

ELEMENT 10: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAILS (PROST)

VISION The regional vision for parks, open space, trails, and recreational opportunities responds to the beauty and unique ecology of the Sonoran Desert. This area has a long history of open lands and active, outdoor, year-round recreation.



Trail along Arroyo Chico Wash invites public use.

For many centuries, the desert provided a spacious home for a sparse population that learned to live in harmony with the land, harvesting its bounty and respecting its stark beauty. This heritage of vast expanses of open land and uninterrupted vistas of mountains, mesas, and desert lowlands underlies today's commitment to protect remaining open space resources.

Natural preserves, such as Cienega Creek, and large existing and proposed parks in the Tortolitas, Tucson Mountains, Sierritas, and Cerro Colorados will complement existing state and federal preserves, such as Catalina State Park, Coronado National Forest, and Saguaro National Park. Desert belts and expanded linear parks will link public lands in an integrated system that provides recreation for the region's growing population and protection for flora and wildlife.



River parks and trails connect the urban area with public reserves.

Trails are part of the heritage and lifestyle of the Tucson area. Hohokam Indians walked along the Santa Cruz River and the major streams that drain the surrounding mountains to hunt game and trade with distant villages. Father Kino and early Spanish settlers traveled north from Mexico along the Santa Cruz and San Pedro Rivers. During the Spanish, Mexican, and Territorial periods, settlers rode a network of trails in pursuit of their livelihood.

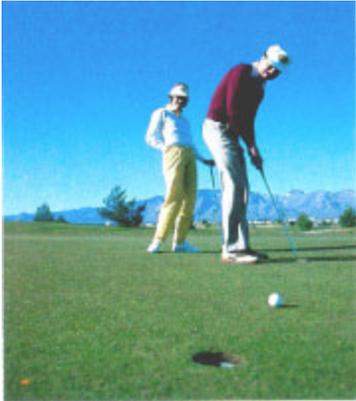
Although trail needs are now primarily recreational and urban, ties to early Western settlement and ranching remain strong. The vision for tomorrow's hikers, urban walkers, joggers, bicyclists, and equestrians is based on an interconnected parks, trails, and open space system implemented through cooperative public and private efforts. The network of urban and natural parks and public trails, emphasizing trail access to public lands, will integrate trails and open space resources throughout the region.

Recreational needs are more varied and complex than in former times when recreation was informal or was associated with guest ranches and health resorts in the Tucson Basin. Urbanization and rapid population growth have resulted in a diverse array of recreational amenities--regional, neighborhood, and linear river parks; zoological parks; botanical gardens; golf courses; and special purpose recreation facilities. Additionally, celebrity sports events, including national golf and tennis tournaments and the University of Arizona athletic program tournaments, will play an increasingly important role in the community. The *Regional Vision* includes an integrated system of parks, recreation, and open space that serves the needs of a population that is diverse in culture, age, and interests. Realization of such a system will be accomplished by expanding traditional park facilities to balance active sports-oriented parks with more natural parklands and by providing miniparks along the linear park system.



Outdoor recreational opportunities are enjoyed year-round.

Element 10: Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST)



World-class golf courses challenge residents and visitors.

Public golf courses will use recycled water. New parks and park renovations will retain native vegetation and incorporate low-water use plant materials. Cooperative programs with school districts and private recreation facilities throughout the region will enhance public resources. A coordinated, incremental program will ensure that the size, type, and distribution of parks keep pace with the needs of residents and visitors alike.

Livable Tucson Goals

Abundant Urban Green Space and Recreation Areas

Includes recreation and green space within the city, including neighborhood and regional parks, common space, community gardens, bike and walking paths, linear and river parks, trees, and urban landscaping.

Protected Natural Desert Environment

Includes protection of the Sonoran Desert ecosystem and protection of washes, hillsides, open space, and wildlife.

Efficient Use of Natural Resources

Includes conservation of resources and use of sustainable energy sources.

Introduction

The Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST) Element identifies park and recreational needs and identifies resources and opportunities to attain policy goals. The element identifies a commitment to providing and maintaining a high quality system of parks facilities with a balanced approach to locations and standards that recognizes current and future needs of the community. The element identifies a commitment and recognition of the social values of providing and maintaining a high quality of leisure recreation programs to serve the current and future needs of the community. The element identifies a commitment to have an interconnected system of open space and trails that facilitates active and passive recreational opportunities for the community and provides relief to the urban fabric of the built environment.



Parks

Background The City has a long history and a continued commitment to providing and maintaining a high quality system of parks and recreation programs to serve the current and anticipated needs of the community. As additional parks and facilities extend the system to more residents and enrich opportunities, existing parks will also need upgrading and renovation to meet current recreational needs. Regional and metro school/parks facilities, together with active sports centers, will continue to be in demand for large segments of the community engaged in team sports. At the same time, demographic changes have placed new emphasis on passive recreational, cultural, and social activities. Community parks, supplemented by neighborhood parks, improved school grounds, natural open space, and trails will provide recreational opportunities close to home. Greater cooperation between public agencies and private providers will be required to continue to meet recreational needs. The City should continue to plan and provide park facilities to renew the spirit and enhance recreational opportunities for all residents, thus promoting lifetime users.

Policy 1: **Determine the parks and recreational needs of a diverse and changing population and provide appropriate facilities and programs.**

- Supporting Policies***
- 1.1 Establish new facilities in existing and undeveloped parks to meet current and future needs of residents.
 - 1.2 Evaluate and renovate existing parks to upgrade facilities to address changing demographic and recreational needs.
 - 1.3 Determine and plan for the acquisition of new park sites to meet new park standards as identified in the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan 2010.

Element 10: Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST)

Actions



1.3.A Identify suitable parcels of land for acquisition for parks using current and future demographics and population projections.

1.3.B Establish priorities and pursue land acquisition for new parks, as established budgetary limits and legislative procedures permit.

1.3.C Evaluate potential locations for new parks and recreation facilities, as identified in adopted specific area and neighborhood plans and policies.

Natural Park Resource

Supporting Policy

1.4 Identify and pursue funding mechanisms for needed parks facilities and recreational services.

Policy 2: Encourage intergovernmental and public-private cooperation to maximize park and recreational opportunities.

Supporting Policies

2.1 Strengthen park planning, development, and coordination of facilities with all regional jurisdictions and agencies.

2.2 Evaluate reciprocal opportunities in the pursuit of City/County and City/City consolidation of the metropolitan recreational services and parks.

2.3 Strengthen cooperation between the City and school districts for the joint development, maintenance, and use of school facilities for educational programs, park development, and recreational use.

2.4 Continue joint planning with federal agencies on grant proposals and allocation of funds.

2.5 Promote effective cooperation for park planning and development between the City and private, nonprofit recreation providers, such as the YMCA and Boys' Clubs, etc.

2.6 Pursue cooperation and foster partnerships with private recreation providers.

Policy 3: Provide and maintain design principles and guidelines for all parks.

Supporting Policies

3.1 Maintain general park design guidelines to promote high and consistent standards in park development.

3.2 Incorporate efficient water use and conservation principles and continue utilization of reclaimed water in new and existing parks and recreation facilities to preserve water resources and to comply with requirements of the Arizona Department of Water Resources.



Element 10: Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST)



Actions

3.3 Provide for well-designed park access, internal circulation, and support facilities for all transportation modes.

3.4 Promote barrier-free access, where appropriate, to all new and renovated facilities and place special emphasis on developing facilities that meet the needs of the disabled community.

3.5 Consider and respond to the costs of energy in parks and recreation facilities, as well as travel costs to parks users.

3.5.A Identify and respond to opportunities to lower energy operational costs in recreation facilities.

3.5.B Pursue scheduling of activities to maximize the use of facilities for maximum energy efficiency.

3.5.C Locate parks and recreation facilities to minimize transportation costs for users.

3.5.D Enhance opportunities for park access by alternate transportation modes.

Supporting Policy

3.6 Integrate public art into park facilities to enhance the recreational and cultural experience of park users.

Policy 4: Provide and maintain standards for the location and function of park facilities to meet the various park and recreational needs of the community.

Supporting Policies



4.1 Provide and maintain standards for feature parks which emphasize special experiences for visitors from the entire metropolitan area, such as zoos, museums, lakes, water-oriented recreation, outdoor amphitheaters, historic and scenic amenities, and golf courses.

4.2 Provide and maintain standards for metro parks which offer a variety of recreational opportunities, including indoor recreation facilities; sports fields; and special scenic, natural, or cultural features and passive use areas.

4.3 Provide and maintain standards for neighborhood parks which offer passive recreational opportunities and facilities, such as open turf areas or children's playgrounds, and which are compatible with nearby residences.

4.4 Provide and maintain standards for community sport facilities to meet the needs of organized sports, appropriately located throughout the city.

Element 10: Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST)

4.5 Provide accessible centers for adults and seniors year-round in our community who need recreational activities, social services, and facilities to maintain a quality of life.

Policy 5: Maintain and coordinate administration and management procedures to promote consistent and effective park development, safety, and maintenance procedures.

Supporting Policies 5.1 Provide development procedures to promote professional quality design and active citizen involvement.

5.2 Promote security and safety for park users.

Actions

5.2.A *Promote public education concerning park care and security utilizing public media, schools, service groups, citizen leaders, and neighborhood groups.*

5.2.B *Promote "Safe by Design" concepts in park development and renovation projects.*

5.2.C *Reduce the potential for vandalism and injury by careful selection of equipment and materials and by expeditious repairs.*

Supporting Policies 5.3 Encourage high standards of maintenance in parks and landscaped areas within the City system.

5.4 Maintain a current inventory of capital improvements and recreation facilities in each park to facilitate park administration and to provide public information.

Recreation

Background People have become increasingly aware of the benefits of and need for leisure time to regularly exercise the mind and body and of the importance of a spirit of play in maintaining a healthy, quality lifestyle. Recreation is proactive: it promotes wellness of individuals of all ages. It is also a proven deterrent to mental and physical illness, reducing vandalism, juvenile delinquency, and loneliness in older adults. As a prevention tool, successful recreation programs can reduce mental and physical health care and justice system costs. With recreation participation increasing, it is essential to assess and respond to recreational trends, both now and in the future. To assure that leisure opportunities are available to Tucson's citizens, the following policies should be implemented.

Element 10: Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST)

Policy 6: Provide and promote a balanced recreation program which offers a diversity of recreational amenities to meet the needs of the population.

Supporting Policy 6.1 Promote accessibility to recreation programs for all residents of the community.

Actions 6.1.A *Recognize and respond to the divergent needs of various income levels and age groups within the community.*

6.1.B *Develop criteria to prioritize the appropriate selection of recreation facilities in locations throughout Tucson.*

6.1.C *Provide a variety of opportunities for enjoying traditional play and the outdoors, learning new skills, and encouraging active participation and teamwork.*

6.1.D *Promote individual physical development, self-expression, intellectual development, creativity, and appreciation of natural parks and recreational resources.*

6.1.E *Continue to pursue programs to benefit mentally and physically disabled people of all ages.*

Supporting Policies 6.2 Assess demographic, social, and recreational trends to better determine and plan for the nature and extent of facilities and programs.

6.3 Develop programs to incorporate park linkage and alternative recreation transportation, such as biking and walking trails, with accompanying education programs.

6.4 Pursue programs that identify and explore elements of Sonoran Desert history and culture and develop creative ways to promote their appreciation and preservation.

6.5 Provide facilities and promote interest in the pursuit of cultural art programs, including the visual and performing arts.

Policy 7: Coordinate the use of community resources to maximize recreational opportunities and benefits while minimizing costs.

Supporting Policy 7.1 Provide community information regarding recreational opportunities and benefits.

Element 10: Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST)

Actions

7.1.A *Increase public awareness that recreation promotes wellness of individuals of all ages; that it is a deterrent to vandalism, juvenile delinquency, and mental and physical illness.*

7.1.B *Promote citizen awareness of recreation programs, by involving neighborhood leaders in system-wide planning.*

7.1.C *Target areas needing special techniques for publicizing recreation programs.*

Supporting Policies

7.2 Promote the maximum use of existing facilities through efficient recreation scheduling and programming.

7.3 Continue to promote the use of volunteers, particularly teens and seniors, in recreation programs and recognize their contributions.

7.4 Promote cooperation among public and private recreation providers to meet recreation demand without duplication of effort.

Open Space

Background



Tucson is committed to protect its open space. The federal and county public preserves surround the valley with natural open space. Development patterns have left numerous undeveloped areas throughout the community. Over time, open space resources have diminished and the value of those remaining has become increasingly appreciated by the city's residents and visitors. Open space within an urbanized area provides land for recreational use and visual relief, protects hydrologic resources, and helps create community identity. Natural open space adjacent to watercourses can provide recreation and wildlife habitat, decrease downstream flooding, and lower costs for flood control measures. In addition, open space can preserve the particular attributes and history of the Sonoran Desert which distinguish and identify Tucson as a unique location. As the community continues to urbanize, an interconnected open space system should be designated and preserved to provide multiple benefits to the community.

Policy 8: Establish an accessible open space system that connects open space in the urbanized area to the surrounding public natural areas.

Element 10: Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST)

Supporting Policy 8.1 Protect significant open space resources within the city to complement the surrounding public preserves.

Actions



Case Park

8.1.A *Promote preservation of remaining natural washes as the basis of an interconnected open space network.*

8.1.B *Recognize the value of cultural, historical, and archaeological sites as important open space resources.*

8.1.C *Protect mountain ranges as vital watersheds, wildlife habitat, recreational resources, and scenic vistas.*

8.1.D *Protect public preserves from urban impacts adjacent to their boundaries.*

8.1.E *Encourage the establishment of open space linkages in areas throughout the region to connect major resource areas, provide definition to the metropolitan area, and define distinct subareas within the region.*

8.1.F *Identify and preserve natural landmarks within the city.*

Policy 9: Implement an interconnected open space system through cooperative public and private efforts.

Supporting Policy 9.1 Encourage cooperation between local governments; county, state, and federal agencies; private organizations; and citizens to acquire, manage, conserve, and protect natural open space resources.

Actions



9.1.A *Identify and incorporate significant natural and cultural resources into a regional open space plan.*

9.1.B *Promote intergovernmental cooperation to develop a regional open space system of parks, natural areas, research areas, and other resources administered by public and private agencies.*

9.1.C *Promote public access to natural areas, parks, and public preserves and set regional standards.*

Supporting Policy 9.2 Identify mechanisms to protect and preserve open space resources.

Actions

9.2.A *Initiate plans and actions for an ongoing, orderly open space acquisition process and maintenance program, based on long-range plans, with continued review and evaluation.*

Element 10: Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST)



9.2.B *Prioritize acquisition and preservation of open space areas identified in the Pima County Open Space Report.*

9.2.C *Evaluate the use of capital funds for public acquisition of open space in flood prone areas.*

9.2.D *Evaluate and pursue implementation techniques for open space preservation employed by other regional governments and jurisdictions.*

Supporting Policies

9.3 Identify and establish sources for permanent funding for acquisition and management programs, including state and federal assistance, to implement open space plans.

9.4 Encourage and coordinate regional efforts for open space identification, preservation, and public information programs to generate interest and support for open space preservation.

Actions

9.4.A *Coordinate with other regional jurisdictions to pursue funding opportunities for open space acquisition.*

9.4.B *Generate public interest and support for open space preservation by emphasizing environmental, recreational, and aesthetic values, including wildlife habitat, water conservation, and flood control; visual relief; and opportunity for contact with natural elements.*

9.4.C *Promote economic values of open space preservation, including increases to property values and benefits to tourism and economic development efforts.*

Trails

Background



Case Park

Beginning with paths along watercourses used by Native Americans and followed by Spanish, Mexican, and Territorial period settlers, Tucson's trails have maintained their importance from living, trading, and social perspectives. Today, a new recreation emphasis has emerged and become increasingly important to city residents, with walking, jogging, and bicycling within the urbanized area joining the equestrian interests at the city's edges. An integrated system of recreational trails is needed to connect parks, open space, schools, and other community activity centers. This trail network is emphasized in both the City and *Regional Vision* statements for parks, recreation, and open space. Starting with the Riverpark System Plan already in place, a multiuse trail system should be identified and implemented to meet the recreational needs of current and future Tucson citizens.

Policy 10: **Provide an interconnected urban trail system throughout the city to meet the recreational needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians.**

Supporting Policy

10.1 Utilize the most current adopted Trails Plan as identified in the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan 2010 as the basis for establishing the City's recreational trails network.

Element 10: Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST)

Actions

10.1.A Provide an interconnected urban trail network for bicyclists and walkers based on enhanced roadways and incorporating appropriate natural and improved washes.

10.1.B Provide an interconnected natural trail network for equestrians and hikers based on natural washes and supplemented by appropriate roadway rights-of-way.

10.1.C Utilize the Eastern Pima County Trail System Master Plan as the basis for the natural trails network.

10.1.D Promote the preservation and protection of remaining natural riparian habitats along all watercourses designated as trail corridors to recognize their multiple values for recreation, flood control, wildlife habitat, and open space.

Supporting Policies

10.2 Periodically update the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan 2010--Trails Plan to improve locations and for additional trail network opportunities.

10.3 Coordinate the City's trail system planning, implementation, and management efforts with those of regional jurisdictions and public agencies.

Policy 11: Develop a plan for acquisition and implementation of the City's trail network.

Supporting Policy

11.1 Create a program to identify and acquire public ownership of trail corridors and access points needed to develop an effective trail network.



Santa Cruz River Park

Actions

11.1.A Identify a yearly trail acquisition program in the annual update of the City's Five-Year Capital Improvements Program budget.

Element 10: Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST)

11.1.B Analyze trail corridors to determine appropriate levels of environmental protection, public use, maintenance, and security.

11.1.C Provide funding for environmental protection, trail maintenance, and security.

Supporting Policies

11.2 Complement an acquisition program with other trail implementation methods, such as, but not limited to, easement, lease, and license agreements.

11.3 Provide for coordination of City efforts to plan, implement, and maintain the trail network.

11.4 Accommodations for the trail network should be integrated into the design of pertinent public facilities and improvements, including parks, drainageways, roadways, and other capital improvement projects.

11.5 Pursue recommendations in the *Eastern Pima County Trail System Master Plan* for identified trail segments that are appropriate to the City of Tucson.

Policy 12: Determine trail design criteria and amenity guidelines.

Supporting Policies

12.1 Identify uniform trail design criteria in conjunction with other intergovernmental jurisdictions based on design concepts and needs for each recreation mode.

12.2 Include provision of trail facilities in the City's Capital Improvements Program.

12.3 Coordinate with other City and community efforts to incorporate trail design criteria and prioritize the location and implementation of facilities and amenities to complement the trail network.

