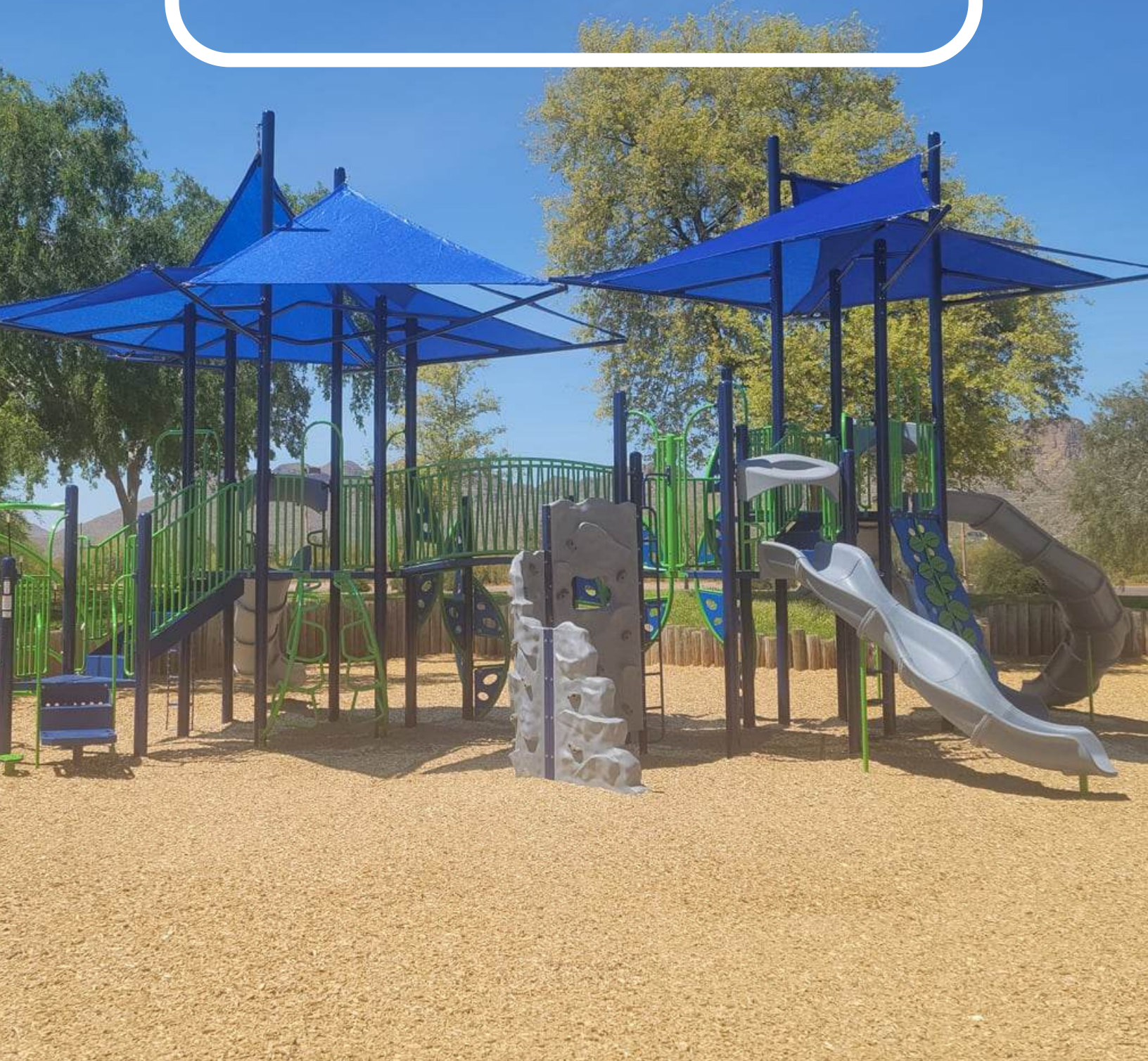


Apache Junction Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan 2023



Introduction

The Parks and Recreation Commission and city staff have developed this strategic plan to align our diverse services with the City's General Plan and the changing needs of our community. The commission met over the last year to analyze each of the components and surveyed 719 residents and visitors in the community on their opinions and interests to ultimately lead to the final decisions in this document.

The Strategic Plan will serve as a guide to help prioritize and budget for critical programs, facilities, and services. It is a living document that will change as necessary and will be updated on an annual basis by the Commission. Most of the items are listed according to our Fiscal year (July-June); however, there are some stats that are most effectively shared on a Calendar Year (January-December) basis.

Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Capital Facility Projects:

- Addition of administrative offices/storage and a fitness deck at the Multi-Generational Center, as well as updated flooring throughout.
- Superstition Shadows Park improvements to include renovations, a new restroom, and outdoor fitness circuit
- Prospector Park general renovations, new ballfield LED/shielded lighting, and a new vault style restroom on the north side
- Construction of Painted Sky Park, Ironwood Linear Park, and Ridgeline Linear Park in the Superstition Vistas Development to include a lake, walking paths, adventure playground, dog park, and much more
- Rodeo Event Center Master Plan review and prioritization of new amenities
- Design and Funding Research for trails, trailheads, and future connectivity, to include the CAP Trail and US60 multi-purpose path

With the expansion of facilities and program areas, our team will continue to grow. We will be adding a new Park Ranger, a Parks Superintendent, and exploring positions that will be needed to effectively run our newly purchased Rodeo Event Center. As always, our goal is to serve our community and deliver the best parks, facilities, and programs possible - making sure #ajplays!

Liz Langenbach
Parks & Recreation Director



About Our Team

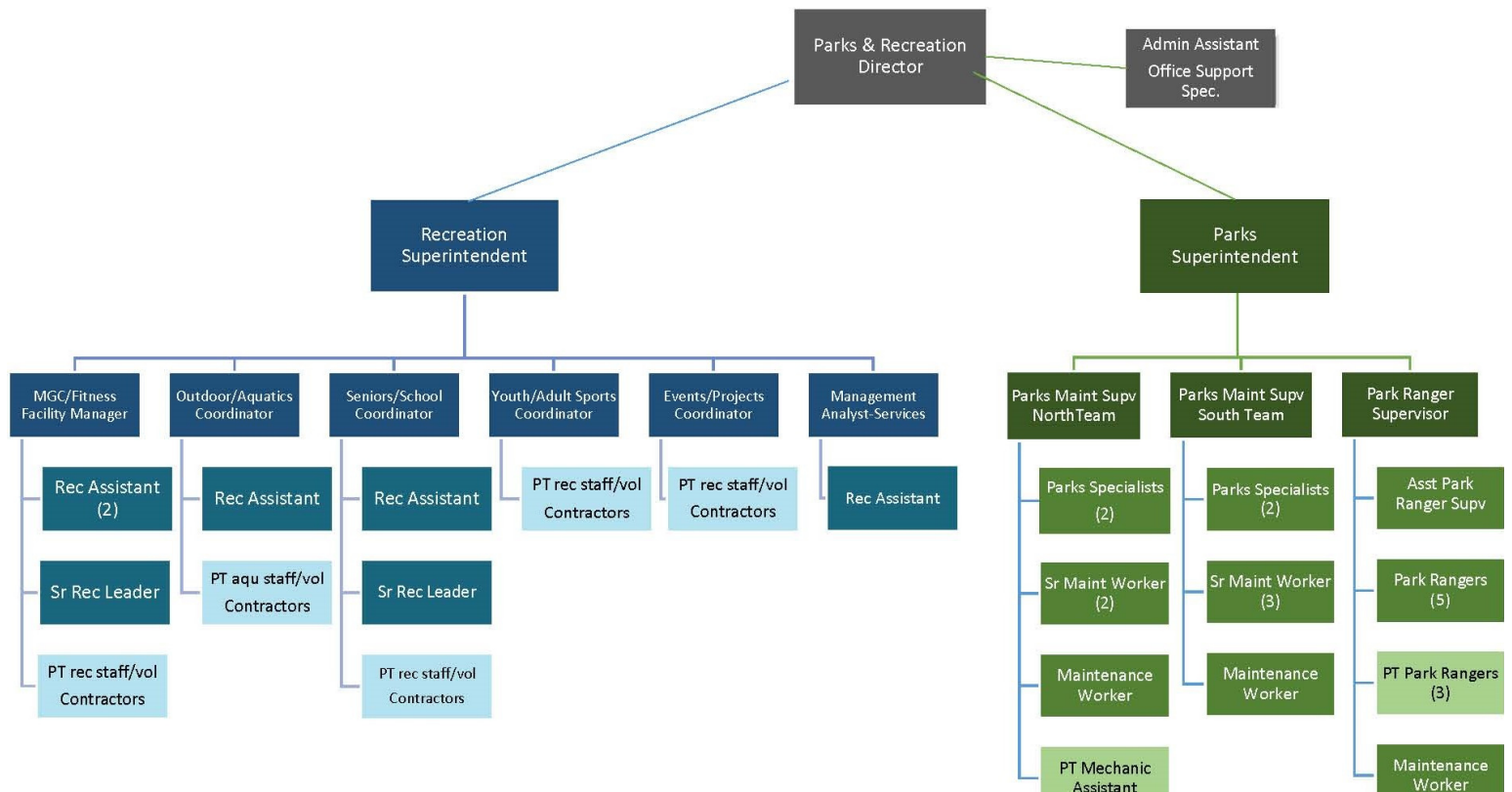
Our Vision

Connecting through people, parks and programs

Our Mission

Through exemplary performance, the Apache Junction Parks and Recreation Department provides quality services to an entire community with diverse recreational programs and an integrated, efficient and safe system of parks, trails and recreational facilities. To accommodate growth, the department also promotes visionary leisure opportunities and community partnerships in a progressive, innovative fashion, while demonstrating appreciation for a sensitive environment.

Organizational Chart





New Park Development

General Plan - Goal 2.1

Develop a system of parks, trails and open space to meet the recreational and health needs of Apache Junction residents and visitors

OBJECTIVES/POLICIES	STRATEGIES/ACCOMPLISHMENTS
<p>Policy 2.1.1- Encourage and facilitate public participation in planning and expanding the parks and trail system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 public Parks & Recreation Commission meetings were conducted in FY23 • 719 surveys were collected, giving input for the P&R Strategic Plan
<p>Policy 2.1.2 - Consider development of additional community facilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built and opened Dutchman Dog Park in FY23 - awarded APRA's Outstanding Facility award • Painted Sky Park in Superstition Vistas will build and open in FY24
<p>Policy 2.1.3 - Coordinate with developers to incorporate potential sites for parks, trails, open space and other recreational facilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with Superstition Vistas developers to incorporate public and private parks in the new developments south of US60 • Exploring sites with developers to add pickleball courts and large scale splashpads
<p>Policy 2.1.4 - Coordinate with other public and private groups on jointly developed parks, trails, and recreational facilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnering with Pinal County on the development of the CAP Trail and future parks on their property • Weeke's Wash Regional Stormwater Detention facility - considering recreation amenities in design • Partnering with BLM on a jointly operated trailhead along Sheep Drive Trail
<p>Policy 2.1.5 - Update and reintroduce the parks and recreation master plan for review and eventual approval by the City Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategic Plan is the first step in the process to achieve this objective



Park Expansion/Improvements

General Plan - Goal 2.2

Plan for the safety, maintenance, and expansion of existing facilities

OBJECTIVES/POLICIES	STRATEGIES/ACCOMPLISHMENTS
<p>Policy 2.2.1 - Include priority park system expansion projects and necessary maintenance programs in the City's annual budget and capital improvement plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FY23 completed \$3.6 million in capital facility expansion/improvement projects (FY24 budgeted \$4 million)
<p>Policy 2.2.2 - Pursue options for purchase or patent from BLM on current Rec & Public Purpose Leases</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchased 20 acre Rodeo Grounds from BLM • Review Prospector Park lease for patent/purchase
<p>Policy 2.2.3 - Consider updates, as needed, to existing intergovernmental agreements (IGAs) to increase usability of community facilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented IGA with Pinal County for CAP Trail • The current agreement with AJUSD expires 2028
<p>Policy 2.2.4 - Maintain an area of honor of war veterans as part of the City Hall campus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnering with local VFW posts to build a Veterans Memorial Park sign
<p>Policy 2.2.5 - Continue to enhance landscaping in high visibility right-of-ways such as the Apache Trail/Old West Highway median</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed improvements Phelps Dr to Ironwood Dr. • FY24 plans include curb and gutter Ironwood Dr. to Ocotillo
<p>Policy 2.2.6 - Operate a Park Ranger program that provides a safe, secure and enjoyable facility/program experience for all users</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hired an Assistant Park Ranger Supervisor to assist with weekend/evening leadership • Added and enhanced existing cameras to parks



Programs/Services

General Plan - Goal 2.3

Take a leadership role in the community for execution of a diverse Parks & Recreation programming and services strategy

OBJECTIVES/POLICIES	STRATEGIES/ACCOMPLISHMENTS
<p>Policy 2.3.1 - Maintain existing youth and adult volunteer programs and develop new programs to further enhance programs and facilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6,907 Volunteer hours in FY23 (\$219,635 value) • Continue existing volunteer programs (Jr guards, volunteer coaches, senior services) • Continue partnerships with volunteer groups
<p>Policy 2.3.2 - Through citizen input and the parks and recreation commission, evaluate the needs and provide a variety of programs and services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Received 1037 program/event survey responses in FY23 • 337 Program Sessions offered - New programs developed include: archery, cornhole, Saturday swim lessons, gyrokinesis workshops, etc. • MGC sold 4,056 memberships for a total of 97,580 visits in FY23 • Conducted 1,971 group fitness classes in FY23 • Installed new state of the art Matrix cardio equipment
<p>Policy 2.3.3 - Maintain and develop special events that attract visitors and residents to parks and recreation facilities and downtown businesses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocated annual Halloween Carnival due to growth • Dino Days and Mother's Day Tea won APRA Outstanding Program awards in their categories
<p>Policy 2.3.4 - Develop and promote programs and facilities that are inclusive in nature and enhance the lives of individuals with special needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added sidewalk connectivity at parks to make areas more accessible for events, programs, passive use • Managed modification requests to increase accessibility in programs
<p>Policy 2.3.5 - Support and assist governmental and non-profit organizations that offer related services/programs, and work together to avoid duplication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer led, youth-serving non profits like AJ Little League and Black and Gold Youth Fball pay only 25% of facility reservation fees • Worked cooperatively with local schools and library

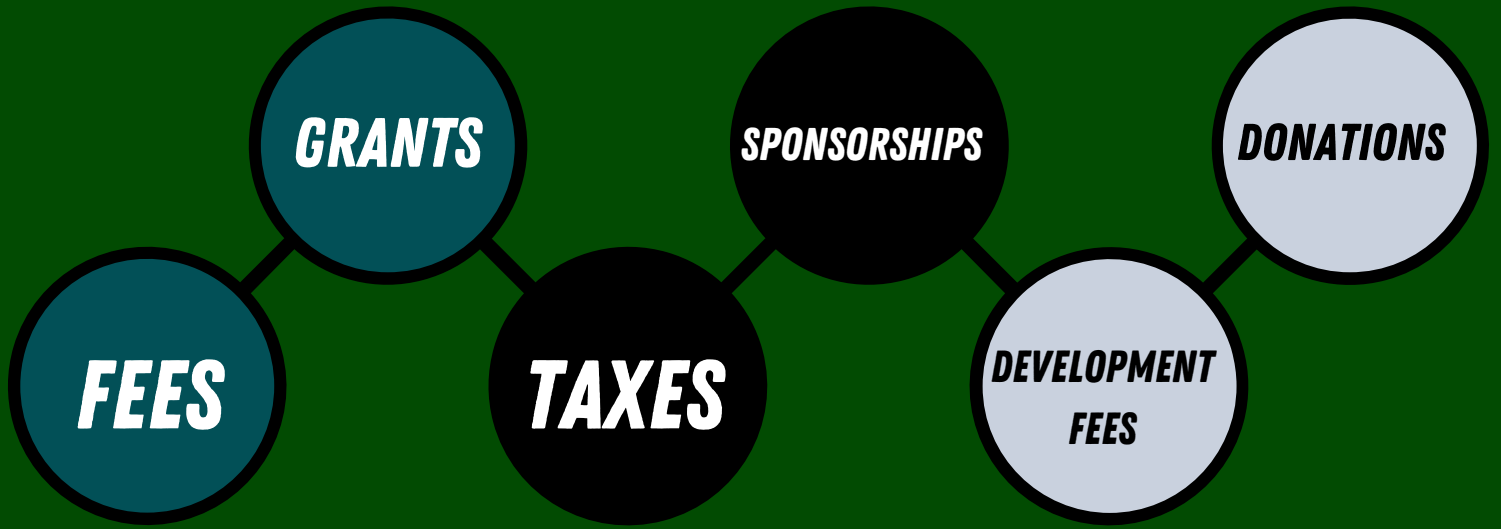


Marketing and Promotions

General Plan Goal 2.4

Promote parks, facilities and programs as a quality of life asset to attract new employers, residents and visitors to the community

OBJECTIVES/POLICIES	STRATEGIES/ACCOMPLISHMENTS
<p>Policy 2.4.1 - Maximize participation in programs through improved marketing and offering multiple registration options</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation/Utilization of Civic Rec as our online and in-person registration software • 39% of online and 61% in-person registrations • Increased on-site registration for special events
<p>Policy 2.4.2 - Maximize the public use of facilities through improved marketing and customer- oriented reservation processes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation/Utilization of Civic Rec as our online and in person facility reservation software • Processed 428 reservations at the dog park • Developing options for online reservations
<p>Policy 2.4.3 - Utilize a multi-modal marketing approach to include print, electronic, radio, televised, social media, and in-person sources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Media milestones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Facebook-10,355 followers & 251,307 reach ◦ Instagram- 1,527 followers & 72,299 reach ◦ Youth Advisory Council added own Instagram • Print Media milestones/goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Published Citizen brochure activity listing (12 full page free ads in the Independent and 3 in-house publications) ◦ FY24 - bringing back the popular Citizen magazine insert with full program listings • Utilized multiple platforms to increase summer recruitment of staff • Welcome Bags went out to 150 home buyers in new neighborhood developments • Added monthly Parks & Rec e-newsletter in FY23



Funding Strategies

General Plan Goal 2.5

Utilize multiple funding sources in order to maximize services, programs, and facility amenities for city residents

OBJECTIVES/POLICIES	STRATEGIES/ACCOMPLISHMENTS
<p>Policy 2.5.1 - Work cooperatively with other city departments to maximize use of grants, gifts, and corporate partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FY23 Grants included: Land Water & Conservation Fund, Burke Playground, State Parks Recreation Trails Program, and MAG Active Transportation Design Grant • \$601,642 grants in FY23 • \$30,008 gifts and donations in FY23 • \$40,000 corporate partnerships in FY23
<p>Policy 2.5.2 - Evaluate the parks and open space development fee and adjust as needed based on impact from users</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City adopted new development fees in 2022 • \$163,587 in development fees raised in FY23 • Superstition Vistas is using their development fees to build public parks within the development
<p>Policy 2.5.3 - Evaluate the parks and recreation fee structure for programs, facility rentals, and services every 5 years to insure compatability with the market and our community demographic</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last market fee study done in 2020 • \$4,400 offered in scholarships for those who cannot afford full fees • Offered multiple programs free of charge within aquatics, youth special interest, and events

PARKS AND FACILITIES PLAN

EXISTING SITES	FISCAL YEAR 2023/2024	FISCAL YEAR 2024/2025	FUTURE
City Hall Park	Explore grants for a new playground feature	Install additional playground feature	
Dutchman Dog Park	Additional benches and water at Mesquite area		
Flatiron Park	Updates to restroom flooring		Add additional shade structure and event plaza sidewalks
Little League Park	Restroom updates	Lazer-level infield	
Multi-Generational Center	Admin office/storage addition and fitness deck		
	Flooring updates throughout		
Multi-Use Trails & Open Space	Design/Construction of SR88 Trailhead with BLM	Design/Construction of SR88 Trailhead with BLM	Construct trailheads
	Fencing repairs throughout	Signage replacement throughout	
Prospector Park	Updates to restrooms ramadas and ballfield fencing	Updates to ramadas & ballfield fencing	Updates to ramadas
	Softball fields 1&2 update to LED/shielded lighting	Softball fields 3&4 update to LED/shielded lighting	Multi-use fields update to LED/shielded lighting
	Tennis court resurfacing		Add additional pickleball courts*
	Idaho Rd main water line replacement	Drainage and curbing improvements throughout	
ROW & Neighborhood Properties	Apache Trail Median (Ironwood to Ocotillo curbing)	Apache Trail Median Re-vegetation (Ironwood to Saguaro)	Apache Trail Median Re-Vegetation (Saguaro to Delaware)
	Palm Wash design work	Palm Wash repairs	Palm Wash repairs
		Granite replacement Arroyo	Granite replacement Renaissance
Rodeo Event Center	Update 2006 Master Plan to identify/prioritize amenities	Implement identified master plan improvements	Implement identified master plan improvements
		Update electricity and water lines	Arena lighting updated to shielded/LED
			Begin process for acquiring additional city-owned land
Silly Mountain Park	Update fencing and signage	Update fencing	
	Apply for and implement invasive grasses grant	Implement invasive grasses grant	Implement invasive grasses grant
	Explore interagency resource/interpretive center	Review and update Master Plan	Interagency resource/interpretive center construction
	Butterfly Waystation Install		

PARKS AND FACILITIES PLAN

EXISTING SITES	FISCAL YEAR 2023/2024	FISCAL YEAR 2024/2025	FUTURE
Superstition Shadows Park	LWCF Updates - restroom, skatepark fence replacement, ADA ramps, fitness circuit	Skatepark concrete and bowls repair	Sports field lighting updated to shielded/LED
	South maintenance building install		
Superstition Shadows Aquatic Center	Boiler replacement	Design and research for secondary sanitation system	
	Remaining grass converted to artificial turf	Interior paint throughout	Fence & CMU wall replacement
	Research grants for added shade	Install added shade	
	Restroom updates throughout		
FUTURE SITES	FISCAL YEAR 2023/2024	FISCAL YEAR 2024/2025	FUTURE
Blossom Rock District Parks	Painted Sky park opening: lake, adventure playground, dog park, and other amenities		Central district park design process (lake, sports fields and sports courts)
Blossom Rock Linear Parks	Ironwood & Ridgeline Linear Parks (Ray to Warner)		Ironwood & Ridgeline Linear Parks (to Elliott)
CAP Trail	Environmental studies and design	Construction of trail	Construction of trail
Superstition Basin and Park	Construction of detention basin and passive shade, benches, trail		Potential pickleball courts* and large splashpad
Lost Dutchman Trail	Prepare for MAG grant to fund	Design/construction of trail (Silly Mountain to Superstition Mtn)	Future phases designed and constructed
Reverence North Park		Public Park Design	Construction dependent on build-out of residential
Weekes Wash Regional Detention & Rec Area	Design of detention structure and amenities		Construction of detention structure and amenities
Marquee & Focal Point	Purchase new Focal Point Christmas Tree		

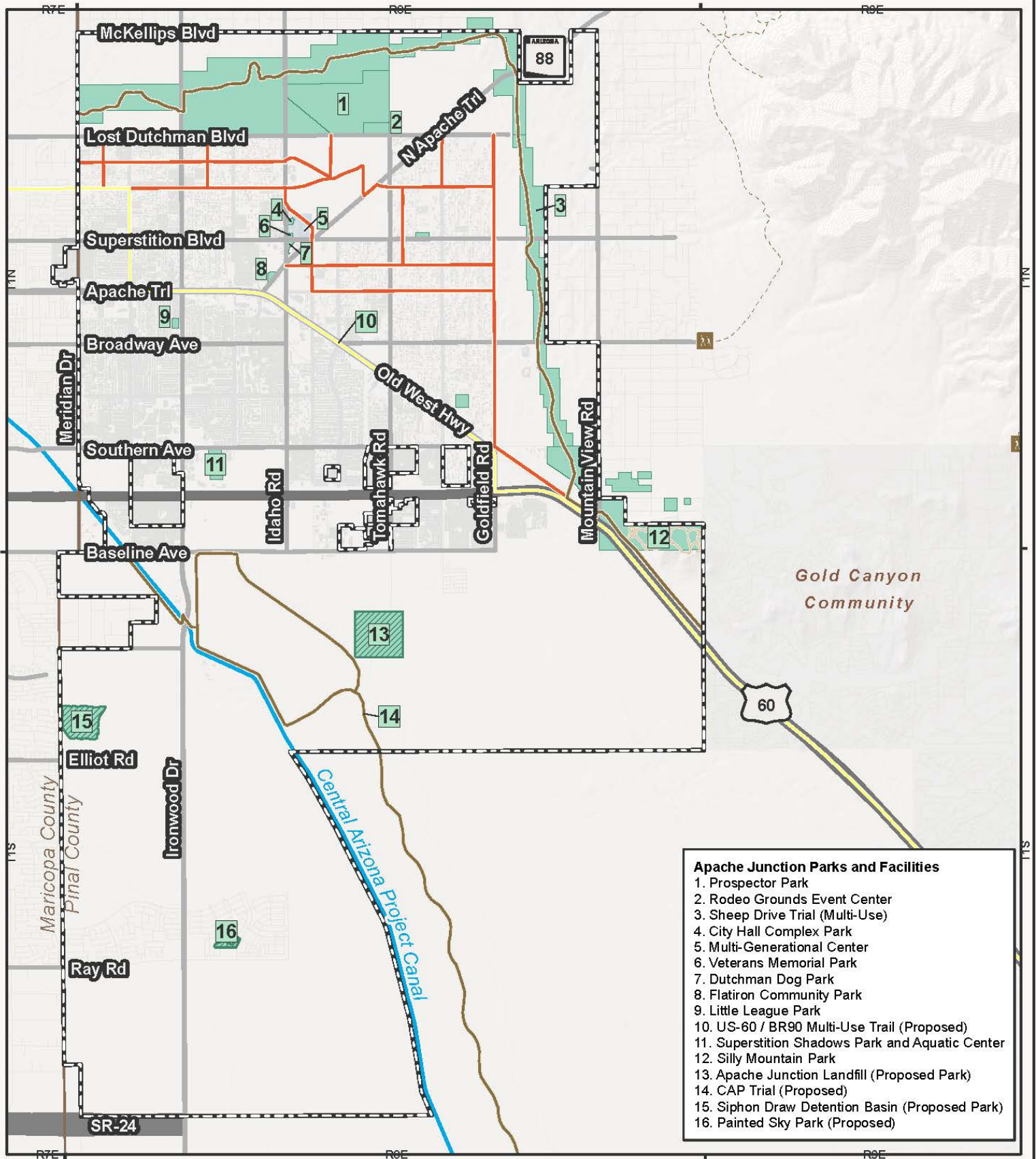
*Designates items that are being considered at multiple locations - will be built at only one location.

PROGRAM AREA	FISCAL YEAR 2023/2024	FUTURE
Park Ranger Program	Adding 1 park ranger to focus on trails, open space, and homeless issues	Assess and add park rangers for future parks in the south part of the community
	Work with other departments to implement new camera monitoring system	

Recreation/Service Programming Plan

PROGRAM AREA	FISCAL YEAR 2023/2024	FUTURE
Aquatics	Successfully recruit and hire enough aquatics staff to open 6 days a week	Successfully recruit, hire and train enough aquatics staff to be open seven days a week and increase swim lessons by 10%
	Expanded weekend operations through Labor Day	Move from Red Cross Lifeguard Certification to Star Guard
	Offered free swim on Wednesdays, 936 youth entries for FY23	Continue to expand aquatics programming; events, classes, etc
Events	Add smaller types of events during May-September	Add smaller types of events during May-September
	Successfully shifted 4th of July from the High School field to Superstition Shadows Park	
Multi-Generational Center	Increase special events at the MGC; added Bingo, Prehistoric Party, Garden Party	Program new deck space
	Increase member engagement at the MGC	Increase special interest offerings for youth during the summer
Senior Programs	Adding a formal winter event	Expanding program and event offerings
	Awarded GRIC Funding for FY24	Increase van use (medical/shopping)
Sports	Expand Archery program to include tournaments and integration into other programs	
	Increased 6 teams in youth sports leagues	Begin to strategically plan for expanded youth leagues; locations, coaches, evenings
Youth Programs	Maxed out summer camps	Explore options of returning a school gym to grow summer camp participation
	Increase awareness of the Youth Advisory Council through social media and presentations	
Outdoor Recreation Programs	Add events and programming at Silly Mountain	Develop and implement a volunteer program for Silly Mountain Park monitoring/maintenance
Administative/ Marketing	Offer online reservations for the dog park, practices fields and ramadas	
	Work with Blossom Rock Community Associations to plan for future shared usage of parks and facilities	
	Transition administrative staff and storage into new building	
	Re-introduce the Citizen Magazine jointly with city departments	

Apache Junction Parks & Facilities



LEGEND

- | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| Municipal Boundary | Apache Junction Parks | Proposed Park |
| County Boundary | Proposed Multi-Use Trail | Park Boundary |
| Maricopa County Park | Hiking Trail | |
| | Equestrian Trail | |
| | Proposed Bikeway | |





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parks &
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