MARICOPA COUNTY
PARKS AND RECREATION

DRAFT

Maricopa County
Parks and Recreation

Parks and Recreation System Strategic Master Plan

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Maricopa County's Parks and Recreation Department now features one of the nation's largest county park systems, with 10 regional parks totaling more than 120,000 acres.

The park system began in 1954 to preserve the mountain areas for future generations to enjoy. During the early 1970's, the Department began using the Recreation and Public Purposes Act of 1924 to acquire thousands of acres of parkland from the Bureau of Land Management at $2.50 an acre. A combination of leased and purchased land has allowed this Department to develop a regional park system that preserves natural open space and will forever provide the residents of Maricopa County with an opportunity to visit "Natural Arizona."

In 1992, Maricopa County entered a 50-year management agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation to manage the newly enlarged Lake Pleasant. At 10,000 surface acres, Lake Pleasant is the second largest lake entirely within the state and far and away the largest lake within easy driving distance from central Phoenix.

Today, more than 1.4 million park visitors each year enjoy affordable parks and recreation services available year-round through the 10 regional parks. In an effort to manage the future needs of residents and the growth of the county the Department decided to update the previous Master Plan for the Park System which was completed over 40 years ago. The Strategic System Master Plan evaluates all aspects of the Department's management efforts and seeks strong community input into the elements and expectations they have for the system today and in the future. PROS Consulting along with local area consultants, Olsson & Associates and Axis Political Consulting, developed the System Master Plan to carry the system well into this century. The Strategic System Master Plan will take a considerable effort by the County Board of Supervisors, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, staff and the community to implement the recommendations in the plan. This will include a financial commitment to open space, preservation of the natural heritage of the parks under their control and a committed community willing to invest in this natural open space system for years to come.

1.2 HIGH QUALITY PARK DEFINITION

The goal of the Parks and Recreation Strategic System Master Plan is to clearly define the qualities and characteristics of a "high quality park system" most appropriate for the

Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department. This will serve as a reference point for the basis of PROS Consulting recommendations in the Strategic System Master Plan Study. This definition has been developed by the Consultant Team following extensive review and research into the current conditions of the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation System, as well as multiple methods of obtaining public input from County residents on the priorities and needs for Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department. This data has been leveraged with the professional experience of the Consultant Team in working with over 100 county park systems around the United States within the last 14 years to provide a context for industry best practices.

The definition of a high quality county park system, as defined by the PROS Team experience in managing and developing parks similar to Maricopa County Parks and Recreation, which provides a benchmark for the future, is comprised of six major elements:

1. Vision of a High Quality Park and Recreation System

2. Experiential Presentation

3. Value to the Community

4. Operational Standards

5. Maintenance Standards

6. Development and Acquisition Standards

These elements are described in more detail in the sections below. This framework of standards was applied to the evaluations of the Maricopa County Park and Recreation system performed by the Consultant Team that resulted in the determination of needs contained within this report.

1.2.1 VISION OF A HIGH QUALITY PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM

A quality Maricopa County Park is a representative piece of Arizona's vast and diverse landscape large enough that the natural and cultural resource base can be protected, studied and used to provide understanding of the history and natural systems of that location for the citizens and out of state visitors who come to enjoy the park system. The park system will be developed following guidelines established by the Maricopa County General Management Plan, in association with this Strategic System Master Plan. Appropriate types of uses are determined for each park and energy efficient infrastructure and facilities needed to provide for operation, maintenance and visitor use are designed and built to fit the landscape and successfully meet the needs of the site and its visitors.

All facilities are regularly maintained to keep them in excellent condition. Equipment is replaced on a regular schedule to assure it is available as needed to maintain buildings and grounds. The park system is fully staffed to provide all aspects of park operations and standards that provide for a safe, clean, educational, recreational and enjoyable visitor experience. The park system is operated in a business-like manner with processes and procedures that assure the proper handling of all business activities while also providing excellent customer service. Active resource management operations assure the protection and restoration of habitat; archaeological sites and historic structures are protected and maintained to assure their preservation.

The park system provides an opportunity for the visiting public schools, and other educational groups to learn from active programming, wayside interpretive signing, professionally prepared exhibits and appropriate printed material focused on the natural and cultural themes and stories important to that site. The park system has core programs aligned with the natural and cultural features unique to that site that energize visitors and help them develop outdoor skills necessary to enjoy a variety of park activities including overnight camping. A well designed and maintained road and trail system are available to support hiking, biking and equestrian uses where appropriate. The park system is designed, built, maintained, staffed and equipped to properly provide for the long term protection of the resources, outstanding opportunities to learn as the park is an "outdoor classroom", and an exciting destination to enjoy a variety of recreational activities for the whole family**.**

A quality park system inspires residents and out of state visitors to return home and tell others about the experience. When a quality park system is achieved it additionally provides a very significant economic benefit to the local economy, and when non-resident visitors are attracted, the financial benefit is both local and countywide.

A "Quality County Park System" is comprised of numerous quality parks, positioned across the county that represent the diversity of the Arizona landscape and that include areas that preserve the story of Arizona and the Phoenix area in the locations where events occurred or people lived who contributed to who and what they are today. The system provides opportunities to see these examples of the lands being maintained or restored to the extent possible to their natural condition. The system provides a variety of different activities and adventures in reasonable proximity to where people live and distant destinations that provide special and unique opportunities not available elsewhere in the county. A quality park system in Arizona is known by its citizens and out of state visitors as a system that is diverse, exciting, well maintained, has excellent and adequate facilities, provides a spectrum of recreational and educational opportunities, and provides of variety of different experiences and adventures that inspire you to return often and to tell others about the quality of opportunities in any Maricopa County Park.

Great parks and park systems are managed by standards and outcomes that support their vision. Managing and operating to these standards enables Maricopa County to always demonstrate how well the agency is performing, and establishes justifications for budget and appropriation requests. These standards should be monitored routinely and gaps in services addressed, or the standards should be adjusted. The sections that follow detail the recommended standards of a high quality county park system in Arizona.

1.2.2 EXPERIENTIAL PRESENTATION

1.2.2.1 MARICOPA COUNTY PARK SYSTEM

A high quality County Park and Recreation System is a premier conservatory of properties, facilities and programs that reflect unique and significant relevance to the "Arizona Story" – the history and heritage, the land and wildlife, and preserving the quality of our County's future. The park system is managed so as to be responsible stewards of public assets and resources, and to protect the quality of visitor experiences. A high quality County Park and Recreation System is reflective of a high quality park organization – an organization that fosters creative and responsible management best practices; an organization that provides and incentive and reward for professional and well-trained employees to perform duties as expected and to always exhibit superb customer service; and an organization that provides adequate tools, equipment and resources to enable employees to do their best every day. A quality system is also a reflection of enlightened and supportive County government and citizenry.

1.2.2.2 INDIVIDUAL COUNTY PARKS SITES

A high quality County park or site features all of the following elements:

1. Adequate signage for way-finding to and within the park.

2. A sense of arrival that is congruent with the park's purpose and overall messaging.

3. Architecture and facility design that compliments the natural surroundings, and represents appropriate space and energy efficiencies.

4. Protection of natural and/or historic resources within the park from human impact resulting from park use and visitation.

5. Adequate size or acreage for the park to preserve significant natural resources within its boundaries, and to provide a sound and manageable habitat for wildlife in the case of extreme external encroachment from development.

6. Facilities and services that provide equitable opportunities for visitors to enjoy the amenities of the park by addressing known and evolving community needs and preferences.

7. Roads and parking areas that feature best design practices regarding environmental and functional aspects, and that are well maintained to protect the quality of the assets and the experience of visitors.

8. Trails, paths, and sidewalks that are well maintained to allow for visitors' safe and meaningful use.

9. Interpretation, education and recreational opportunities regarding the natural and/or historic significance of the site through multiple methods including displays, literature, signage, and programs.

10. Professional and well-trained staff that is properly equipped and resourced to manage the ongoing quality of the park and its services.

11. Marketing and communication means and methods that proactively inspire visitors to enjoy the park and its offerings.

12. Annual and routine evaluation of facilities and services, and performance on the desired outcomes of a high quality park. Action plans are developed and implemented to address any issues of concern.

1.2.3 VALUE TO THE COMMUNITY

1.2.3.1 MARICOPA COUNTY PARK SYSTEM

A high quality County Park and Recreation System is the steward for preserving aspects of Maricopa County's natural and cultural heritage, while also fostering economic development through the provision of facilities and services aligned with public needs and interests.

1.2.3.2 INDIVIDUAL COUNTY PARKS

A high quality County park or site provides value to near and surrounding communities by celebrating the unique natural and cultural heritage of the area, provides quality recreational benefits and opportunities to residents and visitors, and provides economic development opportunities through promoting tourism to the area for single and/or multiple day experiences. These aspects are achieved through well maintained facilities and infrastructure, innovative programs and services, sound marketing and communications, and professional park staff.

1.2.4 OPERATIONAL STANDARDS

1.2.4.1 SYSTEM OPERATIONAL STANDARDS

Maricopa County Park and Recreation System operational best practices should include the following five elements that are applied and managed holistically for the system:

1. Maricopa County Parks and Recreation should update the systems master plan every ten years, individual park master plans every ten years, and maintain a yearly Park and Recreation System Business Plan for all core services the agency manages. At minimum, each park management region needs to maintain a business plan that is supported by the individual business plans of each park within that region. Maricopa County Parks should maintain a strategic marketing and communication plan to keep local Maricopa County communities well informed and the staff in-tune with customer needs.

2. Maricopa County Parks and Recreation should have public/public partnership agreements in place that are written and evaluated on a yearly basis against measureable outcomes. They also should have public/not-for-profit agreements in place that are written with measureable outcomes that are evaluated on a yearly basis, and public/private partnership agreements in place that are written and evaluated on a yearly basis. Agreements should be appropriately structured to enforce equitable return to both the County and the partner, while also providing

incentives through terms and duration that encourage more substantial private investment in capital development and operation at selected county parks.

3. Maricopa County Parks and Recreation should have established pricing policies for pricing of services based on the true cost to provide the service including both direct and indirect costs. This practice will establish the level of true subsidy necessary for successful operation of facilities and services. Pricing policies and structure can then be adjusted in a timely manner to reflect the level of exclusivity a person receives over a general tax payer within the cost recovery goal established for each core service and park facility. Cost recovery goals are updated annually based on the true cost to provide the services with pricing changes occurring as needed and politically realistic.

4. Maricopa County Parks and Recreation should have a minimum of three levels of customer feedback built into program assessments which include pre and post evaluations, and focus groups to assess how well the participants felt about the programs and ways to improve the programs to meet their needs.

5. Maricopa County Parks should invest a minimum of 4-6% of the operational budget for marketing and promotional purposes for their programs, services and facilities available to the community in the form of a regular program guide, web-site management, targeted mailing pieces, PSA's, and researching trends and their customers to establish the level of the market they control.

1.2.4.2 INDIVIDUAL PARK OPERATIONAL STANDARDS

Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department operational best practices should include the following 15 elements that need to be implemented at each county park:

1. Each County park has a business plan unique to that park that focuses on each cost center (cost-based accounting) including the level of tax subsidy required or revenues over expenses that are achieved annually.

2. Each County park conducts in-park surveys each year and provides a report on how well they are meeting customer satisfaction levels. Satisfaction levels need to be at least 90% or greater for visitor experiences to be considered acceptable. Programs or services that score below 90% require critical review and performance enhancement measures with tracked results and enforced outcomes.

3. Each County park annually generates earned revenues (not including public subsidy) equal to a required percentage of operating expenses based upon the performance expectations outlined within the park classification system included within this *Park and Recreation Strategic System Master Plan Study.* Park performance below the detailed performance expectations require critical review and performance enhancement measures with tracked results and enforced outcomes.

4. Each County park has efficiency contractors available to manage elements of the park that they cannot effectively manage at the same standard for the same price.

5. Each County park annually evaluates their users profile as it applies to age segments represented in the park, race, men and women, length of stay by group and age segment.

6. Each County park develops a yearly program plan for the park to attract all demographic segments to the park.

7. Each County park does at least three park sponsored special events a year in the park to draw people to the park.

8. Each County park seeks local partners to support portions of the county park programs and services.

9. Each County park staff operational costs with benefits are no more than 65% of the total budget, based on best management practices of similar size systems.

10. Each County park is designed to accommodate 10 visitor experiences at a minimum to increase the use of the park by multiple age segments, increase the value of the resource, and length-of-stay, while maintaining a 90% customer satisfaction rating or higher.

11. Each County park maintains an updated master plan conducted every 10 years.

12. Each County park manages by maintenance standards, program standards and operational standards adopted and enforced by the Regional Superintendents and senior county park management.

13. Where possible, each county park has representation at each of the local Chambers of Commerce or other applicable tourism and business promotional organizations within their community in order to promote the park in their region as a usable and friendly asset.

14. Each County park has a friends group who raises money that is given to the county park each year to use for improvements or to support programs that are agreed upon prior to fund raising.

15. Each County park manages by several performance measures. It is critical that the park system grow to adopt performance measures over time. These could include the following:

    - Capacity management by amenity would include campgrounds, picnic facilities, marina operations, cabins, special use areas, which are designed to support a specific targeted audience
    - Revenue versus expenses based against anticipated budget
    - Cost center goals for efficiency and revenue development are met at 95% of the goal
    - Customer satisfaction is at least 90%

- Retention of the core market returns at least once each year at 70% or greater
- 4% of the total assets value in the park are improved on a yearly basis
- Each County park has a minimum of five partnerships in place that help them to manage the resources and provide services in the county park
- Each County park has at least 4-6% of their operational budget committed to promoting the county park in the region and the state
- Each County park manages entitlement of special interest groups that tend to control the use of a park area or program, as well as expecting higher levels of services and benefits due to their special interest more so than a general taxpayer receives
- Each County park has a set minimum number of volunteer hours yearly in supporting the staff in the County park
- Equipment replacement is set on a schedule and is met at 95% level on a yearly basis

1.2.5 MAINTENANCE STANDARDS

PROS has developed expected industry standards in hours per tasks and annual frequencies by Levels of Services. The PROS Standards are based on National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) data and include information regarding parks in western states. PROS Standards consist of park and recreation maintenance tasks and presents the standards in three levels with Level 1 being the highest standards and Level 3 being the lowest of the three standards. Performance Measures for standards are typically 90% of the standard suggested and is met on an annual basis. Maintenance Standards are summarized in **Appendix 4**.

1.2.6 DEVELOPMENT AND ACQUISITION STANDARDS

The Maricopa County Park System should apply the following five development standards for the development of facilities and acquisition of new sites:

1. Feasibility studies should be conducted for all facilities that are expected to generate more than 50% of their operational costs prior to the acquisition and design phase. These studies should evaluate projected usage, revenue generating capacity, and estimated operating costs in pro forma manner.

2. Maricopa County Parks should maintain park and land inventories that are aligned with population demands and growth trends. The large size of Maricopa County, combined with diverse eco-region features and population distribution characteristics, creates a difficult challenge of implementing consistent standards across the entire County. To better address park demand, concentration of other public park and recreation providers, and development pressures unique to different regions of the County, an alternative approach for applying standards should be developed distinctive to each park management region.

3. Open space standards are never typically measured in acres, but are acquired and developed based on the natural areas available in a community that need to be protected from development and that support wildlife habitat and unique species of

plants or trees in a community. Open space can include drainage wash corridors for flood control purposes, rivers, streams, and buffer areas surrounding parks. These areas are acquired for preservation purposes first and recreation second and most open space areas have limits on development of approximately 10% of the total property inventory.

4. Maricopa County Parks should implement design standards and construction specifications that protect eco-systems from negative use and preserve the historic integrity of the natural resource with newly constructed infrastructure.

5. Maricopa County Parks should implement construction management standards that enforce the quality and efficiency of contractor oversight during construction projects.

1.3 PROJECT PURPOSE

The Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department desired a Strategic System Master Plan to guide decision-making for the future development and management of its parks, trails, recreation and open space opportunities. The last system master plan was adopted by the County Board of Supervisors in 1965 with subsequent park specific master plans. These plans have supported the development of one of the largest regional county park system in the United States with approximately 120,000 acres. The purpose of the Strategic System Master Plan was to:

- Provide a conceptual framework or blueprint to strategically position the Department as the recognized leader in delivering regional parks and recreation services, opportunities, experiences and benefits, and successfully guide the Department toward the desired future destination.

- Create a Plan that will set forth the appropriate park system structure and policies to guide County leadership in meeting the needs of the expanding population of the County for the next 50 years.

- Affirm that the County Park System will continue to remain one of the finest park systems in the United States.

Following is a detailed approach to develop the Strategic System Master Plan.

1.4 PROJECT PROCESS

PROS Consulting was hired to complete the Strategic System Master Plan. The following planning process was agreed upon by County staff members.

- During the Community/Stakeholder Input Process PROS conducted the following:
    o Key Leadership Interviews
    o Focus Groups Interviews
    o Public Forums
    o Household Survey (completed by Arizona State University) in 2006
    o Developed Community Values Model based off of community input

- Facility/Program Inventory and Analysis
    - Program and Facility Document Review
    - Facility Inventory and Assessment
    - Program Analysis
- Operations, Maintenance, and Financial Assessment
    - Operational Assessment
    - Financial Assessment
    - Maintenance Assessment
    - Maintenance Management Plan
    - Benchmark Analysis
    - Policy and Legislative Assessment
    - Training and Certification Assessment
- Facilities Development/Capital Improvement Plan
    - Regional/Facility Standards and Contribution
    - Demographic Analysis
    - Drive Time Mapping
    - Facility Needs Assessment
    - Capital Improvement Plan
- System Development Plan
    - Synthesize Community Values Model
    - Vision and Mission Statement Development
    - Strategic Vision and Action Matrix Finalized

1.5 VISION AND MISSION

1.5.1 VISION (WHAT WE WANT TO BE KNOWN FOR)

The following vision was created to demonstrate what the Department wants to be known for in the community and the region. The recommendations outlined in this plan support the implementation of this vision for the next ten years.

"Our vision is to connect people with nature through regional parks, trails and programs, inspire an appreciation for the Sonoran Desert and natural open spaces, and create life-long positive memories."

1.5.2 MISSION (HOW DO WE GET THERE)

The Mission was created to demonstrate to the community how we are going to get there in the future over the next ten years.

"Our mission, through responsible stewardship is to provide the highest quality parks, trails, programs, services and experiences that energize visitors and create life-long users and advocates."

1.6 KEY ISSUES

1.6.1 SYSTEM-WIDE KEY ISSUES

The PROS Team interviewed stakeholders, users, partners, citizens and staff, as well as assessed the County park and recreation operations. The following are key issues brought forward during the interview and assessment process that citizens, partners and staff feel need to be addressed in this Strategic System Master Plan:

- Lack of strong political support and grass roots advocacy for the Department exists

- Insufficient funding to operate and maintain the system to an acceptable standard exists

- Inability to maintain the existing infrastructure due to limited and inconsistent capital development money

- Inadequate staffing levels to provide services the community expects for such a large parks and recreation system

- Minimal awareness exist of the Maricopa County park system by residents of the County

  - 54% of ASU Visitor Survey respondents were unaware of who manages the parks

- Need for system process improvements within County government including procurement and hiring practices

- Access to County parks land needs to be addressed

- Lack of park amenities and facilities in existing parks to attract a wide age segment of visitors, as compared to other county systems of similar size

- Disproportionate park visitation, to the continued population growth in the County

- Lack of operational standards for park maintenance and recreation program services

- Absence of design standards for park amenities exist

- Park Infrastructure enhancements are needed as outlined in the Capital Improvement Plan section of this report

- Park service roads, which are roads used by the public for transportation and safety forces within each park, need improvement

- Most Park Master Plans for each park in the system are currently outdated

- Lack of a comprehensive signage program throughout the system exists

- No mandated developer impact fees to help support parks and public facilities is in place

- Land acquisition criteria is non-existent within the system

- Insufficient on-going knowledge of customers of the system exists

- The Department does not have the same legislation that Clark County, Nevada has from the Bureau of Land Management properties as it applies to land leases to create operational revenues to help support the system

- Park trails lack strong management restrictions and enforcement of keeping users on designated trails

  o Need to evaluate a balance between designated front country trails and allowing users into back country trails where users leave the trail to hike into natural areas

- Urban Encroachment Policy missing within the system

- Professional trust inside the organization is lacking

- The organization has limited resources which affects staffs ability to plan

- Limited internal communication within the Department for a large system

1.6.2 PROGRAM KEY ISSUES

- Program guidelines are lacking

  o Need interpretive ranger teaching guidelines

- Measurable program outcomes lacking

- User feedback surveys missing or inconsistently applied

- Lack of marketing and promotional dollars to promote the park system

- Minimal Branding and positioning for Maricopa County Parks and Recreation within the County

- Online registration is unavailable for users to access programs, facilities and services

- A seasonal program guide to inform residents of program services is not available

- Limited core recreation and outdoor educational program areas; existing ones are not adequate to meet current trends and evolving customer interest

- Lack of recreation program standards to ensure consistency in programming opportunities across the system

- Minimal marketing support for promoting recreation and educational services

- Insufficient outreach to a growing Hispanic base

- Absence of programs offering wide age segment appeal in parks

1.6.3 OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE KEY ISSUES

- Employee communication and education of the strategic goals and objectives of the Department, and *The Managing for Results* program the County has incorporated is in need of enhancement

- Internal support provided to field operations need improvement

- No alignment between training activities and strategy and the identification of core competencies

    o Training is done primarily through the County Human Resources Department

- Limited career advancement exists within the organization

    o However, there are opportunities for increasing job skills of employees and laterally expanding skill development

- Existing policies including pricing of services, capital improvement program, budgeting for results, park host and volunteer policies need strengthening

- Lack of existing policies exist to ensure consistency in operations including procurement, access and encroachment, user fee, sponsorships, and partnership

- Field staff have limited input in the budget process

    o The extent of input has improved in recent times

- Relationship and agreement with the Sheriff's Department needs improvement to strengthen safety and security in parks

- Lack of standards contributes to parks operating in an independent manner as opposed to a systems approach

- Lack of dedicated staff for the volunteer program given the size and number of volunteers involved

- Overall staff growth has not kept up with system growth

- Maintenance staffing not equally balanced among the various parks

    o Additionally, as seen from the benchmark study, staffing numbers are substantially smaller in comparison to other similar systems

- Communication in the field, given the remoteness and geographical distance, is a concern

- No formal preventative maintenance program exists

- System-wide maintenance inspection process and life-cycle replacement schedule missing

- Technology is an issue, as there is no work order management system in place to track and maintain park assets and infrastructure

- There is not a comprehensive resource management plan to protect the system's cultural and natural resources

- Major maintenance and construction projects are not completed in a timely manner with only one centralized trades crew

- Training for maintenance personnel, such as safety and equipment operating, needs improvement

1.6.3.1 BENCHMARK FINDINGS

	Total Annual Parks and Recreation Budgets by Category:						
	Area	Actual '05	Population per	Marketing	Parks	Programming	Total
Agency	(Square Miles)	Population	Square Mile	and Admin	Maintenance		
Maricopa County	9,226.0	3,768,123	408	$ 1,146,119	$ 3,679,841	$ 720,657	$ 7,284,829
Clark County	8,012.0	1,912,654	239	$ 5,100,000	$ 12,500,000	$ 17,604,256	$ 35,204,256.0
East Bay Regional PD	1,000.0	2,485,000	2,485	$ 13,728,515	$ 68,785,984	$ 8,371,223	$ 90,885,722.0
Pima County	2,553.0	1,000,000	392	$ 1,440,000	$ 7,750,000	$ -	$ 14,524,994.0
San Diego County	324.3	2,941,454	9,070	$ 5,996,919	$ 18,182,429	$ 6,490,422	$ 33,154,144.0
Three Rivers PD	548.0	753,042	1,374	$ 12,004,869	$ 13,861,494	$ 9,178,928	$ 35,045,291.0
Note: Findings are based on survey response. In some cases budget numbers may be included in more than one category due to individual budgeting practices.							

Figure 1 - Total Annual Parks and Recreation Budgets by Category

- Maricopa County ($7,284,829) is in the lower end as far as Total Park and Recreation Budgets are concerned

	Area	Actual '05	Pop. per	Total Staff /	Parks and FTE's		Total FTE's	Maintenance FTE's	Program FTE's
					Total Maintenance	Total Programming			
City/State	(Sq.Miles)	Population	Square Mile	FTE's	Staff, FTE	Staff, FTE	Per 1,000 Pop.	Per 1000 Pop.	Per 1000 Pop.
Maricopa County	9,226.0	3,768,123	408	91.0	25.0	12.0	0.02	0.01	0.00
Clark County	8,012.0	1,912,654	239	267.0	9.0	86.0	0.14	0.005	0.04
East Bay Regional PD	1,000.0	2,485,000	2,485	713.8	64.0	77.0	0.29	0.03	0.03
Pima County	2,553.0	1,000,000	392	-	200.0	60.0	-	0.20	0.06
San Diego County	324.3	2,941,454	9,070	-	125.0	-	-	0.04	-
Three Rivers PD	548.0	753,042	1,374	-	116.0	57.0	-	0.15	0.08

Figure 2 - Full Time Equivalents

- The FTE information is not available for all systems; however, from the ones available Maricopa does seem to be understaffed in terms of the total population it serves

- Overall, from a system-wide standpoint, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department is on the lower financial end in comparison to the benchmarked systems

  o This disparity is particularly evident in terms of size of the overall and individual department budgets as well as staff resources

- Maricopa County does do well with its limited resources as its high cost recovery of 76% demonstrates it

- Maricopa County's program visitation numbers have increased over the last year and it is important for the County to continue expanding its program offerings within the core program categories to sustain that success

- The County's staffing seems limited in comparison to the population served and the average staff longevity is also marginally lower than the benchmarked agencies

1.6.4 FINANCE KEY ISSUES

- Currently, no established Pricing Policy or Pricing Strategy exists

- Lack of a Comprehensive Revenue Policy

- Lack of a consistent and/or dedicated funding source to support County Parks

- Lack of action by the Parks Foundation for parks or trail systems

- There is no Cost of Service Assessment done for programs, facilities or services to determine direct and indirect costs

- Department's goal of being self-reliant by 2009 is unrealistic

- The department received sporadic capital commitments from the County General Fund

- Despite fee increases in 2008, future projections show a continuous deficit

- Grant revenues are low, given the size of the County

  o During the last 4 years, grants have averaged $106,550 annually

- Stronger partnerships and sponsorships are required

1.7 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are derived from the public input process, citizen survey, best practices in parks and recreation management, and the overall park and recreation assessment conducted by the PROS Team.

1.7.1 SYSTEM-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish Performance measures and outcomes for every park and program

- Department needs system-wide approach to training

  o Including Departmental and more job specific Divisional training requirements

- Implement a campground reservation and program registration system

- Implement an internal communication and education program to enhance employee awareness about strategic goals and objectives and how their work supports these goals and objectives

- Develop a business plan for each park

- Consider laptops and other means to ensure uninterrupted communication while in the field

- Develop a system-wide customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction process

- Evaluate future opportunities to locate the trades and trail crews split into the West and East Regions to reduce drive times and increase efficiencies

- Establish policies to ensure consistency in operations including procurement, user fees, access and encroachment, sponsorships and partnerships

- Develop a Park District or Park Authority with a consistent funding source the Department can count on

- Dedicate staff toward overseeing the volunteer program

- Develop policies and strategies for:

  o Pricing

  o Sponsorship

  o Partnership

  o Off-Highway Vehicle use

  o Land acquisition

  o Pristine desert management

  o Encroachment management

  o Earned income development

  o BLM leased and patented property to allow revenue generation on those lands

1.7.2 FINANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a Business Development Office to create earned income opportunities to support the operational and capital budget of the Department

- Re-engage the existing Parks and Trails Foundation

- Continue to create private land leases on County or BLM properties to develop quality recreation amenities that support visitor needs while generating operating revenue for the Department

- Focus on increased staff input into the budget process to create greater accountability and responsibility in the budget management process

- Park site managers must accurately cost out operations and program services

  o This would ensure greater discretion in choosing program offerings

- Establish a true Cost of Service for each park and program by unit cost

- Seek County Board of Supervisor support and Office of Management and Budget to allow the Department to keep the revenues they earn while not discounting their tax base to catch up on operational and capital needs

1.7.3 PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish additional core program categories that factor in customer needs and trends

- o This includes expansion of nature inclusion, fitness and wellness activities in parks, as well as active and extreme adventure activities

- Incorporate themes for key parks to maximize age segment appeal and create a destination component to each park

- Increase the marketing dollar support to build awareness and increase visitation to County Parks which amount to 4% of the operating budget

- Improve ease of use and user-friendliness of the web site to increase awareness of parks and recreation services

- Create an online program brochure of recreational and educational opportunities

- Expand outreach programs to target growing population groups

- Need to increase age segment appeal of amenities in parks particularly for the younger age segments of visitors

- Need additional program staff to offer programs and "energy up" each park site to the value and use of the resource

- Regularly survey customer needs through a standardized process every 2 years

1.7.4 OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE RECOMMENDATIONS
- Implement the Maricopa County Regional Trail System Plan over the next ten years, to connect all of the Maricopa County Regional Parks

- Develop more of a global perspective of the park system versus a park by park perspective

- Re-organize the Department to support the Strategic System Master Plan recommendations

- Look for ways to augment maintenance staff through contracting of services

- Create consistent maintenance standards for parks and trails

- Develop and / or acquire a maintenance work order system to manage assets

- Develop communication protocols for staff to follow

- Develop planning teams to resolve key issues

- Update design standards for trails

- Develop an economic impact report on the Park and Trail system in Maricopa County

1.8 CONCLUSION

"Considering that that (the American Parks Movement) has occurred simultaneously with a great enlargement of cities and development of urban habits, is it not reasonable to regard it as a self-preserving instinct of civilization?" – Frederick Law Olmsted

The first "layer" of the vision for a city or a county is a great parks system. Great counties have great park systems with beautiful parks and outstanding natural features. Because human beings have a basic need for parks and open space to reconnect with nature, communities that lack adequate open space feel dreary and depressing in regards to the social, aesthetic, and economic fabric of a community.

While park systems in the past were thought of as "amenities," communities across the country are finally realizing how much value these park systems bring to their locales. Maricopa County is in the midst of change. The vision for great parks in Maricopa County acknowledges that in order for the system to be relevant, it must be responsive to new issues the community is facing. A "great park systems" must do the following:

- Stimulate the physical, mental, and spiritual potential of individuals
- Foster connectivity with good schools, jobs, housing, public transportation, clean air and safety
- Encourage a harmonious relationship between man and nature
- Help to conserve energy and natural resources
- Bring quality to the physical, social, economic, and cultural environment
- Take advantage of a community's unique features that include climate, geography, population, history, and express them though park design
- Understand a community's roots
- Involve the community in planning and the use of projects to position the system for the future

The Maricopa County park system needs to be flexible across a wide-range of contexts based on delivering services rather than just on acreage and population. While many people covet nature experiences in their life, it still does not foster enough appreciation to natural lands for an entire community. Land conservation programs do help the environment, but there is a perception that their only function is an ecological one. This is unfortunate given that more and more research points to the positive effects that open space has on the well-being of a community.

Psychologically, just viewing open space reduces stress levels. Direct interaction with nature, such as eco-tours or a causal walk through a protected area will yield more benefits, especially in the development of children, conserving lands can truly have duel benefits for nature and for people; however, this must be reinforced with the public.

"Historical places tell a community where it cam from, what previous generations achieved, what they believed, what they hoped to be. By protecting these reminders of the past, preservation also builds the present and the future." – Natural Trust for Historic Preservation

The Maricopa County park system offers this and more. The Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department has an outstanding assortment of desert mountain parks within Maricopa County. The Department has struggled for years in trying to create a system to meet community needs and to provide adequate levels of staffing, operational and capital needs to create destination parks that people of all ages desire. The Strategic System Master Plan describes what the Department needs to do to become a best practice agency and deliver on all elements of what great park systems can deliver and what the community desires from the system. The population of Maricopa County continues to grow and the expectations of the system continue to increase as well. The Department must create strong advocacy, financial, and political support to maintain and protect the value of these open space regional parks for all citizens to enjoy for future generations. The Department has the leadership and commitment of staff, as well as the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission; however, it is imperative to gain public financial support through a variety of financing alternatives. The Parks and Recreation Department can be one of the key valued assets of the County if given the financial resources to manage to its capability.   The opportunity is now and the leadership is in place to see this plan through, but it will not be easy. The Department is totally capable of delivering on the recommendations outlined in the plan with the right resources and the right political support. Let the advancement begin!

CHAPTER TWO - MARICOPA COUNTY'S COMMUNITY NEEDS AND PROFILE

2.1 COMMUNITY / STAKEHOLDER INPUT

2.1.1 PURPOSE

The community input process engaged key leadership in one-on-one interviews, focus groups with key stakeholders and user groups, public forums open to all residents and a statistically valid household survey. The community input represents qualitative and quantitative data that is used to define need, values, and vision for parks and recreation in Maricopa County.

The following is a list of the different methods used and various groups that comprised the community input process.

- Twenty-five (25) key leadership interviews were conducted individually

- Twenty (20) focus groups (75+ individuals attended)

    o Community Officials/Leaders
    o Park and Recreation Management
    o Park Department Staff
    o Key Stakeholder Groups
    o Partners
    o General Recreation Users

- Ten (10) Public Forums – (100+ residents attended geographically distributed throughout the County)

    o Tempe, AZ
    o Queen Creek/Gilbert, AZ
    o Carefree, AZ
    o Fountain Hills, AZ
    o Central Phoenix, AZ

    o North Phoenix, AZ
    o Wickenburg, AZ
    o Peoria, AZ
    o Gila Bend, AZ
    o South Phoenix, AZ

- Countywide Household Survey

    o Random Sample Telephone Survey
    o 1035 valid responses

This input process was designed to gather information through a broad format to gain insight into as wide a variety of current and potential users and stakeholders in order to create a balanced and far reaching *Strategic System Master Plan*. From this input, community values emerged that serve to frame the overall strategic objectives and the supporting strategies and actions.

2.1.2 METHODOLOGY

The PROS team utilized contacts and relationships of Department officials to identify stakeholders and organized the invitation and logistics for the stakeholder interviews, focus groups and public forums. Meetings were scheduled in various areas of the county based on population centers with focus groups and public forums grouped together to facilitate efficient travel.

The PROS team members worked with the Department to identify all groups and key contact persons for each group. The focus groups were all asked the same questions to help identify common trends related to vision, values, and key issues and provide insight into facility and program needs, operational issues, and opportunities with the system by directly identifying personal value ascribed to parks, trails, recreation and open space. This information provides critical input into other tasks including the Facilities/Recreation Program Assessment, Financial Assessment and the final Strategic System Master Plan.

2.2 STAKEHOLDER / KEY LEADERSHIP INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Individuals comprised of key leaders and representatives from community not-for-profit organizations, local government, athletic organizations, local businesses, organized and self-directed recreation users, frequent program participants, and Department employees participated in twenty-five (25) stakeholder interviews conducted during the week of January 29, 2008 through February 2, 2008.

In each of the key leadership interviews, participants were asked to provide feedback on the same topics related to Parks and Recreation perceptions, key issues that need to be addressed, facility and program needs, community values, funding opportunities, and their vision and priorities for parks and recreation in Maricopa County.

The summary of findings was developed from responses to the following 16 questions and subsequent discussions. These questions were also utilized for the focus group interviews.

1. Have you used any of the Maricopa County parks and recreation facilities, parks and programs? If so what parks, recreation facilities or programs have you used?

2. What are your general perceptions of the County parks and recreation system?

3. Have you used other recreation agencies including public, private or not-for-profit in the County? How do they compare with the County's facilities and or programs?

4. What are the strengths of the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department that we need to build on for this plan?

5. What are the weaknesses of the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department that we need to address through this plan?

6. What are the key issues facing Maricopa County as a whole?

7. How would you describe the values of the residents in Maricopa County as it applies to parks and recreation?

8. How balanced do you think the parks and recreation system is in terms of park types, facilities and programs?

9. What are the mandates for Maricopa County related to Parks and Recreation?

10. What are the recreation program needs do you hear about that are needed in the County?

11. What are the parks and recreation facility needs for the County as it applies to both indoor and outdoor facilities?

12. Are there any operational or maintenance issues that need to be addressed in the plan?

13. What percentage of the total operational costs should users fees be for individual and or team participation in programs or use of facilities?

14. Are their opportunities for partnering or other funding sources in Maricopa County for the development or delivery of recreation facilities or programs?

15. What role do you see parks and recreation playing in the long term sustainability for Maricopa County?

16. If you could change one thing in parks and recreation in Maricopa County in the next 10 years what would it be?

2.2.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following summarizes the responses of stakeholder opinions as captured in these one-on-one interview sessions.

2.2.1.1 STRENGTHS

The overall theme regarding the Maricopa County park system is that it is a solid system and manages its resources well. Individuals within the key leadership arena indicated that some of the system's strengths center on the location of parks throughout the County, the upkeep and maintenance of the park system, and the assortment of programs that are offered. It was noted that a strong, established management team is in place and that the staff are helpful and do a good job despite their small number. Many feel the trail system is good and the ranger-guided hikes and website add to the strength of the Department. In addition, many found the diversity and magnitude of the park system and the uniqueness of parks for an urbanized area to be strengths. Additional comments included:

- The park system is a jewel for the region
- Great interpretive programs
- Clean bathrooms

2.2.1.2 WEAKNESSES

Areas in need of improvement in the park system included: funding, staffing, and bureaucracy. Interviewees indicated that both operating and capital budgets are underfunded and maintenance and operations are affected by the lack of financial resources. Examples of needed maintenance tasks include making sure maps are available

at the parks and improving signage throughout the system. It was also noted that there is a lack of preventative and lifecycle maintenance programs. References to staffing issues included low morale, high turnover, and the lack of adequate staffing levels. Some indicated that the Department is in a reactive mode and that it takes too long to get projects completed because of the bureaucracy. Some feel the internal processes are outdated and there is a general lack of sophistication in the use of technology. For example, there is no point of sale system for fees and permits. Additional areas needing improvement include:

- Minimalist approach taken by the agency
- Lack of awareness by the community about the system
- Frustration at some parks about insufficient access
- Some parks are overused
- One interview mentioned the need for better security

2.2.1.3   OPPORTUNITIES

A number of different comments relating to Departmental opportunities surfaced, supporting the opinion that the Department is running in a status quo mode. Three recurring opportunities were identified: the use of alternative revenues (e.g., sponsors, naming rights, and Friends Groups), marketing, and partnering with other organizations (particularly city governments). A regional bond program (with other entities) and a Departmental bond program should be considered for future land acquisition.   Key leadership interviewees recommended making the development of intergovernmental agreements easier and formalizing an overall program for partnership processes.

Numerous marketing opportunities were identified during the interviews, including the need for the Department to build its brand and image. It was suggested that the Department partner with cities in advertising its programs and work with the tourism industry and Visitor's Bureau to generate awareness and additional business. Partnering with city governments in the area of trail development and trail connections was also suggested.

Other opportunities identified include the development of ecotourism programs, establishment of new regional parks to keep up with the growing population, providing bike rentals, improving the web site with better park maps, developing a point of sale for all parks, and updating the fee structure.

2.2.1.4   KEY ISSUES

A number of key issues emerged that were previously mentioned during other sections of the interview.   These include funding limitations and the inability to reinvest in infrastructure, a lack of capital funds, encroachment issues, and a limited awareness by the public of what the park system has to offer. Additional issues indicated were a lack of park access, issues of entitlement, and the continued growth in the population and the department's ability to accommodate more users.

2.2.1.5   PROGRAMS

Many interview participants felt that the programming within the county is good, however, a number of programs were suggested for the county to pursue or expand upon:

interpretive and environmental programs, equestrian programs, family-oriented programs, and adventure programs such as rock climbing and back country camping. Additional comments include:

- More education programs related to environmental stewardship and conservation
- Shooting programs
- Summer camps
- Special events and programs build advocacy
- Trails 101
- Make sure programs aren't duplicating what cities are offering

2.2.1.6 FACILITIES

Interviews with key leadership resulted in a number of comments related to parks and recreation facilities in Maricopa County. Smaller scale facility projects such as better signage, more trails and a trail program to designate level of difficulty, more interactive facilities/programs for children, and expanding concessionaire opportunities were mentioned. Larger scale projects such as the establishment of visitor centers at all parks, adding laundry facilities, more restrooms and showers, and vending at all campgrounds. Expanding facilities to include paint ball, more equestrian facilities, competition sized shooting range, large room for presentations and meetings, and an outdoor stage were also mentioned.

- Trailhead at State Land Trust at White Tank
- County needs to be a part of the City planning process

2.2.1.7 FEES

Few comments were made regarding fees associated with the Department. It was noted that additional strategies that rely less on the General Fund should be explored. Earlier comments indicated updating the fee structure is one opportunity the department should examine.

2.2.1.8 VALUES

Key leadership in the county value the preservation of open space, the natural beauty of the parks, the ability to get away from the noise of the city, and the family time spent together at county parks.

- Open place to go for all…cheap, accessible, and easy to get to
- Outdoor recreation is highly desired
- Health conscious residents

2.3 FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

Focus group interviews sought to capture public opinion regarding parks and open space, recreation activities, environmental stewardship, and partnerships as it pertains to Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department. Twenty (20) focus groups were conducted during the week of January 29, 2008 through February 2, 2008 and involved a wide range of user groups representing a balanced array of interests. The summary of

findings was developed from responses to the 16 questions listed in the Stakeholders and Key Leadership interviews and subsequent discussions.

2.3.1 GENERAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION SYSTEM

Focus group attendees indicated an overall positive perception about the Maricopa County Park and Recreation System. It was noted that the system's unique programming, cooperativeness, maintenance, variety, beauty, and quality staff all contribute to a positive view. Many feel that the system does a good job for park visitors and the staff, though limited in resources, does a good job of managing those resources. A number of constructive opinions were voiced during the interviews as well. Some feel that the Park and Recreation Commission does not have a lot of interest in what goes on at the parks, the system is hindered by poor morale, and the system is struggling significantly. Additional observations mentioned include parking issues, the perception that there is "nothing to do at the parks except hiking", and parks are not permanently protected as land is being traded for other uses.

2.3.2 USE OF COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES, PARKS, AND PROGRAMS

Focus group attendees indicated using a majority of the parks available to them, including White Tank, Usery Mountain, McDowell Mountain Park, Lake Pleasant, Estrella Mountain Park, Buckeye Hills, Spur Cross, and Cave Creek. Specific facilities identified include the visitor center and scout area/group party area of McDowell Mountain Park. Participants indicated trail use, hiking, interpretive programs, horseback riding, fishing, and mountain biking as parks and recreation programs and services utilized.

2.3.3 USE OF OTHER RECREATION SERVICE PROVIDERS

A small number of additional public, private, and not-for-profit recreation agencies, such as surrounding cities and National Park and Forest Service agencies, were identified as facilities visited in addition to those run by Maricopa County. When asked to compare the County's facilities and programs to those of other recreation agencies, some participants felt that the county system is equal to and compares favorably in size and expansiveness with other systems. It was noted that the county parks are cleaner than other parks and have less expensive entrance fees. Others feel the county system is lagging in comparison to other systems in the areas of park maintenance, staffing, funding, and availability of newer facilities and campgrounds.

2.3.4 STRENGTHS OF THE COUNTY'S PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Many strengths of the department were identified as possible items to be built upon in the master plan including the department's working relationship with federal agencies, quality staff, unique and diverse products, quality resources, a strong group of park rangers and hosts, and the department's trail system.

2.3.5 WEAKNESSES OF THE COUNTY'S PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

While many strengths of the department were identified in the previous question, a number of weaknesses were also highlighted by the focus groups as concerns that should be

addressed in the plan. Regarding staffing and funding, there is concern that there is not enough of either which limits the services offered to visitors. Many feel salary levels are low, contributing to high turnover, and that budgeting for the department is not at an adequate level. Other areas needing improvement include the lack of a preventative maintenance plan, antiquated systems, a lack of volunteers and helpful signage, and the department's ability to accommodate a large number of users. Areas needing improvement of specific parks were also mentioned such as Lake Pleasant Park's pricing structure for water craft access, White Tank Park's trail system, and security at Buckeye Hills Park.

2.3.6 KEY ISSUES FACING MARICOPA COUNTY

One of the key issues Maricopa County is facing that surfaced most frequently is the growth of the county and how this growth is affecting transportation, air quality, demand, and encroachment issues as commercial and residential development around parks increases. Also related to the population growth of the county is the county's ability to educate the public about the parks and recreation system, maintaining open space, and minimizing the effects of aging on park infrastructure. Other key issues identified by the focus group participants include reductions in budgets, keeping utility corridors off of park land, and coordinating with the County Flood Control District.

2.3.7 MARICOPA COUNTY RESIDENT VALUES TOWARD PARKS AND RECREATION

Maricopa County residents value the county parks and the opportunities they provide as a place for families to come together in a safe environment. Residents are appreciative of the contrasting park types and facilities and their offerings. Also highly valued is personal health, active lifestyles, the beauty of the open and natural spaces available, and the preservation of the land.

2.3.8 BALANCE OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM

Overall, focus group participants feel that the park and recreation system in Maricopa County is well balanced and is able to maintain a variety of programs and services to meet the demands of the county residents. A few comments regarding an imbalance in the system reflected a desire to build more active parks and increase the number of group campgrounds.

2.3.9 RECREATION PROGRAM NEEDS

Focus group respondents indicated that additional or more programming in the areas of rock climbing, rappelling, education and nature safety, wildlife, interpretive, equestrian, and conservation is needed. The community needs also focused on the delivery of more special events such as biathlons, corporate team building opportunities, and biking competitions. It was also noted that the county should take the lead in becoming an outdoor recreation leader and, in general, should offer more family-related programs and activities.

2.3.10 PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITY NEEDS

Participants of the focus groups indicated that additional indoor recreation facility needs include larger rooms for indoor presentations and places for people to go during the hot months of the summer time. An example provided includes enhancing the experience at visitor centers by replacing mobile homes with permanent visitor center buildings, creating more interactive displays for children, and more classroom space for educational and interpretive programming.

Many more outdoor recreation facility needs were highlighted at the focus group meetings than indoor needs. Examples of outdoor facility needs include the creation of a paint ball facility, amphitheater/ outdoor stage area, solar restrooms and composting toilets, laundry, shower and vending facilities at campgrounds, and more small group and youth group camping areas.

2.3.11 OPERATIONAL AND MAINTENANCE ISSUES

It was indicated that a number of parks have some maintenance issues related to a lack of trash receptacles, safe creek crossings, upkeep of website and informational brochures, and trail maintenance. It was noted that, overall, the county is not able to provide preventative maintenance at the correct level. Operationally, participants indicated that staffing levels (including hiring an event planner and additional public relations staff), cost recovery principles, and funding issues should be addressed in the plan. Enforcing a standardized purchasing and point of sale system and a consistent pricing policy were also highlighted.

2.3.12 PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL OPERATIONAL COSTS COVERED BY USERS

The focus group conversations resulted in a mixed review regarding user fees and covering the costs of program and facility use. Some indicated a belief that user fees should cover 100% of program and facility use costs while others disagreed. And while some participants feel a $5.00 entry fee is high, others feel it is reasonable. No comments were made regarding an increase in current fees and the possibility that the public would find an increase reasonable.

2.3.13 OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTNERING

Focus group participants offered up a long list of potential partners for the county to work with in the delivery and development of facilities and programs. Examples include partnering with other related education-based organizations that need resources, other local agencies, Student Conservation Association, Arizona State University, and the US Game and Fish Department. Other funding source possibilities offered up during the focus group

interviews for the delivery and/or development of facilities and services include the use of sponsorships, tourism dollars, creating a preservation tax, impact fees, Indian gaming grants, and revenues generated through the sale of county license plates.

2.3.14 ROLE OF PARKS AND RECREATION IN LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF THE COUNTY

Focus group participants indicated that they feel the role of the Parks and Recreation Department is to add value to the community through the preservation and protection of natural resources and provide open space for individuals to escape to when needed. It was also indicated that the county should play a role in getting things started in outlying areas for the creation of programs and facilities.

2.3.15 CHANGE ONE THING OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS

Participants indicated if they could change one thing in parks and recreation in Maricopa County in the next 10 years they would like to see the system adequately staffed at all levels, become high-tech and more advanced, acquire more land, and build visitor centers at all parks. Improving access to all parks, improvements in marketing, and reducing bureaucratic red tape also made the list. Additional items such as the creation of a county preservation tax and the establishment of a career track for employees with improved responsibilities and accountability were also mentioned as items that would like to be changed in the next 10 years.

2.3.16 MANDATES OF THE COUNTY

The mandates indicated for Maricopa County related to parks and recreation include the need to provide and preserve open space, provide unique facilities and services and programs to residents and visitors, and maintain a balanced use of active and passive space at parks. Focus group participants feel the county should also fund the park system properly and increase user group involvement.

2.4 PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY

The PROS Team conducted ten (10) public forums between March 27, 2008 and April 12, 2008, with two (2) meetings held per Supervisory District to ensure geographic distribution throughout the County to gather insight from citizens at large. County staff in conjunction with PROS Team members utilized neutral locations and worked to gain maximum media exposure to inform citizens of the purpose and importance of the meetings and clearly note time and locations. County staff assisted in the outreach and coordination of these meetings including preparing and distributing press releases and related media contacts, coordinating the invitations to stakeholders and their respective constituencies, facilitating meeting room logistics and assisting in attendee sign-in and greetings.

PROS team members facilitated the public forums to gain an understanding of resident's opinions and perceptions surrounding parks and recreation. An agenda was provided to the participants to maintain the focus and purpose of the meeting and ensures coverage of all issues. Professional facilitation managed and directed the sessions toward open and

constructive input. The ten (10) locations of the public forums included (100+ residents from the general public attended):

DISTRICT 1 (CHAIRMAN FULTON BROCK)
- April 7, 1008 in Tempe, AZ – Fiesta Inn Resort, Prescott Room
- March 27, 2008 in Queen Creek/Gilbert, AZ – Queen Creek City Council Chambers

DISTRICT 2 (DON STAPLEY)
- March 29, 2008 in Fountain Hills, AZ – Fountain Hills Branch Library
- April 11, 2008 in Carefree, AZ – Spirit in the Desert Retreat Center

DISTRICT 3 (ANDY KUNASEK)
- March 28, 2008 in Phoenix, AZ (Central) – Burton Barr Central Library
- April 12, 2008 in Phoenix, AZ (North) – Goelet A.C. Beuf Community Center

DISTRICT 4 (MAX WILSON)
- March 31, 2008 in Wickenburg, AZ – Town of Wickenburg Community Center
- April 4, 2008 in Peoria, 2008 – Peoria Public Library

DISTRICT 5 (MARY ROSE WILCOX)
- April 3, 2008 in Gila Bend, AZ – Gila Bend Unified School, Logan Auditorium
- April 5, 2008 in Laveen, AZ (South Phoenix) – Cesar Chavez Branch Library

The public forums sought to capture public opinion regarding parks and open space, key issues, community needs, recreation activities, partnerships, and priorities as it pertains to Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department.

The summary of findings was developed from responses to the following five (5) questions or areas of focus, and the subsequent discussions:

1. What are your general perceptions of the parks, facilities, and programs in Maricopa County?
2. What are the key issues facing the County as a whole, as well as parks and recreation today?
3. What parks and facilities are needed?
4. What recreation programs are needed?
5. What should be the short and long-term priorities for Maricopa County Parks and Recreation?

2.4.1.1 PERCEPTIONS OF PARKS, FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

The attendees of the public forums communicated a number of different items relating to the general perceptions of the parks, facilities, and programs available in Maricopa County. Many forum participants indicated that the amenities available to them are good at serving a multitude of needs and that the parks should be left as natural as possible. Many feel better signage is needed to indicate the presence of blind spots and yielding points on trails. Better trailhead signage and maps were also indicated as a need. An additional general perception highlighted at the public forums was that the county parks do not have the same level of amenities as municipal parks. In addition, Wickenburg residents indicated a desire for a county park that is closer to their community.

2.4.1.2 KEY ISSUES

The community indicated a wide range of key issues that Maricopa County and the Parks and Recreation Department are currently facing. Some of the key issues provided focused on the need for the development and protection of open space, greenbelts, and wildlife corridors. Residents indicated a need for additional dog parks, including off-leash and smaller dog parks. Better connections and partnerships with other governmental entities, such as Yavapai County and the Bureau of Land Management, were highlighted as current issues as well. A lack of connectivity to other parks and trails and a lack of security in parks were primary issues also raised by the community.

2.4.1.3 PARK AND FACILITY NEEDS

The community indicated that additional dog parks were needed in the county, along with a multi-use aviation park and an ATV course. Many expressed a need for a managed trail system containing single use trails as well as trails shared by hikers, bikers, and horses. Additional shaded areas, solar-powered buildings, dedicated wildlife habitats, and improved parking for trailers were also indicated as priority needs.

2.4.1.4 NEEDED PROGRAMS

Public forum attendees pointed out that recreation programs, such as wilderness survival courses, GPS classes, wildlife programming, and informational classes and marketing for the regional trail system and ecological diversity awareness are needed. Cross-education programs and scheduled events for users are needed to promote understanding and appreciation and may be conducted through schools and partnering organizations. An addition, citizens indicated there should be a marketing program to create an identity for the County's Parks and Recreation Department.

2.4.1.5 OPERATIONAL AND MAINTENANCE ISSUES

The community indicated that certain operational aspects should be addressed, such as the ability to purchase annual passes at municipality buildings and town halls, and the ability to conduct e-commerce transactions online. Maintenance issues focused primarily around trail maintenance, including the use of volunteers, installment of call boxes at trailheads, and the trimming and pruning of plants and trees around the trails.   Additional comments included:

- Litter control, facility upkeep, and cleanliness
- Arizona Trails Association; adopt a trail program
- Narrow trails are more natural; should be left this way as appropriate

2.4.1.6 SHORT TERM AND LONG TERM NEEDS

Regarding the short term needs of the county parks and recreation department, the community would like to see the creation of an open space preservation plan and additional trails built at McDowell and San Tan Mountain Regional Parks. Residents feel the county should work more closely with outside groups such as developers to create buffer zones, fire departments on improved emergency and rescue plans, and non-profit organizations to partner with on grants. Other short term needs mentioned included providing multiple education programs, parking improvements, on-line purchases of annual passes, and

improved marketing and communication to the community. Long term needs focused on the expansion of the park system with the establishment of a dog park and the acquisition of additional land for open space. The community also feels that the county should adopt standards for open space planning and development, help in reforming state land regulations, and provide new homeowner educational programs for realtors and homebuilders.

2.5 SURVEY FINDINGS

The PROS Team reviewed the 2006 Maricopa County Parks and Recreation General Population Survey: Telephone Survey of Maricopa County Residents – Final Report prepared by the Arizona State University School of Community Resources & Development in conjunction with Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department, Maricopa County Office of Research and Reporting. This survey updated the 2000 Parks and Recreation General Population Survey for the purposes of assessing Maricopa County general resident attitudes toward park and recreation issues, past outdoor recreation participation and future recreation opportunity preferences. The current 2006 survey focused on understanding current county park users and assessing the current quality of service in the county parks system. Both studies were utilized to compare data to identify relevant trends or changes. The survey was conducted in September, October and early November 2006, with a total of 1,035 interviews conducted from an original sample of 6,000 randomly generated Maricopa County residents.

The survey analysis reviewed for any point of reference that can support the observations and findings of the key leadership interviews, focus group meetings and public forums. Most importantly, the survey analysis is a useful tool to be utilized in concert with the other forms of community input facilitated with the project.

The summary of the survey findings are presented below and these findings have been instrumental in the decision making process for the future parks and recreation needs in Maricopa County.

2.5.1 GENERAL RECREATION ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

Countywide residents indicate that both open space and public parks are very important to them personally and to their family. The personal importance placed on parks and on open space were almost identical suggesting that both parks and open space are very important to Maricopa County residents.

The average Maricopa County Household made 36.2 visits to public parks or outdoor recreation areas over the previous 12 months in Arizona.
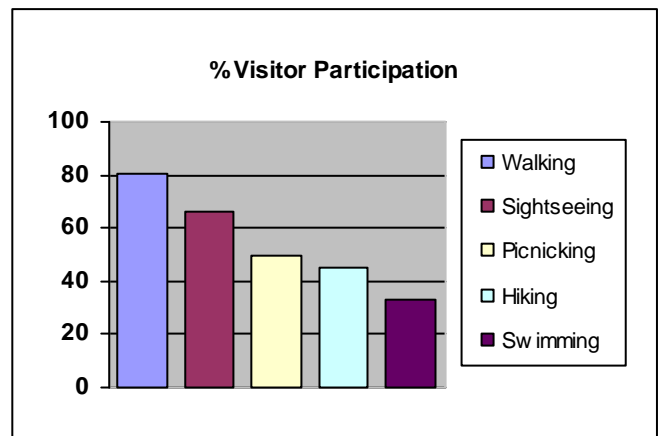
Figure 3 - Percent Visitor Participation

The most participated in outdoor recreation activities for County-wide households were walking for pleasure (80.3%), sightseeing (66.2%), social or family gathering (58.4%), picnicking (49.7%), hiking (45.1%) and swimming/wading (33.2%).

2.5.2 GENERAL OUTDOOR RECREATION AREA AND PARK PREFERENCES (FACILITIES AND SERVICES)

Countywide residents indicated most important (to them and their families) public park facilities (other than city parks), in rank order, were shaded picnic areas, nature centers/museums, group use areas, playgrounds, ADA accessible trails, developed sites, trails and trailheads, visitor centers and shower facilities.

Likewise, the most important services to provide in public parks were well maintained grounds/facilities, law enforcement, first aid, available staff, reserved camping sites, history/archeology programs and nature programs.
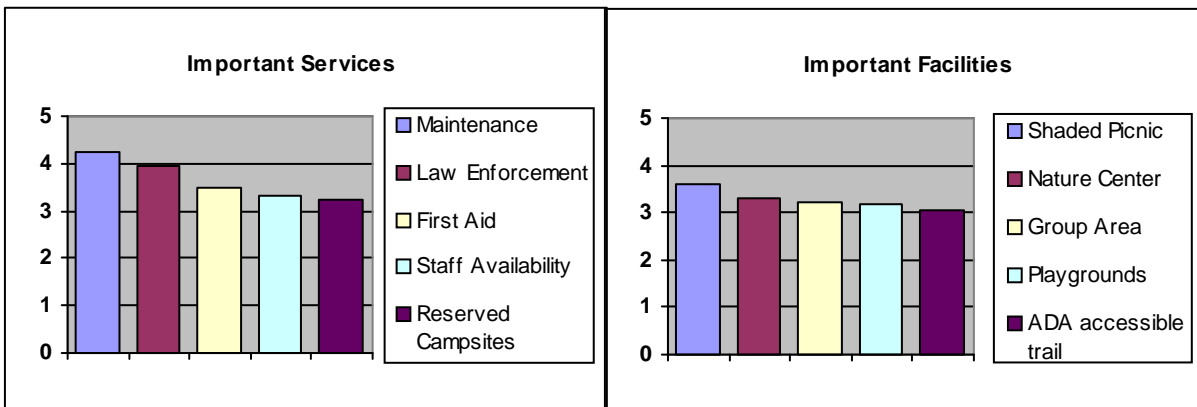
1=not at all important to 5=critical

Figure 4 - Important Services and Facilities

The most important sources of information for planning which parks or recreation areas to visit are internet, pamphlets and brochures, followed by newspapers, television, and radio.

2.5.3 COMPARISONS WITH MARICOPA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT WITH OTHER OUTDOOR RECREATION COMPETITORS

Countywide residents report being the most knowledgeable about the recreation areas managed by the City/ Municipal Parks and Recreation Departments and the least knowledgeable about the areas managed by the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department. Knowledge about areas managed by federal providers (US Forest Service, National Park Service and BLM) and Arizona State Parks were rated between the two.
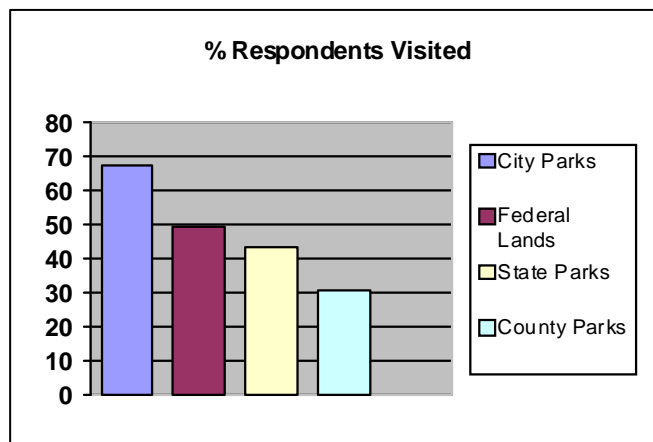
Figure 5 - Percent Respondents Visited

Parks and recreation areas managed by cities parks were reported visited by 67.5 percent of Maricopa County residents over the past year, followed by federal areas (49.4%), the state (43.6 percent) and Maricopa County (30.7%).

In terms of the average number of visits to city, county, state or federal parks and recreation areas, city park and recreation resources (by those who visit) received the most visitation with an annual average of 31.7 visits. County parks were second with 6.1 visits, followed by federal agencies with 3.95 visits and state parks with 3.46 visits.

When visitation to county parks was compared with visitation to South Mountain Park, Saguaro Lake and Lost Dutchman State Park, Lake Pleasant Regional Park was visited by more residents than any of the other recreation areas in the Phoenix metro area by residents.

2.5.4 KNOWLEDGE, VISITATION AND PERCEPTIONS OF MARICOPA COUNTY PARKS

Countywide residents reported the greatest familiarity (knowledge) with Lake Pleasant Regional Park, followed by White Tank Mountain, Estrella Mountain, McDowell Mountain, Cave Creek and Usery Mountain Regional Parks. Visitation over the past five years follows this same general order, except that Usery Mountain Regional Park moves up to the number 2 rank.
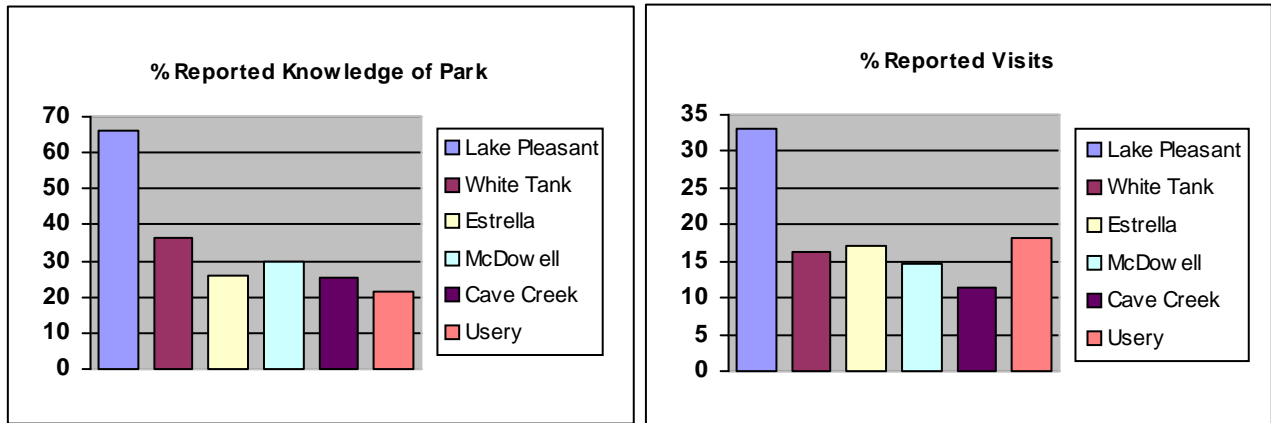
Figure 6 - Percentage Reported Knowledge of Park and Visits

A total of 30.7 percent of the Maricopa County Households reported visiting at least one county park over the past 12 months.

The top three reasons (constraints) given by residents for not visiting county parks are lack of knowledge of the park and distance to the park and poor health/disability.

Visitation Constraints

Legend:
- Lack Knowledge
- Distance
- Poor Health
- Lack interest
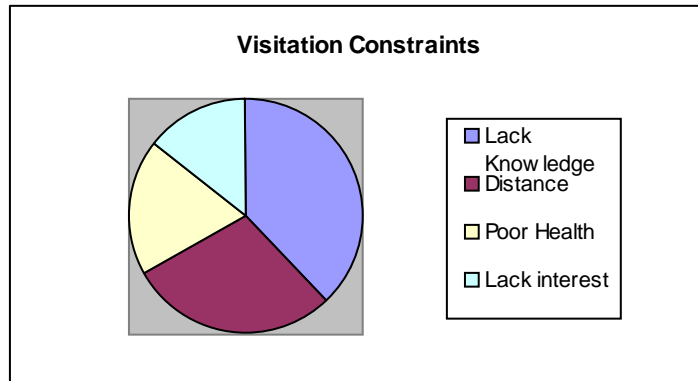
Figure 7 - Visitation Constraints

2.5.5 PERCEIVED BENEFITS FROM COUNTY PARKS USE

Residents perceived contributing outdoor opportunities, improving community image and developing a sense of community as the most important community benefits.

Improving physical health and fitness and strengthening relationships and improving mental health were the most important personal benefits.

2.5.6 IMPORTANCE OF PLANNING FOR FUTURE PARK AND FACILITY NEEDS

Expanding and protecting desert open space for outdoor recreation and wildlife was the highest rated future need by Maricopa County residents.

Enhancing the facilities at existing parks and increasing the number of regional parks were also rated as very important or critical by over 50 percent of Maricopa County residents.

Future Needs

Legend:
- Expand/Protect Open Space
- Enhance Park Facilities
- Increase Number of Parks
- Expand Trails in Urban areas
- Expand Trails in Rural areas
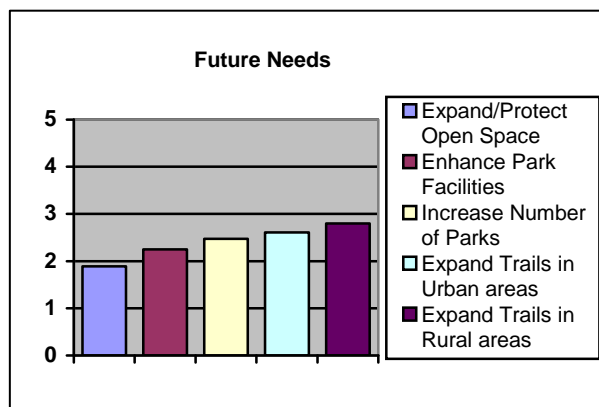
1=critical to 5=not important at all

Figure 8 - Future Park and Facility Needs

2.5.7 PARK USER FEES AND FUNDING ISSUES

While the largest group of Maricopa County residents felt that operations funding should come equally from taxes and user fees (47.7 percent), there was slightly more support for improvement funds coming from taxes.

When asked about a reasonable vehicle entrance fee to visit a county park, the average value was $5.70

When asked about a reasonable camping fee to stay in a not-hook-up campsite, the average value was $11.85.

Figure 9 - Park User Acceptable Fees

When asked about a reasonable camping fee to stay in a full hook-up campsite, the average value was $21.64.

CHAPTER THREE - DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS AND DRIVE TIME ANALYSIS MAPS

3.1 DEMOGRAPHIC AND TRENDS ANALYSIS

The Demographic Analysis provides an understanding of the composition of Maricopa County populace. This analysis demonstrates the overall size by total population by specific age segment, race, ethnicity, the overall economic status and spending power of the residents through household income statistics. From this base data, a clear understanding of the market size, economic factors, and trends will emerge. Having this information will help determine potential participation within the County as a whole as well as the individual parks target markets. A detailed Demographic and Trends Analysis can be found in **Appendix 2**.

3.1.1 INTRODUCTION

Population measurements four unique components, each set counteracts with the other – births and deaths, and a rise and decline in population growth as individuals move in and out of the state. According to population estimates for Arizona, produced by the Arizona Department of Commerce, Maricopa County's population estimate for 2007 was 3,907,492. This number reflects a 27.2% increase from the 2000 census total which was 3,072,149. The population measurement most responsible for the swell in the County populace is in-migration.

Fueled by year-round sunshine, the scenic natural beauty, and relatively favorable housing and job markets, the population boom is expected to continue. Projections estimate an approximate 51% increase in the total population from 2007 through 2022, when the total population is expected to reach 5,880,000 persons.

The county has a relatively young population – the median age is 33. The largest major age segment is comprised of those between 18 and 44 years of age. Gender distribution of Maricopa County is nearly equal with female residents accounting for slightly more than half (50.04%) of the County population, a distribution that is projected to stay constant for the foreseeable future. The County is predominantly made up of persons classified as white (74.4%), with persons of Hispanic or Latino origin accounting for nearly 30% percent of the total population. The estimated 2007 median household income in Maricopa County was $60,193, or roughly 30% higher than the median U.S. household income reported for 2000.

Although both public and private recreational venues have been developed within the County boundaries over the last decade, the development of large scale public park and recreation park sites, assets, and amenities has not maintained a proportional scale. The only recent significant large scale addition by the County Parks and Recreation Department has been San Tan Mountain Regional Park. However, based on total acreage available of both municipal and county inventories, two points can be made:

- The availability of undeveloped parkland is still significant; currently, less than 3% of the County's system is "developed" for some type of recreational use

- Many of the municipal park systems located in the County have made investments in their public park systems by addition of park sites, trails, or amenities

With the expected increase of two million persons over the next 15 years, the County as a whole would need to develop or increase parkland inventories by an additional 30,000 acres of parkland. Depending on the standard utilized to meet the values of the community, this acreage estimate could be higher or lower by 20-30%; for the 15-year estimate, the common standard of 15 acres per 1,000 persons was utilized.

The state of fluctuation that many County residents endured during the County's population and real estate boom of the 2000's, as well as the ensuing bust of the same real estate market, may not be obvious when viewing the income characteristics. It could be assumed however, that with the increase in cost of living and the likely subsequent decrease in disposable income, a larger demand was placed on public recreational venues. This phenomenon is nothing more than the basic supply and demand curve – as the demand wanes for cost prohibitive entertainment and leisure options due to the decrease in discretionary spending, it could be expected that an increase in reasonably priced, traditional parks and recreation activities increased. This increase in use could allow the County to capture a recently unrepresented portion of the population. Building on the County's current passive use, nature based programming could meet this estimated new demand – Americans enjoy the experience of the outdoors and most self-guided or passive based programming is cost-effective.

3.1.2 METHODOLOGY

The most current data available was used for this analysis. All data was acquired in September 2007, and reflects actual numbers as reported in the 2000 U.S. Census and demographic estimates for 2007 and 2012 as estimated by Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), with linear regression used for projected 2017 and 2022 demographics. Demographic data was compared to information provided by the Maricopa Association of Governments. No significant variations were present.

3.1.3 MARICOPA COUNTY, ARIZONA

Maricopa County is the most populous county in the State of Arizona; with an estimated 2007 population of 3,901,548, and an area of approximately 132.4 square miles, the population density of the county is roughly 46.04 people per acre of land. In comparison, the State of Arizona as a whole equates to 0.08 persons per acre.

Population categorization by age segment demonstrates the relative youth of the county (**Figure 10)**; the largest single age segment is comprised of those between the ages of eighteen and forty-four (39% of the total population). The eighteen to forty-four year old segment represents the "doers" of the community – those individuals most responsible for the "vibe" and energy associated with the particular area. The forty-five to sixty-four year old population represents 22% of the county population while the sixty-five and over population (all of those aged sixty-five and above) represent approximately 12% of the population. The youth of the county – those under the age of eighteen – represent approximately 27% of the population. This population composition lends itself to a very wide range of recreational, educational, and entertainment options.
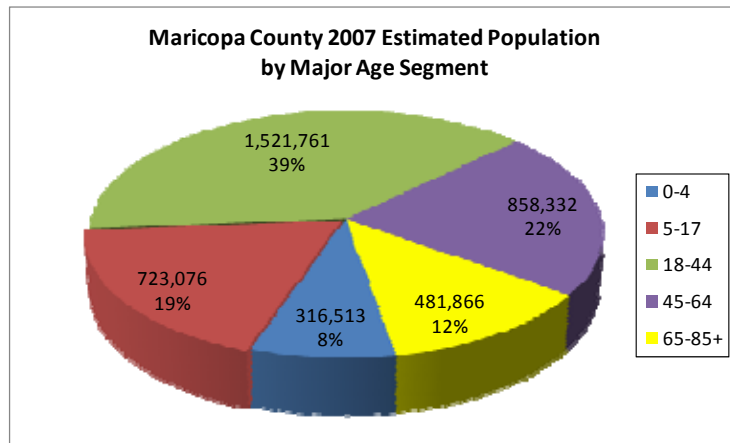
Figure 10 - Population by Major Age Segment 2007

3.1.3.1 RECREATION PRINCIPLES AND AGE

Although a person's age should be considered when planning for program opportunities – recreational programs should be available for each of the major age segments – age alone should not define the ultimate program offering. Age is one of many defining factors in recreation participation patterns.   Personality, social influences, early life recreation experiences, and leisure attitudes also shape recreation behavior throughout the lifetime. The Leisure Information Network's "*A Look at Leisure*" white paper theorized multiple motives which decline in importance with age, and conversely, is generally considered a priority for young, maturing person.   This means that as individual's age, the declining motivation effectively reduces their desire to participate in certain learning or skill building programs. These principals and motives include, but are not limited to:

- Improving skills or knowledge or learning new skills/abilities – valuable asset for a young person or maturing adult; as one ages, the desire, need, and ability to improve skill sets generally decline
- To compete/for a challenge – competitor based programs are generally targeted toward the youth or young adult segments
- For excitement – as with competitor based programming, as the populace ages, thrill seeking and extreme adventure generally levels off

Motivational principals which are often sought after and can increase in importance with age:

- To help/be an asset for the Community – volunteerism and public stewardship generally increases with age; one contributing factor of increased stewardship is the amount of available "free time" the maturing demographic has due to a reduced workload as a result of a partial-retirement or total retirement
- To enjoy nature – trends suggest as the population ages participation in outdoor viewing activities increase; these activities include bird and wildlife viewing and interpretive walks

- Relaxation – in stark contrast to the thrill seeking commonly associated with a youthful age segment, an aging populace generally seeks out activities which are stimulating while allowing for a regeneration of the mind and body

Although often described as an attractive destination for retirees, Maricopa County's population composition is currently similar to national averages. As the County continues to experience an increase in total numbers of persons, it can be expected that a portion of those households will mimic the expected trends of the general U.S. population:

- More baby-boomers – loosely defined as persons aged 55 years or more; many are either already retired/semi-retired or nearing retirement
- Empty nesters – households comprised of two adults and no children

As screen time – time spent in front of televisions and computers – increases for America's youth, it is vital that a realistic and practical alternative to traditional sporting activities is made available for the multitude of youth that choose to not participate in the "bat and ball" sports. Multiple research sources, including American Sports Data, Inc.'s survey information, has shown that the youngest of generation X and many in generation Y have shunned the organized team activities at much greater rates than the preceding generations. The nearly limitless alternatives provided through natural environment allow for an ever evolving youth-based program. Participation trends as they pertain to age and race/ethnicity are presented in the Outdoor Activity Trends section of this report.

3.1.3.2 POPULATION GROWTH

The population of Maricopa County is projected to surge by 51% by 2022 to 5,880,035 persons. During the scope of this period (2007 to 2022) this projected increase results in an annual increase of approximately 1.32% per year. While all population segments are expected to grow in number by 2022, the number of individuals between the ages of eighteen and forty-four is anticipated to decline 3% as compared to the population as a whole. In contrast, the number of county residents between the ages of forty-five and eighty-five will increase its share of the total population by an estimated 4%. This implies that not only is there expected to be a greater portion of new residents comprised of households without children, but a portion of the households with youth are projected to lose their adolescent members to other areas due to attendance at institutions of higher education, families

Maricopa County 2022 Estimated Population by Major Age Segment

- 0-4: 490,466 — 8%
- 5-17: 1,041,891 — 18%
- 18-44: 2,090,157 — 36%
- 45-64: 1,434,193 — 24%
- 65-85+: 823,328 — 14%
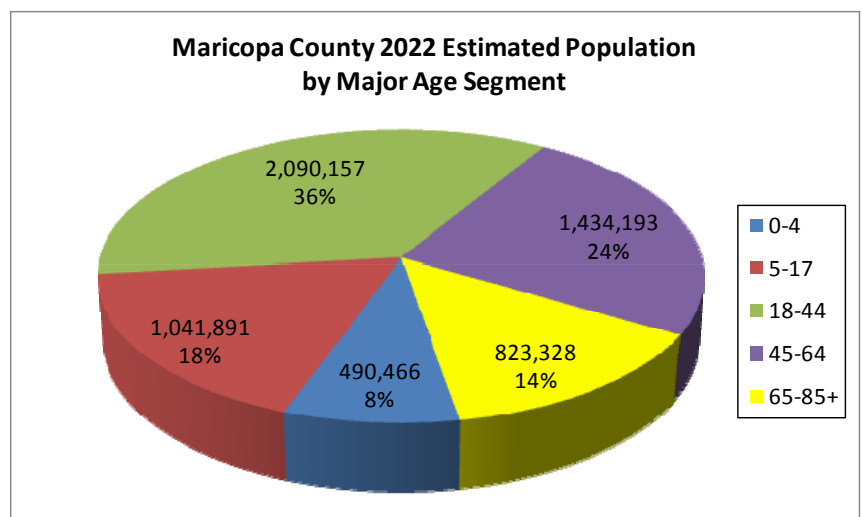
Figure 11 - Population by Major Age Segment 2022

relocating, or other events. In general, the County is **Figure 11** presents 2022 population estimates by major age segment.

3.1.3.3 GENDER

The gender distribution of Maricopa County is nearly equal with female residents accounting for 50.04% of the county population. This distribution is projected to remain constant through 2022.

Analyzing the population by gender reveals that as the population increases in age the female share of the population also increases (**Figure 12**). For 2007, the male to female ratio for residents eighteen and over is nearly even with males at 49.5% and females at 50.5%. An analysis of gender for those aged sixty-five and above reveals a twelve percent gap in gender make-up (Male – 43.8%; Female – 56.2%). Similar trends are anticipated in 2022, with a slight decrease in the gender gap to 11.6% (**Figure 13**).
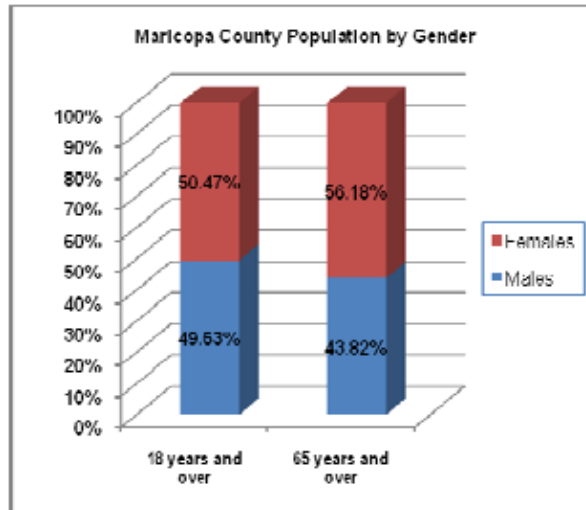
Figure 12 - Population by Gender, 2007

Current recreational trends indicate that Americans participate in a sport or recreational activity of some kind at a relatively high rate (65%). Women participation rates, however, are slightly lower than their male counterparts – 61% of women participate at least once per year in a sport or recreational activity compared to a 69% participation rate of men. According to recreational trends research performed in the industry over the past twenty years, the top ten recreational activities for women are currently walking, aerobics, general exercising, biking, jogging, basketball, lifting weights, golf, swimming, and tennis. The top ten recreational activities for men are golf, basketball, walking, jogging, biking, lifting weights, football, hiking, fishing, and hunting. While men and women share a desire for six of the top ten recreational activities listed above, men claim to participate in their favorite activities more often than women in any ninety-day span. With more women participating in recreational activities further into adulthood, more are opting for less team oriented activities that dominate the female youth recreation environment and shifting
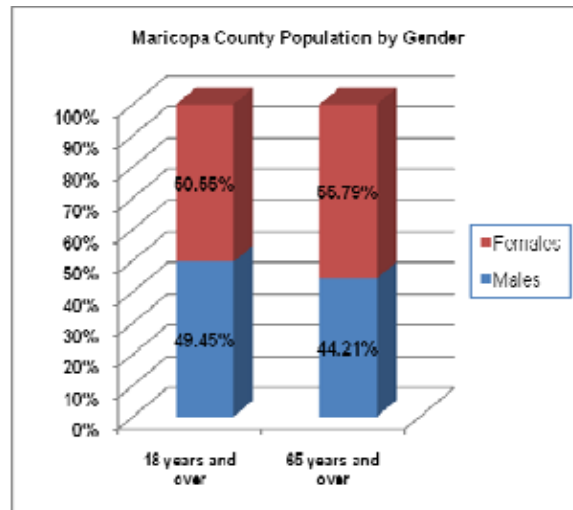
Figure 13 - Population by Gender, 2022

more towards a diverse selection of individual participant activities as evident in the top ten recreational activities mentioned above.

3.1.3.4 RACE AND ETHNICITY

Maricopa County's predominant race is white, accounting for nearly seventy-five percent of the total population (74.4%; 2,902,385 persons). The next largest race is that of those identified as other (14.0%; 547,988 persons) followed by those classified as black (3.9%; 150,330 persons), as shown in **Figure 14**. All remaining races combined (i.e., American Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander, and those identified with two or more races) total approximately eight percent of the population (7.7%; 300,845 persons).
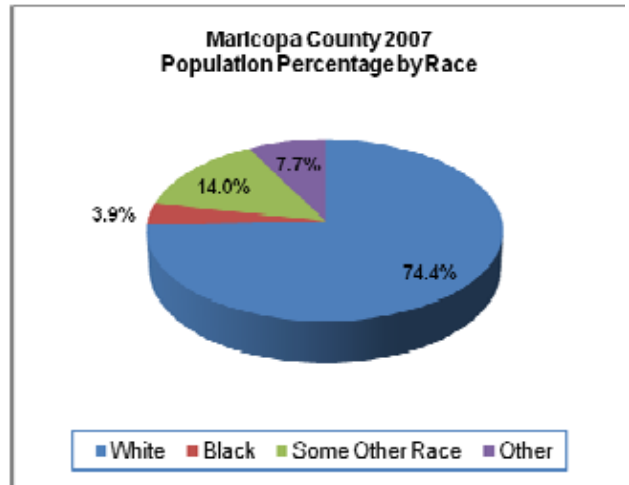
Figure 14 - Population by Race 2007

Contrary to belief, Hispanic/Latino is not an actual race, but a grouping of multiple races within the Latino community. Persons of any race in combination with being classified as being of Hispanic or Latino origin account for nearly 30% of the current population (29.4%; 1,147,513 persons).

Hispanic and Latino Americans

Population by Race, Maricopa County

	2000 Census	2007 Estimate	2012 Projection	2017 Projection	2022 Projection
White Alone	2,376,359	2,902,385	3,344,489	3,731,182	4,132,794
Black Alone	114,551	150,330	180,325	206,614	233,901
American Indian Alone	56,706	70,861	82,568	92,942	103,675
Asian Alone	66,445	99,696	131,003	156,002	182,699
Pacific Islander Alone	4,406	6,051	7,508	8,730	10,015
Some Other Race Alone	364,213	547,988	721,782	860,073	1,007,922
Two or More Races	89,469	124,237	155,688	181,615	209,029
Total Population by Race/Ethnicity	**3,072,149**	**3,901,548**	**4,623,363**	**5,237,158**	**5,880,035**
Hispanic/Latino Origin (Any Race)	763,341	1,147,513	1,509,808	1,798,730	2,107,406

Source: U.S. Census and ESRI

Figure 15 - Population by Race

have strong cultural and community traditions with an emphasis placed on the extended family, many times gathering in large recreational groups where multiple activities geared towards all age segments of the group may participate. Large group pavilions with picnicking amenities and multi-purpose fields are integral in the communal pastime shared by many Hispanics.

The 2022 projections shown in **Figure 16** indicate a slight decrease in the white population from 74.4% to 70.3%. The number of persons classified as Hispanic or Latino descent is projected to account for 36% of the total population by 2022 (total of 2,107,406 persons).
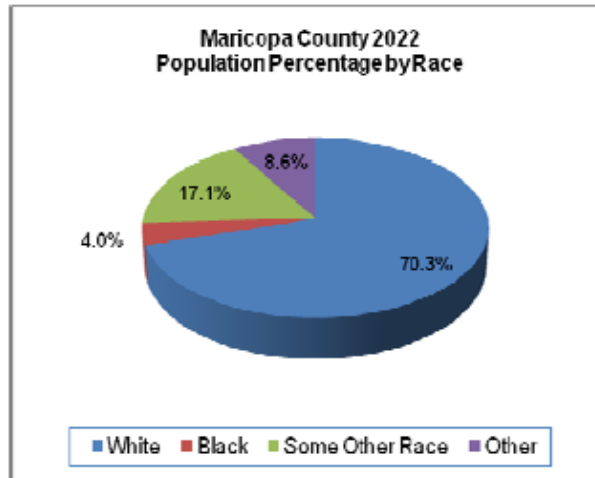
Figure 16 –Population by Race 2022

3.1.3.5 HOUSEHOLDS AND INCOME

Currently, there is an estimated 1,422,956 households in Maricopa County with an average household size of 2.71 persons. The 2000 Census of Population and Housing indicates that family households in the county account for 67.4% of all households, with 51.6% of family households made up of married-couple families.   Non-family households account for the remaining 32.6%. This percentage of family versus non-family households parallel U.S. averages for household characteristics.

The estimated 2007 median household income in Maricopa County is $60,193, up from $45,353 reported in the 2000 Census (see **Figure 17**).   This represents the earnings of all persons age 16 years or older living together in a housing unit.   This significant
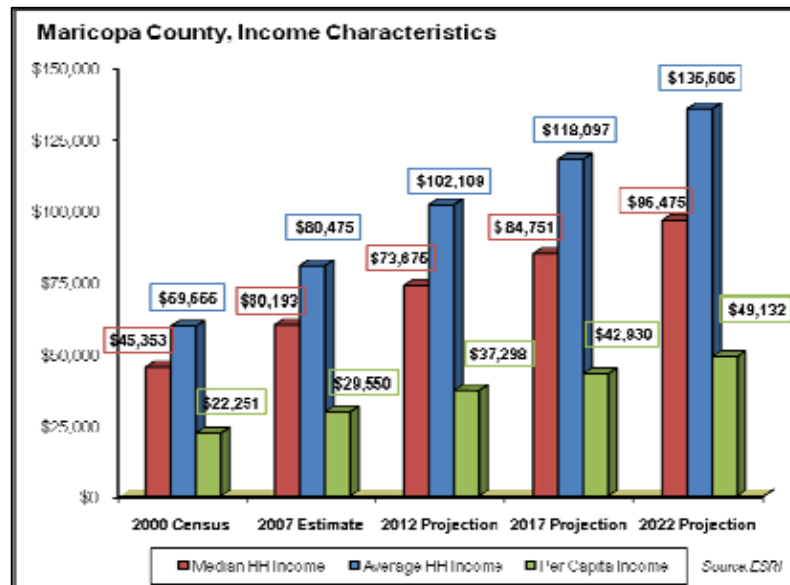
Figure 17 - Income Characteristics

increase implies that significant business development or relocation has occurred within the county during this period. The county's median household income is 30% higher than the average U.S. household income reported for 2005 of $46,242.

Based on the ACCRA Cost of Living Index, the Phoenix cost of living index for the first quarter of 2007 was comparable to the U.S. average. However, compared to other large cities, only

Dallas and Atlanta were determined to have a cheaper cost of living than Phoenix. With an average household income over and above the national average and a cost of living index that is lower than most metropolitan areas, it can be expected that there is a presence of relatively high disposable income and a greater price elasticity. This would imply that the populace is better suited to absorb an increase in costs associated with additional experiences or increased fees associated with a quality experience.

Ultimately, the County Park System faces the same challenges of all parks and recreation providers nationwide – county, city, state, and even private providers – providing a consistent and quality laden experience for an ever demanding constituency in an atmosphere of increasing competition. This can be accomplished by offering programs to all age segments which not only are desirable, but closely adhere to the Department's mission.

3.1.4 CONCLUSION

Rapid growth due to in-migration coupled with a relatively young and diverse population will require Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department to reposition itself over the next decade if the Department is to be successful in providing relevant services to the changing demographic profile of residents. Shifts in recreational participatory patterns and increasing public sentiment to reintroduce children and adults to nature will also require a shift in developing and providing programs and opportunities that engage visitors while promoting a strong environmental ethic. The key to the future viability of the Department will be an entrepreneurial spirit of the management and staff – the ability of the Department to design, implement, and bestow programs and services across all age segments of the population with the flexibility to maintain an evolving target market.

3.2 DRIVE TIME ANALYSIS MAPS

A map for each County park in Maricopa County was produced based on calculated drive times originating at the located entrance of each park and continuing outward on roadways traveling in increments of 15 minutes, 30 minutes and 45 minutes; a 90 minute drive time was also analyzed for Lake Pleasant Regional Park to account for this unique lake asset. These drive times were placed onto 2000 Census Tract estimates for 2007 populations and simplified into density categories of Urban (2.0 people per acre or more; 0.5 acres per person or less), Exurban (0.5 people to 2.0 people per acre; 0.5 to 2.0 acres per person) and Rural (less than 0.5 people per acre, 2.0 acres per person or more). Proportional population estimates were then derived for each drive time and weighted against the drive time acreages to establish average correlated people per acre and the inverted ration of acres per person. The effort to measure the population against the acres available is to demonstrate the need and pressure each County park will be under for the future and how to plan to meet that need in updated master plans for the future and to serve all ages of people surrounding the park where there is high demand pressure on a per person per acre basis.

3.2.1 ADOBE DAM REGIONAL PARK

Adobe Dam Regional Park, located in the north central portion of the County, is the smallest park in the County system at 1,526 acres and is situated in the most urban environment (**Figure 19**). As could be expected with an urban park setting, population densities become less dense with increasing drive times traveled from the park entrance. Adobe Dam Regional Park has an estimated 341,052 people within the 15 minute drive time resulting in 4.71 people per acre and 0.21 acres per person. The 30 minute drive time consists of an estimated 1,905,964 people resulting in 4.31 people per acre and 0.23 acres per person. The 45 minute drive time has a service area of an estimated 3,178,990 people resulting in 3.13 people per acre and 0.32 acres per person.

3.2.2 BUCKEYE HILLS REGIONAL PARK

Buckeye Hills Regional Park comprises 4,474 acres and is located in the central western portion of the County (**Figure 20**). Buckeye Hills is situated in a predominately rural environment. As drive times from the park entrance extend outward, the incorporated areas to the north and east increase the overall population density. Buckeye Hills Regional Park has an estimated 10,361 people within the 15 minute drive time resulting in 0.17 people per acre and 6.06 acres per person. The 30 minute drive time consists of an estimated 65,636 people resulting in 0.20 people per acre and 5.04 acres per person. The 45 minute drive time service area has an estimated 696,572 people resulting in 0.80 people per acre and 1.26 acres per person, changing the population density classification to exurban.

3.2.3 CAVE CREEK REGIONAL PARK

Cave Creek Regional Park comprises 3,722 acres and is located in the north central portion of the County (**Figure 21**). Cave Creek is situated in a predominately exurban environment. As drive times from the park entrance extend outward, the incorporated areas to the south

increase the overall population density. Cave Creek Regional Park has an estimated 41,369 people within the 15 minute drive time resulting in 1.14 people per acre and 0.88 acres per person. The 30 minute drive time consists of an estimated 300,625 people resulting in 1.33 people per acre and 0.75 acres per person. The 45 minute drive time service area has an estimated 1,782,630 people resulting in 2.92 people per acre and 0.34 acres per person.

3.2.4 ESTRELLA MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK

Estrella Mountain Regional Park comprises 19,840 acres and is located in the south central portion of the County (**Figure 22**). Estrella is situated in a predominately exurban environment. As drive times from the park entrance extend outward, the incorporated areas to the northeast and northwest increase the overall population density. Estrella Mountain Regional Park has an estimated 65,303 people within the 15 minute drive time resulting in 1.09 people per acre and 0.92 acres per person. The 30 minute drive time consists of an estimated 801,960 people resulting in 2.43 people per acre and 0.41 acres per person, changing the population density classification to urban. The 45 minute drive time service area has an estimated 2,638,637 people resulting in 2.83 people per acre and 0.35 acres per person.

3.2.5 LAKE PLEASANT REGIONAL PARK

Lake Pleasant Regional Park, located in the northern central portion of the County, is the most regional of the County parks situated on 23,662 acres in a predominately rural environment (**Figure 23**). As drive times from the park entrance extend outward, incorporated areas to the south and east increase the overall population density. Lake Pleasant Regional Park has an estimated 13,664 people within the 15 minute drive time resulting in 0.33 people per acre and 3.03 acres per person. The 30 minute drive time consists of an estimated 253,858 people resulting in 1.09 people per acre and 0.91 acres per person, changing the population density classification to exurban. The 45 minute drive time service area has an estimated 1,799,992 people resulting in 2.59 people per acre and 0.39 acres per person, changing the population density classification to urban. The 90 minute drive time consists of an estimated 3,877,782 people expectedly losing population density as more rural fringes of the county are accessible resulting in 1.05 people per acre and .95 acres per person, changing the population density classification to exurban.

3.2.6 MCDOWELL MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK

McDowell Mountain Regional Park comprises 21,416 acres and is located in the eastern portion of the County (**Figure 24**). McDowell is situated in a predominately rural environment. As drive times from the park entrance extend outward, incorporated areas to the south and west increase the overall population density. McDowell Mountain Regional Park has an estimated 5,673 people within the 15 minute drive time resulting in 0.33 people per acre and 2.98 acres per person. The 30 minute drive time consists of an estimated 62,841 people resulting in 0.97 people per acre and 1.03 acres per person, changing the population density classification to exurban. The 45 minute drive time service area has an estimated 651,733 peopled resulting in 2.77 people per acre and 0.36 acre per person, changing the population density classification to urban.

3.2.7 SAN TAN MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK

San Tan Mountain Regional Park comprises 10,118 acres and is located in the eastern portion of the County (**Figure 25**). San Tan is situated in a predominately rural environment. As drive times from the park entrance extend outward, incorporated areas to the north, within the County, increase the overall population density. San Tan Mountain Regional Park has an estimated 2,460 people within the 15 minute drive time resulting in 0.68 people per acre and 14.68 acres per person. The 30 minute drive time consists of an estimated 51,775 people resulting in 0.28 people per acre and 3.62 acres per person. The 45 minute drive time service area has 590,138 people resulting in 1.07 people per acre and 0.94 acres per person, changing the population density classification to exurban.

3.2.8 SPUR CROSS RANCH CONSERVATION AREA

Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area comprises 2,124 and is located in the northeastern portion of the County (**Figure 26**).   Spur Cross is situated in a predominately exurban environment.   As drive times from the park entrance extend outward, the population densities remain relatively stable. Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area has an estimated 29,576 people within the 15 minute drive time resulting in 1.52 people per acre and 0.65 acres per person.   The 30 minute drive time consists of an estimated 125,108 people resulting in 1.24 people per acre and 0.81 acres per person.   The 45 minute drive time service area has an estimated 512,196 people resulting in 1.59 people per acre and 0.63 acres per person.

3.2.9 USERY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK

Usery Mountain Regional Park comprises 3,648 acres and is located in the eastern portion of the County (**Figure 27**). Usery is situated in a predominately urban environment. As drive times from the park entrance extend outward, the population densities remain relatively stable.   Usery Mountain Regional Park has an estimated 106,911 people within the 15 minute drive time resulting in 2.41 people per acre and .42 acres per person. The 30 minute drive time consists of an estimated 722,720 people resulting in 2.81 people per acre and 0.36 acres per person. The 45 minute drive time service area has an estimated 1,847,195 people resulting in 2.54 people per acre and 0.39 acres per person.

3.2.10 WHITE TANK MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK

White Tank Mountain Regional Park comprises 26,337 acres and is located in the central portion of the County (**Figure 28**).   White Tank is situated in a predominately rural environment. As drive times from the park entrance extend outward, incorporated areas to the south and east increase the overall population density. White Tank Mountain Regional Park has an estimated 2,029 people within the 15 minute drive time resulting in 0.12 people per acre and 8.24 acres per person. The 30 minute drive time consists of an estimated 160,851 people resulting in 1.19 people per acre and 0.84 acres per person, changing the population density classification to exurban. The 45 minute drive time service area has an estimated 1,133,810 people resulting in 2.15 people per acre and 0.47 acres per person, changing the population density to urban.

3.2.11 SUMMARY OF DRIVE TIME ANALYSIS

2007	Total Population by Time Segment (Minutes)			
Site	15	30	45	90
Adobe Dam Regional Park	341,052	1,905,964	3,178,990	N/A
Buckeye Hills Regional Park	10,361	65,636	696,572	N/A
Cave Creek Regional Park	41,369	300,625	1,782,630	N/A
Estrella Mountain Regional Park	65,303	801,960	2,638,637	N/A
Lake Pleasant Regional Park	13,664	253,858	1,799,992	3,877,782
McDowell Mountain Regional Park	5,673	62,841	714,574	N/A
San Tan Mountain Regional Park	2,460	51,775	590,138	N/A
Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area	29,576	125,108	512,196	N/A
Usery Mountain Regional Park	106,911	722,720	1,847,195	N/A
White Tank Mountain Regional Park	2,029	160,851	1,133,810	N/A

2017	Total Population by Time Segment (Minutes)			
Site	15	30	45	90
Adobe Dam Regional Park	437,296	2,476,543	4,205,995	N/A
Buckeye Hills Regional Park	18,877	116,215	976,377	N/A
Cave Creek Regional Park	61,554	403,135	2,307,644	N/A
Estrella Mountain Regional Park	106,212	1,103,520	3,493,037	N/A
Lake Pleasant Regional Park	17,519	326,827	2,369,552	5,203,184
McDowell Mountain Regional Park	7,305	81,303	913,941	N/A
San Tan Mountain Regional Park	3,237	79,292	831,075	N/A
Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area	48,766	178,519	674,075	N/A
Usery Mountain Regional Park	137,694	978,708	2,436,180	N/A
White Tank Mountain Regional Park	2,782	267,256	1,593,287	N/A

2007	Individual Population by Time Segment (Minutes)			
Site	15	30	45	90
Adobe Dam Regional Park	341,052	1,564,912	1,273,026	N/A
Buckeye Hills Regional Park	10,361	55,275	630,936	N/A
Cave Creek Regional Park	41,369	259,256	1,482,005	N/A
Estrella Mountain Regional Park	65,303	736,657	1,836,677	N/A
Lake Pleasant Regional Park	13,664	240,194	1,546,134	2,077,790
McDowell Mountain Regional Park	5,673	57,168	651,733	N/A
San Tan Mountain Regional Park	2,460	49,315	538,363	N/A
Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area	29,576	95,532	387,088	N/A
Usery Mountain Regional Park	106,911	615,809	1,124,475	N/A
White Tank Mountain Regional Park	2,029	158,822	972,959	N/A

2017	Individual Population by Time Segment (Minutes)			
Site	15	30	45	90
Adobe Dam Regional Park	437,296	2,039,247	1,729,452	N/A
Buckeye Hills Regional Park	18,877	97,338	860,162	N/A
Cave Creek Regional Park	61,554	341,581	1,904,509	N/A
Estrella Mountain Regional Park	106,212	997,308	2,389,517	N/A
Lake Pleasant Regional Park	17,519	309,308	2,042,725	2,833,632
McDowell Mountain Regional Park	7,305	73,998	832,638	N/A
San Tan Mountain Regional Park	3,237	76,055	751,783	N/A
Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area	48,766	129,753	495,556	N/A
Usery Mountain Regional Park	137,694	841,014	1,457,472	N/A
White Tank Mountain Regional Park	2,782	264,474	1,326,031	N/A

	Acres by Time Segment (Minutes)			
Site	15	30	45	90
Adobe Dam Regional Park	72,397	369,986	571,757	N/A
Buckeye Hills Regional Park	62,822	267,804	543,343	N/A
Cave Creek Regional Park	36,184	189,516	385,168	N/A
Estrella Mountain Regional Park	59,991	270,041	602,442	N/A
Lake Pleasant Regional Park	41,330	190,888	462,937	2,365,117
McDowell Mountain Regional Park	16,956	64,996	235,177	N/A
San Tan Mountain Regional Park	36,122	151,185	366,357	N/A
Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area	19,471	81,782	220,107	N/A
Usery Mountain Regional Park	44,455	213,172	468,618	N/A
White Tank Mountain Regional Park	16,704	118,889	391,878	N/A

Figure 18 - Summary of Drive Time Analysis
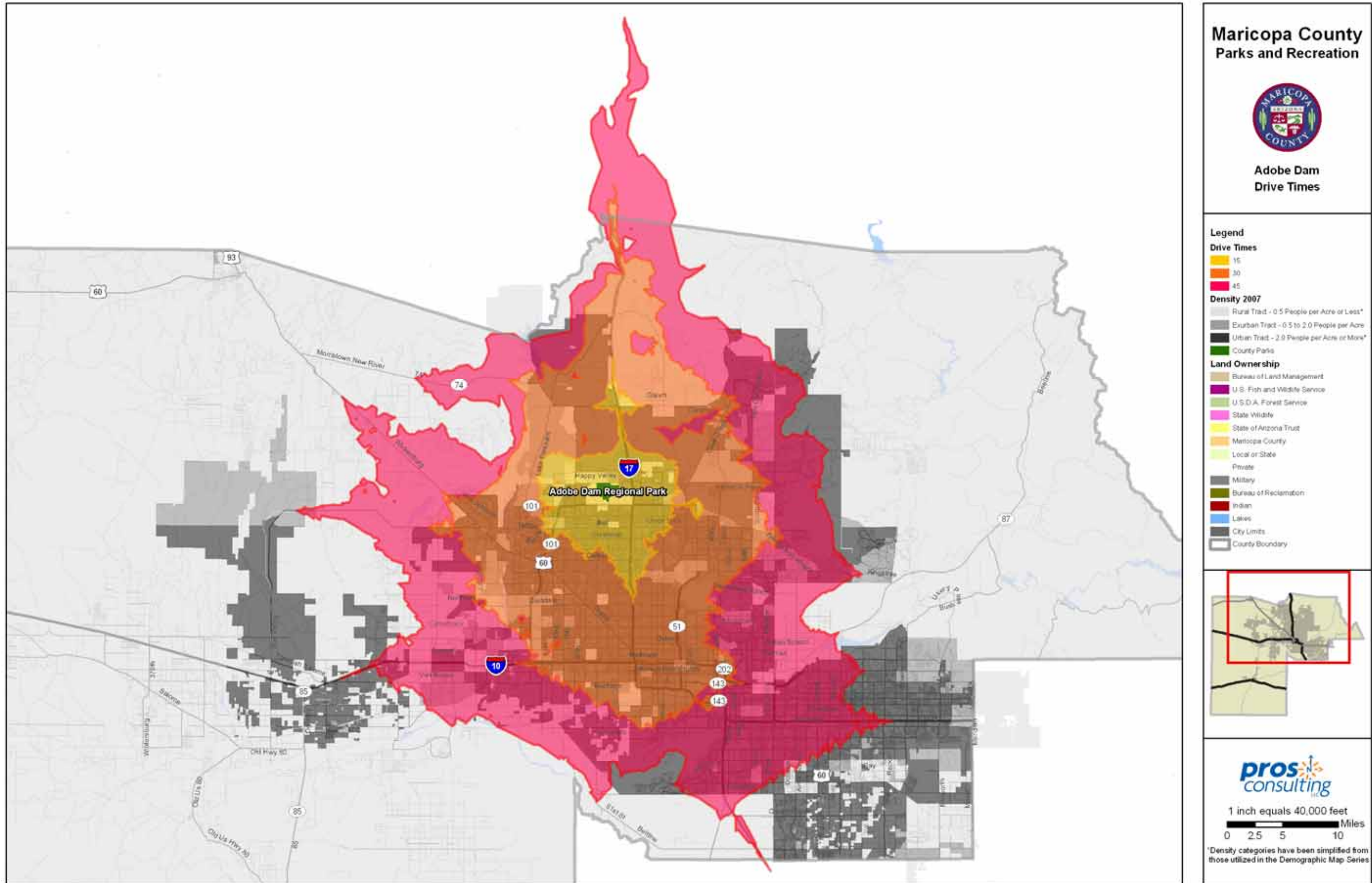
Figure 19 - Adobe Dame Drive Time Map
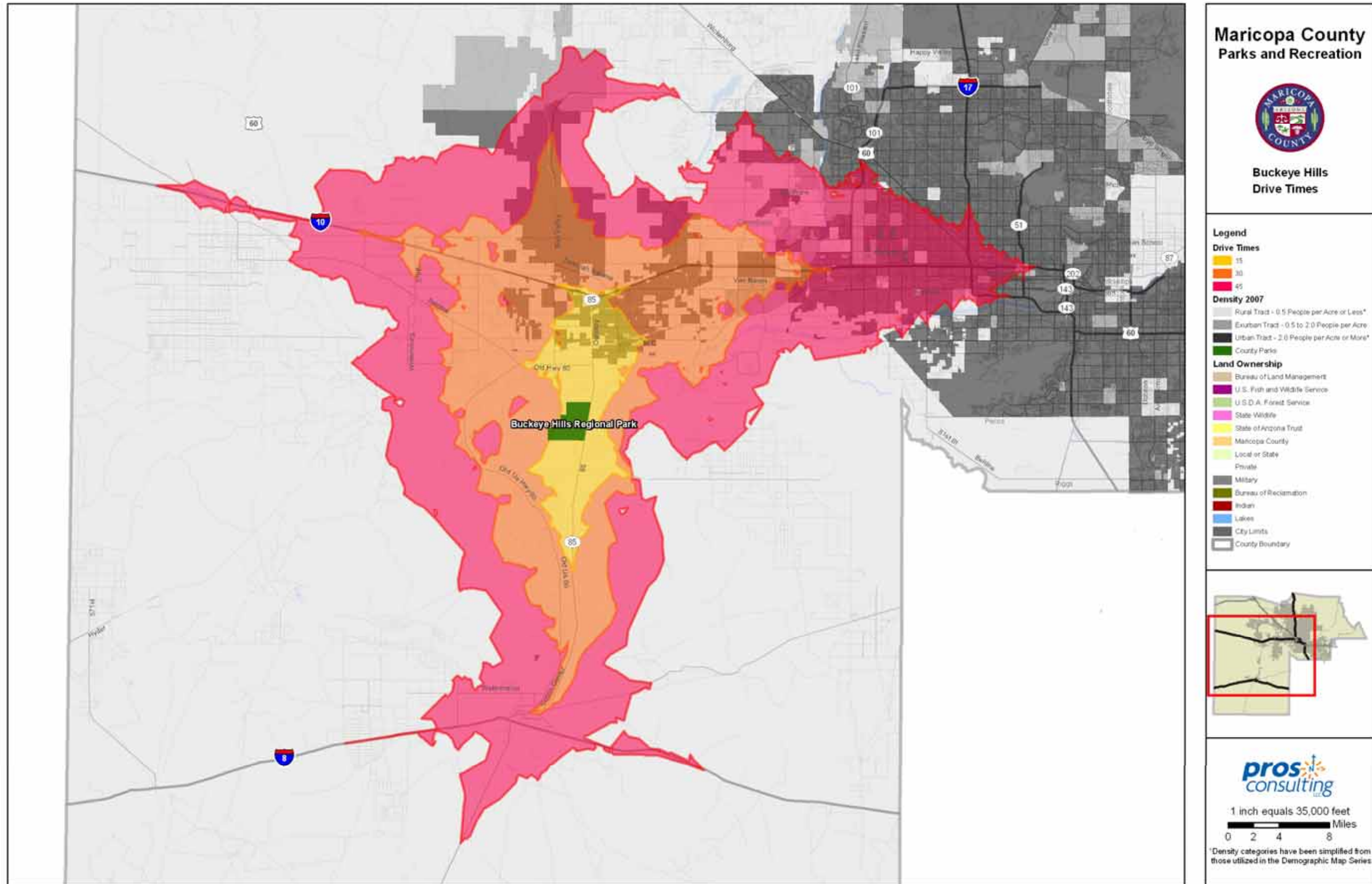
Figure 20 - Buckeye Hills Drive Time Map
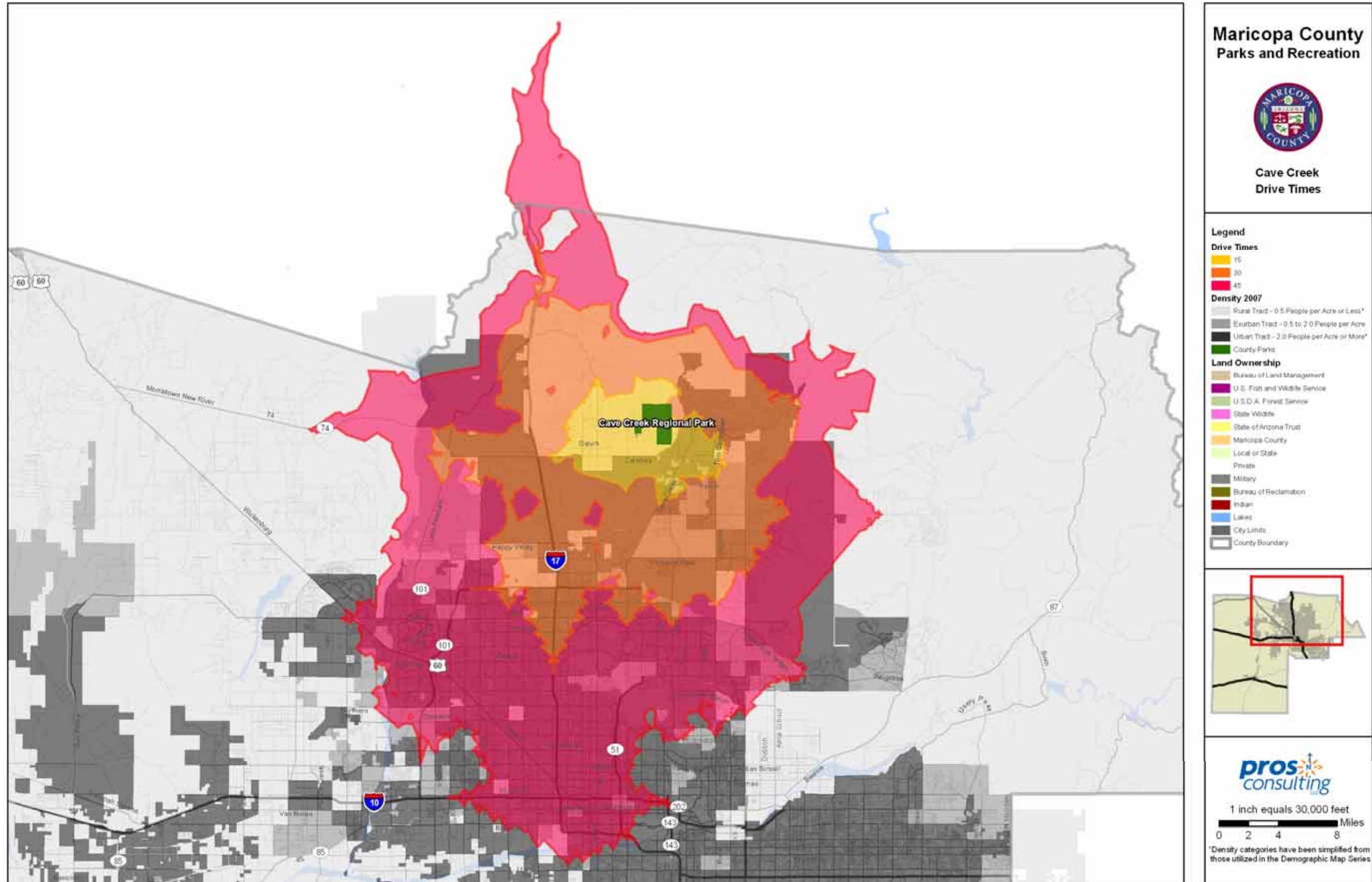
Figure 21 - Cave Creek Drive Time Map

Maricopa County
Parks and Recreation

Estrella Mountain
Drive Times

Legend
Drive Times
- 15
- 30
- 45

Density 2007
- Rural Tract – 0.5 People per Acre or Less*
- Exurban Tract – 0.5 to 2.0 People per Acre
- Urban Tract – 2.0 People per Acre or More*
- County Parks

Land Ownership
- Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S.D.A. Forest Service
- State Wildlife
- State of Arizona Trust
- Maricopa County
- Local or State
- Private
- Military
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Indian
- Lakes
- City Limits
- County Boundary

pros consulting

1 inch equals 30,000 feet
Miles
0   2   4   8

*Density categories have been simplified from those utilized in the Demographic Map Series

Figure 22 - Estrella Mountain Drive Time Map
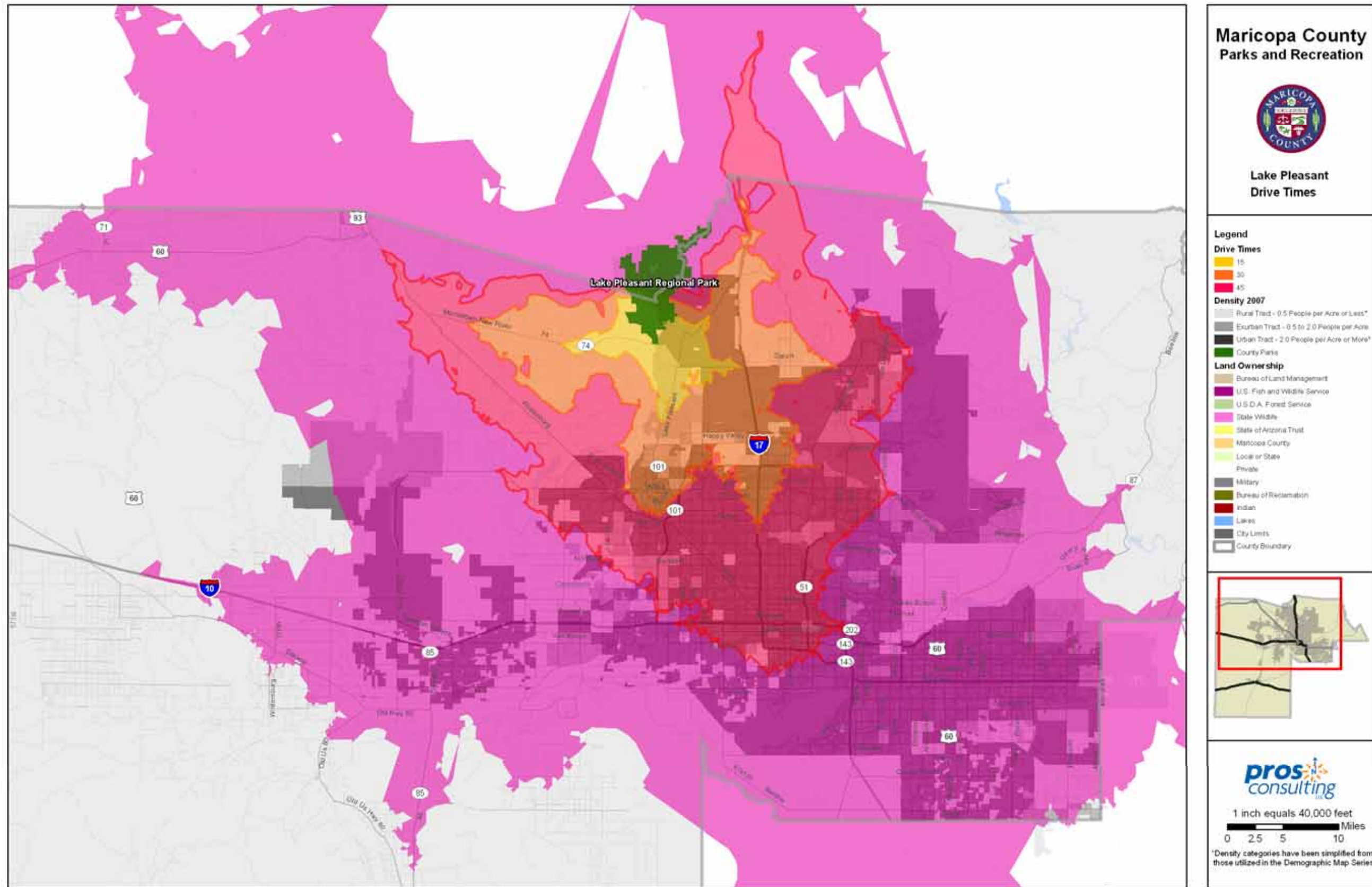
Figure 23 - Lake Pleasant Drive Time Map
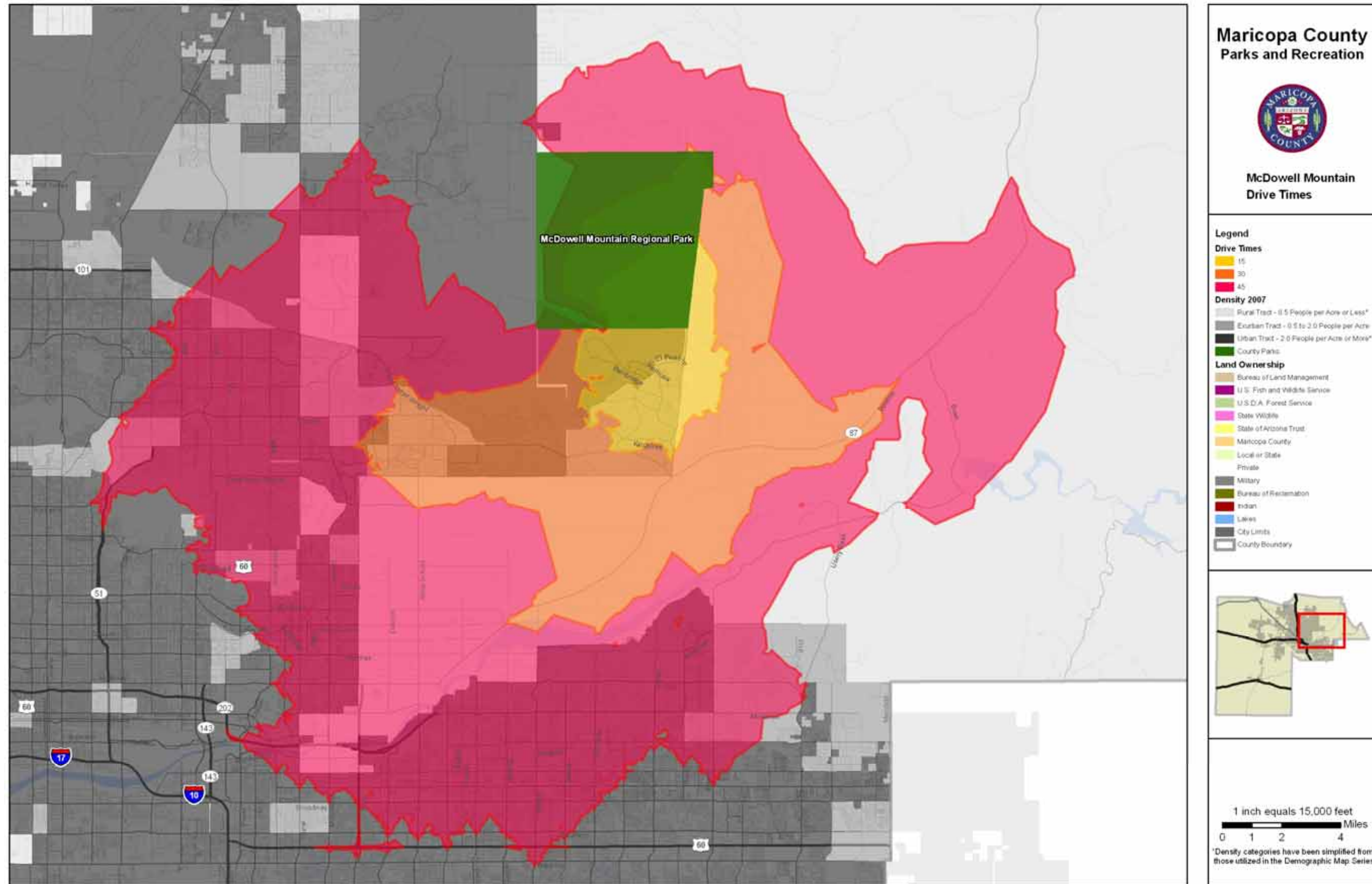
Figure 24 - McDowell Mountain Drive Time Map
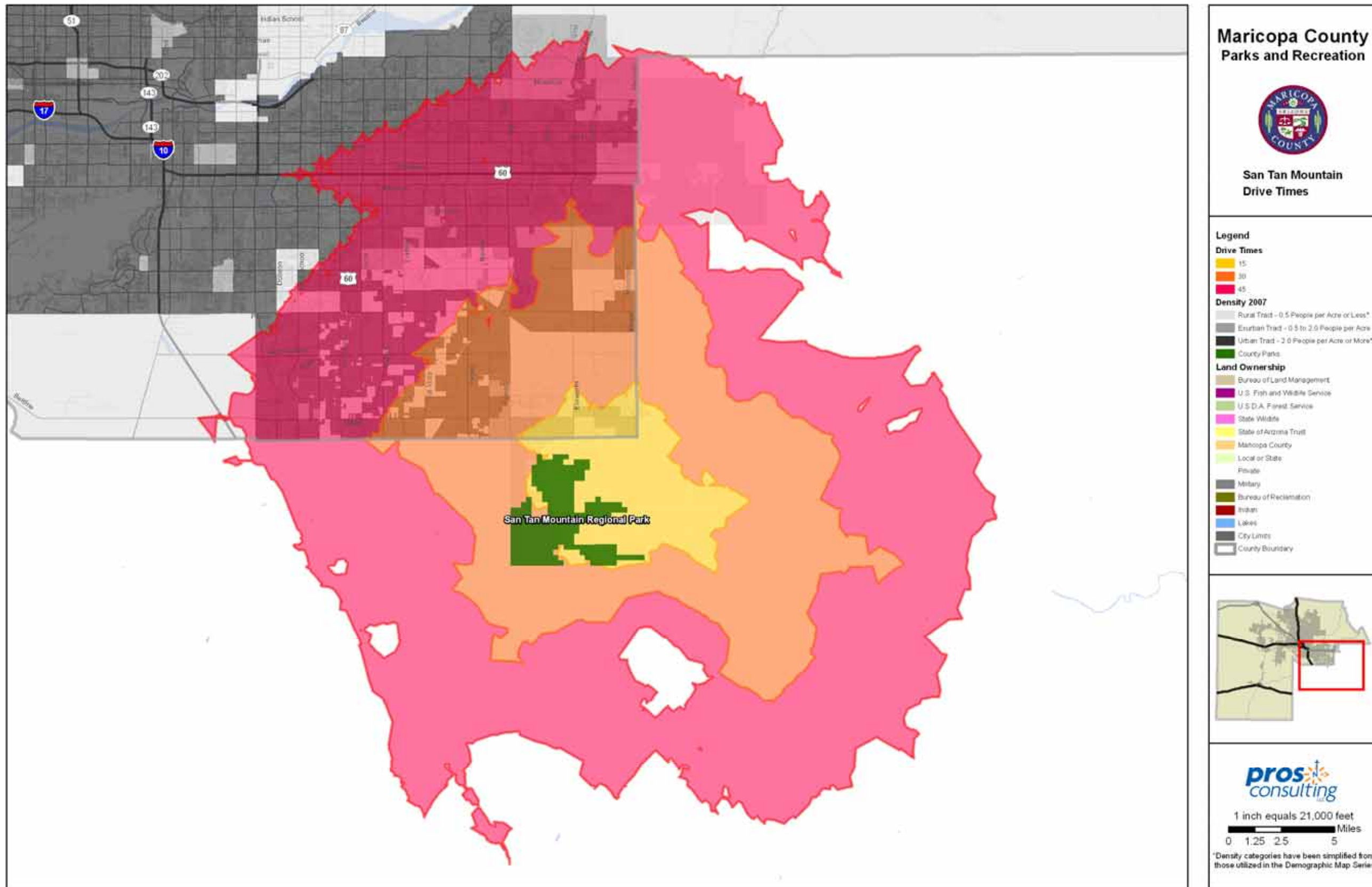
Figure 25 - San Tan Mountain Drive Time Map
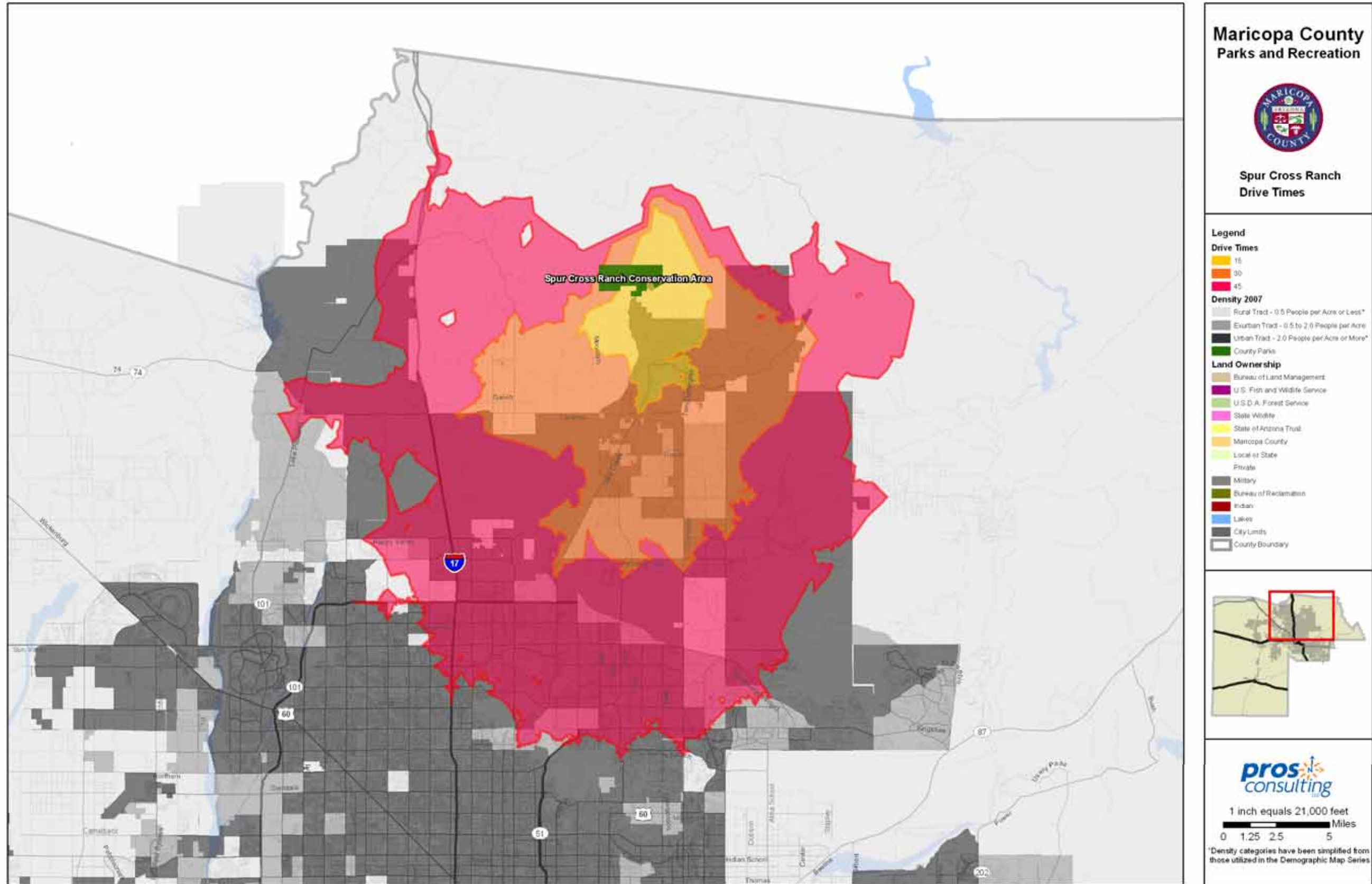
Figure 26 - Spur Cross Ranch Drive Time Map
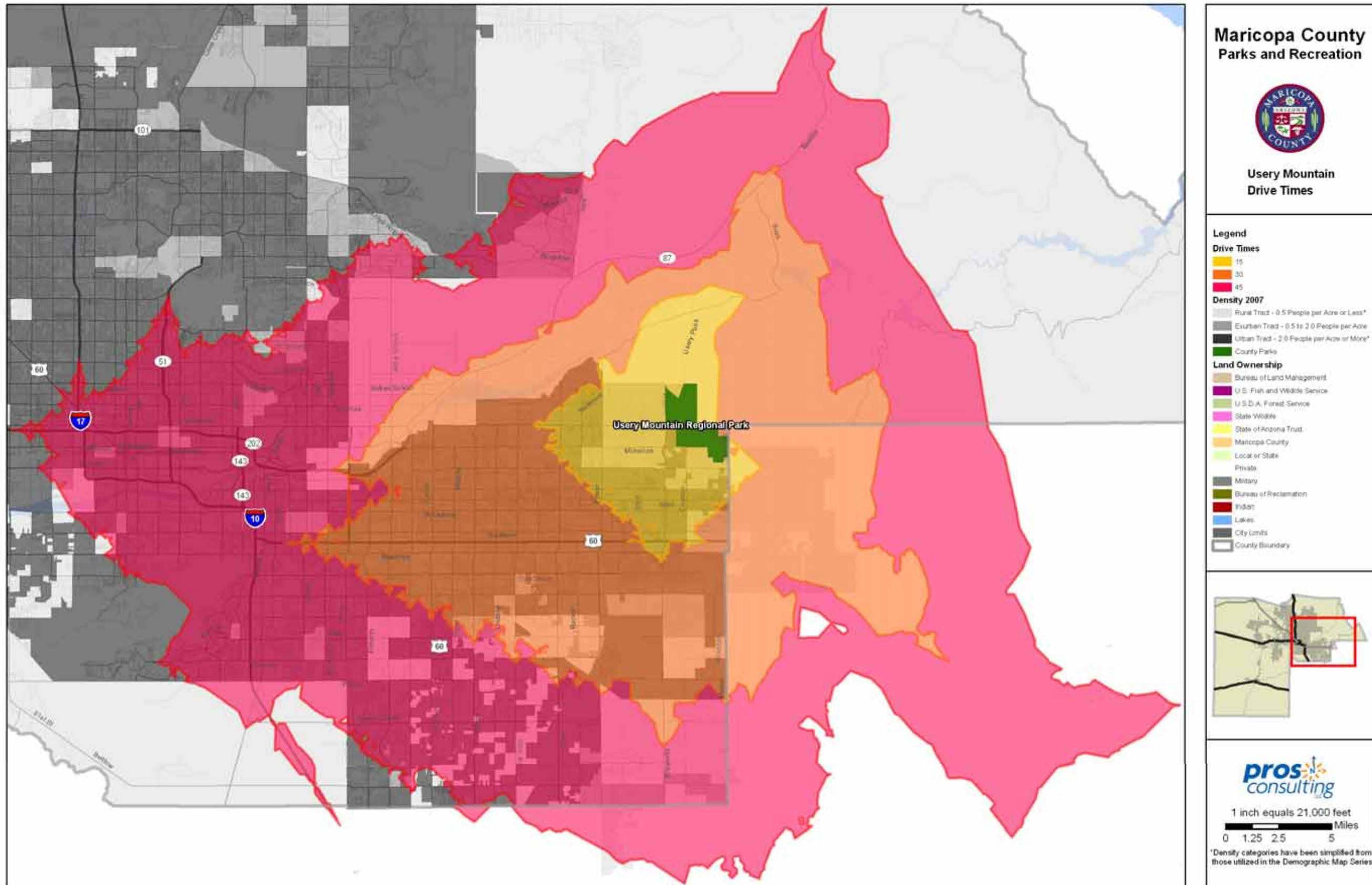
Figure 27 - Usery Mountain Drive Time Map

Figure 28 - White Tank Drive Time Map

CHAPTER FOUR - PROGRAM ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Program Assessment was performed to review the recreation program offerings as a whole and to determine the strengths, opportunities and gaps in the overall offerings.

Given the unique nature of program offerings in a system as large as Maricopa County's, a more subjective interview approach was adopted as opposed to the program assessment template alone provided by PROS. Thus, the program findings and comments were based from a program assessment interview with the regional superintendents and interviews with interpretive ranger staff. The Team also reviewed the latest results of the Visitor Survey as it relates to programming and customer satisfaction. Additionally, comments from public meetings and stakeholder interviews were also considered.

From the information seeking process, many key elements emerged that should be addressed in the future.

4.2 PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Key elements assessed:

- Program overview
- Marketing and promotions
- Customer feedback, service and satisfaction systems
- Registration systems
- Capacity utilization
- Seasonal program capabilities
- Program life cycles
- Partnerships and sponsorships
- Program standards
- Participation and retention of users
- Service gaps
- Volunteers support and use
- Pricing of services

Each of the elements were reviewed and key findings and recommendations for improvement were developed.

4.2.1 PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Programs are currently categorized into three distinct categories: outdoor recreation, education, and general recreation programming. General recreation programs refer to all programs that are not outdoor recreation or education related.

The outdoor education programs have developed an excellent reputation throughout the Maricopa County area for their interpretive led activities. Over the years, programs have developed around outdoor education, and the goal is to build on this legacy and continue these programs at the core of the Department's program offerings in the future.

Overall, the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department has several key elements that could help spur tremendous growth in recreation and outdoor education opportunities for visitors and residents in the time to come. The Parks and Recreation staff is dedicated toward offering the highest quality of programs targeted towards all age segments. The Department is slowly diversifying its interpretive program by targeting a wider audience, as seen by the introduction of more youth and family based and adventure based programs.

Outdoor fitness and wellness activities have a high level of interest. Based on nationwide trends and the unique topography of the area, adventure and extreme sports activities could also prove to be a high growth area. The outdoor adventure and extreme sports area may be an important component in attracting a younger demographic into program areas.

The general recreation program area has been identified as an area that has growth potential as a way of generating new customers. Rentals and reservations also show promising growth potential. Interpretive programs help to align program offerings with customer needs, enable staff to concentrate on the most important program areas and ensure quality program offerings. Furthermore, the development of interpretive programs minimizes using a random approach to programs that diverts resources in areas that have less significance to the customer.

In looking at the current level of programming and in discussions with staff regarding program growth areas the following areas were identified for programming:

- Fitness and wellness
- Outdoor recreation
- General recreation programming (youth, teen, adult, senior, family)
- Special events
- Camps
- Interpretive/nature education

Recommendations depend on the Department's ability to expand program staffing to accommodate additional fee based programs and the ability to develop an online registration process. The Department should consider hiring new full time staff dedicated toward programming, such as the addition of an adventure sports program coordinator, an outdoor and fitness coordinator, as well as a special event coordinator. Additional program revenues from new programs will help defray staff labor costs. Using part-time, seasonal, trained volunteers, and contractual staff also provides a less expensive way to offer additional programs.

The program descriptions, in most cases, provide a description of the benefits and the features, which is a commendable practice and always helps to sell the program better than simply listing the features. Many Maricopa County Parks and Recreation programs have creative titles, such as the Great Scorpion Hunt, Venomous Creatures and Bug Theater, but could use better benefit descriptions. Benefit-based programming descriptions help the user to understand the direct benefits associated with their experience and by encouraging users to enroll and participate due to the anticipated benefits they will receive.

However, there is a lack of consistency across the park system in the extent and manner of program benefits, which suggests an absence of an overall process for program development. This is minimized by some extent through the monthly meetings the regional

superintendents have with the interpretive staff. In addition, lesson plans are developed for programs, which is good practice.

The rangers have developed a reputation for programming excellence. This is achieved without the use of documented standards, but through the personal experience and qualifications they bring to the job. In addition, based on the program assessment interview process, it seems that there is inadequate back-up in the form of part-time and seasonal staff for the rangers. This, coupled with the absence of written standards, inevitably result in variation of program quality and offerings.

Written program standards should include those elements that have critical customer importance. Quality standards include items such as:

- Program evaluation process
- Instructional quality standards
    - Lesson plans
    - On-site visits to programs by management staff
    - Instructor orientation program
    - Registration process standards
    - Minimum and maximum numbers of participants
    - Program measurements of performance

The Marketing, Promotional, and Communication Mix process, mentioned later in this section, is a standard of performance and is a good start in the development of standards. It would also help for the Department to benchmark its performance measures against comparable systems to identify applicable elements that could be implemented.

There are a limited number of programs for specific target age groups, and a large number of programs that simply target the overall community. Hiking related activities are the primary programming base. Hiking was mentioned in the Visitor survey as the most important activity throughout the park system. However, some diversification into other program areas generates a broader audience of participants. Staff has recognized this need and currently is changing and adding programs to targeted users.

There is a need for more focused target age segmentation programs for youths, teens, young adults and family events. Staff also need to develop marketing strategies to attract and accommodate the increasing numbers of users from ethnically diverse population groups.

The best way to determine new program ideas is to ask customers about program needs. The Department has recently initiated customer satisfaction and program surveys. Park

staff that come in contact with park users use information they receive from customers in developing programming. This should be supplemented by a more statistically valid method to ensure that the "right" programs are offered. This survey tool will also benefit the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department when identifying possible program areas that could be duplicated with neighboring city governments in cases in which the demand for services exceeds the city's available supply of offerings. Along with this review, survey results should be shared with neighboring cities and partner with them to develop niche markets or some complimentary offerings when sufficient customer demands exist.

The County has a goal of improving overall health and wellness. The Department aligns itself with that goal in creating and expanding more fitness and wellness activities, such as conditioning activities and competitive fitness activities. More programs need to be created that encourage people to use County parks for fitness related purposes.

As previously mentioned, there are opportunities to add an entire line of park programs related to adventure and extreme sports. These include mountain biking, rock climbing, ropes courses, canoe and kayaking, Off Highway Vehicles (OHV) activities, mountaineering, BMX racing, etc. Ogden, Utah is a good example of a city that has identified the economic impact associated with adventure and extreme sports. Ogden has built an advertising and tourism campaign around adventure activities. Their web site has an extensive and visually exciting array of activities to encourage travel to Ogden.

Adventure Sports Center International (ASCI) based on McHenry, Maryland is a great example of an organization that identified a growing interest in adventure sports and has created a national and international adventure sports destination. One of their biggest strengths has been the identification and segmentation of key target markets, which is a requisite for the success of a regional program provider. ASCI segmented its target market into primary and secondary markets, with the primary markets broken up into adventurists and the secondary market broken up into enthusiasts, learning and education groups, corporate entertainment and development and partner and sponsors.

There are other opportunities for expansion in the recreation programming area, particularly for youth. As a comparison, Clark County, Nevada offers an On the Edge teen camp. Pima County has targeted programs for teens and youths, such as the Sonoran Desert Kids Club, and youth summer day programs. The Desert Outdoor Center (DOC) offers a summer camp for Boy Scouts, which should be expanded to a wider audience of youth, and the Department is currently working with the Phoenix Zoo to determine if a joint camping program is possible.

Photography classes can be expanded, as this was the sixth ranking activity for park users, according to the Visitor survey. Many park users visit parks to take photographs. There could be an opportunity to partner with a photography company like Kodak which would designate picturesque locations throughout the park system as 'Kodak Photo Ops'. This is a model they have successfully implemented all throughout the Walt Disney World Parks in Orlando. In addition, there could be branding opportunities where photography lessons and workshops could be offered by Kodak or have Kodak as the title sponsor for the photography core program group.

In addition to programming, adding rentals at appropriate parks may be a good way to enhance revenues. For example, having mountain bikes available at selected parks would prove to be popular, according to the Visitor survey, as there was a high level of interest. Furthermore, park reservations and rentals could be expanded to accommodate corporate retreats. Many park users go to the parks as a way of leaving the city behind. If this program generates sufficient growth, more facilities that can accommodate corporate groups should be considered. This will require indoor space, including meeting rooms, conference space, and hospitality areas that offer optimum technological connectivity while being surrounded in the heart of nature. The new visitor center offers some opportunities as well to service this opportunity.

4.2.2 MARKETING AND PROMOTIONS

The 2006 Visitor survey results suggested the need for the Department to significantly expand its marketing efforts. Overall, only 54% of survey participants had an awareness of which agency manages the park system. General awareness of some individual parks is also low as follows:

- Buckeye 11%
- Adobe Dam 14%
- San Tan 28%
- Spur Cross 31%
- Desert Outdoor Center 35%

The parks with the highest level of awareness include Lake Pleasant at 78%, White Tank at 68%, and McDowell Mountain at 66%.

The Department recognizes the need for expanded marketing efforts. The Department recently hired a Public Information Officer (PIO) who is charged with overseeing marketing efforts, in addition to other duties. Expanded marketing efforts requires some level of funding. Currently, no marketing budget exists, aside from labor dollars allocated toward marketing efforts. According to the work PROS Consulting does nationwide, best in class systems dedicate approximately 4% of their operating budgets toward marketing efforts.

Recently a Marketing, Promotional and Communication (MPC) Mix Outline was created to assist programming staff with developing marketing standards for programs, including Five Experience Phases, Marketing Mix, Promotional Mix, Communication Mix, and Evaluation. This will help in reviewing all phases of the customer experience and how to best position and market programs. This information should be shared with all customer contact personnel as well, in order for them to present the right message to customers.

In addition to having the tactical details of the marketing mix for individual programs, the Department should have an overall marketing plan that is aligned with both County and Departmental goals. This will result in the creation of an overall marketing system, including strategic marketing goals and objectives, branding and image, alternative revenue strategies, and market research processes. The plan should include a macro approach to marketing the entire system. Subsequently, brief park level marketing plans should be introduced that targets marketing efforts unique to individual parks.

From a staffing perspective, supplementing the PIO staff person with more labor resources will help to augment marketing efforts. A marketing intern from a nearby university offers a low cost method to enhancing marketing activities. Marketing training as a core competency for ranger staff could also enhance the Department's marketing efforts. Understanding the marketing mix and having integrated marketing and sales plans can improve program success. Furthermore, selling skills could benefit staff who deal directly with customers. The Department needs to reinforce the customer focus of the organization through constant training.

About a quarter of all park users come from out of state. This serves as a rich customer base that is currently untapped. The Department, as time goes on, can develop this by dedicating staff resources toward a tourism arm of the department and work with the tourism industry to drive visitors to use Maricopa County Parks for camping and recreational purposes. Pima County has identified this as an opportunity and has tourism as part of its area of responsibility. Hotels and motels, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Arizona Office of Tourism all play an important role in developing awareness, promoting the area for various recreational opportunities and consequently driving increased park attendance. Regular meetings and information sharing need to exist with these agencies by the park administration and other staff members.

The Visitor survey demonstrated that the internet was the most important source of information. This underscores the importance of the website as the provider of park related information and an important marketing tool for various park related activities. The information on the website needs to be more visually appealing, comprehensive and dynamic in nature. Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation in Charlotte, NC is a good example of a system that uses a virtual tour on the web. The calendar of events page should offer the events by park, since park users generally have a specific park in mind, rather than a specific activity arranged by date. Make it more visually appealing with pictures of parks and park activities. Eventually, this should evolve into a program brochure that can be accessed on-line as well as distributed by hard copies at parks, hotels, chamber offices, and tourism offices. Develop on-line virtual tours of campgrounds and picnic reservation areas to make them more attractive to potential customers.   This, along with on-line reservations, will greatly enhance revenues for the Department.

Other information sources, ranked by importance include:

- Park brochures
- Road signs
- State highway map designation
- Visitor information centers
- Toll free number

The Department should develop individual park brochures and improve road signs to help direct customers to the parks. As part of this, the important marketing message should be bilingual in nature to cater to the growing Hispanic user base, which currently stands at 13%.

A complete Signage Plan to access parks and in-park signage also needs to be created for the system.

Currently, there are tight guidelines relating to branding efforts by the Department. Staff mentioned the problem associated with the requirement of following the County brand. This might partially create the problem associated with a general lack of awareness of what agency manages the park system. Efforts are being made to discuss this with the County

management staff to investigate a way for the Department to capitalize on its own brand. This is an important discussion, which could positively affect general park awareness and park usage. Additionally, park signage is limited and inconsistent throughout and as a part of the re-branding effort, consistent signage too should be developed and placed at multiple locations throughout the system. Alternative revenue sources should also be a part of this discussion as there currently are restrictions to naming rights initiatives. Developing relationships with the corporate sector will build advocacy and non-tax revenue growth potential.

4.2.3 CUSTOMER FEEDBACK AND SATISFACTION

The Department relies heavily on the Visitor survey that was completed in 1998-1999, 2002-2003 and 2005-2006. Staff consistently mentioned this tool as the most vital source for customer feedback.

Overall customer satisfaction toward the Department's parks is extremely high, at a rate of 93%. However, this information is difficult to translate to program satisfaction as specific questions regarding program types, satisfaction, and needs were not included in the survey. It is interesting to note that only 4.5% of surveyed park users attended a nature program during the most recent survey. An additional 3.7% attended special events. This suggests that current park users are attracted to the parks, generally speaking, for activities other than organized programming, including hiking, picnicking and walking.

It is recommended that in future surveys, specific programs are listed to determine satisfaction levels and future program needs. Expanding the survey to non-users also helps to determine why they choose not to use the parks. Future program offerings need to be

developed according to customer needs, rather than based on personal preferences of staff or the continuance of programs because they have been successful in the past. Dynamic park and recreation systems offer varied programs, attract varied audiences, and experience success when offerings are aligned with customer needs.

In the recent Visitor survey, the most important information source for customers is the internet. As a result, having a general satisfaction survey posted on the web would probably yield good results, though this would not be a statistically valid survey tool. It would be useful to post survey results on the web. All employees should be aware of these results as well.

Good market research systems do not rely exclusively on surveys. Depending on staff time and available resources, other means of customer satisfaction systems can be deployed including the use of focus groups, consumer advisory panels, on-site transaction surveys, customer interviews, and secret shoppers. These customer feedback mechanisms are important to not only improving the Department's efforts in capturing customer feedback, but also as a way to develop advocacy with more residents.

4.2.4 REGISTRATION

The registration system is an important customer process that should be reviewed and improved on a regular basis. The Department currently does not have the ability to register customers by phone or on-line means. This was frequently mentioned as a significant opportunity for improvement by the public during the public meetings. The absence of good technology and automated systems is a deterrent for visitors to sign up for programs/reservations/rental activities and results in lost revenue to the Department. It is highly recommended that the Department automate its registration systems to better accommodate customers. Customers have the expectation of being able to access programs and reservations on-line. This is undoubtedly one of the most important short-term recommendations for the Department.

The Department tracks the number of campers, special events, and picnic reservations, in its MFR reports. This information should be trend charted on a yearly basis to identify longer term trends and park user habits. This data can then be used as a method to quantify capital improvement priorities, based on the use of and attendance of various park services and programs. In addition, tracking where visitors come from, how far they live, and lengthy of stay can be geo-coded and would help the Department make better decisions in how they manage and program each park.

4.2.5 COMPETITORS

Maricopa County operates a county-wide regional park system that does compete, to some extent, with other agencies in the Phoenix area. These include the cities of Phoenix and Scottsdale. Even with the presence of other service providers, Maricopa County is in a strong position to continue to grow its customer base. The neighboring City departments and Maricopa County Department of Parks and Recreation have an agreed to operating philosophy to complement program offerings, rather than compete against each other.

As a result, the recreation program expansion should take this into consideration. However, the Department must keep in mind the competition it faces for participants' time and

dollars from private entities that offer packaged services. There are a number of such operators in the Phoenix Metropolitan Area that offer day hikes, equestrian trips, river-runner trips etc. in the same region. The Department must highlight its cost advantages over the private competitors and leverage that to drive additional business to the County parks.

4.2.6 PARTNERS

There seem to be a limited number of partners. From a partnership standpoint, there are opportunities to obtain additional contractors and partners for special events that could be held in County parks. The Desert Outdoor Center, with over 20,000 children visiting annually, offers a tremendous opportunity for additional partnering and sponsor opportunities. Special events can be nature based, competition based, or food and art based; all will draw people to the parks.

There could be partnering opportunities with photography groups to introduce additional programs, given the popularity of photography in the area. Partnership with tourism agencies and municipal recreation departments can also be expanded.

The Department must also establish guidelines and standards for future partnerships to ensure consistency across the board. More and more corporations are seeking involvement in non-traditional ventures and corporate partnerships / sponsorships must be actively pursued. As mentioned earlier, having a staff member's responsibilities dedicated towards building and enhancing corporate relationships would be extremely beneficial.

4.2.7 VOLUNTEERS / HOSTS / FRIENDS GROUPS

Volunteers are an integral part of the successful functioning and operations of the park system. However, from a volunteer standpoint, variations exist from one park to another. There are park hosts who assist with park maintenance and programming, and in other situations they do not. There needs to be a standardized training for program volunteers across the system for consistency.

In addition, there could be an opportunity to have a dedicated staff person directed to manage the overall volunteer area. A volunteer coordinator could also work toward developing a volunteer / Friends Group database that can be useful for the future for each park in the system. The database could help store job descriptions for different positions, volunteer recruitment, track volunteer hours, reward and recognition measures and retention rates. The Department needs more advocates of its system, and volunteers and volunteer groups have great potential to help the Department with advocacy efforts.

4.2.8 PRICING STRATEGIES AND FINANCIAL MEASUREMENTS

Currently, the Department only charges one flat fee for day use. There is an opportunity to move towards a more business oriented mindset, to ensure some portion of cost recovery and make the programs more self-sufficient. The Department must revisit the option of fee-based programming in conjunction with the automated registration system. As an alternative, the Department can solicit additional events through Special Use Permits that would help them charge program fees for those events.

There can be various pricing strategies that could factor in group discounts, resident discounts, seasonal / off seasonal, weekday / weekend and even cost recovery goals. Currently, based on information obtained from the staff interviews, there seem to be no cost recovery goals and policies established. Cost recovery goals factoring in direct and indirect costs must be set and implemented.

There may be grant opportunities for a program based around a watering feature or for building barrier-free trails in addition to seeking Heritage Funds. The Department should also consider an endowment program to subsidize program fees for low income children, families, and schools. Additional revenue generating opportunities like sponsorships, grants, naming rights will also help offset operating costs and allow the Department to offer additional programs for the community.

4.3 SUMMARY

The Department has developed a legacy of offering quality interpretive programs that park users have come to expect and enjoy. Furthermore, the park system's natural resources and beauty provide a wonderful backdrop for a wide variety of programs and activities. The primary goals for programming include diversifying and expanding programs to expand the user base. In addition, other initiatives include developing more sophisticated methods of program marketing, particularly web site development, improving technology to support program and rental registrations, and the development of system-wide program standards and measures.

Achieving these goals will enable the Department to build more park advocacy and increase park awareness, along with the obvious benefits created by program participation. Park users recognize the beauty of the parks and what they have to offer. These programs will result in more users being able to develop a relationship with the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department for generations to come.

4.3.1 OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Improve technology to include program registration and reservation on-line capabilities
- Re-define interpretive programs through diversification and expansion as outlined above
- Develop a process to determine customer program needs, including the addition of program related topics to the existing Visitor survey
- Expand marketing activities; develop an overall marketing plan, supplemented by individual park business plans
- Develop consistent programming standards, including a communication process with instructors, registration process, and program evaluation

- Develop a corporate sponsorship/relations component to the marketing arm of the Department. This can include special event sponsorships, naming rights, corporate donations, and philanthropic efforts
- Develop a system-wide customer satisfaction and resolution system.
- Provide rental opportunities at parks as a way of generating more revenue, including mountain bike rentals
- Strengthen the volunteer program by developing an overall program and dedicate a portion of staff time toward this area. Responsibilities include recruitment of volunteers, training, and reward and recognition programs
- Develop a cost recovery goal for park operations, and develop a pricing policy as a means to achieve the goal
- Establish Business Plans for each park
- Use of technology to support self-guided tours, such as IPOD downloads
- Develop self-directed program opportunities for each park in the system. It should be outlined on the County's website that gives individuals and families ideas for a meaningful educational outing. The website could provide guidance to a program kit that individuals review a the nature center or it could be a podcast that individuals that guides them without having a ranger present, similar to the National Park Service

CHAPTER FIVE - OPERATIONS ASSESSMENT

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The Operations and Management Assessment is a situational analysis and review of the Department's operations to examine the quality of internal operations and the connection to key internal business processes which are critical components of implementing the elements of the Strategic Master Plan. In addition, the delivery of maintenance services both within the parks, as well as those provided through a centralized service function was also included in the assessment.

The ability of the Department staff to learn, grow, and develop competencies aligned with strategy, is paramount to the success of a Strategic Master Plan's execution. The operational review included staff meetings in a series of several staff focus group meetings at the beginning of the process. These groups included interpretive ranger staff, park maintenance staff, and park supervisors. In addition, interviews were held with the Executive Director, Administrator, Park Superintendents, the Public Information Officer (PIO), and the Engineering Manager. The PROS Team also reviewed policies, procedures, staffing, maintenance facilities and equipment, organizational structure, technology, performance appraisal process, work methods, and general organizational culture. The project team met with the trades crew and the trails crew to discuss work procedures, work activities and tasks, staffing and equipment.

Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department is a highly spirited and effective work team that provides excellent services for its residents and park visitors. The employees work in a continuous improvement environment and work toward improving their processes. There is a good balance between long-tenured employees and newly hired employees. There is significant energy within the Department, as there is belief in the new leadership and strong belief in the mission of the Department.

Based upon the interviews and observations, the Department operates overall with earnestness and good intentions to better serve the public. In general, the organizational assessment includes an analysis of a number of areas and provides opportunities for improvement. Generally, the areas for improvement relate to increasing the overall level of sophistication of the Department to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of addressing public parks and recreation needs.

5.2 PROCESS

The PROS Team performed an analysis of the current practices of the Department to evaluate its operational situation. This analysis helps identify future Department organization and staffing needs, improved operational efficiencies, policy development, process improvements, system and technology improvements, and marketing/communication opportunities. This assessment included data collection, analysis and on-site observations of key organizational components. The operations and management assessment includes an overview of the following areas:

- Organization, Leadership and Staffing

- Potential Operational Efficiencies
- Policy Development
- Process Improvements
- Information System and Technology Improvements
- Park Maintenance
- Trail Development and Maintenance
- Training of Staff

The following assessment presents findings and overall recommendations to build on the existing strengths and provide a framework for improving overall organizational excellence of the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department.

5.3 OPERATIONS FINDINGS

5.3.1 ORGANIZATION, LEADERSHIP AND STAFFING FINDINGS

This aspect of the operational assessment reviewed multiple areas of focus involving the organization, its leadership and issues relevant to staffing. In summary, this assessment analyzed:

- The manner in which the management team guides and sustains the organization
- How high performance and accountability is encouraged
- How mission, vision, and values are deployed and how organizational performance is measured
- The adequacy of staffing levels and staff organization

Through interviews with staff and on site observations, the Department has not previously functioned effectively through its system-wide management practices in its delivery of park and recreation services. The majority of parks function independently. Field operations personnel indicated that they need better centralized administrative support to do their job more efficiently and effectively.

The organization is at an interesting crossroads given the change of leadership at the director level. Employees feel enthusiasm and excitement about the change. Staff has had the increased ability to participate more in decision making. With this change in leadership, many opportunities for improving the overall system should be pursued.

The employees report to have an awareness and knowledge of the Board of Supervisor's major strategies. The linkage between countywide and Departmental strategies does not appear to be fully clear to employees downward through the hierarchy. It is apparent that there is considerable discretion in the manner in which the department develops strategies and therefore are not "top of mind" for employees. The Director's summary report to the Park Commission should include updates on strategic goals, rather than daily operational updates. This will help the Commission focus on the more important work of strategy development and deployment.

The variety of responses from employees regarding the question, "What is the direction of the Department?" suggests that there is not a consistent flow of information about strategic direction and decisions throughout the organization. Communication of strategy is a significant component of the management team's job responsibilities, and many employees

expressed optimism that new leadership would improve strategic and organizational communication.

The County uses a system of "Managing for Results," but there is confusion among Departmental staff about the programs purpose and how it is to be used. There were also concerns expressed about reporting relationships of the trails and construction crews. Some employees indicated that there could be more benefits from having the crews report to the Park Superintendents. Furthermore, as part of staffing, an unequal distribution of staffing exists among all of the parks. Park staffing levels and workload levels are not reviewed on an annual basis at each park.

Another area identified for changes is the reporting structure and responsibilities of the Public Information Officer (PIO) position. A recent decision and change made as part of the realignment of the management team has the PIO position reporting directly to the Director. This will result in a more comprehensive focus on the external customers rather than being part of the administrative unit primarily serving as internal customer support. In addition, the grant coordinator position will also report directly to the PIO position as a means of initiating a more direct effort in expanding the marketing program, including a focus on partnerships. There also should be consideration of a title change for the PIO position as that title does not adequately reflect the important role of marketing.

Limited advancement opportunity exists in the organization. There is no clear and apparent career progression for staff to engage in as several staff has experienced in previous employment circumstances. There is a prominent expectation among employees that career progression and advancement opportunities should be more clearly defined. The organization as a whole needs to be aligned by functionality for better communication and accountability.

5.3.2 POTENTIAL OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES FINDINGS

A critical component of the operational assessment was to review potential opportunities for operational efficiencies. In summary, this portion of the assessment examined:

- Expansion of adventure recreation program and nature education opportunities
- Increased use of volunteers
- Facility utilization
- Outsourcing
- Resource management and protection

The Strategic System Master Plan process included a thorough review of existing programs offered throughout the Maricopa County Regional Park System and determined that currently there is an inconsistency in the number and types of programs being offered. Obviously, certain parks have unique features and facilities, which dictate their program offerings; however, there does not appear to be a common offering of core programs/activities available at all parks. Establishing these core programs can then provide a basis for expanding the adventure recreation and nature education activity opportunities and maximizing the unique features available at each park.

The Department has heavy reliance on volunteers and each park recruits and trains their volunteers separately. While this practice works and the volunteers at a specific park are loyal to the park manager and staff at each park, a broader effort for volunteer development is needed system-wide. Currently, a Volunteer Policy, training manual and a consistent recruitment process does not exist. Volunteers in best practice agencies are trained side-by-side with full-time and part-time staff as they are an extension of the existing staff. Volunteers should be recruited for other elements in the park system, as well as for programming, marketing, administrative support, and in creating advocacy and financial support for the system.

Facility utilization by residents varies from park to park. The Department does not track capacity utilization of park sites, campgrounds, trails, picnic shelters, and facilities due to the remoteness of sites, lack of a reservation point-of-sale system, and lack of rangers in the park on a consistent basis. Tracking capacity of site amenities and use is a best-practice component of a well managed park system.

The Department currently outsources some of their work in trail development and should consider other areas where they lack the resources or it is cost prohibitive to do the work with public employees. Windshield drive time by staff should be a major consideration when evaluating contracting services to keep more hours in maintaining parks and trails more so than the travel to and from sites.

Resource management and protection plans for each park are not in place with established management outcomes. Park staff at each site does a good job in protecting and managing the resource without a plan due to their commitments to open space and preservation, but more could be done on a system-wide basis. Zone management plans are not established which also needs to be put into place and made a policy issue for the Park Commission and staff to follow.

5.3.3 POLICY DEVELOPMENT FINDINGS

This aspect of the operational assessment reviewed existing policies through conducted interviews, policy analysis and observations. In summary, this assessment includes:

- Existing policies that may need revision to better support the strategic goals of the Department including:
- Revenue Policy (Revenue Generating Concession Contracts - Management Use Agreement)
- Capital Improvement Projects Policy
- Budgeting for Results Accountability Policy
- Park Rules Policy
- Park Host/Volunteer Program Policy
- New policies that will expand the resources and capabilities of the Department to pursue its strategic goals including:
- Procurement Policies
- Park Access, Encroachment, and Edge Treatment Policies
- User Fee Policy
- Sponsorship Policy
- Partnership Policy

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- Self pay envelope handling process policy
- Registration system for camping, reservations, rentals, etc
- The presentation of these policies follows, beginning with existing policies.

5.3.3.1 REVENUE POLICY

The Department does not have a set revenue policy to manage it products and services by. A revenue policy allows the Department to create revenue to support its operational and capital cost. The Revenue Policy needs to address the ability and capability to create earned income for the Department without penalizing the Departments tax base so they can manage forward and keep facilities up to a level the users of the park system expect and create economic value for the County. Revenue policy also addresses how the Department will manage partnerships and outside groups who use County parks for personal gain.

5.3.3.2 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS POLICY

The Department has not developed a capital improvement policy that prioritizes how capital improvements will be developed based on a return on investment and support key customers needs and that can create operational revenue for the Department.

5.3.3.3 BUDGETING FOR RESULTS ACCOUNTABILITY POLICY

The Department does not have a budgeting for results accountability policy that tracks budget dollars according to outcomes and then tracks how closely those dollars achieved the outcomes stated in the budget report.

5.3.3.4 PARK RULES POLICY

A park rules policy addresses how park rules are stated and interpreted. The policy is updated yearly to address key issues the Department dealt with in the past year and ensures that the Department is creating the right environment for users that encourage positive use.

5.3.3.5 PARK HOST PROGRAM/VOLUNTEERS POLICY

The Department host program is a very effective management tool for the Department but each park site operates in a different level. For consistency sake the Department needs to create a Park Host and Volunteer Policy that provides consistency in how volunteers are treated, trained and placed in the Department across the system.

5.3.4 PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS FINDINGS

A critical component of the operational assessment was to review potential opportunities for process improvements. It is clear that an absence of systems creates a culture of autonomy. Parks operate very differently from one another, which creates inconsistency in the customer experience. The development of park maintenance standards, trails and facilities standards, programming standards, and operational standards will assist in reducing service variation. Consistency in implementation of standards is a challenge due to the geographic separation of the Department locations and limited size of the Department staff.

In summary, this portion of the assessment examined:

- Organizational improvement processes and accountability
- Budgetary process improvements
- Internal communication processes
- Employee training
- Park safety and security

5.3.4.1 ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY FINDINGS

The Department pursued the state quality award, the Pioneer Award, and received recognition for their continuous improvement efforts, which is a significant accomplishment. This sets the stage for moving the organization toward "Best in Class" status. The follow-up to the quality award was the development of five process improvement teams that related to cash handling, benchmarking, communications, action planning, and human resources. Staff received training on process management, which is a great skill for the staff and will help with future improvements. The Department should identify and prioritize key processes every year and follow up with improvements.

5.3.4.2 BUDGETARY PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS FINDINGS

The current budget process was mentioned as needing improvement as well. The finance and budget Administrator currently develops the proposed operating budget without significant input from the field staff, which results in credibility issues with field staff. Comments were made that indicated that the capital project process used to be a closed process as well, but improvements have been made, with positive results.

5.3.4.3 INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS PROCCESSES FINDINGS

The most significant issue within the work system category is the need to change the culture of the organization's support roles, as has been previously mentioned. In order to be best in class, the Department needs to manage their most important internal support processes more closely.

The employees all noted that there is a need for improvement in the internal communication process. This was one of the continuous improvement team's initiatives. Appropriate staff needs to be involved in decision-making. For example, staff indicated their frustration with decisions made in the administrative units without any input from staff. Generally, employees feel that there is considerable interest among staff to cooperate with one another that speaks to a positive outlook.

5.3.4.4 EMPLOYEE TRAINING FINDINGS

There were not many comments generated about training efforts provided by the Department. Apparently, there is a considerable level of training opportunities offered through the County which off sets the need for the Department to develop a separate training program. Limited staff resources have prevented broad use of the training opportunities. The County does have a leadership development program that employees have attended; however, continued efforts are needed to create opportunities for supervisors at various levels to participate in management and supervisory skill training

programs. Also more training in Business Management of public resources should also be considered for staff to attend.

5.3.4.5   PARK SAFETY AND SECURITY FINDINGS

There also appears to be confusion among parks staff as to the role and functions of the Sheriff's Department in their activities within the parks. In some parks, staff does not feel that the officers provide the needed services while in others, there is a close working relationship between staff and the officers. It is critical, given the vast park areas, potential for illegal activities and the significant numbers of park users, that there be close working relationships with joint participation in events planning and similar activities plus regular meetings to discuss park operations problems and related matters. All park and Sheriff Department staff feel there is not enough Sheriff personnel available to support the requirement for park safety in the system.

Although some staff believe that certified park rangers are needed as a means of providing needed services that can be directed through parks, there are many reasons to continue with the current functional relationship with the Sheriff's department. However, a concerted effort to revitalize the relationship to better serve the parks is needed.

5.3.5   INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENTS FINDINGS

This aspect of the operational assessment reviewed potential information systems and technology improvements. In summary, this assessment review included:

- Review and analyze opportunities for technology improvements
- Identify critical funding issues

Technology is a significant issue throughout the Department. Some staff are surprised and disappointed at what they consider as a minimal level of sophistication in basic technology and equipment available to them as a resource. There is limited automation for serving customer needs, as previously noted. Some staff use their own cell phones, as their County phone service does not work well at many park locations, especially around the cumbersome to navigate "S" drive. Many staff mentioned the need to improve that system.

5.3.6   PARK MAINTENANCE FINDINGS

This aspect of the assessment reviewed the overall delivery of maintenance services with particular attention to the current centralized trades and trail services. The primary items reviewed included:

- Maintenance Management including Park Maintenance Standards
- Maintenance staffing levels
- The "Sevens Crew", a trade services function
- Outsourcing of certain services

The delivery of maintenance services is of critical importance in this large, diverse and actively used system of parks. However, one of the increasing difficult situations currently facing the Department is the problem of staff turnover position vacancies not being filled in a timely manner. Both problems put great stress on an already over-stressed Department in meeting maintenance requirements.

Given the acres to maintain and the size of the area in which the parks are located, the Department appears to operating with below level maintenance staff, and continues to build and add new facilities which require maintenance and related services.

It is apparent from discussion with staff that the "Seven Crew," a specialized trades crew, is not able to sustain the level of services required in the parks. The concept of a centralized service crew is sound, however, given the size of the park system, the reality of traffic time problems of travel across the county and an increase in the number of facilities requiring attention, a different structure or method of delivering these trade crew services should be considered.

There appears to be a lack of maintenance standards throughout the Department. This includes maintenance standards, preventative maintenance, lifecycle replacement, and programming standards. No maintenance management system exists, though there is support and discussion about the need.

5.3.7 TRAIL DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE FINDINGS

An important aspect of the Department's amenities is the Trail System that currently exists and continues to expand. Without question, the system of trails is popular, heavily used and therefore fundamentally important as a park amenity which requires significant maintenance. The primary issues that the PROS Team has identified are targeted to increase the efficiency of trail services being provided. Those items include:

- Trail maintenance
- Trail renovations
- Trail planning
- Use of volunteers
- Trail amenities

Trails provide opportunities for multiple user groups and are one of the primary attractions in the parks. As such, issues affecting the program and related facilities should be immediately addressed given the popularity of trails use throughout the park system.

The functions of planning, development and maintenance are essential to the continued success of the trails program and require immediate attention. Trail planning and development can be considered as separate from the maintenance activities; however, there is a functional relationship which should be considered in restructuring these responsibilities.

Trail development and maintenance is currently being provided by two small centralized crews that are apparently not keeping pace with the level of demand for their services.

5.3.8 TRAINING FINDINGS

This aspect of the assessment reviewed the training records to access the types and amount of training provided to maintain and enhance the skills of Department's staff. The primary items reviewed included training attendance, training courses and training frequency.

The training records indicated that the types of courses attended was not directly focused to the employee's job functions. PROS expects to see significant safety and equipment training for maintenance and trades staff and more management and communication training for supervisory staff.   The table in **Figure 29** shows the types of courses attended by job category with the recorded training hours.

Job Category	Number of Employees	Course Type	Total Training Hours	Job Category	Number of Employees	Course Type	Total Training Hours
Administrative/Clerical	12	Communication	18	Recreation	25	Communication	41
Administrative/Clerical	1	Conference	16	Recreation	4	Conference	48
Administrative/Clerical	8	Financial	19	Recreation	7	Equipment	36
Administrative/Clerical	1	Health	1	Recreation	8	Financial	40
Administrative/Clerical	21	HR	61	Recreation	1	Health	N/A
Administrative/Clerical	6	Job Training	26	Recreation	25	HR	76
Administrative/Clerical	18	Management	72	Recreation	1	Job Training	7
Administrative/Clerical	26	Office Systems	77	Recreation	35	Management	147
Administrative/Clerical	1	Outdoor Management	4	Recreation	11	Office Systems	27
Administrative/Clerical	2	Personal Improvement	4	Recreation	3	Outdoor Management	48
Administrative/Clerical	1	Recreation	16	Recreation	43	Safety	139
Administrative/Clerical	39	Safety	163	Supervisor	44	Communication	110
Development	10	Communication	24	Supervisor	14	Conference	184
Development	2	Conference	16	Supervisor	2	Construction	2
Development	1	Construction	N/A	Supervisor	25	Equipment	49
Development	23	Equipment	45	Supervisor	29	Financial	127
Development	3	Financial	18	Supervisor	1	Finanical	N/A
Development	20	HR	53	Supervisor	1	Health	2
Development	41	Management	177	Supervisor	106	HR	308
Development	3	Office Systems	4	Supervisor	6	Job Training	20
Development	7	Outdoor Management	24	Supervisor	180	Management	908
Development	1	Retreat	16	Supervisor	58	Office Systems	134
Development	49	Safety	103	Supervisor	15	Outdoor Management	117
Development	3	Technology	18	Supervisor	2	Recreation	3
Financial	15	Communication	21	Supervisor	14	Retreat	190
Financial	2	Conference	24	Supervisor	103	Safety	197
Financial	2	Construction	N/A	Technical	3	Communication	16
Financial	1	Equipment	N/A	Technical	1	Conference	8
Financial	43	Financial	137	Technical	9	Equipment	50
Financial	2	Health	1	Technical	3	Financial	14
Financial	20	HR	32	Technical	6	HR	12
Financial	6	Job Training	N/A	Technical	2	Management	16
Financial	28	Management	56	Technical	2	Office Systems	7
Financial	19	Office Systems	47	Technical	1	Outdoor Management	8
Financial	1	Outdoor Management	8	Technical	25	Safety	36
Financial	1	Retreat	4	Technical	1	Technology	7
Financial	9	Safety	19	Trades	8	Communication	15
Maintenance	10	Communication	13	Trades	1	Construction	N/A
Maintenance	3	Conference	24	Trades	57	Equipment	387
Maintenance	60	Equipment	200	Trades	3	Financial	10
Maintenance	9	Financial	31	Trades	11	HR	42
Maintenance	1	Health	2	Trades	3	Job Training	N/A
Maintenance	40	HR	120	Trades	8	Management	23
Maintenance	1	Job Training	N/A	Trades	3	Office Systems	10
Maintenance	28	Management	85	Trades	3	Outdoor Management	N/A
Maintenance	4	Office Systems	0	Trades	34	Safety	83
Maintenance	2	Outdoor Management	4				
Maintenance	118	Safety	219				
Maintenance	1	Satety	N/A				
Management	9	Communication	29				
Management	1	Conference	16				
Management	18	Financial	52				
Management	17	HR	41				
Management	36	Management	198				
Management	7	Office Systems	17				
Management	1	Outdoor Management	16				
Management	1	Retreat	16				
Management	6	Safety	19				
Management	4	Communication	6				
Management	5	Conference	56				
Management	6	Equipment	19				
Management	4	Financial	25				
Management	12	HR	33				
Management	37	Management	202				
Management	3	Office Systems	12				
Management	2	Outdoor Management	24				
Management	4	Retreat	56				
Management	11	Safety	19				

Figure 29 - Training Records Table

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

Enhancing and maintaining the skills of the Department's limited staff is significant to maintaining and operating the parks system. Our analysis showed that 83 staff attended over 4,600 hours of training during the last five (5) years. The 2007 training hours were 1,166 or approximately 14 hours of training per employee. From our experience with similar agencies, PROS expects to see between 20 to 40 hours of training per staff per year.

5.4 OPERATION RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.1 ORGANIZATION, LEADERSHIP AND STAFFING RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department and its employees would be well served to develop primary strategies aligned around customer needs and the overall vision of the County. The Department also needs to develop a regular communication process in sharing information about the goals and performance outcomes, as well as providing employees with quarterly (or more frequent) review of results. These issues should be addressed through staff meetings held to review this kind of information and discuss about the Department's strategies and their importance to the system. It is also recommended that the Director and management team provide a quarterly performance review update. This includes a review of annual strategies and a progress report of results. By doing this, all supervisors receive the same message about strategy. Furthermore, this information demonstrates appropriate transparency to the taxpayers and should be included on the web site and/or annual report.

The Department should develop career development opportunities in order to retain excellent staff. This will also help with succession planning for future position changes and vacancies, particularly at the senior levels of the organization and park supervisor level.

5.4.1.1 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS
- Administrative functions should be realigned to ensure their role as supporting the delivery of services through park operations.
- Employees should not only understand the Department's mission and vision, but also be given opportunities to fully participate in the development of initiatives and programs targeted to achieve them.
- The Department should develop or improve its formal methods of communicating organizational strategies and tracking achievement.
- All members of the management team should be unified in their approach to engaging employees in the strategic planning process, as well as enforcing accountability at the Department, team and individual levels.
- Staff training programs should continue to be structured towards managing through best practices, Managing for Results, customer focus, internal communication and other similar topics which are essential to the improvement of the Department's ability to deliver outstanding public park and recreation services.
- Career paths identified for advancement opportunities and succession planning need to be developed and explained to staff so they are fully informed on what the Department is capable of providing in advancement for their careers.

5.4.2 POTENTIAL OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES RECOMMENDATIONS

There should be consideration for the establishment of Adventure Recreation Specialist or coordinator positions for expansion of these programs. Ultimately, a position should be created to plan, develop, and coordinate the development of both adventure and nature education programs across the department. An alternative to increasing staff is using a contractual individual to deliver this program services as a market test of how it is received by the community. If the program builds, then staff can be hired.

Related marketing partnerships with local park and recreation agencies and with local outdoor sports stores and retailers can result in an increase awareness and related increase in park use and also creates branding for Maricopa Parks and Recreation as a dynamic leader in providing outdoor recreation program opportunities. Demonstration clinics for various outdoor adventure equipment in County parks would be a great marketing tool for the park system to consider.

The current use of volunteers provides an excellent service opportunity, but given the need to reduce expenditures and increase revenues, the current program should be expanded. Given the presence throughout the year by retirees from outside of the area and others from the local community who use the parks for camping and other activities, there is an obvious opportunity for outreach through appropriate organizations and related publications to actively recruit and recognize volunteers. There should also be consideration for the establishment of a position that is dedicated to the administration of the volunteer program. That position can provide administrative support to park operations through marketing and recruitment, training, recognition, rewards, and provide a means by which the overall cost of service can be reduced.

The use of volunteers should also be expanded into other activities, which will provide relief to park staff. These opportunities could include program volunteers, special event volunteers, as well as administrative and marketing volunteers. For example, functions such as trail patrol volunteers provide excellent opportunities for volunteers who can be equipped with portable radios and mountain bikes, trained in first aid procedures and utilized throughout the park system. This will require a formal program of training, standards and oversight.

5.4.2.1 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS
- Establishing core programs throughout the park system can provide a basis for expanding the outdoor recreation activity opportunities and maximizing the unique features available at each park.
- Emphasis on developing Adventure Programs and Nature Education Programs should be established.
- Developing marketing partnerships with local park and recreation agencies and with local outdoor sports stores and retailers can result in greater efficiency to the Department's marketing and communication priorities.
- The volunteer program should be expanded and formalized into additional activities, which will provide marketing and recruitment support to park staff.
- Consideration should be made for the establishment of a position that is dedicated to the administration of the volunteer program. That position can provide

administrative support to park operations through recruitment, training, recognition, rewards, and provide a means by which the overall cost of service can be reduced.

- Establish a position to serve as a program planner, developer, and coordinator for program services across the department.

5.4.3 POLICY DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.3.1   REVENUE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Revenue Policy is focused on the structuring of partnership revenue agreements. The policy adequately presents the process and issues related to developing partnership revenue agreements. Additional content in agreements is needed to provide a structure for the financial elements of the agreements for the Department to engage in. Specifically, a cost of service analysis is needed of the cost the Department provides in facilities and staff to support the contract. A percentage of gross revenues back to the County should be included for fund raising and "for-profit" events held in County parks.

5.4.3.2   CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

This policy details the processes of the Department's capital improvement project implementation and the construction alternatives.   The County and Department responsibilities need clarification with respect to which agency has approval and support responsibilities.

The Department has prepared a draft Capital Improvements Projects Policy to the standard project implementation methods along with the required development steps for each development method. The draft policy is substantially complete and should be adopted by the Department to manage future construction projects.

5.4.3.3   BUDGETING FOR RESULTS ACCOUNTABILITY POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The budget planning and preparation process is detailed in this policy. Policies related to over and under expenditures and to carry-over balances are presented. The accountability components are limited to spending of allocated funds. Performance measures should be included with the policy to provide a structure to evaluate the results of the financial resources committed to the budget organizations.   The current goal of making the Department non-reliant on the general fund will create an incentive for the Department to aggressively seek earned income. In the past, when the Department has earned income, the general fund allocation is reduced, which limits the Department's incentive to seek earned income, and it continues to erode the Department's ability to get ahead.

5.4.3.4   PARK RULES POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Park Rules establish the operating and use policies of the Department's facilities. The policy also includes rules of conduct and violation penalties. In PROS' opinion, the Park Rules provide sufficient structure to manage the parks and to assure a peaceful environment for visitors. The rules need to be update on an annual basis to stay ahead of changing programs and uses of County parks.

5.4.3.5   PARK HOST PROGRAM/VOLUNTEERS POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Park Host Program establishes the policies of the Department's seasonal volunteers. The policy provides for campsite use in exchange for volunteer services. The program has been successful and provides a major portion of the park labor during peak seasons. The policy establishes that the park supervisors are to determine if the hosts may return the following year.   The evaluation process is best if there is a mid-season review to communicate the observed performance during the season and if there is an end of season review to document the total host performance. This process should extend beyond Park Hosts to all Departmental volunteers.

5.4.3.6   PROCUREMENT POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The current procurement practice has caused time delays in procurement of services and materials as well as considerable frustration among staff. Much of the expressed frustration is the result of inconsistent application of policies and of an unsupportive bureaucracy. A Department-wide policy that meets the County overall procurement requirements is needed in addition to the delegation of authority to appropriate staff for managing and implementing the policy. In addition, reasonable purchasing limits with signature authority for supervisory staff should also be established as a means of streamlining the procurement process. In addition, the establishment of purchase agreements at businesses located near the parks should also be considered for commonly procured items, which will save staff time and gas to drive to businesses not located near existing parks.

The policy should include clear lines of procurement authorities and timelines for approvals. The approval process should be based on required control responsibilities. Approval steps that do not add to the quality of projects should be eliminated. Some steps necessary to streamline processes may require Board approval or even legislative action.   A phased approach is probably the most pragmatic and should be done in consultation with the County Materials Management Division.

5.4.3.7   ACCESS AND ENCROACHMENT POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

As residential development continues to surround the once remote parks, encroachment and access is becoming an increasingly difficult issue. This includes establishing design and development standards related to buffer zones and edge treatments. This also includes working with neighboring cities to develop zoning and development standards.

The issue of development and communities adjacent to parks that desire authorized access to the parks must be addressed. The current problem of encroachment, cut fences, and abuse of park resources at parks will be prevalent at all parks in the foreseeable future as increased development around the perimeter of parks continues. Establishing a user access agreement and fee, or some similar process, with home owner associations should reduce the problem. This process creates the opportunity for all residents to purchase an annual pass to access parks through a single location. The agreement should stipulate the type of permitted uses and the related rules regulating those uses. This program should be consistently applied across all parks.

Parks has obtained the City of Phoenix ordinance and the access management program in place at McDowell Sonoran Preserve. These two policies provide a strong base to fashion a

comprehensive ordinance and management program to ensure the proper level of control is in place while still allowing the public to use and enjoy the parks.

5.4.3.8 USER FEE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the importance of user fees in the system, it is critical that the Department move quickly to both adjust fee schedules as well as establishing opportunities for new revenue generating activities. It is also important that a policy be developed that will establish and ensure a comprehensive practice for the collection of fees throughout the system. The current staffing levels in certain parks result in a potential loss of revenue due to limited hours of operation of entry stations and the lack of enforcement of the envelope/drop box program.

A Pricing Policy is designed to provide the Department with consistent guidelines in pricing admissions, rentals, retail items, and program services. This allows the users to better understand the philosophy behind pricing a service. Furthermore, the level of service and benefits users receive is translated into a price that is based on the subsidy level, on the level of individual consumption and/or on exclusivity that is involved outside of what a general taxpayer receives.

To gain and provide consistency among visitors, user groups, staff, and the community, a philosophical revenue and pricing foundation must be implemented. Ideally, prices should be created based on the level of desired income or subsidy level. Allowing the staff to work within a pricing range will permit the staff to set prices based on primetime/non-primetime rates and season/off-season rates to maximize visitor participation.

The Department should adopt a revenue philosophy that not only promotes revenue production to offset operating costs, but also allows for revenues collected to remain with the Department. In return, this will build incentives for staff to be more aggressive in seeking revenues. User support for pricing services will be developed because the dollars users invest in their park experience will be invested in better quality services and facilities.

The Department should consider the pricing of services to be classified into levels. These classifications include the following:

- Primetime
- Season and Off-season Rates
- Group Discounting and Packaging
- Incentive Pricing
- Cost Recovery Goal Pricing
- Age Segment Pricing

- Non-primetime
- Multi-tiered Program Pricing
- Volume Pricing
- Length of Stay Pricing
- Level of Exclusivity Pricing
- Level of Private Gain Pricing

These classifications will apply to the following:

- Admissions
- Programs
- Permits
- Facility Use

- Reservations
- Concessions
- Rentals
-

5.4.3.9 SPONSORSHIP POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Currently, the Department is relying on Front Row Marketing which is a County-wide provider of sponsorship development services to seek sponsors for parks and special events throughout the park system. To date, this service has provided minimal benefit to the Department. In addition, County management practices prohibit the Department form soliciting sponsorships for its programs or facilities. A Sponsorship Policy will provide a plan and processes for establishing sponsorships for Department facilities and events. Sponsorships include park title sponsors, program sponsors, and attraction sponsors. Sponsorships provide funding for Department events and programs. The Department should pursue a new policy to allow it to develop and manage a comprehensive sponsorship program to support it financial requirements. This policy should include naming rights policies.

A sponsorship policy goal is to create earned income to offset operational costs of the Department. PROS believes that sponsorship dollars are made by creating links to the appropriate businesses in the County or Region of where the park is located that wish to connect with the visitors who come to the Department's parks. Visitor profiles can be developed to identify potential sponsorship opportunities. Businesses that sponsor programs, activities, events, and facilities and support the Department's image can create customer awareness and build brand loyalty as well.

A sponsorship policy focuses on reducing operational costs by leveraging elements of Department parks and programs for sponsorship dollars through tasteful and appropriate agreements that will enhance a visitor experience.

In all sponsorship financial efforts the Department must be able to leverage their values and assets on an equitable basis with its sponsors. This policy should include accurately tracking the value, both direct and indirect, the sponsorships level of investment and then the County's investment

The Department will need to create a description of each potential sponsor element, with pictures and impression points seen of the sponsorship elements, who and what age segment the element is targeted towards, and how the sponsorship dollars would be used to support the operations of the element. Examples of potential sponsorship opportunity displays will need to be developed to sponsor a park, program, or event. Research of the potential targeted market is important in reaching the desired business. The stronger the link between the business and sponsored element, the greater the opportunity there will be for the creation of a successful sponsorship.

In sponsorship opportunities there are five categories of sponsors. These include:

- Title Sponsors
- Presenting Sponsors
- Program Sponsors
- Product Sponsors
- Association Sponsors

Businesses that are likely to sponsor parks and recreation type of programs and events would include:

- Outdoor Adventure Businesses
- Wellness and Fitness Companies
- TV Stations
- Radio Stations
- Hospitals
- Bicycle Shops
- Food Service Companies
- Drink Product Businesses
- RV Dealers
- Convention and Visiting Bureau
- Printing Companies
- Paint Companies
- Music Stores
- Feed and Seed Companies
- Boat Manufactures
- Landscape Companies
- Local Service Groups
- Utility Companies
- Professional Corporations
- Caterers
- Educational Institutions
- Retail Outdoor Outfitters

5.4.3.10   PARTNERSHIP POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department currently uses partners to provide services that support the Department's operations. A strong partnership program will not only add value to the Department's facilities but will also provide additional revenues to support the Department operations.

A Partnership Policy establishes management principles related to the use of facilities separately and jointly. This policy will minimize the potential to create an entitlement by another partner. Certain partnership principles may be adopted by Department for existing and future partnerships to work effectively as it applies to public/public partners, public/private partners, and pubic/not-for-profit partners. These principles are as follows:

- All partnerships require an upfront recital that describes the reason for creation and establishes an outcome that benefits each partner's involvement in the partnership
- All partnerships require a working agreement with measurable outcomes that hold each partner accountable to the outcomes desired and to each other

- All partnerships will track direct and indirect costs and revenues associated with their partnership investment to demonstrate the level of equity each partner is investing in the partnership
- Each partner will not treat each other as a client to client relationship but will create a partnership culture that focuses on planning together on a yearly basis, communicating periodically on how the partnership is working and performing and annually reporting to each others governing boards on how well the partnership is working and their accomplishments
- Full disclosure by both partners to each other will be made available when issues arise
- The partnership policy should be established to maximize the benefits to the Department and its customers

Training of each partner's staff on the respective partners values and goals will be performed yearly so both partners are in-tune with issues the partners may be dealing with that could affect the partnership in place as it applies to finances, staffing, capitol costs, political elements or changes in operating philosophies.

The public/public partnerships include libraries, schools, colleges, and any other municipality. These partnerships facilitate working jointly on the development, sharing, and/or operating facilities and programs. Public/public partnerships conserve community resources by collectively working to accomplish mutual goals as opposed to competing for resources and users.

The public/not-for-profit partnerships provide not-for-profit organizations the use of Department facilities in exchange for services or for providing programs to the community. Public/not-for-profit partnerships focus on equity between the Department and not-of-profit partners. Performance measures and expected results are defined and documented to assure the missions of both partners are accomplished.

The public/private partnerships include agreements with businesses, associations, or individuals who desire to make a profit from use of a Department facility or program. The principles are as follows:

- The Department must recognize that private partners must make a profit
- In developing a public/private partnership, the Department will benefit from designated fees from the contracting agency, or a designated fee plus a percentage of gross dollars on a periodic basis, as outlined in the agreement
- The Department and private partners should establish measurable outcomes to be achieved. A tracking method of those outcomes should be established and monitored by the Department. The outcomes will include standards of quality, financial reports, customer satisfaction, payments to the Department, and overall coordination with the Department for the services rendered
- Depending on the level of investment made by the private contractor, the partnership agreement may be for a month, a year or multiple years

5.4.3.11   OVERAL KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

- A Department wide policy that meets the County overall procurement requirements is needed to streamline the purchasing process.

- Establishing a Park Access ordinance and an access management program as a framework for user access agreements with new developments, home owner associations and communities adjacent to county parks
- The Department should adjust current fee schedules as well as establishing opportunities for new pricing classifications based on a Pricing Policy and cost of each service
- Sponsorship and Partnership policies should be developed to provide needed resources to operate and maintain the system based on the cost of service, equity of each partners investments and expected outcomes

5.4.4 PROCESS IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.4.1 ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

When asked how the organization is performing, staff responded with information from the "Managing for Results" process utilized by the County. While the presence of a measurement system is an integral step in achieving organizational excellence, it is also extremely important to evaluate the process in order to improve the benefits of the system. The measures should capture organizational goals and priorities from the departmental level to the divisional level, and include variables that reflect critical management decisions throughout the process. Typical best-practice measures focus on the following measurements:

- Level of Standards met
- Revenue to expense goals met
- Customer satisfaction levels met
- Level of capacity met
- Earned income levels met
- Resource protection levels met

5.4.4.2 BUDGETARY PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the SIPOC process (supplier, input, process, output, customer) the organization works exactly the opposite way. Rather than having a focus on the customer, the organization has a deeply imbedded culture of insularity and focuses around the support divisions, administration and trails/construction. The organization needs to change the way it does business by reversing the lead/support roles of various divisions within the Department. Having performance measures of internal support accountability by the administration area is an effective way to improve the way an organization operates. Although there is not significant room for major budget shifts in the operating budget due to limited funds, allowing more opportunity for input creates greater buy-in to the process.

5.4.4.3 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PROCESSES RECOMMENDATIONS

The divisional silos of staff organization inhibit excellent operational performance. As a starting point in changing this situation, the department should consider the development of an internal customer service survey for all employees. This would provide an effective

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means of obtaining feedback for the internal support divisions and provides an opportunity for establishing accountability and making improvements, as appropriate to better serve the internal customers. Each year, the Department should identify processes that need improvement and continue the process improvement team format to strengthen all key internal support and external customer support.

5.4.4.4 PARK SAFETY AND SECURITY RECOMMENDATIONS

In discussions with staff, it appears that vandalism and graffiti are growing problems which should be addressed through an organized enforcement program that can be jointly implemented. The City of San Jose has an excellent model program for managing graffiti that the County Sheriff's Department and Parks and Recreation Department should review and apply to Maricopa County park sites.

Given the importance of this issue, it would be appropriate that discussion between the Director and appropriate leadership in the Sheriff's Department be initiated in the near future as a means of addressing these concerns.

The matter of safety and security for park users, staff and volunteers are also an important issue of concern, which closer working relationships will benefit. For example, the use of portable radios, satellite phones, or other means of communication should be a matter of consideration, given the isolated areas in which staff and volunteers frequently work.

5.4.4.5 KEY PROCESS IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

- A change in the culture of the organization's support roles will help to alleviate ongoing conflicts and tension between field staff and administrative personnel. Using an internal customer support evaluation system is one method to influence change in this direction
- The Department should utilize performance measures that measure how the organization unit is performing on a Departmental and Divisional basis.
- Budget development should be initiated at the parks level by Park Supervisors who should also be accountable for managing their own budgets that then role up into a system budget that will focus on the system as a whole. Ideally, park supervisors need to think first what is right for the County, and second, what is right for their specific park as it applies to allocation of resources.
- Improve the budgeting process to incorporate input from field staff.
- Develop internal communication protocols and processes to reinvigorate cooperation and efficiencies between divisions within the Department. This can include cross training opportunities, staff meeting guidelines,
- Continue with the effort to revitalize the relationship with the Sherriff's Office in order to better serve the safety in parks is needed.
- The use of portable radios and other means of communication should be a matter of consideration, given the isolated areas in which staff and volunteers frequently work.
- Each year, the Department should identify processes that need improvement and continue the process improvement team format to strengthen all key internal support and external customer support.

5.4.5 INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENTS RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.5.1 RESERVATION, PROGRAM, AND RECEIPTING SYSTEM RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the most important recommendations is the implementation of a computerized reservation, program, and receipting system to document financial transactions at the Department's facilities. An automated receipting and program system will track financial transaction, date-time of transaction, document the type of service or program provided, and provide real-time accounting of receipts. The transaction system will facilitate the service information needs to fully implement cost-of-service and revenue management. Users can purchase annual passes, admission, register for programs, reserve a campsite and other use permits through unstaffed automated transaction equipment to improve permit compliance throughout the system.

A reservation and program system will maximize the reservation and program management of park facilities and facilitate on-line reservations. Department operations staff will be able to see which facilities and programs are available at all system locations, which will improve overall facility utilization under peak periods. An automated reservation and program system will also facilitate on-line reservations for common transactions from the Department's website.

5.4.5.2 WORK ORDER SYSTEM RECOMMENDATIONS

To maximize the benefits of this analysis, PROS recommends the implementation of a computerized maintenance management system. The benefits of an Automated Maintenance System include improved tracking, improved resource allocations based on needs and standards, documentation of Department efficiencies, and provide justification for additional resource requirements.

The implementation requirements include data gathering, staff training, development of standards, and sufficient human resources to input the daily work results. The long-term efficiencies achieved by automated maintenance reporting significantly exceed the resource requirements.

The field technology should include mobile data terminal to receive work orders and input work results in the field. The field input can be enhanced by the use of bar code system implementation which includes the coding of assets and work tasks.

Maintenance Work Order System Requirements Definition

The PROS team in conjunction with the Department staff prepared a Maintenance Work Order System Requirements Definition. The requirements were developed from the PROS Work Order Requirements Template and modified to meet the specific needs of the Department. The Requirement Definition includes the following major sections:

- General System Requirements
- Contract Management
- Inspection Tracking

- Work Orders Details and Functions
- Preventive Maintenance
- Work Scheduling

- Purchasing
- Parts and Materials Management
- Reporting
- Capital Project Management
- Facility Management

- Assets Management(Areas and Equipment)
- Labor Details
- Tools Management
- Technology / Mobile Functions
- Capital Planning

5.4.5.3   COMMUNICATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department is primarily dependent on cell phones and radios for communications due to the expansive service area. Mobile data terminals are needed to facilitate work assignments for maintenance and operations staff. These may include laptop computers or hand held devices with mobile communication capabilities or vehicle mounted units in Department vehicles.

The Department's remote locations need to be better linked, or in some cases, connected with the County's network system to improve data communications between all of the park locations.

5.4.5.4   KEY RECOMMENDATIONS – SYSTEM AND TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENTS:

- Upgrade technology, both from an external customer perspective, and from an internal customer perspective. External customers should be able to access more information and ability to do business transactions on-line.
- It is important for the Department to cultivate a relationship with the staff of the County's Office of Management and Budgets to improve the funding climate for both operating and capital budgets.
- Procure and implement a computerized reservation and program system to provide on-line customer support for reserving facilities and registering for programs and classes. This system should also function as a point of sale with credit card module to improve revenue management with greatly improved controls along with the ability to better integrate programs system-wide through cross promotions and customer information tracking.
- An automated reservations and transaction system will improve revenue controls, collections and revenue reporting.
- On-line reservations will enhance customer service and provide customers with around the clock reservations services.
- Procure and implement a computerized work order/maintenance management system for greatly improving the tracking of Department maintenance resources, improved resource allocations based on needs and standards, documentation of Department efficiencies, and documentation of additional resource requirements as the system grows. The field technology should include mobile data terminal to receive work orders and input work results in the field. The field input can be enhanced by the use of bar code system implementation which includes the coding of assets and work tasks

5.4.6 PARK MAINTENANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the current fiscal crisis, it is important that the Department carefully analyze the ratio of staffing to the tasks required at each park in order to ensure that there is an appropriate balance. The transfer of existing staff and the realignment of crew responsibilities may be necessary to provide resources and services on a prioritized basis. When the Maintenance Management Plan is implemented, the Department will be in a position to determine the amount of time required to meet the maintenance standards established for each maintenance activity. That measurement will also provide a means to determine if the staffing levels are appropriate. In the interim of implementing that program, the Department should initiate a staffing review at each park and make adjustments as appropriate.

Further, the Department should consider an expanded and accelerated use of part time employees as a more cost effective method of providing additional staff resources. The Department should also carefully develop the Capital Improvements Program with attention to those facilities which will require additional staffing. Given the difficult situation of obtaining additional operating budget funds, it may be necessary and prudent to delay major development for the short term and concentrate on infrastructure improvements to the current park facilities and amenities.

Possible solutions would involve augmenting the current facility maintenance crew by entering into price agreements with vendors such as electrical or plumbing businesses on a time and materials basis. This approach would reduce the need to add positions and additional equipment and provide an expedited facility service response. An alternative solution could be the relocation of the crew from its current location to a more central area in the County or going a step further and dividing the current crew into two crews serving the East and West park areas of the County which would provide a means to reduce travel time, increase productivity and provide an improved and timely service response.

Supervision of these crews could be assigned to regional superintendents as a means of ensuring coordination with park staff. Ensuring that appropriate skills are available in each crew, and procurement of specialized equipment would present challenges, however, these problems can be resolved over a period of time. A first step could be the relocation of the crew or only certain trades' staff to regional locations which would eliminate the staff reporting to the central office for work assignments and provide shorter drive times to work locations. There are obvious fiscal and physical limitations as to steps that can be supported in restructuring this important function, however, the goals of improving service delivery and increasing available work hours are critically important.

Given the Department's continuing budget difficulties, the increase in new facilities coming on line and related inability to increase staffing levels, there is also a need to increase the use of contracts for services across the Department. Outsourcing certain work such as preventive maintenance on the Department's vehicles and motorized equipment to local

repair shops near the parks will in most cases provide a more cost efficient and effective means to provide that service.

5.4.6.1 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS
- Consider the development of a long term plan for restructuring of the delivering of skill trade functions and services across the County.   In the interim of that plan, initiate the development of price agreements for those services most commonly required and consider the relocation of certain staff to outlying parks as a means of gaining needed efficiency.
- Consider delay of new capital projects or shifting capital improvement funds to infrastructure improvements in response to the foreseen fiscal constraints.
- Outsource equipment minor repair and service functions and utilize the County's services for major repairs.
- Utilize the maintenance standards as a means of determining work requirements and related staffing levels.

5.4.7 TRAIL DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE RECOMMENDATIONS
Consideration should be given to restructuring those functions and concentrate staff resources on the primary element of maintenance. This can be done by assigning and relocating the current six trail maintenance positions to two regional locations which could more efficiently serve the smaller geographical east and west park areas.

In addition, outsourcing of trail development as an alternative means of expediting the accomplishment of the capital improvements program should continue. As a means of supplementing the park crew, there should be consideration of the use of volunteers for accomplishing minor trail maintenance, such as an Adopt-a-Trail program. Issues relating to the use of equipment, skill development, and safety concerns should be addressed through a comprehensive policy for volunteers which also includes an aggressive training program.

Continued expansion of trail services which can be provided by the park maintenance staff and volunteers will result in not only a more cost effective service, but also will provide a sense of ownership and pride in the park trails for the park crews.

5.4.7.1 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS
- The restructuring of the current central trails crew into two separate crews serving the east and western park areas with the primary role of trail maintenance should be considered.
- Consideration should be given to the outsourcing of trail development as an alternative means of quickly accomplishing the capital improvements program.
- Volunteers should be used in supplementing maintenance crews by performing certain levels of trail maintenance.
- A comprehensive system of signage and related trail amenities should be established for use at all parks.
- Consideration should be given to the development of a prototype trailhead facility to guide future development.

- Implementing trail maintenance standards and updated design standards should be incorporated into maintenance plans.
- Developing classifications of trail types, signing parks by level of difficulty, as well as maintenance care should be incorporated into the system.
- Trail monitoring of conditions with a hot-line number for maintenance should be incorporated into the system.
- A percentage of the annually Maricopa County Trail money should be targeted to specific existing park trails.
- The establishment of an ADA trail in each County park should be considered.
- Mile markers on each trail, as well as location maps on where a user is located within a park should be added
- Separate equestrian trails should be outlined on park signage if applicable.

5.4.8 TRAINING RECOMMENDATIONS

The staff is provided many technical training operations through the County, but needs to extend the training into business management, program management, advocacy management, customer service, resource management, earned income management, and policy development for the future.

PROS recommends establishing a general training program for major functional categories to focus training hours and budgets. Recommended programs by major function are presented below.

- *Maintenance and trades* training program focused on safety for maintenance and trades staff.

Course Type	Recommended Hours
Safety	16
Equipment Operation	8
Construction	8
Customer Service / Communications	8
Total Hours	40

Figure 30 - Maintenance and Trades Training Program

- *Parks Operations and Recreation* training program focused on customer service and safety for Parks staff.

Course Type	Recommended Hours
Customer Service / Communications	16
Safety	16
Total Hours	32

Figure 31 - Parks Operations and Recreation Training Program

- *Planning and Trails Development* training program focused on construction and safety for planning and trails staff.

Course Type	Recommended Hours
Safety	8
Construction	8
Planning	8
Office Systems	8
Total Hours	32

Figure 32 - Planning and Trails Development Training Program

- *Administrative and Clerical* training program focused on communication and office skills for clerical and administrative staff.

Course Type	Recommended Hours
Office Systems	16
Communication	8
Job Skills Training	8
Total Hours	32

Figure 33 - Administrative and Clerical Training Program

- **Financial** training program focused on office systems and communication for financial staff.

Course Type	Recommended Hours
Office Systems	16
Communication	8
Financial Analysis	8
Total Hours	32

Figure 34 - Financial Training Program

- **Management and Supervisors** training program focused on communication and management training for managers and supervisors.

Course Type	Recommended Hours
Management	16
Communication	16
Human Resources	8
Total Hours	40

Figure 35 - Management and Supervisors Training Program

- **Management and Supervisor** training program focused on cost of service, business management, advocacy management, resource management, earned income management, and policy deployment.

Course Type	Recommended Hours
Business Management	16
Cost of Service	8
Advocacy Management	8
Resource Management	8
Earned Income Management	8
Total Hours	56

Figure 36 - Management and Supervisor Training Program

CHAPTER SIX - MAINTENANCE ASSESSMENT

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department manages a system that encompasses over 125,000 acres and ten parks dispersed over a vast area and serving a population of more than 3,900,000. The Department is organized into four primary areas: Administration, Engineering and Planning, West Side Parks and East Side Parks. The Department has a trails development group and a trades group in Engineering and Planning.

PROS Consulting evaluated the maintenance activities to assess its operations and develop a Maintenance Management Plan. The goal of this Maintenance Management Plan is to provide the most effective and efficient operational strategies as well as address the necessary resources to support the current and future parks system. Each park has a limited maintenance staff that is supported by seasonal volunteers (Hosts.) Heavier maintenance is provided by a central trade's crew that serves all Parks and is staffed by skilled trade's personnel. The trail systems are developed by a dedicated trails crew and renovated by the trails crew and local park staff.

PROS evaluated the maintenance operations to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of its functional areas of responsibility. This included assessing its current operations related to organization and staffing, levels of service/workload, work processes and standards, budgeting, and management and monitoring of daily work by staff. This assessment was performed through on-site evaluations and analysis of collected data provided to PROS by staff.

The following presents a situational assessment, recommendations and an implementation strategy with detailed actions and priorities. The situational assessment presents findings and analysis.   The recommendations are organized to guide decision making for implementing the Maintenance Management Plan with strategies, standards and performance measures.

6.2 SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENT

PROS collected and reviewed a variety of financial and operational data to gain insight into the current operations of the maintenance operations.

A series of questions were asked during interviews with staff. Individuals interviewed ranged from the Department Director, Park Supervisors, Park Managers, park staff and maintenance staff. Additional data was requested during these meetings to expand the level of operational analysis and further identify critical issues to address and develop recommendations. Specific areas assessed included:

- Organizational staffing and workload requirements
- Existing policy and procedures management
- Financial and funding base
- Asset protection
- Information systems and technology

- Resource protection
- Organization / alignment
- Staff training
- Field equipment and resources
- Existing maintenance and operational standards
- Resource management
- Activity based costing
- Budget process
- Purchasing processes
- Performance measures

Following is a summary of findings from the overall assessment completed by PROS with specific key issues to be addressed. Overall, the maintenance staff is seen as a "can-do" group of capable individuals. The maintenance staff has a several constraints to the delivery of their services in a manner that is indicative of an organization within major parks and recreation system that has faced reduced funding, more assets to maintain, and growing demand. Following is an overall assessment of the maintenance services:

- Maintenance staffing is limited across the system and is significantly impacted by travel time to sites
- The maintenance requirements of an aging system infrastructure is also adding to the work load of the maintenance staff
- The continuing development of new public use facilities have resulted in increased maintenance service requirements for the staff resources which are not being expanded
- The efficiency of the centralized maintenance trades crews performing specialized services is impacted by travel time to park locations throughout the system
- The maintenance staff have limited time for preventative maintenance and resource protection activities due to a broad service area and the size of the parks
- The lack of a comprehensive maintenance management plan which includes a work order system and related maintenance standards
- The lack of a comprehensive asset renewal/replacement program
- The differences between peak season and non-peak season use creates an uneven workload throughout the year

This overall assessment is supported by a number of key operational findings that must be addressed through this Maintenance Management Plan. Following is a summary of key operational findings and issues.

6.3 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The PROS Team summarized the key operational findings from the evaluation into the following key issues that need to be addressed in this Maintenance Management Plan.

6.3.1 ORGANIZATIONAL, STAFFING AND WORKLOAD FINDINGS

The current organization structure of the maintenance functions appear to be functional based on the professional opinion of the consulting team and managing their resources reasonably well compared to their significant workload. The maintenance resources

available are stressed when compared to the size and number of locations maintained and given the overall service area being served. The lack of consistent data related to daily performance and standard measures has affected the ability of the maintenance staff to perform meaningful analysis to determine the overall efficiency and effectiveness of its operations.

In 2004, the Department had 36 full-time equivalent maintenance positions. Maintenance is now performed by 37 employees during the years ending 2007 and 2008. That total staff complement includes the Trails Development Crew with seven (7) employees who perform primary trail development and trail maintenance tasks and the Trades Crew with seven (7) employees who perform tasks requiring construction trade skills. The trades and trail crews work from centralized locations and travel to the various park locations. The remaining staff is located and work at specific parks throughout the System. The maintenance staffing levels at park locations include:

Location	Staffing	Developed Acres	Total Acres
Lake Pleasant	6 employees including one supervisor	515	23,646
White Tank	2 employees	289	29,571
Desert Outdoor Center	3 employees	10	19,840
Estrella	3 employees	532	2,922
Cave Creek	2 employees	120	21,099
McDowell Park	2 employees	307	3,648
Usery	3 employees	348	10,198
San Tan	1 employee	6	2,154
Spur Cross	1 employee	1	1,526
Adobe Dam	0 employees	761	1,526
Buckeye	0 employees	122	4,474
Paradise Valley	0 employees	129	129

Figure 37 - Maintenance Staffing Levels at Park Locations

With the limited staffing levels, the maintenance resources are strained and create a reactive operating environment. The issue is also impacted by the reality of maintenance staff travel time.

6.3.2 EXISTING POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANAGEMENT FINDINGS

Maintenance groups appear to have strong tactical execution capabilities. However, locations, equipment, technology and available staff resources limit their ability to increase efficiency. The on-site maintenance staff serves large developed areas from 60 acres to over 100 acres per employee. All maintenance crews need to reduce the non-productive time resulting from the significant travel required each day which instead can be spent on the delivery of services.

6.3.3 FINANCIAL AND FUNDING FINDINGS

By December, 2009, the Department is scheduled to be "non-reliant on the general fund for park operations through alternate means of funding." The Department is adding land and amenities without the ability to add maintenance resources. With additional assets to maintain and a static number of staff, a potential decrease in maintenance and asset conditions exists.

6.3.4 ASSET PROTECTION FINDINGS

The objective of the preventative maintenance program is to extend the life of equipment, infrastructure and facilities and improve the efficiency of resources by reducing the number of trouble calls required. The Department has the opportunity to improve its operations through investment in updated equipment, better geographic distribution of its maintenance staff, and established frequency standards and procedures.

6.3.5 INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY FINDINGS

The Department is challenged in the area of accessing and utilizing information to improve decision-making. This includes integration of technology into work processes and improved record keeping and reporting to support long term planning.

6.3.6 RESOURCE PROTECTION FINDINGS

As a result of staff being in a continuing process of "catching up" with ongoing maintenance work, the management of the Park System's Cultural and Natural Resources has not been managed consistently with the priority required for these important areas.

6.3.7 ORGANIZATIONAL ALIGNMENT FINDINGS

The maintenance services are currently organized into three organization groupings. The Trail Development and Trades crews report to the Chief Engineer. The Department also has maintenance personnel on-site at nine locations.

The current maintenance resources are not aligned to the facilities maintained. The long term goal should be locating skilled maintenance staff as close as practical to the sites and amenities that is being maintained to increase the service efficiency. The travel time to service locations is a significant factor with respect to the number of available work hours. Additional available work hours can be gained by locating the maintenance resources closer to the primary facilities served.

Staffing needs for the Department should be focused on creating positions that increase capacity to implement efficient and effectiveness improvements by allowing supervisors to be in the field performing trouble shooting, quality control and identifying process improvements. In addition, filling vacant maintenance positions should occur.

6.3.8 STAFF TRAINING FINDINGS

The Department does not currently have a training plan for trades, maintenance or construction staff. A training plan would improve productivity and safety.

6.3.9 FIELD EQUIPMENT AND RESOURCES FINDINGS

Field equipment needs to be aligned to a specific park or as a system-wide piece of equipment. A complete inventory, condition assessment, and evaluation of use needs to be made to determine how best to allocate these resources. An equipment replacement lifecycle plan needs to be put into place, fully funded, and tied to specific crews to enhance their work performance. Currently, there is inconsistency on when equipment replacement schedules are followed, which is primarily due to limited funding. Many pieces of equipment the Department owns are 4 to 8 years past their replacement schedules and it costs the Department more to repair the equipment than it is worth.

6.3.10 EXISTING MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONAL STANDARDS FINDINGS

Maintenance standards create an estimated frequency schedule for staff to follow that ensures that the quality of the amenity will be available and working for visitors and users to enjoy. Maintenance standards allow staff to be proactive in managing the fixed assets of the Department. Maintenance standards establish a guideline for maintenance staffing and budgeting to achieve the frequency schedule and provide a baseline for accountability by demonstrating that the standards are being met.

Preventative maintenance standards support maintaining the level of predicted lifecycle of capital improvements and in most cases extends the asset life beyond the expected time period. Preventative maintenance provides a safe and quality experience for visitors and users of park facilities and decreases the liability exposure of the Department. The following standards are the basis for the preventative maintenance plan and are presented in thirteen groups by type of facility. Preventative maintenance standards are presented in Section 5 and were developed with the Department's maintenance staff. The results of the maintenance model are shown in the Appendix. The model presents labor hours requirements for maintenance tasks by levels of service. The model is organized by Park locations and inventory item with associated tasks and three levels of service.

6.4 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

6.4.1 ORGANIZATIONAL, STAFFING AND WORKLOAD RECOMMENDATIONS

Partnership / Volunteer Support –The Department needs to create a partnership policy on how it will manage public/ public partnerships, public/ private partnerships, and public/ non-for-profit partnerships. In addition the Department needs to create a Volunteer Policy on how they will recruit, train and manage volunteers across the system to maximize their staffing capabilities.

6.4.2 EXISTING POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

A large system area like Maricopa County parks requires significant drive times to and between park job sites. The trade crews work from a centralized location. With the current resources, centralized staging is the most productive approach for that crew; however, as the staff levels increase, consideration should be given to reorganizing the current group into two crews that are closer to their assigned service areas to save staff driving time and cost of gas.

The trail development crew works from the Parks and Recreation administration building and the crews are divided into east service area and west service areas.   The trail development staff could be moved to those service areas to improve drive time and to improve the coordination of trail duties between the trail development staff and the park maintenance staff. The trail planners should continue to work from the central office under the Engineer.

Attention should also be given to the work responsibilities of the park maintenance crews .It is apparent that certain efficiencies can be found through park crews providing increased trail maintenance services as a means of supporting the work of the Trails Crews which currently are responsible for both developing and maintaining trails.

Coordination and integration of maintenance standards will provide a broader asset management approach that considers opportunities for more effective use of staff resources and equipment. This can best be accomplished through the implementation of a work order system.   Improved processes for prioritizing work and scheduling of staff resources will greater improve maintenance service delivery.

6.4.3 FINANCIAL AND FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department must tie maintenance standards and asset lifecycle costs to existing parks to demonstrate how overextended the Department is in meting what visitors expect in services when they use County parks. Additional flexibility is needed in funding options to support this park system for the future. A dedicated funding source is needed with the capability of creating earned income that the Department can retain is of the utmost importance. Creating a Park District or Park Authority would allow for that dedicated funding source to exist and the capability of the Department to grow its operational and capital needs to sustain the system and ultimately provide quality services for the public.

6.4.4 ASSET PROTECTION RECOMMENDATIONS

Long-term asset management planning is needed to better quantify the capital maintenance needs so that funding requests can become more consistent year to year. This includes implementing procedures to capture the condition and life-cycle on existing facilities, equipment and infrastructure. This will allow staff to proactively establish life-cycle plans for existing and new improvements currently being planned.

Based on the useful life of the Department's total facility assets, the expected maintenance and rehabilitation budget should be approximately $1,300,000 per year, or approximately 9.12% of total system assets. This includes budgeted maintenance and debt financed capital rehabilitation projects. The Department should consider funding to 4% to 6% of total park and recreation infrastructure value per year for capital maintenance and rehabilitation over the long-term.

A major element of asset protection is preventative maintenance. A work order management system will provide the basis for proactively maintaining the assets of the Department. An automated system will produce preventative maintenance work orders on established schedules to assure that each asset is periodically inspected and maintained.

The limited maintenance staff is not able to conduct preventive maintenance activities to protect natural and cultural resources; such as securing areas from unauthorized vehicle use, maintaining fences from illegal entry, protecting shooting and archery range sites and taking fire prevention measures.

Specific work activities include:

- **Annual Work Plan:** Coordinate Annual Work Plan and review and revised quarterly
- **Work-plan Development and Scheduling:** Preparing weekly work plans and scheduling technicians based on established maintenance standards. Includes coordinating with Trades Crew for support resources and identifying and acquisition of materials, supplies and equipment needs for work execution.
- **Work Execution:** Performance of work plans including inspection process and implementing quality standards. The technicians perform, repair or prepare a work order for more extensive work required.
- **Supervision and Quality Control:** Supervisors and/or independent technicians perform quality control checks on completed work to ensure work is completed to standards.
- **Performance Monitoring and Reporting:** Maintain data and prepare reports presenting the maintenance performance based on established measurements.
- **Resource Protection:** Identify and document natural resources, implement protective actions, and complete restoration activities.
- Identify the appropriate duties that can be performed by volunteers
- Develop training required for volunteers to safely perform each task

Key success indicators include:

- **Satisfaction and Value Rating**: High resident satisfaction and value ratings
- **Return on Investment**: Return on investment (ROI) through the extension of asset life and subsequent capital funding requirements

- **Productivity and Efficiency**: Consistent productivity for staff and resources by reducing operational impacts due to trouble calls
- **Predictable Funding Requirements**: Predictable annual operations and capital funding requirements
- **Internal Customer Satisfaction Rating**: High internal customer satisfaction ratings
- **Reduced Funding Requirements**: Annual targets for reduction in annual operations and maintenance funding requirements
- **Resource Protection**: Documentation of natural resources and preventive actions taken

6.4.5 INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY RECOMMENDATIONS

The implementation of a work order management is critical to the Department to report and manage their resources and track work needed and work performed.

- The work order system implementation is critical to providing needed management information to the Department.
- Communication tools are key to the use of the work management tools and includes mobile phone with internet functionality
- Continually train staff on technology tools

6.4.6 RESOURCE PROTECTION RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a need for a comprehensive resource management plan for the management and protection of these valuable park resources. The plan should include an inventory of sites and specific resources as well as mapping all significant locations. The plan should also identify required maintenance and security efforts including fire prevention, boundary control, signage and related efforts necessary to deal with activities such as encroachment, vandalism, littering, unauthorized entry and other related illegal activities. This issue should be identified by the Department as a high priority initiative and given appropriate attention in the near future.

- A comprehensive resource management plan which includes the inventory and documentation of natural and cultural resources, locations and current conditions should be developed and implemented as an essential step towards ensuring management and protection of these resources
- Staff training should be provided to ensure that management and maintenance activities are appropriately provided
- A dedicated staff person is needed to manage the resource protection recommendations

6.4.7 FIELD EQUIPMENT AND RESOURCES RECOMMENDATIONS

Regularly scheduled equipment replacement is essential to maintaining an efficient fleet of vehicles and rolling stock. Regular replacements of vehicles and rolling stock avoid budget problems with failure of a significant part of the equipment inventory during one budget year. Scheduled vehicle and rolling stock replacement will assure that needed equipment will be available in an emergency and it improves staff productivity levels based on staff not having to wait for repairs or equipment.

- According to the Department's asset records 10.8% of the depreciable assets are over their planned useful lives
- An equipment replacement schedule plan should be developed for each class of equipment. The replacement schedule may be based on set criteria; such as, hours of use, annual downtime and annual maintenance costs.
- Equipment replacements should be based on the equipment life cycle along with the annual equipment conditional assessment

6.4.8 EXISTING MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONAL STANDARDS RECOMMENDATIONS

Standard inspections will be conducted by field supervisors based on work-team reports and documented for compliance weekly on a scheduled basis. Non-compliance performance will be noted by the supervisors and recorded in a work-team employee performance evaluation file. Work team will be redirected to complete work scheduled as established.

- Conduct an interactive, consistent, on-going, and productive dialogue with users to confirm available resources are best matched to needs.
- Employ activity based costing methods and hold all levels of organization accountable for achieving planned outcomes.
- Continually assess and evaluate performance standards and achievements, adjust standards and frequencies where appropriate, reward success when possible.

6.5 SUMMARY OF OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a summary of the most significant recommendations associated with Maintenance Management Planning.

- Adopt maintenance standard measures to create meaningful analysis
- Provide maintenance staff the resources in proportion to the additional assets that are being developed and in line with the selected level of service documented in the maintenance labor model
- Develop an on-going training plan for trades and construction staff to maintain skill efficiency and to improve productivity of staff and keep assets up to date
- Develop a centralize formal stores area for parts and suppliers to increase productivity and reduce drive times of staff
- Contract out non-key services such as equipment maintenance and selected trades such as plumbing and electrical during emergency situations
- Reduce travel time by staff through improving policies relating to purchasing and job site designation
- Continue and increase partnership programs with volunteers and partnering agencies such as municipalities, the National Forest Service, state parks, other Maricopa County Departments, Friends Groups, and conservation type agencies
- The Department needs to implement maintenance performance measures tied to success indicators which will allow the maintenance services to manage by outcomes which will create a positive proactive work environment and provide good information for improved decision-making

- Funding for deferred maintenance must be balanced with new construction to ease the staff impact on maintaining existing facilities and improving customer satisfaction
- Implement a work order system to report and manage resources and track work needed and work performed
- PROS recommends adjustments to the current organization structure to better align with asset management strategies that will allow for improved allocation of staff time and monitoring of performance
- A comprehensive management plan for cultural and natural resources should be developed fore each park in the system

6.6 ZONE MANAGEMENT MAPS

6.6.1 DESCRIPTION OF MANAGEMENT ZONES

The following zones encompass areas of land-based management only and are designed to be a working document so that some flexibility in the classification of each is allowed.

6.6.2 DEVELOPMENT

This zone includes areas which require the highest level of management. These areas contain the largest level of activity by park users. Whenever possible, the size of this zone should be limited to ten percent of the overall park size. Smaller parks that are contiguous to other protected open space may exceed 10%.

6.6.2.1 THIS ZONE INCLUDES BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO:

- Roads
- Golf Courses
- Archery/ Shooting ranges
- Model Airplane
- Sports fields
- Aquatic Complex
- Restrooms Facilities
- Picnic areas and Ramadas
- Camp Sites
- Equestrian Facilities
- Entrance Stations
- Visitor Centers
- Trailheads
- Parking Lots
- Boat Launch Areas
- Amphitheaters
- Group Areas
- Staging Areas
- Park Offices
- Playgrounds

6.6.3 TRAIL

This zone requires a level of management second only to the development zones.   These areas are limited to passive recreation and park maintenance only. In most cases, public vehicular access is restricted. Hiking trails and their connectivity to adjacent land uses make up the majority of this zone.

6.6.3.1   THIS ZONE INCLUDES BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO:

- Park Access Gates
- Shared-Use Trails
- Barrier-Free Trails
- Hiker-Only Trails
- Regional System Trails
- Competitive Tracks
- Service Roads
- Public Roads with no connectivity to developed management zones
- Unpaved roads

6.6.4 SEMI-PRIMITIVE

This zone includes the areas adjacent to and between other management zones which contain few amenities. These areas should act as a transition between zones of high and low management. Semi-Primitive zones typically contain minimal impact activities and provide a 'back country experience'. The management required for this zone is very low.

6.6.5 PRIMITIVE

This zone encompasses the areas which are considered remote and inaccessible. Included in this grouping are areas in which the terrain is too rugged for vehicular or pedestrian traffic. Also included are those areas which are a great distance from any other 'developed' zone without a point of access. The key element of this zone should be wildlife conservation and preservation. Access to these zones is available only by special permit (i.e., wildlife study) and therefore requires the least amount of management.

6.6.6 PERIMETER BUFFER

This zone includes areas along the park boundary and adjacent to varying land uses. Park security and limiting external connectivity are the goals of the zone. Due to encroaching development at several parks, the management required for this zone can be fairly high.

6.6.7 RANKING THE MANAGEMENT LEVEL

Highest   1. Development
   V   2. Trail
   V   3. Perimeter Buffer
   V   4. Semi-Primitive
Lowest   5. Primitive

Zone Maps are presented in **Figures 38-47**.

MAP LEGEND

–··–	Park Study Area	/////	State or Local Park
	Bureau of Land Management	——	Paved Road
	Arizona Game and Fish	·········	Non-Paved Road
	Private Land	——	Service Road
	State Trust Land		Paved Parking Lot
	Indian Community		Non-Paved Parking Lot
	National Forest		

MANAGEMENT ZONE LEGEND

Development

This zone includes areas which require the highest level of management. These areas contain the largest level of activity by park users. Whenever possible, the size of this zone should be limited to ten percent of the overall park size.

Trail

This zone requires a level of management second only to the development zone. These areas are limited to passive recreation and park maintenance only. In most cases, public vehicular access, is restricted. Hiking trails and their connectivity to adjacent land uses make up the majority of this zone.

Semi-Primitive

This zone includes the areas adjacent to and between other management zones which contain few amenities. These areas should act as a transition between zones of high and low management. Semi-Primitive zones typically contain minimal to zero impact activities and provide a 'back country experience'. The management required for this zone is very low.

Primitive

This zone encompasses the areas which are considered remote and inaccessible. Included in this grouping are areas in which the terrain is too rugged for vehicular or pedestrian traffic. Also included are those areas which are a great distance from any other 'developed' zone without a point of access. The key element of this zone should be wildlife conservation and preservation. Access to these zones is available only by special permit (ie, wildlife study) and therefore requires the least amount of management.

Perimeter Buffer

This zone includes areas along the park boundary and adjacent to varying land uses. Park security and limiting external connectivity are the goals of the zone. Due to encroaching development at several parks, the management required for this zone can be fairly high.

Size of Park Study Area	– 1,461.05 acres
Development	– 53.6% (783.82 acres)
Trail	– 0% (0.00 acres)
Semi-Primitive	– 22.4% (327.80 acres)
Primitive	– 0% (0.00 acres)
Perimeter Buffer	– 24.0% (349.43 acres)
Non-Management Zone	– 0% (0.00 acres)

Notes:

This park currently exceeds the percentage of allowable development within the boundaries. The existing management zones accurately reflect the present land uses adjacent to the park. No changes to the management zones are required for the immediate future.

NORTH

| 0 | 465 | 930 | 1,860 | 2,790 | Feet |
| 0 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 0.4 | 0.6 | Miles |

Contour Interval 50 Feet
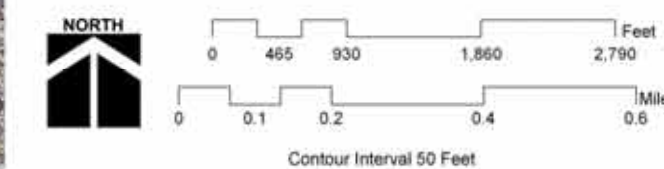
Figure 38 - Adobe Dam Zone Map

MAP LEGEND

- – - – - Park Study Area
- Bureau of Land Management
- Arizona Game and Fish
- Private Land
- State Trust Land
- Indian Community
- National Forest
- State or Local Park
- Paved Road
- Non-Paved Road
- Service Road
- Paved Parking Lot
- Non-Paved Parking Lot

MANAGEMENT ZONE LEGEND

Development
This zone includes areas which require the highest level of management. These areas contain the largest level of activity by park users. Whenever possible, the size of this zone should be limited to ten percent of the overall park size.

Trail
This zone requires a level of management second only to the development zone. These areas are limited to passive recreation and park maintenance only. In most cases, public vehicular access, is restricted. Hiking trails and their connectivity to adjacent land uses make up the majority of this zone.

Semi-Primitive
This zone includes the areas adjacent to and between other management zones which contain few amenities. These areas should act as a transition between zones of high and low management. Semi-Primitive zones typically contain minimal to zero impact activities and provide a 'back country experience'. The management required for this zone is very low.

Primitive
This zone encompasses the areas which are considered remote and inaccessible. Included in this grouping are areas in which the terrain is too rugged for vehicular or pedestrian traffic. Also included are those areas which are a great distance from any other 'developed' zone without a point of access. The key element of this zone should be wildlife conservation and preservation. Access to these zones is available only by special permit (ie, wildlife study) and therefore requires the least amount of management.

Perimeter Buffer
This zone includes areas along the park boundary and adjacent to varying land uses. Park security and limiting external connectivity are the goals of the zone. Due to encroaching development at several parks, the management required for this zone can be fairly high.

Size of Park Study Area - 4,452.26 acres

Development	- 7% (311.00 acres)
Trail	- 0% (0.00 acres)
Semi-Primitive	- 15.5% (689.41 acres)
Primitive	- 64.7% (2,881.79 acres)
Perimeter Buffer	- 12.8% (570.06 acres)
Non-Management Zone	- 0% (0.00 acres)

Notes:

This park is currently very close the percentage of allowable development within the boundaries. The existing management zones accurately reflect the present land uses adjacent to the park. No changes to the management zones are required for the immediate future. However, as future connectivity and access to potential adjacent development arises, the expansion of existing facilities should be examined.

NORTH

| Feet |
| 0 650 1,300 2,600 3,900 |

| Miles |
| 0 0.125 0.25 0.5 0.75 |

Contour Interval 50 Feet
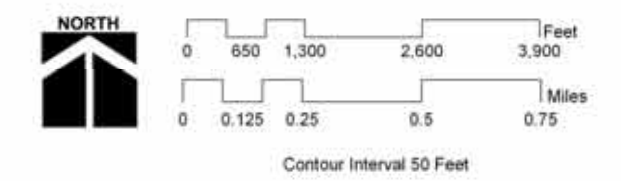
Figure 39 - Buckeye Hills Zone Map

MAP LEGEND

- — · · — Park Study Area
- Bureau of Land Management
- Arizona Game and Fish
- Private Land
- State Trust Land
- Indian Community
- National Forest

- State or Local Park
- ——— Paved Road
- ·········· Non-Paved Road
- ——— Service Road
- Paved Parking Lot
- Non-Paved Parking Lot

MANAGEMENT ZONE LEGEND

Development
This zone includes areas which require the highest level of management. These areas contain the largest level of activity by park users. Whenever possible, the size of this zone should be limited to ten percent of the overall park size.

Trail
This zone requires a level of management second only to the development zone. These areas are limited to passive recreation and park maintenance only. In most cases, public vehicular access, is restricted. Hiking trails and their connectivity to adjacent land uses make up the majority of this zone.

Semi-Primitive
This zone includes the areas adjacent to and between other management zones which contain few amenities. These areas should act as a transition between zones of high and low management. Semi-Primitive zones typically contain minimal to zero impact activities and provide a 'back country experience'. The management required for this zone is very low.

Primitive
This zone encompasses the areas which are considered remote and inaccessible. Included in this grouping are areas in which the terrain is too rugged for vehicular or pedestrian traffic. Also included are those areas which are a great distance from any other 'developed' zone without a point of access. The key element of this zone should be wildlife conservation and preservation. Access to these zones is available only by special permit (ie, wildlife study) and therefore requires the least amount of management.

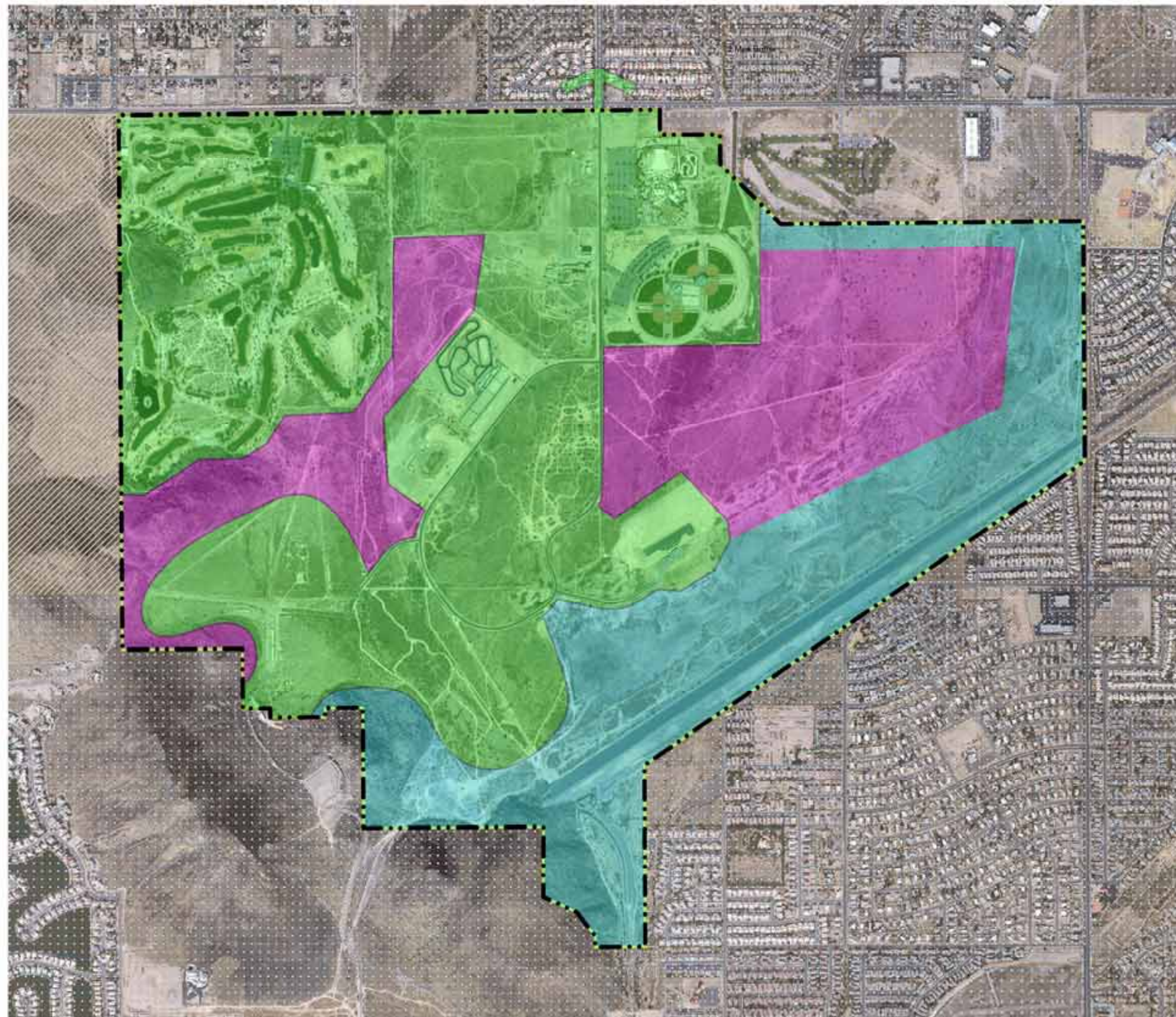**Perimeter Buffer**
This zone includes areas along the park boundary and adjacent to varying land uses. Park security and limiting external connectivity are the goals of the zone. Due to encroaching development at several parks, the management required for this zone can be fairly high.

Size of Park Study Area - 2,937.76 acres

Development	- 3.8% (112.11 acres)
Trail	- 2.8% (81.64 acres)
Semi-Primitive	- 35.6% (1,044.77 acres)
Primitive	- 41.5% (1,220.09 acres)
Perimeter Buffer	- 15.5% (456.33 acres)
Non-Management Zone	- 0.8% (22.83 acres)

Notes:

The existing management zones accurately reflect the present land uses adjacent to the park. No changes to the management zones are required for the immediate future. However, as future connectivity and access to potential adjacent development arises, the expansion of existing facilities should be examined.

NORTH

Feet
0   625   1,250   2,500   3,750

Miles
0   0.125   0.25   0.5   0.75

Contour Interval 50 Feet

Figure 40 - Cave Creek Zone Map

MAP LEGEND

- — · · — Park Study Area
- Bureau of Land Management
- Arizona Game and Fish
- Private Land
- State Trust Land
- Indian Community
- National Forest

- State or Local Park
- Paved Road
- Non-Paved Road
- Service Road
- Paved Parking Lot
- Non-Paved Parking Lot

MANAGEMENT ZONE LEGEND

Development

This zone includes areas which require the highest level of management. These areas contain the largest level of activity by park users. Whenever possible, the size of this zone should be limited to ten percent of the overall park size.

Trail

This zone requires a level of management second only to the development zone. These areas are limited to passive recreation and park maintenance only. In most cases, public vehicular access, is restricted. Hiking trails and their connectivity to adjacent land uses make up the majority of this zone.

Semi-Primitive

This zone includes the areas adjacent to and between other management zones which contain few amenities. These areas should act as a transition between zones of high and low management. Semi-Primitive zones typically contain minimal to zero impact activities and provide a 'back country experience'. The management required for this zone is very low.

Primitive

This zone encompasses the areas which are considered remote and inaccessible. Included in this grouping are areas in which the terrain is too rugged for vehicular or pedestrian traffic. Also included are those areas which are a great distance from any other 'developed' zone without a point of access. The key element of this zone should be wildlife conservation and preservation. Access to these zones is available only by special permit (ie, wildlife study) and therefore requires the least amount of management.

Perimeter Buffer

This zone includes areas along the park boundary and adjacent to varying land uses. Park security and limiting external connectivity are the goals of the zone. Due to encroaching development at several parks, the management required for this zone can be fairly high.

Size of Park Study Area - 19,803.15 acres

Development	- 2.3% (463.00 acres)
Trail	- 1.4% (274.64 acres)
Semi-Primitive	- 31.3% (6,200.10 acres)
Primitive	- 58.2% (11,528.44 acres)
Perimeter Buffer	- 6.8% (1,336.97 acres)
Non-Management Zone	- 0% (0.00 acres)

Notes:

The existing management zones accurately reflect the present land uses adjacent to the park. No changes to the management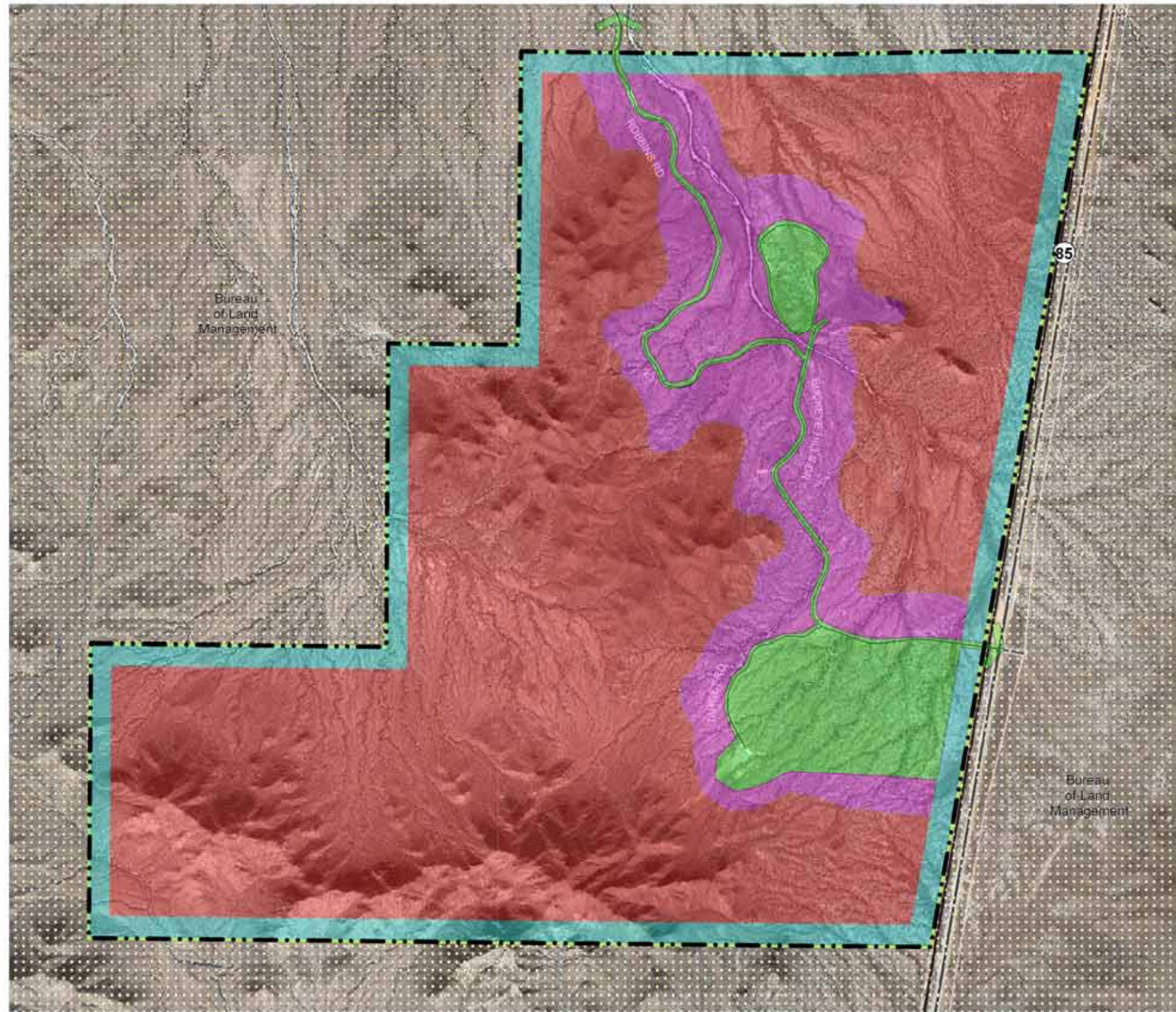 zones are required for the immediate future. However, as future connectivity and access to potential adjacent development arises, the expansion of existing facilities should be examined.

NORTH

Contour Interval 100 Feet
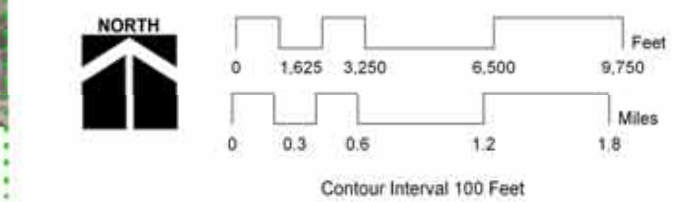
Figure 41 - Estralle Mountain Zone Map

MAP LEGEND

— · — Park Study Area	State or Local Park
Bureau of Land Management	Paved Road
Arizona Game and Fish	Non-Paved Road
Private Land	Service Road
State Trust Land	Paved Parking Lot
Indian Community	Non-Paved Parking Lot
National Forest	

MANAGEMENT ZONE LEGEND

Development

This zone includes areas which require the highest level of management. These areas contain the largest level of activity by park users. Whenever possible, the size of this zone should be limited to ten percent of the overall park size.

Trail

This zone requires a level of management second only to the development zone. These areas are limited to passive recreation and park maintenance only. In most cases, public vehicular access, is restricted. Hiking trails and their connectivity to adjacent land uses make up the majority of this zone.

Semi-Primitive

This zone includes the areas adjacent to and between other management zones which contain few amenities. These areas should act as a transition between zones of high and low management. Semi-Primitive zones typically contain minimal to zero impact activities and provide a 'back country experience'. The management required for this zone is very low.

Primitive

This zone encompasses the areas which are considered remote and inaccessible. Included in this grouping are areas in which the terrain is too rugged for vehicular or pedestrian traffic. Also included are those areas which are a great distance from any other 'developed' zone without a point of access. The key element of this zone should be wildlife conservation and preservation. Access to these zones is available only by special permit (ie, wildlife study) and therefore requires the least amount of management.

Perimeter Buffer

This zone includes areas along the park boundary and adjacent to varying land uses. Park security and limiting external connectivity are the goals of the zone. Due to encroaching development at several parks, the management required for this zone can be fairly high.

Size of Park Study Area = 23,643.48 acres

Development	= 3.5% (821.99 acres)
Trail	= 0.2% (41.81 acres)
Semi-Primitive	= 17.7% (4,185.53 acres)
Primitive	= 38.8% (9,165.39 acres)
Perimeter Buffer	= 4.6% (1,093.65 acres)
Non-Management Zone	= 35.2% (8,335.12 acres)

Notes:

The existing management zones accurately reflect the present land uses adjacent to the park. No changes to the management zones are required for the immediate future. However, as future connectivity and access to potential adjacent development arises, the expansion of existing facilities should be examined.
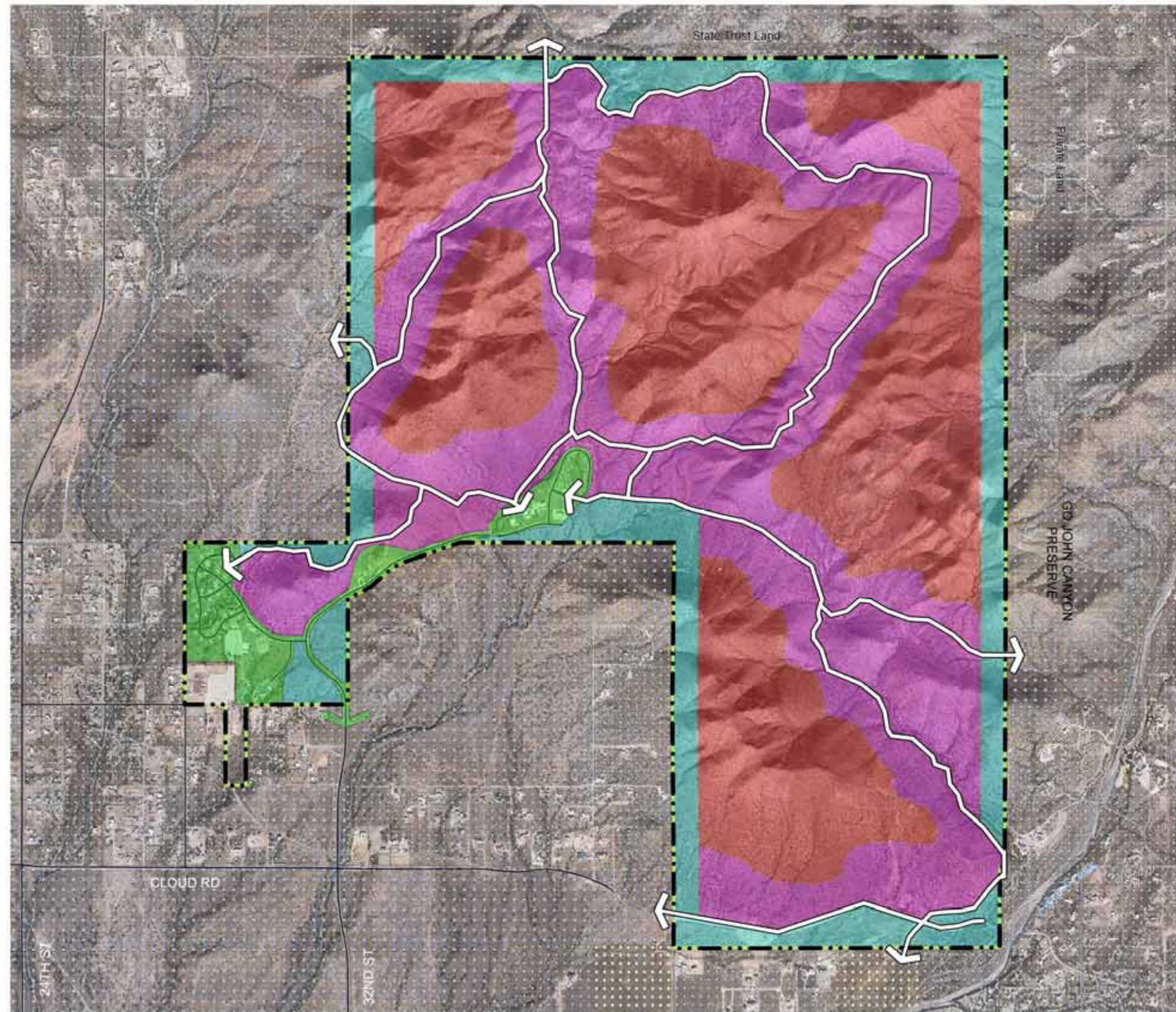
NORTH

| 0 | 2,400 | 4,800 | 9,600 | 14,400 | Feet |

| 0 | 0.45 | 0.9 | 1.8 | 2.7 | Miles |

Contour Interval 200 Feet

Figure 42 - Lake Pleasant Zone Map

MAP LEGEND

— · — · — Park Study Area	State or Local Park
Bureau of Land Management	Paved Road
Arizona Game and Fish	Non-Paved Road
Private Land	Service Road
State Trust Land	Paved Parking Lot
Indian Community	Non-Paved Parking Lot
National Forest	

MANAGEMENT ZONE LEGEND

Development
This zone includes areas which require the highest level of management. These areas contain the largest level of activity by park users. Whenever possible, the size of this zone should be limited to ten percent of the overall park size.

Trail
This zone requires a level of management second only to the development zone. These areas are limited to passive recreation and park maintenance only. In most cases, public vehicular access, is restricted. Hiking trails and their connectivity to adjacent land uses make up the majority of this zone.

Semi-Primitive
This zone includes the areas adjacent to and between other management zones which contain few amenities. These areas should act as a transition between zones of high and low management. Semi-Primitive zones typically contain minimal to zero impact activities and provide a 'back country experience'. The management required for this zone is very low.

Primitive
This zone encompasses the areas which are considered remote and inaccessible. Included in this grouping are areas in which the terrain is too rugged for vehicular or pedestrian traffic. Also included are those areas which are a great distance from any other 'developed' zone without a point of access. The key element of this zone should be wildlife conservation and preservation. Access to these zones is available only by special permit (ie, wildlife study) and therefore requires the least amount of management.

Perimeter Buffer
This zone includes areas along the park boundary and adjacent to varying land uses. Park security and limiting external connectivity are the goals of the zone. Due to encroaching development at several parks, the management required for this zone can be fairly high.

Size of Park Study Area - 21,094.02 acres

Development	- 1.4% (292.46 acres)
Trail	- 2.2% (472.20 acres)
Semi-Primitive	- 49.4% (10,413.71 acres)
Primitive	- 41.2% (8,700.22 acres)
Perimeter Buffer	- 5.3% (1,110.73 acres)
Non-Management Zone	- 0.5% (104.69 acres)

Notes:

The existing management zones accurately reflect the present land uses adjacent to the park. No changes to the management zones are required for the immediate future. However, as future connectivity and access to potential adjacent development arises, the expansion of existing facilities should be examined.

NORTH

Feet
0   1,250   2,500   5,000   7,500

Miles
0   0.25   0.5   1   1.5

Contour Interval 50 Feet

Figure 43 - McDowell Mountain Zone Map
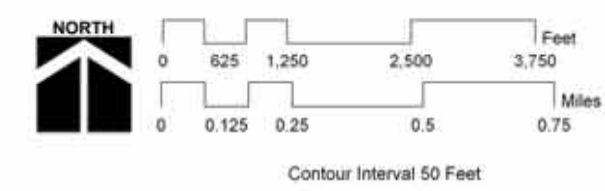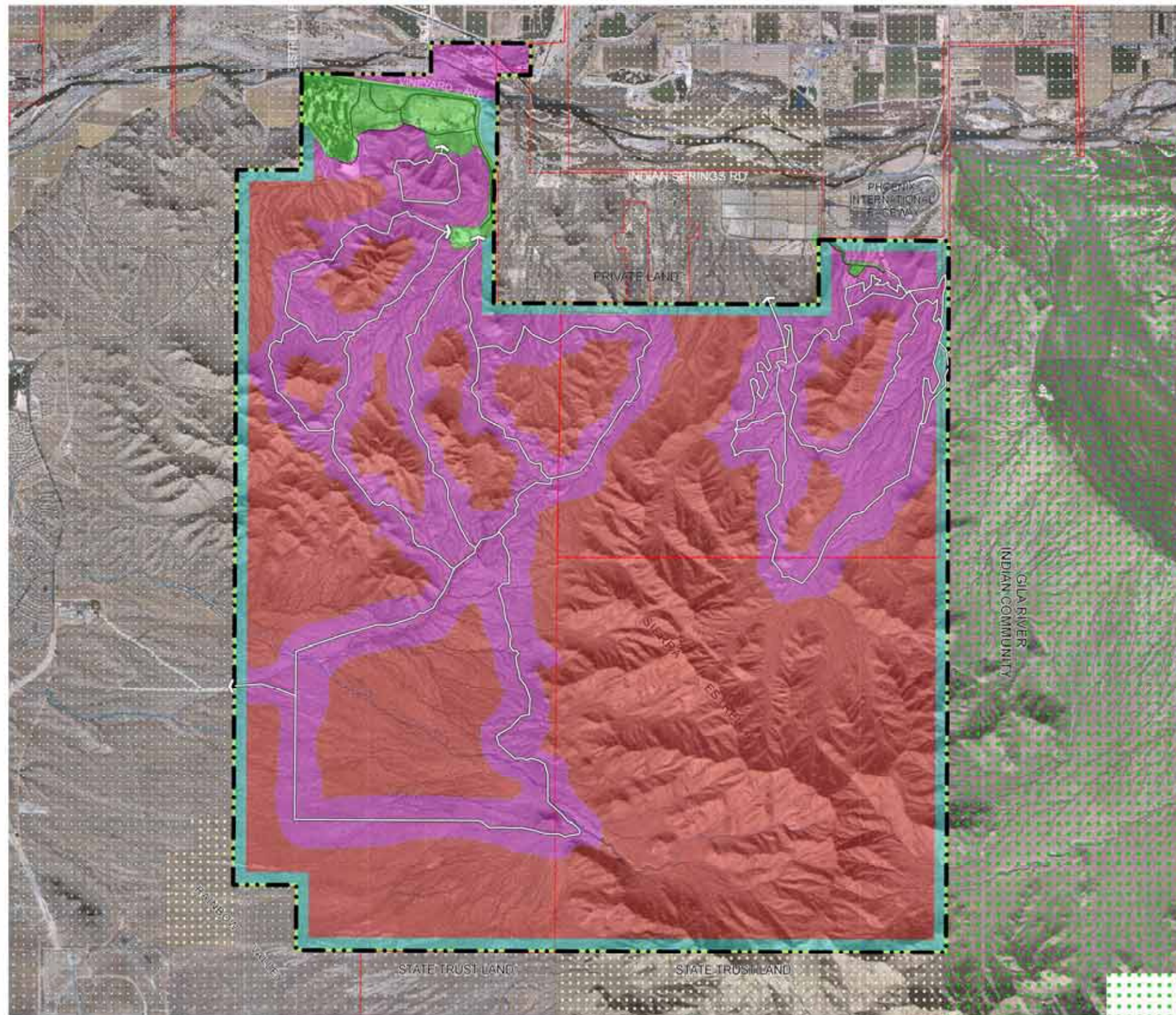
MAP LEGEND

- --- Park Study Area
- Bureau of Land Management
- Arizona Game and Fish
- Private Land
- State Trust Land
- Indian Community
- National Forest

- State or Local Park
- Paved Road
- Non-Paved Road
- Service Road
- Paved Parking Lot
- Non-Paved Parking Lot

MANAGEMENT ZONE LEGEND

Development

This zone includes areas which require the highest level of management. These areas contain the largest level of activity by park users. Whenever possible, the size of this zone should be limited to ten percent of the overall park size.

Trail

This zone requires a level of management second only to the development zone. These areas are limited to passive recreation and park maintenance only. In most cases, public vehicular access, is restricted. Hiking trails and their connectivity to adjacent land uses make up the majority of this zone.

Semi-Primitive

This zone includes the areas adjacent to and between other management zones which contain few amenities. These areas should act as a transition between zones of high and low management. Semi-Primitive zones typically contain minimal to zero impact activities and provide a 'back country experience'. The management required for this zone is very low.

Primitive

This zone encompasses the areas which are considered remote and inaccessible. Included in this grouping are areas in which the terrain is too rugged for vehicular or pedestrian traffic. Also included are those areas which are a great distance from any other 'developed' zone without a point of access. The key element of this zone should be wildlife conservation and preservation. Access to these zones is available only by special permit (ie, wildlife study) and therefore requires the least amount of management.

Perimeter Buffer

This zone includes areas along the park boundary and adjacent to varying land uses. Park security and limiting external connectivity are the goals of the zone. Due to encroaching development at several parks, the management required for this zone can be fairly high.

Size of Park Study Area - 10,216.88 acres

Development	-	0.3% (28.23 acres)
Trail	-	1.4% (142.91 acres)
Semi-Primitive	-	15.5% (1,579.14 acres)
Primitive	-	64.8% (6,633.61 acres)
Perimeter Buffer	-	17.8% (1,814.25 acres)
Non-Management Zone	-	0.2% (18.73 acres)

Notes:

The existing management zones accurately reflect the present land uses adjacent to the park. No changes to the management zones are required for the immediate future. However, as future connectivity and access to potential adjacent development arises, the expansion of existing facilities should be examined.

NORTH

Feet
0   1,150 2,300   4,600   6,900

Miles
0   0.25   0.5   1   1.5

Contour Interval 50 Feet
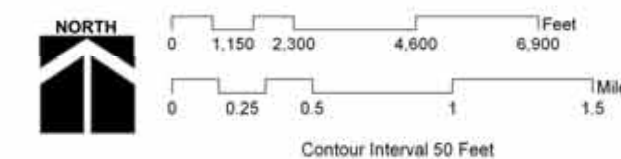
Figure 44 - San Tan Zone Map

MAP LEGEND

- — ··· — Park Study Area
- Bureau of Land Management
- Arizona Game and Fish
- Private Land
- State Trust Land
- Indian Community
- National Forest

- State or Local Park
- Paved Road
- Non-Paved Road
- Service Road
- Paved Parking Lot
- Non-Paved Parking Lot

MANAGEMENT ZONE LEGEND

Development
This zone includes areas which require the highest level of management. These areas contain the largest level of activity by park users. Whenever possible, the size of this zone should be limited to ten percent of the overall park size.

Trail
This zone requires a level of management second only to the development zone. These areas are limited to passive recreation and park maintenance only. In most cases, public vehicular access, is restricted. Hiking trails and their connectivity to adjacent land uses make up the majority of this zone.

Semi-Primitive
This zone includes the areas adjacent to and between other management zones which contain few amenities. These areas should act as a transition between zones of high and low management. Semi-Primitive zones typically contain minimal to zero impact activities and provide a 'back country experience'. The management required for this zone is very low.

Primitive
This zone encompasses the areas which are considered remote and inaccessible. Included in this grouping are areas in which the terrain is too rugged for vehicular or pedestrian traffic. Also included are those areas which are a great distance from any other 'developed' zone without a point of access. The key element of this zone should be wildlife conservation and preservation. Access to these zones is available only by special permit (ie, wildlife study) and therefore requires the least amount of management.

Perimeter Buffer
This zone includes areas along the park boundary and adjacent to varying land uses. Park security and limiting external connectivity are the goals of the zone. Due to encroaching development at several parks, the management required for this zone can be fairly high.

Size of Park Study Area - 2,144.34 acres

Development	- 0.2% (3.76 acres)
Trail	- 2.7% (58.35 acres)
Semi-Primitive	- 22.0% (471.19 acres)
Primitive	- 51.3% (1,100.15 acres)
Perimeter Buffer	- 23.8% (510.88 acres)
Non-Management Zone	- 0% (0.00 acres)

Notes:

The existing management zones accurately reflect the present land uses adjacent to the park. No changes to the management zones are required for the immediate future. However, as future connectivity and access to potential adjacent development arises, the expansion of existing facilities should be examined.
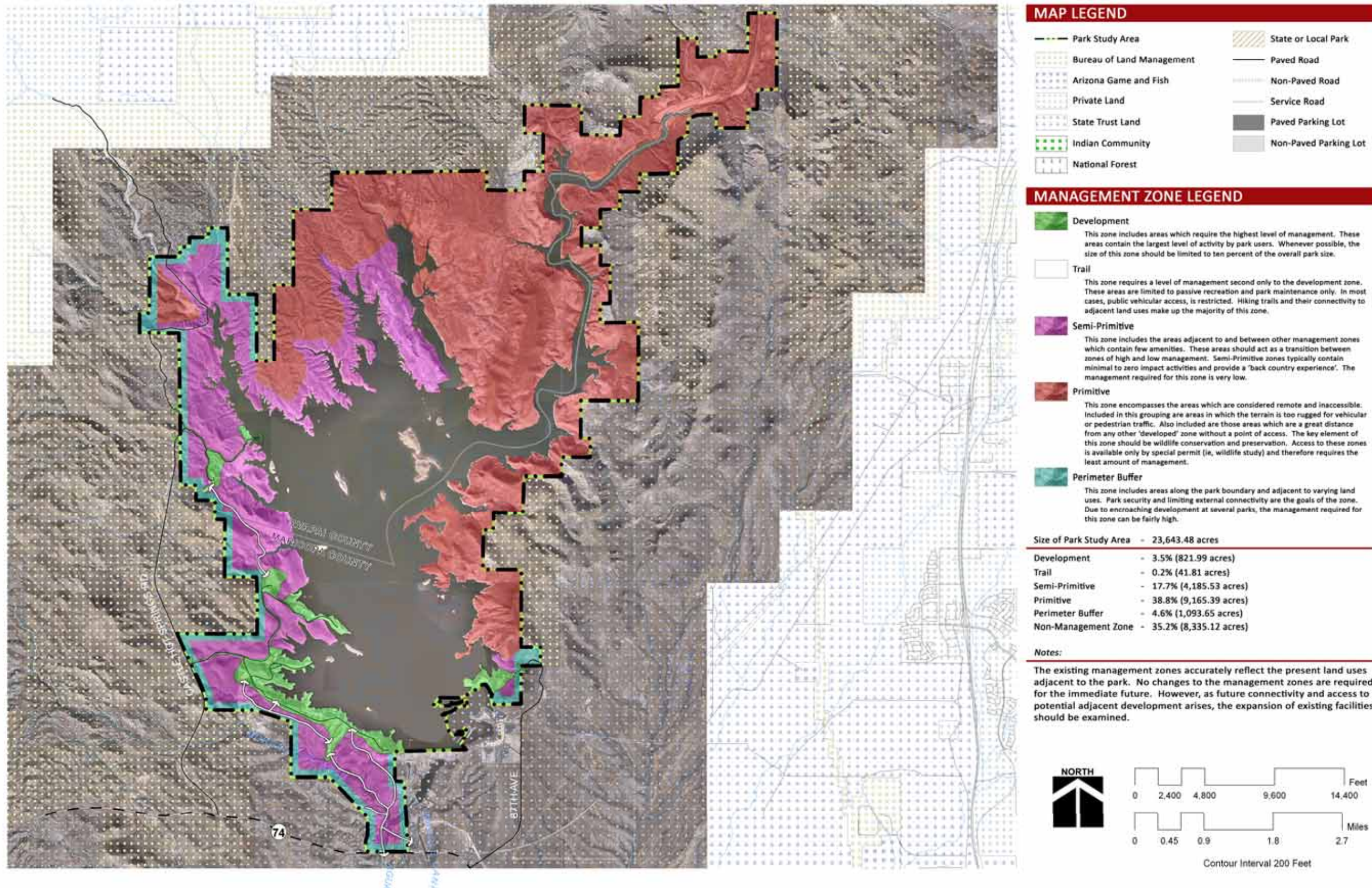
NORTH

| Feet |
| 0 650 1,300 2,600 3,900 |

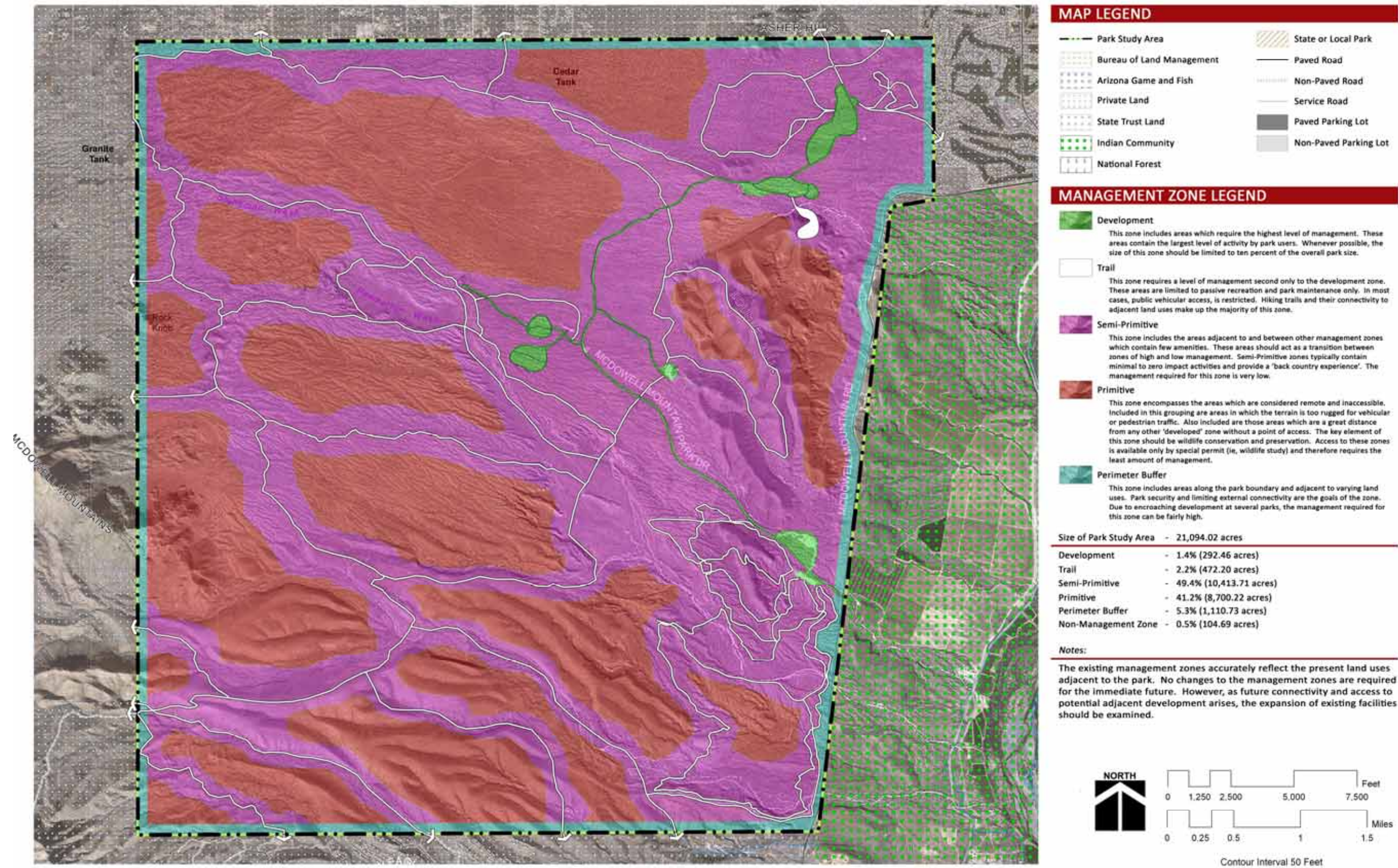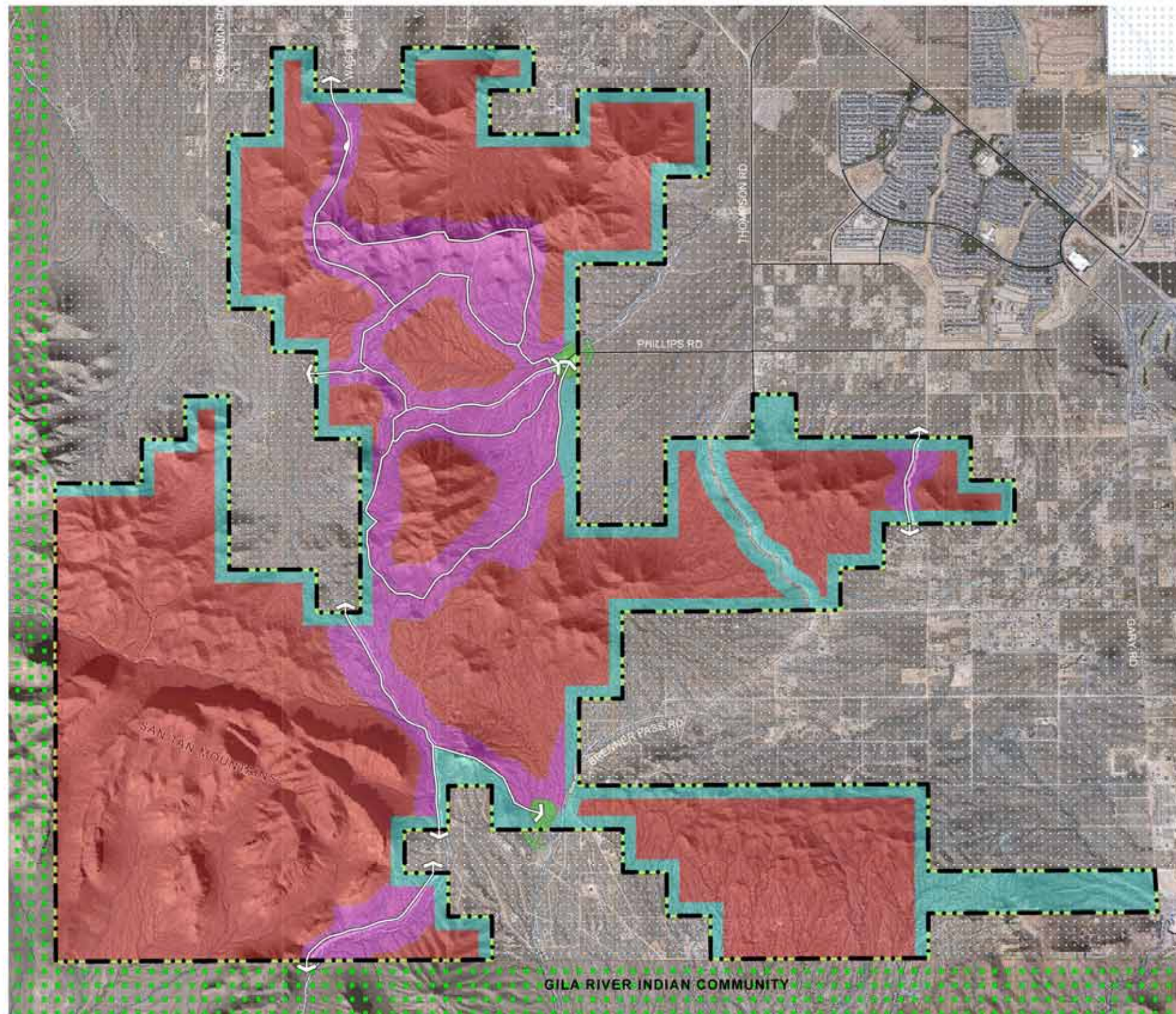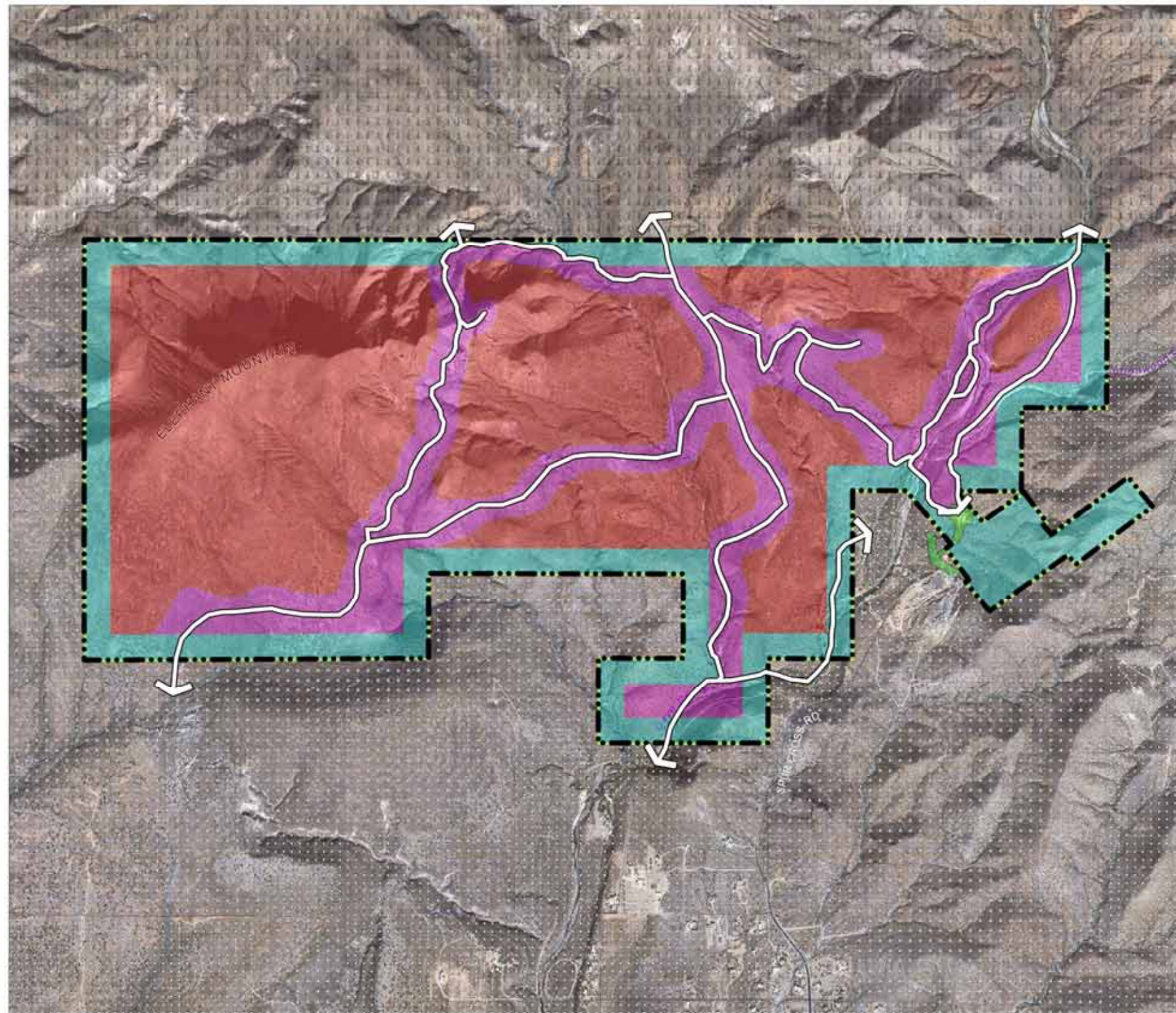| Miles |
| 0 0.125 0.25 0.5 0.75 |

Contour Interval 50 Feet
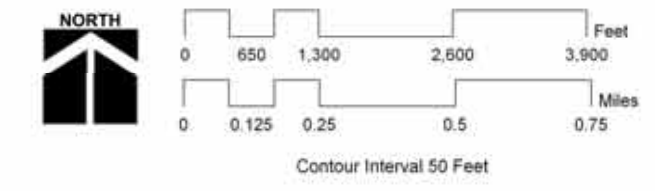
Figure 45 - Spur Cross Zone Map

MAP LEGEND

- — ·· — Park Study Area
- Bureau of Land Management
- Arizona Game and Fish
- Private Land
- State Trust Land
- Indian Community
- National Forest
- State or Local Park
- —— Paved Road
- Non-Paved Road
- Service Road
- Paved Parking Lot
- Non-Paved Parking Lot

MANAGEMENT ZONE LEGEND

Development

This zone includes areas which require the highest level of management. These areas contain the largest level of activity by park users. Whenever possible, the size of this zone should be limited to ten percent of the overall park size.

Trail

This zone requires a level of management second only to the development zone. These areas are limited to passive recreation and park maintenance only. In most cases, public vehicular access, is restricted. Hiking trails and their connectivity to adjacent land uses make up the majority of this zone.

Semi-Primitive

This zone includes the areas adjacent to and between other management zones which contain few amenities. These areas should act as a transition between zones of high and low management. Semi-Primitive zones typically contain minimal to zero impact activities and provide a 'back country experience'. The management required for this zone is very low.

Primitive

This zone encompasses the areas which are considered remote and inaccessible. Included in this grouping are areas in which the terrain is too rugged for vehicular or pedestrian traffic. Also included are those areas which are a great distance from any other 'developed' zone without a point of access. The key element of this zone should be wildlife conservation and preservation. Access to these zones is available only by special permit (ie, wildlife study) and therefore requires the least amount of management.

Perimeter Buffer

This zone includes areas along the park boundary and adjacent to varying land uses. Park security and limiting external connectivity are the goals of the zone. Due to encroaching development at several parks, the management required for this zone can be fairly high.

Size of Park Study Area - 3,534.19 acres

Development	- 8.1% (286.65 acres)
Trail	- 3.5% (123.34 acres)
Semi-Primitive	- 70.4% (2,486.68 acres)
Primitive	- 0% (0.00 acres)
Perimeter Buffer	- 17.3% (611.17 acres)
Non-Management Zone	- 0.7% (26.35 acres)

Notes:

This park is currently very close to meeting the percentage of allowable development within the boundaries. The existing management zones accurately reflect the present land uses adjacent to the park. No changes to the management zones are required for the immediate future.

NORTH

Feet
0   800   1,600   3,200   4,800

Miles
0   0.15   0.3   0.6   0.9

Contour Interval 50 Feet

Figure 46 - Usery Zone Map

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MAP LEGEND

---·---	Park Study Area	/////	State or Local Park
	Bureau of Land Management	———	Paved Road
	Arizona Game and Fish	········	Non-Paved Road
	Private Land		Service Road
	State Trust Land		Paved Parking Lot
	Indian Community		Non-Paved Parking Lot
	National Forest		

MANAGEMENT ZONE LEGEND

Development
This zone includes areas which require the highest level of management. These areas contain the largest level of activity by park users. Whenever possible, the size of this zone should be limited to ten percent of the overall park size.

Trail
This zone requires a level of management second only to the development zone. These areas are limited to passive recreation and park maintenance only. In most cases, public vehicular access, is restricted. Hiking trails and their connectivity to adjacent land uses make up the majority of this zone.

Semi-Primitive
This zone includes the areas adjacent to and between other management zones which contain few amenities. These areas should act as a transition between zones of high and low management. Semi-Primitive zones typically contain minimal to zero impact activities and provide a 'back country experience'. The management required for this zone is very low.

Primitive
This zone encompasses the areas which are considered remote and inaccessible. Included in this grouping are areas in which the terrain is too rugged for vehicular or pedestrian traffic. Also included are those areas which are a great distance from any other 'developed' zone without a point of access. The key element of this zone should be wildlife conservation and preservation. Access to these zones is available only by special permit (ie, wildlife study) and therefore requires the least amount of management.

Perimeter Buffer
This zone includes areas along the park boundary and adjacent to varying land uses. Park security and limiting external connectivity are the goals of the zone. Due to encroaching development at several parks, the management required for this zone can be fairly high.

Size of Park Study Area   -   29,540.66 acres

Development	-	1.8% (517.01 acres)
Trail	-	0.6% (191.02 acres)
Semi-Primitive	-	18.8% (5,572.33 acres)
Primitive	-	72.3% (21,349.89 acres)
Perimeter Buffer	-	6.5% (1,910.41 acres)
Non-Management Zone	-	0% (0.00 acres)

Notes:

The existing management zones accurately reflect the present land uses adjacent to the park. No changes to the management zones are required for the immediate future. However, as future connectivity and access to potential adjacent development arises, the expansion of existing facilities should be examined.
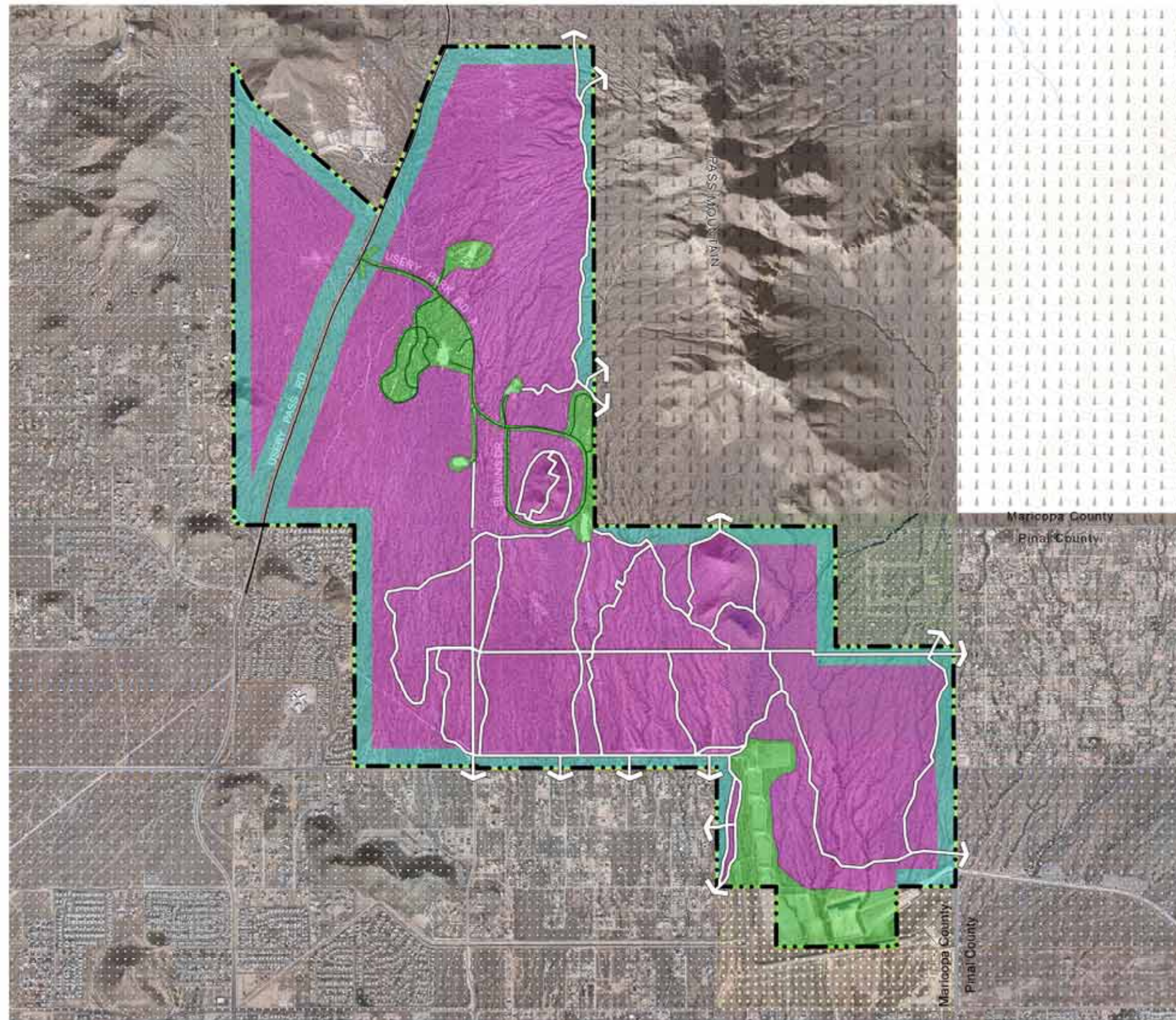
NORTH

0   1,500   3,000   6,000   9,000   Feet

0   0.3   0.6   1.2   1.8   Miles

Contour Interval 100 Feet

Figure 47 - White Tanks Zone Map

CHAPTER SEVEN - BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

7.1.1 INTRODUCTION

PROS Consulting, along with the Maricopa County, identified operating metrics to be benchmarked to comparable systems largely in the west region of the United States. The complexity in this analysis was ensuring direct comparisons through a methodology of statistics and ratios in order to ensure that operating parameters are directly comparable.

Similar-sized systems nationwide were identified and the challenge was ensuring that the agencies would turn around the information in a short time frame. Every effort was made, in working directly with the benchmark agencies, to obtain the most accurate information and organize the data in a consistent and comparable format. The information sought was a combination of operating metrics with budgets and acreages and a subjective element with performance measures and indicators from a best practice standpoint. In some instances, the information was not tracked or not available. The attributes considered in this benchmark study included:

- Population / Demographics

- Size of City (sq. miles)

- Budget Spending

- Parks and Recreation System

Careful attention was paid to incorporate a mix of systems that are comparable and industry leaders and they include:

- Clark County, Nevada

- East Bay Regional Park District, California

- Pima County, Arizona

- San Diego County, California

- Three Rivers Park District, Minnesota

Due to differences in how each system collects, maintains and reports data, variances exist. The goal was to evaluate the resources, spending and operating procedures. The survey is organized into broad categories to obtain data that offers an encompassing view of each system's operating metrics in comparison to Maricopa County's Parks and Recreation Department. The benchmark categories included:

- Funding – this explores the various budget elements, including per capita budget and percentage of individual departmental budgets to the total

- Parks and Staffing – this section evaluates the total park acreages available and maintained as well as the Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) and their ratios per 1000 people

- Programming and Marketing – this considers total programming numbers, core program areas for various systems, the registration processes, customer feedback and types of marketing / communications channels used

- Organizational Structure – this section analyzes the Department structure, the levels of authority, staff longevity and job descriptions

- Performance Measures and Standards – this section lists the various performance measures that each system undertakes

- Partnerships – this sections mentions out the various public, private and not-for-profit partnerships that each system has developed

- Volunteer Use – the volunteer use section describes the extent of volunteer assistance that each system obtains and the various sources from where they obtain it

- Number of Revenue Producing Facilities – this sections details the total number of and the various types of revenue producing facilities that each system possesses

- Use of Technology – this section describes the extent of technology use by each system

Complete survey responses from each system are presented in the **Appendix 5**. The following presents the benchmark comparison.

7.1.2 FINANCIAL

7.1.2.1 TOTAL PARKS AND RECREATION BUDGET BY CATEGORY

	Area	Actual '05	Population per	Marketing	Parks	Programming	Total
Agency	(Square Miles)	Population	Square Mile	and Admin	Maintenance		
Maricopa County	9,226.0	3,768,123	408	$ 1,146,119	$ 3,679,841	$ 720,657	$ 7,284,829
Clark County	8,012.0	1,912,654	239	$ 5,100,000	$ 12,500,000	$ 17,604,256	$ 35,204,256.0
East Bay Regional PD	1,000.0	2,485,000	2,485	$ 13,728,515	$ 68,785,984	$ 8,371,223	$ 90,885,722.0
Pima County	2,553.0	1,000,000	392	$ 1,440,000	$ 7,750,000	$ -	$ 14,524,994.0
San Diego County	324.3	2,941,454	9,070	$ 5,996,919	$ 18,182,429	$ 6,490,422	$ 33,154,144.0
Three Rivers PD	548.0	753,042	1,374	$ 12,004,869	$ 13,861,494	$ 9,178,928	$ 35,045,291.0

Total Annual Parks and Recreation Budgets by Category:

Note: Findings are based on survey response. In some cases budget numbers may be included in more than one category due to individual budgeting practices.

Figure 48 - Total Annual Parks and Recreation Budgets by Category

Maricopa County ($7,284,829) is in the lower end as far as Total Park and Recreation Budgets are concerned. East Bay Regional Park District has the highest budget ($90,885,722) while the rest of the systems, with the exception of Pima County ($14.5 million approx.) are similar in their total budgets for parks and recreation. See **Figure 48** and **Figure 49.** Consequently, Maricopa County's individual department budgets are also much smaller in comparison to the other systems. However, as mentioned earlier, different systems have differing metrics that are used for calculating and in East Bay's case, the Park Maintenance Budget includes the total operations and public safety budget as well.

The Maintenance budget is the total budget dedicated towards all parks and recreation related maintenance services. The Recreation Program budget includes the total budget allocated towards all recreation programming, including staffing that is offered by the agency. A number of agencies do not separate out the marketing costs and tend to include them as a part of the admin budget itself and hence to ensure a fair comparison the Marketing and Admin budgets have been combined into one unit for the purpose of the analysis. A detailed breakout of the budgets is presented in **Appendix 5**.

It must be noted that the size and population numbers of all the benchmark systems vary and thus the absolute numbers may not present a true picture of actual spending. The per capita numbers are a more accurate depiction of the financial spending.

Figure 50 demonstrates the Population Density per Square Mile for each agency.
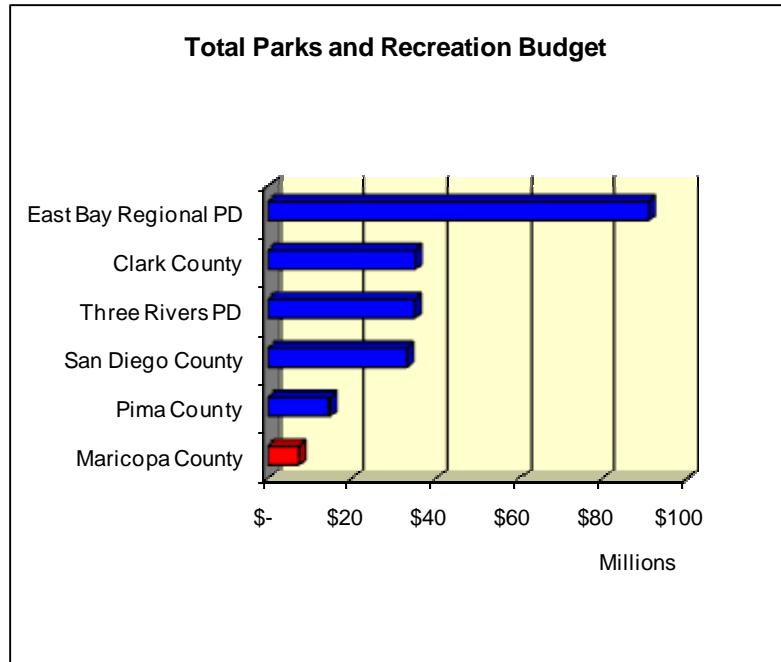
Figure 49 - Total Park and Recreation Budget per Agency (including all funds)
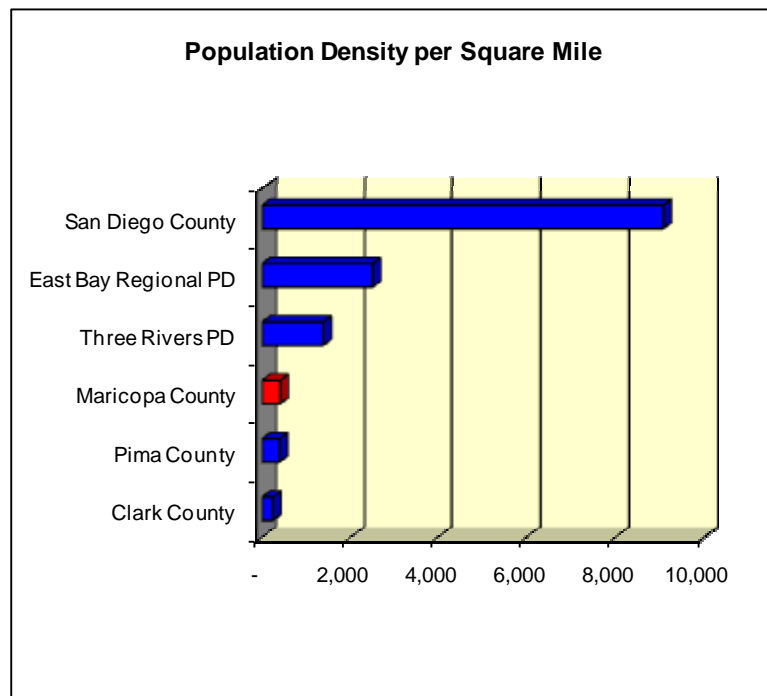
Figure 50 - Population Density per Square Mile

7.1.2.2 PARKS AND RECREATION BUDGET PER CAPITA

Maricopa County ($1.93 per capita) is much lower than other systems where Total Annual Parks and Recreation Budgets are concerned. Three Rivers Park District ($46.54 per capita) and East Bay Regional Park District ($36.57 per capita) are the two highest systems. One of the reasons for this disparity could be that Park District's tend to have a more consistent dedicated funding stream as compared to agencies that face greater competition for budgetary dollars and could see funding levels change based on legislative decisions. Maricopa County's per capita numbers also look smaller in comparison due to the high population number. See **Figure 51** and **Figure 52**.

	Total Annual Parks and Recreation Budgets Per Capita by Category:						
	Area	Actual '05	Population per	Marketing and Admin	Parks Maintenance	Programming	Total
Agency	(Square Miles)	Population	Square Mile	per Capita	per Capita	per Capita	per Capita
Maricopa County	9,226.0	3,768,123	2,961	$ 0.30	$ 0.98	$ 0.19	$ 1.93
Clark County	8,012.0	1,912,654	239	$ 2.67	$ 6.54	$ 9.20	$ 18.41
East Bay Regional PD	1,000.0	2,485,000	2,485	$ 5.52	$ 27.68	$ 3.37	$ 36.57
Pima County	2,553.0	1,000,000	392	$ 1.44	$ 7.75	$ -	$ 14.52
San Diego County	324.3	2,941,454	9,070.2	$ 2.04	$ 6.18	$ 2.21	$ 11.27
Three Rivers PD	548.0	753,042	1,374.2	$ 15.94	$ 18.41	$ 12.19	$ 46.54
Note: Findings are based purely on survey response.							

Figure 51 - Total Annual Parks and Recreation Budgets Per Capita by Category
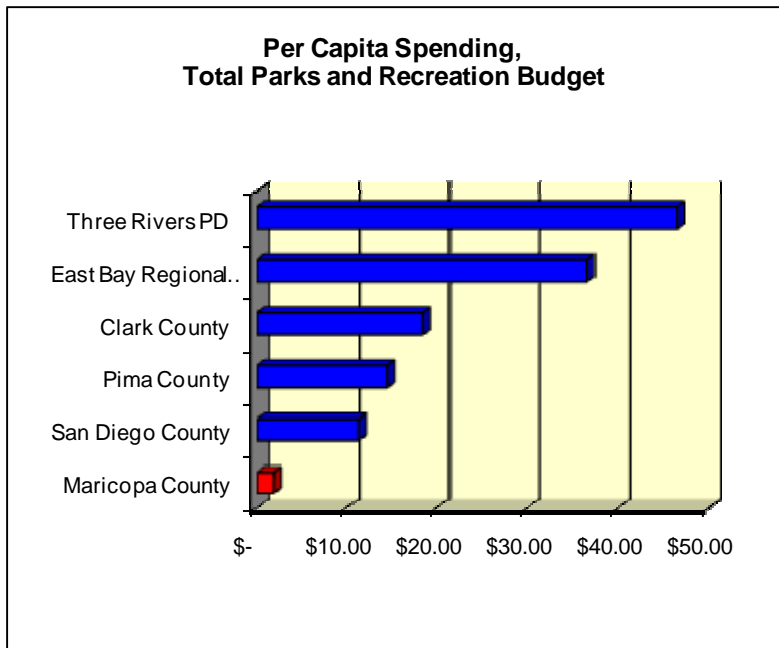
Figure 52 – Annual Per Capita Spending, Total Parks and Recreation Budget

Maricopa County ranks the lowest in the Parks Maintenance Spending Per Capita, while East Bay Regional Park District is the highest with $27.68 per capita. See **Figure 53**. *Note: East Bay's Park Maintenance Budget includes the total operations and public safety budget.*

**Per Capita Spending,
Parks and Recreation Maintenance Budget**
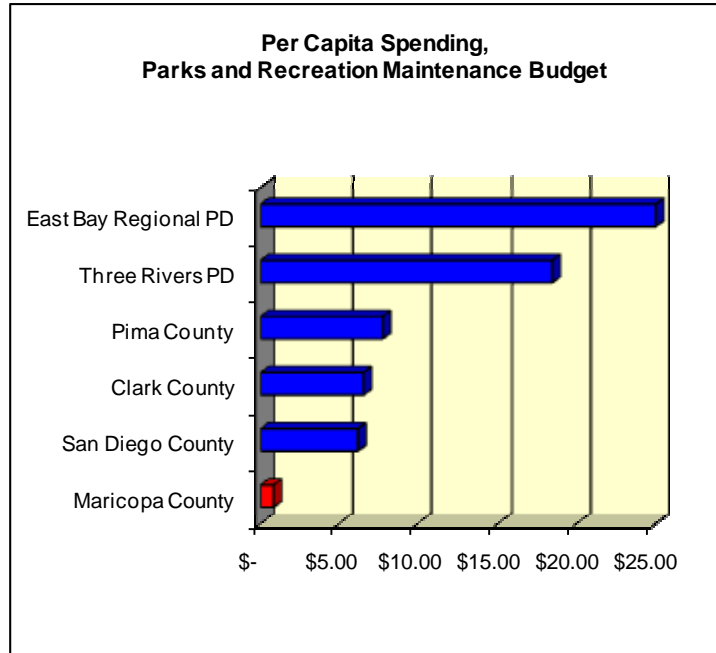
Figure 53 – Annual Per Capita Spending, Parks and Recreation Maintenance Budget

Maricopa County ($0.79 per capita) is on the lower end of the Programming Spending Per Capita. Three Rivers Park District ($12.19 per capita) and Clark County ($9.20 per capita) are the highest in this category. See **Figure 54**. Pima County has not provided a recreation budget breakup.

**Per Capita Spending,
Parks and Recreation Program Budget**
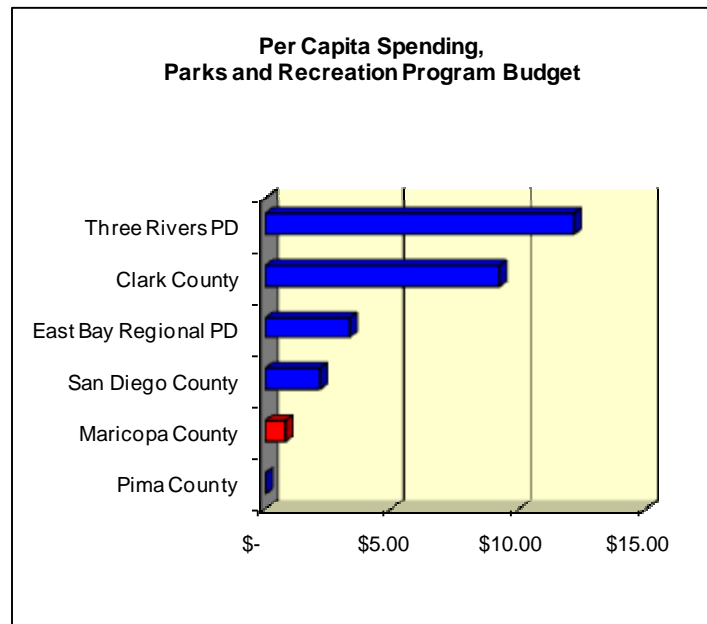
Figure 54 – Annual Per Capita Spending, Parks and Recreation Program Budget

Maricopa County ($0.33 per capita) is on the lower end of the Marketing / Admin Spending Per Capita. Three Rivers Park District ($15.94 per capita) and East Bay Regional Park District ($5.52 per capita) are the highest in this category. See **Figure 55**.

> **Note:** *In the case of Maricopa County, the Information Technology program budget ($32,614) has been included in the Marketing and Admin budget. Clark County has a Marketing Budget of $100,000 only while its Admin Budget is $5 million. Pima County does not have a marketing budget. For a system of the size of Maricopa County, it would likely help to have some funding allotted towards marketing and promotions to create greater awareness and draw additional users into its programs and facilities.*

**Per Capita Spending,
Parks and Recreation Marketing / Admin Budget**
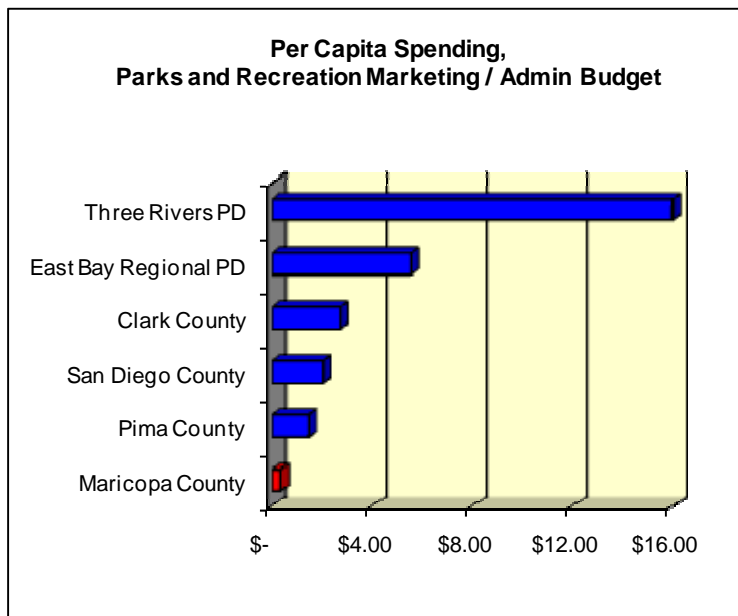
Figure 55 – Annual Per Capita Spending, Parks and Recreation Marketing / Admin Budget

7.1.2.3 PARKS AND RECREATION BUDGET PER CATEGORY BY PERCENTAGE

Figure 56 highlights the Annual Parks and Recreation Budgets by Percentage allocation. It must be noted that due to rounding (in the case of Maricopa County and Three Rivers PD) and partly insufficient information provided by San Diego County and Pima County, the percentages may not sum up to 100%. This is an occurrence that has occurred in other benchmark studies too and in most cases the analysis is done on the basis of the majority of the information that is actually available.

Maricopa County fares well in terms of percentage allocation towards Recreation Programming (40.6%) and Marketing / Admin (16.8%). It is also comparable in terms of Park Maintenance dedication (42.2%).

	Total Annual Parks and Recreation Budgets by Percentage:				
	Area	Actual '05	Marketing and Admin	Parks Maintenance	Programming
Agency	(Square Miles)	Population	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage
Maricopa County	9,226.0	3,768,123	15.7%	50.5%	9.9%
Clark County	8,012.0	1,912,654	14.5%	35.5%	50.0%
East Bay Regional PD	1,000.0	2,485,000	15.1%	75.7%	9.2%
Pima County	2,553.0	1,000,000	9.9%	53.4%	0.0%
San Diego County	324.3	2,941,454	18.1%	54.8%	19.6%
Three Rivers PD	548.0	753,042	34.3%	39.6%	26.2%

Figure 56 - Total Annual Parks and Recreation Budgets by Percentage

East Bay Regional Park District has the highest allocation towards Park Maintenance (75.7%) followed by San Diego County (54.8%). However, as mentioned earlier, East Bay Regional Park District's maintenance budget also includes Public Safety and Operations, which could warrant a larger percentage allocation of the total budget. **Figure 57** also depicts the Percentage of Park Maintenance Budget to the Total Budget.

Percentage of Maintenance Budget to Total Parks and Recreation Budget
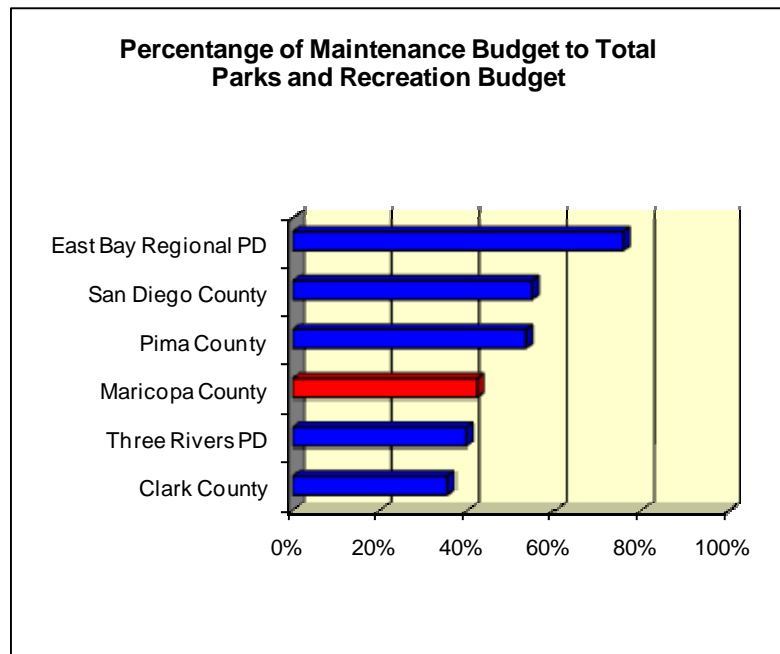
Figure 57 - Percentage of Maintenance Budget to Total Parks and Recreation Budget

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Clark County allocates the highest percentage (50%) towards its program budget followed by Maricopa County (40.6%). However, it must be noted that, though, Maricopa County has a higher percentage allocation, its total recreation budget ($2.9 million) is still lower than East Bay which has a 9% allocation (total budget - $9.1million). .

Percentage of Recreation Program Budget to Total Parks and Recreation Budget
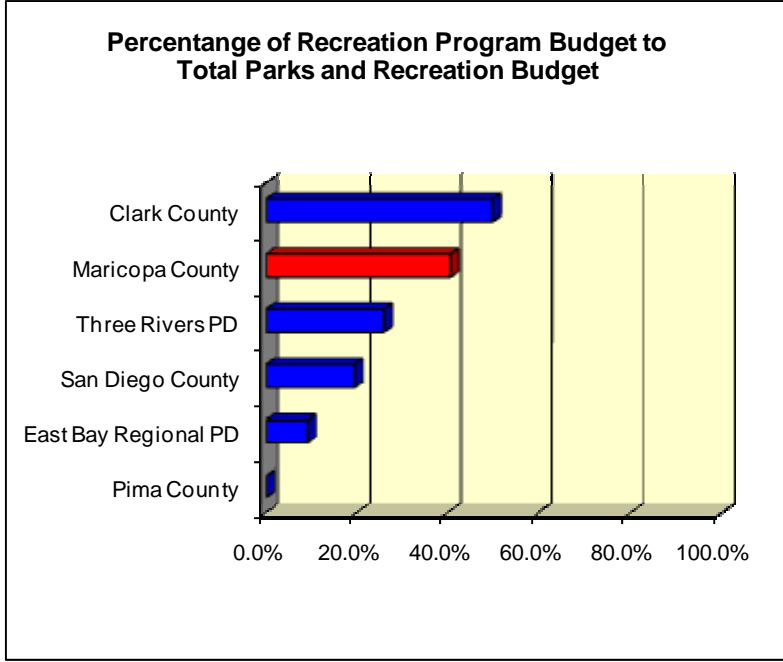
Figure 58 - Percentage of Recreation Program Budget to Total Parks and Recreation Budget

Maricopa County falls in the mid-level in terms of Percentage of Marketing / Admin Budget to Total Budget with 17%. Three Rivers Park District is the highest with 34% followed by San Diego County with 18%. See **Figure 59**.

Percentage of Marketing / Admin Budget to Total Parks and Recreation Budget
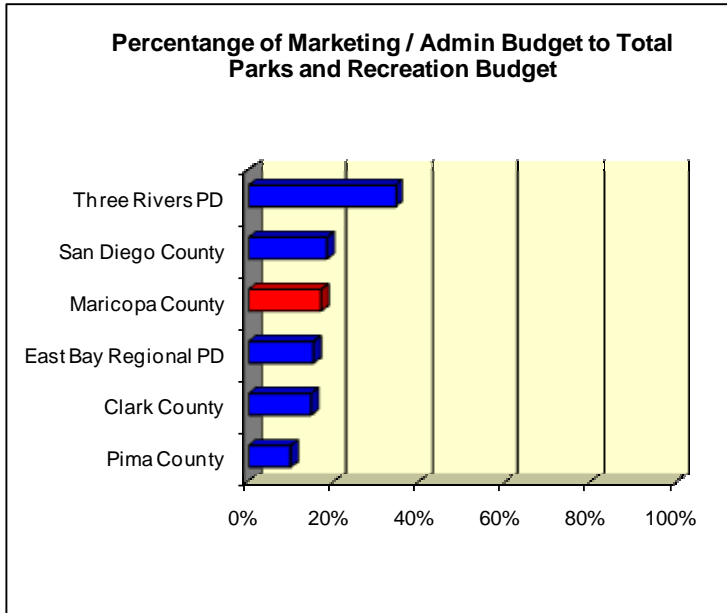
Figure 59 - Percentage of Marketing / Admin Budget to Total Parks and Recreation Budget

7.1.2.4   REVENUES AND COST RECOVERY

Maricopa County fares well in terms of cost recovery percentage with a 76% ratio that is second only to East Bay Regional Park District (144% cost recovery). In the case of East Bay, it must be noted that it gets an 87% tax support to its total operating budget and its revenues from taxes and assessments stand at $111.5 million, while Maricopa's revenues are generated from its programs and facilities. See **Figure 60**.

Though, Maricopa County's current cost recovery percentage is commendable, there needs to be a greater impetus to create additional earned income opportunities to further help offset the operational costs, expand the budget and allocate additional funding towards marketing and staffing.

City/State	Total Cost Recovery		
	Total Revenues	Total Budget	Total Cost Recovery
Maricopa County	$ 5,426,359.0	$ 7,284,829.0	74%
Clark County	$ 10,000,000.0	$ 35,204,256.0	28%
East Bay Regional PD	$ 130,822,487.0	$ 90,885,722.0	144%
Pima County	$ 2,850,000.0	$ 14,524,994.0	20%
San Diego County	$ 4,456,354.0	$ 33,154,144.0	13%
Three Rivers PD	$ 14,558,745.0	$ 35,045,291.0	42%

Figure 60 - Total Cost Recovery

Note: Total revenues include the following: Revenues from fees and charges / Revenues from grants, partnerships, and sponsorships.
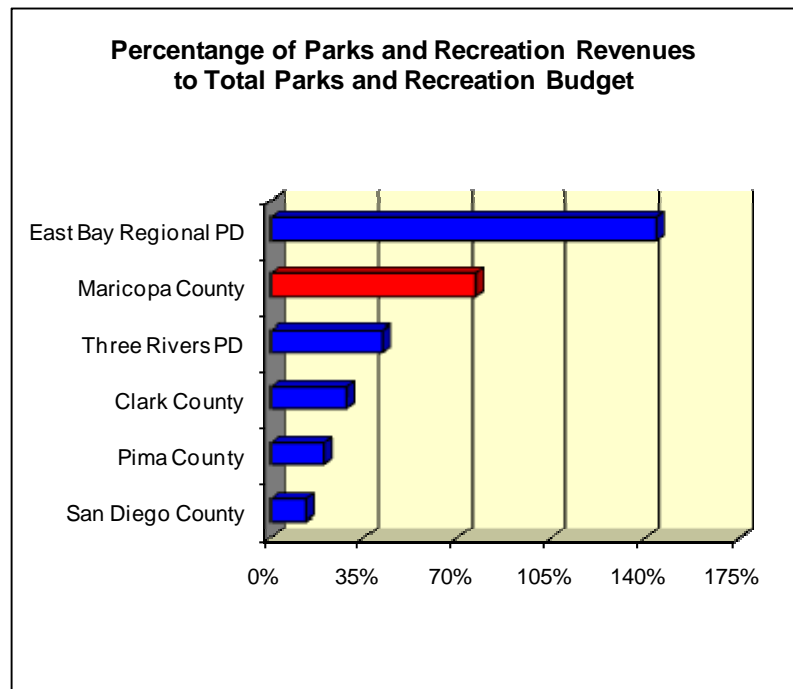
Figure 61 - Percentage of Parks and Recreation Revenues to Total Parks and Recreation Budget

7.1.3 PROGRAMMING

Maricopa County has annual visitation numbers of 1.31 million visitors in 2007, an increase from 1.27 million who visited in 2006. The benchmark template defines its core programs, but there is some room for improvement in ensuring that the service offerings are organized by these core programs. The programs are organized by age segment and program needs, which is a good practice. There is however, no provision for online registration and point of sale by cash register is the only method used. Customer feedback is performed through Arizona State University surveys and by individual park rangers in some cases. There is however, no system-wide program assessment method.

In comparison, East Bay Regional Park District has an estimated 14 million visitors, San Diego has 4.75 million visitors, Pima County has over 1 million and Three Rivers Park District has 5.4 million annual visitors. The visitation data was not provided for Clark County.

With the exception of Pima County that is currently transitioning to an online registration system, all other systems have an online registration system. In addition, each system has multiple core programs that are broken up by various specialties.

Maricopa County organizes its programs by audience segment, identified demand and needs, and cultural/natural resources. It offers the following core programs:

- Outdoor/Environmental Education
- Recreation Programming
- Fitness and Wellness
- Special Events
- Summer Camp

Three Rivers PD's core programs include:

- Natural history
- Outdoor skills / recreation
- Special events
- Competitive events
- Wellness-related events

These core programs are organized by lessons/classes, events, demonstrations, and/or lecture/presentation.

Clark County offers the following as its core programs:

- Community centers
- Sports
- Aquatics
- Before/after school programs

- Day camps

- Residential camps

- Rec mobile

- Gang intervention

- Instructional classes

East Bay Regional PD's programs can be park / subject or based on seasons and the core programs are:

- Naturalist programs

- Recreation

- Aquatics

- Visitors Centers

Pima County has the following core program offerings:

- Environmental education

- Cultural site preservation

- Natural area programming

- Urban recreation

- Sports

- Arts and leisure activities

San Diego County's programs are organized by age and target audience and the core programs include:

- Youth sports

- Youth enrichment activities

- Teen center

- Senior programs

- Outdoor adventures

- Adult enrichment

- Special events

- Adult and senior sports

- Environmental education programs

The detailed responses can be viewed in the **Appendix 5**.

Most systems use internal and external surveys and as well as program evaluations at the end of their programs to obtain customer feedback. Three Rivers Park District performs the most comprehensive job of collecting a variety of objective and subjective data from various sources including surveys, focus groups, demographic studies etc.

7.1.4 PARKS AND STAFFING

This sections looks at the total park acres, acres maintained (total park and non park acres maintained by the agency), acres maintained per 1,000 population and the FTE's for parks and recreation in total as well as by various departments.

City/State	Area (Sq.Miles)	Actual '05 Population	Pop. per Square Mile	Total Park Acres	Total Acres Maintained	Total Park Acres Per 1,000 Pop.	Total Maintained Per 1,000 Pop.	% of Acres Maintained to Total Park Acres
Maricopa County	9,226.0	3,768,123	408	119,199.0	3,229.0	31.63	0.86	2.7%
Clark County	8,012.0	1,912,654	239	6,622.0	1,220.0	3.46	0.64	5.4%
East Bay Regional PD	1,000.0	2,485,000	2,485	98,000.0	88,200.0	39.44	35.49	90.0%
Pima County	2,553.0	1,000,000	392	180,000.0	9,000.0	180.00	9.00	5.0%
San Diego County	324.3	2,941,454	9,070	40,000.0	20,000.0	13.60	6.80	50.0%
Three Rivers PD	548.0	753,042	1,374	27,000.0	22,410.0	35.85	29.76	83.0%

Figure 62 - Parks

Maricopa County (119,199 acres, 3,229 acres maintained) is second to Pima County (180,000 acres, 9,000 acres maintained) in total parks acres but it is the lowest in terms of percentage of park acres maintained to total acreage (2.7%). See **Figure 62** and **Figure 63**. East Bay maintains an extremely high percentage (90%) of its total acreage as can be seen from its large maintenance budget as well.
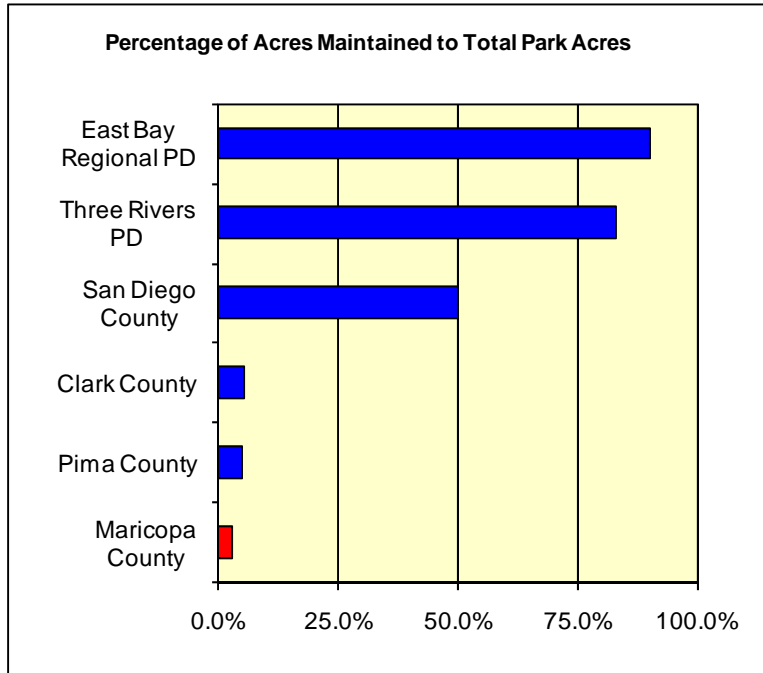
Figure 63 - Percentage of Acres Maintained to Total Park Acres

7.1.5 STAFFING

The FTE information is not available for all systems; however, from the ones available Maricopa does seem to be understaffed in terms of the total population it serves. Clark County and Maricopa County have the lowest Maintenance FTE's per 1000 population and Maricopa is also the lowest in terms of program FTE's per 1000 population. See **Figure 64**.

City/State	Area (Sq.Miles)	Actual '05 Population	Pop. per Square Mile	Total Staff / FTE's	Parks and FTE's Total Maintenance Staff, FTE	Total Programming Staff, FTE	Total FTE's Per 1,000 Pop.	Maintenance FTE's Per 1000 Pop.	Program FTE's Per 1000 Pop.
Maricopa County	9,226.0	3,768,123	408	91.0	25.0	12.0	0.02	0.01	0.00
Clark County	8,012.0	1,912,654	239	267.0	9.0	86.0	0.14	0.005	0.04
East Bay Regional PD	1,000.0	2,485,000	2,485	713.8	64.0	77.0	0.29	0.03	0.03
Pima County	2,553.0	1,000,000	392	-	200.0	60.0	-	0.20	0.06
San Diego County	324.3	2,941,454	9,070	-	125.0	-	-	0.04	-
Three Rivers PD	548.0	753,042	1,374	-	116.0	57.0	-	0.15	0.08

Figure 64 - FTE's

Average staff longevity is not tracked in some systems and from the ones tracked, Maricopa County seems to be marginally lower than the others.

Most systems have a general base job description and customize it based on the position and skill set required. Certain positions have specific descriptions while most others are general in nature. Clark County and Pima County are the two agencies that do not have rangers.

For detailed staffing information, see **Appendix 5**.

7.1.6 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Organizational structure demonstrates variance from one to another and is also incumbent on the nature of the system. In the case of the benchmarked agencies, the Park Districts may operate differently in comparison to the County Parks and Recreation department. From Maricopa County's standpoint, it would be useful to evaluate the organizational structure as it applies to the County's philosophies and nature of operations than compare to other agencies. Recommendations on the organizational structure will be provided in the organizational assessment section of the main report. The available organizational charts have been provided in **Appendix 5**.

7.1.7 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance Measures are tools and guidelines that help ensure a systematic and consistent operation performance and provide methods to track success.

In terms of Performance Measures, Maricopa County is among the top systems from the ones benchmarked. See **Figure 65**. It tracks customer satisfaction and retention rates as well as program delivery rates, cost recovery and cleanliness standards. It is recommended that the Department now take it to the next level by creating a database of the information collection, performing trends analysis over time and establishing and implementing action plans to act on the information.

Almost all systems, including Maricopa County, have safety plans, varying degrees of formal security measures and a formal marketing and communications plan. Maricopa County's security measures are handled by the County Sheriff's office – Mountain Patrol.

Performance Measures

	Customer Satisfaction Rates	Customer Retention Rates	Program Delivery Rates	Cleanliness Standards	Cost Recovery Rates	Safety Plans	Formal Security Measures
Maricopa County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Clark County	No Info	No Info	No Info	No Info	No Info	No Info	Yes
East Bay Regional PD	Yes -- Via Surveys	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Pima County	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
San Diego County	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Three Rivers PD	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Figure 65 – Performance Measures

Maricopa County also manages for results, while the information for other systems in unknown in this case.

Maricopa County has not established Design and Maintenance standards. East Bay Regional Park District and Pima County are the leaders in terms of establishing design and maintenance standards, budgeting according to them and having written standards in place.

Though, Maricopa County does not have system-wide Design Standards, there are prototype plans for Visitor Centers, Picnic Restrooms, Family Campgrounds, Group Picnic Restrooms, Group Campground Restrooms, Large Picnic Ramadas and Individual Picnic Table Shade Ramadas. Also, the County uses the Maricopa Association of Governments Uniform Standards Details and Specifications for Public Works Construction. Maricopa County also does not budget according to standards, but prototype structures are budgeted based on previous costs and then adjusted for inflation.

Currently, there are no system-wide standards either, only prototype structures and public works infrastructure have standard specifications for construction. Additionally, trail maintenance is specified in the Trails Management Manual but due to insufficient funding, the trails are not maintained to the level required. Park pumps, wells, RV pedestals and ice machines are on a maintenance schedule. It would be helpful to establish written design and maintenance standards and levels of maintenance standards which the system can implement and manage its parks and facilities by.

Design and Maintenance Standards

	Design and Maintenance Standard	Budget According to Standards	Written Standards	Levels of Maintenance Standards	Park Classification System	Work Plans / Scheduled Developments	Maintenance Job Descriptions (General / Specific)
Maricopa County	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Both
Clark County	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	General
East Bay Regional PD	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes	General
Pima County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Variable
San Diego County	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	General
Three Rivers PD	Yes	No	Some	Yes	Yes	Yes	Both

Figure 66 - Design and Maintenance Standards

From a marketing standpoint, Maricopa County distributes flyers at parks, uses email databases, monthly newsletters. This is similar to what most other systems use. Clark County and Three Rivers Park District perform additional promotions in the form of news releases, PSAs, TV ads or promotions at various events to build up their online database.

A more detailed description of the performance measures is included in **Appendix 5**.

7.1.8 PARTNERSHIPS

From a partnership standpoint, Maricopa County does have a number of partnerships that include Arizona State Parks, Arizona Game and Fish, Flood Control District, private concessionaires and Trust for Public Land among others.

All other benchmarked agencies have engaged in their share of partnerships with public, private and not-for-profit organizations. Pima County seems to be the most limited in its partnership ventures.

Maricopa County could look into partnerships similar to the Three Rivers PD has with the Minnesota Off-Road Cyclists to assist with sustainable trail maintenance. This could assist with the work done for the development of the regional Maricopa Trail system. Also, additional partnerships with individual clubs similar to East Bay could also be useful.

7.1.9 VOLUNTEER USE

All the benchmarked agencies use help from volunteers. Maricopa County utilizes about 77,650 hours of volunteer time annually. The volunteer hours for other systems have not been mentioned, however East Bay reported that they have a volunteer work force of 11,396 volunteers.

The sources for volunteers vary from park users and park hosts for Maricopa County, to senior advocate outreach programs and park patrons for Clark County. East Bay obtains most of its volunteers from private companies, non-profits, and the general public, Pima County has winter visitors and interest groups offering their volunteer services and San Diego has multiple sources ranging from their website, *Workamper Magazine*, *Volunteer San Diego*, *VolunteerMatch*, networking with Directors of Volunteers in Agencies (DOVIA), and military.com among others.

7.1.10 NUMBER OF REVENUE GENERATING FACILITIES

Maricopa County's 146 revenue generating facilities include four developed campgrounds with 384 sites, one semi-developed campground with thirty-six sites, six group campgrounds, seven youth campgrounds, ninety-four ramadas, one archery range, one gun-range, five amphitheaters, one rodeo arena, six visitor/ nature centers, one outdoor education center, one marina, three golf courses, one paint-ball facility, one water park, two model plane facilities, two model train facilities, three competitive tracks and six ball fields.

In comparison, Clark County has mentioned 113 different revenue producing sites that include urban centers, indoor pools, outdoor pools, before and after school sites, camps and rural sites. East Bay has over 300 such facilities ranging from wedding/ reception, corporate facilities, waterslide, concessionaires such as food vendors, horse rental/riding lessons and

boarding, rentals of kayaks, boats, etc, a bait-and-tackle shop, golf courses, an archery range and gun range, and gift shops.

Pima County has 130 revenue producing facilities that vary from sports fields (i.e., league and tournament fees) to community centers (classes and events) and swimming pools (user fees and tournaments). San Diego has 15 facilities that include community centers, gymnasiums, sports fields, camping parks, and regional parks.

Three Rivers Park District has 152 such facilities. This includes five golf course and driving ranges; six horseback trails; nine cross-country ski trails; eight boat launch ramps; one wilderness settlement; thirteen boat, bike and sports equipment rental sites; thirty-four picnic shelters; twenty-seven meeting/reception rooms; one site that sells produce; park admission fees; six pet exercise areas; bus parking fees; one ski jump; one disc golf site; two swimming ponds with concessions; one snow tubing site; two downhill ski/snowboard areas; one archery site; seven nature centers and special programs and two canoe rack rental spaces.

From Maricopa County's standpoint, it must be kept in mind that the actual difference between the number of revenue producing facilities they possess and those that the others possess is not as large as it may seem. For example, Three Rivers Park District has included elements like park admission fee, bus parking fee, nature center and special programs among others as revenue producing facilities. Similarly, East Bay has included concessionaires, rentals and bait and tackle shop as individual elements and not part of one large facility. Along those same lines, if Lake Pleasant Regional Park and Adobe Dam Regional Park could be broken into several individual revenue producing areas and the total number of facilities in Maricopa County would be significantly higher.

7.1.11 USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Maricopa County is on the lower end in comparison with the benchmarked systems for their technology use. Maricopa County currently uses two way radios and has all their computers on a network for easy data interface. They also use PeopleSoft for timekeeping, GIS software and data collection hardware. Electronic equipment is used for locating underground utilities and full size drawing, color, print, copy and scan system is also used.

Use of Technology

	2-way radios	Enterprise Software Use
Maricopa County	Yes	PeopleSoft
Clark County	Yes	Recware / Safari / SAP / Decision Maker
East Bay Regional PD	Yes	ReserveAmerica / CLASS, Bi-Tech
Pima County	Yes	All processes except customer registrations are electronic
San Diego County	Yes	Online Registration System, Oracle
Three Rivers PD	Yes	RecTrac, WebTrac, ArcView

Figure 67 - Use of Technology

As can be seen in **Figure 67**, two-way radios are pretty standard across the board. Clark County also has Nextel Direct Connect phones that can function as cell phones as well as two way radios. Other systems did not make any mention of having these. Other systems

did not make a mention of having their computers all on a network but based on PROS' operational experience, a network-based system is typically standard across the board in most systems. Three Rivers Park District also mentioned point-of-sale, touch screens and barcode scanners among other types of equipment used.

More detailed information from the other benchmarked systems can be found in the **Appendix 5**.

7.1.12 CONCLUSION

Overall, from a system-wide standpoint, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department is on the lower financial end in comparison to the benchmarked systems. This disparity is particularly evident in terms of size of the overall and individual department budgets as well as staff resources. Maricopa County does do well with its limited resources as its high cost recovery of 76% demonstrates it.

Maricopa County's program visitation numbers have increased over the last year and it is important for the county to continue expanding its program offerings within the core program categories to sustain that success.   The county's staffing seems limited in comparison to the population served and the average staff longevity is also marginally lower than the benchmarked agencies.

Revenue generation should continue to remain a focus since Maricopa County has a limited percentage of tax income support unlike other systems, particularly the Park Districts. Maricopa County has an equal, if not marginally higher, number of revenue generating facilities and that presents a potential opportunity for the staff to program and market them to maximize their revenue potential.   Developing additional partnerships would also complement the program offerings and the revenue generation process.   The current partnerships listed show a fair number of public, private and not-for-profit partnerships that Maricopa County is currently involved in.   Additional volunteer support, to build on the nearly 78,000 volunteer hours currently obtained, would also help offset some operational costs.

Along with revenue generation, in order to impact the bottom line, it is equally important to function effectively and efficiently in a systematic manner. Establishing written design standards, maintenance performance measures, online registration systems and a varied marketing and promotions system will all help to bolster the growth of the system. Expanded technology too would assist in streamlining operations and expedition work processes.

Finally, as a part of the Strategic System Master Plan, it is important to establish the vision and mission going forward and seek to drive the system towards its goals.

CHAPTER EIGHT - POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE ASSESSMENT

County Park Departments in Arizona are generally inadequately funded. Only five of the state's 15 counties even have dedicated Parks Departments. Funding restrictions placed upon the counties, by either legislative or voter action, make it unlikely that they will be able to make increased General Fund investment in parks in the foreseeable future.

8.1.1 PARK DISTRICTS

Park Districts enabling legislation would allow the counties to take parks funding questions directly to the voters. Arizona's existing Park District statute is not workable and needs to be replaced or amended with legislation which addresses the problem. If these funding problems are not addressed, the future of county park organizations in Arizona is bleak, and Arizona citizens will be deprived, for the foreseeable future, of regional parks, open space protection efforts, and associated recreational opportunities. Given Arizona's explosive rate of growth, postponement of such efforts by the counties will result in many of them being forever lost. This legislation will empower the voters to create mechanisms to provide stable, dedicated park district funding and encourage regional cooperation consistent with local political and fiscal environments. This legislation could also incorporate a special trails district or amend existing park district stature to allow this to occur.

Maricopa County should work with a coalition of counties, the Nature Conservancy and the Trust for Public Land to create a state-wide effort that would enable legislation to allow counties and regional entities, including cities and towns, to form special districts to meet the growing demand for parks, natural areas, and outdoor recreation.

8.1.2 PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS BOND

Providing dedicated funding for capital renovations, improvements and new facilities at existing parks, as well as acquisition funding for buffers, a regional trail and new parks are critical to the success of a healthy and sustainable park system that meets the future needs of the County. Nationwide bond elections for parks and recreation systems have been passing consistently over 90% of the time during the past five years and have been very successful in providing capital funding for parks and open space. Bond elections also allow the public to decide through their vote if funds should be dedicated to parks and open space. In recent years, bond elections have been successful in both Pima and Coconino Counties along with many other Cities in the metropolitan Phoenix area. Maricopa County should pursue a bond election in the near future to provide adequate and stable funding for open space preservation, resource conservation and park improvements. The first step is to conduct feasibility research and undertake a public opinion poll to determine the level of public support for such a measure and the fiscal safeguards expected by voters.

8.1.3 STATE TRUST LAND REFORM

Many of the existing parks in Maricopa County's park system are bordered by State Trust Land and potential new park locations are currently owned by the State Land Department which holds land in trust for the benefit of public education along with other benefactors. State Trust Land reform would permit the State of Arizona to plan and manage state trust

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land now, and in the future, in ways that promote well-planned growth, conservation, and sound stewardship in a manner consistent with the mission of the trust. Sound reform should:

- Conserve sensitive lands through the designation of approximately 500,000 - 600,000 acres of permanent conservation lands, and allows other lands to be designated for conservation through local planning or to be classified as suitable for conservation through acts of the legislature such as the Arizona Preserve Initiative, A.R.S. § 37-311 *et seq.* This should include conservation lands being sold to counties, cities, towns, and state agencies for appraised value but without an auction.

- Modernize the methods for planning and disposition of trust lands by providing for planning of trust lands with the cooperation of local communities, allowing the state to dispose of right-of-ways without a public auction, and by allowing the state to consider the true value of each transaction when appraising state trust lands.

- Provide funding for better planning and more effective management of state trust lands in order to increase the revenues distributed to trust beneficiaries and protect the long-term value of trust lands, by authorizing a reasonable percentage of trust land revenues to be used to supplement existing funding for trust lands administration, resource management, and planning.

Maricopa County should work with the County Supervisors Association, League of Cities and Towns, the Arizona Parks and Recreation Association, Homebuilders Association and other interest groups to support and advocate for meaningful reform.

8.1.4 FEDERAL RECREATION AND PUBLIC PURPOSES ACT REFORM

One unique characteristic about the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department is that it is operated as a business enterprise in that it functions primarily on the revenues that it collects in the form of park entry, camping, and special use fees, as well as concessionaire revenues. This was done because from 1992-93, as a result of a major fiscal crisis that occurred in Maricopa County, there was a major restructuring of all County departments which were subsequently classified either as "mandated" or "non-mandated" services. The Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department was classified as a "non-mandated service" and as such, suffered several major budget cuts. In order to insulate itself from future severe budget cuts, the department, through approved state legislation, began the process in 1998 of trying to become self-sufficient in order to continue operations. However, in recent years, in spite of park fee increases, revenues have "flattened out" due to the downturn in the local and national economy.

To compound the problem, this administrative challenge is being further severely constrained by an inaccurate interpretation of federal policy at the state level by the United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM) that has created an impediment to the establishment of new commercial concessionaire revenue streams. A major restriction to expanding these efforts has been the communication from the State BLM Office that no commercial activity of any kind is allowed on land formerly owned by BLM, which were conveyed into the County's parks system through an approved Recreation and Public Purpose Act (R&PP) land patent or property lease. More specifically, it has been stated in

writing by the State BLM Office that "BLM policy defines actions authorized under the R&PP Act. BLM policy prohibits lease or conveyance of land for other than recreation or public purposes and further states that lands shall not be leased or conveyed under the R&PP Act for uses that are aimed at producing revenue beyond what is needed to operate the authorized use of the facility." As a result, many of the County's prior efforts to establish concession operations were confined to less than ideal locations (limited to sites in each park that were not acquired under the R&PP Act) and thereby rendered as non-feasible.

Another issue is the process for acquiring new R&PP properties. Over the past 15 years, five applications have been submitted to the BLM and none have been processed to date. The Arizona State Office has indicated that they are no longer in favor of issuing large R&PP parcels for parks and open space preservation. They have indicated that it goes against their multiple use philosophy. Congressional action should be sought to transfer several identified parcels to Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department over the next 10 years to allow the regional system to keep pace with growing demand. In many instances, BLM does not have adequate staffing to effectively manage these resources that are becoming part of the urban fabric of the metropolitan area. Continuing to try and manage these urban interface areas for multiple use is becoming less and less practical, if not impossible, given growth, safety and air quality issues. In Clark County Nevada, the State BLM office works with the County to provide new park lands and assistance in developing new facilities.

Congressional action should be solicited in both cases to either assist in further clarifying existing language or drafting new legislation that will meet the needs of Maricopa County's Parks and its residents.

8.1.5 ADOPTION OF COUNTY DEVELOPMENT IMPACT FEES FOR PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS

As master planned residential developments request permission to build in unincorporated Maricopa County, Parks staff review the submitted case documentation including preliminary plats and development master plans, and requests that the Maricopa County Planning and Development Department add the following language to the permit application as a stipulation:

> "The residential development will have an impact on [White Tank] Regional Park through the residents' use of the park. This will add more usage on our land, and increase our operation and maintenance costs. The development will also result in the need for expanded facilities.

> We respectfully request that for every building permit that is issued a $250 contribution be made by the developer to Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department. The monies would be placed in a park special revenue fund, which will fund facilities repairs and new capital improvements.

> We would also require a fee escalator that would allow the base $250 per residential unit fee to be increased to account for inflation. Fee to be recalculated annually and be based on the GDP deflator."

This is merely a request and not a current requirement for the permit. In the vast majority of cases, parks does receive this funding, but the Planning and Zoning Commission and the County Board of Supervisors does have the discretion to arbitrarily remove the stipulation. Since the stipulation is only a request and not a mandate, it also has made it more difficult to track and determine if parks is actually getting the fees from every developer. Finally, the $250 sum is far less than most other counties or local governments receive as an impact fee for parks and open space. A study should be conducted to determine the true impact of development on parks and open space and then the appropriate sum should be mandated on all new housing developments.

8.1.6 REAL ESTATE TRANSFER TAX

This is the newest form of funding many agencies and states have used to acquire park land and develop the lands they acquire. The money comes from the transfer of real-estate from one owner to another owner and the County would retain ½ % of the value of the property at the time of sale which is dedicated to acquiring land.

8.1.7 COUNTY OPEN SPACE EDGE TREATMENT ZONING POLICY/ORDINANCES

As growth and urbanization continues in the West, encroachment of urban environments on protected public land (National, Monuments, Conservation Areas, Wildlife Refuges, and state, county, and city parks) continues to present a daunting conservation challenge to management of land designated to protect their natural and cultural values in perpetuity. These lands often serve as the backbone of conservation reserve systems designed to protect biodiversity, and at one time existed in relative isolation far from urban centers. However, the unprecedented growth in the West, particularly in desert communities in Arizona, has created a more abrupt transition between urbanizing areas, the built environment, and protected public lands. Effectively addressing this edge interface between urbanization and protected public lands requires collaboration across sectors, between public land managers, local governments, private landowners, and the development community.

Maricopa County's Parks and Recreation Department should work with the Planning and Development Department to develop "Edge" treatment planning and design guidelines and Natural Areas of Open Space (NAOS), Environmental Sensitive Lands (ESL) and park edge treatment ordinances.

8.1.8 MARICOPA TRAIL SYSTEM ALIGNMENT DEDICATION ZONING POLICY

Ordinances should be explored whereby a right of way easement will be granted for any development occurring on property that contains a designated segment of the Maricopa Regional Trail System. The designated right-of-way should be a minimum of 20 feet with the option given to the county to purchase up to a 100 foot right-of-way easement.

8.1.9 OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE:

- Create a state-wide effort to facilitate legislation to form special districts within counties and regional entities, including cities and towns.

- Pursue a bond election to allow the public to decide and vote for dedicating funds for open space preservation, resource conservation and park improvements.
- Endeavor together with public interest groups and associations to advocate and promote meaningful reform with State Trust Land.
- Seek impact fees for parks and open space that is dedicated versus voluntary base on the true impact of development on existing parks.
- Seek legislation to allow Bureau of Land Management lands that are managed by Maricopa County to allocate concession legislation that is similar to what Clark County has in Nevada.

CHAPTER NINE - TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION ASSESSMENT

In order to successfully implement the Strategic Master Plan, training and certification requirements are an important component of the Plan. Ideally, training and development resources should be aligned with overall Departmental strategies. For example, if a strategic initiative includes expanding marketing efforts, then training should include marketing skill development. Furthermore, core competencies should exist for areas such as leadership, finance and budgeting, technology, and recreation program development. Core competencies are an identified skill set of knowledge and abilities that determine job success. For example, core competencies of leadership can include communication skills, continuous improvement, critical thinking, external customer focus, strategic thinking, and financial management.

Good training and development programs include the following components:

- Employee and supervisor input
- Core competencies
- Employee development should relate to organizational performance improvement areas, technological change, and innovation
- Training should include a breadth and variety of training methods, including education, conferences, classes and seminars, distance learning, coaching, mentoring, and on the job experience
- Training should include professional development
- Training needs to include the development of organizational knowledge
- Training programs should be regularly evaluated on a system-wide basis

The following is a list of various optional training requirements. Many of the training areas can be delivered by in-house facilitators, which ensure frequency of training efforts. This includes topics such as Departmental Customer Service Training, Working in a Team Based Environment, Creating a Strategy Focused Organization, Managing for Results, Marketing 101 and Finance 101. These training programs are listed below in either the Departmental or Divisional categories. A good source for process improvement training is the American Society for Quality. A best in class system for competency based leadership training is Henrico County, Virginia.

9.1.1 DEPARTMENTAL TRAINING

This training is geared to all employees and should generally be offered on an annual basis. Other training categories, such as team training should be offered on an as need basis, depending on numbers of new employees hired each year.

- New Employee Orientation
  - County
  - Department
  - Job specific
- First Aid

- Basic CPR and CPR for first responders
- Defensive Driving
- Emergency Evacuation and Fire Extinguisher Training
- Hazard Communication
- Sexual Harassment
- Diversity
- Communication Skills Training
- Internal and External Customer Service Training
- Ethics Training
- Outcome Focused Management for Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources
- Managing for Results
- Record Retention
- Maricopa County Administrative Policies
- Open Spaces Conference
- Blood borne Pathogens

9.1.2 TEAM TRAINING

- Facilitating meetings
- Working in a team based environment
- Conflict management skills
- Interpersonal skills development
- Train the trainer for in-house training facilitators

9.1.3 SUPERVISORY TRAINING

- Creating a strategy focused organization (senior leaders)
- Maricopa County Executive Development for Governmental Employees (EDGE) – Leadership & Executive Development Schools
- Performance Management for Supervisors
- Conversational Spanish
- National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Executive Development (Park Superintendents)
- NRPA Revenue and Management School and Maintenance Management School (Park Supervisors)
- Arizona Parks and Recreation Association (APRA) Conference
- Behavioral Based Interviewing
- Succession planning

9.1.4 TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE TRAINING

9.1.4.1 BUDGET AND FINANCE
- People Soft Training
- Cost of Service Training
- Pricing Public Service Training
- Budgeting 101
- Finance 101

9.1.4.2 COMPUTER SKILLS
- Microsoft Outlook
- SOLAR
- Excel (basic, intermediate and advanced)
- Power Point (basic, intermediate and advanced)
- Word (basic, intermediate and advanced)
- Recware Reservation Training
- Class Program Reservation Training
- GIS Training
- Asset Management Training
- GEO-coding

9.1.4.3 ENGINEERING
- Water System Operator Certification
- Water Distribution System Operator Certification
- Certified Article 5 Procurement Officer

9.1.5 PROCESS IMPROVEMENT AND INNOVATION
- Six hats thinking for developing creative thinking skills
- Basic statistical process tools for use in data collection and work efficiency
- Managing and improving processes or Lean training

9.1.6 DIVISION SPECIFIC TRAINING

9.1.6.1 PARK MAINTENANCE
- Equipment safety and operation of equipment (backhoe, forklift, crane, motor grader, etc.)
- General safety training tailgates to discuss specific issues
- Welding safety
- Pumps and pump safety
- Heavy equipment operations and inspections

- Commercial drivers license required
- Trail maintenance
- Electrical systems and safety
- Trail construction
- Work Order System
- ATV training
- Certifications:
    - CDL, Class A
    - Certified Arborist
    - Certified Pesticide Applicator
    - Certified Landscape Irrigation Auditor
    - Playground Safety training
    - Certified National Playground Safety Institute

9.1.6.2   ENGINEERING, PLANNING & DESIGN
- Project management
- Presentation skills
- Failure Mode and Effects Analysis
- Geographic Information System (GIS)
- Park infrastructure
- Engineering (water and septic systems)
- Public input process
- Trail construction
- Trail maintenance
- Natural Resource Management and Protection
- Certification:
    - American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) or equivalent
    - Professional Engineer

9.1.6.3   PARK SUPERVISORS
- Marketing 101
- Cash Handling Procedures
- Procurement Card and Procedures
- Certified Agency Procurement Aid
- Outcomes Focused Management
- Limits of Acceptable Change
- ATV training
- Certifications:
    - Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP)
    - Arizona Certified Landscape Professional Program

9.1.6.4   PARK SUPERINTENDENTS
- Outcome Focused Management
- Recreation Opportunity Spectrum
- Limits of Acceptable Change
- Natural Resources Management and Protection
- Certification:
  - CPRP

9.1.6.5   INTERPRETIVE STAFF
- Program design and development
- Marketing 101
- Environmental stewardship/sustainability program information
- National Park Service Interpretative Development Program
- Certification:
  - National Association for Interpretation (NAI)

9.1.6.6   ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF
- Open Meetings Law
- Customer service skills
- Grammar and writing skills
- Payroll processing
- Certification:
  - Certified Administrative Assistants
  - Certified Human Resources Professional

In addition to the list of on-going training mentioned above, the Department should continue to take advantage of cross-training opportunities. Given the small staffing size of the Department, efficiencies can be achieved through an informal cross-training program, which provides employees with opportunities to experience different parks and job responsibilities.

9.1.7 CONCLUSION
Commitment to an overall employee training and development program improves organizational efficiency and effectiveness, shortens employee learning curves, and inspires employees to perform better. Employee learning and development activities are essential to job satisfaction. Follow through in growth and development opportunities will provide the means for the Department's success in implementing the Master Plan.

CHAPTER TEN - FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT

As a key element of the Strategic System Master Plan, a review was conducted to assess the financial situation of the Department. The revenues, expenditures, and capital funds were analyzed to identify trends and assess the Department's financial integrity.   The cost recovery for facilities, programs and services at major functional levels has been analyzed to assess the Department's ability to develop a cost of service approach to pricing.

10.1 DATA REVIEWED

Detailed cost and activity information prepared by the Department staff was reviewed. Following is a list of the cost and activity data reviewed:

- County Financial reports for fiscal year ending 2004 through 2007
- County Budget for fiscal years ending 2004 through 2008
- Department budget worksheets for fiscal years ending 2004 through 2008

10.2 REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES

The actual total revenues and expenditures for fiscal years ending 2004 through 2006, estimated 2007, and the 2008 budget were analyzed to assess the financial situation. The expenditures exceeded the earned revenues for each year due to fund balance expenditures for one-time projects as well as General Fund subsidy of approximately $1.2 million to $1.4 million each year as shown in **Figure 68**. Fund balances at the end of the operating year result from revenue exceeding the expenditures for the period. These funds are available for emergencies and for acquisition of non-recurring items; such as capital development.
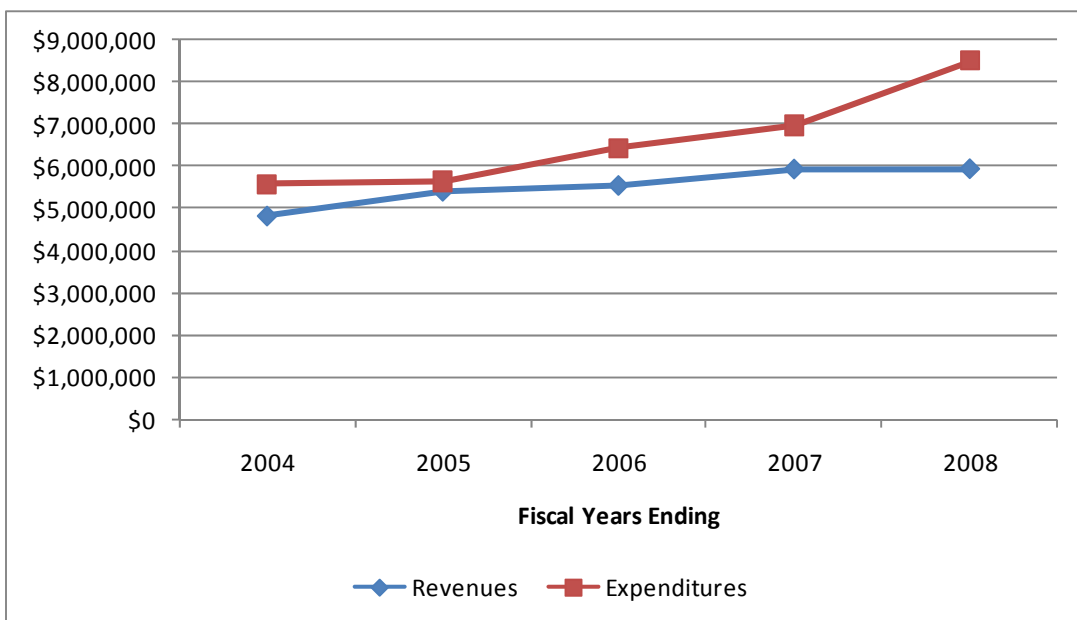
Figure 68 - Revenues and Expenditures

The difference in revenues and expenditures were covered by the County's General Funds for each fiscal year. The amounts are shown in **Figure 69**.

		2004		2005		2006		2007		Projected 2008
Revenues	$	4,823,661	$	5,408,232	$	5,546,970	$	5,933,869	$	5,941,622
Expenditures	$	5,577,606	$	5,639,152	$	6,434,502	$	6,981,659	$	8,517,407
Fund Balance uses	$	-	$	106,976	$	187,284	$	264,680	$	1,742,493
Recurring Uses	$	5,577,606	$	5,532,176	$	6,247,218	$	6,716,979	$	6,774,914
Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	$	(753,945)	$	(123,944)	$	(700,248)	$	(783,110)	$	(833,292)
% of recovery		86.5%		97.8%		88.8%		88.3%		87.7%

Figure 69 - Operating Revenues and Expenditures

Total Earned Revenues covered between 85.6% and 97.8% of the recurring expenditures between fiscal years ending 2004 through projected year 2008. Revenues from Charges for Services which are primarily user fees have funded approximately 51% to 60% of the annual recurring expenditures during that time. This indicates the Charges for Services should be reviewed to recapture the recovery rates experienced in previous years.

Based on the actual 2004 through 2007 amounts, revenues and expenditures are expected to decline through 2012. A fee increase was implemented in fiscal year ending 2008. **Figure 70** projects a continuous deficit of the revenues to cover recurring expenditures with the current revenue streams.
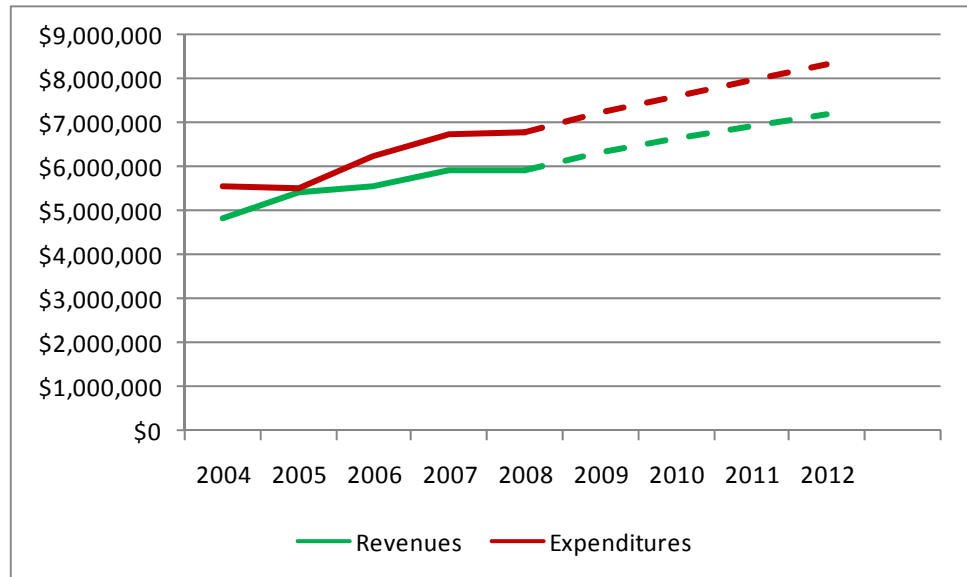
Figure 70 - Projection of Revenues and Expenditures

According to the County's 2008 Budget, the Department has a goal to be non-reliant on the General Fund by December 31, 2009. The Department will need to increase earned revenues to make up the difference in the General Fund subsidy amount which in fiscal year 2008 is 25.33% of the annual Department budget. **Figure 71** shows the revenues and expenditures without one-time items. The percent of recovery is shown with each operating budget.
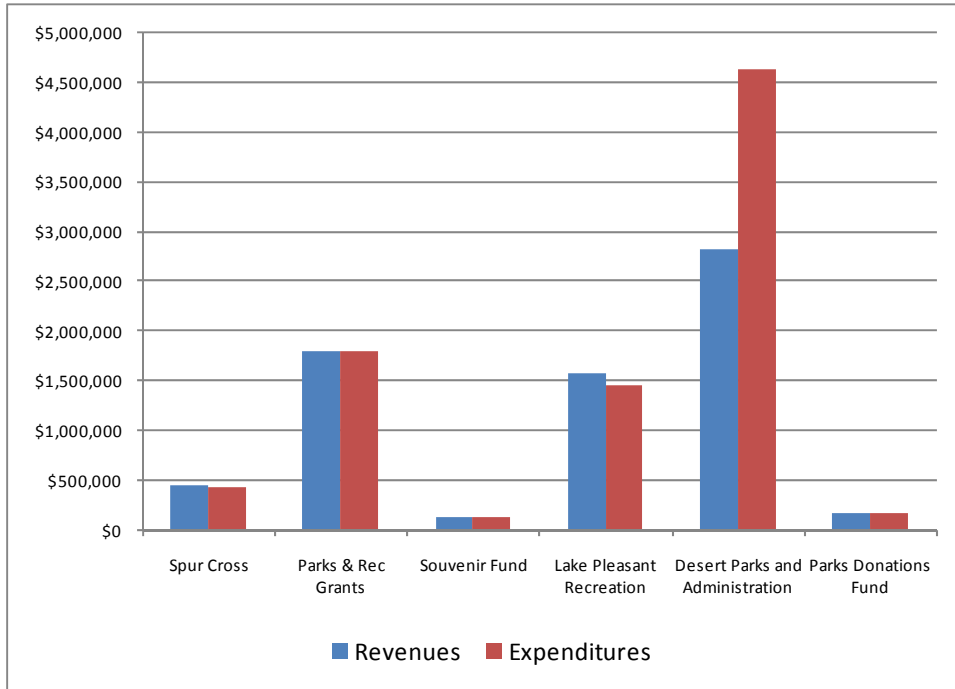
Figure 71 - Projection of Revenues, Expenditures without One-Time Items, and Percent of Cost Recovery

The annual General Fund Allocations are shown in **Figure 72**. The General Fund provided amounts equal to 20% to 25% of the annual expenditures for the periods including 2004 through 2008.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	Projected 2008
Operating Expenditures	$ 5,577,606	$ 5,532,176	$ 6,247,218	$ 6,716,979	$ 6,774,914
General Fund Allocation	$ 1,148,005	$ 1,245,500	$ 1,472,518	$ 1,761,208	$ 1,694,401
General Fund Subsidy	20.6%	22.5%	23.6%	26.2%	25.0%

Figure 72 - General Fund Allocations to the Department

Figure 73 shows the mix of revenue sources by year. Each year, the revenue categories generally increase. The Intergovernmental Revenues are primarily from grants and have fluctuated as grant funds are available. Charges for Services are revenues from user fees for rentals, programs, and services. Other Revenues represent income from other sources such as interest earnings.
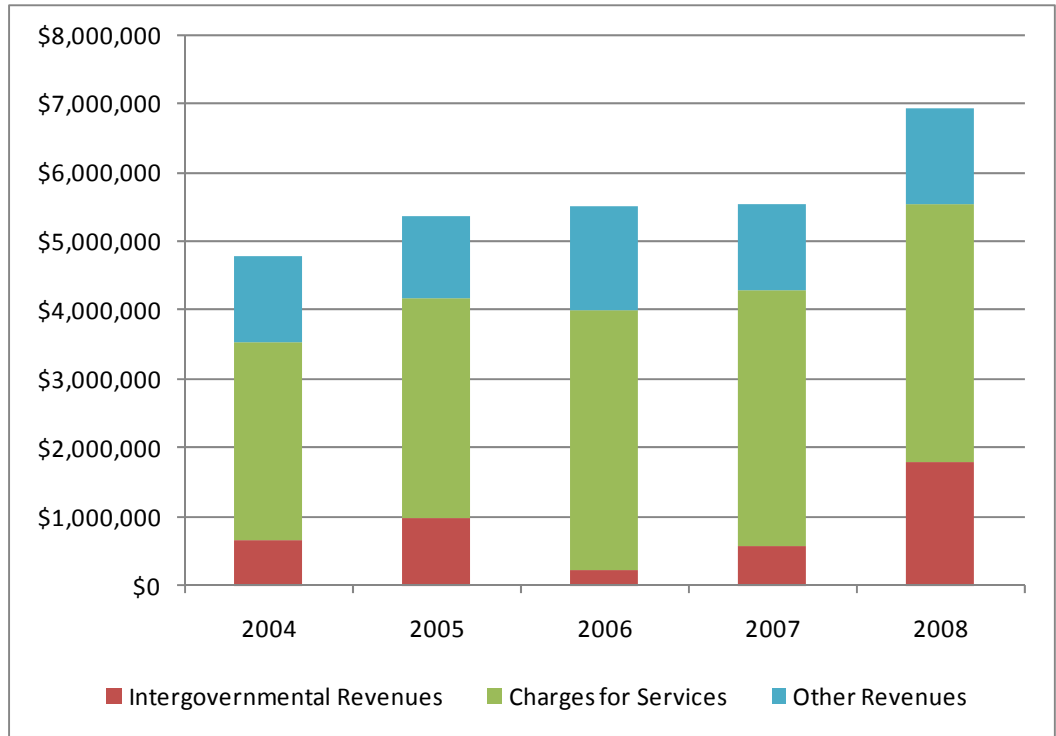
Figure 73 - Revenues by Type

Figure 74 shows the financial activities and fund balances of the special revenue funds from the County's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2006. The strong fund balances give the Department flexibility with respect to operations and safety in cases of major emergencies. As permissible, the fund balances in the Donations, Enhancement, and Lake Pleasant funds could be used for capital projects. The fund balances and cash balances for these funds are much higher than expected given the annual revenues and expenditures. Generally, each fund spends less than projected and saving builds the fund balance. This represents fiscally conservative approach to financial projections. The Beginning Fund Balance for Parks Souvenir Fund is $25,000 each year. Amounts over the established beginning are transfers at the end of the year to the Enhancement Fund.

FY 2006 Special Revenue Funds	Parks & Recreation Grants	Parks & Recreation Donations	Parks Enhancement Fund	Parks Lake Pleasant Fund	Parks Souvenir Fund	Parks Spur Cross Ranch Fund
Revenues						
Charges for services	-	-	1,798,086	1,472,647	-	31,356
Other revenues	243,395	301,743	907,413	204,825	120,610	406,751
Total Revenues	243,395	301,743	2,705,499	1,677,472	120,610	438,107
Expenditures						
Capital	273,318	-	173,825	43,036	-	-
Other expenditures	127,410	60,967	2,240,023	1,252,223	51,519	402,909
Total Expenditures	400,728	60,967	2,413,848	1,295,259	51,519	402,909
	68%	0%	7%	3%	0%	0%
Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	(157,333)	240,776	291,651	382,213	69,091	35,198
Transfers	-	(88,500)	(118,115)	-	(69,169)	-
Net Change in Fund Balance	(157,333)	152,276	173,536	382,213	(78)	35,198
Beginning - Fund Balance	74,810	1,262,117	2,311,555	1,703,149	25,001	386,543
Ending - Fund Balance	(82,523)	1,414,393	2,485,091	2,085,362	24,923	421,741

Figure 74 – FY 2006 Special Revenue Funds - Unrestricted Fund Balance

10.3 GENERAL FUND REVENUES

The County's Strategic Budget Plan calls for the Department to be financially non-reliant on the General Fund by the end of 2009. The Department will not be able to meet that goal without significant increases in Charges for Services. The Department may be forced to reduce maintenance and recreation services if all General Fund assistance is eliminated. The Department will need continued subsidies from the County's General Fund for the near future while the Department adjusts revenues and expenditures to accomplish the County's strategic goal of non-reliance on the County's General Fund.

General Fund dollars should be considered for resource management and protection to conserve natural open space parks and conservation areas for future generations and use. Earned revenues should be used to manage and provide for visitor services. As population increases and development encroachment expands the County will need to pro-actively manage these special places to keep them in a natural state/condition. Parks considered

rural at one time will soon be urban wilderness areas that will serve to remind us what Maricopa County once was. Without proper management, however, the Department may lose the natural resources and habitat that are included in the park system.

10.4 CAPITAL EXPENDITURES

The amount spent on annual capital expenditures is an indication of an entity's willingness to invest and maintain its system assets.

The capital expenditures for years ending 2004 through projected 2007 are approximately 11% of the annual expenditures for the special revenue funds and approximately 6% of the total Department expenditures.

The capital funded projects from operating revenues is an indication of the community's willingness to invest in the system. Using only operating revenues for capital, however, is very limiting and does not allow the Department to keep pace with growing recreation and natural resources demands placed upon the parks by a growing population. No capital funding is anticipated for the fiscal year ending 2009. This will have a negative impact on operations and maintenance of the park system. The Department can anticipate increased equipment maintenance from equipment assets that are near the end of their useful lives. Structural maintenance will increase from lack of rehabilitation and renewal funds for infrastructure assets.

10.5 INTERGOVERNMENT REVNUES

Figure 75 shows the Intergovernmental Revenues for fiscal years ending 2004 through 2008. Intergovernmental Revenues include funds from other government, public entities, and intergovernmental agreements. These funds may be for non-profit agencies, local cities, Federal or State agencies. The average for the five-year period is 15% of total revenues.

	2004 [1]	2005 [2]	2006 [3]	2007 [3]	2008 [4]	Five-Year Average
Intergovernmental Revenues	671,201	986,573	238,309	590,365	1,794,770	
Total Revenues	4,823,661	5,408,232	5,546,970	5,933,869	5,941,622	
Percent of Total Revenues	14%	18%	4%	10%	30%	15%

Source: [1] FY2003-04 Actual Restated from Annual Business Strategies 2005-06
[2] FY2004-05 Actual Restated from Annual Business Strategies 2006-07
[3] FY2005-06 Actual Restated from Annual Business Strategies 2007-08

Figure 75 - Intergovernmental Revenues to Total Revenues

The Grant revenues for fiscal years 2004 through 2007 are low given the size of the agency (**Figure 76**). The Department should research opportunities for new funding specifically related to natural and anthropological resources.

	2004	2005	2006	2007
Grant Revenues	40,715	142,088	243,395	0

Figure 76 - Grant Revenues

10.6 PRICING POLICY

10.6.1 PURPOSE OF THE PRICING POLICY

The revenue policy establishes a framework for setting Charges for Services for facilities, programs and services. The policy provides a methodology for staff to follow when determining Charges for Services for existing and new programs and services. The level of services and benefits users receive is translated into a price that is based on a set subsidy level, or on the level of individual consumption or exclusivity that is involved outside of what a general taxpayer receives.

It is recommended that any program subsidy should be communicated to the program participants to demonstrate the investment that the Department makes to the recreational programming. This communication should include the cost of the facilities even if facilities costs are not being recovered in the fee.

10.6.2 PHILOSOPHY OF THE PRICING POLICY

A revenue policy provides a guideline for the amount of recovery of a program that the Department seeks to recover through Charges for Services. The direct and indirect program costs should be considered in the establishment of fees. Facility costs should be considered with respect to the degree of exclusiveness of equipment and facility use that a program requires. For example, a program in a common area of a park that does not limit the general public use of the facility should not include the cost of the facilities in the program's revenue recovery. A program that requires exclusive use of a part of a facility would include a proportional part of the facility costs. The cost recovery from Charges for Services should increase as the degree of exclusive use and personal benefit increases.

10.6.3 PRICING FOR SERVICE GUIDELINES

Pricing for service guidelines include age segment, exclusive use, contractual and special event pricing classifications. Pricing schedules were evaluated based on the following classifications:

- Level of Exclusivity Pricing
- Age Segment Pricing
- Incentive Pricing
- Group Discounting and Packaging
- Peak Season / Non-Peak Season
- Prime / Non-primetime

The Department should consider adding incentive pricing for programs which provide significant social benefits, group discounts, and primetime/non-primetime classifications to its guidelines. Incentive pricing may also be used for new programs and services to test the program content and adequacy of the facilities.

The pricing for service guidelines do not include specific cost recovery goals. Cost recovery goals are useful for the establishment of specific program fees. Recovery guidelines also help programmers in developing program content, number of sessions, and materials and supplies that may be included in the program fee.

Figure 77 contains a sample of industry-wide cost recovery percentage goals for the recreation programs based on direct and indirect costs. The sample goals are for illustrative purposes only. The Department should adopt pricing goals that are consistent with its mission and objectives.

Sample Program/Service	Sample Cost Recovery Rates
Senior Programs	50%
Outdoor Adventures	100%
Exclusive Use Activities or Facilities	100%
Facility / Shelter Rentals	20%
Admissions (Daily, Monthly, Annual)	100%
Adult Sports Programs	100%
Adult Health and Wellness	90%
Adult Education Programs	90%
Youth Health and Wellness Programs	70%
Youth Education Programs	90%
Youth and Adult Special Events	100%

Figure 77 - Sample Industry-Wide Cost Recovery Rates

10.6.4 PRICING OBJECTIVES
The objective of effective pricing is fourfold.

- Equity
- Revenue Production
- Efficiency
- Redistribution of Income

10.6.4.1 EQUITY
Equity means those who benefit from the service should pay for it and those who benefit the most should pay the most. Public park and recreation agencies offer three kinds of services: public, merit and private. The type of service will directly determine the cost recovery strategy or pricing strategy to be used in the pricing of their services and products for the Department.

Public Services

Public services normally have low or no user fees associated with their consumption. The cost for providing these services is borne by the general tax base. Public services are those services parks and recreation offer that provide all users the same level of opportunity to access the service. The level of benefit is the same to all users. Examples of public services are open public access to use a park, a playground, a trail or a picnic area that is not reserved by a special use permit.

Merit Services

Merit services can be priced using either a partial overhead pricing strategy or a variable cost pricing strategy. Partial overhead pricing strategies recover all direct operating costs and some determined portion of fixed costs. The portion of fixed costs not recovered by the price established represents the tax subsidy. Whatever the level of tax subsidy, the Department staff need to communicate to the public the level of subsidy being provided. Merit services are usually services whereby the user receives a higher level of benefit than the general taxpayer. And yet the taxpayer benefits as a whole because the service provides a more livable community and the service has a good public benefit as well. Examples of merit type services within the Department are educational programs, general activities provided and special events that promote community health through outdoor activities.

Private Services

Private services are where only the visitor benefits. These services are usually priced using a full cost recovery strategy. The price of this particular service is intended to recover all fixed costs and variable costs associated with the service. Examples of private services include rental of space for family gatherings, club and business meetings, RV camping, boat slip rentals, and competitive related events.

10.6.4.2 REVENUE PRODUCTION

Revenue production means that user fees from admissions, programs, food services, retail services, rentals and special events will assist in the overall operations of the Department. Revenue production gives the park system needed cash for operations, and capital costs. These dollars can come from any source that supports operations of the Department and can include grants, sponsorships, catering, special rental uses, partnerships and special use permits. Ideally, in best-practice agencies, the Department is able to retain the dollars they earn without penalty of tax reduction to support operational costs.

10.6.4.3 EFFICIENCY

Efficiency is maintained by the Department utilizing revenue dollars and expenditures are not made unless necessary revenues are available. Priorities in management of park lands, resources and activities are clearly defined because the services provided are clearly made priorities because direct user dollars are associated with the activities that the public is demanding. Pricing can achieve six positive results:

- Reduces congestion and overcrowding
- Indicates visitor demand and support

- Increases positive visitor attitudes
- Provides encouragement to the private sector
- Provides incentives to achieve societal goals
- Ensures stronger accountability on agency staff and management

10.6.4.4   REDISTRIBUTION OF INCOME

Redistribution of income means that the dollars associated with each activity are used to pay for direct cost and for future improvements associated with the activity from which the income was generated. Example: Charges for Services from the Desert Outdoor Center are used for operations, maintenance and capital improvements related to the activities of the Desert Outdoor Center.

10.7 BENCHMARK DATA FOR PARK FEES

The Department's park entry and camping fees were compared with other selected park systems. The comparison group includes:

- Arizona State Parks
  - Alamo Lake State Park
  - Buckskin Mountain
  - Buckskin River Island
  - Catalina
  - Cattail Cove
  - Dead Horse Ranch
  - Fool Hollow
  - Lake Havasu
  - Lost Dutchman
  - Lyman Lake
  - Patagonia Lake
  - Picacho Peak
  - Roper Lake
- Santa Clara County, CA
- Tonto National Forest
  - Bartlett Lake, AZ - Tonto National Forest
  - Saguaro Lake - Tonto National Forest
- Fort Tuthill County Park, Coconino County, AZ
- Clark County, NV
- San Bernardino County, CA - Regional Parks
  - Prado Regional Park
  - Glen Helen Regional Park
  - Mojave Narrows Regional Park
  - Calico Ghost Town Regional Park
  - Moabi Regional Park
  - Yucaipa Regional Park

- o   Mojave River Forks Regional Park
- Los Angeles County
    - o   Castaic Lake State Recreation Area
    - o   Frank G. Bonelli Regional Park
- Santa Monica Mountain Conservancy District
- Cedar Hill State Park, TX (TPWD)
- The Vineyards, Grapevine, TX
- Developed Camping
    - o   Gilbert Ray, Pima County, AZ - Tucson Mountain Park
    - o   Davis Camp, AZ - Mohave County Parks Department
    - o   San Diego County Parks with Camping

10.7.1 PRICING COMPARISON

Five systems had comparative seven-day and annual passes as shown in **Figure 78**. The Department's annual passes are 76% higher than the sample group. The seven-day passes are second out of three compared fees. The vessel (boat) passes are higher than the two comparative fees.

Park System	Annual Pass - Seniors	Standard Annual Pass - Day Use Pass	Annual Vehicle Pass - Seven-day	Annual Vehicle Pass - Four-day with Watercraft	Annual Vehicle Pass - Seven-day with Watercraft
Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department	$ 65	$ 75			
Maricopa County - Lake Pleasant Regional Park	$ 65	$ 120		$ 100	$ 160
Arizona State Parks		$ 45			
San Diego County Parks with Camping		$ 40			
Santa Clara County, CA			$ 70		$ 135
San Bernardino County, CA - Regional Parks			$ 125		
LA County - Frank G. Bonelli Regional Park			$ 120		$ 250

Figure 78 - Comparison of Passes

Park Entry and similar fees are shown in **Figure 79**. The horse and bicycle fees are half the Arizona State Parks rate. The Daily Pass for the Department is approximately the same as the sample group. The Arizona State Park fee is one dollar ($1) higher and two of the sample groups had higher fees.

Park System	Per pedestrian, bicycle or horse	Daily Pass / Daily Vehicle Pass	Water Craft	Conservation Area Per Person	Per school bus	Per commercial bus
Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department	$ 1	$ 6	$ 2	$ 3	$ 10	$ 30
Arizona State Parks (average)	$ 2	$ 7	$ 4			
Tonto National Forest						
Bartlett Lake, AZ - Tonto National Forest		$ 6	$ 4			
Saguaro Lake - Tonto National Forest		$ 6	$ 4			
FortTuthill County Park, Coconino County, AZ						
Prado Regional Park		$ 5				
Glen Helen Regional Park		$ 5				
Mojave Narrows Regjonal Park		$ 5				
Calico Ghost Town Regional Park		$ 6				
Moabi Regional Park			$ 2			
Yucaipa Regional Park		$ 5				
Mojave River Forks Regional Park		$ 5				
LA County - Castaic Lake State Recreation Area		$ 10	$ 12			
LA County - Frank G. Bonelli Regional Park		$ 8	$ 8			
Cedar Hill State Park, TX (TPWD)		$ 5				
Davis Camp, AZ - Mohave County Parks Department		$ 5	$ 10			

Figure 79 - Comparison of Entry Fees

The Department's developed site camping fees are similar to the sample group. The fees are the same as the lower three of the sample group. Seven entities had slightly higher fees. The semi-developed camping fees are second lowest, the one sample being the same as the Department and three samples showing the higher fees. The Department's primitive camping charges are second from the lowest of the sample. Six agencies have higher primitive camping fees. The Department's group camping is significantly lower than the sample, but the reservation fees are higher. The camping fees are shown in **Figure 80**.

Park System	Developed Campsites-Full hook-ups (water/elect) May also include: dump		Semi-Developed Campsites - Partial hook-ups		Primitive Camping - no hookups		Group Camping		Group Camping-Non-refundable reservation fee
Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department	$	20	$	15	$	10	$	12	$ 30
Arizona State Parks (average)	$	22	$	13					
Tonto National Forest									
Bartlett Lake, AZ - Tonto National Forest									
Saguaro Lake - Tonto National Forest									
FortTuthill County Park, Coconino County, AZ			$	15	$	12	$	60	
Prado Regional Park	$	22							
Glen Helen Regional Park									
Mojave Narrows Regjonal Park	$	22			$	15	$	17	$ 10
Calico Ghost Town Regional Park	$	22	$	20	$	18			
Moabi Regional Park	$	25	$	20	$	15			
Yucaipa Regional Park	$	27			$	18			$ 10
Mojave River Forks Regional Park	$	20			$	13			
LA County - Castaic Lake State Recreation Area									
LA County - Frank G. Bonelli Regional Park									
Cedar Hill State Park, TX (TPWD)	$	20			$	7			
Davis Camp, AZ - Mohave County Parks Department	$	20	$	17					

Figure 80 - Comparison of Camping Fees

10.7.2 COMPARATIVE RESULTS

The Department should increase the developed and semi-developed camping fees to match the market rates. The developed campsite fees should be increased to $22 to match the major portion of the sample group and the semi-developed campsite fees should be increased to $18 to be similar to the sample group's fees.

10.8 COST OF SERVICE READINESS

The purpose of the cost of service analysis is to evaluate the major programs and services to achieve the following:

- Determine the cost effectiveness of each program area including identifying subsidy levels and resource efficiencies
- Analyze operations associated with each program area to identify total costs and assist in the design of appropriate user fees
- Facilitate and document the achievement of pricing policies and recovery goals

The cost of service analysis is to determine the total cost of providing services to individual customers, groups of customers, or an entire customer base. The total cost of service includes all direct and indirect costs. The results of the analysis support decision making for determining the resource requirements of programs and services and for applying pricing policies to set Charges for Services. The analysis can also be used to identify inefficiencies and programs that have gone beyond their lifecycle. Following is the methodology used to prepare this cost of service analysis:

- Direct costs include salaries and benefits, store inventory, activities, uniforms, supplies, equipment rental, contractual services, printing, programming, and volunteer program.
- All costs other than direct costs are indirect costs. Indirect costs are allocated to each department and/or program based upon the indirect cost allocation included in the model. The portion of indirect cost allocated to each cost center is based on the allocation methodology applied to the specific indirect cost element.
- The direct cost plus the indirect costs equal the total costs.
- The total costs divided by the units of service are identified to determine the total costs per unit of service.
- The result of the cost of service analysis does not necessarily mean that the Department should recover the total costs of service through user fees. The Pricing Policy should guide the recovery of costs through user fees.

The review performed included:

- The readiness for the development of a comprehensive cost of services model
- The ability to perform activity based costing of maintenance functions
- The cost recovery of services

This review resulted in an action plan that identifies information needed to perform a detailed cost of service analysis and develop a cost of service model. The action plan provides strategies for implementing a cost of service approach for budgeting and pricing including documenting the cost of individual functions and services provided by the Department. In addition, the recommended cost of service approach will document the

revenue recovery of individual programs and services, and permits the establishment of cost recovery goals and policies.

A cost of service analysis includes three levels of assessment:

- **Direct Cost** - The most detailed analysis will be at the program level and will assess the cost and related recovery for each activity within the budget programs. This assessment will document the direct cost of each program.
- **Indirect Cost** - The second tier assessment will allocate the Department's indirect and administrative costs to the program areas. The indirect and administrative should be reviewed in relationship to both the direct cost and potential extra administrative and/or facilities costs associated with each program offering. Indirect costs include services from units outside recreation; such as, building and grounds maintenance, accounting services, legal services, and external service charges and contractors. Administrative costs include the general administrative functions and governance of the Department.
- **Other Financial Impacts** - The third tier assessment will allocate debt service, external costs, and external funds; such as grants, gifts or donations to the program areas.

10.8.1 COST OF SERVICE EXPENDITURE DETAIL

Additional cost information is needed at each park to document the resources used to provide the various services and facilities. The Budget information is currently organized by location and the budget structure includes expense categories; such as salaries, supplies, and services. To facilitate a cost of service analysis, additional detail is needed to document the cost for operations, programs, and maintenance. Expenditures need further detail to match the costs of specific programs, facilities and services with the associated revenue accounts. This matching may be automated within the accounting framework or estimated using a cost of service model.

10.8.2 ACTIVITY DETAIL

Details on specific activities, programs, and services will be needed to complete a true cost of service analysis. This includes:

- Programs - Details for each activity including:
  - Number of activities/sessions
  - Attendance/participants
  - Current fee schedules
  - Actual revenues
- Facilities - Details regarding facilities including:
  - Number of facilities by function
  - Size and attributes of each facility
  - Age of facilities
  - Approximate historical cost of facility construction

- Maintenance - Details for each activity including:
    - o Historical work order summary, if available
    - o Staff hours available by function and/or trade
    - o Maintenance equipment
    - o Supply, material, and part warehousing
    - o Contracted maintenance functions

With the additional activity information and accounting information, the Department would be able to complete a comprehensive cost of service analysis.

The result of the cost of service analysis does not necessarily mean that the Department should recover all of the costs of a service through user fees. Though the cost of service depicts the cost to provide a service, it should not be used as a cost recovery benchmark. The cost of service results document what is required in the way of operating capital and what rates should be set to meet the recovery goals of the pricing policy. When evaluating the pricing of services, organizations typically analyze their target market and the social and economic impact of the service, the characteristics of the product or service, and environmental influences.

Cost of service documentation with adopted pricing policies provides the Department with the tools to adjust the pricing of programs and services as operation and maintenance costs increase against a fixed tax revenue stream.

10.9 COST OF SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS

The following presents the steps required for the Department to implement a full cost of service approach. The steps are organized by major task. In certain cases, tasks may be performed simultaneously with others to gain efficiencies and to recognize the integral nature of certain activities. Steps will document the extent to which program areas are self-supporting, at breakeven or requiring a subsidy.

10.9.1 COST ANALYSIS

The cost analysis documents total costs for each program or service. Additional cost detail is needed to estimate the costs attributable to each program, service and facility and match the costs to the appropriate revenue stream.

10.9.2 UNITS OF SERVICE

The units of services provided are keys to the costing process. Units may be participants, visitors, number of classes, number of groups, numbers of rentals, etc. The Department should begin documenting the units of service provided for each major area. To implement this process, the Department may wish to select one park to start the process. Units of service include the number of:

- Participants in education programs
- Attendees of special events
- Visitors to facilities and parks
- Facilities rentals and dates

10.9.3 USER FEE DESIGN

The analysis of each program area's resource requirements documents the proper allocation of resources to achieve the Department's desired quality and quantity of services and programs. Additionally, the analysis provides a method for documenting operational efficiency and determining subsidy levels.

The cost analysis information is used to assess functional responsibilities and identify areas in need of adjustments in staffing levels and budgeted funds.

Based on the pricing policies and recovery goals, the Department will have the capabilities to revise existing and/or design new user fees.

10.9.4 UPDATE OF REVENUE PLAN

The final step is an update of the Department's revenue plan to project program demand, user fees, and program revenues over a five-year period.

10.9.5 UPDATE OF PRICING POLICIES

The cost of service analysis is an opportune time to review and update the Department's pricing policies to maximize the results of the cost of service analysis and make adjustments to policies and cost recovery goals.

- The Department should seek General and/or bond funds for long-term capital and trail improvements projects
- The Department should seek General Fund dollars to provide for natural and cultural resource protection and management which will become increasingly important for the long-term health and well-being of the parks as the County continues to grow
- The Department should analyze alternative funding sources that have been used effectively in other counties around the U.S. such as the creation of a special park district

10.10 FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

- One of the Department's strategic goals is for the Department to be non-reliant on General Funds for operations
- Financial trends indicate that the Department will not have sufficient resources to maintain and operate additional facilities
- If County General Funds are reduced the Department may consider reducing daily operations at selected parks
- For the long term, the Department should strengthen park foundation to fund specific parks and/or specific activities within selected parks
- The Department provides a number of programs and activities with charges. The Department should implement fees for activities and programs that are staffed by Department personnel
- The Department should adopt a pricing policy to guide the development of Charges for Services

- The Department should implement cost of service based Charges for Services
- To complete the cost of service analysis, the Department should begin tracking cost by activity and program and begin documenting the units of services provided

10.10.1 SUMMARY OF OVERALL FINANCIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a summary of the most significant recommendations associated with finance management:

- Seek out a dedicated funding source the Department can count on
- Seek a policy to allow the Department to keep earned income to support operational costs without reduction in its tax base from the County's general fund
- Establish a Pricing Policy
- Establish an Earned Income Policy
- Establish a Partnership Policy
- Incorporate a true cost of service for all elements the Department provides to help set pricing rates and subsidy rates
- Adjust prices for camping to support cost of service and match market rates
- Develop a Park Foundation and keep the Greenway Foundation
- Aggressively seek corporate sponsorships to help maintain operational costs
- Add program prices for activities in parks
- Seek legislation to allow concessionaire to develop recreation facilities on County property for a percentage of gross that meet customer needs in parks
- Market and promote the parks to drive more visitors to parks to increase attendance and use of the parks

CHAPTER ELEVEN - PARK AND FACILITY DEVELOPMENT AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department seeks to develop and maintain a system of parks that reflects the unique natural and cultural landscape of the region, the park and recreation trends and needs of Maricopa County residents, and the capacity of the County to balance the resources necessary to manage a high quality park system. This *Capital Improvement Plan* unifies many components of the overall Strategic Master Plan by applying the priorities of the Department through a phased prioritized approach to capital development over the next 10 years.

This *Capital Improvement Plan* includes the individual elements listed below that are detailed within the sections that follow.

- Strategic Development Principles and Guidelines
- Summary of Site Analyses
- Phased Capital Plan by Park

11.1 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

In developing design principles for parks it is important that each park be programmed, planned, and designed to meet the needs of its service area and classification within the overall parks and recreation system. The term programming when used in the context of planning and developing parkland refers to intended uses and subsequent facilities, and does not always include instructor-led recreation programs.

The program for a site can include such elements as ball fields, nature centers, spray parks, shelters, restrooms, game courts, trails, natural resource stewardship, open meadows, nature preserves, or interpretive areas. These types of amenities are categorized as lead or support components. The needs of the population of the park it is intended to serve should be considered and accommodated at each type of park. Every park regardless of type must have an established set of outcomes that includes operational and maintenance costs associated with the design outcomes.

Established program and expectations for each park leads to the development of themes under which the park system is operated. These themes exhibit the priorities and needs of the community, the values of the Department, and responsible use of public resources for parks and recreation. Additionally, the thematic approach to park design and operation provides a sense of identity and character to the parks, facilities, programs, and services. This identity becomes the brand of Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department.

11.1.1 MARICOPA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION OPERATIONAL THEMES
Following extensive assessment of the existing conditions of the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation System, detailed study of community preferences and needs, and the operating potential of each park the Consultant Team recommends three predominant operational themes under which parks can be maintained and managed. These themes correspond with the recommended management zones associated with this report, as well as the need to

limit development on each park to specific zones. The operational themes recommended that support the specific elements of this *Capital Improvement Plan* are detailed in the sections below.

11.1.1.1   DESTINATIONS

Maricopa County Parks feature destinations that provide a wide array of recreational opportunities and services. These parks include overnight accommodations that range in level of service, and diverse park amenities that create opportunities for visitors to enjoy quality outdoor recreation in a natural setting. Parks that are recommended to be managed as destinations include:

1.   Estrella Mountain Regional Park[1]
2.   Lake Pleasant Regional Park
3.   Adobe Dam Regional Park[2]

11.1.1.2   ADVENTURE AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

There are a multitude of parks within the Maricopa County System that feature high quality adventure and outdoor recreation amenities and opportunities. Select facilities exhibit a notable national reputation for quality facilities and programs, specifically in mountain biking trails. Parks that are recommended to be managed as adventure and outdoor recreation parks include:

1.   McDowell Mountain Regional Park
2.   San Tan Mountain Regional Park
3.   Usery Mountain Regional Park

11.1.1.3   PRESERVATION, CONSERVATION, AND EDUCATION

It is a priority of both Maricopa County residents and the Department to utilize the Maricopa County Parks System to foster preservation, conservation, and education about the unique natural resources of Central Arizona. Specific sites within the System feature prime opportunities to limit development for purposes of protecting and preserving the natural setting and ecological significance of the Maricopa County area.   Parks recommended to be managed as preservation, conservation, and education parks are:

1.   Buckeye Hills Regional Park
2.   Cave Creek Regional Park
3.   Desert Outdoor Center at Lake Pleasant Regional Park
4.   Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area
5.   White Tanks Regional Park

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[1] This *Capital Improvement Plan* recommends select development at Estrella Mountain Regional Park that will enhance its status as a destination park.

[2] Adobe Dam Regional Park currently does not feature overnight facilities, but is a unique day-use destination that provides substantial revenue generating capacity to the Department. While this park is a big asset to the system, it is not a priority of the Department to duplicate its design within the system at this time.

11.1.2 PARK PRIORITY MANDATES

Throughout the process of intense community input and interaction with Maricopa County leadership associated with this process it has been identified there are five priorirty mandates that will also drive the strategic direction of each site. These priority mandates are derived from the identified community values and goals of the Department, support the operational themes discussed above, and are the foundation of the phasing for capital projects.

There are five priority mandates that are present throughout the Maricopa County Park System, but may be ordered differently for each site to reflect its unique characteristics, existing conditions, and strategic opportunities. The mandates are not mutually exclusive, but all may exist in differing capacities at each site and represent the tiered priorities under which park development can be considered and pursued. These five mandates are:

1. Preserve the natural setting and environmental aspects of the park by heavily restricted use and limited public access.
2. Strategically develop facilities that increase the revenue generation capacity of the park and park system.
3. Acquire additional property to create a buffer from encroaching external development.
4. Pursue limited development to enhance the quality and diversity of recreational opportunities.
5. Devote resources to the repair and replacement of existing infrastructure.

The Consultant Team assigned a prioritization of these mandates to each site to reflect the findings from community input, interaction with Department staff, and interviews with Maricopa County leadership. These priorities subsequently are combined with the operational themes discussed above and the prioritized facility rankings discussed later in this report to produce the phased approach for capital projects over a 10 year period for each park.

11.1.3 PRIORITIZED FACILITY RANKINGS

The purpose of the prioritized facility rankings is to provide a prioritized list of facilities / amenities that ranked high on importance based on the responses obtained through the community input and survey process.

This assessment evaluates both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data includes the 2006 telephone survey that was performed and tabulated by Arizona State University, which asked residents to state the importance for various facilities / amenities. Qualitative data includes resident feedback obtained in Focus Group meetings, Stakeholder and Key Leader Interviews.

A weighted scoring system was used to determine the priorities for park and recreation facilities / amenities and recreation programs. This scoring system considers the following:

- Community Survey
    - o Importance ranking for facilities – Normalized factor, converted from the percent (%) ranking of facility / amenity to a base number. Survey

participants were asked to rate the importance of a facility / amenity on a Likert scale from **Critical** to **Not Important at All**.

- Consultant Evaluation
  - Subjective factor derived from the consultant's evaluation of facility importance based on community input, demographics and trends.

These weighted scores were summed to provide an overall score and priority ranking for the system as a whole. The results of the priority ranking were tabulated into three categories: High Priority, Medium Priority, and Low Priority. These rankings will be one of the drivers in establishing the recommendations for the Facility Service Levels and in creating the Capital Improvement Plan.

It is important to note that this survey ranking is purely based on the stated importance of a facility / amenity and not on its perceived need. A facility type can be considered to be very important, however if the existing need in the community is being met, then that facility may not be given highest precedence in the eventual Capital Improvement Plan.

Figure 81 below depicts the Facility / Amenity Priority Ranking for Maricopa County.   Note that trails / trailheads, nature centers or museums (visitor centers) and playgrounds were the top three facilities / amenities.

Facility	High	Medium	Low
Trails/Trailheads	1		
Nature Centers or Museums	2		
Playgrounds	3		
Public Parks	4		
Group Use Areas	5		
Picnic Sites	6		
Open Spaces	7		
Reserve Camping Sites	8		
Cabins/Rooms for Rent		9	
Developed Camp Sites and Campgrounds		10	
Visitor Centers		11	
ADA Accessible Trails		12	
Shooting Ranges		13	
Mountain Bike Trails		14	
Swimming Beaches		15	
Remote Camp Sites		16	
Surface Bike Paths/Lanes			17
Off-Highway Vehicles and ATVs			18
Fishing Piers or Docks			19
Equestrian/Horse Facilities			20
Boating Facilities			21
Trailer/RV Hookups			22
Archery Ranges			23

Figure 81 - Facility / Amenity Priority Ranking

11.1.4 AGE SEGMENT APPEAL

Among the greatest areas for improvement for many park systems, including Maricopa County, is providing facilities and services that appeal to a broader age segment of the population. Frequently, park amenities are biased towards visitors ages 25 to 45, and miss opportunities to appeal to children and older adults.   Given the demographic shifts both nationally and locally, park systems that provide facilities and services that appeal and attract families with children, young adults, and older adults are proving to have more reliable visitation, revenue generation, and community approval.

The features and facilities in the park must be designed for the number of age segments the park is intended to serve, the desired length of stay deemed appropriate, and the uses aligned with the operational themes assigned. Recreation needs and services required differ based on the age segments that make up the community. A varying number of age segments will be accommodated with the park program depending on the classification of the park. Typical age segments that drive facilities and services are:

- Ages 2-8
- Ages 9-17
- Ages 18-34
- Ages 35-54
- Ages 55-64
- Ages 65+

11.1.5 DESTINATION AMENITIES

For a destination to truly be successful, it must have a unique compilation of physiographic, historical or cultural perspective, and entertainment and events. The physiographic, or general environment and climate, activates the sensory recognition which helps to form the experience. A cultural or historical perspective elicits the historical precedence that lends itself to the intellectual appreciation one might have for the destination. Entertainment, including special events, provides the foundation for achieving greater self actualization and emotional satisfaction. To achieve these essential elements in creating a destination, development principles must be adopted and implemented.

Standards in excellence in recreation based development are based on four concepts:

- Quality and Reliability of the Resource
- Design Driven by Visitor Experience
- Blend of Passive and Active Recreation
- Multiple Attractions

The quality and reliability of the resource is unique to the Maricopa County parks system. The vast size and variety of resources within the inventory affords the Department the opportunity to provide nearly limitless recreational opportunities. Archaeological areas, mountains, desert regions, and water resources all provide for unique endeavors.

Design driven by visitor experience communicates to the ease of use associated with a destination. This pertains to the ingress and egress as well as the circulation once the destination has been reached and participation has commenced. Three principles associated with the visitor experience can be summed as follows:

- Sense of Arrival
  - Highway Signage
  - Gateway
  - Landscaping
- Aesthetic and Functional Signage
  - Directional
  - Visitor Guides
  - Safety and Management
- Architecture and Use
  - Design with Natural Surroundings
  - Customer Flow
  - Mixed Use
  - Generates Satisfaction and Revenue

Most activities associated with recreation are designed around a desired length of experience. A blend of passive and active recreational opportunities extends the length of experience and increases the frequency of participation. This offering necessitates that the core resources and attractions be in sync with the demand of the market. Recreational opportunities may be defined as a very broad range of activity – socializing with friends and family and shopping are two of the top four entertainment, recreation, and leisure activities most participated in since 1990. Other popular activities include:

- Typical Recreational Opportunities
  - Camping (primitive to full-service)
  - Multi-use trails (recreational and interpretive)
  - Beach / waterfront access
  - Marina
  - Equestrian facilities
  - Climbing walls / bouldering areas
  - Orienteering / geo-caching
  - Play areas
  - Pavilions and picnic areas
- Additional Recreational Opportunities
  - Cabins
  - Skateboard / BMX parks
  - Wildlife viewing blinds
  - Vending
  - Interpretive gardens
  - Sport equipment rental
  - Visual and performing arts

Multiple attractions can be viewed as a subsidiary of the blend of passive and active opportunities. Strategically placed venues dictated by market demand provide for several zones or areas to host various programs. Multiple attractions also lend to programming across the entire array of age segments.

11.2 SUMMARY OF SITE ANALYSES

The following analyses present findings and overall recommendations to build on the existing strengths of the parks, and provide a framework for improving overall excellence of the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department.

11.2.1 ADOBE DAM REGIONAL PARK

11.2.1.1 LOCATION/SETTING

Adobe Dam Regional Park is comprised of 1,526 acres and is the smallest park in the County System. The park is located in north Phoenix within the Hedgepeth Hills. The main entry to the park is located on the southwest corner of 43rd Avenue and Pinnacle Peak Road. The Park land is leased by the County, and the recreational facilities are privately owned and operated. Park hours vary by the activity area, although most of the activities are open to the public 365 days a year and the hours are from 6:00 AM to 10:00 PM .

11.2.1.2 NATURAL AND VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Adobe Dam Regional Park is the most urban of all the County Parks. The context of the Park creates convenient access from many of the central and west areas of the Valley. The majority of the land surrounding the Park is residential, which makes the Park, with its variety of recreational activities, a large scale urban recreation mecca.

The Park offers a mix of topographic character, ranging from the Hedgepeth Hills in the south and west areas, to relatively flat areas throughout the majority of the Park, and a 410 acre flood plain area. The most scenic area of the park is on the west side, where an 18 hole championship golf course is integrated with the Hedgepeth foothills. From the highest elevations in the Park, it is possible to see many miles in all directions, including distant mountain ranges to expansive Valley urban development in all directions.

One of the contrasting physical features of the Park is the Flood Retarding Structure situated along the south – southeastern boundary. This structure was built and is maintained by the Flood Control District of Maricopa County. The structure connects with the Hedgepeth Hills along the southern boundary creating an interesting landform juxtaposition.

11.2.1.3 RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Adobe Dam Regional Park offers the greatest variety of active recreational opportunities of all the County Parks. The Park generates approximately 85% to 90% of all concessions related to revenue for the entire Maricopa County Parks and Recreation System. The majority of the park's recreational facilities are located in the central area, with exception of the 500 Club Championship Golf Course in the west and the Arizona Model Pilots Society situated just north of the Flood Retarding Structure. Approximately 410 acres of the Park are located in the flood plain, with development restrictions.

Primary Recreational Facilities Include:

- 500 Club Championship Golf Course

- Sahuaro Central Railroad
- Waterworld Safari Aquatic Park
- Victory Lane Sports Complex
- Phoenix Kart Racing Association
- Arizona Kart Racing Association
- Adobe Paintball Park

11.2.1.4 KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Like many of the parks in the County System, Adobe Dam Regional Park is experiencing increasing use and pressures from adjacent private development. The greatest challenge for this park is to maintain controlled access and to limit uncontrolled access. The majority of the current development pressure is encroaching from all directions.

Another significant challenge for the Park is the management of leases for the individual concessions. Each of the facilities is unique and the lease terms vary. In order to manage the overall Park, the County will need to continue to monitor the success and sustainability of the facilities to plan for future operations.

Adobe Dam Regional Park offers many recreational activities not found in most of the other County Parks. These facility types and the management required to operate these facilities is very different than the other Parks in the System.

11.2.2 BUCKEYE HILLS REGIONAL PARK

11.2.2.1 LOCATION/SETTING

Buckeye Hills Regional Park is comprised of 4,474 acres and is currently the most remote Park in the Maricopa County System. The park is located approximately 8 miles south of I-10 off of SR 85, in the Town of Gila Bend. There is only one access road into the Park, which is from SR 85. There is currently no access control at the main entry. All other access to the park is by non-controlled pedestrian and equestrian trails. The Park is open to the public 365 days a year and park hours are 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM Sunday to Thursday and 6:00 AM to 10:00 PM Friday and Saturday.

11.2.2.2 NATURAL AND VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Situated between the Buckeye Hills Mountains and the Gila River, Buckeye Hills Regional Park consists predominately of lower Sonoran Desert vegetation. The parks topography ranges from the Buckeye Hills Mountains on the south end of the Park to foothills and valley plains ranging from 1,000 feet in the valley plains to the mountain elevations around 1,900 feet. The most striking natural characteristics of the park, is the rugged Mountain topography that rises from the lower Sonoran Desert valley plains. The higher elevations

throughout the park, offer valley vistas in all directions, including the riparian Gila River corridor.

11.2.2.3   RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Buckeye Hills Regional Park is the least developed park in the County System. There is currently no electricity available at the park. Most of the park development has been focused on the shooting range located in the southeastern area of the Park. This area is currently undergoing expansion and improvements. The direction of aim for range shooting is to the southwest. Other Park facilities include small group ramadas and picnicking accessed by a dirt road system south of the shooting range. There are no developed trails in the Park.

The Maricopa County Trails System, which is planned to link all of the County Regional Parks, except Adobe Dam Regional Park, accesses Buckeye Hills Regional Park from the north, with connectivity from this location to Estrella Mountain Regional Park, several miles to the east and to White Tank Mountain Regional Park, and several miles to the north.

11.2.2.4   KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

The relatively remote context of Buckeye Hills Regional Park has protected it from many of the pressures of urban development experienced by all of the other County Park sites. However, future growth is impending from the Town of Buckeye and Town of Gila Bend. It will be very important to coordinate the Recreation Area with other comprehensive planning efforts to integrate and protect the natural and open space resources of Area. The greatest challenge for this park is to maintain controlled access and to limit uncontrolled access. Buckeye Hills Regional Park is surrounded by predominately Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Arizona Department of Fish and Game land. At the present time this land ownership provides a buffer from private land development, however, the future status of this land is undetermined.

Common to all of the parks in the County system, Buckeye Hills Regional Park is short staffed due to limited financial resources. Staff and park hosts are currently assigned to Buckeye Hills from Estrella Mountain Regional Park.   Managing the park resources through frequent park-wide surveillance is difficult, particularly those areas that cannot be accessed by vehicle, which is the majority of the park.   The limited surveillance capacity and access restrict fire management techniques, which limits the protection of the natural resources for the future.

11.2.3 CAVE CREEK REGIONAL PARK

11.2.3.1   LOCATION/SETTING

Cave Creek Regional Park is comprised of 2,922 acres and is one of 10 Maricopa County Regional Parks. The park is located north of Phoenix in the Towns of Cave Creek. The main

entry to the park is located on 32nd Street, approximately 2 miles north of Carefree Highway, and access is controlled by a contact station. All other access to the park is via pedestrian and equestrian trails. The Park is open to the public 365 days a year and park hours are 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM Sunday to Thursday and 6:00 AM to 10:00 PM Friday and Saturday.

11.2.3.2   NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS

Situated in the rugged upper Sonoran Desert, Cave Creek Regional Park is rich in vegetation and wildlife and majestic views in all directions. The park's topography is diverse ranging from bajada elevations around 2,000 feet to mountain peaks over 3,000 feet. The rugged washes throughout the park contain abundant vegetation and natural travel corridors for wildlife.

11.2.3.3   RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Trails are located throughout the park, providing a diversity of opportunities to visit nearly all areas of the park. One of the most popular trails is the Go John Trail that traverses deep washes, mountain slopes and peaks. The trails system offers views that are contained in many areas and other areas offer spectacular vistas to Tonto Forest mesas and mountains, north of the park, and valley plain views to the Towns of Cave Creek, New River, Desert Hills and Phoenix. The Maricopa County Trails System which is planned to link all of the County Regional Parks, except Adobe Dam Regional Park, accesses Cave Creek Regional Park from the northern boundary, with connectivity from this location to Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area to the north and Lake Pleasant Regional Park to the west.

There are a wide variety of other recreational opportunities located primarily in the south central area of the park. These uses include both small and large group day use picnic sites, many with large ramadas with shade. These sites are in close proximity to a large play area with equipment and restrooms. Overnight camp sites are located in the very southwestern corner of the park and are served by restrooms and shower facilities.

Equestrian use in this park is abundant and facilities for users range from rental horses and tours provided by a private vendor, to dedicated parking/staging areas for users with their own horses.

11.2.3.4   KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Like many of the parks in the County System, Cave Creek Regional Park is experiencing increasing use and pressures from adjacent private development. The greatest challenge for this park is to maintain controlled access and to limit uncontrolled access. Similar to many of the parks in the System, Cave Creek Regional Park is surrounded by a mix of land uses, including private, Desert Foothills Land Trust, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and State Trust Land. Many of the Private areas have developed up to the borders of the park, creating access control issues. The remaining BLM and State land areas will likely be sold in the future, and this uncertain future land use creates an added sense of urgency to protect the boundaries and resources of the park.

Common to all of the Parks in the System, Cave Creek Regional Park is short staffed due to limited financial resources. Park Hosts are utilized to assist with maintenance and operations. Managing the park resources through frequent park-wide surveillance is difficult, particularly those areas that cannot be accessed by vehicle, which is the majority of the park. The limited surveillance capacity and access restrict fire management techniques, which limits the protection of the natural resources for the future.

11.2.4 ESTRELLA MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK

11.2.4.1   LOCATION/SETTING

Estrella Mountain Regional Park is comprised of 19,840 acres and was the first park in the County system back in 1954. The park is located in the City of Avondale, City of Goodyear, and partially within the unincorporated lands of Maricopa County within the Sierra Estrella Mountains in the west Valley. The main entry to the park is located at the northwest corner of the Park, approximately a half mile east of Estrella Parkway on West Vineyard Avenue. The main entrance is controlled by a contact station. A secondary entry is located at the northeast corner of the Park, south of Indian Springs Road on El Mirage Road, adjacent to Phoenix International Raceway. This entrance is controlled by a self-pay station. All other access to the park is via non-controlled pedestrian and equestrian trails. The Park is open to the public 365 days a year and park hours are 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM Sunday to Thursday and 6:00 AM to 10:00 PM Friday and Saturday.

11.2.4.2   NATURAL AND VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Estrella Mountain Regional Park is situated in a unique area of the County. The Park has diverse topographic character, ranging from river and valley plains near 1,000 feet, to the rugged mountain peaks of the Sierra Estrella Mountains, over 4,000 feet. Two of the larger natural river corridors in the State, the Gila and Salt are located close to the northern boundary of the Park, and a segment of the Gila flows through the northwestern area of the park. The confluence of these two rivers is located about a mile north of the northeastern boundary of the park. These river corridors were once rich in riparian habitat when the rivers flowed naturally throughout the year. The riparian character still exists, although damming of the Rivers to create mountain reservoirs has diminished these natural resources. From the highest elevations in the Park, it is possible to see many miles in all directions, including distant mountain ranges to expansive relatively undeveloped desert

valleys to the south, west and southeast and developed urban areas of Metropolitan Phoenix to the north and northeast. Estrella Mountain Regional Park is characterized by rugged topography with rich lower and upper Sonoran Desert vegetation throughout most of the Park, with the exception of the low lying river valley along the northern reaches of the Park. Abundant wildlife, including deer, javelina, coyotes, many species of birds, and snakes. The riparian areas of the Park are particularly diverse in bird species. The most striking natural characteristics of the park are its rugged mountain peaks, deeply serrated with ridges and canyons that lead to broad bajadas and valley plains.

11.2.4.3 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Estrella Mountain Regional Park is home to some unique cultural history. The Hohokam Maricopa and Pima Indians, occupied many areas of the Sierra Estrella Mountains, particularly the northern areas located closest to the Gila and Salt Rivers. The Indians relied extensively on the water from the rivers. Archaeological evidence, including canal systems have been located in within the Park. Other evidence of their presence can be found throughout the park, including petroglyphs.

11.2.4.4 RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Estrella Mountain Regional Park offers the greatest diversity of recreational opportunities of all the County Parks. The park's recreational areas are generally characterized by the most active facilities and opportunities located on the north end of the park, in the non-mountainous, valley plains, and the more passive opportunities, such as hiking, located throughout the more mountainous areas.

Estrella is unique in its recreational resources. It is the only Park in the system with turf areas for picnicking and open play. It is also one of two parks in the system that offers golf facilities, a rodeo arena, and a ball field complex for organized sports. In addition, Estrella has an amphitheater located in the active, northern area of the Park.

The active northern recreation area represents a very small area of the nearly 20,000 acre Park. It is comprised predominately of turf, complimented by a very large playground area, picnic areas, large and small group ramadas, restrooms and parking lots. The Park has the capacity to serve multiple special events in the open turf areas. Some of the events that have taken place at Estrella, include the Society for Creative Acronyms (SCA), and multiple dog shows. The ballfield complex, located off of Casey Abbott Parkway, between the golf course and the open turf recreation area, consists of two softball fields with parking and restrooms.

The rodeo arena is well organized and developed to accommodate many events throughout the year. The arena is located behind the active recreation area of the park, separated by mountain foothills. Additional access, for special events is controlled by access gates on 143rd Avenue.

The concessionaire-operated golf course is comprised of 18 holes located at the far northwest corner of the park, and was developed in 1962. The course is open to the general public.

The majority of Estrella Regional Park is native Sonoran desert, that remains relatively undisturbed. Much the same as it would have appeared when the Indians inhabited the area. Multi-use trails systems, with varying degrees of difficulty, have been developed in the western half of the Park. The trails system offers views that are contained in many areas and other areas offer spectacular vistas to the surrounding valley plains and distant mountain views. The higher elevation trails are more difficult to traverse, with many steep slopes. There are currently no developed trails in the eastern, most rugged area of the Park. A barrier free loop trail, the Gila Trail, is available near the northern active area, north of the rodeo arena.

The Maricopa County Trails System, which is planned to link all of the County Regional Parks, except Adobe Dam Regional Park, accesses Estrella Mountain Regional Park from the northwest, with connectivity from this location to Buckeye Hills Regional Park, several miles to the west and to White Tanks Mountain Regional Park, and several miles to the northwest. One of the unique opportunities for park visitors, is direct access from the park to the natural recreational opportunities along the Gila River corridor, part of the El Rios project which will include a cooperative educational exhibit at the Estrella Nature Center.

The Park offers a competitive bike course located in the northeastern area of the park. The Track includes two loop courses. The Technical Loop, is designed for advanced riders, while the Long Loop is for general use.

A maintenance compound was developed back in the early 1990s to help support the maintenance, administrative and management of the Park.

11.2.4.5   KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Like many of the parks in the County System, Estrella Mountain Regional Park is experiencing increasing use and pressures from adjacent private development. The greatest challenge for this park is to maintain controlled access and to limit uncontrolled access. The majority of the current development pressure is coming from the west and north sides of the park. Particularly evident, is the growth in the Estrella Mountain Ranch area to the west, which is encroaching on the western boundary of the Park. Growth of the metropolitan Valley is rapidly approaching the natural barrier of the Gila and Salt Rivers, however, improved transportation corridors across the Rivers makes the Park more accessible. The area south of the Park, Rainbow Valley, is currently in the early stages of planning and development, and in the future will likely resemble the Estrella Mountain Ranch, with an abundance of residential development. Existing fences along these boundaries are often cut, creating entries to the park land from adjacent private and public land. Uncontrolled access from these properties puts additional pressure on the natural resources, and makes it more difficult to manage the use of the park.

The Estrella Nature Center is a facility that is almost complete in accordance with the park master plan performed in the early 1990s. This facility will provide interpretive information related to the natural resources and man-made amenities offered at the park. Similar to the majority of the County Parks, increasing visitation presents a greater need for this type of facility that can assist County staff meet a diversity of needs, both educational and administrative.

Similar to many parks in the County system, Estrella Mountain Regional Park is short staffed due to limited financial resources. Park Hosts are utilized to assist with maintenance and operations. Managing the park resources through frequent park-wide surveillance is difficult, particularly those areas that cannot be accessed by vehicle, which is the majority of the park. The limited surveillance capacity and access at Estrella Mountain Regional Park restricts fire management techniques, which limits the protection of the natural resources for the future. Additionally, there is a lack of maintenance resources available to address ongoing facility needs and the repair of facilities.

11.2.5 LAKE PLEASANT REGIONAL PARK

11.2.5.1 LOCATION/SETTING

Lake Pleasant Regional Park is comprised of 23,643 acres and is one of two County parks that have land within two counties, Maricopa and Yavapai. The park is located in north Peoria and is surrounded by Bureau of Land Management (BLM), State of Arizona, and privately held lands on the east, west and south sides. The north side of the park is within Yavapai County and the land is predominately publicly owned. The main entry to the park is located on Lake Pleasant Access Road immediately off of Castle Hot Springs Road, two miles north of US 60. There is a secondary public access entry on Castle Hot Springs Road, approximately 5 miles north of US 60. The public access entry off of Castle Hot Springs Road is controlled by a contact station. The Park is open to the public 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, with day-use areas operating for the hours of 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM Sunday to Thursday, and 6:00 AM to 10:00 PM Friday and Saturday.

11.2.5.2 NATURAL AND VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Lake Pleasant Regional Park is the only park in the County system with a large lake that comprises the majority of the park area. The lake is surrounded by lower Sonoran Desert Mountains, bajadas, arroyos and washes. The base elevation of the lake is 1,690 feet and the topography around the perimeter of the lake is diverse with some areas over 2,400 feet.

The most striking natural characteristic of the park, is the vivid contrast between the lake and the surrounding rugged desert terrain. The many "fingers" created by the lake, provide expanded habitat for fish and wildlife. One of the more unique wildlife areas is an eagle habitat and nesting area, located in the northeastern area of the park.

11.2.5.3   RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Lake Pleasant Regional Park offers one of the most diverse recreational programs of all the County Parks. The majority of the recreational uses revolve around the lake. Water-based recreation includes boating, swimming, fishing and educational classes, such as scuba diving and swimming.

The majority of the land based recreational opportunities are located along the southern and western areas of the park. Day and overnight camping areas are located in close proximity to the lake and are accessible by paved roads.

Large and small group shade ramadas are provided for picnicking and gathering events. Multi-use trails are limited at Lake Pleasant Regional Park. The trails system offers views that are contained in many areas and other areas offer spectacular vistas to Lake Pleasant, the Bradshaw Mountains in north Yavapai County, and the surrounding desert mountains. The Maricopa County Trails System, which is planned to link all of the County Regional Parks, except Adobe Dam Regional Park, accesses Lake Pleasant Regional Park from the south, with connectivity from this location to Spur Cross Ranch, several miles to the east and to White Tank Mountain Regional Park, several miles to the southwest.

The Desert Outdoor Center, located in the southeast corner of the park provides an educational environment and facilities for groups of all sizes. The Center can accommodate overnight stays and offers environmental classrooms and exhibits. Outdoor interpretive trails and educational spaces are provided and extend from the Center to the lake. A visitor Interpretive Center is located on a prominent vantage point near New Waddell Dam. A broad range of Park and interpretive information is provided for visitors as well as a gift store.

The Park is home to many special events throughout the year, including triathlons and July 4th fireworks.

11.2.5.4   KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Like many of the parks in the County System, Lake Pleasant Regional Park is experiencing increasing use and pressures from adjacent private development. The greatest challenge for this park is to maintain controlled access and to limit uncontrolled access. Lake Pleasant Regional Park is surrounded by a mix of land ownership on all sides, and encroaching development is eminent. The most remote area of the park is the   north side, and is most protected from encroachment.   Due to the remote and rugged nature of the park, it is difficult to control access along the boundaries which puts additional pressure on the natural resources, and makes it more difficult to manage the use of the park.

The park headquarters offers an abundance of visitor information related to the natural resources and man made amenities offered at the park. Similar to the majority of the

County Parks, increasing visitation presents a greater need for a larger visitor center that can assist County staff meet a diversity of needs, both educational and administrative.

Common to all of the parks in the County system, Lake Pleasant Regional Park is short staffed due to limited financial resources. Park Hosts are available to assist with maintenance and operations. Managing the park resources through frequent park-wide surveillance is difficult, particularly those areas that can not be accessed by vehicle, which includes the north and east sides of the park. The limited surveillance capacity and access restrict fire management techniques, which limits the protection of the natural resources for the future.

Increasing demand on the unique lake resources from an expanding population will continue to place additional pressure on the Park. The areas that are most environmentally sensitive, predominately in the north and east, will need to continue to be closely monitored for impacts and carrying capacity.

11.2.6 MCDOWELL MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK

11.2.6.1 LOCATION/SETTING

McDowell Mountain Regional Park is comprised of 21,099 acres within the lower Verde River basin, and is one of the largest parks in the County system. The park is located north

of the Town of Fountain Hills, northeast of Tonto Verde and in eastern foothills of the McDowell Mountains. The main entry to the park is located on McDowell Mountain Park Drive, off of Fountain Hills Boulevard, approximately four miles north of Fountain Hills. The main entrance is controlled by a contact station. All other access to the park is via pedestrian and equestrian trails. The Park is open to the public 365 days a year and park hours are 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM Sunday to Thursday and 6:00 AM to 10:00 PM Friday and Saturday.

11.2.6.2 NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS

Situated in the eastern foothills and bajadas of the McDowell Mountains, McDowell Mountain Regional Park is rich in upper Sonoran Desert vegetation, abundant wildlife, including deer, javelina, coyotes, many species of birds and snakes. The parks topography is diverse, ranging from 1,500 feet adjacent to the Verde River corridor along the east boundary to foothill elevations around 3,000 feet. The most striking natural characteristics of the park are its physical context between the rugged McDowell Mountains and the striking riparian Verde River corridor, as well as its dramatic mountain vistas in all directions. The overall park area is characterized by a series of bajadas, arroyos and washes that extend from west to east, dissecting the park. All of the natural drainage from the park makes its way to the Verde River.

11.2.6.3   CULTURAL RESOURCES

McDowell Mountain Regional Park is home to some unique cultural history. The park's proximity to the Verde and Salt River made it a natural hunting and gathering site, and the park contains many remains of several such sites, including petroglyphs and archaeological evidence.

11.2.6.4   RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

McDowell Mountain Regional Park offers one of the most extensive multi-use trails systems of all the County Regional Parks, over 50 miles! Hiking and equestrian trails are located throughout the park, providing a diversity of opportunities to visit nearly all areas of the park. The trails system offers views that are contained in many areas and other areas offer spectacular vistas to Tonto Forest mesas and mountains east of the park, the majestic McDowell Mountains to the west, and the Verde River Basin views to the east and southeast. One of the more popular trails is the Pemberton Trail, which offers a large 15 mile loop of the park, with a variety of topography. The Maricopa County Trails System, which is planned to link all of the County Regional Parks, except Adobe Dam Regional Park, accesses McDowell Mountain Regional Park from the northwestern corner, with connectivity from this location to Spur Cross Ranch, several miles to the north and to Usery Mountain Regional Park, and several miles to the southeast. One of the unique opportunities for park visitors is direct access from the park to the McDowell Mountains. The mountains have been preserved to protect the natural resources and to expand recreational open space, including any miles of multi-use trails. Together, the park and the mountains offer expansive areas that will remain predominately in their natural condition.

Small and large group camping and picnicking facilities are located throughout much of the central area of the park. Some of these camping areas provide spaces for motor homes, while many do not. Large group ramadas are available by reservation.

While the majority of the park recreational facilities are passive in nature, such as camping, picnicking, and trails, the park offers unique competitive bike courses located in the southeastern area of the park. These courses have received national recognition, and numerous national caliber competitive events are hosted at the park each year.

11.2.6.5   KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Like many of the parks in the County System, McDowell Mountain Regional Park is experiencing increasing use and pressures from adjacent private development. The greatest

challenge for this park is to maintain controlled access and to limit uncontrolled access. McDowell Mountain Regional Park is protected from encroaching development on the west by the McDowell Mountain range. The north, south and east boundaries are all experiencing increasing private development pressure. Existing fences along these boundaries are often cut, creating entries from private property. Uncontrolled access from these properties puts additional pressure on the natural resources, and makes it more difficult to manage the use of the park.

The park headquarters offers an abundance of visitor information related to the natural resources and manmade amenities offered at the park. Similar to the majority of the County Parks, increasing visitation presents a greater need for a larger visitor center that can assist County staff meet a diversity of needs, both educational and administrative.

Common to all of the parks in the County system, McDowell Mountain Regional Park is short staffed due to limited financial resources. Park Hosts are utilized to assist with maintenance and operations. Managing the park resources through frequent park-wide surveillance is difficult, particularly those areas that cannot be accessed by vehicle, which is the majority of the park. The limited surveillance capacity and access restrict fire management techniques, which limits the protection of the natural resources for the future. Wildfires have taken their toll on the park in recent years providing evidence of the damage that comes with uncontrollable fires.

11.2.7 SAN TAN MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK

11.2.7.1   LOCATION/SETTING

San Tan Mountain Regional Park is comprised of 10,000 acres and is located in both Maricopa and Pinal Counties in the southeast Valley. The park is located south of the Town of Queen Creek, southeast of the Sun Lakes community, west of the Town of Florence, north of the Town of Coolidge and east of Interstate 10. A large area of the Park's western and southern boundaries is located adjacent to the Gila River Indian Community. The main entry to the park is located on the east side of the park, south of Hunt Highway on Thompson Road, and east on Phillips Road. The entry is controlled by a contact station. All other access to the park is via pedestrian and equestrian trails. The Park is open to the public 365 days a year and park hours are 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM Sunday to Thursday and 6:00 AM to 10:00 PM Friday and Saturday.

11.2.7.2   NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS

Situated in the heart of the San Tan Mountains, San Tan Regional Park is rich in lower Sonoran Desert vegetation, abundant wildlife, including deer, javelina, coyotes, many species of birds and snakes. The parks topography is diverse, ranging from 1,400 feet in the valley plains to the mountain elevations around 2,500 feet. The most striking natural characteristics of the park, is the rugged mountain topography that rises from the lower

Sonoran Desert valley plains. The higher elevations throughout the park, offer dramatic mountain and valley vistas in all directions. The overall park area is characterized by a series of rugged mountain peaks to bajadas, arroyos and washes that extend from the highest elevations to the Valley plains.

11.2.7.3 RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

San Tan Mountain Regional Park is one of the least developed parks in the County System. Most of the park development has been focused on multi-use trails. All of the trails are generally located in the central area of the park. There is an abundance of non-designated equestrian trails and use throughout park, and much of this use is from rural residential areas around the park.

The Maricopa County Trails System, which is planned to link all of the County Regional Parks, except Adobe Dam Regional Park, accesses San Tan Mountain Regional Park from the north, with connectivity from this location to Usery Mountain Regional Park, several miles to the north and to Estrella Mountain Regional Park, and several miles to the west.

11.2.7.4 KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Like many of the parks in the County System, San Tan Mountain Regional Park is experiencing increasing use and pressures from adjacent private development. The greatest challenge for this park is to maintain controlled access and to limit uncontrolled access. San Tan Mountain Regional Park is protected from encroaching development on the south by Gila River Indian Community. Many other boundaries are all experiencing increasing private development pressure. Existing fences along these boundaries are often cut, creating entries from private property. Uncontrolled access from these properties puts additional pressure on the natural resources, and makes it more difficult to manage the use of the park.

Similar to the majority of the County Parks, increasing visitation presents a greater need for a larger visitor center that can assist County staff meet a diversity of needs, both educational and administrative.

Common to all of the parks in the County system, San Tan Mountain Regional Park is short staffed due to limited financial resources. Managing the park resources through frequent park-wide surveillance is difficult, particularly those areas that can not be accessed by vehicle, which is the majority of the park. The limited surveillance capacity and access restrict fire management techniques, which limits the protection of the natural resources for the future.

11.2.8 SPUR CROSS RANCH CONSERVATION AREA

11.2.8.1 LOCATION/SETTING

Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area is comprised of 2,154 acres and is the newest addition to the Maricopa County Regional Parks system. The park is located north of the Town of Cave Creek and adjacent to the south boundary of Tonto National Forest. The main entry to the park is located approximately 7 miles north of Cave Creek Road on Spur Cross Road. Access is currently controlled by an "iron ranger", with access via a step-through gate.

Information and regulatory signage related to park usage is provided at this location. All other access to the park is via the Regional Trail or Forest Service Road 4 from Tonto National Forest. The Park is open to the public 365 days a year and park hours are 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM Sunday to Thursday and 6:00 AM to 10:00 PM Friday and Saturday.

11.2.8.2 NATURAL AND VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Situated in the rugged upper Sonoran Desert, Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area is one of the most unique sites in the County Park system. The rich riparian Cave Creek corridor is

sharply contrasting to the surrounding rugged desert environment and meanders through the park from the National Forest south through the Town of Cave Creek. The Creek has running water through the majority of the winter months. The parks topography is diverse ranging from the lower Creek elevations around 2,400 feet to a high point at Elephant Mountain, around 4,000 feet. The rugged arroyos and washes throughout the park contain abundant vegetation and natural travel corridors for wildlife. The park is rich in riparian and upper Sonoran vegetation. Elevations are ideal for Saguaro cacti habitat and large stands can be found throughout the park. Contrasting large

cottonwood trees can be found along Cave Creek. Wildlife commonly found in the park include, deer, javelina, coyotes, and many species of snakes. The park setting provides majestic views in all directions. The views along the Creek corridor are contained in many areas, in contrast to open, unrestricted views at higher elevations.

11.2.8.3 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area is home to an abundance of fascinating archaeology sites. These include Hohokam Indian sherds, petroglyphs which are hundreds of years old, to remnants of more recent historical activity related to mining and ranching. The name Spur Cross Ranch is derived from the historical Ranch which was located on the west side of Cave Creek. Guided tours at the Park provide opportunities to view these sites and evidence of past civilizations.

11.2.8.4 RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Hiking and equestrian trails are located throughout the park, providing a diversity of opportunities to visit nearly all areas of the park. The trails system offers spectacular vistas to Tonto Forest mesas and mountains, north of the park, and valley plain views to the Towns of Cave Creek and Carefree. The Maricopa County Trails System, which is planned to link all of the County Regional Parks, except Adobe Dam Regional Park, accesses Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area from the southwest corner of the Area, with connectivity from this location to Cave Creek Recreation Area to the south and Lake Pleasant Regional Park to the west.

Equestrian use in this park is abundant with many visitors that trailer their horses to the Area, utilizing the parking area near the main entry on Spur Cross Road. Other local equestrian visitors access the Park by the Maricopa County Trails System and major drainage corridors.

11.2.8.5   KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Like many of the parks in the County System, Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area is experiencing increasing use and pressures from adjacent private development. The greatest challenge for this park is to maintain controlled access and to limit uncontrolled access. Similar to many of the parks in the System, the Conservation Area is surrounded by a mix of land uses and ownership, including private, National Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and State Trust Land. Many of the Private areas are developing rapidly from the south up to the border of the park, creating access control issues. The future disposition of the remaining BLM and State land areas is uncertain and creates an added sense of urgency to protect the boundaries and resources of the park.

Common to all of the Parks in the System, Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area is short staffed due to limited financial resources. Park Hosts are not currently utilized for this Park. Managing the park resources through frequent park-wide surveillance is difficult, particularly those areas that cannot be accessed by vehicle, which is the majority of the park. The limited surveillance capacity and access restrict fire management techniques, which limits the protection of the natural resources for the future. Recent wildfires in close proximity to the Area are evidence of the impacts of fire on the natural desert environment.

Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area also suffers from issues of invasive weeds, a lack of parking, and a lack of bathrooms. This park is in need of on-site administrative and management staff. A visitor interpretive center which can provide information and education would benefit the overall operations and protection of this unique environment.

11.2.9 USERY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK

11.2.9.1   LOCATION/SETTING

Usery Mountain Regional Park is comprised of 3,648 acres and is located on the east side of the Valley. The park is located east of the City of Mesa, north of the Town of Apache Junction and directly abuts the west end of the Goldfield Mountains and Tonto National Forest along its eastern boundary. The main entry to the park is located on Usery Park Road, off of Usery Pass Road. The entry is controlled by a contact station. All other access to the park is via pedestrian and equestrian trails. The Park is open to the public 365 days a year and park hours are 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM Sunday to Thursday and 6:00 AM to 10:00 PM Friday and Saturday.

11.2.9.2   NATURAL AND VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Situated in the western foothills of the Goldfield Mountains, Usery Mountain Regional Park is rich in lower Sonoran Desert vegetation, abundant wildlife, including deer, javelina, coyotes, many species of birds and snakes. The parks topography is diverse, ranging from 1,500 feet in the valley plains to the mountain elevations surrounding Pass Mountain,

around 2,200 feet. The most striking natural characteristics of the park, is it's juxtaposition with the rugged Pass Mountain rising to 3,300 feet. The higher elevations along the eastern boundary offer dramatic mountain and valley vistas in all directions. The overall park area is characterized by a series of bajadas, arroyos and washes that extend from the higher eastern elevations to the southwest.

11.2.9.3 RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Usery Mountain Regional Park offers one of the most diverse recreational programs of all the County Parks. Multi-use trails, camping, picnicking, horseback riding, R/C model airplanes, and archery opportunities are several of the most popular activities that the park offers.

The Park offers a wide variety of multi-use trails, most of which are located in the southern half of the Park, including a barrier free loop trail around Merkle Hills in the center of the Park. One of the most popular trails is Pass Mountain, which extends around Pass Mountain in Tonto National Forest. The Maricopa County Trails System, which is planned to link all of the County Regional Parks, except Adobe Dam Regional Park, accesses Usery Mountain Regional Park from the north, with connectivity from this location to McDowell Mountain Regional Park, several miles to the north and to San Tan Mountain Regional Park, several miles to the south.

One of the unique opportunities for park visitors is direct access to Tonto National Forest from the east boundary of the Park. Tonto National Forest expands the open space and passive recreation resources for visitors. Together, the Park and the National Forest land offer expansive areas that will remain predominately in their natural condition.

Small and large group camping and picnicking facilities are located throughout much of the north-central area of the park. Some of these camping areas provide spaces for motor homes, while some do not.

Superstition Air Park provides a facility dedicated to radio control model airplanes. This facility is located in the southeastern corner of the site with a dedicated access road and parking area.

One of the more unique recreation facilities is the Archery Range, located in the northern area of the site, is a first class facility, attracting many archers.

11.2.9.4   KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Like many of the parks in the County System, Usery Pass Regional Park is experiencing increasing use and pressures from adjacent private development. The greatest challenge for this park is to maintain controlled access and to limit uncontrolled access.   Usery Pass Regional Park is protected from encroaching development on the east by Tonto National Forest. The west, south and south- east boundaries are all experiencing increasing private development pressure.   Existing fences along these boundaries are often cut, creating entries from private property. Uncontrolled access from these properties puts additional pressure on the natural resources, and makes it more difficult to manage the use of the park.

The park headquarters offers an abundance of visitor information related to the natural resources and manmade amenities offered at the park. Similar to the majority of the County Parks, increasing visitation presents a greater need for a larger visitor center that can assist County staff meet a diversity of needs, both educational and administrative.

Common to all of the parks in the County system, Usery Pass Regional Park is short staffed due to limited financial resources. Park Hosts are utilized to assist with maintenance and operations.   Managing the park resources through frequent park-wide surveillance is difficult, particularly those areas that cannot be accessed by vehicle, which is the majority of the park. The limited surveillance capacity and access restrict fire management techniques, which limits the protection of the natural resources for the future.

11.2.10 WHITE TANK REGIONAL PARK

11.2.10.1   LOCATION/SETTING

White Tank Mountain Regional Park is comprised of 30,000 acres and is the largest park in the County system. The park is located within the White Tank Mountains in the west Valley surrounded by the Town of Buckeye. The main entry to the park is located on Olive Avenue, 4 miles west of Highway 303. The main entrance is controlled by a contact station. All other access to the park is via non-controlled pedestrian and equestrian trails. The Park is open to the public 365 days a year and park hours are 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM Sunday to Thursday and 6:00 AM to 10:00 PM Friday and Saturday.

11.2.10.2   NATURAL AND VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Situated in the heart of the White Tank Mountains, White Tank Mountain Regional Park is characterized by rugged topography with rich upper Sonoran Desert vegetation, abundant wildlife, including deer, javelina, coyotes, many species of birds and snakes. The parks topography is diverse, ranging from 1,500 feet in the valley plains to the rugged mountain peaks over 4,000 feet. The most striking natural characteristics of the park, are its rugged mountain peaks, deeply serrated with ridges and canyons. Erosion of the granite canyon walls exposed the white color of the granite and the depressions created by the erosion process, known as tanks are the derivation of the name White Tank.   The park offers dramatic mountain, foothills and valley plain vistas.

11.2.10.3   CULTURAL RESOURCES

White Tank Mountain Regional Park is home to some unique cultural history. The Hohokam Indians, and Western Yavapai occupied many areas of the White Tank Mountains. Archaeological evidence of their presence can be found throughout the park, and, in fact, 11 sites have been identified, many of these rich with petroglyphs. Most of the sites are concentrated around the White Tanks areas where water was historically available. One of the most popular trails, Waterfall Canyon, provides many opportunities to view the largest concentration of the petroglyphs.

11.2.10.4   RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

White Tank Mountain Regional Park offers a diversity of multi-use trails systems, with varying degrees of difficulty. The trails system offers views that are contained in many areas and other areas offer spectacular vistas to the surrounding valley plain and distant mountain views. The higher elevation trails are more difficult to traverse, with many steep slopes.

The Maricopa County Regional Trail, which is planned to link all of the County Regional Parks, except Adobe Dam Regional Park, accesses White Tank Mountain Regional Park from the east, with connectivity from this location to Lake Pleasant Regional Park, several miles to the north and to Buckeye Hills and Estrella Mountain Regional Park several miles to the south.   One of the unique opportunities for park visitors, is direct access from the park to other areas of the White Tank Mountains.

Small and large group camping and picnicking facilities are located throughout much of the central area of the park. Some of these camping areas provide spaces for motor homes, while many do not. Large group ramadas are available by reservation. While the majority of the park recreational facilities are passive in nature, such as camping, picnicking, and trails, the park offers a competitive bike course located in the northeastern area of the park.

11.2.10.5   KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Like many of the parks in the County System, White Tank Mountain Regional Park is experiencing increasing use and pressures from adjacent private development. The greatest challenge for this park is to maintain controlled access and to limit uncontrolled access. The majority of the current development pressure is coming from the east and west sides of the park. Growth of the metropolitan Valley is rapidly approaching the east side of the park.. The west side of the mountain, in the Sun Valley area, is currently in the early stages of planning and development, and will soon resemble the east side. Existing fences along

these boundaries are often cut, creating entries to the park land from adjacent private and public land. Uncontrolled access from these properties puts additional pressure on the natural resources, and makes it more difficult to manage the use of the park.

The park headquarters offers visitor information related to the natural resources and manmade amenities offered at the park. Similar to the majority of the County Parks, increasing visitation presents a greater need for a larger visitor center that can assist County staff meet a diversity of needs, both educational and administrative. Common to all of the parks in the County system, White Tank Mountain Regional Park is short staffed due to limited financial resources. Park Hosts are utilized to assist with maintenance and operations. Managing the park resources through frequent park-wide surveillance is difficult, particularly those areas that cannot be accessed by vehicle, which is the majority of the park. The limited surveillance capacity and access restrict fire management techniques, which limits the protection of the natural resources for the future.

11.3 SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC CAPITAL PHASING BY PARK

The phasing of capital projects for the Maricopa County Parks System recommended in this *Capital Improvement Plan* has been developed from the multitude of inputs detailed above in this report. The framework upon which this phasing is developed and applied was derived from the capital improvement plan provided by Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department in June 2007. In summary, the variables applied are:

1. Development principles as detailed within this report.
2. Operational themes as detailed within this report.
3. Priority mandates as detailed within this report.
4. Prioritized facility rankings as detailed within this report.
5. Existing conditions at Maricopa County Parks.

Capital projects are also organized by categories in the 10-year phasing plan detailed for each park in the Maricopa County System below. The categories have been established to distinguish between projects that reflect distinct purposes for the parks in which they are located. Projects are indicated in the phasing charts below to indicate which category it has been assigned to. These project categories are:

1. Capital repair and replacement
2. Equipment
3. Enhancing existing facilities for improved usage
4. Developing new facilities

At times the distinction of whether or not capital projects are enhancing existing facilities or developing new facilities can be subjective, but does not detract from the recommending phasing or corresponding cost estimates.

11.3.1 ADOBE DAM REGIONAL PARK

Adobe Dam Regional Park is the most developed park in the System. Urban growth has surrounded the site and there are no apparent opportunities for land acquisition for additional buffering. This park is one the largest revenue generators in the System, predominantly through vendor operations. The operational theme and priority mandates for Adobe Dam Regional Park are detailed in **Figure 82**.

Maricopa County Park	Adobe Dam Regional Park
Operational Theme	Destination Park
Priority Mandates	
1 - Devote resources to the repair and replacement of existing infrastructure.	
2 - Pursue limited development to enhance the quality and diversity of recreational opportunities.	
3 - Strategically develop facilities that increase the revenue generation capacity of the park and park system.	

Figure 82 - Adobe Dam Regional Park Operational Theme and Priority Mandates

The phased capital projects for Adobe Dam Regional Park are detailed in **Figure 83**.

		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Adobe Dam Regional Park		FY 2008-09	FY 2009-10	FY 2010-11	FY 2011-12	FY 2012-13
Capital Project	Project Category					
Water Storage Tank Repairs	Capital replacement and repair	$ -	$ 50,000		$ -	$ -
Boundary Fencing Replacement (to be determined)	Capital replacement and repair					$ 360,000
Park Subtotal		$ -	$ 50,000	$ -	$ -	$ 360,000

Figure 83 - Phased Capital Projects for Adobe Dam Regional Park

There are no additional projects recommended within this report identified for Adobe Dam Regional Park from Years 6 through 10. It is recommended that as additional capital repair and replacement projects are identified after 2008, that these projects be properly scheduled and phased to reflect both responsible facility management and funding availability. Additionally, it is recommended that any new developments identified that can be prudently pursued by private partners of the park also be appropriately evaluated and scheduled.

11.3.2 BUCKEYE HILLS RECEATION AREA

Buckeye Hills Recreation Area is likely the most remote park in the System. This park currently has very few improvements for recreation, with the exception of two shooting ranges. The majority of the park remains undeveloped. Buckeye Hills is surrounded by federal land predominantly owned by the Bureau of Land Management, which creates a buffer from encroachment. There exists strong potential for trails development that

connects with regional destinations. The operational theme and priority mandates for Buckeye Hills Recreation Area are detailed in **Figure 84**.

Maricopa County Park	Buckeye Hills Recreation Area
Operational Theme	Preservation, Conservation and Education Park
Priority Mandates	
1 - Preserve the natural setting and environmental aspects of the park by heavily restricted use and limited public access.	
2 - Pursue limited development to enhance the quality and diversity of recreational opportunities.	
3 - Strategically develop facilities that increase the revenue generation capacity of the park and park system.	

Figure 84 - Buckeye Hills Recreation Area Operational Theme and Priority Mandates

The phased capital projects for Buckeye Hills Recreation Area are detailed in **Figure 85**.

		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Buckeye Hills Recreation Area		**FY 2008-09**	**FY 2009-10**	**FY 2010-11**	**FY 2011-12**	**FY 2012-13**
Capital Project	**Project Category**					
Master Plan Update (completed in 1969)		-	375,000	-	-	-
Group Picnic Restroom w/ Septic System (2)	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	484,000	484,000
Maintenance Compound w/ Host Sites	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	900,000.00	-
Entrance Station	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	242,000
Stone Monument Entrance Sign	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	77,000
Pickup Truck 4X4	Equipment	-	-	-	-	43,200
Compact Sport Utility Vehicle	Equipment	-	-	-	-	50,400
Pickup Truck	Equipment	-	-	-	-	36,000
Utility Tractor	Equipment	-	-	-	-	72,000
Park Subtotal		$ -	$ 375,000	$ -	$ 1,384,000	$ 1,004,600
		Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
Buckeye Hills Recreation Area		**FY 2013-14**	**FY 2014-15**	**FY 2015-16**	**FY 2016-17**	**FY 2017-18**
Capital Project	**Project Category**					
Picnic Ramada Complex (2)	Develop new facilities	220,000	-	-	-	-
Individual Shaded Picnic Sites (20)	Develop new facilities	-	220,000	-	-	-
Playground w/ Shade Structure	Develop new facilities	-	132,000	-	-	-
Boundary Fence (10)	Develop new facilities	-	-	198,000	-	-
Boundary Survey (10)	Develop new facilities	-	-	83,500	-	-
Cultural Survey (10)	Develop new facilities	-	-	33,400	-	-
Visitor Center	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	3,000,000.00	-
Park Subtotal		$ 220,000	$ 352,000	$ 314,900	$ 3,000,000	$ -

Figure 85 - Buckeye Hills Recreational Area Phased Capital Projects

It is recommended that as additional capital repair and replacement projects are identified after 2008, that these projects be properly scheduled and phased to reflect both responsible facility management and funding availability. Additionally, it is recommended that any new developments identified that can be prudently pursued by private partners of the park also be appropriately evaluated and scheduled.

11.3.3 CAVE CREEK REGIONAL PARK

Cave Creek Regional Park features a nice mix of recreational opportunities and facilities. Most of the infrastructure development is less than 20 years old, as well as many of the facilities. Land acquisition wherever possible around the entire park should be considered a high priority as development is encroaching quickly. It is recommended that Cave Creek Regional Park feature development that encourages increased usage by families with children, and themed campgrounds designed to accommodate specialized user groups (ie. music camping, festivals, etc.). The operational theme and priority mandates for Cave Creek Regional Park are detailed in **Figure 86**.

Maricopa County Park	Cave Creek Regional Park
Operational Theme	Preservation, Conservation and Education Park
Priority Mandates	
1 - Preserve the natural setting and environmental aspects of the park by heavily restricted use and limited public access.	
2 - Acquire additional property to create a buffer from encroaching external development.	
3 - Strategically develop facilities that increase the revenue generation capacity of the park and park system.	
4 - Pursue limited development to enhance the quality and diversity of recreational opportunities.	

Figure 86 - Cave Creek Regional Park Operational Theme and Priority Mandates

The phased capital projects for Cave Creek Regional Park are detailed in **Figure 87**.

Cave Creek Regional Park		Year 1 FY 2008-09	Year 2 FY 2009-10	Year 3 FY 2010-11	Year 4 FY 2011-12	Year 5 FY 2012-13
Capital Project	Project Category					
Mine Closures	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	220,000	-	-
Security System	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	65,500	-	-
Staff Building Improvements (Insulation & Parking)	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	52,400	-	-
Boundary Fencing (7.5 mi.)	Develop new facilities	160,650	-	-	-	-
Boundary Survey (7.5 mi)	Develop new facilities	44,625	-	-	-	-
Cultural Survey (7.5 Mi)	Develop new facilities	17,850	-	-	-	-
Individual Picnic Shade Structures (20)	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	220,000	-	-
Shaded Park Host Sites (5)	Develop new facilities	-	-	412,500	-	-
40-foot parking shade cover for equpiment	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	13,100	-	-
Amphitheater Equipment	Equipment	59,500	-	-	-	-
Park Subtotal		$ 282,625	$ -	$ 983,500	$ -	$ -
		Year 6 FY 2013-14	Year 7 FY 2014-15	Year 8 FY 2015-16	Year 9 FY 2016-17	Year 10 FY 2017-18
Cave Creek Regional Park						
Capital Project	Project Category					
Master Plan Update (completed in 1980)	Enhance existing facilities	-	360,000	-	-	-
Campground Expansion (40 Sites)	Develop new facilities	-	-	6,000,000	-	-
Park Subtotal		$ -	$ 360,000	$ 6,000,000	$ -	$ -

Figure 87 - Cave Creek Regional Park Phased Capital Projects

It is recommended that as additional capital repair and replacement projects are identified after 2008, that these projects be properly scheduled and phased to reflect both responsible facility management and funding availability. Additionally, it is recommended that any new developments identified that can be prudently pursued by private partners of the park also be appropriately evaluated and scheduled.

11.3.4 ESTRELLA MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK

Estrella Mountain Regional Park is the third largest park in the System, with developed facilities second only to Adobe Dam concentrated on the north end of the site. The majority of the park is characterized by rugged mountains with limited development. It is recommended that Estrella Mountain Regional Park feature development that encourages increased usage by RV campers, to the degree that an RV campground with advanced and updated facilities be considered. Additionally, there is a need for a challenging short trail at this park. This facility would strongly enhance the use of the trails and other amenities of the site, as well as generate substantial revenue for the System. The operational theme and priority mandates for Estrella Mountain Regional Park are detailed in **Figure 88**.

Maricopa County Park	Estrella Mountain Regional Park
Operational Theme	Destination Park
Priority Mandates	
1 - Strategically develop facilities that increase the revenue generation capacity of the park and park system.	
2 - Preserve the natural setting and environmental aspects of the park by heavily restricted use and limited public access.	
3 - Devote resources to the repair and replacement of existing infrastructure.	

Figure 88 - Estrella Mountain Regional Park Operational Theme and Priority Mandates

The phased capital projects for Estrella Mountain Regional Park are detailed in **Figure 89**. Items noted in red are anticipated expenses that have the potential to be managed by a private partner as a developer/operator.

Estrella Mountain Regional Park		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
		FY 2008-09	FY 2009-10	FY 2010-11	FY 2011-12	FY 2012-13
Capital Project	**Project Category**					
Picnic Ramada Complex (8)	Develop new facilities	-	-	480,000	480,000	-
RV Resort Campground	Develop new facilities	8,000,000	-	-	-	-
Water Storeage Tank Repairs	Capital repair and replacement	-	-	78,600	-	-
Picnic Restroom Replacement (4)	Capital repair and replacement	327,250	-	330,000		330,000
Turf Area Lighting	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	660,000		-
Security System	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	65,500	-	-
Utility Cart (2) Mule	Equipment	-	-	39,300	-	-
Boundary Fencing (7.5 miles)	Develop new facilities	160,650	-	-	-	360,000
Boundary Survey (7.5 mile)	Develop new facilities	44,625	-	-	-	-
Cultural Survey (7.5 Mile)	Develop new facilities	17,850	-	-	-	-
Group Campground Design	Develop new facilities	-	87,500	-	-	-
Group Campground Restroom	Develop new facilities	-	484,000		-	-
Group Campground Ramadas (2)	Develop new facilities	-	220,000		-	-
Host Site canopies (7)	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	-	254,100	-
Amphitheater Equipment	Equipment	59,500	-	-	-	-
Park Subtotal		$ 8,609,875	$ 791,500	$ 1,653,400	$ 734,100	$ 690,000

Estrella Mountain Regional Park		Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
		FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-18
Capital Project	**Project Category**					
Picnic Restroom Replacement (4)	Capital repair and replacement	-	330,000	-	-	-
Gila River/143rd Ave. Overhead Ped. Xing	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	1,800,000
Amphitheater Upgrades	Enhance existing facilities	-	840,000	-	-	-
Master Plan Update (completed in 1988)	Enhance existing facilities	456,000	-	-	-	-
Rodeo Arena Upgrades and Design	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	900,000	-	-
Park Subtotal		$ 456,000	$ 1,170,000	$ 900,000	$ -	$ 3,300,000

Figure 89 - Estrella Mountain Regional Park Phased Capital Projects

It is recommended that as additional capital repair and replacement projects are identified after 2008, that these projects be properly scheduled and phased to reflect both responsible facility management and funding availability. Additionally, it is recommended that any new developments identified that can be prudently pursued by private partners of the park also be appropriately evaluated and scheduled.

11.3.5 LAKE PLEASANT REGIONAL PARK

Lake Pleasant Regional Park is one of the most unique parks in the System, featuring diverse natural and man-made amenities. The man-made lake is the focal point of the park and provides opportunities for abundant water-based recreation and access to nearly all land around the park. Primitive areas with little human impact need to be protected. It is recommended that Lake Pleasant Regional Park enhance its existing overnight accommodations with up to 20 cabins that are configured as single, double and family occupancy. Given the multitude of recreation opportunities, the attraction of the lake, and the harshness of the climate during peak usage seasons, cabins are anticipated to be in high demand at this park. The operational theme and priority mandates for Lake Pleasant Regional Park are detailed in **Figure 90**.

Maricopa County Park	Lake Pleasant Regional Park
Operational Theme	Destination Park
Priority Mandates	
1 - Strategically develop facilities that increase the revenue generation capacity of the park and park system.	
2 - Preserve the natural setting and environmental aspects of the park by heavily restricted use and limited public access.	
3 - Acquire additional property to create a buffer from encroaching external development.	
4 - Devote resources to the repair and replacement of existing infrastructure.	

Figure 90 - Lake Pleasant Regional Park Operational Theme and Priority Mandates

The phased capital projects for Lake Pleasant Regional Park are detailed in **Figure 91**. Items noted in red are anticipated expenses that have the potential to be managed by a private partner as a developer/operator.

		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Lake Pleasant Regional Park		FY 2008-09	FY 2009-10	FY 2010-11	FY 2011-12	FY 2012-13
Capital Project	**Project Category**					
Cabins (20)	Develop new facilities	-	**$ 3,000,000**	-	-	-
Shaded Park Host Site (Group Picnic Area)	Develop new facilities	-	-	98,250	-	-
Security System & Gates	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	131,000	-	-
ADA Fishing Dock	Develop new facilities	-	330,000	-	-	-
Navigational Aid Boat House	Develop new facilities	-	385,000	-	-	-
Picnic Ramada Complex	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	110,000	-
Boundary Fencing (10 Mile)	Develop new facilities	214,200	-	-	-	-
Bondary Survey (10 Mile)	Develop new facilities	59,500	-	-	-	-
Cultural Survey (10 Mile)	Develop new facilities	23,800	-	-	-	-
Boundary Fencing (35 Mi)	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	346,500
Boundary Survey (35)	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	192,500
Cultural Survey (35)	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	77,000
Agua Fria Project Master Plan	Develop new facilities	-	100,000	-	-	-
Entry Station Lanes w/ curbing and landscaping	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	200,000	-	-
Nav-Aid Boat Replacement	Capital repair and replacement	-	-	125,000	-	-
Scute Loop upgrades-add electric & water	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	-	852,000	-
Group Campground Host Site	Develop new facilities	-	-	98,250	-	
Re-roof Old Ranger Station	Capital repair and replacement	-	-	-	-	110,000
Repair Vistor Center Roof	Capital repair and replacement	-	62,500	-	-	-
Visitor Center Displays	Enhance existing facilities	-	31,250	-	-	-
Monument Sign	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	70,000	-	-
Amphitheater Equipment		59,500	-	-	-	-
Park Subtotal		$ 357,000	$ 3,908,750	$ 722,500	$ 962,000	$ 726,000

		Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
Lake Pleasant Regional Park		FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-18
Capital Project	**Project Category**					
Boundary Fencing (35 Mi)	Develop new facilities	378,000	-	-	-	-
Boundary Survey (35)	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Cultural Survey (35)	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Agua Fria Project Master Plan	Develop new facilities		2,400,000	-	-	-
Water Storage Tank Repairs	Capital repair and replacement	-	-	120,000	-	-
Two Cow Ridge-Primitive Camping Sites (25)	Develop new facilities	480,000	-	-	-	-
4-lane-additional restroom and parking	Develop new facilities	-	-	10,560,000	-	-
Master Plan Update (completed in 1995)	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	-	-	400,000
Park Subtotal		$ 858,000	$ 2,400,000	$ 10,680,000	$ -	$ 400,000

Figure 91 - Lake Pleasant Regional Park Phased Capital Projects

It is recommended that as additional capital repair and replacement projects are identified after 2008, that these projects be properly scheduled and phased to reflect both responsible facility management and funding availability. Additionally, it is recommended that any new

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developments identified that can be prudently pursued by private partners of the park also be appropriately evaluated and scheduled.

11.3.5.1   DESERT OUTDOOR CENTER AT LAKE PLEASANT REGIONAL PARK

The Desert Outdoor Center operates at Lake Pleasant Regional Park. This interpretive center has an objective of providing environmental education and includes meeting and classroom space, animal exhibits, amphitheater, dorms and marina. The Center is not open to general public and admission is by appointment only, with the exception of four times a year the Center is open to the general public for star gazing.

The Center has a gated entrance which presents an opportunity to add attractive signage at the entrance where signage is currently missing. The lack of lighting along the road from the gate leading up to the Center detracts from the quality of the user experience afterhours and potential creates safety issues for egress from star gazing events. There is also a lack of adequate lighting between the main building and the dorms.

There appears to be adequate indoor program space at the Center including a multi-purpose room, Exhibit Hall, Science Room, Resource Center. These are all flexible programming places used for classrooms, workshops or events. Outdoor program space is limited and should be considered to be expanded. The challenge course needs to be completed and marketed for corporate retreats, ASU Business School team training workshops, boy scout training. An archeology site targeting youth education is also being developed on site.

Construction of a boathouse should be explored to complement the existing features of the waterfront. The Center currently has a movable dock to adjust for varying water levels. Additional aquatic programming opportunities with boys scouts and aquatic / swim programs should be considered

The phased capital projects for the Desert Outdoor Center are detailed in **Figure 92**.

		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Desert Outdoor Center at Lake Pleasant		FY 2008-09	FY 2009-10	FY 2010-11	FY 2011-12	FY 2012-13
Capital Project	Project Category					
Drainage Improvements	Enhance existing facilities	$ -	$ 375,000.00	$ -	$ -	$ -
Security System	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	65,500	-	-
Water Storage Tank Repairs	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	78,600	-	-
Boundary Fencing (4 mile)	Develop new facilities	$ 85,680	-	-	-	-
Boundary Survey (4 Mile)	Develop new facilities	$ 23,800	-	-	-	-
Culutral Survey (4 Mile)	Develop new facilities	$ 9,520	-	-	-	-
Boundary Fencing (6 Mi.)	Develop new facilities	-	135,000	-	-	-
Boundary Survey (6)	Develop new facilities	-	37,500	-	-	-
Cultural Survey (6mi)	Develop new facilities	-	15,000	-	-	-
Chip - Seal Parking Lot	Enhance existing facilities	-	22,500	-	-	-
Shade over Archaeology and Dinosaur Pits	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	26,200	-	-
Extend Air Conditioning duct work in Kitchen	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	26,200	-	-
Path Lighting between dorms & main building	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	-	110,000	-
Park Subtotal		$ 119,000	$ 585,000	$ 196,500	$ 110,000	$ -

Figure 92 - Desert Outdoor Center Phased Capital Projects

11.3.6 MCDOWELL MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK

McDowell Mountain Regional Park is recognized for its diversity of user experiences, particularly diverse trails. Most of the facilities are in reasonably good condition, and are relatively passive in nature. Land acquisition opportunities for additional buffering are extremely limited. It is recommended that McDowell Mountain Regional Park feature development that strengthens its existing reputation as a park for outdoor fitness, social fitness, and nature education.

The operational theme and priority mandates for McDowell Mountain Regional Park are detailed in **Figure 93**.

Maricopa County Park	McDowell Mountain Regional Park
Operational Theme	Adventure and Outdoor Recreation Park
Priority Mandates	
1 - Preserve the natural setting and environmental aspects of the park by heavily restricted use and limited public access.	
2 - Pursue limited development to enhance the quality and diversity of recreational opportunities.	
3 - Strategically develop facilities that increase the revenue generation capacity of the park and park system.	

Figure 93 - McDowell Mountain Regional Park Operational Theme and Priority Mandates

The phased capital projects for McDowell Mountain Regional Park are detailed in **Figure 94**.

McDowell Mountain Regional Park		Year 1 FY 2008-09	Year 2 FY 2009-10	Year 3 FY 2010-11	Year 4 FY 2011-12	Year 5 FY 2012-13
Capital Project	**Project Category**					
Visitor Center	Develop new facilities	1,190,000	-	-	-	-
Amphitheater	Develop new facilities	330,000	-	-	-	-
Group Campground Restroom (2)	Develop new facilities	-	484,000	484,000	-	-
Family Campground Restroom (3)	Develop new facilities	423,500	-	423,500	-	423,500
Water Storage Tank Repairs	Capital repair and replacement	-	50,000	-	-	-
Shaded Park Host Sites (5)	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	412,500	-	-
Staff Building Improvements (Insulation & Parking)	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	44,000	-	-
Security System	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	55,000	-	-
Boundary Fencing (6 Mi.)	Enhance existing facilities	124,200	-	-	-	-
Boundary Survey (6)	Enhance existing facilities	35,700	-	-	-	-
Cultural Survey (6)	Enhance existing facilities	14,280	-	-	-	-
Boundary Fencing (12 Miles)	Enhance existing facilities	-	237,600	-	-	-
Boundary Survey (12)	Enhance existing facilities	-	66,000	-	-	-
Cultural Survey (12)	Enhance existing facilities	-	26,400	-	-	-
Individual Picnic Shade Structures (25)	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	275,000	-	-
Master Plan Update (completed in 1967)	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	330,000	-	-
Picnic Restroom (3)	Develop new facilities	302,500	-	-	-	-
Amphitheater Equipment	Equipment	59,500	-	-	-	-
Park Subtotal		$ 2,479,680	$ 864,000	$ 2,024,000	$ -	$ 423,500

McDowell Mountain Regional Park		Year 6 FY 2013-14	Year 7 FY 2014-15	Year 8 FY 2015-16	Year 9 FY 2016-17	Year 10 FY 2017-18
Capital Project	**Project Category**					
Picnic Restroom (3)	Develop new facilities	-	363,000	363,000	-	-
Picnic Ramada Complex/Shade at Youth Camp	Develop new facilities	-	-	110,000	-	-
Northeast corner Trail-trail and cultural resource	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	48,000
Campground-Refurbish North Loop-curbing/level	Capital repair and replacement	660,000	-	-	-	-
Park Subtotal		$ 660,000	$ 363,000	$ 473,000	$ -	$ 48,000.00

Figure 94 - McDowell Regional park Phased Capital Projects

It is recommended that as additional capital repair and replacement projects are identified after 2008, that these projects be properly scheduled and phased to reflect both responsible facility management and funding availability. Additionally, it is recommended that any new developments identified that can be prudently pursued by private partners of the park also be appropriately evaluated and scheduled.

11.3.7 SAN TAN MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK

San Tan Mountain Regional Park is actually located in Pinal County which creates substantial opportunity for a development and/or operational partnership between Maricopa and Pinal Counties. The park is primarily attractive for its hiking and equestrian trail opportunities. Encroaching development continues to place additional pressure on the park's resources. Limiting perimeter access is also a significant issue. It is recommended that San Tan Mountain Regional Park pursue the brand of a "high adventure park", seeking development and operational partnerships with organizations such as Outward Bound or National Outdoor Leadership School. The operational theme and priority mandates for San Tan Mountain Regional Park are detailed in **Figure 95** on the following page.

Maricopa County Park	San Tan Mountain Regional Park
Operational Theme	**Adventure and Outdoor Recreation Park**
Priority Mandates	
1 - Preserve the natural setting and environmental aspects of the park by heavily restricted use and limited public access.	
2 - Pursue limited development to enhance the quality and diversity of recreational opportunities.	
3 - Strategically develop facilities that increase the revenue generation capacity of the park and park system.	

Figure 95 - San Tan Mountain Regional Park Operational Theme and Priority Mandates

The phased capital projects for San Tan Mountain Regional Park are detailed in **Figure 96**.

		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
San Tan Mountain Regional Park		**FY 2008-09**	**FY 2009-10**	**FY 2010-11**	**FY 2011-12**	**FY 2012-13**
All Terrain Vehicle w/ Trailer--Mule	Equipment	$ 17,850	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Base Station Radio System	Equipment	11,900	-	-	-	-
Individual Shaded Picnic Sites (25)	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Picnic Restroom	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	462,000
Equestrian Staging Area	Develop new facilities	750,000		-	-	-
Trailhead w/ Restroom (3)	Develop new facilities	-	-	550,000		605,000
Water Utility Installation	Develop new facilities	-	500,000	-	-	-
Maintenance Compound w/ Host Sites	Develop new facilities	-	937,500	-	-	-
Security System	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	65,500	-	-
Boundary Fencing (1 Mi.)	Enhance existing facilities	21,420	-	-	-	-
Boundary Survey (1 Mi.)	Enhance existing facilities	5,950	-	-	-	-
Cultural Survey (1 Mi.)	Enhance existing facilities	2,380	-	-	-	-
Flat Bed Truck	Equipment	-	-	52,400	-	-
Visitor Center & Amphitheater	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Picnic Ramadas (2)	Develop new facilities	-	250,000	-	-	-
Master Plan Update-last completed 2005	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	-	-	144,000
Park Subtotal		$ 809,500	$ 1,687,500	$ 667,900	$ -	$ 1,211,000

		Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
San Tan Mountain Regional Park		**FY 2013-14**	**FY 2014-15**	**FY 2015-16**	**FY 2016-17**	**FY 2017-18**
All Terrain Vehicle w/ Trailer--Mule	Equipment	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Base Station Radio System	Equipment	-	-	-	-	-
Individual Shaded Picnic Sites (25)	Develop new facilities	275,000	-	-	-	-
Picnic Restroom	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Equestrian Staging Area	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Trailhead w/ Restroom (3)	Develop new facilities		605,000	-	-	-
Water Utility Installation	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Maintenance Compound w/ Host Sites	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Security System	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Boundary Fencing (1 Mi.)	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Boundary Survey (1 Mi.)	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Cultural Survey (1 Mi.)	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Flat Bed Truck	Equipment	-	-	-	-	-
Visitor Center & Amphitheater	Develop new facilities	-	2,200,000	-	-	-
Picnic Ramadas (2)	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Master Plan Update-last completed 2005	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Park Subtotal		$ 275,000	$ 2,805,000	$ -	$ -	$ -

Figure 96 - San Tan Mountain Regional Park Phased Capital Projects

It is recommended that as additional capital repair and replacement projects are identified after 2008, that these projects be properly scheduled and phased to reflect both responsible facility management and funding availability. Additionally, it is recommended that any new developments identified that can be prudently pursued by private partners of the park also be appropriately evaluated and scheduled.

11.3.8 SPUR CROSS RANCH CONSERVATION AREA

Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area is the most natural of all the parks in the System. The natural and cultural resources are rich and should be highly protected, with very limited development, restricted to the main access area, and trails. It is important to look for land acquisition opportunities to add additional park buffering. It is recommended that Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area feature development that strengthens its existing reputation as a park for conservation and nature education. The operational theme and priority mandates for Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area are detailed in **Figure 97**.

Maricopa County Park	Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area
Operational Theme	Preservation, Conservation and Education Park
Priority Mandates	
1 - Preserve the natural setting and environmental aspects of the park by heavily restricted use and limited public access.	
2 - Acquire additional property to create a buffer from encroaching external development.	
3 - Pursue limited development to enhance the quality and diversity of recreational opportunities.	
4 - Devote resources to the repair and replacement of existing infrastructure.	

Figure 97 - Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area Operational Theme and Priority Mandates

The phased capital projects for Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area are detailed in **Figure 98**.

		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area		FY 2008-09	FY 2009-10	FY 2010-11	FY 2011-12	FY 2012-13
Capital Project	Project Category					
Solar Oasis: Water Development	Develop new facilities	$ 59,500	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Cable suspension Feasibility Study	Enhance existing facilities	17,850	-	-	-	-
Boundary Fencing (10 Mi.)	Develop new facilities	-	-	235,800	-	-
Boundary Survey (10)	Develop new facilities	-	-	65,500	-	-
Cultural Survey (10)	Develop new facilities	-	-	26,200	-	-
Park Subtotal		$ 77,350	$ -	$ 327,500	$ -	$ -

Figure 98 - Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area Phased Capital Projects

There are no additional projects recommended within this report identified for Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area from Years 6 through 10. It is recommended that as additional capital repair and replacement projects are identified after 2008, that these projects be properly scheduled and phased to reflect both responsible facility management and funding availability. Additionally, it is recommended that any new developments identified that can be prudently pursued by private partners of the park also be appropriately evaluated and scheduled.

11.3.9 USERY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK

Usery Mountain Regional Park is recognized for its diversity of recreational and natural resources. This park, like many of the parks in the System, could benefit from investment in repairs and maintenance. The adjacency to the Tonto National Forest provides partnering opportunities that should continue to be pursued and supported. The park could benefit from additional trails development with the Forest Service. It is recommended that Usery Mountain Regional Park feature the development of an indoor field sports facility, or shooting range, to complement the existing archery range. This will strengthens its existing reputation as a park for outdoor recreation and also engage the surrounding areas in unique recreational opportunities. The operational theme and priority mandates for Usery Mountain Regional Park are detailed in **Figure 99**.

Maricopa County Park	Usery Mountain Regional Park
Operational Theme	Adventure and Outdoor Recreation Park
Priority Mandates	
1 - Preserve the natural setting and environmental aspects of the park by heavily restricted use and limited public access.	
2 - Strategically develop facilities that increase the revenue generation capacity of the park and park system.	
3 - Pursue limited development to enhance the quality and diversity of recreational opportunities.	

Figure 99 - Usery Mountain Regional Park Operational Theme and Priority Mandates

The phased capital projects for Usery Mountain Regional Park are detailed in **Figure 100**. Items noted in red are anticipated expenses that have the potential to be managed by a private partner as a developer/operator.

		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Usery Mountain Regional Park		**FY 2008-09**	**FY 2009-10**	**FY 2010-11**	**FY 2011-12**	**FY 2012-13**
Security System	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	65,500	-	-
Staff Building Improvements (Insulation & Parking)	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	44,000	-	-
Indoor Field Sports Facility	Develop new facilities	-	-	**3,000,000**	-	-
Picnic Restroom (2)	Develop new facilities	302,500	302,500			-
Boundary Fencing (7.5 Mi.)	Enhance existing facilities	160,650	-	-	-	-
Boundary Survey (7.5)	Enhance existing facilities	44,625	-	-	-	-
Cultural Survey (7.5)	Enhance existing facilities	17,850	-	-	-	-
Individual Picnic Shade Structure (25)	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	275,000	-	-
Group Picnic Restroom (4)	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Master Plan Update (completed in 1993)	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Host site at Trailhead Staging Area (2)	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	165,000
Electric Service to Ramadas (4) at Host Site	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	-	-	100,000
Group Restroom at Trailhead Staging Area	Develop new facilities	-	-	310,000	-	-
Kawasaki Mule	Equipment	-	-	-	-	-
Tent Camping Pilot	Develop new facilities	-	-	32,750	-	-
Amphitheater Equipment	Equipment	59,500	-	-	-	-
Park Subtotal		$ 585,125	$ 302,500	$ 3,727,250	$ -	$ 265,000
		Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
Usery Mountain Regional Park		**FY 2013-14**	**FY 2014-15**	**FY 2015-16**	**FY 2016-17**	**FY 2017-18**
Security System	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Staff Building Improvements (Insulation & Parking)	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Indoor Field Sports Facility	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Picnic Restroom (2)	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Boundary Fencing (7.5 Mi.)	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Boundary Survey (7.5)	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Cultural Survey (7.5)	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Individual Picnic Shade Structure (25)	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Group Picnic Restroom (4)	Develop new facilities	451,000	451,000	451,000	-	-
Master Plan Update (completed in 1993)	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	330,000	-	-
Host site at Trailhead Staging Area (2)	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Electric Service to Ramadas (4) at Host Site	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Group Restroom at Trailhead Staging Area	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Kawasaki Mule	Equipment	-	-	25,050	-	-
Tent Camping Pilot	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Amphitheater Equipment	Equipment	-	-	-	-	-
Park Subtotal		$ 451,000	$ 451,000	$ 806,050	$ -	$ -

Figure 100 - Usery Mountain Regional Park Phased Capital Projects

It is recommended that as additional capital repair and replacement projects are identified after 2008, that these projects be properly scheduled and phased to reflect both responsible facility management and funding availability. Additionally, it is recommended that any new developments identified that can be prudently pursued by private partners of the park also be appropriately evaluated and scheduled.

11.3.10 WHITE TANK REGIONAL PARK

White Tank Regional Park is one of the largest parks in the System. Urban growth is encroaching quickly on all sides, and will require special perimeter buffering attention. Rich cultural resources have been impacted in some areas and need protection. There are abundant opportunities for an expanded trails system.

Most of the developed facilities are old and need improvements. The operational theme and priority mandates for White Tanks Regional Park are detailed in **Figure 101**.

Maricopa County Park	White Tank Regional Park
Operational Theme	Preservation, Conservation and Education Park
Priority Mandates	
1 - Preserve the natural setting and environmental aspects of the park by heavily restricted use and limited public access.	
2 - Devote resources to the repair and replacement of existing infrastructure.	
3 - Pursue limited development to enhance the quality and diversity of recreational opportunities.	
4 - Acquire additional property to create a buffer from encroaching external development.	

Figure 101 - White Tanks Regional Park Operational Theme and Priority Mandates

The phased capital projects for White Tank Regional Park are detailed in **Figure 102**.

White Tank Regional Park		Year 1 FY 2008-09	Year 2 FY 2009-10	Year 3 FY 2010-11	Year 4 FY 2011-12	Year 5 FY 2012-13
Picnic Restroom (6)	Develop new facilities	-	-	925,000	925,000	-
Boundary Fencing (12 Mi.)	Develop new facilities	237,600	-	-	-	-
Boundary Survey (12)	Develop new facilities	71,400	-	-	-	-
Cultural Survey (12)	Develop new facilities	28,560	-	-	-	-
Staff Building Improvements (Insulation & Parking)	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	52,400	-	-
Security System	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	65,500	-	-
Competitive Track Restroom w/shower	Develop new facilities	-	-	495,000	-	-
Group Picnic Restroom (2)	Develop new facilities	-	363,000	330,000	-	-
Master Plan Update (completed in 1964)	Enhance existing facilities	-	330,000	-	-	-
Youth Area Ramada Complex	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	144,000
Host Site Shade Structures w/ Concrete Pad (4)	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	145,200
Individual Picnic Shade Structures (25)	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	-	-	275,000
Waterfall Trail Grant/ ADA trail at VC		-	-	-	-	-
South Border Fence at CASE property	Develop new facilities	-	25,000	-	-	-
Bike Path		-	-	-	-	-
Host Sites (2)	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	-
New Vehicle for IR transport animals	Equipment	-	-	-	-	-
2 S-10's Pickups	Equipment	-	-	-	-	-
Small John Deer Tractor/Backhoe	Equipment	-	-	-	-	-
2 Electric club cars	Equipment	-	-	-	-	-
1 Gator	Equipment	-	-	-	-	-
1 Six Wheel Quad 4x with trailer	Equipment	-	-	-	-	-
Interpretive Trail Panels (8)	Enhance existing facilities	-	26,250	-	-	-
Amphitheater Equipment	Equipment	59,500	-	-	-	-
Park Subtotal		$ 397,060	$ 744,250	$ 1,867,900	$ 925,000	$ 564,200

White Tank Regional Park		Year 6 FY 2013-14	Year 7 FY 2014-15	Year 8 FY 2015-16	Year 9 FY 2016-17	Year 10 FY 2017-18
Picnic Restroom (6)	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Boundary Fencing (12 Mi.)	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Boundary Survey (12)	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Cultural Survey (12)	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Staff Building Improvements (Insulation & Parking)	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Security System	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Competitive Track Restroom w/shower	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Group Picnic Restroom (2)	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Master Plan Update (completed in 1964)	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Youth Area Ramada Complex	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Host Site Shade Structures w/ Concrete Pad (4)	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Individual Picnic Shade Structures (25)	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Waterfall Trail Grant/ ADA trail at VC		-	-	-	-	-
South Border Fence at CASE property	Develop new facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Bike Path		-	-	-	-	-
Host Sites (2)	Develop new facilities	165,000	-	-	-	-
New Vehicle for IR transport animals	Equipment	48,640	-	-	-	-
2 S-10's Pickups	Equipment	-	39,750	-	-	-
Small John Deer Tractor/Backhoe	Equipment	-	79,500	-	-	-
2 Electric club cars	Equipment	-	-	56,780	-	-
1 Gator	Equipment	-	-	-	26,400.00	-
1 Six Wheel Quad 4x with trailer	Equipment	-	-	-	52,800.00	-
Interpretive Trail Panels (8)	Enhance existing facilities	-	-	-	-	-
Amphitheater Equipment	Equipment	-	-	-	-	-
Park Subtotal		$ 213,640	$ 119,250	$ 56,780	$ 79,200	$ -

Figure 102 - White Tank Regional Park Phased Capital Projects

It is recommended that as additional capital repair and replacement projects are identified after 2008, that these projects be properly scheduled and phased to reflect both responsible facility management and funding availability. Additionally, it is recommended that any new developments identified that can be prudently pursued by private partners of the park also be appropriately evaluated and scheduled.

11.4 PARK SYSTEM SUMMARY

Figure 103 summarizes the proposed phasing of capital projects by each park and year. **Figure 1** shows the County's total CIP development.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Maricopa County Park	**FY 2008-09**	**FY 2009-10**	**FY 2010-11**	**FY 2011-12**	**FY 2012-13**
Adobe Dam Regional Park	-	50,000	-	-	360,000
Buckeye Hills Recreation Area	-	375,000	-	1,384,000	1,004,600
Cave Creek Regional Park	282,625	-	983,500	-	-
Estrella Mountain Regional Park	8,609,875	791,500	1,653,400	734,100	690,000
Lake Pleasant Regional Park	357,000	3,908,750	722,500	962,000	726,000
Desert Outdoor Center at Lake Pleasant	119,000	585,000	196,500	110,000	-
McDowell Mountain Regional Park	2,479,680	864,000	2,024,000	-	423,500
San Tan Mountain Regional Park	809,500	1,687,500	667,900	-	1,211,000
Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area	77,350	-	327,500	-	-
Usery Mountain Regional Park	585,125	302,500	3,727,250	-	265,000
White Tanks Regional Park	397,060	744,250	1,867,900	925,000	564,200
Park Subtotal	$ 13,717,215	$ 9,308,500	$ 12,170,450	$ 4,115,100	$ 5,244,300
Private Development Partnerships	8,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	-	-
Park Total	$ 5,717,215	$ 6,308,500	$ 9,170,450	$ 4,115,100	$ 5,244,300
	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
Maricopa County Park	**FY 2013-14**	**FY 2014-15**	**FY 2015-16**	**FY 2016-17**	**FY 2017-18**
Adobe Dam Regional Park	-	-	-	-	-
Buckeye Hills Recreation Area	220,000	352,000	314,900	3,000,000	-
Cave Creek Regional Park	360,000	6,000,000	-	-	-
Estrella Mountain Regional Park	456,000	1,170,000	900,000	-	3,300,000
Lake Pleasant Regional Park	858,000	2,400,000	10,680,000	-	400,000
Desert Outdoor Center at Lake Pleasant	-	-	-	-	-
McDowell Mountain Regional Park	660,000	363,000	473,000	-	48,000
San Tan Mountain Regional Park	275,000	2,805,000	-	-	-
Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area	-	-	-	-	-
Usery Mountain Regional Park	451,000	451,000	806,050	-	-
White Tanks Regional Park	213,640	119,250	56,780	79,200	-
Park Subtotal	$ 3,493,640	$ 13,660,250	$ 13,230,730	$ 3,079,200	$ 3,748,000
Private Development Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-
Park Total	$ 3,493,640	$ 13,660,250	$ 13,230,730	$ 3,079,200	$ 3,748,000

Figure 103 - Proposed Phasing of Capital Projects

Maricopa County Park	**TOTAL**
Adobe Dam Regional Park	$ 410,000
Buckeye Hills Recreation Area	$ 6,650,500
Cave Creek Regional Park	$ 7,626,125
Estrella Mountain Regional Park	$ 18,304,875
Lake Pleasant Regional Park	$ 21,014,250
Desert Outdoor Center at Lake Pleasant	$ 1,010,500
McDowell Mountain Regional Park	$ 7,335,180
San Tan Mountain Regional Park	$ 7,455,900
Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area	$ 404,850
Usery Mountain Regional Park	$ 6,587,925
White Tanks Regional Park	$ 4,967,280
Park Subtotal	$ 81,767,385
Private Development Partnerships	$ 14,000,000
Park Total	$ 67,767,385

Figure 104 - Total CIP Development

CHAPTER TWELVE - IMPLEMENTATION

12.1 MARICOPA COUNTY VISION

"Our vision is to connect people with nature through regional parks, trails and programs, inspire an appreciation for the Sonoran Desert and natural open spaces, and create life-long positive memories."

12.2 MARICOPA COUNTY MISSION

"Our mission, through responsible stewardship is to provide the highest quality parks, trails, programs, services and experiences that energize visitors and create life-long users and advocates."

Please see **Appendix 1** for the detailed Action Strategy Matrix.

12.3 COMMUNITY VISION FOR LAND AND FACILITIES

"Develop a diverse, exciting, well maintained, and sustainable park system that has excellent and adequate facilities, provides a spectrum of recreational and educational opportunities, and provides a variety of different experiences and adventures that inspire a user to return often and to tell others about the quality of opportunities in any Maricopa County park."

12.3.1 GOAL

The Maricopa County Park System will be managed by standards and outcomes that support the vision for land and facilities by always demonstrating how well the agency is performing, and establishes justifications for budget and appropriation requests for every park and facility in the system.

12.3.1.1 STRATEGIES

- Land acquisition criteria must be established

- Land use and stewardship planning must be conducted for all park resources

- Create updated Park Master Plans for each park in the system

- Control inappropriate access and encroachment on County parks land exist

- Incorporate a comprehensive signage program system wide

- Create design standards and guidelines for parks, facilities and amenities

- Enhance park infrastructure and improvements to park roads

- The Department will seek new legislation from the Bureau of Land Management on County owned properties as it applies to land leases

- Implement the Maricopa County Regional Trail System Plan over the next ten years

- Develop a business plan for each park in the system

12.4 COMMUNITY VISION FOR PROGRAMS

"Our vision for recreation and educational programs is to stimulate the physical, mental and spiritual potential of individuals through quality programs that encourage a harmonious relationship between man and nature and by teaching users how to use Maricopa County Parks in the most appropriate manner."

12.4.1 GOAL

Develop wide age segment programs to attract users to Maricopa County Parks and into programs that increase the use of parks and operational revenues of the system.

12.4.1.1   STRATEGIES

- Establish Program Standards, guidelines and outcomes for all core programs that are market driven

- Develop core program strategies in the business plans

- Increase the marketing dollar support to build awareness and increase visitation to County parks

- Expand marketing and promotions initiatives to create an identifiable brand and unique positioning for the Department

- Add additional program staff to offer programs and "energy up" each park site to the value and use of the resource

- Develop more program partnerships to invite them to program services in County parks for a percentage of gross dollars earned and to increase awareness and attendance

12.5 COMMUNITY VISION FOR PARK OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

"Our vision is to provide quality safe parks that encourage positive use and provide memorable experiences."

12.5.1 GOAL

Increase the amount of users in parks through quality park maintenance, enticing amenities and quality programs and services.

12.5.1.1   STRATEGIES

- Develop a more global perspective of the Park System versus a park by park perspective

- Establish policies to ensure consistency in operations including procurement, naming rights, user fees, access and encroachment, sponsorships and partnerships

- Evaluate future opportunities to locate the Trades and Trail Crews into a West and East Region to reduce the drive times and increase efficiencies

- Create a dedicated full-time staff person to oversee the volunteer program

- Develop updated policies and strategies for pricing, sponsorship, partnerships, off-highway vehicle use, land acquisition, pristine desert management, encroachment management, earned income development

- Develop a Park District or Park Authority with a consistent funding source the Department can count on to meet the community needs and expectations

- Re-organize the Department to support the Strategic System Master Plan Recommendations

- Enhance employee communication and education of strategic goals and objectives

- Improve internal support provided to field operations

- Improve career advancement opportunities within the Department

- Develop a system-wide maintenance inspection process and life-cycle replacement program for all park assets

- Establish a comprehensive resource management plan to protect the system's cultural and natural resources in every park in the system

12.6 COMMUNITY VISION FOR FINANCING

"Our Vision for Financing is to create a sustainable park and recreation system that can maintain the County's Park and Open Space resources in perpetuity."

12.6.1 GOAL

Appropriately fund the Maricopa County Park and Recreation System based on the needs of the residents and visitors to county parks by allowing the Department to maximize all available resources.

12.6.1.1 STRATEGIES

- Develop a Business Development Office to create earned income opportunities to support the operational and capital budget of the Department

- Increase staff input into the budget process to create greater accountability and responsibility in the budget management process

- Increase efforts to acquire grants in the Department

- Develop additional revenue generation sources to help fulfill Department's goal of being as self-reliant as possible

- The Department must expand beyond using only operating revenues for capital

- Despite fee increases in 2008, future projections show a continuous deficit

- Partnerships and sponsorships must be strengthened

- The Department must continually update this plan and report results

CHAPTER THIRTEEN - CONCLUSION

> *"Considering that that (the American Parks Movement) has occurred simultaneously with a great enlargement of cities and development of urban habits, is it not reasonable to regard it as a self-preserving instinct of civilization?" – Frederick Law Olmsted*

The first "layer" of the vision for a city or a county is a great parks system. Great counties have great park systems with beautiful parks and outstanding natural features. Because human beings have a basic need for parks and open space to reconnect with nature, communities that lack adequate open space feel dreary and depressing in regards to the social, aesthetic, and economic fabric of a community.

While park systems in the past were thought of as "amenities," communities across the country are finally realizing how much value these park systems bring to their locales. Maricopa County is in the midst of change. The vision for great parks in Maricopa County acknowledges that in order for the system to be relevant, it must be responsive to new issues the community is facing. A "great park systems" must do the following:

- Stimulate the physical, mental, and spiritual potential of individuals

- Foster connectivity with good schools, jobs, housing, public transportation, clean air and safety

- Encourage a harmonious relationship between man and nature

- Help to conserve energy and natural resources

- Bring quality to the physical, social, economic, and cultural environment

- Take advantage of a community's unique features that include climate, geography, population, history, and express them though park design

- Understand a community's roots

- Involve the community in planning and the use of projects to position the system for the future

The Maricopa County park system needs to be flexible across a wide-range of contexts based on delivering services rather than just on acreage and population. While many people covet nature experiences in their life, it still does not foster enough appreciation to natural lands for an entire community.   Land conservation programs do help the environment, but there is a perception that their only function is an ecological one. This is

unfortunate given that more and more research points to the positive effects that open space has on the well-being of a community.

Psychologically, just viewing open space reduces stress levels. Direct interaction with nature, such as eco-tours or a causal walk through a protected area will yield more benefits, especially in the development of children, conserving lands can truly have duel benefits for nature and for people; however, this must be reinforced with the public.

> *"Historical places tell a community where it cam from, what previous generations achieved, what they believed, what they hoped to be. By protecting these reminders of the past, preservation also builds the present and the future." –* Natural Trust for Historic Preservation

The Maricopa County park system offers this and more. The Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department has an outstanding assortment of desert mountain parks within Maricopa County. The Department has struggled for years in trying to create a system to meet community needs and to provide adequate levels of staffing, operational and capital needs to create destination parks that people of all ages desire. The Strategic System Master Plan describes what the Department needs to do to become a best practice agency and deliver on all elements of what great park systems can deliver and what the community desires from the system. The population of Maricopa County continues to grow and the expectations of the system continue to increase as well. The Department must create strong advocacy, financial, and political support to maintain and protect the value of these open space regional parks for all citizens to enjoy for future generations. The Department has the leadership and commitment of staff, as well as the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission; however, it is imperative to gain public financial support through a variety of financing alternatives. The Parks and Recreation Department can be one of the key valued assets of the County if given the financial resources to manage to its capability. The opportunity is now and the leadership is in place to see this plan through, but it will not be easy. The Department is totally capable of delivering on the recommendations outlined in the plan with the right resources and the right political support. Let the advancement begin!