

# APACHE JUNCTION **PARKS & RECREATION** STRATEGIC PLAN





# Introduction

The Strategic Plan serves as a guide to help prioritize and budget for critical programs, facilities, and services that align with the City's General Plan and the changing needs of our community. It is a living document and is updated/adopted on an annual basis by the Parks & Recreation 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.

In addition to the opening of Painted Sky Park, we have many more exciting improvements to existing parks and facilities. Below are highlights of our fiscal year 2024/2025 Budget:

- **Prospector Park – Complete sports field dark sky friendly lighting retrofit**
- **Prospector Park – Drainage improvements and completion of curbing/sidewalk accessibility**
- **Prospector Park – Playground Shade Structures**
- **Prospector Park – Pickleball courts design and construction**
- **Superstition Shadows Park & Little League Complex – Ballfield fencing replacement**
- **Superstition Shadows Park - Fitness equipment and playground shade**
- **Superstition Shadows Park - Drainage channel and ADA accessibility**
- **Superstition Shadows – Restroom facility**
- **Superstition Shadows Park – Pathway lighting throughout**
- **Superstition Shadows Park – Ballfield dark sky friendly lighting retrofit**
- **Superstition Shadows Aquatic Center – Secondary sanitation system**
- **Superstition Shadows Aquatic Center – Shade**
- **CAP Trail Design**
- **Palm Wash – Improvements to Arroyo Verde and Renaissance Point neighborhoods**
- **Dutchman Dog Park – ADA improvements at park entrances**
- **MGC – Shower/Restroom remodel for ADA and non-gender based access**
- **Apache Trail Median – Landscape improvements**

With the expansion of facilities and program areas, our team continues to grow. Below are the new positions allocated to the Parks and Recreation Department in the 2024/2025 fiscal year:

- **Maintenance Specialist – assigned to Rodeo Grounds and Open Space/Trails**
- **Maintenance Specialist – assigned as an additional irrigation tech to help manage miles of irrigation and water lines**
- **Two Maintenance Workers – to bring our crews back to pre-recession numbers**
- **Management Analyst - to take over Rodeo Grounds promotions and the city-wide Special Event Liaison role, in addition to current facility reservation processes**
- **Outdoor Recreation Coordinator – to manage and expand the outdoor programs and natural resource grants and initiatives**

As always, our goal is to serve our community and deliver the best parks, facilities, and programs possible. We have so many exciting things planned, and we hope you will join us, all year long as we #PartyWithParks!

Liz Langenbach  
Parks & Recreation Director

# About Our Team

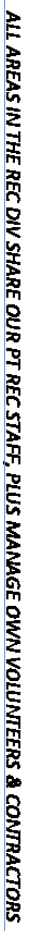
## Our Vision

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.









# 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 public Parks &amp; Recreation Commission meetings were conducted in FY24</li> <li>• Held focus groups on Pickleball use and Rodeo Grounds Design in FY24</li> <li>• Begin surveying the community on gaps in our Parks and Amenities in FY25</li> </ul>
Policy 2.1.2 - Consider development of additional community facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Built and opened new admin building with storage space</li> <li>• Painted Sky Park, Ironwood Linear Park, &amp; Ridgeline Linear Park in Superstition Vistas were built</li> </ul>
Policy 2.1.3 - Coordinate with developers to incorporate potential sites for parks, trails, open space and other recreational facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Built first community fishing lake in Painted Sky Park</li> <li>• Continue to work with Superstition Vistas developers to incorporate public parks for</li> <li>• Exploring sites with developers to add large scale splashpads &amp; sports fields</li> </ul>
Policy 2.1.4 - Coordinate with other public and private groups on jointly developed parks, trails, and recreational facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnering with Pinal County on the development of the CAP Trail and Superstition Basin for future parks on their property</li> <li>• Weeke's Wash Regional Stormwater Detention Facility - considering recreation amenities in design</li> <li>• Partnering with BLM on a jointly operated trailhead along Sheep Drive Trail</li> </ul>
Policy 2.1.5 - Update and reintroduce the Parks and Recreation Master Plan for review and eventual approval by the City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updating the Strategic Plan yearly to help guide department</li> <li>• Start researching on Parks and Recreation Master Plan</li> <li>• Begin researching 10 minute walk concept in relationship to the adopted City General Plan</li> </ul>





# 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FY24 completed \$4 million in capital facility expansion/improvement projects</li> <li>FY25 budgeted \$5.3 million</li> </ul>
Policy 2.2.2 - Pursue options for purchase or patent from BLM on current Rec & Public Purpose Leases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Prospector Park lease for patent/purchase</li> <li>Review Silly Mountain, Sheep Drive &amp; Multi-Use Trails leases for patent/purchase</li> </ul>
Policy 2.2.3 - Consider updates, as needed, to existing intergovernmental agreements (IGAs) to increase usability of community facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue working with Pinal County for CAP Trail &amp; Superstition Basin</li> <li>The current agreement with AJUSD expires 2028</li> <li>Create an IGA with Great Hearts School in Superstition Vista</li> </ul>
Policy 2.2.4 - Maintain an area of honor of war veterans as part of the City Hall campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Built a Veterans Memorial Park sign by partnering with local VFW</li> <li>Start to consider other public art pieces at Veterans Memorial Park</li> </ul>
Policy 2.2.5 - Continue to enhance landscaping in high visibility right-of-ways such as the Apache Trail/Old West Highway median	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed improvements Ironwood Dr. to Ocotillo Dr.</li> <li>FY25 plans include curb and gutter Ocotillo Dr. to Delaware</li> <li>Built Ironwood Linear Park at Superstition Vistas</li> </ul>
Policy 2.2.6 - Operate a Park Ranger program that provides a safe, secure and enjoyable facility/program experience for all users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hired a Park Ranger for trails/open spaces &amp; homeless outreach</li> <li>Added and enhanced existing cameras to parks</li> </ul>





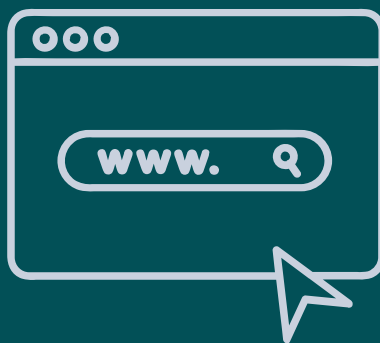
# Programs/Services

## 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"> <li>• 8,502 volunteer hours in FY24 (\$284,748.73 value)</li> <li>• Continue existing volunteer programs (Jr guards, volunteer coaches, senior services)</li> <li>• Add Silly Mountain Volunteer Program &amp; Senior Volunteer Club</li> </ul>
<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"> <li>• Received 397 program/event survey responses in FY24</li> <li>• 414 Program Sessions offered- New programs: swim team prep, stargazing, and outdoor programs</li> <li>• MGC sold 4,056 memberships for a total of 97,580 visits in FY24</li> <li>• Conducted 1,971 group fitness classes in FY24</li> <li>• Continue adding focus groups on MGC programs &amp; spaces in FY25</li> </ul>
<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"> <li>• Start to expand events to Superstition Vistas</li> <li>• Add Outdoor Recreation program area and expand our programming</li> <li>• Add more events to the Rodeo Grounds Event Center</li> </ul>
<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"> <li>• Renovating existing facilities to be more ADA accessible: MGC locker rooms, Dutchman Dog Park, Superstition Shadows &amp; Pickleball courts at Prospector Park</li> <li>• Built fully accessible playground at Painted Sky Park</li> <li>• Managed modification requests to increase accessibility in programs</li> </ul>
<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"> <li>• Volunteer led, youth-serving non profits like AJ Little League and Black and Gold Youth Fball pay only 25% of facility reservation fees</li> <li>• Worked cooperatively with local schools and library</li> <li>• Added New Leaf into our Halloween Event</li> </ul>





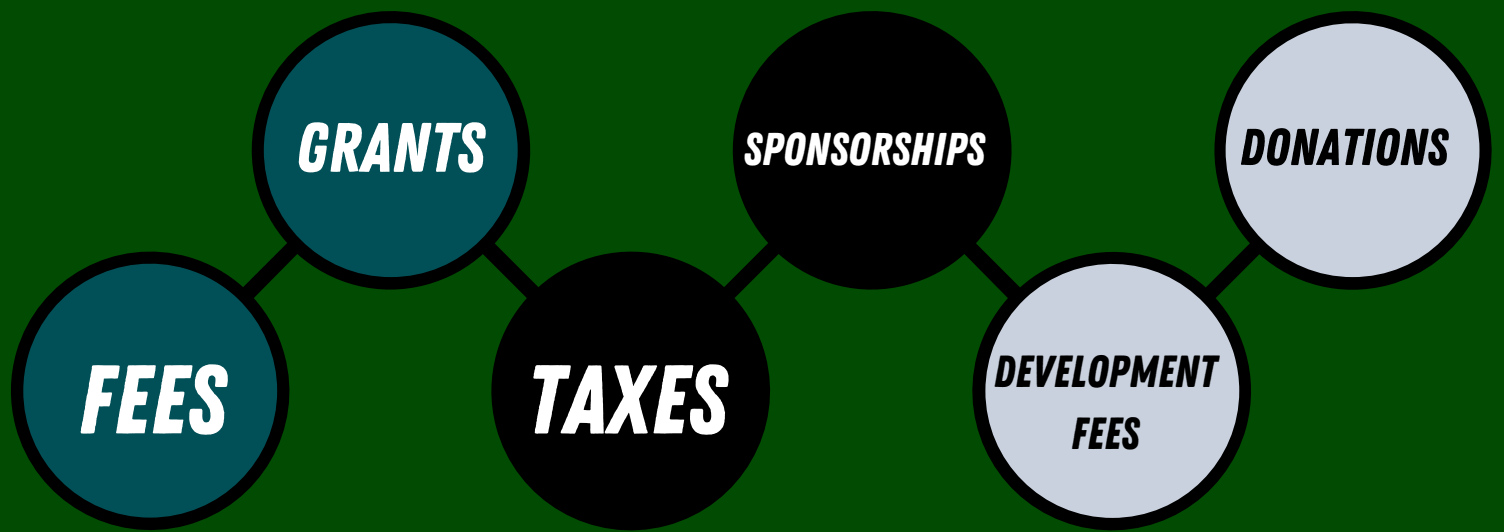
# Marketing and Promotions

## 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Utilization of Civic Rec as our online and in-person registration software</li><li>• 56% of online and 44% in-person registrations</li><li>• Offer in person, online, &amp; onsite registration options</li><li>• Response time to patrons is less than 24 hours</li></ul>
Policy 2.4.2 - Maximize the public use of facilities through improved marketing and customer- oriented reservation processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Utilization of Civic Rec as our online and in person facility reservation software</li><li>• Processed 499 reservations at the dog park</li><li>• Added online reservations for dog parks, ramadas &amp; sports courts</li></ul>
Policy 2.4.3 - Utilize a multi-modal marketing approach to include print, electronic, radio, televised, social media, and in-person sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social media milestones:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Facebook- 12,000 followers &amp; 471,000 reach</li><li>◦ Instagram- 2,000 followers &amp; 17,000 reach</li></ul></li><li>• Print media milestones/goals:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ FY24 - brought back the popular Citizen magazine insert with full program listings</li></ul></li><li>• Utilized multiple platforms to increase summer recruitment of staff</li><li>• Welcome bags went out to 1,500 home buyers in new neighborhood developments</li><li>• Updated web pages to be more user friendly</li></ul>





# 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FY24 grants included: Land Water &amp; Conservation Fund, Invasive Plant Grant, LTAF Transportation Grant, GRIC Grant</li> <li>\$107,142 grant utilization in FY24</li> <li>\$32,975 gifts and donations in FY24</li> <li>\$16,500 corporate partnerships in FY24</li> </ul>
Policy 2.5.2 - Evaluate the parks and open space development fee and adjust as needed based on impact from users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The City adopted new development fees in 2022</li> <li>\$401,655 in development fees raised in FY24</li> <li>Superstition Vistas area contributes to new development through their Community Facilities District</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Last market fee study done in 2021 and will start a new study in 2026</li> <li>\$5,500 in scholarships for those who cannot afford full fees were utilized</li> <li>Offered multiple programs free of charge within aquatics, youth special interest, and events</li> </ul>



PARKS AND FACILITIES PLAN			
EXISTING SITES	FISCAL YEAR 2024/2025	FISCAL YEAR 2025/2026	FUTURE
City Hall Park		Install additional playground feature	
Dutchman Dog Park		Install shade structures	
Flatiron Park		Splashpad fencing	Add additional shade structure and event plaza sidewalks
Little League Park	Replace outfield and dugout fencing	Laser-level infield	Add shade structures
Multi-Generational Center	Locker room shower conversion design and construction	Repaint interior	
		Replace aging kitchen equipment	
Multi-Use Trails & Open Space	Design/Construction of SR88 Trailhead with BLM	Possible construction of SR88 Trailhead with BLM	Construct trailheads
	Fencing repairs throughout	Signage replacement throughout	
Prospector Park	Drainage improvements construction	Renovate ballfield irrigation system	Updates to ramadas
	Softball fields 3&4 & Multi-Use fields update to LED/shielded lighting	Drainage and curbing improvements throughout	Renovate Multi-Use fields irrigation system
	Design and construction of additional PB courts		
	Idaho Rd main water line replacement		
ROW & Neighborhood Properties	Apache Trail Median (Ironwood to Ocotillo curbing and granite)	Apache Trail Median Re-vegetation (Ironwood to Delaware)	Palm Wash repairs
	Palm Wash design work	Palm Wash repairs	
		Granite replacement Arroyo Verde/Renissance	
Rodeo Event Center	Design Phase 1 Master Plan	Design Phase 2 Master Plan	Implement identified Master Plan improvements
	Begin Phase 1 construction		Construction of Master Plan phases 2 & 3
			Begin process for acquiring additional city-owned land
Silly Mountain Park	Update fencing and signage	Update fencing	Continue invasive grasses grant
	Implement invasive grasses grant	Continue invasive grasses grant	Interagency resource/interpretive center construction
	Coordination of a Monarch Butterfly Way Station	Review and update Master Plan	



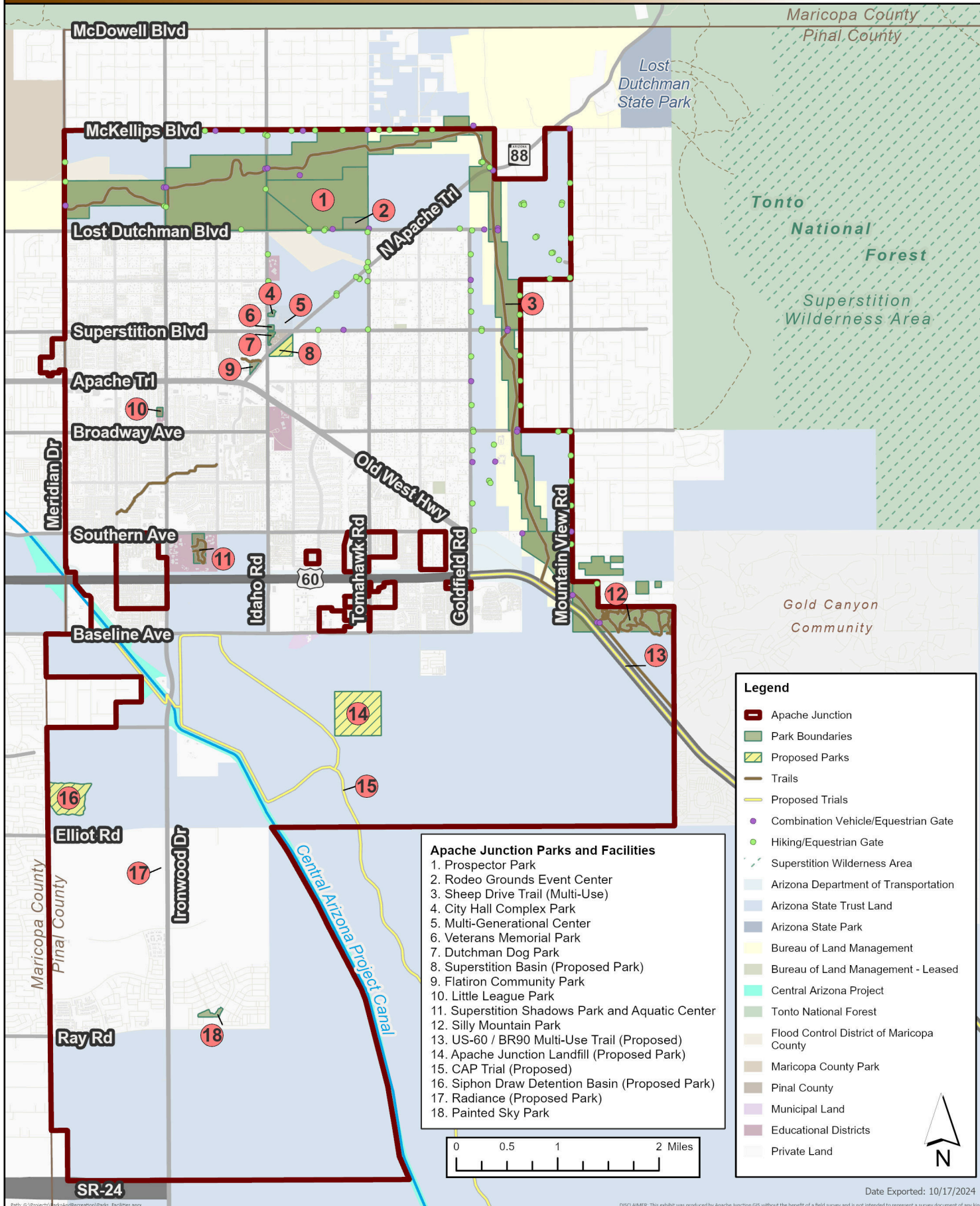
PARKS AND FACILITIES PLAN			
EXISTING SITES	FISCAL YEAR 2024/2025	FISCAL YEAR 2025/2026	FUTURE
Superstition Shadows Park	LWCF Updates - restroom, ADA ramps, fitness circuit	Skatepark concrete and bowls repair	Replacement play equipment
	Ballfield lighting LED conversion	Laser-level infields	Update ramadas
	ADA & drainage improvements	SRP electrical connections to office and south side of park	
Superstition Shadows Aquatic Center	Boiler replacement	Recoat deck	Filtration updates
	Install secondary sanitation system	Fence & CMU wall replacement	Restroom updates throughout
		Install added shade	
Painted Sky Park	Painted Sky Park opening: lake, adventure playground, dog park, and other amenities	Design of Central District Park (lake, sports fields, and sports courts)	Central District Park construction
Blossom Rock Linear Parks	Ironwood & Ridgeline Linear Parks (Phase 1)		Future Phases Ironwood & Ridgeline Linear Parks
Marquee & Focal Point	Flower bed renovations		
FUTURE SITES	FISCAL YEAR 2024/2025	FISCAL YEAR 2025/2026	FUTURE
CAP Trail	Environmental studies and design	Construction of trail	
Superstition Basin and Park	Construction of detention basin	Design of walking trail	Potential park and amenities
Lost Dutchman Trail	Prepare for MAG grant to fund	Design/construction of trail (Silly Mountain to Superstition Mtn)	Future phases designed and constructed
Radiance North Park	Public Park Design	Public Park possible construction start	Construction of Pubic Park (dependent on residential build out)
Weekes Wash Regional Detention & Rec Area	Design of detention structure and amenities		Construction of detention structure and amenities
*Designates items that are being considered at multiple locations - will be built at only one location.			

PROGRAM AREA	FISCAL YEAR 2024/2025	FUTURE
Park Ranger Program	Adding and updating safety equipment for Park Rangers	Assess and add Park Rangers for future parks in the south part of the community



Recreation/Service Programming Plan		
PROGRAM AREA	FISCAL YEAR 2024/2025	FUTURE
Aquatics	Successfully recruited and hired enough staff to open 7 days a week	Continue to expand aquatics programming; events, classes, etc.
	Added 3 new events and a swim team	Improve aquatic administrative processes
Events	Added 3 new smaller events (July-September)	Continue to diversify events at new park locations
	Add and improve on dog park events	Look for alternative spaces for growing events
Multi-Generational Center	Increase programming on the new deck space	Increase events hosted at the MGC
	Increase member engagement at the MGC	Improve member check-in process
Senior Programs	Increase transportation options	Increase recreational opportunities
	Increase volunteer participation & appreciation	
Sports	Begin to strategically plan for expanded sports leagues; locations, coaches, evenings	Expand pickleball program to utilize new Prospector courts
	Host a senior softball tournament	
Youth Programs	Move summer camp CCJH to expand the program	Grow summer program to multiple sites
	YAC to create a signature event	Continue to grow teen programming
Outdoor Recreation Programs	Added events and programming at Silly Mountain	Develop a fishing program
	Develop and implement a volunteer program for Silly Mountain park monitoring/maintaining	Continue to partner with other agencies for programs and initiatives
Admininistative/ Marketing	Continue to explore online reservations for City facilities	Continue to research marketing strategies to reach our community
	Explore Special Event ordinances for the City	
	Get verified on our Social Media accounts	
Special Interest	Increase staff lead special interest programs	Continue to offer diverse programs for all ages
	Increase adult special interest programs	

# Strategic Plan Map







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# Contact Us



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