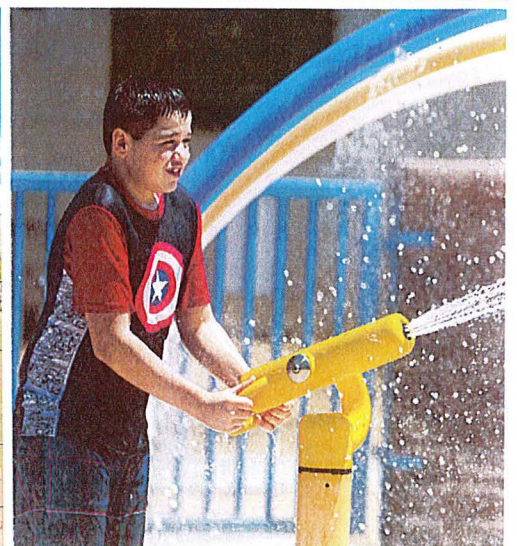
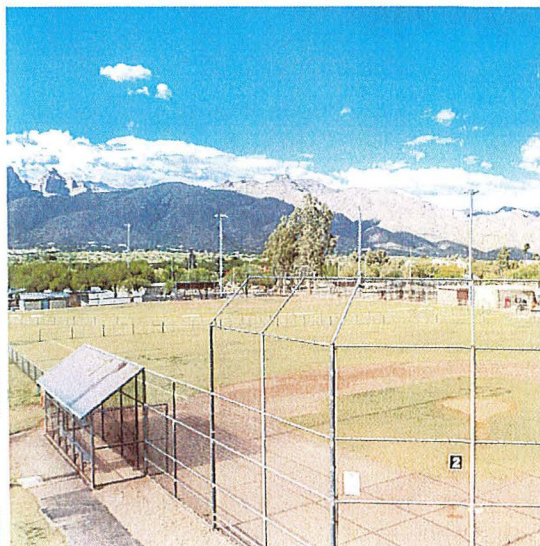




# MASTER PLAN







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# Executive Summary





## Executive Summary

Pima County Parks and Recreation enriches the lives of residents and visitors by providing safe, well-maintained parks, quality recreational facilities, and affordable programs and events. Its system spans urban neighborhoods, rural communities, and desert landscapes, offering places for recreation, connection, and community pride. Guided by a **vision of excellence and a commitment to people first, mission always, and continuous improvement**, the department creates spaces that support health, wellness, and meaningful connections that enhance quality of life across Pima County.

The **Pima County Parks and Recreation Master Plan** (Plan) provides a **clear framework to guide the next 20 years of reinvestment, expansion, and sustainability**. It is designed to:

- **Guide parks, amenities, and programs for the next 20 years**, ensuring that decision-making remains forward-looking and data-driven
  - **Place the right amenities in the right locations**, aligning investments with where people live and what they value most
  - **Adapt to future growth and recreation trends**, staying responsive to shifting demographics and interests
  - **Reflect community feedback and aspirations**, translating resident input into tangible priorities
  - **Highlight strengths and opportunities for improvement**, recognizing what works well and what needs updating or change
  - **Ensure lasting success by aligning funding**, staffing, and community partnerships with long-term sustainability
- .....



Developed over 18 months, the Plan is grounded in research, benchmarking, and community engagement. The planning process included:



**Engaging residents and stakeholders** through surveys, focus groups, community meetings, and outreach at popular events to reach people where they live and recreate

.....



**Evaluating operations, staffing, and funding** against peer and national benchmarks to understand organizational capacity

.....



**Reviewing recreation programs** to identify participation trends, unmet demand, and opportunities for innovation

.....



**Assessing parks and facilities** to determine service gaps, maintenance priorities, and reinvestment needs



## PIMA COUNTY MANAGES A WIDE RANGE OF FACILITIES, INCLUDING:



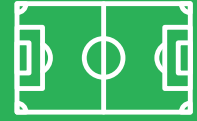
**41**  
PARKS



**12**  
COMMUNITY  
CENTERS



**9**  
POOLS



**106**  
SPORTS  
FIELDS



**9**  
DOG PARKS



**3**  
SHOOTING RANGE  
COMPLEX



**150**  
MILES OF MULTI-  
USE PATHS\*  
\*Including the 138-mile  
Chuck Huckelberry Loop

## Community Engagement: A Countywide Conversation

Thousands of residents helped shape the Plan through surveys, meetings, focus groups, and community events held throughout Pima County. **Multi-lingual engagement opportunities were designed to reach people where they live, work, and recreate, offering multiple ways to share ideas and priorities for the future of parks and recreation.**

A statistically valid survey gathered input from more than 650 households, supported by outreach at local events such as Tucson Meet Yourself, the Rillito and Rincon Valley Farmers Markets, the 4th Ave Street Fair, and the Tucson Rodeo. Residents also provided feedback through focus group session, an online engagement hub, and targeted facility surveys, identifying what they value most and where improvements are needed.

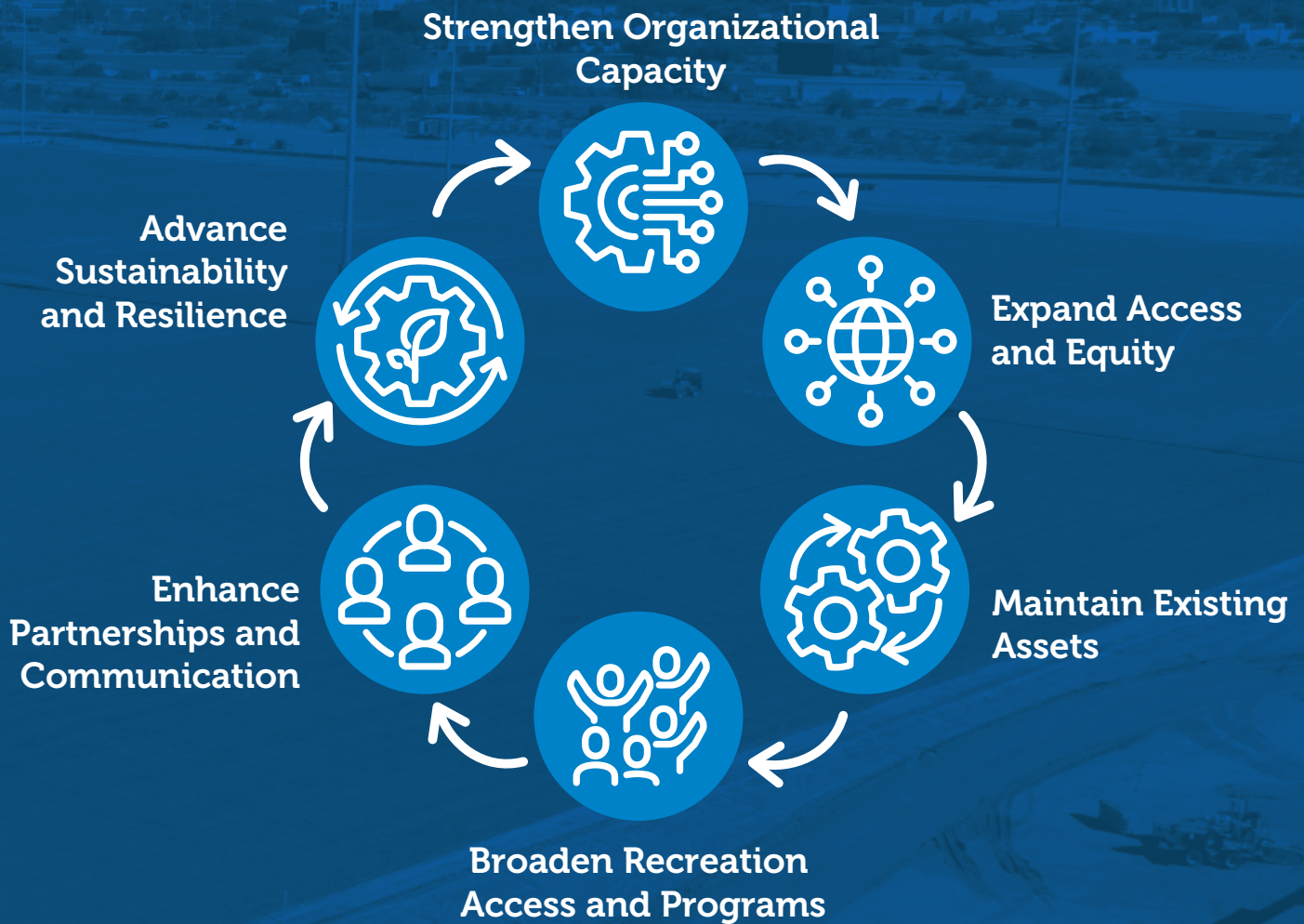
Across all engagement activities, **several themes emerged countywide, though priorities often varied by community type and location.** Common areas of focus included:

- Repairing and updating existing parks, pools, and community centers
- Expanding aquatics and community events
- Adding walking loops, dog parks, and playgrounds
- Improving overall sports field and park access

Together, this feedback underscores broad support for reinvestment in existing assets while recognizing that community needs differ across the county. These perspectives guided the priorities and phasing of the Implementation Plan and will continue to inform future decision-making.



# Plan Priorities





## Plan Priorities

The Implementation Plan identifies six priorities that guide reinvestment, operations, and community service over the next 20 years. Each is supported by detailed goals that establish clear actions, timelines, and funding pathways. Together, they create a balanced approach that emphasizes facility updates, operational equity, and long-term sustainability across Pima County's park and recreation system.

### ► Strengthen Organizational Capacity:

Builds the staffing, systems, and financial foundation needed to sustain services across a large and growing county and ensure long-term operational excellence.

### ► Expand Access and Equity:

Ensures all residents have equitable access to parks, facilities, and programs regardless of location or income to promote fairness and community well-being. These efforts directly support the County's prosperity initiative.

### ► Maintain Existing Assets:

Prioritizes updating and maintaining aging parks, pools, and community centers to extend their lifespan and maintain quality service levels.

### ► Broaden Recreation Access and Programs:

Expands the range and quality of recreation opportunities to meet evolving community needs and support active, healthy lifestyles.

### ► Enhance Partnerships and Communication:

Strengthens collaboration with local agencies, schools, and private partners to maximize resources, increase awareness, and expand community reach.

### ► Advance Sustainability and Resilience:

Promotes sustainable, cost-effective operations to reduce long-term costs. These efforts support the Sustainable Action Plan for County Operations for more sustainable operations and facilities.

## Looking Ahead

The Plan establishes a clear and achievable path for the next two decades. Grounded in community input, operational data, and fiscal responsibility, it provides the framework to guide reinvestment, strengthen organizational capacity, and expand access to parks and programs across Pima County. By aligning funding, partnerships, and stewardship, the Plan ensures that future decisions reflect both community priorities and sound management practices.

As Pima County continues to grow and change, the Plan will help the department adapt, reinvest wisely, and deliver parks and recreation experiences that enhance quality of life, reflect a commitment to excellence, and foster the meaningful connections that define Pima County's sense of community.





# 1.0 Introduction



The Parks and Recreation Master Plan (Plan) provides a 20-year roadmap to guide investments, operations, and services for the Pima County Parks and Recreation (PR) Department. Its purpose is to ensure the department continues to meet community needs through well-maintained parks, modern facilities, and high-quality programs.



## About Pima County Parks & Recreation

In 2024, Pima County (County) established PR as a standalone department following the transfer of natural resource functions to the new Conservation Lands and Resources (CLR) Department. This reorganization sharpened PR's focus on parks, recreation facilities, and community programs, creating the need for the department's first dedicated Master Plan.

PR is dedicated to enriching the lives of residents and visitors by providing safe parks, exceptional recreational facilities, and affordable programs and events. Guided by the vision of one team of recognized professionals committed to excellence, the department emphasizes teamwork, a "people-first, mission-always" mindset, and continuous improvement.

Serving one of Arizona's largest and most geographically and ethnically diverse counties, PR oversees **41 parks, 12 community centers, nine pools, nine dog parks, a shooting range complex, and nearly 150 miles of multi-use paths, including the 138-mile Chuck Huckelberry Loop (Loop)**. While the Loop was developed by the Pima County Regional Flood Control District, PR is responsible for its daily maintenance under an interdepartmental agreement. The department provides services across both unincorporated areas—rural communities, desert landscapes, and small towns—and incorporated municipalities, such as Tucson, Marana, Oro Valley, Sahuarita, and South Tucson.

### Mission Statement

To enrich the lives of Pima County residents and visitors by providing safe, expertly maintained parks with exceptional recreational facilities and affordable events.

To provide trusted gathering spaces allowing for meaningful community connections which advances healthy outcomes and quality of life.

### Vision Statement

One team of recognized Parks and Recreation professionals committed to achieving excellence.

### Values

Teamwork by focusing on People first, Mission always and Continuous Improvement.

## The Planning Process

The planning process was led by Berry, Dunn, McNeil & Parker, LLC (BerryDunn), a national consulting firm specializing in local government strategy and operations. The 18-month effort was designed to help ensure the Plan reflects broad community input, responds to local needs, and positions PR for long-term success.

### The process included:



- Engaging the community through surveys, focus groups, public meetings, and stakeholder discussions



- Reviewing program offerings to assess participation trends, unmet demand, and opportunities across different age groups and user types



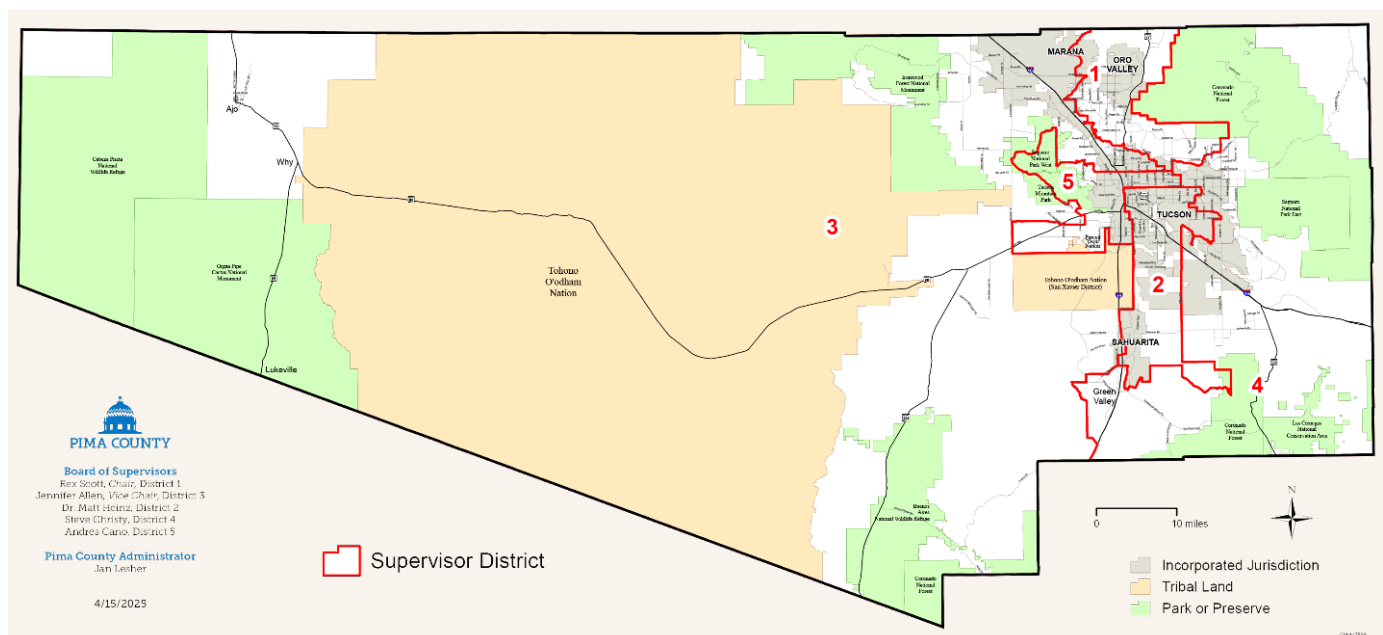
- Evaluating operations, funding, and staffing relative to national and regional benchmarks



- Assessing the park system's inventory and distribution, including other service providers, to identify gaps in service and opportunities for reinvestment

As part of this process, the County was analyzed both as a whole and by its five supervisor districts, which served as sub-areas for the Plan. This district-level approach allowed the team to identify geographic variations in population growth, income, racial and ethnic diversity, and access to parks and programs. Figure 1 provides a map of the County supervisor districts to illustrate the countywide framework used in the analysis.

**Figure 1: Supervisor Districts**





## Related County Planning Efforts

In addition to this Plan, PR's work is influenced by a broader set of countywide initiatives completed over the last decade. Many of these efforts intersect with parks and recreation by shaping where facilities are located, how natural corridors are preserved, and what standards guide new investments. By aligning with these countywide efforts, this Plan helps ensure that PR advances larger community goals for livability, sustainability, and access.

### **CHUCK HUCKELBERRY LOOP (THE LOOP) USAGE & EXTENSION PLANNING (ONGOING)**

Guides the maintenance and expansion of the Loop through digital user counters, crowdsourced data analysis, conceptual planning for trail extensions, and a Loop Patrol pilot program that improves safety, enforces rules, and enhances the visitor experience.

### **FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT PLAN (2025–2030)**

Guides flood risk reduction and open space preservation, directly affecting river parks, greenways, and trails.

### **PIMA PROSPERS—COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2015, UPDATE IN 2025)**

Establishes long-range land use policies for parks, recreation, and community services, with a focus on improving access for disadvantaged and historically underserved populations.

### **PIMA REGIONAL TRAIL SYSTEM MASTER PLAN (FOUNDATIONAL, WITH RECENT UPDATES)**

Provides the framework for regional trail development and connectivity across urban, suburban, and rural areas.

### **PROSPERITY INITIATIVE—BOARD POLICY E36.2 (2023, ONGOING)**

Establishes a countywide commitment to reducing generational poverty and improving community wealth by prioritizing investments in underserved areas, ensuring equitable access to facilities, and aligning programs with broader goals for health, education, and opportunity.

### **SANTA CRUZ RIVER MANAGEMENT PLAN (2021)**

Identifies strategies for managing river corridors, with implications for trails, recreation, and restoration projects.

### **STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS AND DETAILS FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT (2016)**

Establishes standards for the design, renovation, and construction of parks and recreation facilities.

### **SUSTAINABLE ACTION PLAN FOR COUNTY OPERATIONS (SAPCO) (2018–2025)**

Provides a framework for energy efficiency, water conservation, waste reduction, and sustainable land use, including turf reduction, irrigation efficiency, and facility design practices that reduce water use.



Demographic Profile

Understanding who lives in the County today and how the population is projected to change is essential for planning parks, facilities, and programs. To capture these dynamics, the analysis examined conditions **countywide and by supervisor district**. This district-level lens highlights important geographic differences in growth, income, age, and diversity that shape recreation needs.

In 2024, the County’s population was just over **1.07 million residents**, distributed relatively evenly across the five districts. Since 2000, all districts have grown, with **District 4 experiencing the most growth (+45.7%)**. Countywide growth has slowed in recent years, averaging **0.61% annually between 2020 and 2025**, and is projected to decline further to 0.25% between 2025 and 2030.

**The median age countywide is 41.9**, with residents ages **55–74 making up nearly one-quarter** of the population. By 2030, the **75 and older age group**

**is expected to increase by 2.2%**, while most other age groups will decline.

Household characteristics show clear disparities. The **median household income is \$69,802**, but Districts **1 and 4 exceed county, state, and national averages**, while Districts **2, 3, and 5 fall below**. Poverty is most concentrated in **District 5 (21.3%)**.

The County is also becoming more **racially and ethnically diverse**. Districts **2 and 5 are majority nonwhite and majority Hispanic**, while the share of residents identifying as **two or more races has grown from 3.7% in 2010 to 17.4% in 2025**, the most significant demographic shift in recent years.

Table 1 provides a snapshot of key demographic indicators across the five supervisor districts, highlighting the differences in growth, age, income, poverty, and racial diversity that shape recreation needs.

Table 1: District Snapshot

	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
Population (2024)	213,146	213,697	214,499	215,661	213,652
Population Growth (2000–2024)	21.5%	29.2%	29.4%	45.7%	12.9%
Median Age (2024)	50.9	36.7	41.1	48.4	34.9
Household Income (2024)	\$97,386	\$59,848	\$57,523	\$81,814	\$54,153
Households in Poverty (2024)	6.37%	18.60%	17.66%	7.71%	21.29%
Nonwhite Population (2024)	26.4%	53.5%	40.8%	28.0%	55.3%



## Prosperity Initiative

Pima County's Prosperity Initiative (Board Policy E36.2) commits the County to reducing generational poverty and improving individual and community wealth. Parks and Recreation plays a direct role in advancing this policy by:

- Delivering affordable, accessible programs that reduce household costs
- Providing safe, trusted gathering spaces that foster community support
- Creating opportunities for youth development, employment, and volunteerism

By embedding these values into the Master Plan, PR ensures its services contribute not only to recreation but also to the County's broader prosperity goals.

**CHILD POVERTY RATE**  
About  
**20%**  
of kids in Pima  
County live below  
the poverty line.



The demographic snapshot highlights significant differences across the County's five supervisor districts. **District 4** has grown the fastest since 2000 (+45.7%) and maintains one of the highest median household incomes, while **District 1** has the oldest population (median age 50.9) and the highest incomes overall. In contrast, **Districts 2 and 5** are younger, more racially and ethnically diverse, and majority nonwhite, but also face the highest poverty

rates, with **District 5** at **21.3% of households**.

**District 3** falls near county averages for age diversity but shows higher poverty levels and lower income compared to the state and national benchmarks. These differences underscore the need for tailored strategies that address growth, economic disparities, aging populations, and cultural diversity across the County.



# 2.0

# Organization and Resources

Delivering parks and recreation services across the County requires a strong organizational foundation. This chapter reviews how PR is structured, staffed, and funded, and benchmarks those resources against national and peer agencies. The assessment highlights current strengths and gaps, providing the baseline for recommendations to strengthen capacity, improve efficiency, and sustain services over the next 20 years.

## Benchmarking Context

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) provides two primary frameworks for benchmarking and evaluating agency performance.

NRPA Park Metrics serves as the nation's most widely used benchmarking tool, offering data on staffing, spending, facilities, and service delivery by population size. Throughout this section, benchmarks for agencies serving populations over 500,000 are referenced to help place PR's staffing levels, budget allocation, and per capita spending in context.

**CAPRA Accreditation (Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies)** represents NRPA's companion program focused on professional standards and organizational excellence. It evaluates agencies against 154 national standards covering planning, operations, safety, programming, fiscal management, and accountability. Pursuing accreditation demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement, transparency, and public trust.

### What Is CAPRA Accreditation & Why Pursue It?

CAPRA is the only national accreditation program for parks and recreation systems, administered through the NRPA. It evaluates agencies against a comprehensive set of national standards covering planning, operations, safety, programming, fiscal management, evaluation, volunteer involvement, and more.

#### WHY PURSUE CAPRA?

- Validates professional credibility and builds public trust with residents, elected officials, and funders.
- Encourages continuous improvement through benchmarking against national best practices.
- Enhances internal efficiency, accountability, and policy consistency.
- Strengthens eligibility for grants and partnerships by demonstrating operational excellence.



#### ARIZONA CAPRA-ACCREDITED AGENCIES:

- Avondale
- Buckeye
- Glendale
- Mesa
- Scottsdale
- Mohave County
- Peoria
- Surprise
- Gilbert
- Tucson



## Leadership and Governance

PR is led by a Director of Parks and Recreation, who provides overall leadership, strategic vision, and policy direction for PR. The Director represents PR in executive-level discussions, interdepartmental coordination, and public-facing initiatives. Supporting the Director is a Deputy Director, who oversees department-wide administration, coordinates special projects, and helps ensure alignment across operational and recreational functions.

A Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC), composed of 10 members appointed by the Board of Supervisors, advises on park rules, long-range planning, and policy recommendations. PRAC works closely with staff to help ensure the delivery of high-quality parks, programs, and services for County residents.

## Organizational Structure

PR is organized into two primary operational branches—the Operations Program and the Recreation Program—each of which is led by a division manager and includes multiple functional areas (Figure 1). For budgeting and resource allocation, the department is structured into three major program areas:

- ▶ **Departmental Services:** Oversees operational and fiscal administration, strategic planning, communications, in-lieu park fees, and coordination with other County departments
- ▶ **Operations:** Handles maintenance of park facilities, multi-use paths, playground inspections, ballfield lighting, and repair/asset management
- ▶ **Recreation:** Manages community centers, special events, aquatics, shooting ranges, and a broad range of recreation programs

Staffing in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024/2025 totals approximately 236.65 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions, along with part-time and seasonal personnel. NRPA benchmarks indicate a median of 2.5 FTE per 10,000 residents for large agencies. PR operates below this level, with 2.1 FTE per 10,000 residents, representing a shortfall of about 25 positions.

Figure 1: Organizational Structure



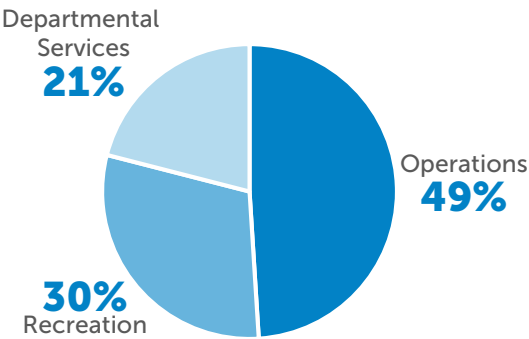
Financial Overview

The County develops an annual budget that supports both operating and capital needs. The County’s FY begins on July 1 and ends on June 30. Most departmental operations are funded through the general fund, primarily supported by property taxes, with additional funding from grants, program fees, and special revenue sources.

PR’s FY2024/2025 general fund expenditure budget is approximately \$17.9 million. Figure 2 illustrates the distribution by program area, with 49% allocated to operations (parks), 30% to recreation, 21% to departmental services (administration).

According to NRPA Park Metrics, agencies serving populations of 1 million or more typically devote 53% of their budgets to parks and 26% to recreation. PR directs a slightly smaller share to parks (49% vs. 53%) but a larger share to recreation (30% vs. 26%), reflecting balanced attention across functions with stronger-than-average support for recreation.

Figure 2: Budget Allocation by Program Area



In addition to its general fund allocation, PR maintains a Park Renewal Fund to support deferred maintenance and renewal of park assets. The fund is focused on addressing aging infrastructure and safety-related improvements that go beyond standard operational maintenance. Allocations have grown steadily over time, increasing from approximately \$500,000 in 2015 to around \$2 million in recent budget cycles. **However, the Park Renewal Fund is not a guaranteed annual allocation, and the Department must request funding from County Administration each year through the Supplemental Budget Process.**

Budget Trends

Table 2 shows the general fund support for PR from FY2019/2020 to FY2024/2025. The largest decline occurred in FY2020/2021 (-6.93%), reflecting the COVID-19 pandemic’s impact on operations, facility closures, and program participation. The following year, FY2021/2022, saw a strong rebound (+12.77%) as programs and services resumed. Steady growth continued through FY2023/2024, reaching the highest budget in the period at \$19.1 million.

In FY2024/2025, the budget decreased by 6.55%, coinciding with departmental restructuring and the transfer of natural resource functions. Although the budget has grown overall since FY2019/2020, it has not fully kept pace with inflation. While

incremental increases have occurred, most have been tied to countywide adjustments such as pay increases or higher central service costs for information technology, communications, and fleet management. **As a result, the Department has not experienced a meaningful increase in its operating capacity over the past five years.**

Based on a Consumer Price Index (CPI) growth of approximately 22.7% over this period, the FY2024/2025 budget would need to be about \$19.32 million to maintain the same purchasing power as FY2019/2020. **The FY2024/2025 budget of \$17.86 million is roughly \$1.46 million below inflation-adjusted needs.**



Table 2: General Fund Budget

Fiscal year	Total Budget	Change (\$)	Change (%)
2019/2020	\$15,745,494	—	—
2020/2021	\$14,655,113	-\$1,090,381	-6.93%
2021/2022	\$16,526,178	+\$1,871,065	+12.77%
2022/2023	\$17,849,551	+\$1,323,373	+8.01%
2023/2024	\$19,110,809	+\$1,261,258	+7.07%
2024/2025	\$17,859,614	-\$1,251,195	-6.55%

Rising costs for both capital and operational needs further strain PR’s budget beyond the effects of inflation. **Prices for materials such as concrete, lumber, steel, irrigation components, turf, and playground equipment have increased 20-30% in recent years, along with contractor labor rates for renovations and repairs.** Operating expenses have

also escalated, with higher costs for utilities such as water and electricity and for consumables like toilet paper, paper towels, cleaning supplies, and trash liners used across parks, restrooms, pools, and community centers. Together, these rising costs reduce the department’s ability to deliver the same scope of work within the same budget.

.....

Per Capita Spending

NRPA Park Metrics also provide benchmarks for per capita spending. Agencies serving populations over 500,000 report a median of \$51.73 per capita, with a lower quartile of \$23.65 and an upper quartile of \$86.15.

**PR’s per capita spending is approximately \$16.68, based on its \$17.9 million budget and population of 1.07 million. This is below the lower quartile benchmark of \$23.65, representing a shortfall of roughly \$6.6 million annually.** PR’s relatively lean funding reflects the presence of multiple municipal and regional service providers in the County but underscores the challenge of sustaining services across such a large and geographically diverse area.

Cost Recovery

NRPA Park Metrics indicate that agencies serving populations over 500,000 achieve a median cost recovery of 27%. PCPR’s cost recovery is approximately 9%, reflecting a greater reliance on tax support compared to peer agencies.

This lower rate suggests that while the County prioritizes accessibility and affordability, it faces challenges in generating sufficient program and facility revenues to offset operating costs. Continued attention to Board of Supervisor pricing strategies, cost allocation, and partnership models could help strengthen financial sustainability and align more closely with national benchmarks.

## Comparative Analysis

Benchmarking similar jurisdictions provides insight into agency operations, budgets, staffing, and service responsibilities, helping assess PR service levels and resource allocation. Peer counties were selected based on similar population sizes and service challenges, particularly those serving large rural areas. Data was sourced from the NRPA Park Metrics database, agency websites, master plans, and annual budgets.

**The five peer agencies in this study are:**

- Bernalillo County, New Mexico–Parks, Recreation & Open Space Department (Bernalillo)
- Clark County, Nevada–Parks & Recreation Department (Clark)
- El Paso County, Texas–Parks & Community Services Department (El Paso)
- Maricopa County, Arizona–Parks & Recreation Department (Maricopa)
- Travis County, Texas–Parks Department (Travis)

Populations range from just under 700,000 to over 4.4 million residents, with the County near the lower end at 1.07 million residents. Clark County has the closest population size to the County, while Maricopa County has a nearly identical land area.

Table 3 summarizes the size, budget, staffing, and service responsibilities of PR and its peer agencies. This side-by-side comparison highlights similarities in population and land area while also showing variations in funding levels, staffing ratios, park acreage, and the number of services offered. The final rows identify which agencies provide each of the 22 tracked services, illustrating both common core offerings and unique areas where PR’s scope exceeds that of its peers.

.....

## Service Responsibilities

**PR manages 14 distinct service areas out of 22 tracked in the benchmarking analysis, the second highest of any agency in the peer group.** Core services common to all agencies include park sites, multi-use paths, indoor facilities, non-park sites, trails and greenways, special-purpose parks and open spaces, and recreation programming. PR’s scope extends beyond these baseline functions to include outdoor aquatics, sports complexes, shooting ranges and farmers markets.

**Among peer agencies, service responsibility and parkland scale place PR at the top of the group:**

- PR: 14 services, 41 parks, 3,105 acres
- Bernalillo: 13 services, 37 parks, 1,950 acres
- Clark: 16 services, 116 parks, 2,331 acres
- El Paso: 12 services, 15 parks, 1,165 acres
- Maricopa: 7 services, 12 parks, 120,000 acres
- Travis County: 13 services, 31 parks, 7,078 acres

The combination of broad services and significant acreage creates more complex operational demands compared to peers with narrower scopes of responsibility.



Funding and Staffing

In 2024, PR’s operating budget was \$17.9 million, or approximately \$17 per resident. This is higher than Travis (\$14), El Paso (\$11), Clark (\$7), and Maricopa (\$3) but lower than Bernalillo (\$23). Unlike peers with smaller geographies or more limited responsibilities, PR must stretch these funds across one of the largest service areas at 9,189 square miles while supporting a wide variety of services.

PR also manages labor-intensive amenities, such as indoor facilities, aquatics, and sports complexes. To support these responsibilities, the department employs 237 full-time staff, or 2.1 FTE per 10,000 residents. This staffing ratio falls below Bernalillo (2.9) but above Travis (1.8), El Paso (1.2), Clark (0.6), and Maricopa (0.2).

Table 3: Comparative Analysis

Agency Size	PR	Bernalillo	Clark	El Paso	Maricopa	Travis
Population	1,070,655	671,747	2,292,000	875,162	4,420,568	1,334,961
Square miles	9,189	1,167	8,061	1,015	9,224	1,023
2024 operating expenditures	\$17.9 million	\$15.2 million	\$16.6 million	\$9.9 million	\$11.2 million	\$19.3 million
2024 per capita spending	\$17	\$23	\$7	\$11	\$3	\$14
Full-time employees	237	197	141	109	100	240
FTE per 10,000 population	2.1	2.9	0.6	1.2	0.2	1.8
Total number of parks	41	37	116	15	12	31
Total park acres	3,105	1,950	2,331	1,165	120,000	7,078
Operate and maintain park sites	●	●	●	●	●	●
Operate and maintain indoor facilities	●	●	●	●		●
Operate, maintain, or contract golf courses	●		●	●	●	
Operate, maintain, or contract campgrounds			●		●	●
Operate, maintain, or contract indoor swim facilities/water parks		●	●	●		

Agency Size	PR	Bernalillo	Clark	El Paso	Maricopa	Travis
Operate, maintain, or contract outdoor swim facilities/water parks	●	●	●	●		●
Operate, maintain, or contract racquet sport activities/courts/facilities	●		●	●		●
Operate, maintain, or contract tourism attractions	●	●				●
Provide recreation programming and services	●	●	●	●	●	●
Operate and maintain non-park sites	●	●		●		●
Operate, maintain, or manage trails, greenways, and/or blueways (TGB)	●	●	●	●	●	●
Operate, maintain, or manage special-purpose parks and or open spaces	●	●	●	●	●	●
Manage or maintain fairgrounds			●			
Maintain, manage, or lease indoor performing arts center			●			
Administer or manage farmers markets	●					
Administer community gardens		●				
Manage large performance outdoor amphitheaters			●			



Agency Size	PR	Bernalillo	Clark	El Paso	Maricopa	Travis
Administer or manage tournament-/event-quality outdoor sports complexes	●	●	●	●		●
Conduct major jurisdiction-wide special events	●	●	●	●		●
Manage large outdoor shooting ranges	●	●	●			
Operate, maintain, or contract marinas					●	
Maintain or manage beaches (inclusive of all waterbody types)						●

The peer analysis shows that **PR manages a broader range of services and one of the largest park acreages among its peers, despite operating with fewer staff and leaner funding on a per capita basis.** While other counties often focus more narrowly—such as Maricopa on large-scale open

space or El Paso on smaller, localized facilities—PR balances both community-scale parks and regional amenities across a vast service area. **This breadth of responsibility highlights PR efficiency but also underscores the need for additional resources to sustain and enhance services over time.**

.....



Summary

The organizational assessment highlights both the strengths and constraints of PR’s current structure, staffing, and funding. PR benefits from clear leadership, strong advisory support, and a broad service portfolio that exceeds that of many peers. At the same time, PR operates with fewer staff per resident, lower per capita spending, and budget growth that has not fully kept pace with inflation or rising operating costs. Comparative benchmarking underscores these challenges while also demonstrating PR’s efficiency in managing a wide range of facilities and services across a very large geography. **Together, these findings point to the importance of securing sustainable funding, right-sizing staff capacity, and investing strategically in infrastructure updates to ensure PR can continue delivering equitable, high-quality services for the community.**

# 03 Community Engagement Findings



Community engagement shaped the foundation of this Plan, helping ensure residents' voices directly informed priorities for parks, facilities, and programs. Given the County's size and diversity, the outreach process sought broad representation across urban, suburban, and rural communities while elevating perspectives from historically underrepresented populations.



## What We Heard by Engagement Type

From fall 2024 to spring 2025, the project team implemented a multilingual outreach strategy promoted through print ads, social media, press releases, and bilingual signage at parks and community centers. Engagement opportunities included:

- ▶ **COMMUNITY MEETINGS** held across the County, including rural, suburban, and urban areas such as the Catalina Foothills, Picture Rocks, the Three Points area, City of South Tucson, Green Valley, Vail, and Ajo
- ▶ **COMMUNITY EVENT PARTICIPATION** hosted at local gatherings such as the Rincon Valley Farmers Market, Rillito Farmers Market, Tucson Meet Yourself, the 4th Avenue Street Fair, and the Tucson Rodeo
- ▶ **MULTILINGUAL PROJECT WEBSITE** maintained to provide updates, plan documents, and opportunities to submit feedback online
- ▶ **STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY** conducted by Supervisor Area to capture countywide perceptions, priorities, and satisfaction with current offerings, with equal weighting applied to less populated rural areas
- ▶ **SPECIALIZED FACILITY SATISFACTION SURVEYS AND FOCUS GROUPS** administered with aquatics users, sports field users, community center visitors, and participants in shooting sports
- ▶ **JOINT MEETING** held with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and Board of Supervisors staff to review engagement findings and discuss priorities



Additionally, a **focus group session with Parks and Recreation directors** from jurisdictions across the County was held to better understand shared challenges and priorities. Participating agencies included the City of Tucson Parks and Recreation, Town of Marana Parks and Recreation, Town of Oro Valley Parks and Recreation, and Town of Sahuarita Parks, Recreation & Community Services. Directors identified several common needs across jurisdictions, including more sports fields, improved field lighting, additional dog parks, and streamlined registration systems. These themes informed broader engagement efforts and helped ensure alignment with local agency priorities and community feedback.

This multi-channel strategy allowed the collection of broad input while also gaining detailed insights into the experiences of specific user groups and recreation partners.

## Community Meetings

Public meetings held across the County served as a platform for residents to share feedback and help shape the future of the parks and recreation system. These sessions, scheduled in each of the five supervisor districts, encouraged open dialogue and captured place-based perspectives, reflecting the distinct needs and priorities of communities throughout the County.

This structure helped to ensure consistency across sessions while allowing flexibility for participants to elevate the issues most important in their communities. Table 4 summarizes key needs and barriers identified through these meetings, organized by supervisor district and location.

Each meeting followed a consistent structure guided by six core topics:

► **Organizational Effectiveness**—Perceptions of the department and its role

► **Parks and Facilities**—Maintenance, quality, and desired amenities

► **Community Centers**—Accessibility, condition, and needed improvements

► **Programs**—Ideas for classes, events, and recreation opportunities

► **Communication**—Evaluation of outreach and information-sharing methods

► **Long-Term Priorities**—Investments and improvements for the next 5–20 years

**Table 4: Community Meeting Summary by Supervisor District**

District	Location	Key Needs	Barriers/Issues Identified
District 1	Catalina Community Center	Modular 50m pool with university partnership; youth skill development; high school and college partnerships for aquatics; trampoline and diving programs; volunteer support from retirees	Lack of existing partnerships or formal youth development pathways through parks
District 1	Nanini Library	Senior program expansion; splash pad; indoor community space; office space repurposing; facility maintenance improvements	Inconsistent maintenance; underused indoor spaces; low visibility
District 2	Littletown Community Center	Splash pad and dog park; facility refurbishment; expanded fitness classes; improved signage and visibility; consistent senior programs and events	Facility is outdated and lacks visibility; missing planned amenities
District 3	Picture Rocks Community Center	Extended swim lessons; longer pool season; affordable fitness and after-school programs; facility upgrades; community garden; senior and cooling center programs	High fitness fees; aging facility; low visibility and limited signage



District	Location	Key Needs	Barriers/Issues Identified
District 3	Robles Ranch Community Center	Pool and splash pad; walking path and equestrian area improvements; dog park; pickleball courts; sports programs and equipment; adult and youth program expansion	Lack of investment; program duplication with school district after-school programs; limited visibility and communication
District 3	Ajo Community Center	Splash pad; winterized pool; senior and youth programs; lighting upgrades; ceramics annex improvements; more outreach and promotion	Underused annex space; limited awareness of programs
District 4	Green Valley Recreation East Center	Dog park with shade; passive recreation space; shaded trails; Canoa Ranch weekend access; equitable park access	High frustration over lack of dog parks—Canoa Hills signage is misleading; shaded trails lacking; Green Valley feels underprioritized in County resource allocation
District 4	W. Anne Gibson-Esmond Station Library	Completion of Esmond Park; teen amenities; pickleball courts; temporary fairground amenities; Loop connectivity; school facility access	Long distance to nearest park; lack of path to the Loop; limited school facility access
District 5	Valencia Library	Despite outreach efforts, the public meeting did not receive any attendees.	

## Community Event Participation

To broaden outreach beyond formal public meetings, the project team participated in a series of well-attended community events across the County. At each event, an information booth was set up to share details about the planning process and invite resident input.

Dot voting activities were used only at events to gather quick, interactive feedback on desired programs and park amenities, helping to identify the most valued services and features. Nearly 1,000 individuals engaged with the project team through these events, providing a valuable snapshot of countywide interests in a casual, accessible setting.

ZIP codes collected during these events were used to associate responses with County supervisor districts. Because ZIP code boundaries often

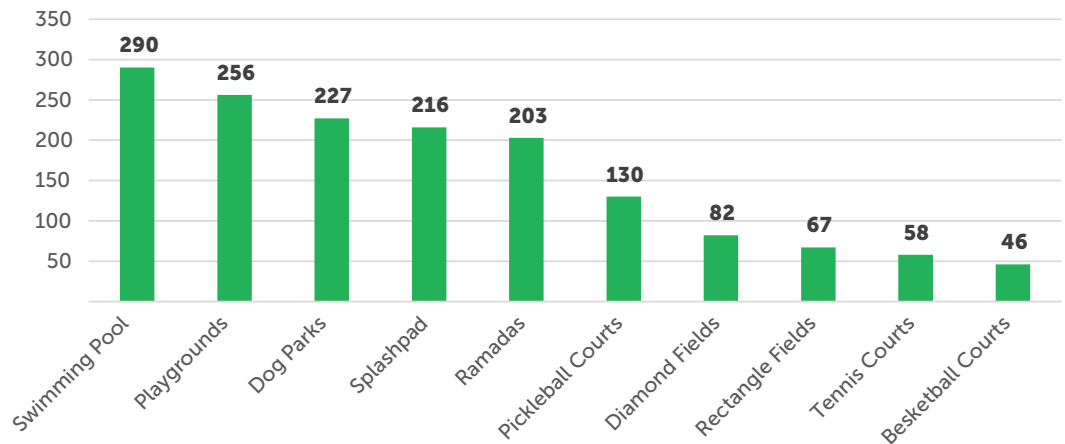
span multiple districts, responses were assigned to all applicable districts when tabulating results. This worked to ensure broad geographic representation while accounting for overlaps that reflect service areas.



## AMENITY PREFERENCES

Participants identified the types of park and recreation amenities they most want to see improved, expanded, or added across the County. The top amenity selections reflect strong demand for aquatics, youth play spaces, and places for gathering and social activity.

**Figure 3: Community Events: Amenity Preferences**



While preferences were largely consistent, some variances emerged across supervisor districts, as shown in Table 5.

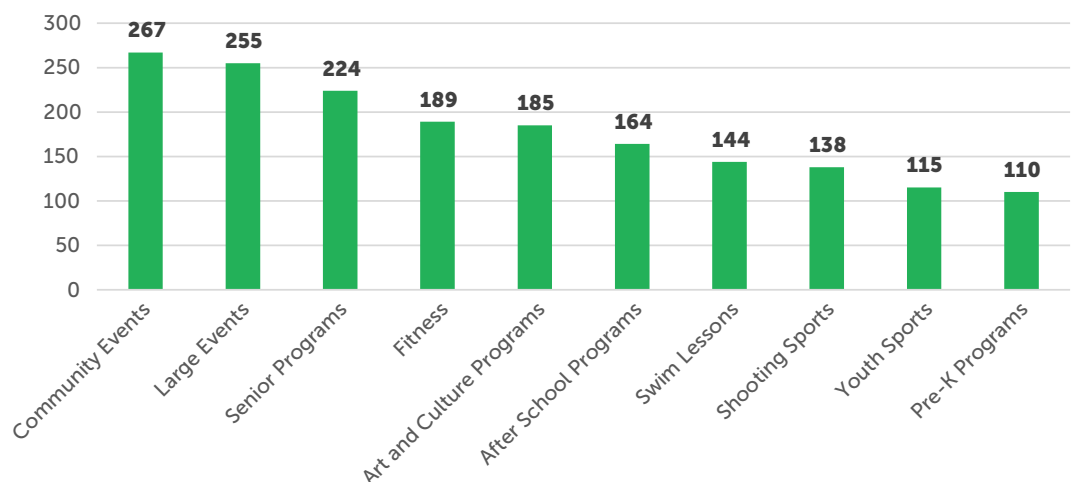
**Table 5: Community Events: Amenity Preference by Supervisor District**

District	Amenity Preferences
District 1	Playgrounds, Ramadas, Dog Parks, Pickleball, Splash Pads/Pools
District 2	Playgrounds, Ramadas, Dog Parks, Splash Pads/Pools
District 3	Playgrounds, Ramadas, Dog Parks, Splash Pads/Pools
District 4	Playgrounds, Ramadas, Splash Pads/Pools
District 5	Playgrounds, Ramadas, Dog Parks, Splash Pads/Pools

## PROGRAM PREFERENCES

When asked which types of programs are most important to them, participants emphasized community events, senior programs, fitness offerings, and art and culture programs. The results show a high level of interest in inclusive, multigenerational recreation.

**Figure 4: Community Events: Program Preferences**





While preferences were largely consistent, again some variances emerged across supervisor districts, as shown in Table 6.

**Table 6: Community Events: Program Preference by Supervisor District**

District	Program Preferences
District 1	Community Events, Fitness Programs, Senior Programs
District 2	Community Events, Art and Culture Programs, Fitness Programs
District 3	Community Events, Art and Culture Programs, Fitness Programs, Senior Programs
District 4	Community Events, Fitness Programs, Senior Programs
District 5	Community Events, Art and Culture Programs, Fitness Programs, Senior Programs

.....

### Project Website

To support broad and accessible input, the project team **launched a multilingual, web-based engagement platform using Social Pinpoint.**

The platform allowed community members to learn about the planning process, explore key topics, and provide input through interactive tools, including a Quick Poll, Ideas Wall, and Interactive Map.

## ENGAGEMENT NUMBERS



**498** QUICK POLL RESPONSES



**230** IDEAS WALL COMMENTS



**125** MAP-BASED SUBMISSIONS



**4,073** SITE VISITS



**853** TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS

This digital input offered valuable insight into community priorities, amenity needs, and geographic-specific suggestions. The table below summarizes recurring themes and frequently mentioned locations.

**Table 7: Project Website: Summary by Supervisor District**

District(s)	Theme	Need	Notable Locations
District 1	Specialized Recreation	Cricket field development	Catalina Foothills
District 1	Environmental and Nature-Based	Wildlife protection and interpretive signage	Catalina Foothills
District 2	Age-Inclusive Programming	Teen/youth programs	Littletown
District 2	Recreation Facility Development	More dog parks and shaded micro parks	South Tucson
District 3	Recreation Facility Development	More dog parks and shade in parks	Picture Rocks
District 3	Age-Inclusive Programming	Senior wellness and social programs	Picture Rocks
District 3	Specialized Recreation	Expanded pickleball courts	Ajo, Three Points
District 3	Access and Equity	More parks in underserved areas	Three Points
District 4	Recreation Facility Development	Full service regional parks with pools, fields, recreation centers	Vail, Rita Ranch, Sahuarita
District 4	Environmental and Nature-Based	Wildlife protection and interpretive signage	Canoa Ranch, Vail
District 4	Specialized Recreation	Dog park development	Green Valley
District 4	Age-Inclusive Programming	Senior wellness and social programs	Green Valley
District 4	Access and Equity	More parks in underserved areas	Vail, Green Valley
District 4	Specialized Recreation	Expanded pickleball courts	Green Valley, Southeast Tucson, Rita Ranch, Vail
District 5	Safety and Cleanliness	Trailhead safety and homelessness concerns	Randolph area, Tucson Mountain Park
Multiple	Recreation Facility Development	New splash pads and shaded playgrounds	Countywide



Statistically Valid Surveys

To gather additional feedback on parks and recreation needs, a community survey was conducted by ETC Institute as part of the planning process. The goal was to collect a minimum of 600 completed surveys from a random, geographically representative sample of County residents. This goal was exceeded, with 657 surveys collected through the randomized sample. An additional 236 surveys were completed through the project website, bringing the total number of responses to 893.

**The 657 random surveys provide a margin of error of  $\pm 3.8\%$  at the 95% confidence level.** The survey distribution was intentionally structured to reflect the County’s demographic and geographic diversity, **with equal weighting applied to less populated rural areas to ensure balanced representation across all Supervisor Areas.** This approach supports a reliable understanding of resident priorities, satisfaction levels, and preferences. These results serve as a key input to the master plan.

FACILITY USE AND CONDITION

- The most visited sites were Brandi Fenton Memorial Park (46%), Rillito Regional Park (22%), and Arthur Pack Regional Park (18%).
- Most respondents (76%) rated the condition of parks and facilities as either good (55%) or excellent (21%).
- Top barriers to park use included distance from home (38%), use of other non-County facilities (34%), and presence of homelessness (29%).

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION AND BARRIERS

- 21% of respondents had participated in PR recreation programs in the past year. Of those, 84% rated program quality as good or excellent.
- Main reasons for not participating in programs were not knowing what is offered (55%), distance (22%), and lack of time/interest (17%).

OTHER FACILITY AND ORGANIZATION USE

- Top recreation providers used included Arizona State Parks (51%), PR (50%), and city/town parks departments (43%).

LOOP SYSTEM

- 52% of respondents reported using the Loop; 89% of users rated it as good or excellent.

COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES

- Respondents most commonly learned about programs via word of mouth (52%), social media (46%), and the County website (29%).
- Preferred communication methods include social media (56%), County website (37%), and email (35%).

SUPPORT FOR IMPROVEMENTS

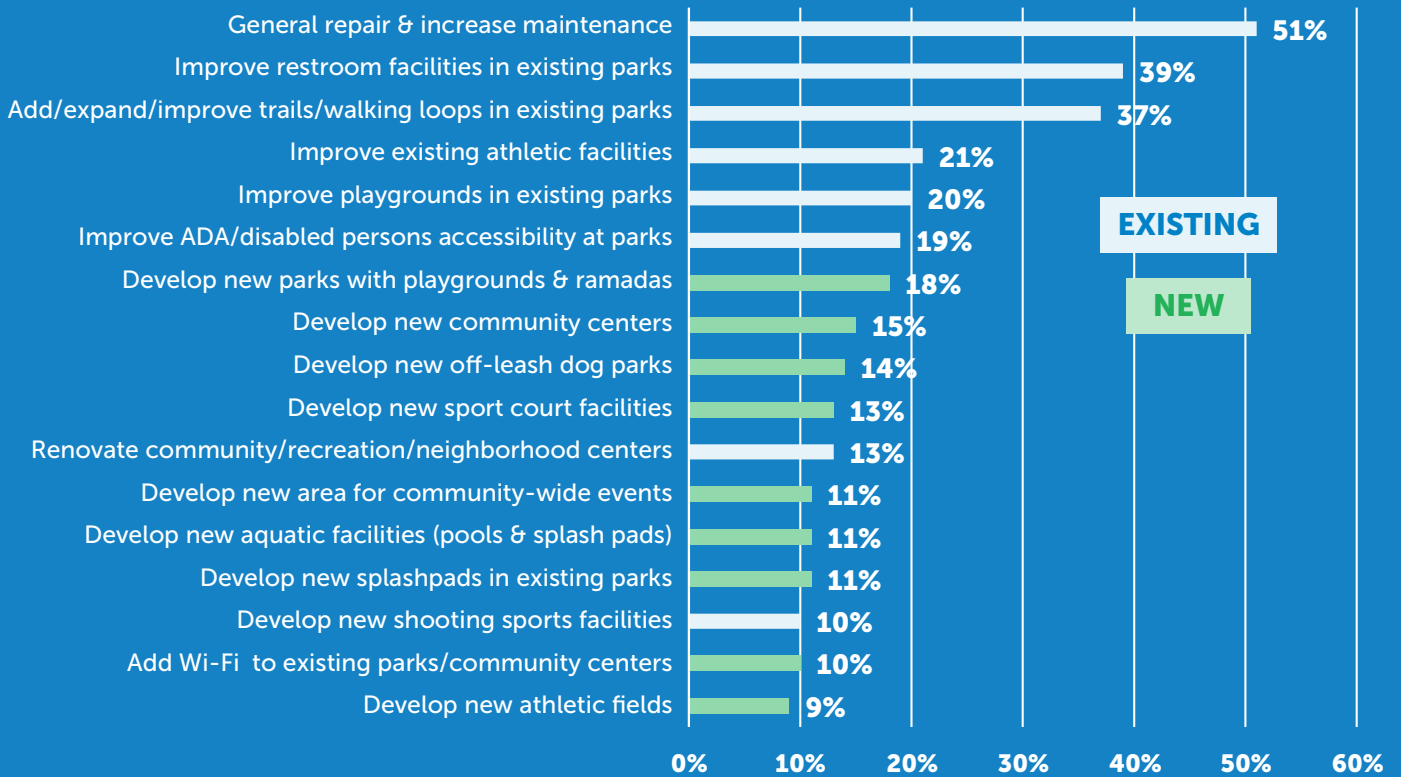
- Strongest support for facility improvements included general repair and maintenance (90%), restroom upgrades (87%), and walking loop enhancements (83%).
- Respondents were most willing to fund maintenance and repairs over developing new facilities (51%), restroom improvements (39%), and walking loops (37%). (see Figure 5)

OVERALL SATISFACTION

- 55% of respondents were either satisfied (40%) or very satisfied (15%) with the overall value their household receives from PR.

**Figure 5: Survey Results: Willingness to Fund**

**Which four actions from the list in Question 7  
would you be most willing to see PC fund?**



Priority Investment Summary

As part of the statistically valid survey, ETC Institute developed a Priority Investment Rating (PIR) to help the PR objectively evaluate where to focus future resources. The PIR equally weighs the importance residents place on a facility or program and the extent to which needs for that offering are unmet. Items that receive a PIR score over 100 are considered high priorities for investment.

FACILITY PRIORITIES

The following amenities and facility types received PIR scores over 100, indicating both high community value and unmet need:

- Trails and walking paths around park perimeters (PIR = 200)
- Developed parks (district and regional) (PIR = 147)
- Indoor/outdoor recreation pools (PIR = 135)
- Community/recreation centers (PIR = 130)
- Ramadas and picnic shelters (PIR = 129)
- All-accessible/all-abilities amenities (PIR = 127)
- Lap pools (PIR = 119)
- Playgrounds (PIR = 118)
- Outdoor fitness areas (PIR = 117)
- Splash pads (PIR = 107)
- Dog parks (PIR = 105)
- Senior centers (PIR = 103)

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The following programs also scored above 100, making them high priorities for future investment:

- Farmers markets and county markets (PIR = 200)
- Special events (PIR = 147)
- Arts, culture, dance, enrichment, and performing arts (PIR = 146)
- Health, fitness, and wellness programs (PIR = 138)
- Senior programs (PIR = 117)
- Community service and outreach programs (PIR = 109)
- Group fitness classes (PIR = 106)

Table 8 presents a more detailed breakdown of survey results by supervisor district. It highlights the top three facility and program priorities identified by respondents in each district, providing insight into localized preferences and needs across the County.

Table 8: Survey Results: Top 3 Facility and Program Priorities by District

District	Top 3 Facility Priorities	Top 3 Program Priorities
District 1	Trails/paths (around park), develop new parks (district/regional), outdoor fitness	Farmer’s market, special events (fairs, festivals, races), health fitness, wellness
District 2	Trails/paths (around park), develop new parks (district/regional), ramadas	Farmer’s market, art and culture, community service and outreach programs
District 3	Trails/paths (around park), ramadas, all-abilities amenities	Farmer’s market, special events (fairs, festivals, races), art and culture
District 4	Trails/paths (around park), develop new parks (district/regional), playgrounds	Farmer’s market, special events (fairs, festivals, races), health, fitness, wellness
District 5	Trails/paths (around park), pools	Farmer’s market, art and culture, health, fitness, wellness



Specialized Facility Satisfaction Feedback

In addition to broad-based community outreach, focused input was gathered from users of specific facilities through tailored surveys and a facilitated focus group. These efforts targeted community centers, aquatics, sports fields, and shooting sports, facilities that serve frequent users and specialized recreation needs.

The community center, aquatics and sports field surveys were created to capture satisfaction levels, usage patterns, infrastructure needs, and improvement priorities. Questions addressed included:

- Frequency of use and travel time
- Facility condition, cleanliness, and amenities
- Satisfaction with programs, services, and hours
- Desired upgrades and future investments

To gain more insight on shooting sports a focus group provided in-depth feedback on range operations and identified unique needs not easily captured through surveys. Together, these efforts offer a detailed view of how key user groups experience PR-operated facilities and where improvements are most needed.

COMMUNITY CENTER SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- **94% of respondents** rated the cleanliness of the facility as good
- **80% of respondents** rated the facility condition as excellent or good
- **75% of respondents** were satisfied with the center’s operating hours
- **68% of respondents** were satisfied with the variety and availability of programs
- **Lowest-rated amenities:** Fitness Equipment (48%), Computer Labs (33%), and Seating/Lounge Areas (15%) received the lowest positive ratings and the highest dissatisfaction (fair or poor)
- **The top building priorities** include upgrades to flooring, lighting, and paint (36%), additional program space (27%), and updated restrooms (19%)

AQUATICS SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- **86.3% rated** pool cleanliness as good
- **73.5% rated** infrastructure condition as good
- **65% of respondents** were satisfied
- **64.9%** were satisfied with pool hours
- **49%** are satisfied with the pool season
- **Core infrastructure improvements** such as locker rooms (39%), recreation features (28%), and shaded group areas (17%) emerged as the highest priorities for investment

SPORTS FIELD USER SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- **89% rated** the permit process as good
- **71%** were satisfied with field conditions
- **The top field priorities** include improving surface quality (33%), adding lighting (25%), and increasing field availability (20%).

SHOOTING SPORTS FOCUS GROUP HIGHLIGHTS:

- The South East Regional Shooting Range (SERP) was praised for its safety, professionalism, and overall maintenance. The highest priorities for improvement include upgrading indoor training technology and ventilation, extending yard lines to support long-range use by high-powered rifles and law enforcement, and expanding trap and skeet areas. Additional opportunities include introducing night shooting and adjusting layouts to better support competition and sporting clays.
- At the Tucson Mountain Park Range, basic infrastructure is lacking—specifically restrooms and electricity. Users request utility upgrades and extended yard lines for safer and more functional use.
- Community input highlighted consistent priorities for program growth, facility upgrades, and improved access across major recreation facility types. Table 9 summarizes specific needs for community centers, aquatics facilities, sports fields, and shooting sports areas.

Table 9: Specialized Facility Findings

Facility Type	Program Growth	Facility and Infrastructure	Access and Scheduling
Community Centers	Expand diverse programming, including arts, fitness, education, and youth activities	Prioritize core building upgrades: flooring, lighting, paint, restrooms, and multipurpose space; furnishings and outdoor areas seen as lower priorities	Expand availability and variety of programs
Aquatics	Extend swim season; maintain strong program satisfaction	Prioritize infrastructure improvements: restrooms, recreation amenities, and covered group areas; general seating seen as less critical	Extend operating hours and seasonal access
Sports Fields	Increase field availability to support frequent team and league use	Improve field surface quality; increase seating/shade	Expand scheduling field capacity (lights)
Shooting Sports	Enhance programming to support competition and law enforcement training	Upgrade indoor training technology and ventilation at SERP; add utilities and yard line extensions at Tucson Mountain Park	Enhance ADA paths at SERP; expand range distances (200–1,000 yards) to support high-powered rifles and law enforcement training

## District-Specific Recreation Findings

To better understand how priorities vary across geographic areas, community input was analyzed by supervisor district. Table 10 summarizes key findings from each major engagement source, including public meetings, dot voting activities, digital engagement tools, and the statistical survey. By reviewing these data points together, recurring themes emerged within each district, reflecting shared needs such as aquatics access, walking trails, senior programming, and equitable park distribution. These themes offer a foundation for district-level planning and investment decisions aligned with local preferences and conditions.

**Table 10: Engagement Findings by Supervisor District**

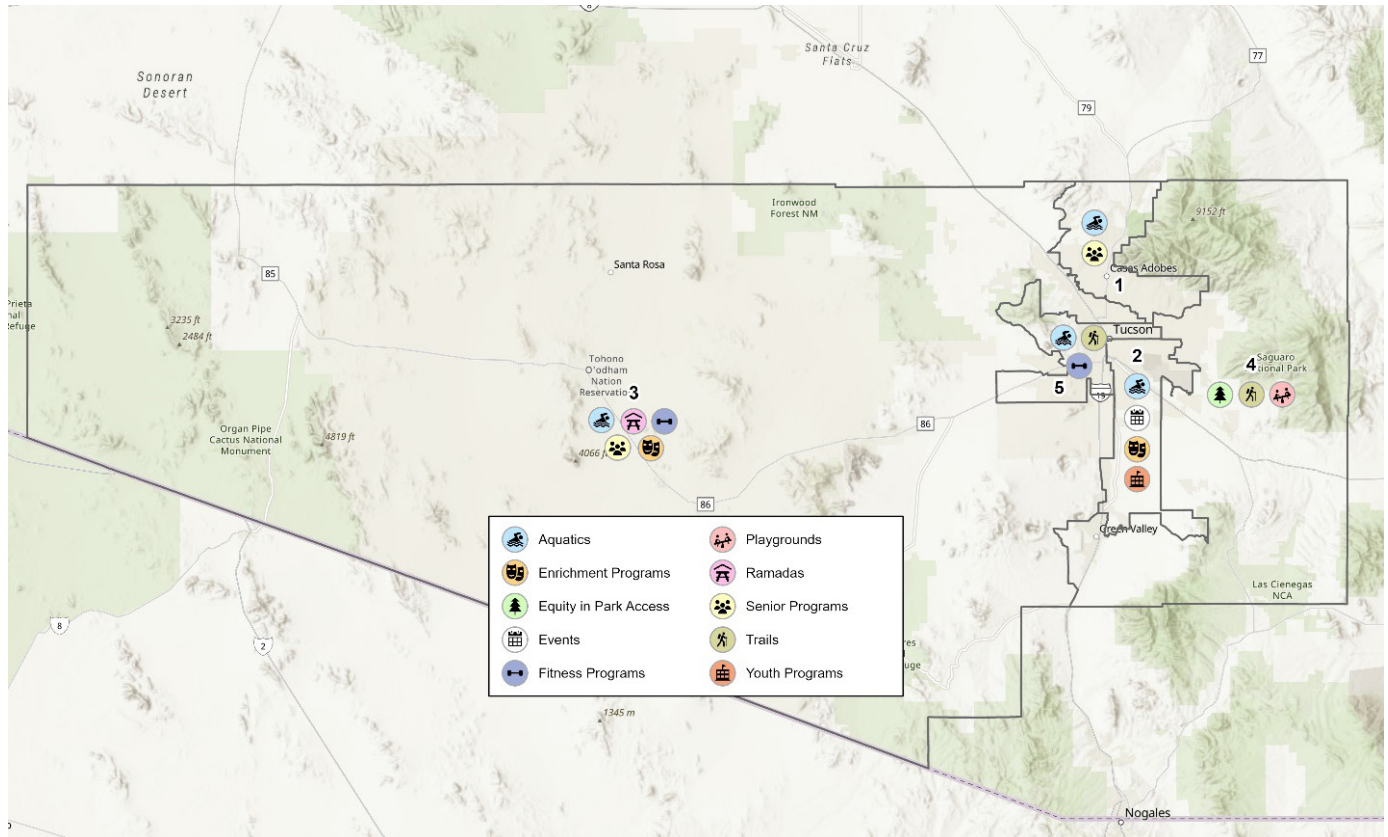
District	Public Meetings	Dot Voting	Digital Engagement	Statistical Survey	Common Themes (Recurring in ≥2 Sources)
District 1	Aquatics, senior programs, facility updates	Community events, fitness programs, senior programs, playgrounds, ramadas, dog parks, pickleball, aquatics	Cricket field, interpretive signage, inclusive amenities	Trails/paths (around park), develop new parks (district/regional), outdoor fitness, pools, farmer's market, special events (fairs, festivals, races), health fitness, wellness	Aquatics, senior programs
District 2	Aquatics, senior programs, facility updates	Community events, art and culture programs, fitness programs, playgrounds, ramadas, dog parks, aquatics	Youth programming, shaded dog parks, inclusive spaces	Trails/paths (around park), develop new parks (district/regional), ramadas, farmer's market, art and culture, community service and outreach programs	Aquatics, events, art and culture programs, youth programs



District	Public Meetings	Dot Voting	Digital Engagement	Statistical Survey	Common Themes (Recurring in ≥2 Sources)
District 3	Aquatics, youth programs, fitness programs, facility updates	Community events, art and culture programs, fitness programs, senior programs playgrounds, ramadas, dog parks, aquatics	Senior wellness, Ajo splash pad and field lights, equity in Three Points	Trails/paths (around park), ramadas, all-abilities amenities, farmer's market, special events (fairs, festivals, races), art and culture	Aquatics, ramadas, fitness programs, senior programs, art and culture programs
District 4	Equity concerns in Green Valley; Esmond Park access	Community events, fitness programs, senior programs playgrounds, ramadas, aquatics	Pickleball courts, trails, youth programs, dog parks	Trails/paths (around park), develop new parks (district/regional), farmer's market, special events (fairs, festivals, races), health, fitness, wellness	Equity in park access, trails, playgrounds
District 5	N/A	Community events, art and culture programs, fitness programs, senior programs playgrounds, ramadas, dog Parks, aquatics	Trail safety, range access and improvements	Trails/paths (around park), pools, farmer's market, art and culture, health, fitness, wellness	Aquatics, trails, fitness programs

To further illustrate these findings, Figure 6 highlights the 10 most frequently mentioned community priorities, those that appeared in two or more engagement sources within each supervisor district. This visualization supports a clearer understanding of how needs vary across geographic areas and can inform localized planning efforts.

**Figure 6: Map of Recurring Engagement Findings by Supervisor District**




## Summary

Taken together, the engagement results show strong countywide support for repairing and updating existing assets, growing aquatics and youth opportunities, expanding multi-use paths and walking loops, improving field lighting and capacity, and adding dog parks and shaded play areas. District-level findings also point to location-specific needs, including regional park

access in Vail, dog parks and shaded trails in Green Valley, and expanded programming and visibility at select community centers. These insights guide the priorities and phasing in the Implementation Plan.

# 4.0 Recreation Programs and Facilities



Recreation programs and facilities shape how residents connect with PR every day. From community centers and pools to art studios and shooting sports, these spaces provide opportunities for learning, fitness, and social connection.



## Facility Overview by District




PR is responsible for 27 recreation facilities, including community centers, aquatic sites, art studios, and shooting sports locations. Of these, 22 are directly operated by PR and were included in this assessment. Four additional community centers are operated by partner organizations and, while not formally assessed, are referenced in this report to provide a complete picture of the system.

Table 11 organizes all 27 facilities by district and type. Partner-operated sites are marked with an asterisk (\*) to distinguish their status. This framework supports regional analysis and helps identify areas of strength, service gaps, and future investment opportunities.

	Art Studio		Community Center		Pool		Shooting Range
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### DISTRICT 1

#### FACILITY NAME:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northwest YMCA (NWYMCA) Art Studios</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catalina Community Center</li> <li>NWYMCA*</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catalina Pool</li> <li>Thad Terry (NWYMCA) Pool</li> </ul>
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### DISTRICT 2

#### FACILITY NAME:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centro Del Sur Community Center*</li> <li>Littletown Community Center</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kino Pool</li> <li>Los Niños Pool</li> </ul>
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DISTRICT 3

FACILITY NAME:



- Ajo Community Center
- Arivaca Community Center\*
- Ellie Towne Flowing Wells Community Center
- Picture Rocks Community Center
- Robles Ranch Community Center



- Ajo Pool
- Picture Rocks Pool
- Wade McLean (Marana HS) Pool\*
- Flowing Wells Pool\*



- Virgil Ellis Shooting Range



- Ajo Art Annex

DISTRICT 4

FACILITY NAME:



- Continental Community Center\*
- Mount Lemmon Community Center



- Clay Target Center
- Southeast Regional Park (SERP) Shooting Range

DISTRICT 5

FACILITY NAME:



- Drexel Heights Community Center



- Manzanita Pool



- Tucson Mountain Park Shooting, Rifle, Pistol and Archery Range



Art Studio



Community Center



Pool



Shooting Range





## Community Centers

Pima County maintains 12 community centers that serve as neighborhood-based hubs for youth, adult, and senior programming. These centers play a vital role in providing recreation and enrichment, particularly in rural and unincorporated areas where other services might be limited. Eight of these centers are operated by the department, while the remaining four are operated through partnerships with organizations that manage programming independently. PR-operated centers include:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Ajo Community Center (District 3)                       | 5. Littletown Community Center (District 2)    |
| 2. Catalina Community Center (District 1)                  | 6. Mt. Lemmon Community Center (District 4)    |
| 3. Drexel Heights Community Center (District 5)            | 7. Picture Rocks Community Center (District 3) |
| 4. Ellie Towne Flowing Wells Community Center (District 3) | 8. Robles Ranch Community Center (District 3)  |

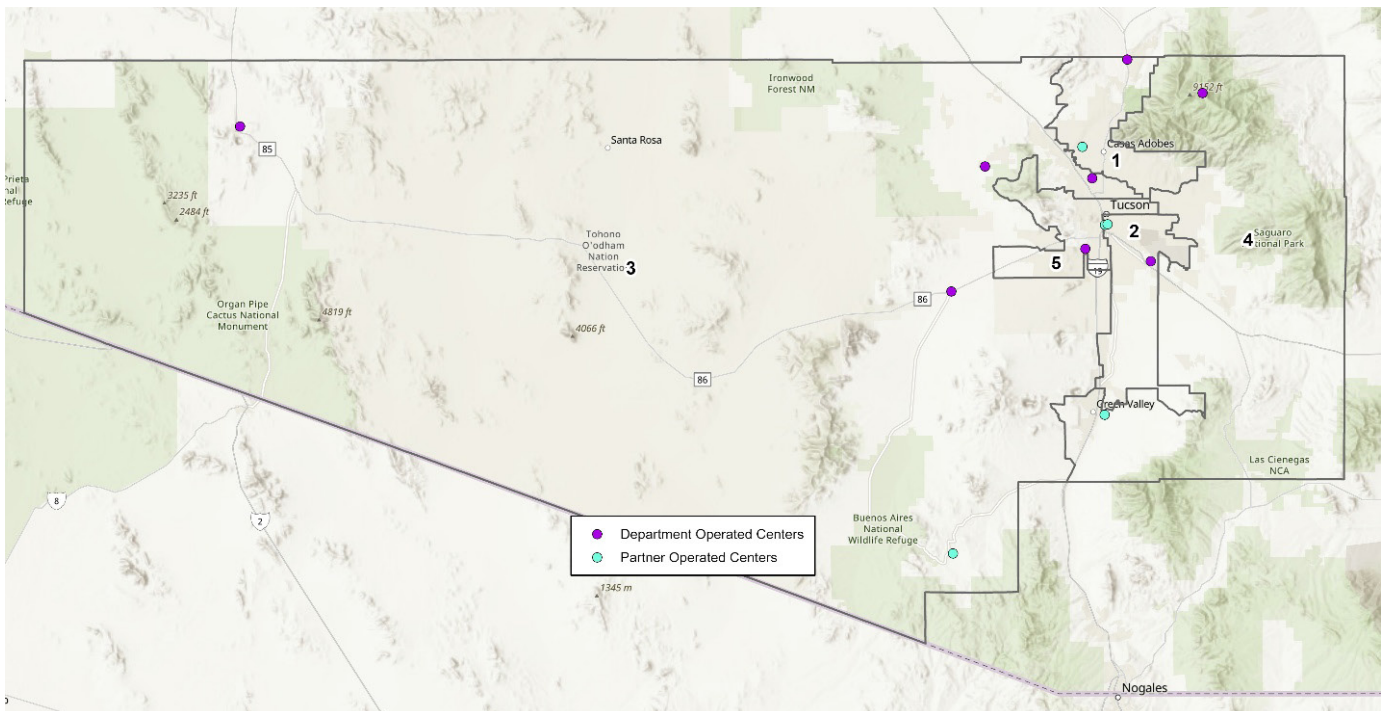
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### THE FOLLOWING CENTERS ARE OPERATED BY PARTNERS:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Arivaca Community Center (District 3)        | 3. Continental Community Center (District 4) |
| 2. Centro Del Sur Community Center (District 2) | 4. NWYMCA (District 1)                       |

Figure 7 shows the location and district distribution of all centers and highlights the PR-operated facilities.

**Figure 7: Community Center Map**





## 4.0 | Recreation Programs And facilities

A review of the PR-operated sites revealed that, despite their unique characteristics, several common themes emerged. The following observations highlight shared challenges and opportunities to strengthen services and enhance community impact.

### 1. Centers Offer a Wide Range of High-Value Programs

Each site supports popular and well-attended offerings, such as after-school programs, summer camps, youth sports, adult crafts, and senior activities. Many facilities serve as important access points for families in rural or underserved areas.

**Opportunity:** Maintain and enhance core programs that demonstrate strong attendance, and explore ways to replicate successful models at other locations.

### 2. Facility Space Limits Program Growth

Many centers have limited space for expanded programming. The lack of flexible rooms, storage, and modern layouts reduces the ability to accommodate new activities or larger groups.

**Opportunity:** Prioritize facility enhancements that add flexibility and functionality. Consider modest upgrades like multipurpose rooms, storage solutions, and improved layouts to support program growth.

### 3. Visibility and Outreach are Ongoing Challenges

Staff reported that public awareness of program offerings remains limited at some sites. A lack of signage, minimal marketing, and low visibility in rural areas contribute to underutilization.

**Opportunity:** Strengthen outreach efforts with improved signage, digital communication, and local promotion. Develop outreach toolkits tailored to each center's audience and setting.

### 4. Facility Modernization Needed

Several facilities were originally built in the 1970s or repurposed from other uses, leaving them with aging infrastructure and layouts not designed for today's recreation demands. These limitations reduce flexibility and make it difficult to support modern programming, technology, and community needs.

**Opportunity:** Modernize existing facilities through targeted upgrades such as reconfigurable spaces, improved technology, and updated furnishings. Strategic improvements can extend building life, enhance functionality, and allow centers to better adapt to evolving uses without requiring full replacement.

### 5. Dedicated Staff Facing Resource Constraints

Staff demonstrate strong commitment to serving their communities but operate with limited resources that affect service delivery and program growth. Feedback across sites emphasized the need for clearer operational processes, consistent funding for supplies, and timely support to meet community request.

**Opportunity:** Equip front-line staff with additional tools, training, and operational support. Streamline processes to reduce delays and ensure staff can respond quickly and effectively to community needs.

## After-School Program and Summer Camp Attendance

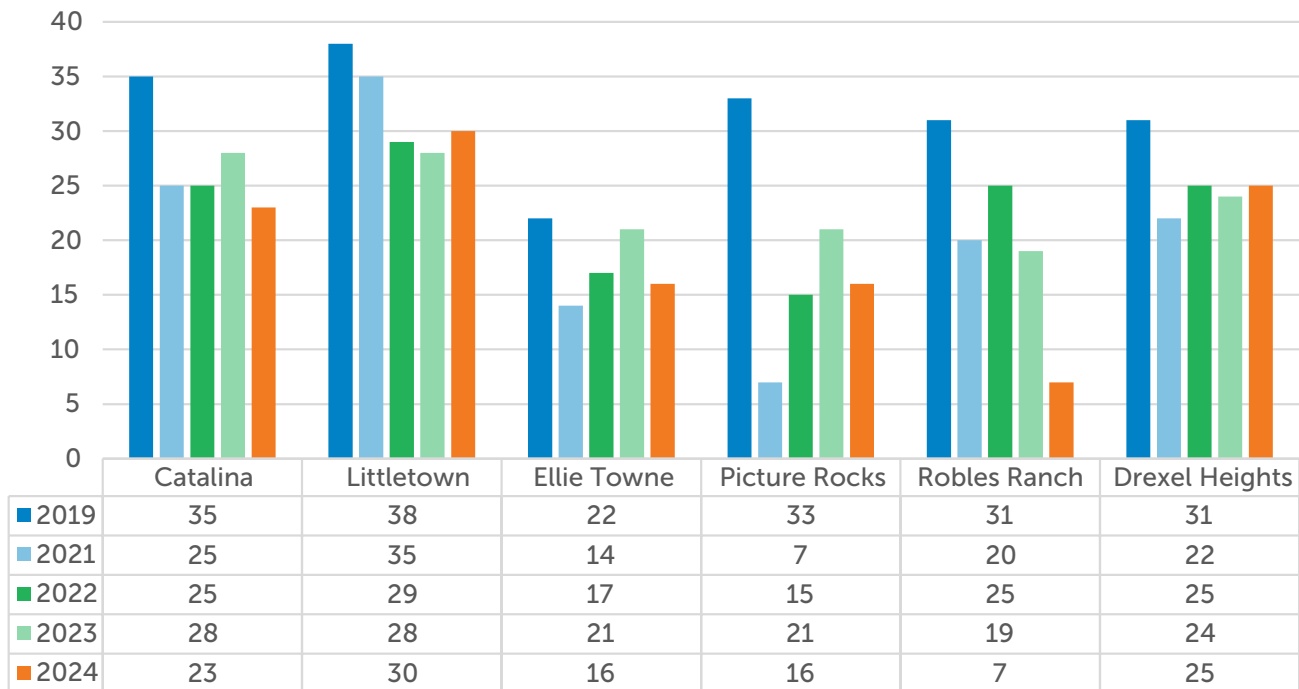
Among the most consistent and impactful offerings across PR community centers are after-school programs and summer camps. Offered at six centers, these small but essential programs have experienced attendance shifts over the past five years due to COVID-19 disruptions and evolving community needs. They continue to serve as a vital resource for working families—particularly in areas with limited alternatives. The following section provides a closer look at recent participation patterns and trends across these sites.

### AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

After-school attendance has stabilized in recent years, though participation levels continue to vary by site. As shown in Figure 8, average daily attendance differs across locations and years, reflecting a range of local conditions and community dynamics.

- **Littletown** and **Drexel Heights** have remained steady, with small increases in 2024
- **Ellie Towne** and **Picture Rocks** are still recovering from earlier declines
- **Catalina** dropped slightly after several stable years
- **Robles Ranch** continues to see lower attendance, likely due to nearby schools offering free programs

**Figure 8: Average Daily Attendance—  
After-School Programs by Location (2019–2024)**

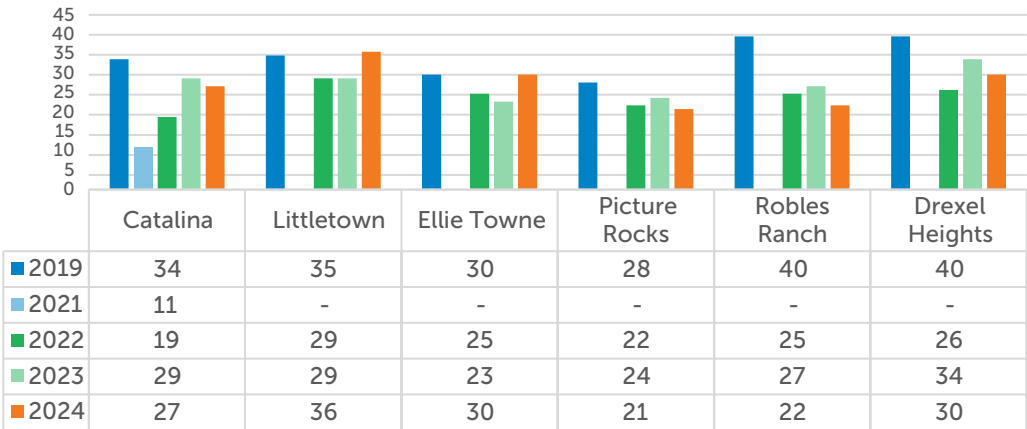


SUMMER CAMPS

Summer camps, offered at the same six centers, have shown more varied trends. Several sites have experienced strong growth, while others have had only minor shifts. Figure 9 shows average daily attendance from 2019 to 2024 across each site.

- **Ellie Towne** had the largest increase in 2024
- **Drexel Heights** remained steady with minor fluctuations
- **Robles Ranch** saw a decrease, though summer attendance has been more stable than its after-school program
- **Littletown** and **Picture Rocks** also saw notable growth
- **Catalina** experienced a small decline after several consistent years

Figure 9: Average Daily Attendance—Summer Programs by Location (2019–2024)



YOUTH SPORTS AWARD

In August 2025, PR received the Youth Sports Award from the Arizona Parks & Recreation Association for its Ajo Youth Sports program, recognizing its significant contribution to recreation in Pima County.

As the only organized athletic program for youth ages 4–14 within a 50-mile radius, Ajo Youth Sports offers 17 different sports throughout the year, engaging more than 400 youth annually. In a town of fewer than 3,000 residents, the program touches over 18 percent of the population through players, families, volunteers, and community partners.

Beyond athletics, Ajo Youth Sports represents a community-wide effort. Local businesses and organizations contribute funding and supplies, ensuring every child has access to a jersey and no family is burdened by costs. Partnerships with the Tohono O’odham Nation’s Sonoran Desert League



and national organizations like MLB, NFL, and NBA provide rare opportunities for Ajo’s youth to compete, connect, and grow.

This award affirms what the community already knows. Ajo Youth Sports is more than games. It is a source of confidence, belonging, and pride, building a stronger future for the children of Ajo and for the County as a whole.





## Aquatics Facilities

In Arizona's desert climate, community pools play a vital role in promoting health, safety, and recreation during the intense summer heat. PR oversees nine pools that operate seasonally, offering essential services, such as swim lessons, swim team, water aerobics, and open swim.

To understand systemwide coverage across all providers in the County, access to all municipal pools was evaluated using a 20-minute walk time and access to splash pads using a 10-minute walk time, overlaid with population distribution. The analysis shows that most areas of the County have reasonable coverage, but notable gaps exist in Catalina Foothills and Drexel Heights, and Vail. Figure 10 illustrates areas of coverage and the communities that remain underserved.

### OUTSTANDING PROGRAM FOR AQUATICS AWARD

In August 2024, PR received the Outstanding Program for Aquatics Award from the Arizona Parks & Recreation Association for its long-running Swim Team Program. This recognition highlights the program's innovation, responsiveness to community needs, and consistent excellence in serving Pima County youth.

The Swim Team Program has become a summer tradition for families across the region. Open to youth ages 5 to 18, it provides an inclusive and supportive environment where participants of all skill levels can develop their abilities, build confidence, and form lasting friendships. Each season brings together more than 800 young swimmers who train and compete at all nine County pools. Weekly practices focus on technique and endurance, while five swim meets and a season-ending championship create opportunities for competition, teamwork, and celebration.

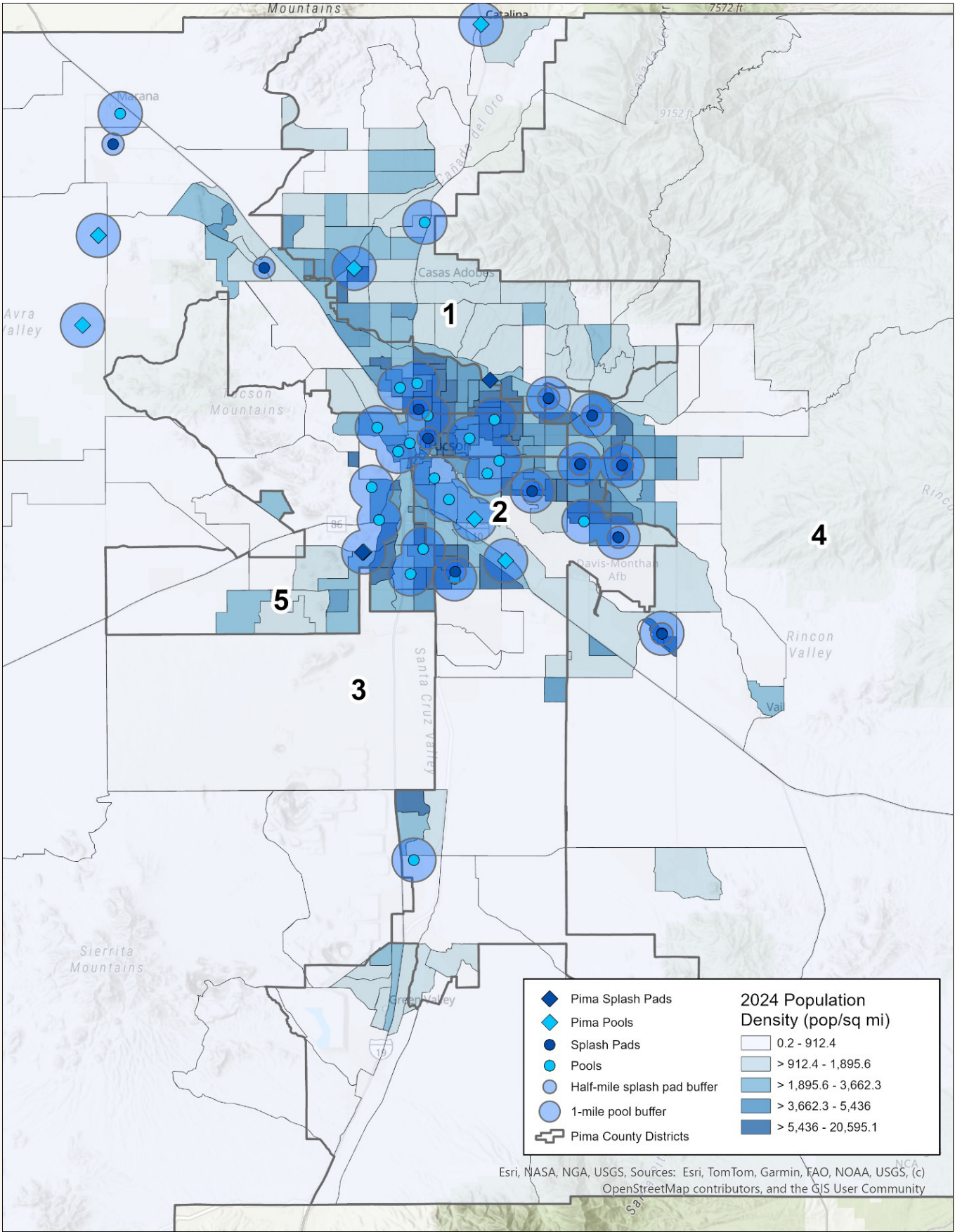
More than just a series of practices and competitions, the program reflects PR's commitment to providing accessible, high-quality recreation. Its affordability, countywide reach, and emphasis on safety ensure that every interested child

has the opportunity to participate, regardless of background or experience. For many, the program offers their first exposure to organized aquatics and serves as a foundation for a lifetime of swimming, health, and recreation.

The Swim Team Program does more than teach strokes and host competitions. It inspires confidence, builds lasting friendships, and creates pathways for a lifetime of recreation and wellness. Its continued success shows how aquatics can shape stronger, healthier communities across the County



Figure 10: Aquatic Facilities





While each of the nine pools serves a distinct community, consistent themes emerged related to staffing, infrastructure, and scheduling. The following findings highlight systemwide challenges, along with opportunities to strengthen aquatics services and improve community access.

## 1. Facility Limitations Restrict Program Expansion

Several pools face physical or site constraints that limit growth and flexibility. Catalina Pool has limited deck space, while Los Niños and Manzanita lack lighting, restricting evening programming. These challenges reduce opportunities to expand offerings even when demand exists.

**Opportunity:** Prioritize modest upgrades that increase functionality, such as deck improvements, lighting installation, and flexible furniture. Address small-scale needs that can significantly improve program delivery.

## 2. Infrastructure and IT Gaps Hinder Efficiency

Several pools lack basic IT infrastructure, which limits the ability to access scheduling systems, submit reports, or manage rosters on site. This affects both day-to-day operations and long-term planning.

**Opportunity:** Ensure consistent access to digital tools and systems across all pool sites. Provide staff with reliable technology to streamline communication and operations.

## 3. Popular Programs Often Reach Capacity

Programs like swim lessons, water aerobics, and swim team are widely attended and often sell out. Manzanita and Kino pools, for example, reported full registration early in the season. However, staffing and facility constraints prevent additional offerings.

**Opportunity:** Expand program availability at high-demand sites when staffing allows. Explore waitlist tracking and targeted expansion of popular programs at sites with the most community interest.





## 4. Partnerships Require Clear Expectations and Support

Several pools operate under shared-use agreements with school districts or nonprofit organizations. While these partnerships increase community access, they can also create challenges when roles, responsibilities, or scheduling priorities are unclear. Staff report communication gaps and logistical constraints that limit program delivery and create confusion for users.

**Opportunity:** Strengthen and formalize partnership agreements to clearly define operational responsibilities. Establish regular check-ins and shared planning tools to ensure smooth coordination and aligned priorities.

## 5. Aging Pools Increase Maintenance and Capital Needs

Nearly half of PR's pools were built before 1990, including Catalina (1965), Los Niños (1972), and Flowing Wells (1983). Thad Terry (2003) is somewhat newer but already showing limitations common to older designs. These facilities remain operational but face higher maintenance costs, outdated layouts, and shorter remaining lifespans compared to newer facilities. Without reinvestment, systemwide reliability and community access will decline over time.

**Opportunity:** Develop a long-term reinvestment strategy for older pools. Use life cycle planning to identify which facilities should be modernized, replaced, or repurposed to best meet community needs.

## 6. Undersized Pools Limit Access in High-Demand Areas

Facilities such as Catalina (1965), Manzanita (1997), and Thad Terry (2003) were built at smaller scales than current demand requires. These sites regularly operate at or near capacity, limiting swim lesson slots, lap swim lanes, and overall public access during peak times. Their size also constrains the ability to diversify programming to meet different community needs.

**Opportunity:** Explore expansion or replacement options at undersized pools in high-demand areas.

## 7. Coverage Gaps Remain in Underserved Communities

While most of the County has reasonable access to pools and splash pads, gaps exist in Catalina Foothills, Drexel Heights, and Vail. These areas fall outside typical walk-time service ranges, leaving residents with fewer public aquatic options during the summer months. Addressing these gaps will require coordination with other providers as well as consideration of future investments.

**Opportunity:** Work with municipal and school district partners to expand access in underserved areas. As growth continues, evaluate opportunities to add new aquatic features such as splash pads, small-scale pools, or shared-use facilities to improve equity in service coverage across the County.




## Shooting Sports Facilities

Shooting sports facilities offer a structured and skill-based form of recreation that emphasizes marksmanship, safety, and personal development. Facilities accommodate a wide range of users, including recreational shooters, competitive participants, and those engaged in training or education through both open practice and organized instruction. Table 12 summarizes the primary features and opportunities for each of the County's four shooting sports facilities.

**Table 12: Shooting Sports Facilities**

Facility	Description	Opportunity
Clay Target Center	The multi-use facility focused on trap and skeet shooting supports open shooting and structured classes. Community-oriented user base with older equipment and limited instructional infrastructure.	Upgrade throwing equipment; add classroom space; improve equipment reliability.
SERP Shooting Range	A regional range facility that supports marksmanship, training, education and competitive events. Offers classes and open shooting. Integrated classroom and office space, affecting instructional and administrative operations.	Update classroom and A/V equipment; improve ADA access; expand range distances (200–1,000 yards). SERP also presents opportunities for expanded partnerships with public safety and community groups.
Tucson Mountain Park Shooting, Rifle, Pistol and Archery Range	The outdoor range for rifle, pistol, and archery. Limited by lack of electricity, water, and security infrastructure. Poor roadway access impacts usability and safety.	Install utilities; improve access road; expand shooting lanes; improve security.
Virgil Ellis Shooting Range	Small facility used primarily for open shooting and special events. Limited by lack of restrooms, instructional capacity, and certified staff.	Install restrooms; certify staff for instruction; add infrastructure for new programs.



## Art Studios

Art studios offer diverse programming, including ceramics, painting, and general art classes. These facilities serve as important community hubs for hands-on learning. As part of the recreation and facility assessment, two key sites were reviewed: the Ajo Art Annex and the NWYMCA Art Studios. Staff feedback highlighted the unique strengths of each location, along with shared challenges related to facility visibility, equipment needs, and operational support. Table 13 summarizes the role of each site and outlines priorities to sustain and grow arts programming in the system.

Table 13: Art Studios

Facility	Description	Opportunity
Ajo Art Annex	A ceramics-focused studio offering workshops and “Paint & Takes,” typically serving 80–100 participants per month. The site includes multiple unmanned classrooms and operates separately from the main community center. Staff noted inconsistent hours, confusion about its location, and a lack of basic technology infrastructure. These limitations hinder visibility, recordkeeping, and public outreach.	Upgrade IT to support operations; enhance wayfinding and clarifying the studio’s connection to the community center.
NWYMCA Art Studios	This multi-room facility includes a multipurpose classroom, dedicated ceramics and jewelry studios, and kiln yards. Programming includes ceramics, pottery, jewelry fabrication, and general art classes. The space is operated in partnership with the YMCA, which manages interior maintenance. The County oversees exterior maintenance. Challenges include limited instructor availability, competition for parking, and lack of classroom technology.	Improve facility conditions through updated audiovisual and kiln equipment and enhancing basic IT access to better support instruction; strengthen maintenance coordination with the YMCA; address barriers to recruiting contract instructors.

.....

### Summary

PR recreation system includes a diverse mix of community centers, pools, shooting sports facilities, and art studios that provide residents with opportunities for learning, health, and connection. Across these facility types, **consistent themes emerged: aging infrastructure, undersized or capacity-limited facilities, staffing and resource constraints, and geographic gaps in service.** At the same time, many programs demonstrate strong demand and community value, underscoring the importance of continued investment. Addressing these challenges through reinvestment, modest upgrades, strategic partnerships, and targeted expansion will help ensure that PR continues to provide accessible and high-quality recreation opportunities for all residents.



# 5.0 Park Inventory and Level of Service



County parks are where residents gather for youth sports, year-round picnics, fitness, and everyday connection with nature. The system encompasses 41 parks across more than 3,105 acres, offering playgrounds, sports fields, dog parks, and shaded gathering spaces that anchor community life. To help ensure these resources serve residents equitably, this chapter examines both the County's park inventory and how well amenities are distributed across neighborhoods. The analysis identifies where access is strong, where gaps remain, and what opportunities exist to better serve all residents in the future.

## Park Inventory

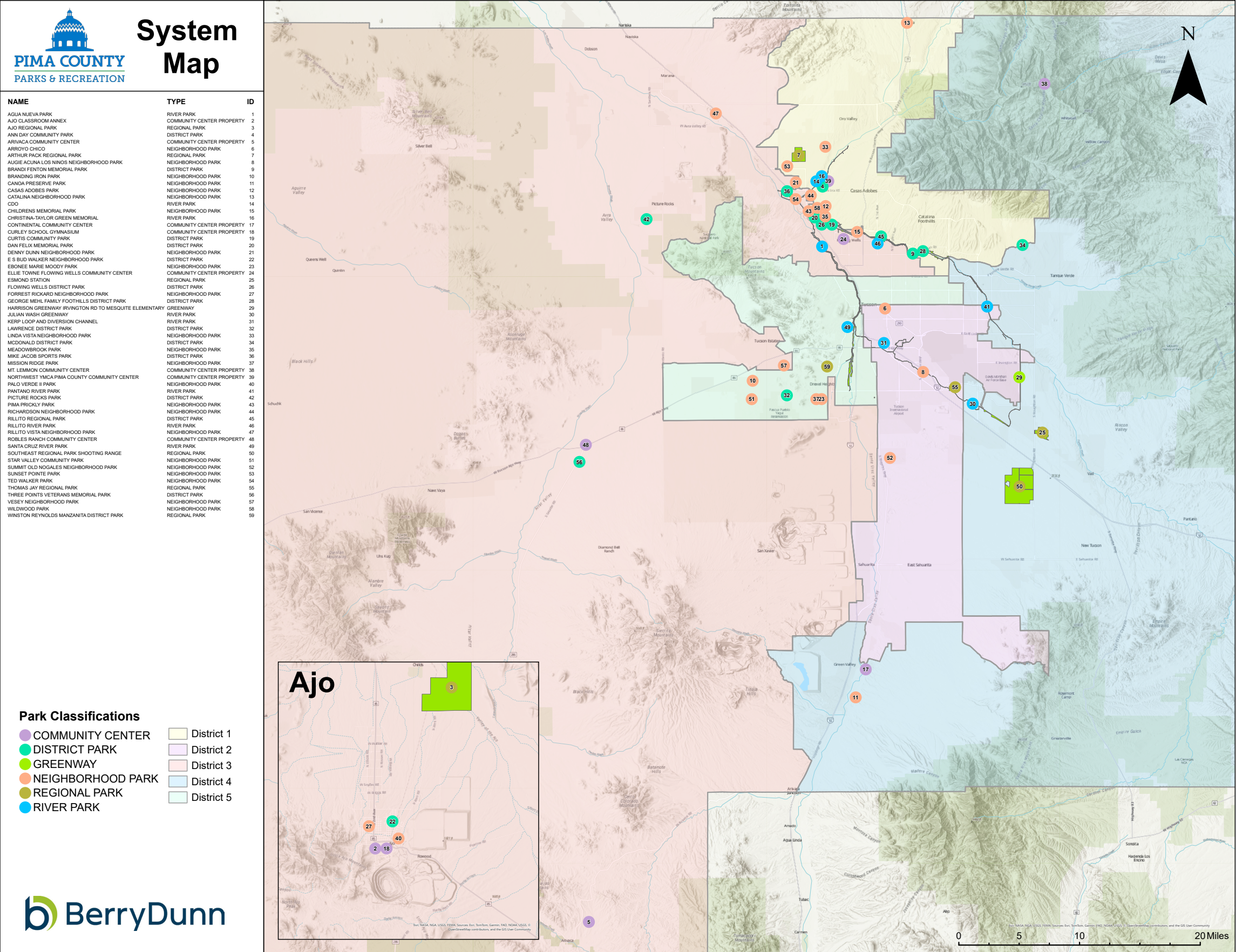
The County's park system is diverse, ranging from small neighborhood gathering spaces to expansive regional destinations that draw visitors from across the County. Each park type plays a distinct role in serving residents—whether by providing everyday access to playgrounds and shaded ramadas close to home, or by offering large-scale recreation experiences that support sports, events, and family gatherings. Table 14 provides a breakdown of park classifications and acreage.

**Table 14: Park Inventory by Classification**

Park Classification	Definition	Number of Parks	Total Acres
Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood parks are 10 acres or smaller and serve nearby residents with convenient access to recreation. They typically include a playground, restroom, parking lot, and a ramada with a BBQ grill. Parks closer to 10 acres may also feature a diamond ballfield and a basketball or tennis court.	23	205
District Park	District parks primarily range in size from 11 to 40 acres and provide a broader mix of amenities than neighborhood parks. These facilities may include multiple ballfields (both rectangle and diamond), drinking fountains, linkages to adjacent or nearby trails, park benches, additional ramadas, and perimeter walking paths.	12	368
Regional Park	Regional parks are generally greater than 100 acres and represent the largest parks in the system. They offer the widest range of amenities, which may include splash pads, dog parks, and multiple diamond and rectangle fields, along with other features that support community-wide recreation.	7	2,364
River Parks and Greenways	River parks and greenways are linear park or park-like corridors developed along watercourses or major roadway rights-of-way. They provide recreation, fitness, and alternative transportation opportunities. Examples include the Rillito River Park, Santa Cruz River Park, Pantano River Park, CDO River Park, and Houghton Greenway.	9	138



Figure 11 shows the geographic distribution of County parks and highlights how they are spread across urban, suburban, and rural communities.





The system supports a wide range of amenities, with some of the most frequently used including:



**113**

**RAMADAS**  
(shaded picnic shelters)



**9**

**DOG PARKS**



**96**

**PLAYGROUNDS**



**3**

**SPLASH PADS**



**72**

**DIAMOND FIELDS**  
(baseball/softball)



**3**

**SHOOTING RANGES**



**34**

**RECTANGULAR FIELDS**

(soccer/lacrosse/football)



**2**

**ARCHERY RANGES**

This sampling highlights high-use amenities within the larger park system, which also includes multi-use paths, courts, and other recreation features. In addition to park classifications, these amenities demonstrate the different scales at which the system operates, from the local convenience of neighborhood parks to the regional draw of large destination parks and river corridors. **As is typical for a county government, the County focuses most heavily on regional-scale parks that serve broader populations and complement the neighborhood and community parks operated by municipalities such as Tucson, Marana, Sahuarita, and Oro Valley.**



## Arthur Pack Regional Park— Advancing Water Conservation

Arthur Pack Regional Park is undergoing a major reclaimed water irrigation conversion that will save an estimated 45 acre-feet of groundwater per year. The \$1.75 million–\$2.25 million project replaces the park's potable water system with reclaimed water infrastructure, reducing reliance on groundwater while maintaining high-quality turf and landscape areas.

This investment aligns with the SAPCO by advancing turf reduction and water conservation goals. Construction is expected to be complete by the first quarter of 2026, positioning Arthur Pack as a model for how County parks can reduce long-term operating costs while protecting natural resources.

## Level of Service (LOS) Analysis

While the inventory highlights the breadth of the County's parks and amenities, a closer look at their distribution shows that access is not consistent across all communities. Some areas enjoy strong coverage, while others show gaps in access. To provide a complete picture, the LOS analysis considered both County-operated facilities and those provided by municipalities and other service partners. The analysis evaluates how well the overall system meets resident needs and whether resources are equitably distributed. Standardized service areas were applied to reflect how residents typically travel to and use different types of amenities, and these were compared to 2024 population density data to identify where gaps in access exist.

### Service Standards

- Regional Parks: 15-minute drive
- Ramadas: 20-minute walk
- Splash Pads: 10-minute walk
- Dog Parks: 10-minute drive
- Playgrounds: 10-minute walk
- Sports Fields: 10-minute drive



### Regional Coordination and Service Providers

The parks and recreation system in the County is supported by a network of providers that collectively enhance access to parks, recreation, and community amenities across the region. In addition to the County's own parks and recreation services, several municipal and community-based organizations contribute to the overall system. **The City of Tucson Parks and Recreation, Town of Marana Parks and Recreation, Town of Oro Valley Parks and Recreation, and Town of Sahuarita Parks, Recreation & Community Services** each operate their own park systems, providing neighborhood and community parks, trails, and facilities that serve both local and regional users. **Green Valley Recreation**, further complements these efforts through a network of membership-based centers offering programs and amenities for primarily 55+ residents. Together, these providers form an interconnected system that supports recreation, wellness, and quality of life throughout the County.



## 5.0 | Park Inventory And Level Of service

A review of the LOS results revealed several consistent patterns across the system. The following findings summarize where access is limited and highlight opportunities to strengthen equity through targeted investments and partnerships.

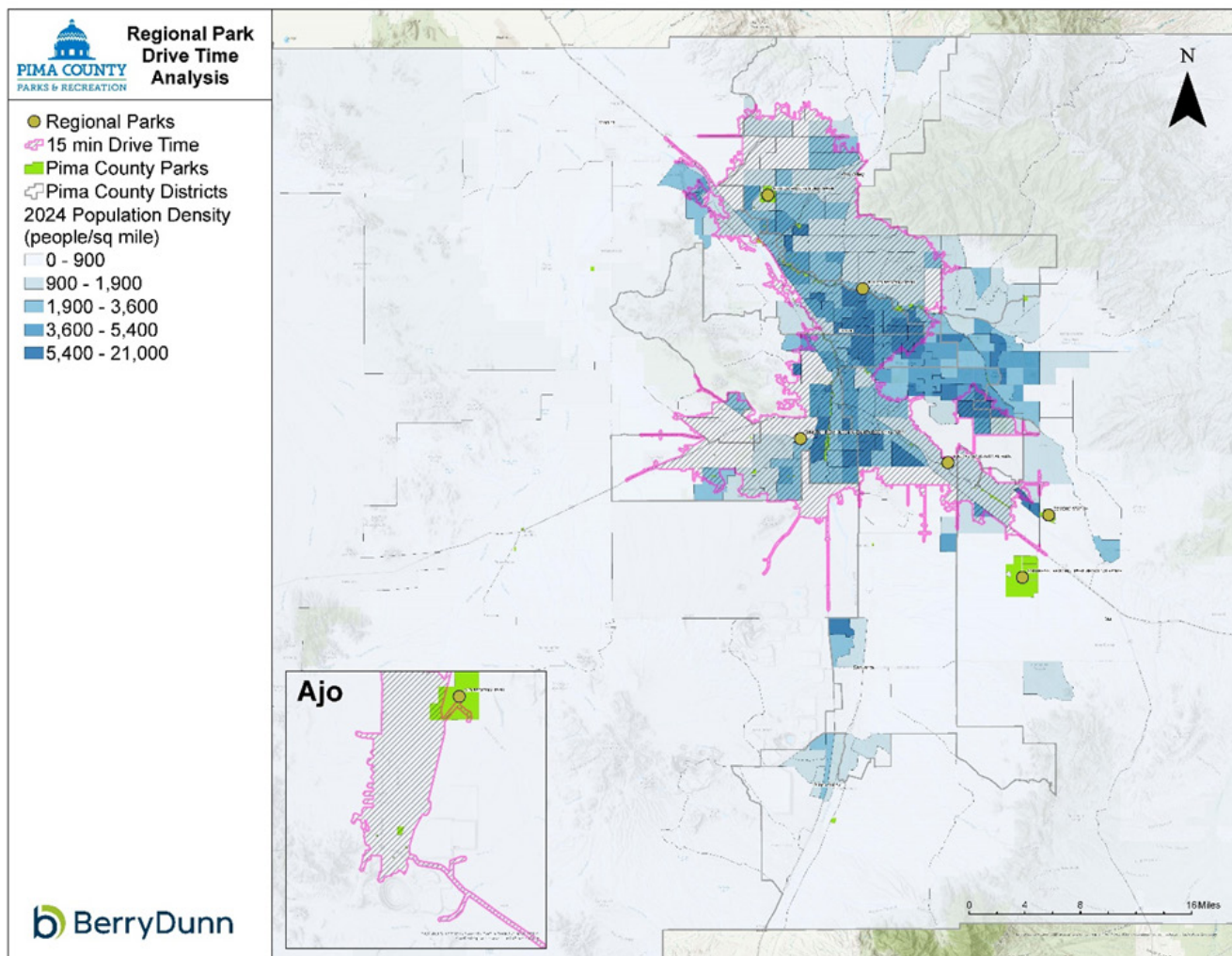
### 1. Regional Park Access Gaps

Using a 15-minute drive-time standard, most of the Tucson metro area and Ajo are well served by regional parks. Gaps in access are evident in Marana, Catalina, Picture Rocks, Three Points, Green Valley, Vail, and Sahuarita. Several of these communities, however, have partial coverage through other providers or smaller-scale County facilities. Catalina is supported by Oro Valley Parks and Recreation and the County's Catalina Neighborhood Park; Three Points has access to Three Points Veterans Memorial Park and the Robles Ranch Community Center; Picture Rocks is served by the County's Picture Rocks Park; and

Green Valley residents benefit from Green Valley Recreation and Canoa Preserve Park. **Vail stands out as the most significant gap, with no regional-scale or comparable public park facilities nearby, making it a high-priority area for expanded access.** Figure 12 illustrates regional park coverage across the County.

**Opportunity:** Advance development of Esmond Station Regional Park to address the regional park gap in Vail, while also strengthening partnerships with municipal providers to maximize coverage in other areas.

**Figure 12: Regional Park Drive Time Analysis**





## 2. Limited Dog Park Coverage

While urban coverage is strong, Catalina, Green Valley, Vail, and Three Points lack dog parks within a 10-minute drive.

**Opportunity:** Explore co-location of dog parks with existing regional or district parks to improve access in communities with gaps.

## 3. Sports Field Shortage

Overall sports field density is high, but southeast area of the County lacks both diamond and rectangular fields, and limited lighting elsewhere reduces usability.

**Opportunity:** Add fields in southeast portion of the County and prioritize lighting upgrades to extend hours at existing sites.

## 4. Playground Access

Overall coverage is strong, but gaps in access exist in the southeast areas of the County, limiting opportunities for young children and families in those communities.

**Opportunity:** Expand playground access in areas with gaps by co-locating new facilities at schools and libraries and incorporating playgrounds into the development of Esmond Station Regional Park.

## 5. Ramadas Coverage

Shaded gathering areas are widely available but sparse in rural and fringe areas, particularly in Green Valley, Vail, and Three Points.

**Opportunity:** Prioritize ramada placement near playgrounds and other high-use sites in rural areas to support family and group activities.

For a closer look at amenity access across the County, the interactive Amenity StoryMap provides a self-guided way to view park locations and amenities.




## Summary

The LOS analysis shows that the system provides a strong foundation, but gaps remain in fast-growing and outlying communities such as Vail, Green Valley, and Three Points. Aging facilities and limited lighting also reduce the usability of existing amenities. These challenges point to clear opportunities for reinvestment, stronger partnerships, and co-located amenities. Targeted investments in areas with gaps will help ensure the system remains accessible and

equitable as the County grows. By incorporating sustainability and resilience goals such as water conservation, energy efficiency, and climate-ready design, PR can deliver improvements that expand access while also strengthening long-term environmental and operational sustainability.

# 6.0

# Implementation Plan



The Implementation Plan provides a roadmap for the next 20 years, organizing recommendations into six priority areas with goals and phased actions. Short-term initiatives build critical foundations, while mid- and long-term projects expand capacity, update assets, and strengthen the system over time.

## Priority Areas

The six priority areas establish the framework for guiding PR's future direction. Each is supported by goals that provide clear direction for implementation and will be phased to ensure an organized and achievable path forward.



### ► **Strengthen Organizational Capacity:**

Builds the staffing, systems, and financial foundation needed to sustain services across a large and growing county and ensure long-term operational excellence.



### ► **Expand Access and Equity:**

Ensures all residents have equitable access to parks, facilities, and programs regardless of location or income to promote fairness and community well-being.



### ► **Maintain Existing Assets:**

Prioritizes updating and maintaining aging parks, pools, and community centers to extend their lifespan and maintain quality service levels.



### ► **Broaden Recreation Access and Programs:**

Expands the range and quality of recreation opportunities to meet evolving community needs and support active, healthy lifestyles.



### ► **Enhance Partnerships and Communication:**

Strengthens collaboration with local agencies, schools, and private partners to maximize resources, increase awareness, and expand community reach.



### ► **Advance Sustainability and Resilience:**

Promotes environmentally responsible and cost-effective operations to reduce long-term costs and prepare parks and facilities for future conditions. These efforts directly support SAPCO.



Implementation Phases

Table 15 summarizes the short-, mid-, and long-term phases for implementing the plan. These phases establish a logical sequence, helping ensure early priorities build the foundation for mid- and long-term investments. The successful implementation of these priorities is only possible through an infusion of capital, whether from the general fund, bond funds, or other dedicated resources.

Table 15: Implementation Phases

Phase	FY Range	Strategic Focus
Short-Term	FY26–FY30	Build organizational capacity, deliver early park and facility improvements, such as regional park enhancements, complete critical assessments for pools and buildings, expand programming in rural areas, and plan for improved park and amenity access.
Mid-Term	FY31–FY35	Implement major capital projects (Esmond Station Park, park update projects, pool renovations, community centers modernization), grow volunteer capacity, and expand public-private partnerships.
Long-Term	FY36–FY46	Complete sustainability upgrades, incorporate renewable energy initiatives, and continue systemwide capital renewal planning.

Goals by Priority Area and Phase

Table 16 provides a systemwide view of all goals organized by priority area. It shows each goal’s implementation phase and target FY range, offering a quick reference before the detailed goal descriptions that follow.

Table 16: Goals by Priority Area and Phase

Goal	Goal Title	Phase	FY Range
	<b>PRIORITY AREA A: Strengthen Organizational Capacity</b>		
A.1	Improve Data and Performance Tracking	Short-Term	FY26–FY30
A.2	Achieve National Accreditation	Short-Term	FY26–FY30
A.3	Align Staffing Levels with Population Growth, Service Demand and Industry Standards	Short-Term	FY26–FY30
A.4	Develop a Sustainable Pricing Model	Short-Term	FY26–FY30
A.5	Establish Long-Term Funding Strategy	Short-Term	FY26–FY30
A.6	Prepare a Bond and Capital Plan	Short-Term	FY26–FY30

Goal	Goal Title	Phase	FY Range
	<b>PRIORITY AREA B: Expand Access and Equity</b>		
B.1	Expand Programs in Rural Areas	Short-Term	FY26–FY30
B.2	Enhance Regional Parks	Short-Term	FY26–FY30
B.3	Develop Esmond Station Park (Bond-Funded)	Mid-Term	FY31–FY35
	<b>PRIORITY AREA C: Maintain Existing Assets</b>		
C.1	Invest in Pool Facilities (Bond-Funded)	Mid-Term	FY31–FY35
C.2	Modernize Community Centers (Bond-Funded)	Mid-Term	FY31–FY35
C.3	Update Parks by District (Bond-Funded)	Mid-Term	FY31–FY35
	<b>PRIORITY AREA D: Broaden Recreation Programs</b>		
D.1	Add Lighting to Existing Athletic Fields (Bond-Funded)	Short-Term	FY26–FY30
D.2	Expand Aquatics Capacity	Short-Term	FY26–FY30
D.3	Diversify and Expand Program Offerings	Short-Term	FY26–FY30
D.4	Upgrade Shooting Sports Facilities (Bond-Funded)	Mid-Term	FY31–FY35
	<b>PRIORITY AREA E: Enhance Partnerships and Communication</b>		
E.1	Build Local Marketing Capacity	Short-Term	FY26–FY30
E.2	Evaluate Intergovernmental Partnerships	Short-Term	FY26–FY30
E.3	Expand Volunteer and Ambassador Programs	Mid-Term	FY31–FY35
E.4	Establish Public-Private Partnerships	Mid-Term	FY31–FY35
	<b>PRIORITY AREA F: Advance Sustainability and Resilience</b>		
F.1	Convert Turf to Drought-Tolerant Landscaping	Long-Term	FY36–FY46
F.2	Install Renewable Energy Systems	Long-Term	FY36–FY46
F.3	Transition Parks to Reclaimed Water Irrigation	Long-Term	FY36–FY46
F.4	Upgrade Field Lighting to LED	Long-Term	FY36–FY46

Detailed Goals by Priority Area

This section provides detailed descriptions for each goal organized by the six priority areas. These narratives explain the purpose, desired outcomes, and timing for implementation, building on the summary tables presented earlier. Achieving these goals will ultimately depend on securing the necessary capital, whether from the general fund, bond funds, or other dedicated resources.



Priority Area A: Strengthen Organizational Capacity

Builds the staffing, systems, and financial foundation needed to sustain services across a large and growing county and ensure long-term operational excellence.

Goal A.1: Improve Data and Performance Tracking

By FY30, fully implement and leverage the Kaizen recreation software system to manage program registration, facility rentals, participation tracking, marketing, and customer feedback. Use the system’s reporting functions to review results annually and share information on participation trends.

Goal A.2: Achieve National Accreditation

By FY30, achieve CAPRA accreditation to demonstrate alignment with national standards and best practices. Establish an Accreditation Steering Committee and Coordinator, complete a self-assessment to identify and address compliance gaps, update key policies and procedures, and provide staff training to ensure organization-wide understanding of CAPRA standards.

Goal A.3: Align Staffing Levels with Population Growth, Service Demand and Industry Standards

Goal A.3: Align Staffing Levels with Population Growth, Service Demand and Industry Standards

Conduct a comprehensive staffing analysis by FY30 to align staffing levels with NRPA medians. PR currently operates at 2.1 FTE per 10,000 residents (237 FTEs) compared to the NRPA median of 2.5 FTE per 10,000 residents (262 FTEs), a shortfall of 25 FTEs. In addition to population benchmarks, the analysis should account for acres of parkland maintained, the geographic distribution of facilities, and travel distance between locations. Findings should identify staffing needs by program area and facility type to guide phased hiring and help ensure resources are allocated where demand is highest.

Goal A.4: Develop a Sustainable Pricing Model

Increase cost recovery for revenue-generating facilities and programs by 10% by FY30 through a review of Board of Supervisor’s fee structures, market comparisons, and operational efficiencies, while maintaining equitable access for all residents.

Goal A.5: Establish a Long-Term Funding Strategy

By FY30, create a 10-year financial strategy that incorporates both capital and operational needs, balancing County funds with revenue sources such as park in-lieu fees, partnerships, and bonds. This strategy should be guided by the \$3 million–\$5 million annual gap relative to peer agencies, while also addressing the \$1.5 million backlog from prior inflation and building in assumptions for future inflation of roughly 3% annually to prevent further erosion of service levels. Operating costs for new parks, facilities and amenities should also be incorporated and supported by the general fund.

Goal A.6: Prepare a Bond and Capital Plan

By FY30, prepare a detailed capital plan documenting facility priorities, and cost estimates as the foundation for a potential voter-approved bond package, including Board of Supervisors consideration, public education, and ballot preparation.





## Priority Area B: Expand Access and Equity

Ensures all residents have equitable access to parks, facilities, and programs regardless of location or income to promote fairness and community well-being.

### Goal B.1: Expand Programs in Rural Areas

By FY30, expand recreation and youth sports opportunities in rural communities by piloting at least three new programs that improve access to structured and inclusive activities through community center staff or partnerships. Priority will be given to rural and high-poverty areas such as Districts 2, 3, and 5, consistent with Pima Prosper's guidance to direct facilities and services to communities of greatest need. Programs should be developed with Prosperity Initiative principles in mind, linking recreation to broader efforts that improve health, education, and pathways to economic mobility.

### Goal B.2: Enhance Regional Parks

By FY30, implement at least three amenity upgrades at regional parks that respond to community priorities, such as dog parks, field lights, splash pads, or ramadas, to increase accessibility, comfort, and overall park use.

### Goal B.3: Develop Esmond Station Park

Update the master plan for Esmond Station Park by FY28 and identify funding strategies such as a future bond initiative or public-private partnerships to support phased development, ensuring Phase 1 opens in the near term to meet recreation needs in the Vail area.



## Priority Area C: Maintain Existing Assets

Prioritizes updating and maintaining aging parks, pools, and community centers to extend their lifespan and maintain quality service levels.

### Goal C.1: Invest in Pool Facilities

By FY35, complete capital improvements at two to four pools to replace outdated pumps, filters, heaters, chemical treatment systems, pool decks and interiors, locker rooms, and changing facilities, and improve water and energy efficiency. These investments should be aligned with the Prosperity Initiative by prioritizing facilities in underserved areas, ensuring equitable access to safe, affordable aquatics, and recognizing pools as community assets that support health, youth development, and opportunity in underserved communities.

### Goal C.2: Modernize Community Centers

By FY30, collaborate with the Pima County Facilities Management Department's Asset Management & Planning Division to identify modernization priorities for all community centers, including ADA compliance, energy efficiency, technology upgrades, interior renovations, and improvements

to building visibility and exterior presence.

Community centers in Districts 2, 3, and 5 will be prioritized given higher poverty levels, facility age, and the role these centers play in providing equitable access to recreation opportunities. By FY35, complete renovations at three to four community centers to address identified needs and improve accessibility, functionality, and user experience. Modernizations should also integrate workforce training, digital access, and supportive programming that reinforce the County's Prosperity Initiative goals.

### Goal C.3: Update Parks by District

By FY30, develop a park update plan **supported by general fund and/or bond funding** that identifies one priority park in each district (five total) that has exceeded its typical 25- to 30-year lifespan. By FY35, complete update projects at all five parks, addressing safety, accessibility, and modernization needs.



**Priority Area D: Broaden Recreation Programs**

Expands the range and quality of recreation opportunities to meet evolving community needs and support active, healthy lifestyles.

**Goal D.1:** Add Lighting to Existing Athletic Fields

By FY35, install LED lighting at a minimum of five currently unlit athletic fields to expand hours of use for practices, games, and community events, increasing overall field capacity without new construction.

**Goal D.2:** Expand Aquatics Capacity

By FY30, expand access to aquatic recreation by extending hours at two pools and increasing instructional programs by 15%, supported by investments in lighting and heating to enable longer operating hours and greater program capacity. Additional general fund resources will be required.

**Goal D.3:** Diversify and Expand Program Offerings

By FY30, expand youth, senior, art and culture programs, and contractor-led program participation collectively by 20% and pilot at least three new

programs at each community center to test emerging interests and broaden recreation opportunities. By FY35, scale successful pilots countywide and increase overall program participation by an additional 10%. Additional general fund resources will be required.

**Goal D.4:** Upgrade Shooting Sports Facilities

By FY35, upgrade the County’s two primary shooting sports facilities to support recreational users, competitive events, and public safety training needs.

SERP: Improve ADA accessibility, and update ranges to accommodate longer shooting distances and modern standards

Tucson Mountain Park Shooting Range: Improve roadway access and utility infrastructure to enhance safety, accessibility, and long-term usability





**Priority Area E: Enhance Partnerships & Communication**

Strengthens collaboration with local agencies, schools, and private partners to maximize resources, increase awareness, and expand community reach.

**Goal E.1:** Build Local Marketing Capacity

By FY30, develop a marketing strategy in coordination with the Communications Department that equips each community center with the tools, training, and resources to promote programs locally while maintaining consistent branding and bilingual messaging across all facilities. The strategy will set measurable goals to increase social media engagement by 25% and website visits by 10%.

**Goal E.2:** Evaluate Intergovernmental Partnerships

Beginning in FY26, use the quarterly Parks and Recreation Directors meetings to evaluate opportunities to partner with municipalities and other public entities within the County. These evaluations should consider options for sharing resources, coordinating programming, and pursuing collaborative facility or regional initiatives that improve efficiency and expand access for residents.

**Goal E.3:** Expand Volunteer and Ambassador Programs

By FY35, launch a Parks Ambassador volunteer program with at least 50 trained volunteers supporting events, outreach, and park stewardship, with annual recognition and training opportunities to maintain mid-term engagement.

**Goal E.4:** Establish Public-Private Partnerships

By FY35, establish at least three public-private partnerships to support capital projects, program delivery, or sponsorships that expand recreation opportunities, reduce operating costs, or provide new amenities for residents.



**Priority Area F: Advance Sustainability and Resilience**

Promotes environmentally responsible and cost-effective operations to reduce long-term costs and prepare parks and facilities for future conditions. These efforts directly support SAPCO.

**Goal F.1:** Convert Turf to Drought-Tolerant Landscaping

By FY46, convert 50% of non-programmed turf and park landscaping, excluding sports fields and active recreation areas, into drought-tolerant designs to reduce water use and long-term maintenance costs.

**Goal F.2:** Install Renewable Energy Systems

By FY46, install renewable energy features, such as solar lighting, at a minimum of five parks or community centers to reduce environmental impact and operating costs.

**Goal F.3:** Transition Parks to Reclaimed Water Irrigation

Work toward transitioning park irrigation systems from potable to reclaimed water as funding and infrastructure opportunities allow.

**Goal F.4:** Upgrade Field Lighting to LED

By FY46, replace 100% of existing athletic field lights with LED fixtures, beginning with at least 50% conversion by FY35.





**PIMA COUNTY**  
PARKS & RECREATION

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