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# PHOENIX PARKS MASTER PLAN

DECEMBER 2016

VOLUME I  
FINAL REPORT



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# Special Thanks & Acknowledgements

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## About the Community Service Center

The Community Service Center (CSC) is a research center affiliated with the Department of Planning, Public Policy, and Management at the University of Oregon. It is an interdisciplinary organization that assists Oregon communities by providing planning and technical assistance to help solve local issues and improve the quality of life for Oregon residents. The role of the CSC is to link the skills, expertise, and innovation of higher education with the transportation, economic development, and environmental needs of communities and regions in the State of Oregon, thereby providing service to Oregon and learning opportunities to the students involved.



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# Chapter 1: Introduction

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**The Phoenix Parks Master Plan** will provide a guiding vision for the development and maintenance of the parks system in Phoenix for the next 20 years. The Phoenix Parks Master Plan articulates the community’s vision to provide healthy and enjoyable recreational opportunities to its residents and visitors, as well as build capacity to accommodate Phoenix’s changing population and needs. The plan provides specific tools and guidance for achieving the goals and vision of city staff and the community at large.

## Overview

Parks systems play a vital role in residents’ quality of life. Whether through trails, natural areas, play equipment, sports fields, or open space, a

**Quality of Life** refers to an individual’s satisfaction with their social and physical surroundings. Parks and recreation are major contributors to the resources, assets, and opportunities that improve quality of life for residents

community’s parks system is a source of diversion, connectivity, aesthetic beauty, natural preservation and enjoyment for its residents. The

parks system shapes the character of communities, provides a gathering place for neighborhood activities, and promotes healthy behaviors and lifestyles.

Creating and maintaining park and recreation facilities is a challenge for local governments. Finite land, resources, and administrative and maintenance capacity may all limit a community’s ability to expand parks and services to meet their growing needs. Identifying system priorities and matching them with available resources requires thoughtful planning. Communities typically develop and adopt Parks System Master Plans to guide development of parks systems in a way that is both beneficial to the community and fiscally feasible.

## Purpose of the Plan

This plan provides an extensive, stand-alone update of the 1997/2008 Parks and Recreation Element of Phoenix’s Comprehensive Plan. Phoenix is expected to undergo significant population growth and development in the next 20 years, which will require improved parks system capacity to maintain adequate levels of service. The Phoenix Parks Master Plan describes the community’s vision for its

parks and provides specific actions and tools necessary to achieve that vision. The plan:

- Provides a **community profile** that describes demographic, housing, and recreational trends in Phoenix.
- Updates the **park inventory** including city owned property as well as trails and linkages.
- Analyzes areas in the city that are currently **underserved** by park and recreational opportunities.
- Provides a planning framework of **goals, objectives, and specific recommendations** to guide the City's decisions.
- Includes five-year and ten-year **Capital/Parkland Improvement Plans** that prioritize park expenditures based on need.
- Details **strategies for acquiring new parkland** to better serve the community of Phoenix.
- Contains **funding options and opportunities** for park improvement and acquisition recommendations.

## The Parks Planning Process

The parks planning process relied on input from residents, the Phoenix Parks Commission, and City staff to answer three key questions:

1. Where are we now?
2. Where are we going?
3. How do we get there?



The process was managed by a planning team consisting of external consultants (from the University of Oregon's Community Service Center) and members of the Phoenix Parks Commission.

### Where are we now?

The planning team interviewed stakeholders and completed an inventory of park facilities to understand the current condition of parks. The planning team also hosted a parks planning open house and distributed a mailed and online survey to gather more information from residents about how well the current parks meet their needs.

### Where are we going?

The planning team asked for feedback on how residents would like to see their parks improved and added to in the future through a series of public workshops and events, a mailed and online survey, and via an interactive website. This feedback helped the planning team create a Vision for the Phoenix parks system. The Community Service Center's landscape architect also gathered information through site visits, a design workshop, and a public comment event to develop a design concept that re-imagines Blue Heron Park.



## How do we get there?

The planning team created a list of small parkland improvements under \$1,200 and a list of capital improvements that details higher cost (\$1,200+) parkland improvements that may require external funding. This document includes suggestions for how to finance park improvements, and a recommended strategy for acquiring new park land. The planning team also crafted a timeline to assist the City with plan implementation.

## Community Engagement

Community and stakeholder engagement are critical elements of the planning process. Community engagement provides tangible benefits to the process by: (1) providing insight into community members' values and preferences; (2) developing and nurturing an environment of goodwill and trust; (3) building consensus support for the Plan. Throughout the planning process, the planning team used a variety of methods to gather input from Phoenix residents, including:

- Eight stakeholder interviews
- Five public workshops (including two with middle and high school students)
- Parks Commission meetings
- Site visits
- A printed and online survey
- An interactive website

This Plan combines community input with technical analysis to provide a framework for achieving the goals and objectives that implement the parks system vision. The Plan can also be integrated into other planning decisions that relate to areas of parks planning.



“Welcome to Summer” Workshop at Blue Heron Park  
Source: Community Service Center

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## Relationship to Other Plans

The Phoenix Parks Master Plan complements and integrates with other plans that guide Phoenix and the surrounding area.

The **Parks and Recreation Element** of Phoenix’s **Comprehensive Plan** (updated concurrently with the Phoenix Parks Master Plan) serves as a technical guide to land use decisions related to parks and recreation. While the Phoenix Parks Master Plan provides a holistic vision and recommendations for cultivating a full-service parks system, the Comprehensive Plan Element focuses more on land use and development policies that will facilitate the implementation of the Master Plan.

The **Bear Creek Greenway Management Plan** is a multi-jurisdictional document that guides the operations, maintenance, and management activities of the Bear Creek Greenway. The Greenway itself is governed by the Jackson County “**Bear Creek Greenway Corridor Ordinance.**” The City of Phoenix contributes to maintenance of the Greenway, and activities involving the Greenway should consider both the Management Plan and the provisions of the Jackson County ordinance.

The **Greater Bear Creek Valley Regional Problem Solving Plan**, adopted in 2011 by Jackson County, was created as part of a collaborative Regional Problems Solving process to deal with issues of rapid population growth and development in the

Bear Creek Valley. The future development patterns described in the plan will have implications for park development in Phoenix. The Regional Plan established Urban Reserve Areas outside of Phoenix’s existing Urban Growth Boundary that will eventually be incorporated into the Phoenix city limits. This means that both Phoenix’s population and physical size will expand, creating the need for parkland expansion in northern Phoenix. The plan specifically identifies a need for between 70 and 90 more acres of parkland and open space.

## Organization of the Plan

The remainder of the Phoenix Parks Master Plan is organized as follows:

**Chapter 2: Community Profile** – Provides information on Phoenix’s planning area, projected growth, and socio-demographic trends.

**Chapter 3: The Phoenix Parks System** – Provides an overview of the City of Phoenix’s existing parks and recreation facilities, park service areas, and park classifications.

**Chapter 4: Parks and Recreation Needs** – Presents findings from the community engagement process, including what the community values in a park system and identified needs and wants for future park improvements.

**Chapter 5: Park System Vision and Goals** — Presents a 20-year vision for the Phoenix park system, including goals and recommended action

items. These recommendations outline specific efforts, which the City and community can undertake to achieve the desired vision.

**Chapter 6: Park System Improvements and Expansion** – Includes recommendations to improve *existing* park and recreation facilities as well as suggestions for *future* expansion of the parks system.

**Chapter 7: Operations and Funding** – Provides descriptions of (1) the parks system’s current organization structure; (2) current operating budget; (3) projected park system expenditures; and (4) descriptions of funding tools available to the City of Phoenix.

**Volume II: Blue Heron Park Redesign** – Gives a detailed explanation of the process for developing the Blue Heron Park concept plan and presents goals and recommendations for the park.

**Volume III - Appendix A: Parkland Acquisition and Level of Service** – Presents an analysis of Phoenix’s current level of service and projected future parkland needs. It also includes a land acquisition strategy and design guidelines for new parks.

**Volume III - Appendix B: Resources** – Contains specific resources that will help the City implement the Parks Master Plan, including information about park system staffing, resources for how to form a “Friends of the Park” nonprofit, and a detailed preliminary plan for repairing the horseshoe pits at Colver Road Park.

**Volume III - Appendix C: Community Input** – Explains the community input process and shares findings from the community workshops, stakeholder interviews, and community survey.



Community Stage at Blue Heron Park  
Source: Community Service Center



# Chapter 2: Community Profile

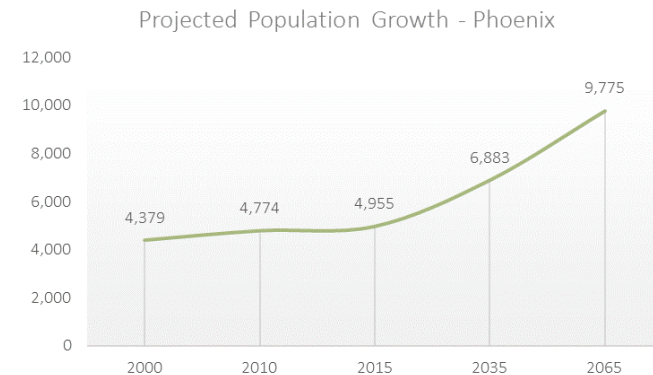
**Who lives in Phoenix? What direction is the community headed?** The Phoenix parks planning team gathered demographic and economic information to inform the design and planning choices included in the Parks Master Plan. By examining these characteristics, the planning team also identified populations and groups with unique needs that the City of Phoenix must consider as it continues to improve and expand the parks system.

Phoenix is located in the Rogue Valley of Southern Oregon, and much of the surrounding land is agricultural. In 2015, Phoenix had a population of 4,585 with a slightly female-biased gender balance and a median age of 48.<sup>1 2</sup> The population is predominately white but has experienced significant growth of non-white residents in recent years.<sup>3</sup>

Phoenix has a labor force of approximately 1,900 people.<sup>4</sup> More than three-quarters of employees in Phoenix work in services and retail trade, with the highest employment in administrative and support services (20%), elementary and secondary schools (12%), and food and drinking establishments (10%).<sup>5</sup> Most businesses in Phoenix are fairly small, with 67% having only 1 to 4 employees.<sup>6</sup>

## A growing population will require expanded parkland and recreation services<sup>7</sup>

Phoenix's population grew by 395 people between 2000 and 2010, an average annual growth rate of just under 1% per year. However, Phoenix's population is projected to grow at a much higher rate within the next 20 years (1.7% average annual growth rate), with a projected increase of nearly 2,000 residents by 2035. **This means that over the 20 years covered in this plan, Phoenix's population will increase by almost 40%.** By 2065, Phoenix's population is projected to *almost double* from 2015 levels.



Source: PSU Population Research Center. Jackson County Coordinated Population Forecasts 2015-2065.

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A growing population demands a comparable increase in infrastructure and public goods. Public amenities such as parks and recreation will play a crucial role in maintaining livability and general welfare of the community, particularly as an influx of new residents drives economic growth and housing development.

### Shifting age groups will bring new demands to the parks system<sup>8</sup>

Changing age demographics may create challenges for park planners, as they must find ways to accommodate growing populations on opposite ends of the age spectrum. From 2000 to 2010, the population of children 9 and under increased more than any other age group, at an average annual growth rate of 8.5% per year. Residents aged 65 and older experienced the second most pronounced growth rate during this same period (1.6% per year).

These trends indicate that the City will need to create more **recreation options that serve the needs of young children and families**, as well as an expected increase in adolescents. At the same time, the City must also consider the needs of **senior citizens**, particularly when assessing accessibility of facilities.

### A diversifying racial and ethnic makeup will require greater outreach and inclusion<sup>9</sup>

Although Phoenix has a predominantly white population, the amount of residents identifying as people of color has risen significantly within the past decade. While Phoenix's entire population grew nearly 12% between 2000 and 2010, **about two-thirds of the growth occurred in non-white race categories**. The population identifying as **Hispanic or Latino accounts for the single largest demographic increase** in this time period, almost doubling from 9% to 16%.

In the past, park systems have been developed primarily with the needs and desires of a majority white population in mind. As minority populations increase, park systems must change to accommodate different needs and desires, and must seek new ways to be welcoming to traditionally marginalized groups. In Phoenix, the voices of minorities should be considered and sought out in future parks planning processes. Phoenix parks should not only be a welcoming and accessible space for *all* residents, but should also reflect the community's growing diversity with the services, design, and activities offered.

## A high disability rate will necessitate investment in accessibility<sup>10</sup>

Phoenix has a higher percentage of 18-64 year-olds with a disability than both Jackson County and Oregon: 18% compared to 14% and 12% respectively. Phoenix's youth (under 18) disability rate is also higher than the County and the State at 7% compared to 5% for Jackson County and Oregon.

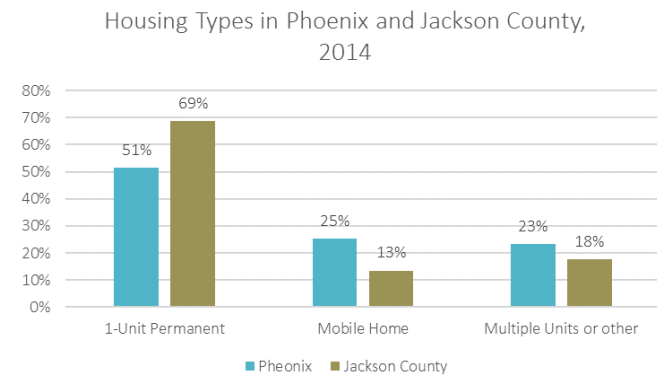
**Living with a disability may bring unique challenges to accessing public goods such as parks.** Parks may be difficult to navigate in terms of mobility, may offer limited activities that people with disabilities can enjoy, and/or may not feel like safe and accepting environments. The City must invest resources to ensure there are multiple access points for people with disabilities to each park and park facility, and also bear the needs of this group in mind in future park development and programming.

## A high percentage of multi-family and trailer housing means limited private green space<sup>11</sup>

Housing characteristics are important to consider in parks planning as they can indicate growth, economic stability, and permanence of residency. In 2010, Phoenix's housing units were at a 93%

occupancy rate, with about 58% owner-occupied and 35% renter-occupied. Of Phoenix's occupied housing units, **approximately half are either multi-family or trailer park housing**, as opposed to single unit homes. This is higher than in Jackson County as a whole, where less than one-third of housing units are multi-family or trailer park housing.

Multi-family housing and trailer park housing are less likely to offer access to a yard or any private green space, making residents of these homes more dependent on parks for opportunities to spend time outdoors, gather socially, or participate in exercise. The City must consider the needs of residents with limited yard space when developing level of service standards for the parks system. Future park development should also aim to serve areas where multi-family housing and trailer parks are concentrated.

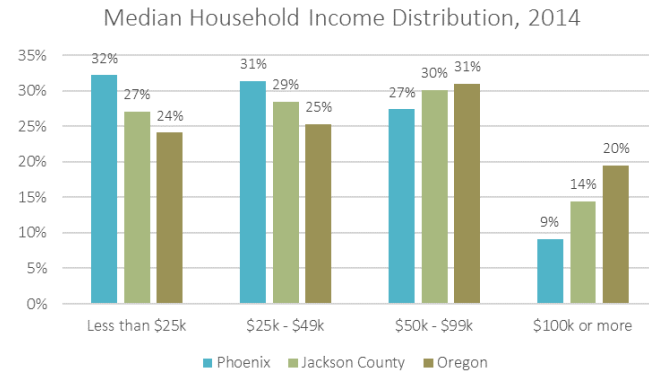


Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. "Selected Housing Characteristics: 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates." Table DP04.

## A large population living in poverty may benefit from parks<sup>12</sup>

In 2014, median income in Phoenix was \$34,478, lower than the Jackson County median (\$44,086) and over \$15,000 below the statewide median. Phoenix also has more households in lower income brackets than Jackson County and Oregon. With about **a quarter of both adults (aged 18-64) and youth (under 18) living below the poverty line**, Phoenix has higher poverty rates than both Jackson County and Oregon.

These data suggest that Phoenix's parks system must seriously consider the needs of those living in poverty, a population that often relies more heavily on public goods such as parks. Facilities should support programming and services that would benefit this demographic, so that the parks may serve as a system of support as well as a source of enjoyment for those who cannot afford other sources of recreation.



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. "Selected Economic Characteristics: 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates." Table DP03.





Monarch Waystation at Blue Heron Park  
 Source: Community Service Center

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## Section Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Portland State University Population Research Center. "Certified Population Estimates 2015." <https://www.pdx.edu/prc/population-reports-estimates>

<sup>2</sup> US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. "Age & Sex: 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates." Table S0101.

<sup>3</sup> US Census Bureau. Census 2000 and 2010 Summary File 1, 100% Data. "Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin." Table QT-P3.

<sup>4</sup> Oregon Zoom Prospector. "Phoenix, OR Community Profile – Labor Force." <http://oregon.zoomprospector.com/>

<sup>5</sup> Oregon Zoom Prospector. "Labor Force Report (Phoenix, Oregon) – Total Employees by Major SIC (2016) and Total Employees by NAICS (2016)." <http://oregon.zoomprospector.com/>

<sup>6</sup> Oregon Zoom Prospector. "Labor Force Report (Phoenix, Oregon) – Total Establishments by Size (2016)." <http://oregon.zoomprospector.com/>

<sup>7</sup> Portland State University Population Research Center. "Coordinated Population Forecast 2015 – 2065, Jackson County: Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs) and Area Outside UGBs." June 2015. [http://www.pdx.edu/prc/sites/www.pdx.edu/prc/files/Jackson\\_Forecast\\_Report\\_201506.pdf](http://www.pdx.edu/prc/sites/www.pdx.edu/prc/files/Jackson_Forecast_Report_201506.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> US Census Bureau. Census 2000 and 2010 Summary File 1, 100% Data. "Sex and Age." Table QT-P1.

<sup>9</sup> US Census Bureau. Census 2000 and 2010 Summary File 1, 100% Data. "Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin." Table QT-P3.

<sup>10</sup> US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. "Disability Characteristics: 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates." Table S1810.

<sup>11</sup> US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. "Selected Housing Characteristics: 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates." Table DP04.

<sup>12</sup> US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. "Selected Economic Characteristics: 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates." Table DP03.

# Chapter 3: The Phoenix Park System

**This chapter focuses on Phoenix’s existing park system.** The park classification, inventory, and service analyses are critical components of the Master Plan. These components characterize the existing park system and establish a framework that helps identify current and future park system needs.

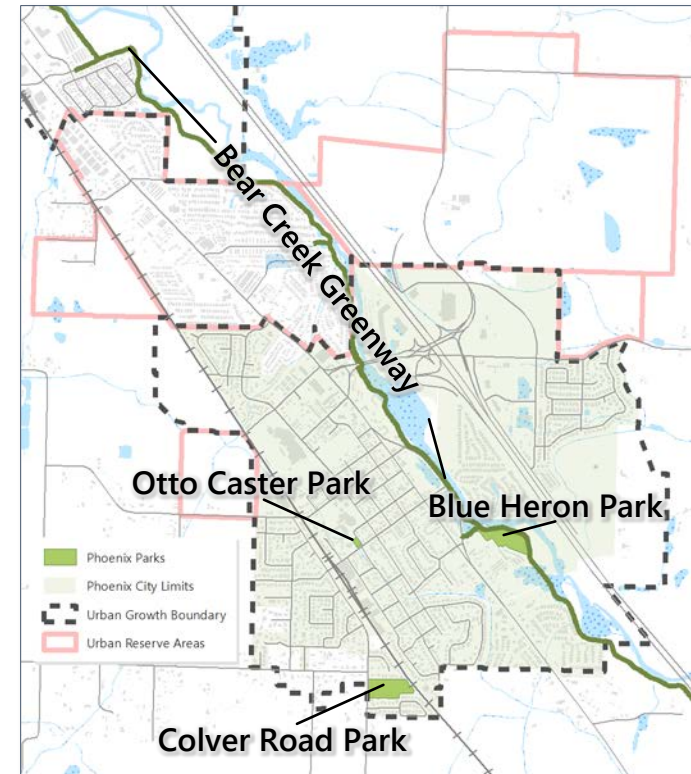
The City of Phoenix owns three parks: Blue Heron Park, Colver Road Park, and Otto Caster Park. Phoenix is also one of the jurisdictions responsible for managing the Bear Creek Greenway, a paved trail that connects towns from Ashland to Central Point. In total, the City of Phoenix currently owns approximately 30 acres of developed parkland and open space, with two more parks currently in the development phase (the downtown plaza and wetlands park). Of these 30 acres, approximately 12 are “developed parkland” – areas with built up infrastructure to serve park visitors. Phoenix’s growing population and changing demographics will require the park system to expand to accommodate the community’s needs.

## Planning Area

Phoenix is located in Oregon’s Rogue Valley in Jackson County. The city is situated 3 miles

southeast of Medford, 2.5 miles northwest of Talent, and is traversed by Interstate-5. The Phoenix parks planning process focused on a planning area within the current Urban Growth Boundary and Urban Reserve Areas.

**Map 3-1. Phoenix and Its Parks**



Source: Jackson County GIS, prepared by Community Service Center

## Parks Inventory

A critical step in parks planning is identifying how much parkland exists, where parks are located, what facilities and amenities parks provide, and what condition parks are in. This information is used to create both a parks inventory and a classification system. The parks inventory and classification process identifies the strengths and weaknesses of a park system by revealing areas or activities that are underserved by the system, as well as overall improvements the system requires.

Parks are assessed based on level of development, amenities, size and service area. Parks are categorized into the following classification types using the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) methodology: Pocket Parks, Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, Regional Parks, Special Use Parks, Linear Parks, Greenways, Open Space/Natural Areas, and Undeveloped. **Table 3-1** on the following page shows an inventory of Phoenix's current parks system.

## Other Recreation Assets

### The Bear Creek Greenway

The Bear Creek Greenway connects Ashland, Talent, Phoenix, Medford, and Central Point as a 20 mile paved trail. The greenway is open to walkers, bikers, joggers and all other non-motorized vehicles, providing an opportunity for recreation and transportation to residents and visitors of these

communities. The trail parallels I-5, Highway 99, and Bear Creek, with parks along the route providing parking, restrooms, and drinking water. Blue Heron Park is the main point of access between Phoenix and the Greenway, and serves as a resting point for those using the trail.



**Bear Creek Greenway through Blue Heron Park**  
*Source: Community Service Center*

**Table 3-1. Park System Inventory**

Park Name	Address	Acres	Development Level	Parking	Amenities	Facilities	Classification
<b>Blue Heron Park</b>	4361 Bear Creek Dr	7	7 acres developed 17 acres undeveloped	44 (2 ADA)	2 play structures, community garden, community stage, community activity board, access to Bear Creek Greenway	<b>Basic:</b> water fountain, 7 trash cans, restrooms, 5 benches <b>Food:</b> 2 covered eating pavilions, 15 picnic tables , 2 BBQ stands, 1 water spigot	Community Park
<b>Colver Road Park</b>	4042 Colver Rd	5	Developed	53 (2 ADA)	4 play structures, bike/foot path around park perimeter	<b>Basic:</b> restrooms, 4 trash cans, 4 benches, drinking fountain <b>Food:</b> 3 covered eating pavilions (2 single table, 1 multi), 9 picnic tables, concessions stand, BBQ stand <b>Sports:</b> baseball field, basketball court, horseshoe pits, open field area	Neighborhood Park
<b>Otto Caster Park</b>	510 W. 1st St	0.5	Developed	None	2 play structures, miniature library, library access via footpath, public art features	<b>Basic:</b> drinking fountain, 2 trash cans <b>Food:</b> 5 picnic tables, covered pavilion	Pocket Park
<b>Downtown Wetlands Park</b>	-	-	Developing	-	-	-	Nature Parks, Green Space & Trails
<b>Downtown Community Center Park</b>	-	-	Developing	-	-	-	Urban Plaza Parks

## Park Classifications

Park classifications are provided to give city staff, community members, developers, and consultants common language when discussing potential parks improvements and new park development. These parks classifications can provide a framework for the planning of new parks but are not a substitute for site-specific design. The park classifications described here come from classification system adopted by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department.<sup>1</sup>



**Playground at Colver Road Park**  
*Source: Community Service Center*

## Pocket Parks

TYPICAL ACREAGE	0.25 – 2 acres
SERVICE AREA	Serves nearby residents, ¼ mile radius
EXISTING PARKS	<b>Otto Caster Park</b>
DEFINITION	Pocket parks provide basic recreation opportunities on small lots within residential areas. Typically less than two acres in size, these parks are designed to serve residents in immediately adjacent neighborhoods. These parks provide limited recreation amenities, like playgrounds, benches, and picnic tables. Mini parks can be expensive to construct and maintain on a per unit basis but can be very valuable in neighborhoods that do not have parks or open space in close proximity.
BENEFITS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Provides access to basic recreation opportunities for nearby residents</li> <li>→ Contributes to neighborhood identity</li> <li>→ Provides green space within neighborhoods</li> <li>→ Protects the City's tree canopy</li> <li>→ Contributes to health and wellness</li> </ul>
DESIGN CRITERIA	Fencing should offer privacy to residents abutting the park property line while still providing transparency. A four-foot fence lined with trees that are limbed up 4 feet and shrubs that are generally 2 to 3 feet high will create a barrier for the park neighbors while still allowing the neighbors to enjoy the view of the park from their yard. Adjacent neighbors of the park should have a lockable gate to allow them direct access to the park from their yards.

<sup>1</sup> Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. "Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan: 2013-2017 – Parkland Classification System." P. 104-108. [https://www.oregon.gov/oprd/PLANS/docs/scorp/2013-2018\\_SCORP/2013-2017\\_Oregon\\_SCORP.pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/oprd/PLANS/docs/scorp/2013-2018_SCORP/2013-2017_Oregon_SCORP.pdf)

## Neighborhood Parks

TYPICAL ACREAGE	2 – 15 acres
SERVICE AREA	Serves residents within walking and biking distance, ½-mile radius. May include sports fields that attract users from greater distances.
EXISTING PARKS	<b>Colver Road Park</b>
DEFINITION	Neighborhood parks provide close-to-home recreation opportunities for nearby residents. Typically 5 to 10 acres in size, these parks are designed to serve neighbors within walking and bicycling distance of the park. Neighborhood parks include amenities such as playground equipment, outdoor sport courts, sport fields, picnic tables, pathways, and multi-use open grass areas. A neighborhood park should accommodate the needs of a wide variety of age and user groups. These spaces are designed primarily for non-supervised, non-organized recreation activities. The needs of pedestrians, bicyclists and other non-motorized travelers should be a high priority consideration in the design of these parks. Connectivity to the surrounding neighborhood is vital to these parks. Sidewalks, bike paths, crosswalks and connections to larger trail systems should be established. These parks may be co-located with school facilities.
BENEFITS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Provides a variety of accessible recreation opportunities for all ages</li> <li>→ Provides opportunities for social and cultural activities</li> <li>→ Contributes to community identity</li> <li>→ Serves recreation needs of individual, families, small and large groups</li> <li>→ Provides green space within neighborhoods</li> <li>→ Protects and enhances the City’s tree canopy</li> <li>→ Contributes to health and wellness</li> <li>→ Connects residents to nature</li> <li>→ Provides green space within neighborhoods</li> </ul>
DESIGN CRITERIA	Approximately two-thirds of a neighborhood park should be reserved for active recreation uses such as ball fields, tennis, basketball, and volleyball courts, open grass area for free play, children’s playgrounds and space for outdoor events. Viewsheds should be highlighted by the placement of picnic areas (some should be reserveable), benches, gardens and natural areas. Vegetation can be thinned or planted on the site to accentuate or hide scenes of the surrounding valley. Paved pathways should direct users to areas within the park as well as to adjacent trails, greenways, streets and sidewalks. Housing developments need to create access to parks if they are located on the boundary of a park. To promote further connectivity, these developments should connect to other neighborhoods as well, especially if those other neighborhoods are connected to a park.

Baseball field at Colver Road Park  
Source: Community Service Center



## Community Parks

TYPICAL ACREAGE	15 – 100 acres
SERVICE AREA	May draw residents from the entire community, 1-mile radius. Provides access from a collector or arterial street. Should be located to incorporate bus and transit access. Supports bicycle and pedestrian access for nearby neighbors.
EXISTING PARKS	<b>Blue Heron Park</b>
DEFINITION	Community parks provide both active and passive recreation opportunities that appeal to the entire community. Typically 20-30 acres, these sites draw residents from throughout the community. Community parks accommodate large numbers of people and offer a wide variety of facilities, such as group picnic areas and shelters, sport fields and courts, children’s play areas, horseshoes, gardens, trail or pathway systems, community festival or event space and green space or natural areas. There is also an opportunity to provide indoor facilities because the service area is much broader and therefore can meet a wider range of interests. Community parks require additional support facilities, such as off-street parking and restrooms. The size of these parks provides opportunities to offer active and structured recreation activities for young people and adults.
BENEFITS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Provides a variety of accessible recreation opportunities for all ages</li> <li>→ Provides opportunities for social and cultural activities</li> <li>→ Contributes to community identity</li> <li>→ Serves recreation needs of individual, families, small and large groups</li> <li>→ Provides green space within neighborhoods</li> <li>→ Protects and enhance the City’s tree canopy</li> <li>→ Contributes to health and wellness</li> <li>→ Connects residents to nature</li> <li>→ Provides green space within neighborhoods</li> </ul>
DESIGN CRITERIA	Approximately two-thirds of a community park should be reserved for active recreation uses such as ball fields, tennis, basketball and volleyball courts, open grass area for free play, children’s playgrounds and space for outdoor events. Viewsheds should be highlighted by the placement of picnic areas (some should be reserveable), benches, gardens and natural areas. Vegetation can be thinned or planted on the site to accentuate or hide scenes of the surrounding valley. Paved pathways should direct users to areas within the park as well as to adjacent trails, greenways, streets and sidewalks. Housing developments need to create access to parks if they are located on the boundary of a park. To promote further connectivity, these developments should connect to other neighborhoods as well, especially if those other neighborhoods are connected to a park.



“Welcome to Summer” workshop in Blue Heron Park  
Source: Community Service Center



## Nature Parks, Green Space, and Trails

TYPICAL ACREAGE	Size and shape will vary depending on its function, use and available land.
SERVICE AREA	Service area will vary depending on its function, use and available land.
EXISTING PARKS	<b>Bear Creek Greenway</b> <b>Parts of Blue Heron Park (riparian area)</b> <b>Wetlands Park (in development)</b>
DEFINITION	Green space provides natural or landscaped areas within the City in contrast to the built landscape. The size, shape, and service area of green space will vary depending on its function and use. Green space may be managed for different purposes, including: stormwater management, wildlife habitat, and flood retention. Natural areas and greenways are designed to protect or conserve significant natural features, such as trees and tree canopy, rivers and streams, wetlands, steep hillsides, environmentally sensitive areas, and wildlife habitat. Where appropriate, these parks may also support outdoor recreation, such as trail-related opportunities, bird and wildlife viewing, environmental interpretation and education, and small-scale picnicking. Trail corridors are linear-shaped parks that may follow streams, abandoned railroad lines, transportation or utility rights-of-way, or elongated natural areas. These parks typically support facilities such as soft or hard-surfaced trails, interpretative and informational signage, and trailheads. Trail corridors may support non-motorized transportation, recreation, exercise, and community access by connecting significant destinations within the City. Trails should be looped and interconnected to provide a variety of trail lengths and destinations. They should link to various parts of the community, as well as existing park sites.
BENEFITS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Protect valuable natural resources and open space</li> <li>→ Contribute to the environmental health of the community, including protecting the tree canopy and improving water and air quality</li> <li>→ Contribute to community identity and quality of life</li> <li>→ Provide wildlife corridors through the City</li> <li>→ Improve the aesthetic quality and beauty of Phoenix</li> <li>→ Encourage non-motorized transportation, such as walking and biking</li> <li>→ Improve community connectivity, by linking parks and other community destinations, such as schools, neighborhoods, shopping areas, and recreation opportunities provided by others</li> <li>→ Provide opportunities for nature-based recreation and environmental education</li> </ul>
DESIGN CRITERIA	Sensitive areas such as wetlands, riparian zones and other ecologically sensitive areas should be protected. Trails that pass through sensitive areas should be designed with site-sensitive materials that do not harm the resource. Views to these areas can be achieved through proper site layout.

Bear Creek: view from the Greenway  
 Source: Community Service Center



## Urban Plaza Parks

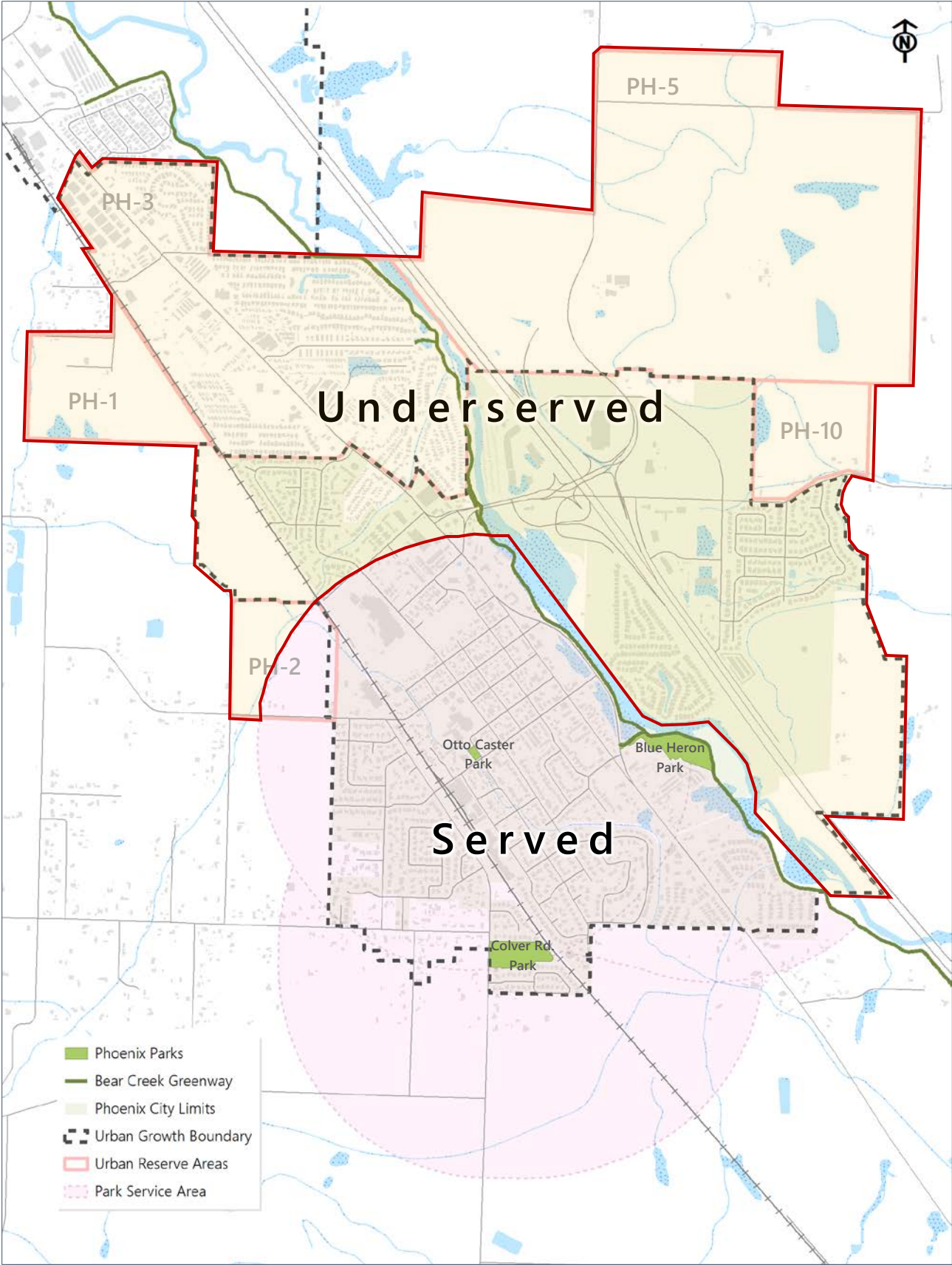
TYPICAL ACREAGE	0.25 – 3 acres
SERVICE AREA	Users of the urban area.
EXISTING PARKS	<b>Downtown Community Center Park (in development)</b>
DEFINITION	Urban plaza parks are public gathering spaces in urban spaces that foster community interaction and civic pride. They are small in size (¼ to 3 acres) and intensely developed. Visitors will tend to be those who are already in the neighborhood for other purposes, such as shopping, work, dining and/ or those who live in or near densely developed urban areas. Urban plaza parks typically include amenities such as drinking fountains, benches, litter receptacles, trees and shrubs, paved walkways and plazas.
BENEFITS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Creates a source of civic pride</li> <li>→ Contributes to community identity and quality of life</li> <li>→ Provides a central gathering areas in dense urban spaces</li> <li>→ Improves the aesthetic quality and beauty of Phoenix</li> <li>→ Provides a place for employees to enjoy work breaks near their place of work</li> <li>→ Provides opportunities for historical and cultural education</li> </ul>
DESIGN CRITERIA	The site should be located in a dense urban or downtown setting. It is ideally located near government and/or commercial facilities. Plazas should be open with site lines throughout the space. Avoid use of elements around edges that create barriers to entering the space such as fences, gates, and railings. Use high quality materials such as brick, stone and wrought iron. Incorporate historic or cultural themes to create a unique character for the plaza. Include artwork as an integrated design element on the walls, floors and ceilings of outdoor space. Promote participatory artwork that moves or responds to the viewer. Include artwork as an integrated design element on the walls, floors and ceilings of outdoor space. Promote participatory artwork that moves or responds to the viewer.

## How well are Phoenix residents served by parks?

In addition to inventorying and classifying parks, the parks planning team assessed the how well Phoenix’s existing parks serve residents. **Map 3-2** on the following page shows a half-mile buffer around each of Phoenix’s three parks (based on park classifications, these three parks should serve residents within an approximate half-mile radius). The map reveals areas where residents do not have easy access to parks: areas east of I-5 and the northern-most portions of the city west of I-5.

As Phoenix’s population continues to expand, the City will have to develop new parks in underserved areas. **Chapter 6** and **Appendix A** of this plan provide more detail about how the City might work to expand the park system and promote better access to existing parks.

Map 3-2. Areas served and underserved by Phoenix's parks.



Source: Jackson County GIS, prepared by the Community Service Center.

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## Evaluation of the Park System

For a community of its size, Phoenix has access to a relatively broad range of parks. With Otto Caster, Colver Road, and Blue Heron Parks representing a spectrum of park sizes and functions, the Phoenix parks system currently offers residents a diversity of options for parks and recreation uses.

However, as noted in the Community Profile, **this system will need to expand to meet the growing demands of an expanding and diversifying population.** The City should also work to increase use of existing facilities by increasing community knowledge of parks and investing in necessary changes and improvements.

For a smaller community like Phoenix, parks should maximize their use of space. Colver Road Park currently offers a variety of activities, but could provide more to the neighborhood by making use of some of the open field space. Similarly, Otto Caster, while only a small park, presents recreation opportunities almost exclusively for young children. Each park should aim to provide something for everyone, even if the park is primarily oriented towards a certain age or interest group. In general, Phoenix needs more neighborhood-oriented parks like Colver Road and Otto Castor that provide a safe, accessible, and inviting space for nearby residents.

In addition to traditional play-oriented parks, Phoenix can build on the natural beauty and natural features (such as Bear Creek and surrounding wetlands) that characterize the community. Blue Heron is a good example of a park that incorporates the natural landscape, and in the future, the City has the opportunity to enhance the park's connection to nature by increasing creek access and further incorporating environmental stewardship into its signage and design.

As the City focuses more attention on expanding the park system, it will be important to consider unmet community needs. Parks and their facilities should be targeted towards reaching a previously underserved area (i.e. northern and eastern neighborhoods), demographic (i.e. teens), or function (i.e. dog park). At the same time, the entire park *system* must emphasize connectivity. By creating multiple entryways, good signage, and walking/biking paths between parks, the City can help to increase overall park use. Ultimately, all park improvements and expansions should strive to improve quality of life and access to recreation opportunities for all residents.

# Chapter 4: Park & Recreation Needs

**Community input is an essential component of any planning process**, allowing residents to have a voice in shaping their community, express their needs and desires, and ensure efficient and desirable use of public resources. The Phoenix Parks planning team sought input from a variety of residents, young and old, to ensure recommendations for the future of Phoenix's parks aligned with how residents wanted to see parks evolve and change.

Generally speaking, **Phoenix residents who provided input into the parks master plan expressed satisfaction with the parks system.**

Sixty-eight percent of residents who responded to the Parks Master Plan Survey were either satisfied or very satisfied with the overall quality of Phoenix parks, and 65% rated parks as very important to the quality of their life. However, many also identified areas of desired improvement for current or future parks in Phoenix.

This chapter describes key themes to emerge from the community input phase of the master plan process. We derived these themes from a five-month outreach process that included:

- A **community survey** mailed to over 1,500 residents, available online or in paper form (190 responses received)
- Eight **interviews with key community members** who are involved with or interested in parks and recreation
- Three **public workshops** in or near the parks
- Two **youth workshops** with 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students

For community engagement methodology and specific findings from the community engagement process, please refer to **Appendix C**.



**Workshop at Phoenix High School**  
*Source: Community Service Center*

# Facilities, Maintenance, & Safety

## Park Facilities

**Residents would like to see more variety in the facilities parks provide.** The following are some of the facilities of high interest for future addition to parks, as expressed through the survey and conversations with residents:

- **Restrooms** were rated as the **highest priority** for future addition to parks (67% of survey respondents indicated this was a high priority), particularly in Otto Caster where there are currently no bathroom facilities.
- **Water features** were extremely popular in both survey responses and workshop activities. On the survey, 60% rated water, spray, or splash play features as a high priority addition for future investment in the parks.
- **Facilities to accommodate parties and group gatherings** were the third highest priority for park improvements and additions. There was high interest in adding **sheltered or covered areas** (56% of respondents rated this as a high priority) and **picnic tables** (53% of respondents rated this as a high priority).
- Residents would like **off-leash areas for dogs** in the parks. Dog walking was one of the most prevalent activities people self-reported using

the parks for on the survey (36%) and a dog park was rated as a popular option for future additions (45% of respondents rated this as a high priority). Additionally, many residents who commented during public workshops expressed a desire for a dedicated dog park.

- Residents would enjoy more **nature and walking trails** in and outside of parks, as there are limited options for hiking and areas for outdoor pursuit that don't require a car for transportation. Survey respondents rated **green space or natural areas** (57%), **unpaved trails** (39%), **paved trails** (35%) and **bicycle terrain tracks** (26%) as high priority future park improvements and additions.
- Survey respondents also rated features such as additional **playground equipment** (49%), **nature-play playgrounds** (44%), **botanical gardens** (40%) and a **basketball court** (40%) as a high priority for future park improvements and additions.

## Park Maintenance

**Those who provided input generally felt Phoenix's parks were well maintained.**

- During public workshops, complaints over parks maintenance rarely arose.
- Most maintenance related complaints centered on **restrooms** being poorly kept or locked at inconvenient hours during the day.

- A few residents expressed a desire to more easily access park facilities. Some workshop attendees noted that they would like to use picnic facilities more but power sources were often turned off and water spigots were not accessible.



Vision from Phoenix High School workshop.  
Source: Community Service Center

## Park Safety

**There was general concern and dissatisfaction with safety in the parks, especially related to the riparian areas adjacent to Bear Creek Greenway and Blue Heron Park.**

- Survey respondents who did not regularly use parks ranked feeling unsafe as one of the top three reasons they didn't visit parks.
- Survey respondents referenced safety over forty times in their text responses, either as a reason for not visiting the Greenway or as an area of desired improvement. Most comments cited either homeless and itinerant activity or poor lighting as the cause of security issues.
- Many survey respondents and workshop attendees requested more frequent police patrols or better lighting along the Greenway and in other parks to increase safety and allow nighttime walking.

## Access and Use

### Park Location

**Residents identified the concentrated locations of Phoenix's parks as an issue causing underuse.**

- Current parks are all located within one geographic area of the city, leaving other

neighborhoods and their residents underserved.

- On the survey and in community workshop discussions, most participants identified the areas in to the east of I-5 and north of the city limits as areas most in need of new parks. These areas currently have no parks, but have experienced recent housing development that is expected to continue in the future.



Vision from Phoenix High School workshop.  
Source: Community Service Center

## Pedestrian and ADA Access

**Residents identified access as an issue both within parks and in transportation to parks.**

- **Not all facilities are ADA accessible.** In particular, workshop participants discussed the path to the picnic areas at Colver Road Park as a facility that was difficult for those with limited mobility to navigate. They also commented that there is only one wheelchair-accessible ramp leading from Blue Heron's parking lot to the park itself.
- While many survey respondents thought that all populations were adequately served by parks, 20% of respondents said **people with disabilities** were underserved by the parks system.
- In survey comments and during workshops, residents also expressed frustration over the **difficulty of walking to parks**. They felt there were no easy pedestrian routes through town, and pointed to the poor condition of sidewalks and lack of infrastructure such as crosswalks, road shoulders, and curb cutouts as impediments to walking. Blue Heron in particular came up as the park most difficult to access on foot.

## Parking

**Those who provided input suggested that parking was an obstacle to park use and event planning in Phoenix.**



- In particular, **Blue Heron Park is perceived as having insufficient parking.** The park is the largest in Phoenix, with 24 acres of parkland, but has only 44 parking spots, fewer spaces than the smaller Colver Road Park.
- Lack of parking presents an obstacle for hosting events. Community events at Blue Heron Park have suffered in the past due to insufficient parking for event attendees and performers. The lack of an access road to the community stage also makes it difficult for performers to set up.

## Comfort of Use

**The hot climate in Phoenix presents a barrier to residents' use of the parks in the summer months.**

- Both workshop attendees and survey respondents expressed a desire for more cooling devices or techniques to be used in the parks, particularly Blue Heron Park. Ideas included **increasing shade and providing more water play features.**
- At workshops, participants made many verbal requests for the addition of more shade trees, covered rest and play areas, and artificial shade devices for events on hot days (such as shade canopies).

## Recreational Programming

**Those who provided input frequently expressed a desire for more community events and park activities.**

- Ideas, provided verbally or written on comment boards, often centered on **music and performance**, and/or **classes and workshops** in art, physical activity, and skills such as beekeeping.
- Particularly during stakeholder interviews, **residents expressed an interest in volunteering their time to teach classes or support other parks programming.** Volunteer opportunities can increase use of parks, build social capital, and feed back into the long-term sustainability of the parks system.

## Connection to Nature

### Green Space and Outdoor Pursuits

**Those who provided public input felt that park development should incorporate nature and existing environmental assets.**

- Fifty-seven percent of survey participants rated **green and natural spaces** as a high priority for improvement and future development, second only to the desire for restrooms and water features.

- During workshops, **preserving natural landscaping and ‘feel’** in parks was a common theme. Many participants expressed a preference for natural landscaping over inorganic materials and strictly manicured lawns.
- Workshop participants frequently requested more **trees, landscaping, and gardens**, as well as **secluded areas to sit peacefully**. Several participants also expressed interest in having more **fruit trees** in parks.



Vision from Phoenix High School workshop.  
Source: Community Service Center

## Environmental Education and Stewardship

**Many residents expressed a hope that the park system could take a more active role in environmental conservation and education.**

- Parks programming and educational initiatives built around environmental stewardship were of high interest to workshop participants and stakeholders.
- Phoenix already has established groups, businesses, and residents who are interested in environmentalism, such as the **garden club and Bee City USA**. Both these groups hoped to **play a role in environmental leadership** by continuing to engage in activities that support the environmental services of parks.
- Some workshop participants were dissatisfied with the amount of pesticides and water used in parks maintenance. They hoped it would be possible to move towards **more sustainable park designs**, suggesting ideas like drought resistant and native plants to reduce water waste.

## Inclusivity

### Underserved Youth and Seniors

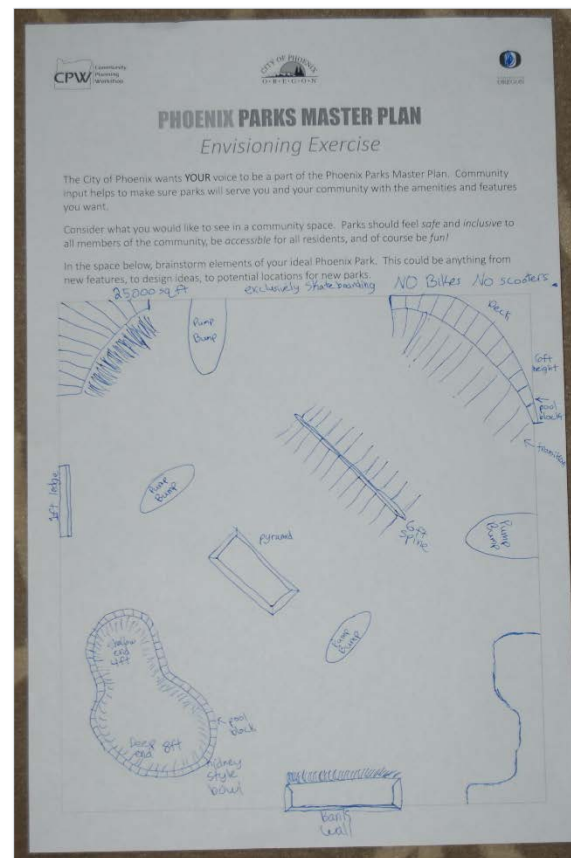
**Survey participants identified youth and senior citizens as the top two demographics not adequately served by the parks system – two**

demographic groups whose populations have been growing for over a decade.

- In community workshops, especially those conducted in the schools, participants frequently stated that Phoenix has little to offer young adults. The parks have features for young children, but little to no function for teens other than as a gathering space.
- Teens are frequently perceived as ‘loitering’ because there are few public gathering places where they can spend time, especially after dark when the parks close. Participants in the youth workshops specifically requested **extended park hours and park spaces intentionally designed for young adults.**
- A **skate park** was a popular proposed facility that would serve young adults.

**Seniors are also in need of more active ways to engage with parks.**

- Providing **more walking trails** could encourage exercise and enjoyment, and a **“senior fitness station”** or other fitness equipment was a popular idea in discussions with the public.
- Some workshop participants proposed **classes, music, or public talks** in the parks as forms of entertainment for the retired community.



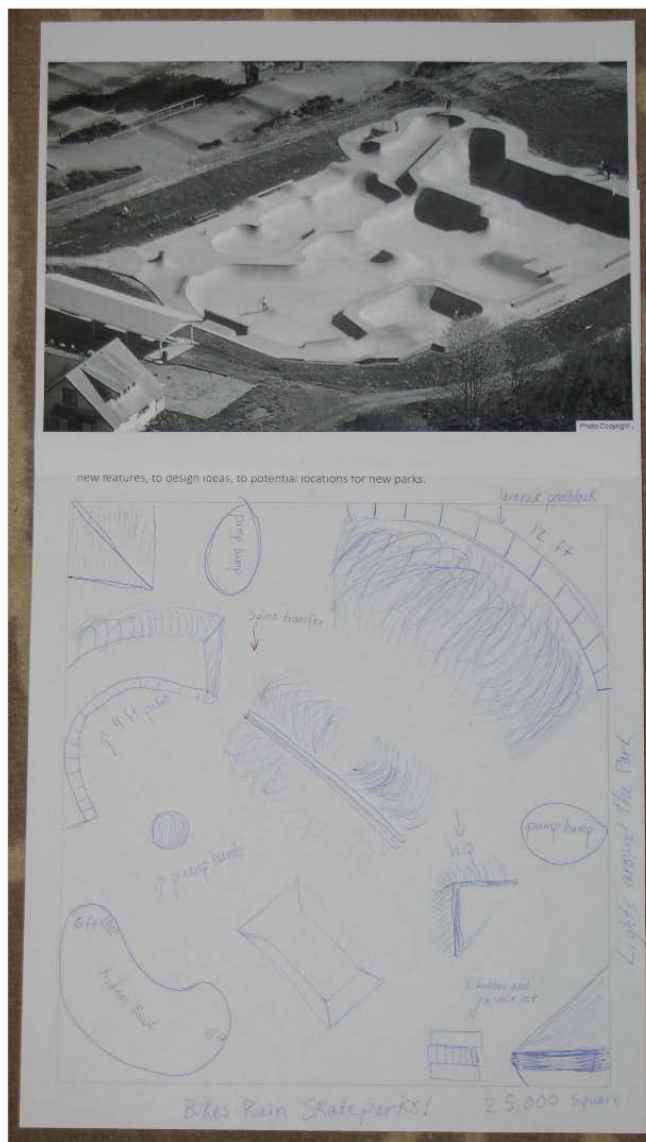
**Skate park vision from Armadillo Technical Institute workshop.**  
Source: Community Service Center

## Open to All

Phoenix has a wide range of socioeconomic characteristics, and has been diversifying in terms of race and ethnicity. However, **those not a part of the majority or “mainstream” sometimes feel invisible in the community identity and unwanted at events or facilities such as parks.** Planning processes and community input often exclude those

who face institutionalized barriers or prejudices, so measures to increase inclusivity should be taken into account for this missing perspective.

- Many who provided input believed that incorporating **bilingual signage** and encouraging **events that celebrate diverse backgrounds** would be helpful in making all residents feel comfortable and welcome in parks.
- During a community workshop, one resident described an incident where they were threatened and asked to leave a park due to their race and language.
- In stakeholder interviews, participants suggested that **events and programming should be free or low-cost** to reach the widest range of residents. Some also thought that festivals and large events should aim to offer some activities that are not based around purchasing food or luxury items.
- Some residents perceive **biases in who is granted access** to facilities or allowed to host park events.
- There is currently no straightforward process for setting up events and reserving facilities that is widely publicized and easily accessible, such as an online or telephone booking system.



Skate park vision from Armadillo Technical Institute workshop.

Source: Community Service Center

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# Chapter 5: Park System Vision, Goals, & Recommendations

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**This chapter presents a 20-year vision including goals, objectives and recommendations for the Phoenix Parks System.** Goals represent the general end toward which an organizational effort is directed. Objectives are measurable statements that identify specific steps needed to achieve the stated goals. The goals and objectives serve as an umbrella to categorize certain action item activities. The parks planning team derived action items (recommendations) from the needs analysis and input from the community and Parks Commission.

The values and desires of the City of Phoenix and its residents guide the parks master planning process and future decisions made regarding the parks system. A series of Parks Commission meetings, community workshops, and conversations with City staff led to the development of the vision statement, goals, and recommendations found in this chapter. The vision statement, goals, and recommendations provide guidance for the development of new facilities and other capital improvements as well as operation and maintenance decisions made for Phoenix's system of parks.

## Vision

*The Phoenix parks system provides recreation opportunities for patrons of all ages and abilities, and promotes the general health and social vibrancy of the community. Parks and trails are well maintained in order to be safe and welcoming spaces for residents and visitors to enjoy, connect with nature, and one another.*

## Park System Goals

The Phoenix Master Parks Plan update establishes a set of goals that provide a framework for development of the park system. The plan goals are intended to be used as a guide to address current and future community needs. Each goal includes one or more objectives that provide guidance on specific steps to take in order to achieve the goal. Because each goal is equally important, the goals are not listed in priority order.

- ◆ **Provide adequate park system funding.**
- ◆ **Increase capacity for park operations and maintenance.**
- ◆ **Develop and expand recreational programming options.**
- ◆ **Incorporate environmental stewardship practices in park design and maintenance.**
- ◆ **Foster opportunities for community support and involvement.**
- ◆ **Increase inclusion and improve access to parks.**
- ◆ **Develop a vibrant park system and acquire parkland to accommodate future needs.**

## Recommendations

The Phoenix Parks Master Plan update establishes a set of recommendations that serve as a framework for development of the park system. The plan

recommendations fall under the umbrella of the stated goals and objectives and provide specific instruction for how the City and community can work towards the park system vision.

## Priority Levels

Each recommendation is labeled with a priority level (**Table 5-1**). The level reflects the urgency of need as well as the amount of time needed to complete each recommendation. Priority 1 (P1) is high priority, and should be completed within 5 years. Priority 2 (P2) is medium priority, meaning it is not as urgent as a P1 recommendation but should still be completed within 5 to 12 years. Priority 3 (P3) is low priority. This does not necessarily mean the recommendation is less important, but rather that it may take longer to complete or will not be necessary until other future expansions occur.

**Table 5-1: Levels of Priority for Recommendations**

<b>P1: High Priority</b>	1-5 years
<b>P2: Medium Priority</b>	5-12 years
<b>P3: Low Priority</b>	13-20 years

# Goal 1: Provide adequate park system funding.

## Objectives

- 1.1 Identify and evaluate **external** grant, donation, or endowment opportunities to develop outside funding streams for parkland development. The external capital sources could come from non-profits (such as a local parks foundation), state government, or federal agencies.
- 1.2 Evaluate the potential **internal** parks funding sources such as System Development Charges (SDCs), parks and recreation fee on utility bills, or dedicating a portion of a cannabis tax towards parks and recreation.

## Recommendations

1. Dedicate a portion of the cannabis tax for the acquisition, development, and maintenance of public parks and public open spaces. *(Survey: 83% of respondents supported using the tax for parks)* **(P1)**
2. Create a parks utility fee in the range of \$2-5 per month that will provide additional funding to the park system. Based on current population, even a modest fee could generate significant revenues. *(Survey: 38% Yes; 40% No; 22% Depends on how much; of pro-fee respondents, 50% supported \$1-3/month, 27% supported \$4-6/month)* **(P1)**
3. Re-evaluate SDC fee structure to accommodate future park development. (See Appendix A for a preliminary evaluation of SDCs.) **(P1)**
4. Establish a park endowment fund that would be managed by 501-C nonprofit organization. This organization would partner with the City to accept grants, donations and other funding that the City itself could not accept (also see *Goal 5. Community Support & Involvement, Recommendation 3*). **(P2)**
5. Re-apply for grant to fund movies and equipment to offer a free “Movies and Music in the Park” summer series at Blue Heron Park with family-friendly films and local music acts, including high school musicians. **(P3)**

## Recommendations

1. Establish a part-time Parks Coordinator position in the Public Works Department with responsibility for parks operation and the development of future parks and recreational programming. In the future (5-20 years), this position may be expanded to full-time as the park system grows. **(P1)**
2. Parks Coordinator should establish and manage a clear online booking system for reservation of park space, so that people are more easily able to plan BBQs, family events, etc. **(P2)**
3. Parks Coordinator should create and adopt a standard “Terms and Conditions of Use” for parks and publicize prominently on the online booking system. **(P2)**
4. Install automatic toilets and hand dryers to reduce waste and maintenance needs and allow for extended bathroom hours. **(P2)**
5. Add a minimum of 1 Full-Time Employee (FTE) position for park maintenance and operations as additional parkland is acquired and developed. This should complement the existing staff time dedicated towards parks which currently amounts to about 1 FTE, meaning that in the future, the park system should be served by 2 FTE for maintenance and operations and 0.5 – 1 FTE for operations and recreational programming. (See Appendix B for information about park system staffing in other Oregon cities with 9,000 – 10,000 in population.) **(P3)**
6. Provide additional FTE as seasonal demand requires. **(P3)**

## Goal 2: Increase capacity for park operations and maintenance.

### Objectives

- 2.1 Hire additional staff to manage parks operation, maintenance, and development of future parks and recreational programming.
- 2.2 Develop a parks maintenance program that informs when replacements, repairs or other improvements should be completed and with what resources and staff.
- 2.3 Build maintenance strategies into future park development and improvements.



## Goal 3: Develop and expand recreational programming options.

### Objectives

- 3.1 Parks Coordinator develops year-round and seasonal recreational programming. Although some programming should be city-sponsored, opportunities for interested community members to initiate their own programming should also be available.
- 3.2 Measure programming or event attendance and invite public feedback to determine the success of various programs. Use feedback and other metrics to improve recreational programming.

### Recommendations

1. Create an annual recreation schedule of activities and distribute as a seasonal brochure or catalog via mail, e-mail and at City Hall. **(P1)**
2. Create opportunities for residents to develop and lead classes at the new community center to build on existing community interests and resources (e.g. resident interested in teaching beekeeping). **(P1)**
3. Build a new skate park to increase the amount of recreational options available to young adults (also see *Goal 7: Park system expansion.*) **(P1)**



Basketball court and horseshoe pits in Colver Road Park

Source: Community Service Center

## Recommendations

1. Work with OSU Extension's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program and Bee City USA to explore ways to continue to lessen the amount of herbicides used in parks maintenance. **(P1)**
2. Devote at least 30% of each park's land to native landscaping to reduce water usage. This could include the use of rain gardens and butterfly gardens with pollinator-friendly and drought-tolerant plant species. Refer to OSU Extension Office, Master Gardeners, Saving Water Partnership, USDA, and NRCS for planting guides. Incorporate this theme into the branding and signage of the parks. **(P2)**
3. Create three interpretive signs (one for each park) describing a brief history of the park and its current ecological context. Also, highlight and describe the City's restorative and native landscaping practices on site to encourage residents to do the same in their backyards. Signs should be in both English and Spanish. **(P2)**
4. Create at least one interpretive sign for each new park developed in Phoenix describing the park's ecological context and highlighting the City's restorative and native landscaping practices. Signs should be in both English and Spanish. **(P3)**

## Goal 4: Incorporate environmental stewardship practices in park design and maintenance.

### Objectives

- 4.1 Incorporate environmental stewardship into the design and identity of new and existing parks through environmentally conscious landscaping, maintenance techniques, signage, art, and recreational/ educational programming.
- 4.2 Work closely with Bear Creek Greenway Foundation to align environmental stewardship goals with the Comprehensive Enhancement and Restoration Plan for Greenway and Riparian Corridor and collaborate on restoration projects at Blue Heron Park.

# Goal 5: Foster opportunities for community support and involvement.

## Objectives

- 5.1 Create community events, educational opportunities, and informational material that are geared towards increasing park system awareness and use.
- 5.2 Develop and coordinate volunteer opportunities to assist with the maintenance, fundraising, and recreational programming for parks.

## Recommendations

1. Parks Coordinator should establish an Adopt-a-Park volunteer program that targets park maintenance activities. Utilize volunteers, private businesses, group-quartered individuals, students, and other Samaritans in town to perform light maintenance activities like mowing, trash pickup, trail maintenance, and other similar work whenever possible. This will help to lessen the load placed on the City's maintenance staff, freeing them to perform more complicated and difficult maintenance tasks such as building repairs. **(P1)**
2. Work with the newly established Phoenix Public Arts Council to ensure each park has at least one piece of public art. Possible partners for public art projects include local artists and students in the Phoenix-Talent School District. **(P1)**
3. Work with community members to establish a "Friends of the Phoenix Parks" 501(c)3 nonprofit foundation to assist with parks development, maintenance, and programming (also see *Goal 1. Funding, Recommendation 3*). (See Appendix B for information about forming a nonprofit.) **(P2)**
4. Create a "Nature Talks" series where local and regional experts are invited to give brief educational tours touching on various ecological topics regarding native plants, creeks, wildlife, and the human role and impact on the landscape. Possible partners for tour guides include Bear Creek Greenway Foundation, Bee City USA, Nature Center at U.S. Cellular Park, OSU Extension Master Gardner program, and the Rogue Valley Council Governments. **(P2)**
5. Work with the Phoenix Historical Society to provide historic and cultural education through free monthly interpretive tours in the parks. **(P2)**

## Recommendations

1. Recruit diverse candidates for future openings on Parks Commission and Friends of the Phoenix Parks to reflect diversity of Phoenix in genders, races, ages, sexual orientations, abilities, and socio-economic status. **(P1)**
2. Create bilingual signage in all parks to ensure accessibility and inclusion of growing Spanish-speaking population. **(P1)**
3. Offer scholarships or subsidized pricing for recreational programming to ensure accessibility for low-income families. **(P2)**
4. Provide at least one free event per month year-round to increase access for all community members. **(P2)**
5. Prioritize connections between parks and neighborhoods in Transportation System Plan and Capital Improvements Plan updates. **(P1), (P2), (P3)**



**Play structure at Otto Caster Park**  
*Source: Community Service Center*

## Goal 6: Increase inclusion and improve access to parks.

### Objectives

- 6.1 Create parks and programming with the specific intent of including underserved populations such as young adults, seniors, low-income residents, geographically isolated residents, people with disabilities, and people of color.
- 6.2 Ensure that parks are physically linked to neighborhoods and other parks with safe and well-defined pedestrian, bike, and public transit infrastructure.

## Goal 7: Develop a vibrant park system and acquire parkland to accommodate future needs.

*See Chapter 6 for recommendations and further information on existing park system improvements and expansion of the park system.*

### Objectives

#### Existing Park Improvement Objectives

- 7.1 Upgrade aging or broken equipment to keep parks safe and fun for all ages.
- 7.2 Add amenities like public art, interpretive signs, lighting, and seating to improve parks' aesthetic ambiance and safety.

#### Park System Expansion Objectives

- 7.3 Expand the park system and services to accommodate the needs of Phoenix's growing population. Continue to evaluate levels of service and concentrate new park development in the underserved areas of eastern and northern Phoenix.
- 7.4 Improve infrastructure such as sidewalks and trails around and between parks to facilitate easy access for pedestrians, bikers, and people with limited mobility.



# Chapter 6: Park System Improvements & Expansion

**This chapter expands on Goal 7: Develop a vibrant park system and acquire parkland to accommodate future needs.** The recommendations for existing park improvements and park expansion should guide staffing and financial planning activities that will contribute to the enhancement of Phoenix’s park system. To complement the recommendations, **Appendix A** includes design guidelines for new parks that the City will develop in the future. For more information regarding the cost of the recommendations presented in this chapter, refer to the park budget, and parkland/capital improvement guides included in Chapter 7.

**Goal 7: Develop a vibrant park system and acquire parkland to accommodate future needs.**

## Part 1 – Existing Park Improvement Objectives

7.1 Upgrade aging or broken equipment to keep parks safe and fun for all ages.

7.2 Add amenities like public art, interpretive signs, lighting, and seating to improve parks’ aesthetic ambiance and safety.



Play structure and path mosaics at Otto Caster Park  
Source: Community Service Center



**Community garden at Blue Heron Park**  
*Source: Community Service Center*



# Bear Creek Greenway



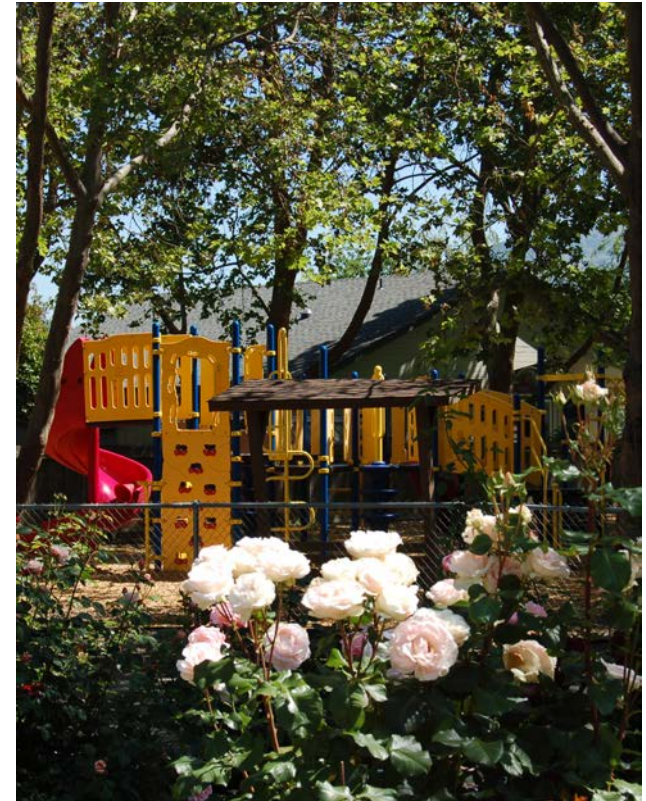
## Recommendations

- BCG-1** Use Bear Creek Greenway Management Plan to further protect and develop Bear Creek Greenway (the Greenway). **(P1)**
- BCG-2** Work with the Police Department to coordinate a seasonal volunteer safety patrol on bikes, golf carts or walking along the Greenway. Volunteers should have communication capabilities to report any suspicious or concerning behavior. **(P1)**
- BCG-3** Coordinate volunteers to provide educational and habitat restoration opportunities that enhance the riparian area around Bear Creek. **(P2)**
- BCG-4** Partner with the Bear Creek Foundation, Rogue Fly Fishers, Steelheaders, the Rogue River Watershed Council, and other relevant groups to develop and restore the riparian area around Bear Creek near Blue Heron Park. This could include development of a trail system, vegetation management and restoration (e.g. to clear the invasive blackberries and reestablish native plants), and the creation of picnicking and nature play areas. **(P3)**

## Recommendations

- C-1** Develop a lighting plan similar to Blue Heron Park to make park safer. **(P1)**
- C-2** Update bathrooms with newer, more efficient toilets, sinks, and hand dryers. **(P1)**
- C-3** Partner with the Horseshoe Club to repair and maintain the horseshoe pits. **(P1)**
- C-4** Install two more trash cans closer to park entrance and at least one trash can next to the backstop of the baseball field. **(P1)**
- C-5** Improve and enhance landscaping at park entrance and parking lot and improve parking lot condition with ADA accessible parking facilities and address drainage issues. **(P1)**
- C-6** Provide a shaded swing set separate from current playground equipment area. **(P1)**
- C-7** Designate one acre of field for a fenced off-leash dog area. **(P2)**
- C-8** Address gopher problem in fields with non-lethal options such as castor oil spray, vibrating stakes or gopher traps. **(P2)**
- C-9** Increase ADA access to picnic tables and fields by smoothing out main walking path and repairing cracks on sidewalks. **(P2)**
- C-10** Provide more shade for picnic areas and the walking path. **(P2)**
- C-11** Develop an interpretive sign that discusses the heritage and/or natural environment of Colver Road Park. Signs should be in both English and Spanish. *(Also see Goal 4, Recommendation 4).* **(P2)**

## Colver Road Park



# Otto Caster Park



## Recommendations

- OC-1** Develop lighting plan similar to Blue Heron Park to make park safer. **(P1)**
- OC-2** Install two unisex bathroom facilities. **(P1)**
- OC-3** Install a fence with a latch to protect smaller children from running into traffic. **(P2)**
- OC-4** Increase signage on main roads to better direct people to the park. **(P2)**
- OC-5** Partner with the Phoenix Public Arts Council, local artists, and children to create more public art at the park. **(P2)**
- OC-6** Develop an interpretive sign that discusses the heritage and/or natural environment of Otto Caster Park. Signs should be in both English and Spanish. *(Also see Goal 4, Recommendation 4).* **(P2)**

## Recommendations

- BH-1** Develop a trail system and observation areas in the riparian area. (P3)
- BH-2** Enhance natural riparian corridor through restoration and vegetation management. (P3)
- BH-3** Maintain understory vegetation near Bear Creek to provide open site lines and discourage undesirable activities. (P1)
- BH-4** Provide bilingual signage (English/Spanish) to inform visitors about Bear Creek watershed and riparian restoration. (P3)
- BH-5** Incorporate a nature play area near northwest parking lot. (P1)
- BH-6** Use the central parking lot island and additional planting beds as a display garden for native and bee habitat plants. (P1)
- BH-7** Expand the “Monarch Waystation” on the south side of the greenway and add bilingual (English/Spanish) interpretive signage. (P2)
- BH-8** Add 33 parking stalls with two designated as accessible. (P2)
- BH-9** Assess potential for parallel parking on southern access road. (P3)
- BH-10** Assess potential for future event parking on adjacent properties. (P3)
- BH-11** Create a system of pathways to separate uses and improve access. (P2)
- BH-12** Construct an access road from the central parking area to the greenway. A section of this road will provide access to the stage. (P2)
- BH-13** Reconfigure east section of playground to have specified uses by age. (P3)
- BH-14** Incorporate a water play area into the existing playground space. (P1)
- BH-15** Add a full size sand volleyball court. (P2)
- BH-16** Add trailside fitness stations (5-10 stations could provide a circuit). (P3)
- BH-17** Add 6 new picnic tables with six BBQ grills (at least two ADA accessible). (P2)
- BH-18** Install public art at park entrances. (P2)
- BH-19** Install solar lights around playground and along concrete pathways (city currently has 10 fixtures). (P2)
- BH-20** Plant additional shade trees using native and drought tolerant species when possible. (P1)
- BH-21** Create native wetland swales at the southeastern corner of the park (use cut soils to construct berm landforms on the site). (P2)

## Blue Heron Park



As part of the 2016 Parks Master Plan update, the planning team developed a redesign concept for Blue Heron Park (see following page). The recommendations to emerge from the redesign are listed here (in a condensed form), and a more detailed description of the redesign process, goals, and recommendations can be found in **Volume II - Blue Heron Redesign**.

# BLUE HERON PARK CONCEPTUAL DESIGN



## Part 2 – Park System Expansion

Currently, Phoenix’s park system serves the southwestern portions of the city well, but residents to the east of I-5 and north of the high school have very limited access to parks and open space. Furthermore, Phoenix’s population is expected to increase 40% by 2035, which will augment issues of park service and access.

In the next 20 years, the City will need to focus on expanding parks and connections to parks in underserved areas. The following objectives and recommendations are designed to guide expansion of Phoenix’s park system. For more detailed information about how the parks planning team arrived at these recommendations, see **Appendix A: Parkland Acquisition and Level of Service**. This appendix also includes a land acquisition strategy for the City and design guidelines for new parks the city develops.

### Park System Expansion Objectives

7.3 Expand the parks system and services to accommodate the needs of Phoenix’s growing population. Continue to evaluate levels of service and concentrate new park development in the underserved areas of eastern and northern Phoenix.

7.4 Improve infrastructure such as sidewalks and trails around and between parks to facilitate easy access for pedestrians, bikers, and people with limited mobility.



Field in Colver Road Park

Source: Community Service Center



Residents give feedback in Blue Heron Park

Source: Community Service Center

# Park System Expansion



## Recommendations

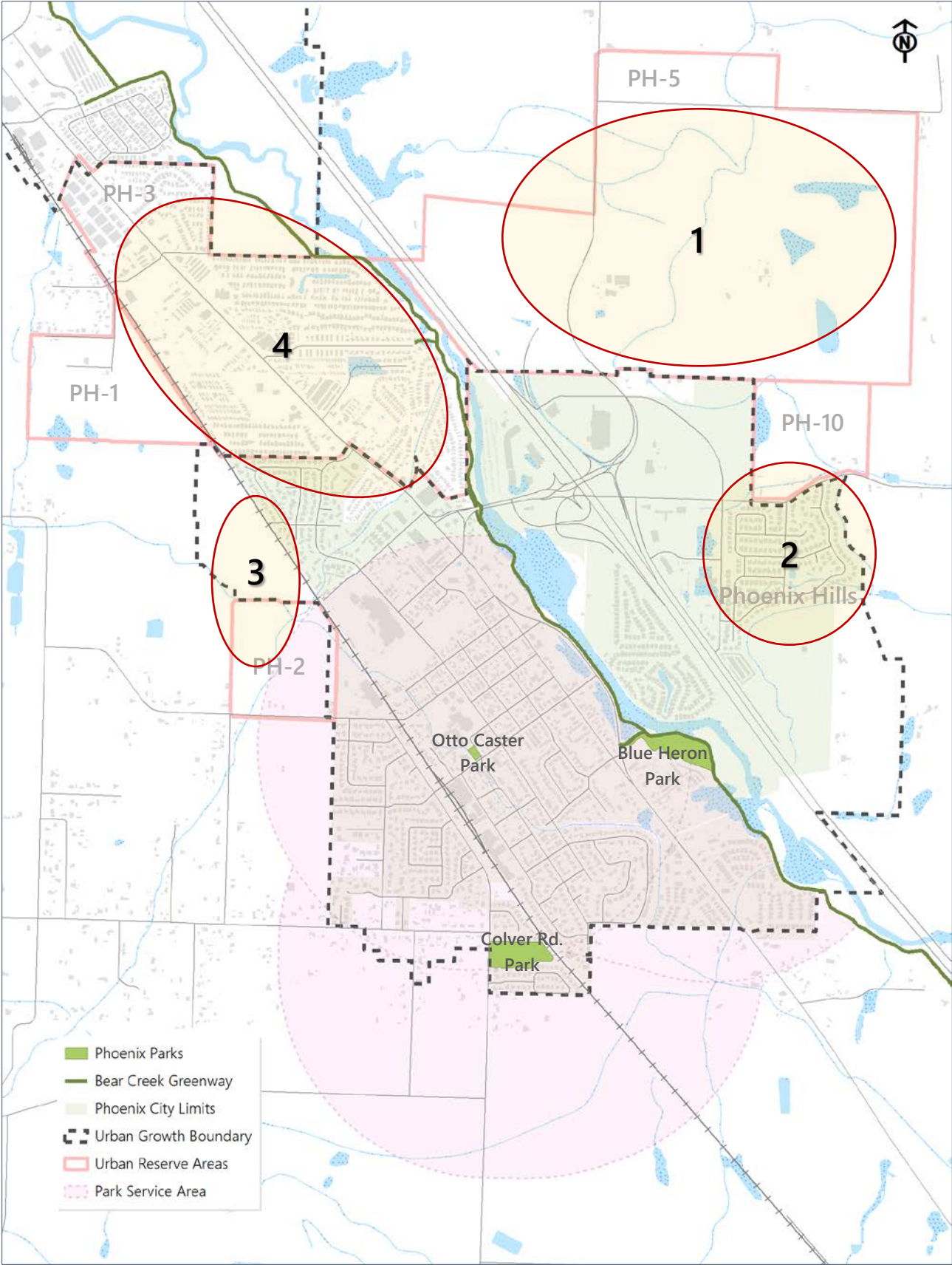
Based on the Level of Service analysis presented in **Appendix A**, Phoenix will require an additional **11.2 acres** of parkland within the urban growth boundary to sustain the current level of service. The city, however, is expected to grow substantially over the next 20 years. The Regional Problem Solving Plan specifies that Phoenix will require an additional **69 acres** of parkland and open space in the Urban Reserve Areas. In total therefore, **Phoenix will require between about 70 new acres of parkland** to be added in the future. See **Map 6-1** on the next page for a visual representation of the areas to be targeted for park development.

1. Build a new skate park, likely downtown (also see *Goal 3, Recommendation 3*). **(P1)**
2. In PH-5 and PH-10, develop the following: **(P3)**
  - a. 1 Community Park (5 – 20 acres) in residential areas
  - b. 1 Urban Plaza in the employment area
  - c. 2-4 Pocket or Neighborhood Parks (.25 – 5 acres) in residential areas
  - d. A trail system that connects parks in PH-5 to Medford's Chrissy Park, and possibly Jackson County's Prescott Park
3. In the Phoenix Hills neighborhood (to the east of I-5), develop at least one Pocket or Neighborhood Park (.25 – 3 acres). **(P3)**
4. Create a functional open space on the City's property west of the railroad tracks currently accessible by an informal path extending from Dano Way. **(P3)**
5. Explore opportunities to create at least one Pocket or Neighborhood Park in northern Phoenix (land currently in city limits, in the Urban Growth Boundary, or in PH-1, PH-2, or PH-3). **(P3)**
6. Connect all parks with biking infrastructure: develop dedicated bike streets (using sharrows and/or signs), bike lanes, and/or off-street paths that create a link between all parks. **(P3)**
7. Place directional signs at key intersections to inform park visitors of parks' location relative to their position. **(P3)**





**Map 6-1. Areas for future park development.**



Source: Jackson County GIS, prepared by the Community Service Center.



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# Chapter 7: Operations & Funding

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**A vibrant, well-used park system relies on a solid foundation of organizational and financial support.** As Phoenix’s park system grows, so must the funding and staff support required to provide engaging programming and high-quality maintenance. This chapter describes the current organizational and financial structure of Phoenix’s park system and provides resources that will help the City move from a 3-park system to a 6+ park system with recreational programming by 2035.

## Current Organizational Structure and Operations

Phoenix Public Works Department oversees the Phoenix park system. The Department is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of City-owned parks, trails, and undeveloped open space, as well as landscaping on other City-owned properties. Work is carried out by Public Works Department employees, Jackson County Parks (contracted to provide mowing services), the Community Justice work crew (for occasional

assistance with debris pick-up and leaf, brush, and weed removal), and community volunteers.

The Phoenix “parks staff” includes:

- **Public Works Director** – approximately 0.01 FTE dedicated towards parks
- **1 Lead Utility Worker** – approximately 0.05 FTE dedicated towards parks
- **5 Utility Workers** – a combined total of approximately 0.95 FTE dedicated towards parks between the five workers
- **1 Seasonal hire** serving between May and September

In addition to the public works staff who manage park operations and maintenance, the City of Phoenix has established and appointed a Parks Commission. The Parks Commission consists of seven appointed members who serve four-year terms, and meet at least quarterly.<sup>2</sup> The Commission also has one City Council Liaison, and the Public Works Administrative Assistant acts as the Commission’s secretary. The Parks Commission serves as a vision-keeper for the Phoenix park system. Its members often volunteer to put on events and support other recreational activities. As

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<sup>2</sup> City of Phoenix Parks Commission webpage (as of September 2016): <http://www.phoenixoregon.gov/prc>

of 2016, the park system had no paid staff responsible for recreation and special event programming.

## Operating Budget

The Phoenix Parks operating budget accounts for ongoing costs such as staffing, operations, maintenance, and equipment. It does not include longer term, “big ticket” items such as equipment purchases for a new park; these items are instead incorporated into the Public Works Department’s Capital Improvement Plan when they arise.

The operating budget is developed during the normal budget cycle each year. Beginning in January, the Public Works Director works with the Finance Director and City Manager to discuss budget estimations for the upcoming fiscal year. The budget is then drafted and approved by June 30. This section presents park operating budget information from FY 2011-2012 through FY 2015-2016.

## Revenues & Expenditures

Revenue for parks comes from property taxes (General Fund), System Development Charges (SDCs), and any grants the City receives (**Table 7-1**). The SDC Fund also maintains working capital, which may or may not be used each year (**Table 7-2**).

Park expenses fall into three main categories: personal services, materials and supplies, and

capital outlay. Personal services and materials and services are currently covered by General Fund revenue. Capital outlay, on the other hand, is currently covered by the SDC Fund, both from annual SDC Fund revenue and from the SDC Fund’s working capital.

**Table 7-1. Phoenix Parks Operating Budget**

	FY 11-12	FY 12-13	FY 13-14	FY 14-15	FY 15-16
<b>Revenue</b>					
<b>General Fund</b>					
General Fund Total	\$ 79,978	\$ 65,422	\$ 70,692	\$ 83,955	\$ 93,514
<b>SDC Fund</b>					
SDC Fund Total	Not Available	Not Available	\$ 10,095	\$ 819	\$ 1,279
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ 79,978</b>	<b>\$ 65,422</b>	<b>\$ 80,787</b>	<b>\$ 84,774</b>	<b>\$ 94,793</b>
<b>Expenses</b>					
<b>Personal Services (Covered by General Fund)</b>					
Total Personal Services	\$ 51,106	\$ 43,025	\$ 44,172	\$ 42,340	\$ 50,157
<b>Materials &amp; Services (Covered by General Fund)</b>					
Total Materials & Services	\$ 28,872	\$ 22,397	\$ 26,520	\$ 41,615	\$ 43,357
<b>Capital Outlay (Covered by SDC Fund)</b>					
Total Capital Outlay	Not Available	Not Available	\$ 416	\$ 1,510	\$ 14,600
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 79,978</b>	<b>\$ 65,422</b>	<b>\$ 71,108</b>	<b>\$ 85,465</b>	<b>\$ 108,114</b>

Source: City of Phoenix Budget

**Table 7-1. SDC Fund Working Capital Balance**

	FY 11-12	FY 12-13	FY 13-14	FY 14-15	FY 15-16
<b>Fund Balance</b>					
<b>System Development Charges Fund</b>					
Fund Working Capital	Not Available	Not Available	\$ 96,190	\$ 105,869	\$ 105,178

Source: City of Phoenix Budget

## Projected Expenditures

Based on the recommendations provided in Chapter 6, this plan includes projected expenditures for both small-scale parkland improvements and large-scale capital improvements.

## Parkland Improvements

Parkland improvements are specific low-budget projects (\$1,000 or less) that are included each year in the park's operating budget. These projects should be reevaluated and updated each year to reflect completed projects and new upcoming projects. **Table 7-3** and **Table 7-4** on the following page show parks improvements proposed for the next five years and ten years (P1 and P2 recommendations). The tables contain costs associated with improvements to Colver Road and Otto Caster Parks (Blue Heron Park is included in a separate section). This cost table should be used to help the City budget for near-term park improvements, beginning with the next fiscal year budget. Costs are only *estimates*.

Estimated costs *do not* include labor. This means that if the City contracts out the work, the actual cost of improvements will likely be higher than those reported here. Just under \$11,000 in parks improvements are proposed for the next ten years. Contingency costs are built into project costs to account for unanticipated issues such as permitting

fees that may arise or unexpected increases in material costs.



Cyclist on Bear Creek Greenway  
Source: Community Service Center

**Table 7-3. P1 Parkland Improvements (FY17-18 through FY22-23)**

Program Element	Quantity	Unit	Cost/Unit	Total
<b>Colver Park</b>				
C-4: Trash cans	3	Each	\$ 350.00	\$ 1,050.00
C-5: Landscaping at entrance and parking lot	--	--	--	
Shrubs- 1 gallon (installed)	10	Each	\$ 10.00	\$ 100.00
Shrubs- 3 gallon (installed)	6	Each	\$ 27.00	\$ 162.00
Ground Cover plants- 4" pots (installed)	20	Each	\$ 2.50	\$ 50.00
<b>Subtotal</b>				<b>\$ 1,362.00</b>
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>				<b>\$ 1,362.00</b>
<i>Add 10% Design/Engineering</i>				<i>\$ 136.20</i>
<i>Add 15% Contingency</i>				<i>\$ 204.30</i>
<i>Add 2% Fees</i>				<i>\$ 27.24</i>
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>\$ 1,729.74</b>

Source: Community Service Center estimates.

**Table 7-4. P2 Parkland Improvements (FY23-24 through FY28-29)**

Program Element	Quantity	Unit	Cost/Unit	Total
<b>Colver Park</b>				
C-7: Dog Park-specific furnishings	--	--	--	--
Water line and Spigot	1	Each	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
Doggie Crawl	1	Each	\$ 900.00	\$ 900.00
Stepping Paws	1	Each	\$ 925.00	\$ 925.00
Weave Posts	1	Each	\$ 725.00	\$ 725.00
Hoop Jump	1	Each	\$ 550.00	\$ 550.00
C-8: Gopher Twin Pack Sonic Spikes	14	Each	\$ 25.00	\$ 350.00
C-9: Crusher fines on pathway	500	Sq. Ft.	\$ 0.74	\$ 370.00
C-10: Shade Sail for picnic area	1	Each	\$ 800.00	\$ 800.00
C-11: Heritage Interpretive Sign	1	Each	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
<b>Subtotal</b>				<b>\$ 6,120.00</b>
<b>Otto Caster Park</b>				
OC-4: Park Identification Signage	1	Each	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
OC-6: Heritage Interpretive Sign	1	Each	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
<b>Subtotal</b>				<b>\$ 1,000.00</b>
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>				<b>\$ 7,120.00</b>
<i>Add 10% Design/Engineering</i>				<i>\$ 712.00</i>
<i>Add 15% Contingency</i>				<i>\$ 1,068.00</i>
<i>Add 2% Fees</i>				<i>\$ 142.40</i>
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>\$ 9,042.40</b>

Source: Community Service Center estimates.

## Capital Improvements

Capital Improvements are projects that require a larger financial investment (in this case greater than \$1,000) that are expected to have a useful life greater than three years. **Table 7-5** and **Table 7-6** on the following page show capital improvements proposed for implementation in the next five years and ten years (P1 and P2 recommendations). It covers improvements for Colver Road and Otto Caster Parks.<sup>3</sup> **Table 7-7** shows costs for the Blue Heron Park Redesign, which do not necessarily need to take place in the next five years. Similar to the parkland improvement cost table, these cost tables should be used to help the City estimate how much to include in the Public Works Capital Improvement Plan, and are *estimates* only that *do not* include labor.

A total of about \$267,000 of capital improvements are proposed of Colver Road and Otto Caster Parks. Blue Heron estimated capital improvements total just over \$770,000. With the SDC Fund as the primary source for covering capital improvement costs, it should be noted that at the current rate of SDC, revenue will not be sufficient to support the proposed schedule of capital improvements. As with the parkland improvements cost table, contingency costs have been built in to account for

unanticipated issues such as permitting fees that may arise or unexpected increases in material costs.



**Memorial rock at Blue Heron Park**  
Source: Community Service Center

<sup>3</sup> Note that the Rogue Valley Pitchers (the organized group that uses the horseshoe pits at Colver Rd. Park) have provided a detailed preliminary plan for horseshoe pit upgrades. This plan is included in Appendix B and should be used to create more accurate cost estimates in the future.

**Table 7-5. P1 Capital Improvements (FY17-18 through FY22-23)**

Program Element	Quantity	Unit	Cost/Unit	Total
<b>Colver Park</b>				
C-1: LED luminaire (every 50' on major pathways)	40	Each	\$1,500.00	\$60,000.00
C-2: Remodel bathrooms	1	Each	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00
C-3: Repair horseshoe pits	12	Each	\$300.00	\$3,600.00
Replace south fence (4' high)	1	Each	\$1,600.00	\$1,600.00
Replace cement walkways	1	Each	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
C-6: Swing set with soft fall	1	Each	\$9,500.00	\$9,500.00
			<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$104,700.00</b>
<b>Otto Caster Park</b>				
OC-1: LED luminaire	10	Each	\$1,500.00	\$15,000.00
OC-2: Build two bathroom facilities	1	Each	\$75,000.00	\$75,000.00
			<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$90,000.00</b>
			<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$194,700.00</b>
			Add 10% Design/Engineering	\$19,470.00
			Add 15% Contingency	\$29,205.00
			Add 2% fees	\$3,894.00
			<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$247,269.00</b>

Source: Community Service Center estimates.

**Table 7-6. P2 Capital Improvements (FY23-24 through FY28-29)**

Program Element	Quantity	Unit	Cost/Unit	Total
<b>Colver Park</b>				
C-7: Fence for 1-acre dog area	834	Linear Ft.	\$ 17.00	\$ 14,178.00
C-7: Dog Park-specific furnishings	--	--	--	--
Seating benches	2	Each	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 3,000.00
Information kiosk/Doggie bag station	1	Each	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00
			<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 19,178.00</b>
<b>Otto Caster Park</b>				
OC-3: Fence	200	Linear Ft.	\$ 17.00	\$3,400.00
			<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$3,400.00</b>
			<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 22,578.00</b>
			Add 10% Design/Engineering	\$ 2,257.80
			Add 15% Contingency	\$ 3,386.70
			Add 2% Fees	\$ 451.56
			<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 28,674.06</b>

Source: Community Service Center estimates.



**Table 7-7. Blue Heron Redesign Cost Estimates**

Program Element	Quantity	Unit	Cost/Unit	Total
<b>Parking Improvements</b>				
Parking cost per space (does not include demolition and removal of existing materials)	33	1 space	\$ 1,692.50	\$ 55,852.50
				<b>Subtotal \$ 55,852.50</b>
<b>Playground Improvements</b>				
Splash pad (1200 - 1500 sq. ft. )	1	Each	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00
2-5 year old play area (1000 sq. ft.)	1	Each	\$ 35,000.00	\$ 35,000.00
				<b>Subtotal \$ 135,000.00</b>
<b>Site Amenities</b>				
Nature play area	1	Each	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
Art sculptures	TBD	Each	TBD	--
Picnic tables	6	Each	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 9,000.00
BBQ grills	6	Each	\$ 150.00	\$ 900.00
Trailside fitness station (8-10 stations along trail)	1	Each	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
Seating benches (6' ADA)	6	Each	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 12,000.00
Sand volleyball court (50' x 80' with concrete border)	1	Each	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
River observation deck	2	Each	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
Bike racks	2	Each	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 2,400.00
Garbage cans	4	Each	\$ 500.00	\$ 2,000.00
				<b>Subtotal \$ 141,300.00</b>
<b>Paths</b>				
Paved paths (4" concrete)	5,300	Sq. Ft.	\$ 7.50	\$ 39,750.00
Unpaved paths (crushed gravel)	8000	Sq. Ft.	\$ 0.74	\$ 5,920.00
10' Multi-purpose access roads	6,860	Sq. Ft.	\$ 7.00	\$ 48,020.00
Solar lighting (45' spacing along major pathways)	35	Each	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 52,500.00
Gates	2	Each	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 2,400.00
				<b>Subtotal \$ 148,590.00</b>
<b>Earthwork</b>				
Earth moving/ regrading/ ampitheatre berm	1000	C.Y.	\$ 15.60	\$ 15,600.00
				<b>Subtotal \$ 15,600.00</b>
<b>Vegetation</b>				
Trees (2" caliper)	60	Each	\$ 250.00	\$ 15,000.00
Planting beds (Soil prep, fertilizers, plant materials, mulch)	10550	Sq. Ft.	\$ 3.50	\$ 36,925.00
Grass/native forbs seed	25000	Sq. Ft.	\$ 0.35	\$ 8,750.00
				<b>Subtotal \$ 60,675.00</b>
<b>Riparian Restoraton</b>				
	7	Acre	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 45,500.00
				<b>Subtotal \$ 45,500.00</b>
<b>Signage</b>				
Interpretive signs	8	Each	\$ 500.00	\$ 4,000.00
				<b>Subtotal \$ 4,000.00</b>
				<b>SUBTOTAL \$ 606,517.50</b>
				<i>Add 10% Design/ Engineering</i> \$ 60,651.75
				<i>Add 15% Contingency</i> \$ 90,977.63
				<i>Add 2% Fees</i> \$ 12,130.35
				<b>TOTAL \$ 770,277.23</b>

Source: Community Service Center estimates.

## Additional Funding Tools

This section presents potential funding tools available to the City for park system improvements and maintenance. This information was gathered through a case study review of other cities' Park Master Plans within the State of Oregon – such as Sweet Home, Brookings, and Grants Pass – as well as professional knowledge of parks planning and general research. City of Phoenix must work to develop the most appropriate funding strategy for the community's park system given the fiscal environment and other influencing community factors.

## General Fund

The general fund accounts for all city financial resources that are not specifically tied to another fund. Resources come from a wide variety of revenue streams and support essentially all of the local government's essential functions, including policy and legislation, public safety, code enforcement, economic development, city officials, and so on. Use of the general fund may not be the most appropriate revenue structure because the general fund has competing priorities with essential City services. A more appropriate structure may be to create a more self-sustaining park system with expenditures stemming from this funding tool. The general fund may potentially be used to offset administrative, liability, or fleet operation

expenditures of the park systems rather than capital improvement projects or park systems maintenance. Currently, Phoenix parks rely very heavily on the General Fund.

## Utility Fees

Utility fees, or park maintenance fees, are a popular funding tool used to generate stable revenue streams for parks maintenance. A standard utility fee is added to each residence’s utility bill and collected by the City on a monthly basis. Utility fees allow local governments to collect a continuous revenue stream throughout the year and can fund a wide variety of functional tasks and aspects of the park system.

Local governments use Parks utility fees across the State of Oregon. Cities such as Medford, Talent, and West Linn have successfully implemented Parks Utility Fees for the operation and maintenance of parks, facilities, beautification and right-of-way areas. Parks Utility Fees for these three cities range from \$2.80 in the City of Talent to \$9.20 in the City of West Linn. Based on the population (and projected population growth) of Phoenix, a \$2-5 monthly utility fee is recommended.

When surveyed, City of Phoenix residents were supportive of a monthly utility fee to fund parks and safety. The City of Phoenix Parks Commission also supports the use of utility fees.

Implementation of parks utility fee allows local governments to continually invest in parks, making it possible for these assets to be used by residents. The parks utility fee can be increased to stabilize the on-going maintenance needs, which represent a large long-term cost to the City. This would relieve the park system’s reliance on revenue from the City’s General Fund.

**Table 7-8** presents the estimated revenue generation, based on the number of housing units in Phoenix in 2016, from a parks utility fee. It also includes estimates based on the projected 20-year population growth, which would greatly increase revenue.

**Table 7-8. Park Utility Fee Revenue Potential**

Monthly Fee (\$)	2016 Revenue Potential		Estimated 2035 Revenue Potential*	
	Monthly	Annual	Monthly	Annual
\$1	\$1,400	\$16,800	\$1,960	\$23,520
\$2	\$2,800	\$33,600	\$3,920	\$47,040
\$3	\$4,200	\$50,400	\$5,880	\$70,560
\$4	\$5,600	\$67,200	\$7,840	\$94,080
\$5	\$7,000	\$84,000	\$9,800	\$117,600

\*Based on an assumed 40% increase in utility fee payers (Phoenix’s population is expected to grow 40% by 2035)

Source: City of Phoenix utility billing database.

## Cannabis Tax

A percentage of the cannabis tax revenue can be applied to the acquisition, development, and maintenance of public parks and public open spaces. Other cities in Oregon and Colorado have used these tax dollars for public services. The

current estimated annual revenue from the cannabis tax in Phoenix is \$120,000. Depending on what percentage of this tax revenue is allocated towards the funding of parks and safety, the City could have anywhere between \$6,000-\$48,000 per year for parks.

When surveyed, 83% of City of Phoenix residents were supportive of using a portion of the Cannabis tax revenue to fund parks (improvements, maintenance, and new park development). The City of Phoenix Parks Commission also supports the use cannabis tax revenue.

**Table 7-9** presents the estimated revenue generation, based on the tax’s current estimated total revenue of \$120,000.

**Table 7-9. Cannabis Tax Potential**

% of Cannabis Tax for Parks	Revenue Potential	
	Monthly	Annual
5%	\$500	\$6,000
10%	\$1,000	\$12,000
15%	\$1,500	\$18,000
20%	\$2,000	\$24,000
40%	\$4,000	\$48,000

Source: City of Phoenix finance department.

## Sponsorship

Sponsorship is a funding mechanism used to offset operations and maintenance costs for parks systems. The City of Phoenix should establish an

“Adopt-A-Park” program, which would help provide volunteer labor for the parks system. The City or Parks Commission may increase solicitation of sponsors (either individuals, private groups, or businesses) who are willing to pay for advertising, signage, naming rights, park infrastructure, or special events or programs.

## Public, Organizational or Government Grants

Grants provide a source of revenue not otherwise accessible within a local community. This funding source can be used for either large or small-scale projects.

This funding tool is best used for projects that have a set goal(s) or tangible improvement. On-going administrative functions, maintenance, and strategic planning projects are less attractive to donors. Grant contributions should not be considered a primary funding tool for a self-sustaining park system, but rather to supplement occasional special projects.

Grants can be highly competitive and often require matching contributions. When applying for grants it is important to do substantial outreach and research to ensure the proposed project or initiative adheres to the criteria set forth in the grant. In recent years the number of transportation related grants, especially for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, has increased substantially. Other

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park related projects or initiatives well-suited for grants include building trails and greenways, natural resource conservation and water quality, public safety, and tree planting.

## Local Improvement District or Parks and Recreation District

Forming a local improvement district or parks and recreation district are common funding tools for a park system. Both types of designated districts establish a tax on real property within a specified area to offset all or part of the costs of a public revitalization or development initiative. This provides a long-term and stable revenue stream to be used for either maintenance or capital improvements to local parks.

Parks and recreation districts establish a set rate, or tax, on local residents to support the park system. In a local improvement district, rates are apportioned according to the estimated benefit that will accrue for each property. Bonds are then sold for the amount of the improvement or special project.

These tools present an opportunity for local residents to invest in their neighborhoods and support projects and initiatives they have identified as a priority. Funding is generated from a tax levy on real property within a specified area. In turn, these funds directly benefit the designated area and the local residents therein.

A parks and recreation district requires a majority vote from property owners or electors within the proposed district area and therefore should only be used if the community has expressed strong support for their park system. Once established, all or partial control of a parks and recreation district is given to a local organization or board. This loss of management could be considered a benefit or drawback for a local government depending on local political and economic climate.

## Donations, Contributions and Volunteer Support

Donations of labor, cash, land, or park infrastructure (such as benches, trees, or playground equipment) can be used for specific projects. Examples of donations from community members for capital improvement projects could include an annual tree planting day sponsored by a local organization, property donation to the City, a fundraiser drive, or “legacy planning” through individual estates. This funding tool is well suited for capital improvements projects because it provides a tangible enhancement or “finished product” to the local park system to which donors or participants can feel connected.

## Tax Levy

A tax levy is a common tool for continued maintenance and land acquisition for a park system.

This tool can stem from a variety of local taxes or license fees. Tax levies commonly support a local government's general fund unless a parks and recreation district is in place, in which case levies can be collected by the district. A tax levy can be used for long-term system-wide improvements or short-term targeted improvements (i.e. special projects fund) and provide a dedicated and permanent source of funding. However, it is important to assess whether or not there is adequate community support for the goals and actions laid out in the Parks Master Plan prior to initiating this tool.

## Park Dedication in Lieu of Fees

Phoenix may explore offering land developers the option of dedicating parkland to the parks system in lieu of system development charges. Public dedication offers guaranteed land for the parks system expansion in step with land development trends and also helps to relieve the pressure of new development on the parks system. This tool is best utilized when coupled with strong outreach efforts to land developers. To apply use of public dedication, Phoenix should adopt an ordinance in the City's development code and in the City's Comprehensive Plan update offering guidelines for the use of Park Dedication in Lieu of Fees. The ordinance should include specified criteria to ensure that in-lieu land dedications are appropriate for park development.

## User Fees

User fees may be collected from individuals for facility rental as the park system. The City currently rents pavilions and picnic structures in Colver Road and Blue Heron Parks to individuals and groups for events and gatherings. As the park system expands and new facilities are built, this reservation program could expand. Parking fees could potentially be expanded to special events. Although user fees will typically only make up a small amount of the total park system revenue, these fees could help offset day-to-day maintenance costs. This program could potentially be expanded to include ballfields maintained by the City and used by private organized sports leagues. When considering renting city owned facilities it is important to have a fair fee structure applicable to all interested parties regardless of affiliation.

## Land Trust and Easements

Land trusts and easements are often considered a win-win solution to set aside land for parks, natural areas, or rights of way. This is because these tools (1) are a voluntary action on the part of a local community member, business, advocacy group, or other organization and (2) offer tax incentives for the benefactor.

Trusts can be acquired by the City or partnering organization through a donation, estate will, reduced priced sale, or exchange. Private property

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owners can acquire easements. Easements may be an especially attractive tool for accessibility projects and initiatives that aim to connect parks and natural areas throughout the city that may be separated by numerous public and private properties. Private property owners are able to allow full or limited access through their property without forfeiting other property rights.

The drawbacks of land trusts and easements are that these tools can take a considerable amount of time and effort from City staff. If land trusts are considered for the Phoenix park system, the City or Parks Commission may want to partner with a nearby conservancy group for advising or management assistance.

## Wetland Mitigation Banking

Wetland mitigation banking is a planning and funding tool used to protect, restore, and enhance critical conservation areas, including wetlands, streams, and sensitive habitat areas. It should not be considered for a manicured or highly maintained park, but rather for natural areas where development is unlikely.

Wetland mitigation banking aims to consolidate small fragmented mitigation projects into larger contiguous sites. A mitigation banker (in this case the City of Phoenix) would undertake a design and compliance process to preserve a conservation area under its jurisdiction. Once the process is complete,

the banker can acquire “credits” or payments from private developers for certain applicable projects. Developers buy credits from the City when they wish to improve a property for commercial purposes that would impact a wetland, stream, or habitat area on that property. In theory, the loss of a small wetland, stream, or habitat area on the developer’s property would be compensated with the preservation of a larger conservation area on the City’s property.

Wetland mitigation banking has a significant amount of compliance and a steep learning curve; however, this tool has continued to grow in popularity and can be used to offset management costs for natural and open spaces that meet specified requirements. Wetland mitigation banking should not be considered a short-term strategy, as it takes substantial commitment and upfront investment from a city.

During the first five years or initial phase, the City would be required to fund management plans and any necessary retainers. The City also must work with federal land agencies, such as the Army Corps of Engineers, and subject matter experts for planning purposes. After the first five years, the local wetland mitigation banking program typically enters into a maintenance phase with substantially less operating and management costs.

In order for the City of Phoenix to be approved for wetland mitigation banking they must meet certain

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criteria, including (1) owning a site that is conducive and appropriate for wetland mitigation (i.e. vegetation, hydrology, and soil types), (2) having necessary up front capital and commitment, and (3) access to necessary resources (i.e. subject matter expertise and earthmoving equipment).

Today, there are only a limited number of local jurisdictions using wetland mitigation banking. The demand for conservation credits from developers is higher than what is currently available through supply<sup>4</sup>.

The first step for consideration of this option is to identify suitable properties within the Urban Growth Boundary.

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*



**Colver Road Park in Summer**

*Source: Community Service Center*