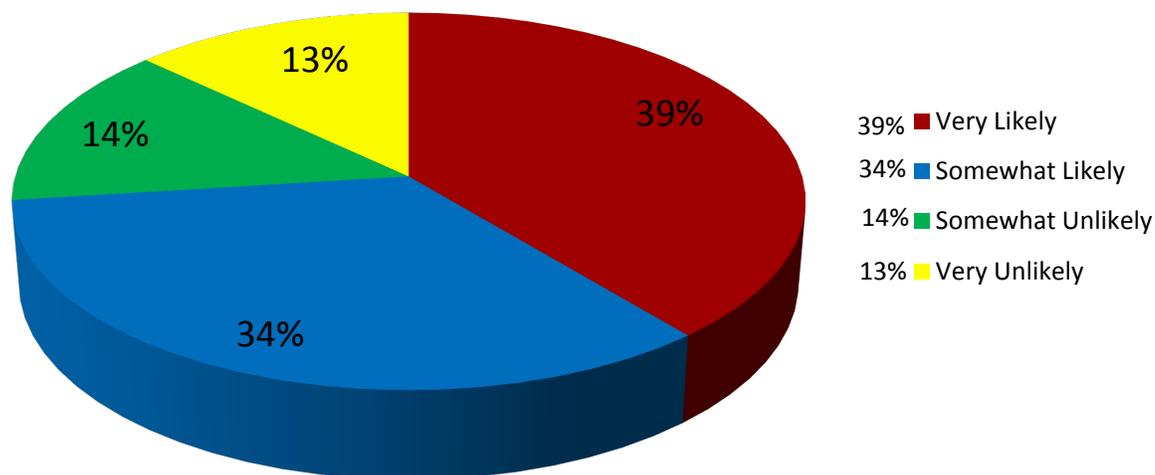
13. What do you like most about the City's recreation facilities?
Free responses were categorized as follows:



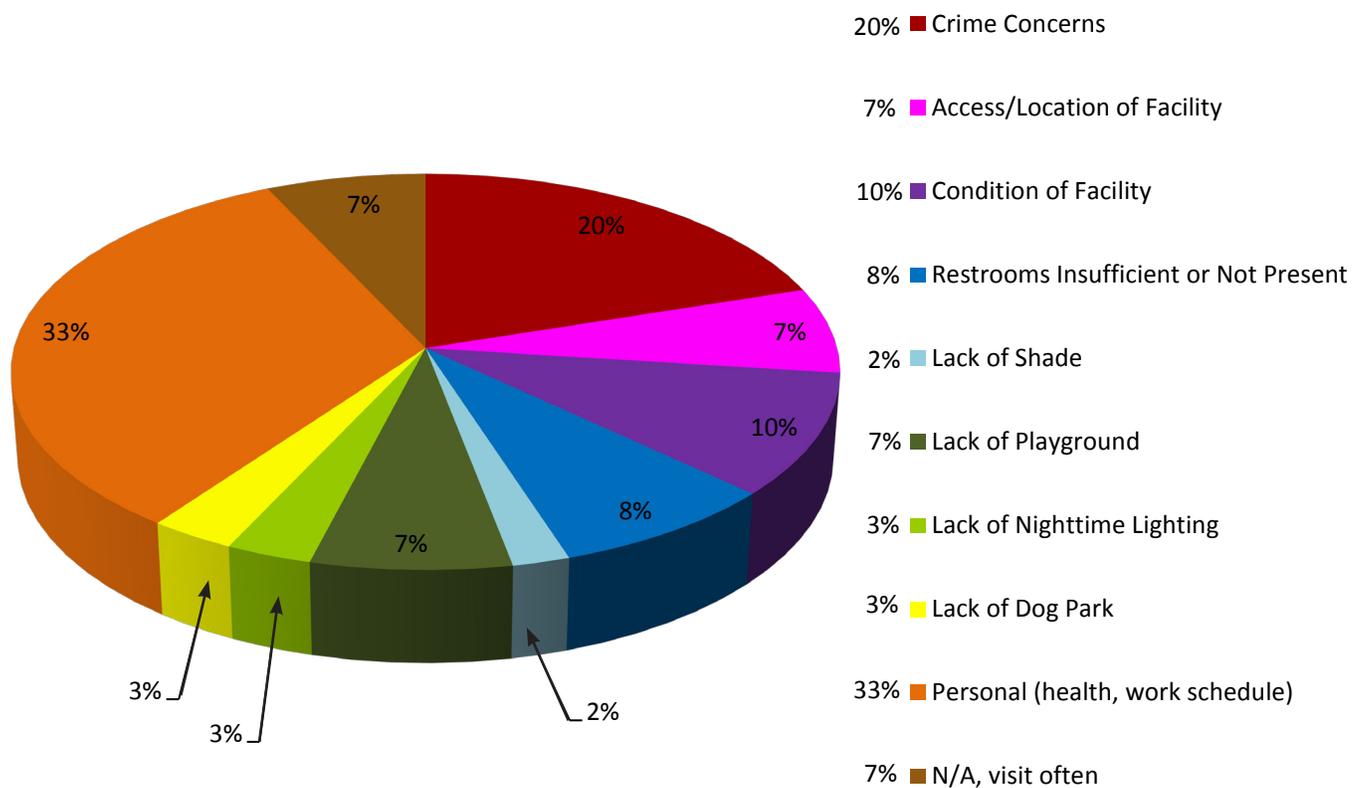
14. What do you dislike most about the City's recreation facilities?
Free responses were categorized as follows:



15. How likely would you be to recommend City recreational programs to a friend?

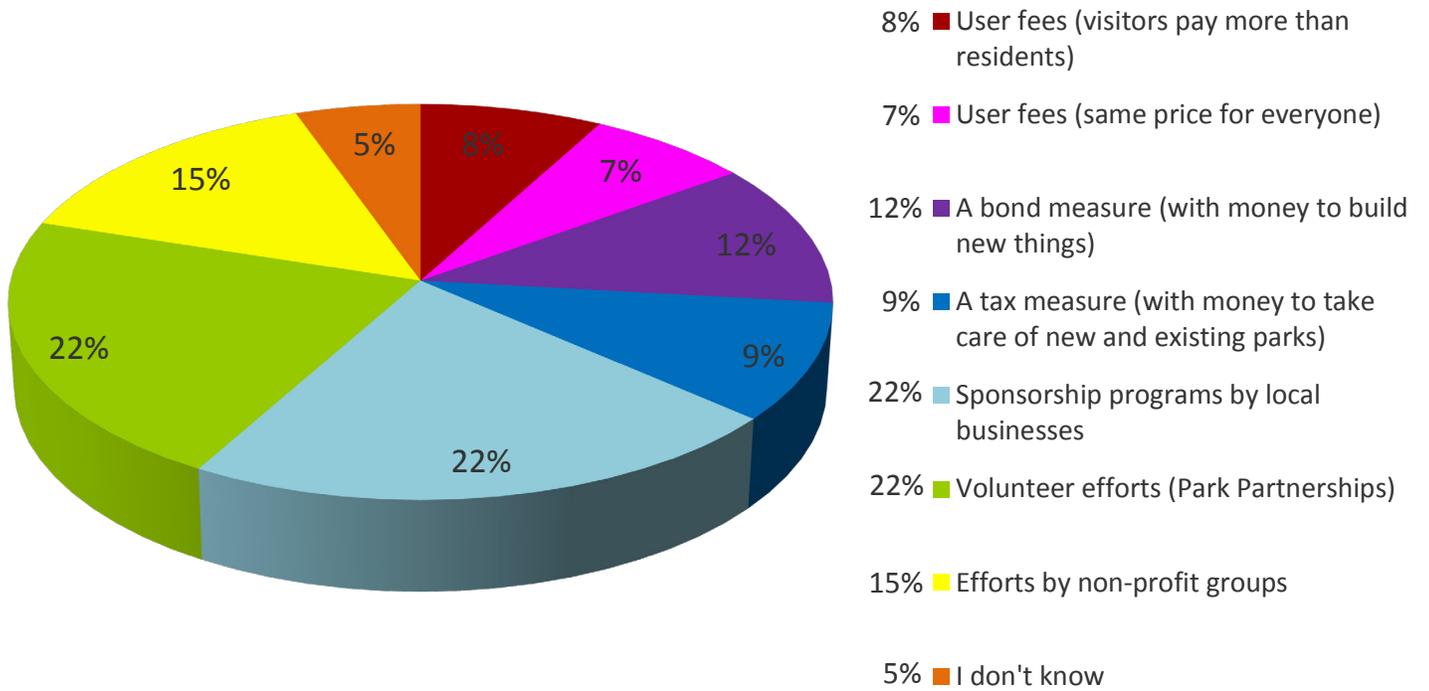


16. What keeps you from visiting City parks more often?



APPENDIX A

17. Because of funding limitations, the City and County currently struggle to staff and maintain their parks and recreation facilities. How do you think park maintenance, programs and new parks and facilities should be funded?





Smyrna Park

Appendix B

INVENTORY MATRIX

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INVENTORY MATRIX

Ceres Parks and Recreation Service Features	River Bluff Regional Park	River View Park	Independence Park	Berrygrove Park	Smyrna Park	Neel Park	Whitmore Park	Persephone Park	Roeding Heights Park	Redwood Park	Don Pedro Park	Strawberry Fields Park	Sam Ryno Park
SIZE (ACRES)	76	5.60	4.27	3.65	27.88	8.15	1.48	3.14	6.10	1.00	5.00	4.62	5.20
SHADE STRUCTURES													
Group Shade/Picnic Area-Small	1				2				1		1		
Group Shade/Picnic Area-Large					1								1
Group Shade/Picnic Area-Destination					Many								
SPORTS FIELDS													
Baseball Field-Little League-Lighted					3								
Baseball Field-Little League-Unlighted									1				
Softball Field-Adult -(Lights?)					2								
Softball Field-Girls -(Lights?)													
Soccer Field-bantam-Small													
Soccer Field-bantam-Large	6												
Soccer Field-bantam-Regulation Grass													
Multi-Use Turf Area L-M-S		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
SPORTS COURTS													
Basketball Outdoor Full Court									1/Light				
Basketball Outdoor Half Court												1	1
Tennis Courts									2/Light				
Volleyball (Sand)					2								
Horseshoes					8								
PLAY EQUIPMENT													
2-5 Yr	1	1		1	1			1		1			1
5-12 Yr	1	1	1	1	1			1		1	1	1	1
Swings				2	4								1

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Ceres Parks and Recreation Service Features	River Bluff Regional Park	River View Park	Independence Park	Berrygrove Park	Smyrna Park	Neel Park	Whitmore Park	Persephone Park	Roeding Heights Park	Redwood Park	Don Pedro Park	Strawberry Fields Park	Sam Ryno Park
SKATEPARK													
Skate park					1								
AQUATICS AND SPRAY PARKS													
Pool													
Aquatic Center													
Spray Area													
GATHERING PLACES													
Gazebo							1						
Amphitheater (Seat number)													
BBQ		2			29		2	1	7	1	3	1	1
Tables	23	3	2	4	88		13	1	14	4	4	6	4
Benches	2		1		12		4	1	4	1	1		4
Memorial							1						
Dog Park													
Rose Garden				1	1		1						
Dance Floor							1						
ASSOCIATED STRUCTURES													
Teen Activity Center													
Community Center													
Site Storage Facilities					1								
Restrooms	1				1				1			1	
Concessions	1				1								
UTILITIES													
Irrigation Pump	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Detention Basin	Yes (small)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Drinking Fountain	1						1					1	1
Transformer									1		1		1