



APACHE JUNCTION PARKS & RECREATION

STRATEGIC PLAN

2026

Introduction

Hello, Apache Junction!

Thank you, for taking the time to check out our Strategic Plan. It's an opportunity each year to map out where we've been and where we are going in tiny snapshots for the community. The goals are based on the citizen approved City of Apache Junction 2020 General Plan. For each objective, we've shared just a few of the key achievements from last fiscal year (July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025) and a few strategies for the current year.

We have a lot of capital projects this year, but here are some of the highlights:

Rodeo Event Center Phase 1 Construction

Little League Complex Restroom/Concession Renovation

Dog Park Shade Structures

Apache Trail Median Re-Vegetation

Aquatic Center Deck and Shower Flooring

Aquatic Center Fencing/Masonry Replacement

Superstition Shadows Park Aquatic Center & Playground Shade

MGC Interior Re-Paint

Prospector Park Pickleball Courts

Our team is proud of the programs, facilities, and services we provide to our quickly expanding city. Here are some of our most recent award winning parks, programs, and people!

2024 APRA Young Professional of the Year - Riley King

2024 Outstanding Sports Program - Parent Tot Sports

2024 Tree City USA/Growth Award

2024 Fields of Excellence Award - Little League Complex

2025 APRA Park Professional of the Year - David Butler

2025 Outstanding Facility - Painted Sky Park

DarkSky Certified Sportsfields - Prospector & Superstition Shadows Parks

As you look through the Strategic Plan, and you see something that is missing, or you think could be more clear, please don't hesitate to tell us! We revisit the Strategic Plan EVERY year. We want your input. You can attend one of our Parks and Recreation Commission meetings in person or you can fill out our Strategic Plan survey online at www.apachejunctionaz.gov/parks.

We hope to see you out in one of our parks or programs!

Liz Langenbach

Parks & Recreation Director

About Our Team

Our Vision

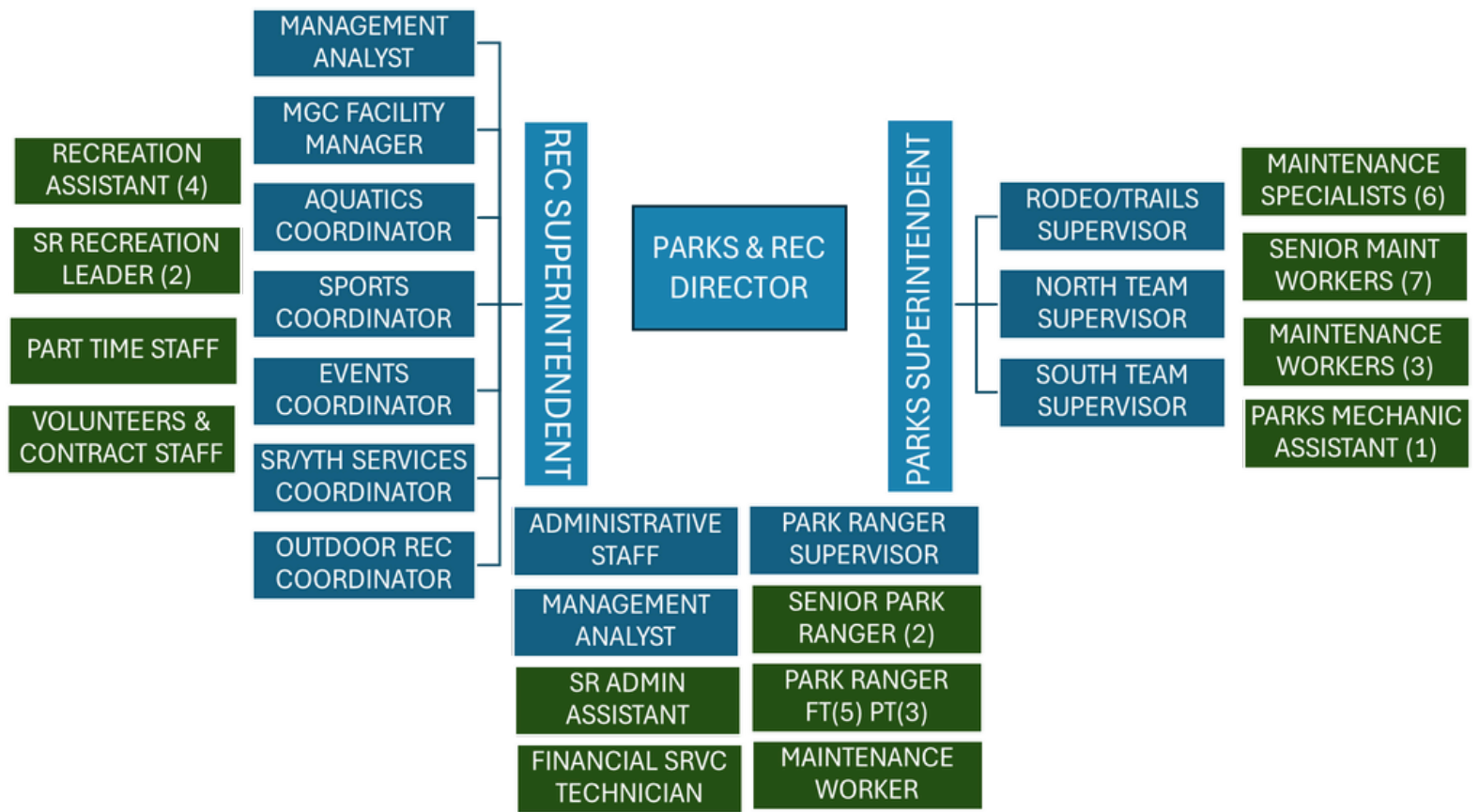
Connecting through people, parks, and programs.

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
Policy 2.1.1- Encourage and facilitate public participation in planning and expanding the parks and trail system	• 9 public Parks & Recreation Commission meetings were conducted in FY25 • Held stakeholder meetings for pickleball courts • Surveyed community members regarding park needs, including a method to offer feedback on the Strategic Plan
Policy 2.1.2 - Consider development of additional community facilities	• Held the Grand Opening of Painted Sky Park • Opened Ridgeline Linear Park • Completed Design of Phase 1 Rodeo Event Center, Prospector Park Pickleball Courts and began construction on both projects.
Policy 2.1.3 - Coordinate with developers to incorporate potential sites for parks, trails, open space, and other recreational facilities	• Working cooperatively with Brookfield Development to design the public Central District Park within Blossom Rock • Work cooperatively with CIP Department to Master Plan South City Campus which includes a park
Policy 2.1.4 - Coordinate with other public and private groups on jointly developed parks, trails, and recreational facilities	• Partnering with Pinal County on the development of the CAP Trail and Superstition Basin Park • Weeke's Wash Regional Stormwater Detention Facility - considering recreation amenities in design • Partnering with BLM on a jointly operated trailhead along Sheep Drive Trail
Policy 2.1.5 - Update and reintroduce the Parks and Recreation Master Plan for review and eventual approval by the City Council	• Began showing 10 minute walk concept on our City Park map for context and future planning • Updating the Strategic Plan yearly to help guide department planning efforts • Propose Process for Parks and Recreation Master Plan in FY27 and FY28 Budget Planning



Park Expansion/Improvements

General Plan - Goal 2.2

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

OBJECTIVES/POLICIES	STRATEGIES/ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Policy 2.2.1 - Include priority park system expansion projects and necessary maintenance programs in the City's annual budget and Capital Improvement Plan	- FY25 completed \$5.3 million in capital facility expansion/improvement projects - FY26 budgeted \$6.21 million
Policy 2.2.2 - Pursue options for purchase or patent from BLM on current Rec & Public Purpose Leases	- Review Prospector Park lease for patent/purchase - Review Silly Mountain, Sheep Drive, & Multi-Use Trails leases for patent/purchase
Policy 2.2.3 - Consider updates, as needed, to existing intergovernmental agreements (IGAs) to increase usability of community facilities	- Continue working with Pinal County for CAP Trail & Superstition Basin - The current agreement with AJUSD expires 2028 - Explore IGA/MOU opportunities with the local charter schools adjacent to parks/trails
Policy 2.2.4 - Maintain an area of honor of war veterans as part of the City Hall campus	Consider additional public art pieces and potential police memorials at Veterans Memorial Park
Policy 2.2.5 - Continue to enhance landscaping in high visibility right-of-ways such as the Apache Trail/Old West Highway median	- FY26 plans include completing adding vegetation and granite to Apache Trail median - Completed Ridgeline Linear Park at Superstition Vistas - Took over maintenance of Idaho Median US60 to Baseline
Policy 2.2.6 - Operate a Park Ranger program that provides a safe, secure, and enjoyable facility/program experience for all users	- Hiring a 2nd evening Assistant Ranger Supervisor to lead Park Ranger duties - Created and promoted the See Something Say Something campaign with text/call contact info



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
Policy 2.3.1 - Maintain existing youth and adult volunteer programs and develop new programs to further enhance programs and facilities	• 9397 volunteer hours in FY25 (\$326,939 value) • Continue existing volunteer programs (Jr guards, volunteer coaches, senior services, YAC) • Adding Silly Mountain Volunteer/Steward Program • Added new popular Sound Bath pool reservation
Policy 2.3.2 - Through citizen input and the Parks and Recreation Commission, evaluate the needs and provide a variety of programs and services	• Received 878 program/event surveys in FY25-large increase due to auto generated surveys in CivicRec • 131 MGC membership survey responses • 454 Program Sessions offered • New programs include: fishing, full moon hikes, First Saturday, cornhole league, 2 pickleball instructors/classes, and more • MGC sold 4541 memberships; 103,326 visits in FY25 • Conducted 2220 group fitness classes in FY25
Policy 2.3.3 - Maintain and develop special events that attract visitors and residents to Parks and Recreation facilities and downtown businesses	• Added parking and an ICS team to Easter Event • Halloween event in 2025 will go back to a free event • Grow Wellness event, adding more city businesses • Collaboration with local business for Paint and Pints
Policy 2.3.4 - Develop and promote programs and facilities that are inclusive in nature and enhance the lives of individuals with special needs	• Added sensory bins and adaptive areas to Dino Days, April Pool's Day, and the Easter Egg Hunt • Added adaptive Egg Hunt, w/ options for egg hunting • Manage modification requests to increase accessibility in programs
Policy 2.3.5 - Support and assist governmental and non-profit organizations that offer related services/programs, and work together to avoid duplication	• Volunteer led, youth-serving non profits like AJ Little League and Black and Gold Youth Football pay only 25% of facility reservation fees • Work cooperatively with local schools and Library • Work with non profits to collaborate on shared special events



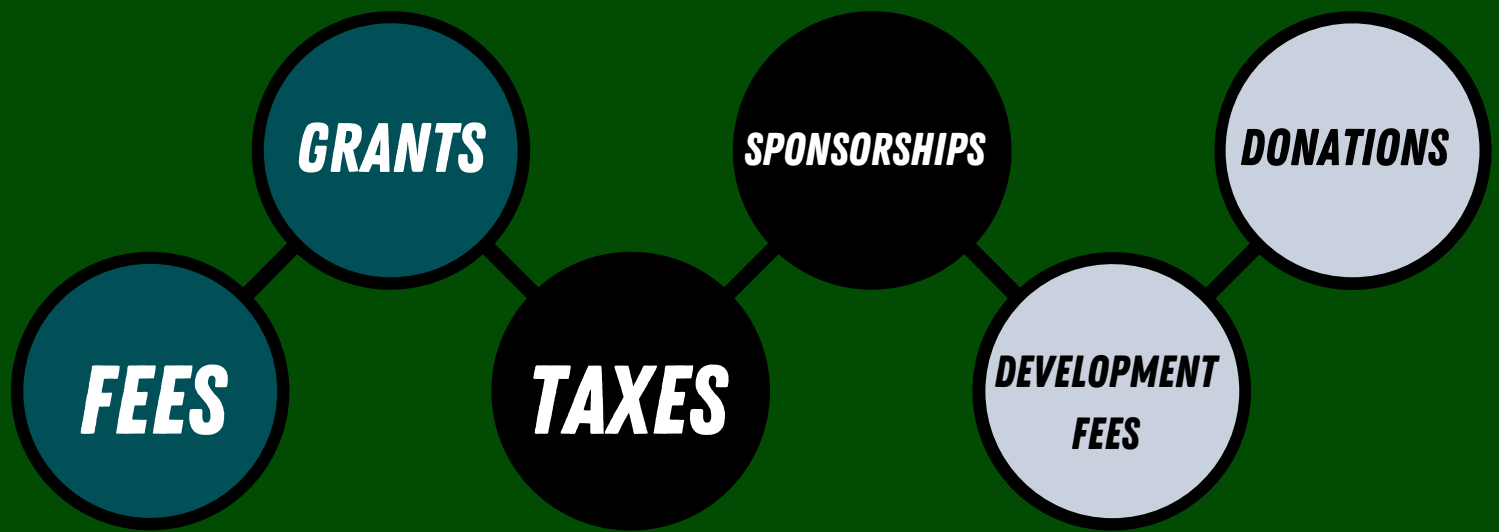
Marketing and Promotions



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
Policy 2.4.1 - Maximize participation in programs through improved marketing and offering multiple registration options	- Utilization of CivicRec as our online and in-person registration software 55% of registrations in-person, 45% online - Offer in person, online, & onsite registration options - Response time to patrons is less than 24 hours
Policy 2.4.2 - Maximize the public use of facilities through improved marketing and customer-oriented reservation processes	- Utilization of CivicRec as our online and in person facility reservation software (26% online and 74% in person) - Processed 739 reservations at Dutchman Dog Park & Ruff Ranch Dog Park - New events to the Rodeo Event Center included: a Bluegrass Festival, Development Services' Building Safety Expo, and a partnered burro derby and family equestrian event
Policy 2.4.3 - Utilize a multi-modal marketing approach to include print, electronic, radio, televised, social media, and in-person sources	- Social media milestones: - Facebook- 13,400 followers & 428,700 reach - Instagram- 2,532 followers & 38,200 reach - Print media milestones/goals: 26,500 copies of Citizen brochure distributed 3X per year - Created Z-card park/facility maps - Utilized multiple platforms to increase summer recruitment of staff - Welcome bags went out to over 1,500 home buyers in new neighborhood developments



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
Policy 2.5.1 - Work cooperatively with other city departments to maximize use of grants, gifts, and corporate partnerships	• FY25 grants included: ARPA, DFFM Invasive Plant Grant, CDBG grants, Drowning Prevention Coalition grant , LTAF/GRIC/Central Arizona Ageing transportation grants, SRP • \$2,421,637 grant utilization in FY25 • \$31,273 gifts and donations in FY25 • \$20,278 corporate partnerships in FY25 • Department taking over the administration of our own corporate partnership program
Policy 2.5.2 - Evaluate the parks and open space development fee and adjust as needed based on impact from users	• \$492,830 in development fees and investment income raised in FY25 • Superstition Vistas area contributes to new development through their Community Facilities District • Will work with the Development Services Dept to update the City's Development Fee Study
Policy 2.5.3 - Evaluate the Parks and Recreation fee structure for programs, facility rentals, and services every 5 years to insure compatibility with the market and our community demographic	• Last market fee study done in 2021 and will start a new study in 2026 • \$6,100 in scholarships given out for youth who cannot afford full fees • Offered multiple programs free of charge within aquatics, youth special interest, and events

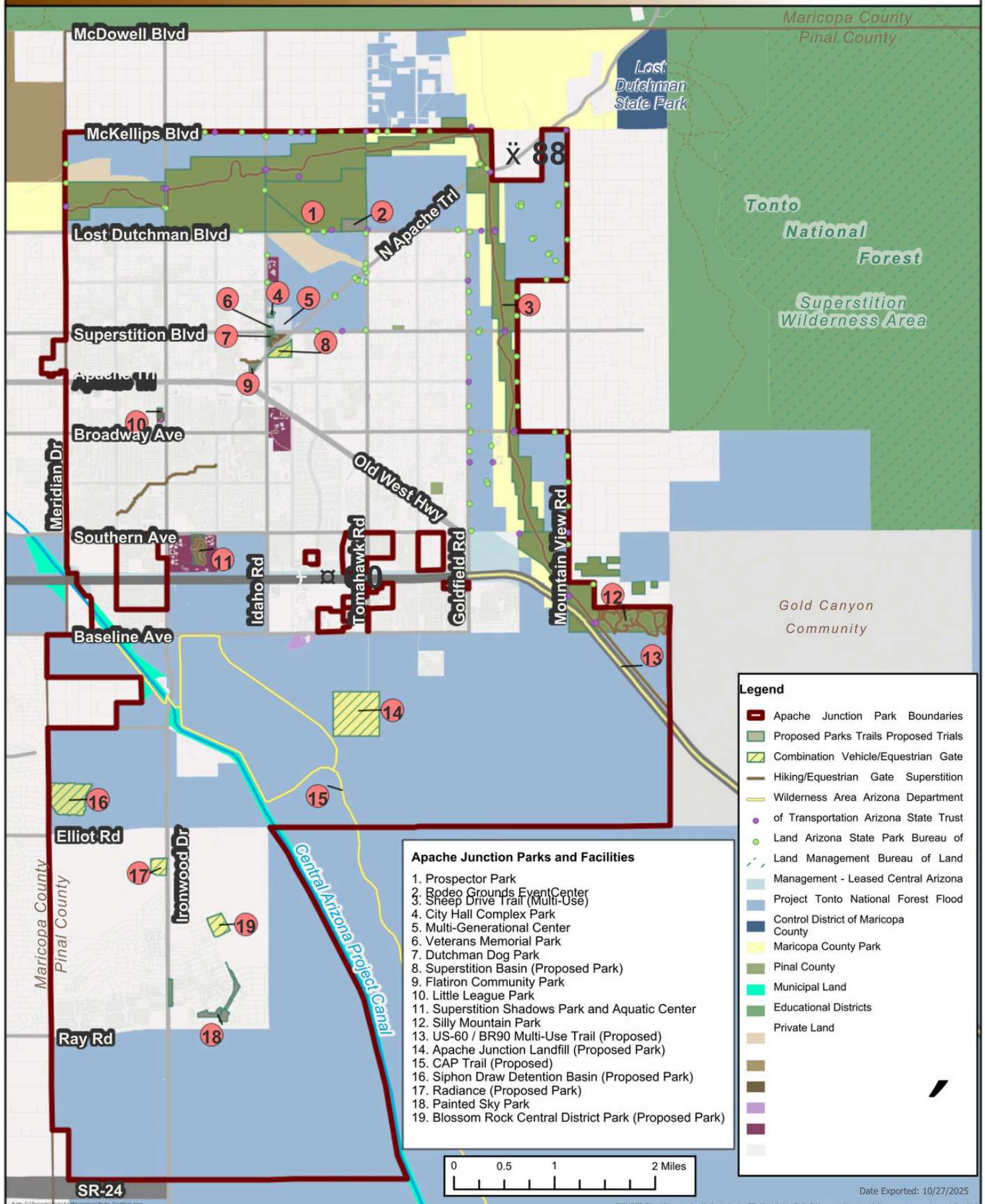
PARKS AND FACILITIES PLAN			
EXISTING SITES	FISCAL YEAR 2025/2026	FISCAL YEAR 2026/2027	FUTURE
City Hall Campus	Library Reading Garden Construction	Consideration of Veterans Park for police memorial (PAC)	
Dutchman Dog Park	Install shade structures		
Flatiron Park	Review Master Plan and additional needs with Commission		Phase 2 ramada and central plaza
Little League Park	Concession and restroom renovations		Shade structures and walkway improvements
Multi-Generational Center	Interior paint throughout	Walking track replacement	
Multi-Use Trails & Open Space	Complete trail marker placements	Horse Crossover Signage replacement	Construction of joint trailhead with BLM Goldfield Rec Area
Painted Sky Park	Acquisition of additional space north of the Dutch		
Prospector Park	Phase 1 Ballfield Irrigation renovation	Phase 2 Ballfield renovation & removal of non-functional turf	Multi-Use Fields Irrigation renovation
	Phase I Pickleball Court construction	Lighting updates throughout park	Ramada renovations
	Parking lots crack and slurry seal	Dedication signage Jeff Bell Softball Complex	
ROW & Neighborhood Properties	Apache Trail Median Re-vegetation (Ironwood to Delaware)		
	Renaissance Point - Palm Wash Repairs	Renaissance Point - Walking trail improvements/repairs	
		Arroyo Verde - Palm Wash repairs	
Rodeo Event Center	Construction Phase I - ADA sidewalks/parking, large ramada extended, site electric/utilities		
	Design Phase 2 Master Plan	Possible construction Phase II	Design/Construction Phase II
Silly Mountain Park	Invasive plant mitigation project	Review and update Master Plan	Consideration of interagency resource/interpretive center

PARKS AND FACILITIES PLAN			
EXISTING SITES	FISCAL YEAR 2025/2026	FISCAL YEAR 2026/2027	FUTURE
Superstition Shadows Park	Skatepark concrete and bowls repair design	Laser-level infields	Replacement play equipment
	Ramada replacements and phase 2 of lighting updates	Remove non-functional turf	Possible construction of skatepark renovations
Superstition Shadows Aquatic Center	Re-coat decking & slide renovations	Re-paint buildings	Filtration system updates
	Fencing and CMU wall replacement	LED Lighting	Restroom updates throughout
	Install added shade		
Marquee & Focal Point	Flower bed renovations		
FUTURE SITES	FISCAL YEAR 2025/2026	FISCAL YEAR 2026/2027	FUTURE
Blossom Rock District Parks			North District Park design (Developer)
Central District Park	Design of Central District Park (Developer)	Construction of Central District Park (Developer)	
Blossom Rock Linear Parks	Construction Ironwood Linear Park to Warner (Developer)	Construction Ridgeline Linear Park to Warner (Developer)	Ironwood & Ridgeline Linear Parks to Elliott
CAP Trail	Completion of trail design		Construction and maintenance of trail
Superstition Basin and Park	Park design (dependent on development fund)	Park design and construction documents	Park and amenities construction
Lost Dutchman Trail		Design of trail (Silly Mountain to Superstition Mtn)	Future phases designed and constructed
Radiance North Park	Master Plan of South City Campus	Design of Park at South City Campus	Construction of Park at South City Campus
Weekes Wash Regional Detention & Rec Area			Construction of detention structure and amenities

PROGRAM AREA	FISCAL YEAR 2025/2026	FUTURE
Park Ranger Program	Added a Sr Park Ranger to the evening rotation for additional team supervision and extra staffing in parks	Implement a Park Ranger Annual Training Calendar
	Promotion of See Something-Say Something campaign	

Recreation/Service Programming Plan		
Program Area	Fiscal Year 2025/2026	Future
Aquatics	Year-round trainings for aquatics staff	Continue to expand aquatics programming; fitness, events, classes, etc.
	Expand on current events and add 1 more event	Add additional opportunities for adaptive programming in aquatics
Events	Working with Cohere on partnered programs and events at Painted Sky	Continue to diversify events at new park locations
	Update the Special Event Code to include a city-wide permitting process	Continue to look at ways to introduce STEM programming to events (like Mad Science)
	Discontinue ticket/wristbands for Halloween Event - all games free	
Multi-Generational Center	Improve member engagement with staff, and incentive programs	Add more education and wellness programs
	Host two new events: 20 th Birthday Celebration and Turkey Trot	
Senior Programs	Continue to partner with other agencies for programs (Oakstreet Health, Library)	Increase transportation options and funding
	Research field trips for seniors	
Sports	Expand pickleball program to utilize new Prospector courts	Begin to strategically plan for expanded sports leagues. Utilizing space locations and recruitment of players and coaches
	Host a varied sport program for ages 3-5	
Youth Programs	Add value programming to intercession camps (guest speakers, entertainment)	Grow summer program to multiple sites
	YAC recruitment and youth program survey	Continue to grow teen programming
Outdoor Recreation Programs	Develop a hiking program	Develop additional lake programming: kayaking, paddle boarding
	Research biking related programs, clubs, meet-ups to implement	Continue to partner with other agencies for programs and initiatives
	Implement a volunteer program for Silly Mountain park monitoring/maintaining	
Administative/Marketing	Begin Fee Study for programs, facilities, and services	Take updated fees to Parks & Rec Commission and City Council for final adoption
	Social Media goal of at least 3 reels/videos per month	Continue to research marketing strategies to reach our community
Special Interest	Offer a monthly Read & Rec program with the Library along with other new programs	Continue to work with the Library to cross market and offer programs to both audiences
	Research other agencies and partners for classes	Continue to add STEM oriented programming for youth

City of Apache Junction - Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan Map



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