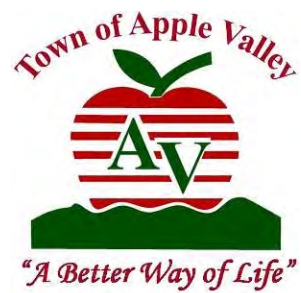


# apple valley



## parks and recreation master plan





## **PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN**

### ***Final Plan***

May 2013

Prepared by:



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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Town of Apple Valley greatly appreciates the efforts of community members, Town staff, officials and professionals who contributed to this planning effort. Your interest and support will continue to foster the success of our park and recreation system.

### **TOWN COUNCIL**

Curt Emick, Mayor  
Art Bishop, Mayor Pro Tem  
Barb Stanton, Councilmember  
Scott Nassif, Councilmember  
Larry Cusack, Councilmember

### **PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION**

Donald Tatera, Chairman  
Jiles Smith, Vice-Chairman  
Mike Hinkle, Commissioner  
Mike Martin, Commissioner  
Richard Cambridge, Commissioner

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### **TOWN MANAGER**

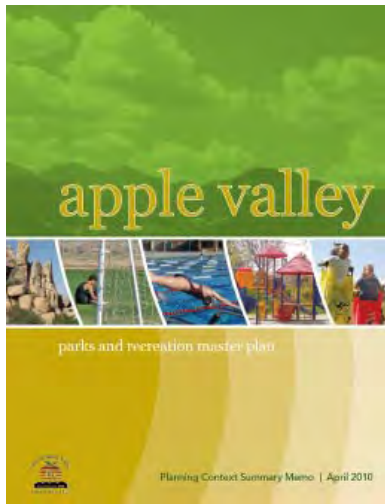
Frank Robinson

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# Executive Summary



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In February 2010, the Town of Apple Valley began updating its *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* to obtain community-supported directions for developing a sustainable system of parks, recreation facilities, programs and community events. More than 900 residents participated in the planning effort, sharing their priorities for parks and recreation and their vision for the future. The planning process included a technical analysis of parks, facilities, operations and services, as well as a GIS assessment of community needs.

The result is a 20-year master plan, which:

- Presents the community’s long-range vision and goals for parks and recreation;
- Describes current and future recreation needs, as well as community preferences for parks, recreation facilities, programs, and events;
- Identifies policies, strategies and the level of investment that would be needed to sustain and improve parks and recreation services in alignment with the Town’s vision; and
- Provides conservative, short- and long-term strategies for the Parks and Recreation Department to use in making decisions about managing, maintaining, and improving the Town’s parks and recreation system.

## THE VISION FOR PARKS AND RECREATION

Throughout Apple Valley’s history, Town leaders and residents have promoted Apple Valley as a healthy and attractive community with a unique landscape, a pleasant climate and a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities. Parks and recreation have been integral elements of the community’s heritage and vision for the future. As a result, the Town has worked for years to expand and enhance parks and recreation to support “A Better Way of Life.” This transition began in earnest when the Town took over the Apple Valley Recreation and Park District and continues today.

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## Transition from a Park District

Since 1947, parks and recreation services had been provided by the Apple Valley Recreation and Park District (the District). Funded through a property tax, this District served all residents within its boundaries, an area approximately twice as large as the town. In 2001, the Town of Apple Valley petitioned to dissolve the District in an effort to improve recreation services for its residents.

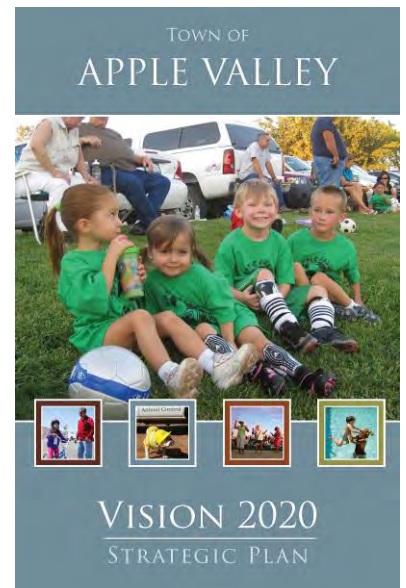
As set forth in a resolution by the Local Area Formation Commission (LAFCO), the Town of Apple Valley absorbed the District's park properties and property tax revenues to be able to **"simplify, improve, enhance and expand the park and recreational services"** for Town residents. In addition, the Town agreed to use a portion of the property tax allotment to provide the "current level and range of services" to former District residents who lived outside of town boundaries.

Since the LAFCO dissolution, the Town of Apple Valley has allocated approximately \$500,000 annually from the Town's General Fund to improve and enhance parks, recreation facilities, programs, events and services for residents as planned. This investment helped the Town proceed with projects such as the development of Civic Center Park, which attracts people from around the area with high quality facilities, community events and programs.

## Transition to a Premier Destination

The same vision that prompted a higher level of investment in parks and recreation service over the last ten years was defined more formally in Apple Valley's Vision 2020 Strategic Plan. Adopted in 2009, the Strategic Plan called out the Town's goal to provide "ample parkland and diverse recreation opportunities." It noted objectives to "expand and enhance" parks and recreation, and to "expand and enhance" signature events to position Apple Valley as the High Desert's premier destination.

These goals and objectives were cross-checked through public outreach as part of the *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* update, which began in 2010. A variety of public efforts were planned to collect feedback from a broad spectrum of the community. Through stakeholder interviews, focus group meetings, youth and adult questionnaires, intercept events and a community visioning workshop, participants identified their vision and priorities for the future.





Through community feedback, this vision emerged:

**We envision an interconnected and sustainable system of safe, attractive parks, premier recreation facilities, and diverse special events and programs that preserve our community’s character, support our health and economy, foster opportunities for all ages, and promote “A Better Way of Life.”**

### **IMPACT OF THE RECESSION**

Much has changed since the beginning of this planning process. While the community’s vision has remained the same, an extended economic recession has affected funding for park and recreation operations and capital projects. Most notably, funds associated with the property tax base—which the Town took over from the Park District—are considerably less because of a decrease in property values. Also, the Town realized that it could not continue to use General Fund Reserves to cover the cost of the enhanced services it wanted to provide. As of Fiscal Year 12/13, this has created a negative fund balance of more than \$5.5 million.

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In July 2011, Council established the Parks and Recreation Ad Hoc Committee to evaluate potential cost savings and service efficiencies to address the funding deficit. The Committee developed several short-term recommendations that were implemented in FY 2012/13, such as closing Cramer Family Park and increasing programming fees by ten percent. At the same time, the Parks and Recreation Department also decreased its spending on park maintenance, deferred needed repairs and improvements, postponed planned equipment purchases, and cut other services where feasible to operate on a reduced budget. If the situation continues, the park system will slowly deteriorate and the recreation system will not be able to meet current demands for recreation opportunities—let alone grow in the future. There are already signs of stress at parks and facilities as routine maintenance is reduced and deferred.



Prompted by the economic recession, Apple Valley also revised its Vision 2020 Strategic Plan in 2012. Parks and Recreation still remains in the top eight priorities of the Town. However, revised park and recreation objectives focus on maintaining current programs and facilities, seeking partnerships, and identifying and securing funding for parks, recreation facilities, programs and events.

## THE FUNDING QUESTION

The *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* is a 20-year plan to guide future decision and services. It recognizes that short term service cuts and efficiencies are needed to address decreased funding levels during the recession. However, the plan also raises questions about how the Town will meet the future needs of the community.

The planning process has affirmed the vision held by the community: one of improved parks, engaging community events and celebrations, increased recreation to support health and wellness, a greater variety of opportunities for people of all ages, safe and inviting places to play, programs to bring families closer together, and enhanced recreation experiences for all residents in Apple Valley to support a better way of life.

However, this leads to the biggest question of all: where does the money come from to provide enhanced and expanded services? In November 2011, community priorities were tested in a statistically-representative, random sample Parks and Recreation Implementation Survey. The survey was designed to test public priorities, including where services could be cut





and where additional investment is needed. The survey also tested support for a variety of potential funding mechanisms.

Survey results suggested that a majority of residents were willing to support increasing fees to support priority services. These included facility use fees, non-resident fees, commercial impact fees, and to a lesser extent, fees for programs, classes, and sports leagues. Slightly less than half residents showed support for increasing the sales tax by one-half or one-quarter percent (46-47%). This level of support is high, considering respondents were not given any information about why additional funding was needed.

The results of the Implementation Survey suggest that residents may be willing to consider additional fees, funding mechanisms, and realigned services to be able to support priority projects and services. As noted in the survey, these were not big ticket items such as a new community center. Instead, the following projects and services were rated as medium and high priorities by the percentage of respondents noted in parenthesis:

- Continuing to adequately maintain and repair parks and recreation facilities (96%);
- Maintaining the number and variety of recreation programs and classes for youth (87%);
- Adding or improving restrooms at existing parks where needed (85%);
- Upgrading or replacing worn-out recreation and playground equipment (83%); and
- Continuing to provide a variety of special community events such as movies in the park, concerts, and festivals (82%).

## THE IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

To be able to respond to these community priorities, the Parks and Recreation Department, Town Council and the Parks and Recreation Commission together are striving to find ways to most efficiently and effectively increase the investment in parks and recreation. As noted in this plan, these efforts may include:

- Updating Quimby requirements to match the existing park land inventory;
- Developing a formal cost recovery policy for programs, events, and services;

- 
- Involving partners, sponsors, stakeholders, and local businesses in collaborative efforts to support parks, recreation, health and wellness;
  - Identifying an appropriate level of General Fund investment as proposed by the Parks & Recreation Commission and Ad Hoc Committee; and
  - Identifying community-supported capital and operations funding, such as a ¼ cent sales tax, impact fees, landscape maintenance districts, etc.

These funding mechanisms, as well as the priority projects they may help fund, are noted in the final chapter of this plan.

## THE PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

implementing the *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* will require the coordinated efforts of Town leaders, residents, stakeholders, businesses and staff—everyone in the Apple Valley community—working together to achieve their vision for the future. Community support will be needed if the Town is to provide *a better way to play*.

The *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* updates the 2004 *Master Plan of Park and Recreation Services*. It is compliant with the 2009 *Apple Valley General Plan* and incorporates the goals outlined in the Town’s *Vision 2020 Strategic Plan*, including the 2009 plan and the 2012 update.

The *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* contains seven chapters:

- *Chapter 1: Our Town* introduces the plan and the planning process in the context of the Town’s long-term recreation heritage;
- *Chapter 2: Our Vision* describes the Town’s core values, vision, mission and goals for parks and recreation;
- *Chapter 3: Our Needs* provides an overview of existing parks, facilities, and programs and identifies current and future community needs;
- *Chapter 4: Our Future System* describes the proposed park and recreation system, including recommended policies for park and facility development, programming, maintenance, funding, partnerships, marketing, and customer service;
- *Chapter 5: Our High Desert Destinations* presents specific recommendations for each existing and proposed park;
- *Chapter 6: Our Investment* describes the funding situation and the level of investment that is needed to achieve the community’s vision; and



- 
- *Chapter 7: A Better Way to Play* proposes future investment strategies for meeting priority community needs.

Six appendices provide critical background information:

- *Appendix A* presents the Town’s park and facility inventory by classification, including an inventory of recreation facilities owned by the School District that support local use;
- *Appendix B* summarizes all public outreach activities conducted during the planning process, as well as key findings;
- *Appendix C* introduces new park design and development guidelines by park classification to enhance the quality of park development;
- *Appendix D* presents a capital and operations cost model that calculates capital, maintenance, and reinvestment costs for all recommended projects;
- *Appendix E* provides a list of potential capital and operations funding sources; and
- *Appendix F* presents the findings of the Parks & Recreation Implementation Survey.

The master plan provides guidance for the short and long term for enhancing and expanding parks and recreation services.









# Chapter I: Our Town



# Our Town of Apple Valley



## CHAPTER 1: OUR TOWN

The Town of Apple Valley is an oasis in the High Desert, known for its dramatic landscapes, exquisite sunsets, and strong sense of community. The place that Roy Rodgers once called home has grown. Apple Valley now has more than 70,000 residents, and the Happy Trails Highway is a four-lane expressway. Instead of riding off into the sunset, residents are more likely to spend evenings enjoying an outdoor concert or a game of kickball. Even with these changes, Apple Valley continues to offer a better way of life, and parks and recreation are an integral part of that vision.

## A BETTER WAY OF LIFE



For years, residents have been attracted to Apple Valley. In 1893, this area was promoted as the “Gateway to the Golden Land of Opportunity.” By the mid 1940’s, it was actively developed as a recreational resort and retirement community. The Apple Valley Inn and Apple Valley Golf Course were built during this time, and in the 1960s, Roy Rodgers and Dale Evans retired here. From their home next to the golf course, the “King of the Cowboys” and “Queen of the West” enjoyed Apple Valley’s equestrian trails, expansive vistas, outdoor recreation opportunities, and healthful desert air.



Today, Apple Valley continues to celebrate this heritage. Since its incorporation in 1988, the Town has championed the qualities of Apple Valley that support its success as a healthy and attractive community. The *Vision 2020 Strategic Plan* calls out its goal of providing ample and diverse recreation opportunities and high-quality community events, as part of the Town’s effort of becoming the premier destination of the High Desert.

From its *Healthy Apple Valley Initiative* to its mission to provide *A Better Way of Life*, Apple Valley has steadily worked to preserve and support parks and recreation, including the recreation amenities and landscapes that have attracted people for decades. For example, the Town recently acquired the Apple Valley Golf Course. It built a new Conference Center, so that its civic center now includes Town Hall, library, recreation center and community park. A destination playground was added to Civic Center

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Park, where an aquatic center, amphitheater, and outdoor event space attract residents and visitors with variety of special events, festivals and programs.

## OUR PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Clean air, open space, and a strong sense of community allow Apple Valley to support residents who are seeking a better way of life. However, the Town is at a crossroads. While the community continues to grow and facilities continue to age, economic challenges have decreased the funding available for parks, recreation, and other essential services. With a declining budget, the Town is searching for new ways to support community facilities and special events that draw residents together and promote the spirit of Apple Valley.

Funding is needed to restore aging facilities, such as the James Woody Community Center. More programming space is needed to support the sports, recreation classes, special events and equestrian programs desired by the community. If Apple Valley wants to become the premier destination of the High Desert, Town leaders and community members together must decide how best to invest in parks and recreation services in the short and long term.

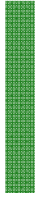
In July 2011, a Parks and Recreation Ad Hoc Committee was established to evaluate possible options to minimize the gap in parks and recreation funding. The Committee met on four occasions to develop recommendations that could be implemented in upcoming years. These remedies are needed to be able to maintain existing assets in a cost-effective, sustainable way. They are important short-term elements of a longer-term vision to continue to enhance parks and recreation opportunities in Apple Valley.

In both the short and long term, the Town needs a strong vision and practical set of recommendations to determine how best to allocate funding for parks and community services. In this context, the *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* is a roadmap that will provide guidance on the steps needed over the next 20 years and beyond to maintain the legacy of the past and achieve the community's vision for the future.





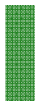
## Community Vision



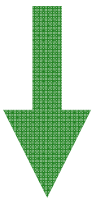
Community Needs for  
Parks, Facilities,  
& Programs



Community Assets  
& Resources



Implementation &  
Funding



Plan to  
Achieve this  
Vision



## OUR PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

The *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* presents strategies and actions for the Town of Apple Valley to continue to support high-quality parks and recreation opportunities now and in the future. This plan:

- Presents the community's vision and goals for parks and recreation;
- Describes current and future needs, as well as community preferences for parks, recreation facilities, programs, events, and trails;
- Identifies policies, implementation strategies and an investment program to enhance and sustain parks and recreation services as integral elements of a livable community; and
- Provides conservative, short and long-term directions for the Parks and Recreation Department to rely on during these difficult economic times and when the economy rebounds in the future.

The *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* updates the 2004 *Master Plan of Park and Recreation Services*. It is compliant with the 2009 *Apple Valley General Plan* and incorporates the goals outlined in the Town's *Vision 2020 Strategic Plan*, including the 2009 adopted plan and the 2012 update.

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## PLANNING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

The *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* was developed through the active participation of many residents, interest groups, stakeholders, Town staff and members of the Parks & Recreation Commission and Town Council. These individuals and groups provided feedback through a variety of meetings, intercept events, interviews, surveys, questionnaires and workshops. These diverse outreach activities were designed to collect feedback from as many people as possible, including different demographic and interest groups. More than 900 people participated in developing this plan, as noted in Table 1.

As a result, this *Master Plan* reflects the many different priorities and preferences of the Apple Valley community. It's designed to be flexible to be able to respond to changing community needs as Apple Valley evolves. It is also designed to give Town staff and leaders the information and tools they need for good decision-making.

## PLAN ORGANIZATION

The *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* contains seven chapters and six appendices. The chapters introduce the plan, describe the Town's vision and goals for parks and recreation services, identify community needs, describe policies for the future, present specific recommendations and guidelines for parks and recreation facilities, and propose investment options for meeting community needs.

The appendices provide critical background information for the planning process, such as the park and facility inventory, public involvement findings, park design and development guidelines, capital and operations costs, a list of potential funding sources and implementation survey results.

Also, the Plan is built on a foundation of several interim reports, which are available under a separate cover:

- Planning Context Summary Memo (May 2010);
- Existing Recreation Resources Summary Memo (August 2010);
- Questionnaire Summary Memo (August 2010);
- Community Needs Assessment (February 2011); and
- Implementation Survey Report (January 2012).

**Table 1: Community Participation**

Activity	#
Adult Questionnaire	287
Youth Questionnaire	37
Focus Groups	26
Intercepts Events	102
Stakeholder Interviews	5
Visioning Workshop	22
Implementation Survey	400
Staff Team	5
Park & Recreation Commission	10+
Town Council	7+
<b>Total</b>	<b>901+</b>

\*Additional residents and staff provided comments at Commission and Council meetings.

*This Plan represents a commitment to our Town, our vision for the future, and our desire to enhance Apple valley through people, parks, and programs.*



## Chapter 2: Our Vision





# Our Vision for the Future

## CHAPTER 2: OUR VISION



The values and the community aspirations for the Town of Apple Valley are the guiding forces for the *Parks and Recreation Master Plan*. Through public involvement, a Community Visioning Workshop, and meetings with the Parks and Recreation Commission, these values and aspirations were identified and integrated into a strategic planning framework. The framework includes four key elements (Figure 1):

- Core Values
- Vision
- Mission
- Goals



These elements are consistent with the Apple Valley's *Vision 2020 Strategic Plan*. The Strategic Plan contains similar core values and strategies to enhance Town services. The implementation of the *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* will help achieve many of the Town's goals, including those related to parks and recreation, sustainability, community enhancement, public safety, economic development, and premier destination.



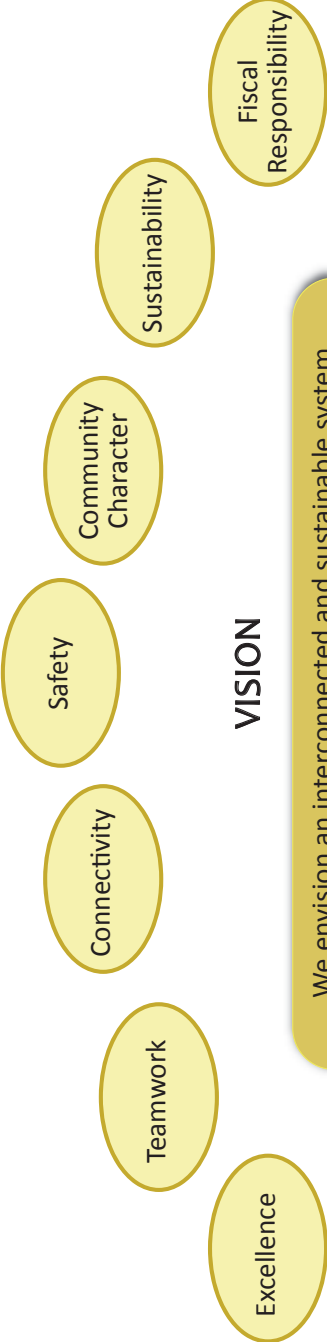
## CORE VALUES

Core values are the shared beliefs and qualities treasured by the community. These values guide the recreation services provided by the Town. Through public involvement activities and a Visioning Workshop, residents identified the following core values for parks and recreation:

- *Excellence*: We value high quality parks, recreation facilities and programs and will strive for excellence in all recreation services.
- *Teamwork*: We value the power of teamwork and the ability to work cooperatively at all levels to achieve our common vision.
- *Connectivity*: We value an interconnected community, enhanced by a network of parks and trails that provide access to our natural environment and key destinations in Town.



## CORE VALUES



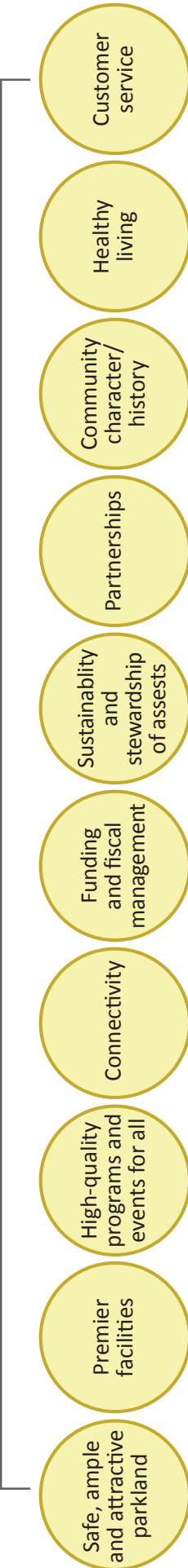
## VISION

We envision an interconnected and sustainable system of safe, attractive parks, premier recreation facilities, and diverse special events and programs that preserve our community's character, support our health and economy, foster opportunities for all ages, and promote "A Better Way of Life."

## MISSION

Providing a better way to live and play.

## GOALS



## RECOMMENDATIONS



- *Safety:* We value safe, secure, and inviting parks, recreation facilities and programs that foster social interaction and enjoyment.
- *Community Character:* We value Apple Valley’s heritage, open space, and history, contributing to our sense of community and civic pride.
- *Sustainability:* We value efficient and effective management of our assets and stewardship of our parks and recreation resources to sustain them for future generations.
- *Fiscal Responsibility:* Understanding that public service is a public trust, we value honesty, integrity, accountability, and sustainable fiscal practices.

## VISION

The core values shared by the community support our Town’s vision for a preferred future. This vision paints a picture of the parks and recreation system the community wants to achieve. Through the public involvement process, the following vision emerged:

***We envision an interconnected and sustainable system of safe, attractive parks, premier recreation facilities, and diverse special events and programs that preserve our community’s character, support our health and economy, foster opportunities for all ages, and promote “A Better Way of Life.”***

## MISSION

A mission statement, congruent with the community’s vision and values for parks and recreation, describes the approach that Parks & Recreation staff will take in providing parks, recreation facilities, and programs for Apple Valley. The mission of the Parks & Recreation Department is:

***Providing a better way to live and play.***

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## GOALS

Goals are the desired outcomes to be achieved by implementing the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Goals reflect these desired outcomes or key directions for the Town's future. Ten goals emerged during the planning process, reflecting key directions for the Town's future.

- *Safe, Ample and Attractive Parkland:* The Town of Apple Valley will expand and enhance Apple Valley's network of parkland and recreational opportunities, providing clean and attractive parks and that are conveniently located for easy access throughout town.
- *Premier Facilities:* The Town of Apple Valley will provide high-quality, signature facilities that foster community pride and help ensure that the Town is a destination for residents and visitors seeking high quality events and amenities in the High Desert.
- *High Quality Programs and Events for All:* The Town of Apple Valley will provide engaging, accessible, affordable recreation events and programs that meet the needs of our diverse community, including residents of all ages, abilities, family compositions and economic and cultural backgrounds.
- *Connectivity:* The Town of Apple Valley will connect community members together via a network of parks, recreation facilities and trails. By linking key destinations, the system will support community health and strengthen the fabric of the community.
- *Funding and Fiscal Management:* Parks & Recreation staff will demonstrate fiscal responsibility, accountability, and long-term financial stability through their work, making the best use of limited public funds for park acquisition, development, maintenance, and programming.
- *Sustainability and Stewardship of Assets:* Parks & Recreation staff will be a responsible steward of Apple Valley's environmental, cultural, and financial resources. Through sound management and best practices, staff will create a legacy for future generations.
- *Partnerships:* Parks & Recreation staff will work collaboratively with residents, businesses, other departments, and neighboring communities to collectively use our energy, creativity and resources to enhance our community.
- *Community Character/History:* Through its parks, recreation facilities, and programs, Parks & Recreation staff will work to preserve Apple Valley's heritage, enhance its neighborhoods, strengthen community





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identity, and create a premier destination in the High Desert.

- *Healthy Living:* Health and wellness are critical elements of a livable community. The Town of Apple Valley will support active lifestyles and promote life-long learning by providing parks, facilities, events and programs that support healthy lifestyles for all ages.
- *Customer Service:* Parks & Recreation staff will be responsive, accountable, and creative in meeting present and future community needs, reflecting the desires of residents and sharing community priorities. Staff will continue to demonstrate excellence in customer service.

## STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Strategies and actions are statements that describe how the Town's goals will be achieved. They describe the improvements, projects, programs, and policies that the Town would like to see implemented and accomplished in the next 20 years. These strategies and actions include recommendations for park acquisition, development, maintenance, operations, and programming which are presented in Chapters 4 and 5 of this plan.







## Chapter 3: Our Needs





# Our Park & Recreation Needs



## CHAPTER 3: OUR NEEDS

Apple Valley residents enjoy many recreation opportunities provided by parks, facilities, and programs. Playing on playgrounds, swimming, picnicking, playing sports, participating in summer camps, and attending community festivals enhance life for all who participate. To continue to provide these services, the Town must be able to maintain and restore its existing facilities, add new parks and facilities as the community grows, and improve its recreation facilities and services as the community attracts new residents, businesses and visitors.

This chapter identifies current and future needs for parks, facilities, and programs for the next 20 years. It identifies community-wide needs that may require the support of residents, businesses, recreation groups and other service providers to meet. The chapter focuses on the parks and facilities needed to serve Apple Valley in the future, while recognizing that funding, maintenance and service needs also must be addressed while improving the park and recreation system. Recommendations and implementation strategies to meet these needs are presented in Chapters 4-6 of this plan.



## PARKS

To help identify park land needs, Apple Valley's parks and recreation resources were inventoried, classified, and evaluated. The Town currently provides 370 acres of parks and open space at 17 sites. This includes the Apple Valley Golf Course, which is an important recreation amenity, but is not funded with Parks and Recreation Fund dollars (Table 2). Map 1 illustrates the locations of these parks. The entire inventory is presented in Appendix A.



In the Town's General Plan, parks and recreation facilities have been classified in four categories, which were refined as noted below:

- *Mini Parks:* Mini parks are small parks that serve nearby neighbors with basic play facilities and a small green space. They are located within walking distance of most users.

- **Neighborhood Parks:** Neighborhood parks are moderately-sized parks that serve nearby neighbors with basic recreation opportunities and play space.
- **Community Parks:** Community parks are larger, multi-purpose parks that provide both active and passive recreation opportunities and specialized facilities that appeal to the entire community. These sites typically support organized, active recreation (such as sports or aquatics) and opportunities for large-group gatherings.
- **Special Use Parks:** Special use parks are sites with specialized facilities that provide unique recreation opportunities. These parks often serve a specialized audience Town-wide.

In addition to these park types, the Town has four undeveloped park properties that could be developed as parks in the future. While these sites provide open space, they are not currently managed as existing parks or natural areas.

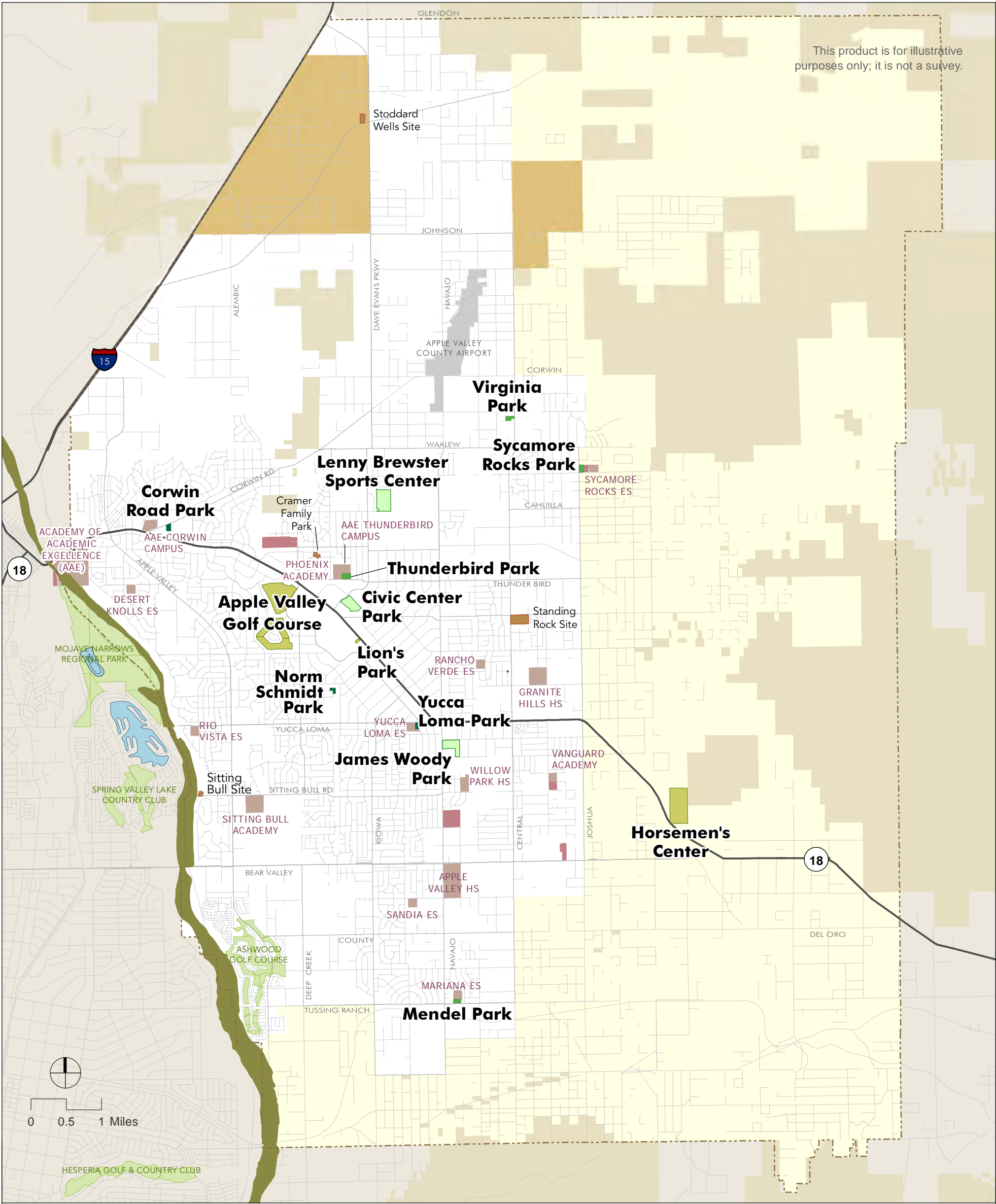


**Table 2: Park Inventory**

<b>Mini Parks</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Corwin Park	3.7
Lion's Park	1.6
Mendel Park	3.5
Norm Schmidt Park	2.4
Virginia Park	4.0
Yucca Loma Park	2.0
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>17.1</i>
<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>	
Sycamore Rocks Park	4.1
Thunderbird Park	6.3
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>10.4</i>
<b>Community Parks</b>	
Civic Center Park	21.2
James Woody Park	23.0
Lenny Brewster Sports Center	38.6
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>82.8</i>
<b>Special Use Parks</b>	
Apple Valley Golf Course	149.3
Horsemen's Center	80.2
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>229.6</i>
<b>Undeveloped Parks</b>	
Cramer Family	2.8
Sitting Bull	2.1
Standing Rock	20.0
Stoddard Wells	5.1
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>29.1</i>
<b>Total Park Land</b>	<b>369.8</b>



This product is for illustrative purposes only; it is not a survey.



**Parks & Recreation Master Plan**

Prepared 10.25.2012

**Map 1: Existing Parks & Recreation Resources**



Data Source: Town of Apple Valley, CaSIL, ESRI & USGS  
NAD1983 StatePlane California V FIPS 0405 Feet

- |                   |                                |               |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Mini Park         | General Plan Annexation        | Mojave River  |
| Neighborhood Park | Public Schools                 | Water Feature |
| Community Park    | Other School District Property | BLM Lands     |
| Special Use       | Streets                        | Town Limits   |
| Undeveloped       | Major Roads                    | Planning Area |
| Other Resources   | Freeway/Highway                |               |





**Table 3: Park Land Level of Service by Classification**

Classification	LOS*
Mini Parks	0.23
Neighborhood Parks	0.14
Community Parks	1.11
Special Use Parks	3.10
<b>Total Existing LOS</b>	<b>4.6</b>

\*Level of service is measure in acres per 1,000 residents.

### Park Level of Service

One way to measure the amount of park land provided by the Town of Apple Valley is by calculating its “level of service.” The level of service (LOS) for park land is a ratio of the number of developed park acres provided by the Town in comparison to the number of residents served. This ratio is expressed in terms of acres per 1,000 residents.

Apple Valley’s existing level of service is *4.6 acres/1,000 residents*.<sup>1</sup> This LOS increased significantly in 2011 with the acquisition of the Apple Valley Golf Course, which is considered as a recreation amenity even though it is operated separately through an enterprise fund. While the Town provides a variety of parks and recreation amenities, more than 67% of the existing park land is provided in special use parks, including the Golf Course and Horsemen’s Center (Table 3).

Currently, Apple Valley’s level of service for park land is similar to other benchmarking communities (Lancaster, Temecula, and Hesperia).<sup>2</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> The calculation is based on the Town’s current inventory and a 2009 population of 74,266 residents. It does not include undeveloped parks.

<sup>2</sup> These communities were chosen by the Parks & Recreation Commission for comparison to Apple Valley because of their proximity, demographic characteristics, and similar type of park system. They also represent high quality parks and recreation systems, similar to what Apple Valley wants to provide.

Town of Apple Valley provides a higher LOS for developed park land than Lancaster and Temecula, but a lower LOS than its neighbor, Hesperia (Table 4). It is important to recognize that Apple Valley’s service level without the Golf Course is considerably less than the amount of developed park land in comparable communities.<sup>3</sup>

### Public Demand for Parks

In addition to the amount of park acreage provided, community expectations play an important role in defining park needs. Several community priorities are outlined below, based on public involvement findings. (See Appendix B for details on the methodology and key findings from the public involvement process.)

Town parks provide many benefits, but residents value parks most because of their contributions to health and wellness. In Apple Valley, community parks, which support active recreation opportunities, are visited most frequently. Neighborhood parks rank second in terms of visitation, drawing far more users than mini parks or special use parks. The top recreation facilities used by both youth and adults include the Aquatic Center, James Woody Community Center, James Woody sports fields, and Town Hall Recreation Center, suggesting that the Town’s recreation programs are effective in drawing participation. Residents report that they visit parks primarily to take advantage of social opportunities, such as attending community events and hanging out with family and friends. Not surprisingly, recreation festivals and special events are the most popular types of programs in Apple Valley.

Throughout the planning process, respondents raised concerns about the Town’s aging facilities, the lack of diversity in recreation opportunities, and the incapacity of existing parks and facilities to meet growing needs. Specific issues noted by community stakeholders, focus group participants, and Town leaders include: the size, age, and condition of James Woody Community Center; the distance youth have to travel to parks and recreation facilities; the lack of support amenities at several sites (e.g., restrooms, shade, picnic tables, pathways); and the desire for high quality parks and varied recreation opportunities to support Apple Valley’s goal of becoming a premier destination.

<sup>3</sup> There remains a possibility that the Golf Course could be sold in the future. Without this recreation amenity, the Town’s service level for park land is 2.6 acres/1,000 residents.

**Table 4: Existing Park LOS Comparison**

Jurisdiction	Existing LOS*
Lancaster	3.4
Temecula	4.3
Apple Valley	4.6
Hesperia	7.3
<b>Average of Comparable Communities</b>	<b>5.0</b>

\*Acres/1,000 residents.  
Sources: Hesperia General Plan (2010); Lancaster Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Cultural Arts Master Plan (2007); City of Temecula Parks and Recreation Department, (2009).

*The top two priorities for improving the park system:*  
 1) *Repairing or replacing old, run-down facilities in existing parks;*  
 2) *Adding more amenities and facilities to parks.*



While more park land and facilities will be needed in the future, the top priority for many residents now is taking care of (repairing and replacing) existing facilities. These findings are important both for understanding the community’s short-term priorities, but also for setting goals and guidelines for park acquisition and development in the future.

### Park Access

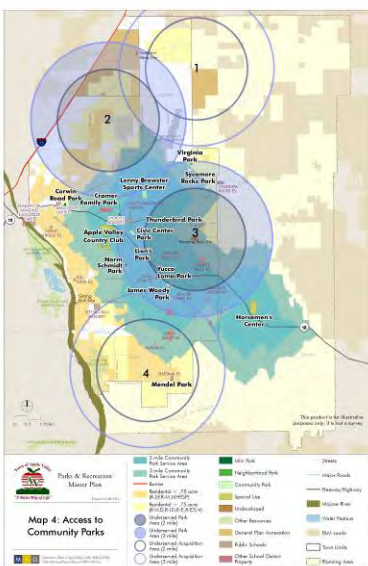
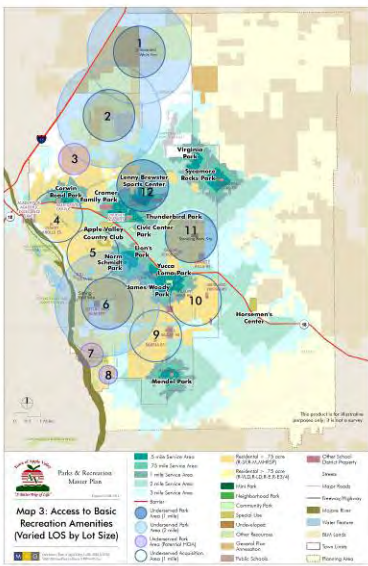
Another way to evaluate park needs is by considering park access. Using GIS, park access can be measured in terms of the distance people must travel to reach parks. Fewer parks mean that people must travel farther to play. A park access analysis was conducted as part of this planning effort. Details are presented in the Community Needs Assessment Report.

There are many factors that influence the distance people travel to parks, such as residential density, transportation modes, barriers to park access (topography, highways, fencing, etc.), and the attractiveness and/or uniqueness of recreation amenities. Given these factors and community demands for park land, Town staff and the Park and Recreation Commission (PRC) determined that parks should be provided in Apple Valley within the following travel distances:

- 1 mile to reach basic or essential recreation amenities<sup>4</sup> for residents in higher density residential areas, where the lot sizes are smaller than ¾ acre;
- 2-2 ½ miles to reach basic or essential recreation amenities for residents in lower density areas, where lot sizes are greater than ¾ acre; and
- 2-3 miles to reach a community park, where a variety of recreation opportunities are provided.

These travel distances are greater than typical walking distances (½ mile), reflecting land use patterns and community expectations in Apple Valley.

The access analysis documented several areas in Apple Valley where residents do not have access to essential recreation amenities and/or community parks within desired travel distances. While parks provided by Homeowner’s Associations are anticipated to serve several planned neighborhoods in the future, three (3) new community parks and six (6)



<sup>4</sup> Essential recreation amenities include playgrounds, picnic shelter/tables, and open lawns. These amenities can be found in mini, neighborhood and community parks.

new neighborhood parks will be needed in the future if Apple Valley develops as planned.

### Park Land Standards & Future Needs

To provide neighborhood and community parks in unserved areas, Apple Valley will need more park land. This *Master Plan* conservatively proposes a new park land standard of 4.5 acres/1,000 residents—slightly lower than the current level of service. However, the proposed standard represents a fairly dramatic increase in land needs for community and neighborhood parks—the two most frequently visited park types in Apple Valley. Table 5 notes the standards and acreage needs by park type.

**Table 5: Proposed Standards and Needs for Developed Park Land**

Park Type	Existing LOS <sup>1</sup> (acres/1,000)	Proposed Standard (acres/1,000)	Future Acres Needed <sup>2</sup>
Mini Parks	0.23	0.2	--
Neighborhood Parks	0.14	0.5	47.6
Community Parks	1.11	1.8	126.1
Special Use Areas	3.10	2.0	2.5
<b>Total Existing LOS</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>176.2</b>

<sup>1</sup>The existing level of service (LOS) is based on a current population of 74,266.

<sup>2</sup>Future needs are based on a 2029 population estimated at 116,041.

By applying these standards, park land needs are noted below by type:

- *Mini Parks*: No new mini parks are needed. These smaller sites are not as cost-effective or as successful in providing the types of facilities that would draw people from 1-2 miles away.
- *Neighborhood Parks*: Six (6) new neighborhood parks are needed. This could include the development of Stoddard Wells Property and the acquisition and development of five new parks in underserved areas around Town.
- *Community Parks*: Three (3) new community parks are needed. This could include the development of the Standing Rock site, plus new parks in the North Pointe area and in South Apple Valley.
- *Special Use Parks*: One (1) new special use park is needed. This need may be met by developing a trailhead/nature park at the Sitting Bull property.

*To maintain the desired level of service, 6 neighborhood parks, 3 community parks and 1 special use park will be needed in the future.*





**Table 6: Outdoor Recreation Facility Inventory**

Facility	#
Soccer Field	15
Backstop	12
Playground	12
Baseball/Softball Field	9
Picnic Shelter	4
Basketball Court	3
Tennis Court	2
Amphitheater	1
Campground	1
Dog Park	1
Hard Surface Trail	1
Horseshoe Complex	1
Skatepark	1
Soft Surface Trail	1
Swimming Pool	1
Volleyball Court	0
Water Play Area	0

## FACILITIES

Having the right amount of park land is important in a successful park and recreation system. However, residents also need a variety of recreation amenities and facilities that are in good condition. The Town of Apple Valley currently provides a mix of recreation facilities ranging from small-scale playgrounds to large-scale aquatic facilities and community centers. Tables 6 and 7 summarize the inventory of indoor and outdoor facilities. (See Appendix A for a full inventory of facilities by site.)

As noted in Table 6, the Town provides a lot of sports fields and playgrounds, but far fewer of other types of outdoor facilities. As noted in Table 7, it also provides a variety of indoor facilities with meeting rooms, general activity space, an auditorium, and a gymnasium. However, the Town does not have a larger, multi-purpose recreation and community center with specialized indoor activity space. Indoor programming space and a greater variety of outdoor recreation facilities are needed.

**Table 7: Indoor Recreation Facility Inventory**

Facility	Activity Room	Gymnasium	Kitchen	Meeting Room	Stage	Other
Apple Valley Golf Course			1	2		Banquet Room, Pro Shop
James Woody Community	2	1	1		1	Offices
Town Hall Conference Center				1 <sup>2</sup>		
Town Hall Recreation Center	3		1	0 <sup>2</sup>		Offices

<sup>1</sup>Includes maintenance office space.

<sup>2</sup>Room can be divided into two separate rooms by partition.

<sup>3</sup>Activity rooms can be divided into four separate meeting rooms.

## Facility Evaluation

In March 2010, park and recreation facilities were evaluated to identify current issues and opportunities related to their condition, development, maintenance, and management. Findings included:

- *James A. Woody Community Center:* Built to serve Apple Valley when the Town’s population was 7,000 people, the 60-year old James Woody Community Center provides indoor active recreation space (a gymnasium), an auditorium and two activity rooms. This facility was never intended to provide sufficient indoor recreation space to serve a town of 74,266 people.<sup>5</sup> Although several elements (e.g., kitchen, gym lighting) have been upgraded in recent years, a significant investment in improvements or replacement is needed.
- *Playground Age/Condition:* Apple Valley has six playgrounds built in the year 2000 or before. Playground equipment has an estimated 10-20 year life span, depending on its materials, intensity of use, climate, and other factors. Playground safety and accessibility standards also have changed significantly in the last 15 years. Given these circumstances, playground replacement will be needed at these six sites in the future.

<sup>5</sup> General indoor activity space is provided at the Town Hall Recreation Center to help meet needs, but no other specialized indoor programming space is available.

- 
- *Facility/Development Quality:* While Apple Valley has several new parks and facilities in excellent condition, it also has sites with amenities and facilities that are inconsistent with the community's vision to be a premier destination. Several parks are underdeveloped and lacking restrooms, shade structures, and unique and varied recreation facilities. High demand, aging facilities, and a decreasing maintenance budget are contributing to the speed at which facilities need renovation, repair, and replacement.



### Amenity and Facility Demand

Community feedback, obtained during the public involvement process, was used to identify the most essential types of recreation amenities and facilities that are desired in parks, such as shade, restrooms, open grass areas, playgrounds, active recreation opportunities, and social gathering places. The existing park system was evaluated in comparison to these essential facilities. The analysis noted:

- *Shade:* Even though shade is important to community health, a lack of shade is an issue at several Apple Valley parks. New picnic structures have just been installed at Mendel, Corwin, and Thunderbird Parks. However, sites such as Civic Center Park and Lenny Brewster Sports Center need shade shelters. Other opportunities to improve the availability of shade include providing coverings at the swimming pool, concession areas and playgrounds, as well as maintaining and nurturing shade trees in all parks.
- *Restrooms:* The distance that residents typically travel to parks in Apple Valley creates a need for restrooms at most sites. Seven existing mini and neighborhood parks lack permanent restrooms. Portable restrooms are provided at several sites. In community parks, Civic Center Park needs a restroom, and both James Woody Park and Lenny Brewster Sports Center need more restroom stalls to support the high level of site use.
- *Active-use Facilities:* Active recreation encourages exercise, which also contributes to individual and community health. While many Town parks have sports fields or multi-purpose back stops, only one mini or neighborhood park (Thunderbird Park) includes a sports court. Corwin Park does not have any type of active-use facilities.
- *Trails:* Despite the community's interest in and demand for trails, few parks provide walking trails or are connected to the Town's trail network to make these sites easily accessible by foot, bike, or horse.

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## Specialized Facility Comparison

Specialized facility needs were evaluated through a comparison of Apple Valley to the benchmarking cities of Lancaster, Hesperia and Temecula. Since this is not an “apples to apples” comparison, the assessment looked at the type and scale of facilities provided in those communities.

- *Lancaster:* The Lancaster Parks, Recreation and Arts Department strongly invests in specialized facilities, such as the Lancaster Performing Arts Center, the Lancaster Museum/Art Gallery, the Western Hotel Museum, five indoor activity centers, a 35-field soccer complex, tournament quality adult softball complex, baseball stadium, high desert nature interpretive center, two pools, and four joint-use gymnasiums. It serves a population of 135,225 residents.<sup>6</sup>
- *Temecula:* The Temecula Community Services Department, Recreation Division, provides a recreation center, community center, senior center, Children’s Museum, library, Community Theater, History Museum, chapel, three swimming pools, an outdoor amphitheater, a skate park, and gymnasium to serve a population of 105,029 residents.<sup>7</sup>
- *Hesperia:* The City of Hesperia and the Hesperia Recreation and Park District (HRPD) provide four community centers, a youth activity center, roller rink, pool, country club/golf course, fishing area, campground, museum/nature center, and slot car/RC car tracks to serve a population of 88,184 residents.<sup>8</sup>

The Town of Apple Valley has added or acquired several specialized facilities in recent years to enhance its level of service, such as the Golf Course, Conference Center, Aquatic Center, Amphitheater, and Town Hall Recreation Center. However, continued investment is needed to provide the number and variety of specialized facilities found in those comparable communities.

## Facility Needs

Table 8 summarizes needs for indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, taking into account recreation trends and participation, unserved areas, as well community preferences. According to findings from the analysis, Apple Valley needs the following amenities and facilities in the next 20 years:

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<sup>6</sup> City of Lancaster, 2007 Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Cultural Master Plan.

<sup>7</sup> City of Temecula, 2009 Developed Park and Recreational Facilities.

<sup>8</sup> City of Hesperia, 2010 Hesperia General Plan.

*Lancaster, Temecula, and Hesperia offer more and a wider variety of specialized facilities than Apple Valley.*

**Table 8: Indoor and Outdoor Recreation Facility Needs\***

Facility	#
BMX Facility	1
Baseball/Softball Field	9
Event/Group Venue	4
Trails (hard/soft)	1
Multi-Purpose Recreation Center	1
Multi-use Turf Field	2
Playground	9
Skatepark	1
Soccer Field	8
Water Play Area	2

\*The number recreation amenities, such as restrooms and shade shelters, and sports courts, will be determined by park design and development guidelines.



- *Playgrounds:* Nine (9) new playgrounds will be needed to provide play opportunities in proposed new neighborhood and community parks.
- *Sports Courts:* Nine (9) new sports courts of various types (e.g., basketball, tennis, volleyball, bocce, shuffleboard, horseshoes) will be needed to increase active use opportunities in new neighborhood and community parks.
- *Sports Fields:* Nine (9) new baseball/softball fields and eight (8) soccer fields will be needed in the next 20 years to meet sport field guidelines proposed in the Needs Assessment Report. Also, two (2) multi-use turf fields will be needed to support football, lacrosse, rugby, and soccer.
- *Event Space/Large-Group Venues:* To continue to provide the Town’s highly successful special events and opportunities for large-group gatherings, three (3) large-group venues or event facilities will be needed. This represents one in each proposed new community park.
- *Skatepark:* One (1) additional skatepark or several (2-4) smaller skate spots distributed around town will be needed to provide skating variety and challenge and improve access to skate elements as the community continues to grow.
- *BMX Facilities:* One (1) separate BMX Freestyle Facility will be needed in the long-term to minimize the safety concerns associated with conflicting uses at the Three Diamond Skatepark.
- *Water Play:* At least two (2) water play opportunities will be needed. These are appropriate at the Aquatic Center (as planned) and at a community park.
- *Multi-Purpose Recreation Center:* A large community recreation center (40,000+ sf) will be needed to provide indoor programming and active recreation space, including space for teens and seniors.

### Trail Needs

The public involvement process for the *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* noted a strong demand for trails in Apple Valley. In fact, ninety-one (91%) percent of questionnaire respondents and 79% of intercept event participants indicated that Apple Valley needs more trails and pathways. In the General Plan, the Town of Apple Valley presents its adopted plan for an interconnected trail system. It includes:

- *Bike Paths:* Class I, II, and III bike paths include on-street and off-street routes.



- 
- *Lifeline Trails*: More than 102 miles of multi-use Lifeline Trails are planned for walking, bicycle riding, horseback riding, and other forms of “human propulsion.”
  - *Bridle Easements*: Existing bridle easements, although not developed or marked, are mapped as riding trails.

At this time, the Parks and Recreation Department does not play a role in trail development outside of parks. However, the Town needs a stronger strategy to create this interconnected trail system to meet community needs for recreation, connectivity and non-motorized transportation. In the meantime, the Parks and Recreation Department can focus on addressing trail needs through park development, and ensuring that new parks are connected to the trail system where feasible. Beyond ADA requirements for interconnected facilities, soft-surfaced trails are needed in parks to support jogging, mountain biking, nature interpretation, and equestrian use. Hard-surfaced trails are needed to support opportunities for walking, biking, skateboarding, rollerblading, and scooter use.

#### Needs for Other Amenities

Needs for additional park amenities, such as permanent restrooms, shade structures, and open turf play areas, are noted in park design and development guidelines presented in Appendix C. These guidelines notes what types of amenities and facilities are required by park type.

*More trails are needed in Apple Valley, according to participants in the public outreach process.*







## PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

The Town of Apple Valley's Parks and Recreation Department provides a full range of recreation programs for all ages. Its programs, special events, classes and sports leagues are highly successful, attracting nearly 65,000 participants annually.<sup>9</sup>

### Program Area Needs

Currently, Apple Valley offers recreation programs in eight major program areas. As the community grows, the Town will need to provide more recreation programs and special events in these areas to address an increased demand for services. These areas include:

- After School Activities Program
- Aquatics
- Classes (e.g., arts and crafts, dance and music, fitness and wellness classes for youth and adults)
- Special Events
- Sports Leagues (adult, youth and pee wee sports)
- Active Adult and Senior Programs
- Therapeutic Recreation
- Volunteer Opportunities

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<sup>9</sup> FY 2008/09 participation data.

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In addition to these service areas, public involvement findings highlighted a need for increased programming in two other areas: 1) Fine/Dramatic Arts, and 2) Healthy Living. While Apple Valley currently provides classes for youth and adults in arts, crafts, and dance, cultural arts is not a major service area for the Town. There is an opportunity to increase indoor and outdoor theater programs, using the Civic Center Park Amphitheater and James A. Woody Community Center stage. To expand this program area, specialty indoor programming space will be needed, such as art studios, music studios, dance studios, art gallery, etc. This need could be met at a new community center, or potentially in partnership with another provider.

The Town of Apple Valley has been awarded a grant by the County of San Bernardino Department of Public Health in support of the “Healthy Apple Valley” mission of improving the health and well-being of residents through the promotion of healthy eating, education, cooking programs, and physical activity. Through programs and events, Apple Valley has successfully positioned itself as a center for healthy living, which has emerged as a significant new service area. A need exists to continue and expand these programs beyond the Town’s current grant funding. In addition, there is a potential to tie this program area to trail-related programs, taking advantage of the Town’s proposals for trail development inside parks and across town.

### Target Populations

The Apple Valley Parks and Recreation Department provides programs and events for people of all ages. While many demographic groups are well-served by existing recreation programs, public involvement findings suggest that several groups have distinct needs that should be addressed. Needs for the following groups were specifically noted:

- *Youth:* While youth development is a key focus in current programming, public involvement findings suggest that programs supporting youth integration, safety, and positive outcomes/behavior are still needed. Expanded youth skills programs and volunteer opportunities may help address this need. Another possibility is to bring recreation opportunities to underserved youth through the use of a Mobile Recreation Program, offering free recreation activities (e.g., games, crafts) at targeted park and school sites.



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- *Teens:* Apple Valley teens are in need of both programmed and self-directed recreation time. The youth focus group noted a desire for more drop-in opportunities to play, socialize, and be entertained. Desires were also noted for drop-in and organized sports, volunteer opportunities, computer classes, safe parties and social events, and tours/travel (bus excursions). Also, improved communication with teens is desired. Suggested opportunities included a Facebook youth page and Teen Zone webpage on the Town's website (which is now available). While needs for teen drop-in space may be partially addressed in an expansion of the PAL Center, a youth/teen room integrated into a multi-purpose community/recreation center would provide indoor space to support teen recreation and programs.
  - *Seniors/Active Adults:* Nearly one-quarter (24.2%) of Apple Valley's population is over age 55. The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) expects this age group to continue to grow over the next several years. While the Del Webb Solera/Sun City planned community caters to this demographic with recreation facilities and programs, the Town may need to expand programs for older adults and seniors living throughout Apple Valley. Programs for active adults and seniors in fitness and healthy living could be tied to the healthy living program area.
  - *Younger Workers:* The population of young adults focused on jobs is expected to increase in Apple Valley, according to SCAG data. These residents often have less free time for recreation because of job-related commutes and a focus on work productivity. However, active and social evening programs, such as sport leagues and social events, or flexible drop-in programs, such as open gym time, often appeal to this demographic. This includes both traditional sports programs, such as softball, as well as emerging adult sports, such as kickball and dodge ball.
  - *Multi-generational Programming:* According to public involvement findings, one of Apple Valley's strengths is its multi-generational programming. Apple Valley's special events promote community connections, provide community-building and family activities, and meet diverse needs. SCAG projects that middle-age and school-age population will continue to dominate the Town's population in the next several years. Consequently, there will continue to be a strong need for parent/child, family, and multi-generational programming.





## Chapter 4: Our Future System





# Our Future System

## CHAPTER 4: OUR FUTURE SYSTEM



There are many needs to be met in achieving the community’s vision for parks and recreation, and even more to accomplish if the Town wants to be recognized as the High Desert’s premier destination. Even with these goals, the Town must balance priorities while creating the park system of the future. This chapter presents recommendations to enhance services system-wide, while finding a balance between Town resources and desires for:

- Park and facility development
- Recreation programming and events
- Maintenance
- Funding
- Partnerships
- Marketing
- Customer Service



The recommendations in this chapter provide guidance for developing the park and recreation system in the short and long term. Specific recommendations for enhancing parks and facilities are presented in Chapter 5. Implementation strategies to achieve priority recommendations are described in Chapter 6.



### Proposed Park System

The Town of Apple Valley is a unique community with large lots, open space, mountain vistas and desert valleys. The Town takes pride in its equestrian heritage, while looking forward to the type of specialized development that will position Apple Valley as a premier destination.



Green parks, multi-use trails, and specialized recreation venues are an important part of the Town’s vision for the future. To achieve this vision, the proposed park and recreation system will improve access to community parks, where special events, organized sports, and other community gatherings can be held. The travel distance to neighborhood and mini parks will be addressed, so that most residential areas have

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access to close-to-home recreation opportunities. In addition, all residents will have access to a variety of special use parks that provide unique recreation opportunities, such as golfing, camping, and participating in equestrian or BMX events.

Apple Valley's current park system provides a strong foundation to support this vision. However, there are many residential areas that lack essential park opportunities, and services should be improved in these areas. In addition, parks and facilities should be added to unserved residential areas as Apple Valley grows. This is especially true in south Apple Valley, where four new neighborhood parks and one community park will be needed.

### Proposed Park Concept

Map 2 illustrates the proposed park system of the future. The map presents the general location of existing and proposed park sites to create an image of what the park system may look like at build-out. Build-out is the point at which the Town is fully developed according to its land use planning strategies.

Some important notes about the Proposed Park System Map include:

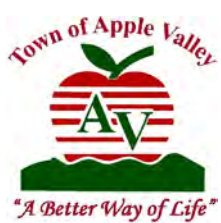
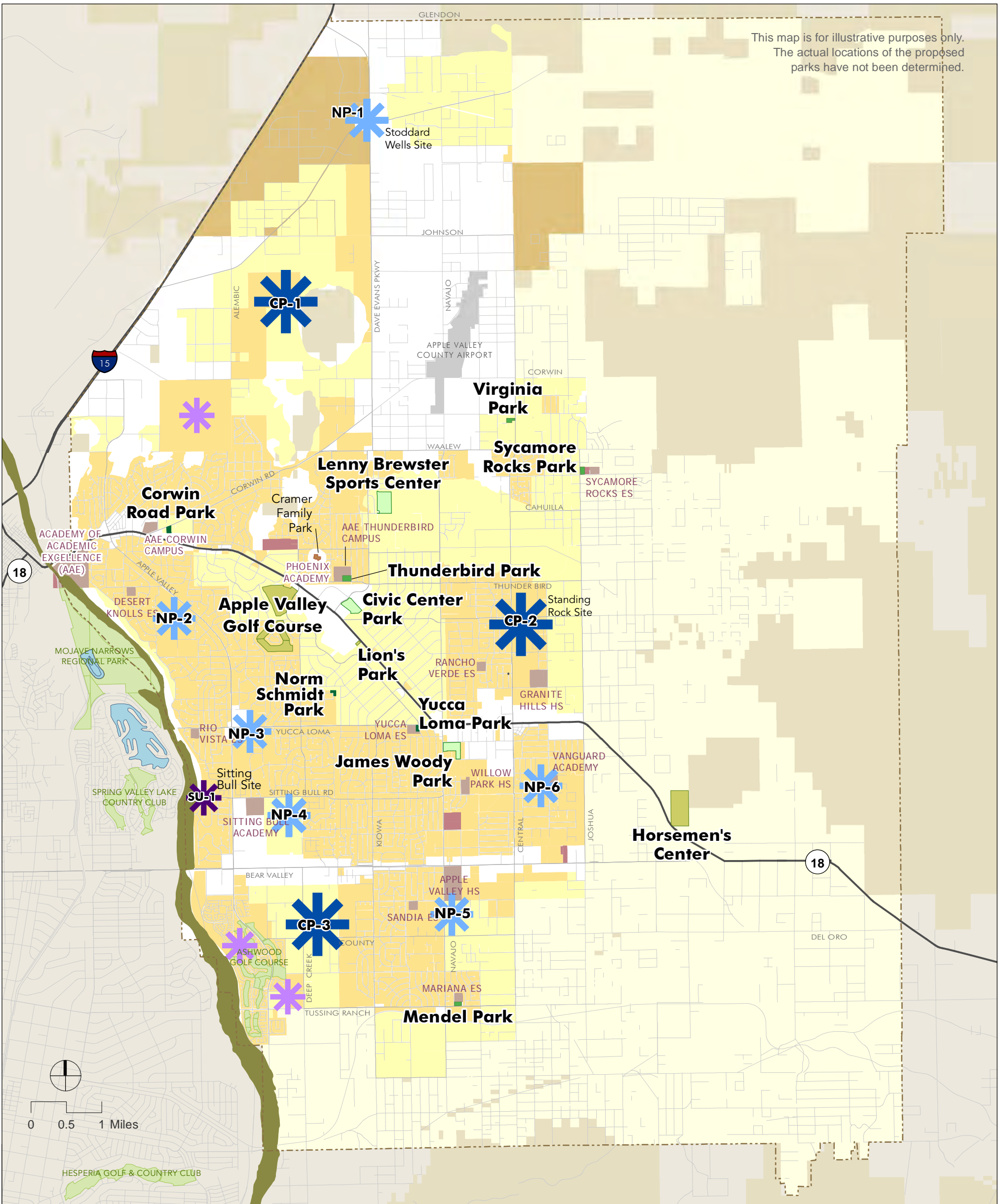
- Each proposed Town park is coded with letters and numbers (such as CP-2). The letters note the type of park to be developed:

NP	Neighborhood Park
CP	Community Park
SU	Special Use Area
- Colored asterisks indicate the general location of proposed parks. In addition to Town-owned sites, which are coded on the map, there are three uncoded, light purple asterisks. According to current plans, parks to be managed by Homeowner's Associations are proposed for new developments in these areas.

While the proposed park system takes into account current land use and anticipated growth and development plan, the map does not illustrate precise locations for proposed park sites. These details will be determined later based on factors such as the availability of land, the rate of growth and development, land costs, and neighborhood and community preferences at the time the park land is acquired and developed.

*More parks will help position the Town as a premier destination and support health and fitness.*

This map is for illustrative purposes only. The actual locations of the proposed parks have not been determined.



## Parks & Recreation Master Plan

Prepared 10.25.2012

# Map 2: Proposed Park System



Data Source: Town of Apple Valley, CaSIL, ESRI & USGS  
NAD1983 StatePlane California V FIPS 0405 Feet

- |  |                                |                 |
|--|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Proposed Neighborhood Park                     | Mini Park                      | Streets         |
| Proposed Community Park                        | Neighborhood Park              | Major Roads     |
| Proposed Special Use Park                      | Community Park                 | Freeway/Highway |
| Proposed HOA Park                              | Special Use                    | Mojave River    |
| Residential < .75 acre (R-SF,R-M,MHP,SP)       | Undeveloped                    | Water Feature   |
| Residential > .75 acre (R-VLD,R-LD,R-E,R-E3/4) | Other Resources                | BLM Lands       |
|  | General Plan Annexation        | Town Limits     |
|  | Public Schools                 | Planning Area   |
|  | Other School District Property |                 |







### Proposed Park and Facility Development

New park development is recommended to achieve the community's vision for the future. Recommendations to improve the planning, design, and development of new parks and recreation facilities are noted below. More specific design and development guidelines for each park type are listed in Appendix C.

- Apply park design and development guidelines that address factors such as required amenities, site access and circulation, the provision of restrooms, and appropriate development. (See Appendix C.)
- Enhance park image through minor upgrades over time.
  - Provide attractive site identification signage at main entrances.
  - Develop park locator signs to direct the public to local parks and facilities. Create a standard set of guidelines for their design and placement.
  - In the long term, replace current park amenities (benches, trash cans, picnic tables, drinking fountains, etc.) with standard set of higher-grade amenities throughout the park system. For example, replace barrel trash cans with covered receptacles. Use a consistent style for amenities within each park.



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- Provide concrete pads under picnic tables, benches, drinking fountains, kiosks, and other high traffic areas where turf damage will occur.
  - Implement a comprehensive proactive turf management program to ensure that all fields and turf areas are provided at a consistently high level.
  - Foster the Town’s natural and cultural heritage through park design and development:
    - When master planning and designing parks, be responsive to local conditions, including topography, site context, and neighborhood character.
    - Include public art and/or historic and environmental interpretive elements where possible to contribute to park identity and character.
    - Consider distinct themes for each community park site to establish a unique character and identity. Themes may be highlighted through the use of colors, materials, furnishings, equipment and plant selections.
    - Encourage art in parks by either developing an Art in Public Places program or designate areas in the parks system for possible art installations in the future.
    - Promote western heritage and equestrian culture through park design.
    - Protect the quality and character of natural and historic resources through park acquisition or facility preservation.
  - Emphasize public safety and security in park development.
    - Where applicable, apply Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) guidelines in the design and operation of parks and facilities. Some publicly-supported guidelines include the appropriate use of lights to deter crime, landscaping to allow unobstructed views of surrounding areas, and the location of play equipment and other recreation facilities in areas that are highly visible from the street.
    - Utilize park fencing to separate play areas from roadways where needed. For example, enclose play areas that are closer than 25’ to arterial or collector streets and parking areas with 3’ high non-climbable fence. Avoid fencing entire parks.





- Provide an internal site circulation system in each park that meets ADA requirements and improves access to facilities.
  - Provides direct access to restrooms, play areas and sports fields, but permit users to bypass other amenities. For example, provide a direct path of travel from the parking area to major facilities, such as playgrounds.
  - Provide a direct path of travel from major facilities to restrooms.
- Pursue opportunities to create pedestrian and bike-friendly parks.
  - Identify and provide appropriate gates or entries for non-motorized access to parks. Where possible, locate the park's entry near a bus stop or crosswalk.
  - Locate parks near proposed Lifeline Trails and Class I bikeways to enhance community connectivity. Work with other Departments to connect parks to these trails and pathways.
- Integrate shade into all parks. Consider the following:
  - Provide covered picnic tables in areas without tree cover.
  - Consider playground covers or adjacent shade shelters to prolong play.

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- Select and plant canopy trees to create maximum shaded areas in parks.
  - Implement a water efficiency program in compliance with the Updated Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance AB 1881, and the Irrigation Association’s Turf and Landscape Best Management Practices. Consider the following:
    - Incorporate water efficient fixtures in all restrooms and water fountains. Explore the opportunity to retrofit washrooms with low-flush toilets and waterless urinals.
    - Select and purchase products with the EPA WaterSense label meeting EPA water efficiency criteria.
    - Develop water-efficient irrigation systems linked to a centralized, irrigation control system.
    - Use weather-based irrigation controllers capable of receiving real-time, internet-based paging signal or on-site ET data.
    - Establish a monthly water budget for normal weather conditions and a deficit irrigation water budget for drought conditions.
    - Use water efficient technologies, including but not limited to check valves, sprinkler/valve pressure regulation, rain sensors, master valves, and real time flow monitoring to further assist in reducing potential water waste.
    - Explore the potential to retrofit irrigation distribution equipment with nozzles that provide higher distribution uniformities.
    - Use recycled (reclaimed) water for park irrigation where appropriate when the reclamation facility is constructed.
    - Periodically and annually, evaluate irrigation system performance.
    - Use adapted, low water use, and drought tolerant plants where appropriate.
    - Use local native plant communities as plant palette models.
    - Minimize turf areas that are not designed to support active or passive recreation use. Use lawn substitutes (rocks, wood chips, plantings, etc.) that require less water consumption, fertilizers, and mowing than traditional lawns where lawn is not required for recreation purposes.
    - Provide a minimum mulch depth of 2-inches in plant beds and tree rings to help conserve water and suppress weeds.



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- Support sustainable and environmental stewardship in park design, development, and improvements.
    - Pursue LEED-compliant construction in the development of new indoor facilities. This does not require LEED certification.
    - Increase energy efficiency through the installation of energy efficient lighting.
    - Use local and recycled materials in buildings and park furnishings.
    - Consider a recycling program for Town parks and events, in conjunction with the Town’s Green Apple Valley campaign.
    - Incorporate interpretive signage in parks to educate the community about efforts to use native, drought tolerant plants, as well as limit the amount of turf in new construction, as part of the Town’s water conservation program.
  - Preserve habitat and natural areas within parks.
    - Design “no-mow” zones within parks where habitat is present, or where developed parks abut the natural desert landscape.
    - Preserve natural areas and features when designing new parks and renovating existing ones.
    - Incorporate habitat for native species, where appropriate.
  - Address recreation programming needs during park design and development.
    - Look for opportunities to create social spaces in parks. For example, provide picnic tables, restrooms, and a concession stand grouped in one gathering area.
    - Phase park development so that the construction of support amenities, such as restrooms, accompanies the development of major facilities.
    - Provide facilities to support recommended program expansion.



## RECREATION PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

One of Apple Valley’s goals is to provide engaging, accessible, affordable recreation events and programs that meet the needs of a diverse community, including residents of all ages, abilities, family compositions and economic and cultural backgrounds. This section presents recommendations to achieve that goal.

### Core Program Areas

Public involvement feedback suggests that the Parks and Recreation Department should continue to provide high-quality programs and events in eight major program areas (as noted in Chapter 3). As the Town continues to grow, the Town recreation programming opportunities will need to be expanded in each of these areas to maintain Apple Valley’s current level of service.

Recommendations for these eight program areas include the following:

- Implement online registration for all programming. This would significantly improve the registration process for the community.
- Continue to support outdoor special events such as, fairs, festivals, sports tournaments, races, walking events, equestrian events, and





other community gathering opportunities for special interests and all ages to enhance Town identity and culture.

- Continue to provide a series of family events/nights to promote family values and multi-generational recreation opportunities.
- Support the community's heritage and character through special events.
- Provide a diverse mix of classes based on public feedback, recreation trends, community needs, and defined uses of parks and facilities.
- Seek opportunities to provide events, tournaments, etc., that draw people to Apple Valley to support the Town's economy.
- Increase the number of indoor events and revenue generating opportunities, using the Apple Valley Conference Center.
- Reposition Lion's Park as a reservable venue for small scale outdoor events, such as farmer's markets, flea market, craft fairs, gatherings, etc.
- Continue to evaluate needs for the After School Activities Program on a site-by-site basis.
- Continue to engage and expand the opportunities for youth volunteers in all recreation program areas.
- Partner with neighborhood watch and public safety groups to create an eyes-in-the-park volunteer group who can call to report behavioral or maintenance problems in parks.
- Develop and promote an Adopt-a-Park program and strengthen the Adopt-a-Trail program, especially for new parks and trails.

### Proposed Program Areas

In addition to current program areas, expanding programming opportunities are needed in two additional areas: arts and healthy living. As part of healthy living, the Parks and Recreation Department may coordinate with others to support trail-related programming. Recommendations include:

- Expand programs in fine/cultural/dramatic arts.
  - Increase outdoor theater programs at the Civic Center Park Amphitheater.

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- Consider renovation of the James A. Woody Community Center (stage and associated space) to support dance, arts and crafts, theater programs, and cultural arts.

- Support the Healthy Apple Valley initiative with programs and events that promote healthy living and physical activity and contribute to a healthy community. Programs may range from Farmer’s Markets to fitness classes and events.
- Aid the community in coordinating a variety of trail clubs, such as walking and jogging clubs, equestrian groups, birdwatchers, bike clubs, and others.
- Work with the Equestrian Committee to promote equestrian and trail-related special events, rides and races.
- Partner with the Lewis Center for Educational Research to develop and implement interpretive programs at the proposed Sitting Bull Trailhead on the Mojave River.
- Provide bike safety courses for all ages, particularly as more trails and bikeways are developed. Promote helmet use, hand signaling, bike etiquette, and appropriate behavior around horseback riders.



### Demographic Groups

In addition to these existing program areas, there are several demographic groups that need improved program opportunities and services. Specific recommendations for programs for teens, seniors, and young adults are noted below.

- Provide more drop-in opportunities for teens, such as drop-in gym time (free play), a teen center, and drop-in sport programs (e.g., indoor soccer, basketball, tennis, etc.). One opportunity is to partner with the Police Activities League to expand their current offerings.
- Partner with appropriate providers, such as the Police Activities League, to increase the number of programs supporting youth integration, safety, and positive outcomes/behavior. Consider computer classes, job-readiness programs, and leadership classes for youth and teens.
- Create a Mobile Recreation Program, offering free recreation activities (e.g., games, crafts) at park and school sites to involve kids who would not otherwise participate in recreation programs.



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- Continue to expand events and programs for teens, such as skatepark programs, talent shows, BMX programs, golfing, tennis, and extreme sports.
  - Consider adding a Facebook youth page and Teen Zone webpage on the Town's website.
  - Offer more opportunities for tours/travel (bus excursions) for all ages, but specifically targeting seniors and teens.
  - Collaborate with recreation coordinators at Del Webb Solera/Sun City to provide recreation opportunities for seniors.
  - Engage more seniors in volunteer opportunities.
  - Provide more fitness opportunities for seniors and active adults.
  - Focus on program needs of younger workers, with opportunities such as active and social evening programs, open gym time, and competitive sporting events, including traditional sports as well as emerging adult sports, such as kickball and dodge ball.



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## KEY SERVICES

As part of the balance in providing park and recreation services, the development of new parks, facilities, and recreation programs must be accompanied by enhancements in the key support services. These include maintenance, funding, partnerships, customer service, and marketing.

### Park and Facility Maintenance

- Work with Town staff or a concessionaire to implement a tiered maintenance program to allocate maintenance efforts where these are most needed, such as community parks and special use parks.
- Determine the maintenance needs of all new parks and major public facilities prior to development, identifying costs and funding sources.
- Provide a routine preventive maintenance program for all parks, facilities, equipment, vehicles, and other assets.
- Regularly assess long-term maintenance, repair, and replacement needs for all parks, facilities, vehicles and equipment.
  - Create a capital reinvestment program and fund to replace aged, deteriorating facilities. As part of this effort, conduct a safety and accessibility evaluation of older play equipment and create a replacement schedule.
  - Budget and schedule a system-wide revitalization program to enhance park image and update features in aging parks.
  - Develop a vehicle and equipment replacement protocol and fund to be able afford new equipment when needed.
- Consider needs for satellite maintenance storage at larger community parks and special use sites. Address this need at the Lenny Brewster Sports Center when the existing maintenance building is removed.
- Implement strategies to decrease the level of effort needed for system-wide maintenance, such as standardizing park site furnishings (within a range of choices) and integrating low-maintenance plantings, non-turf (no-mow) areas, and vandalism-resistant structures.
- Develop a landscaping manual and plant palette to address types of landscaping and plant materials used to ensure ease of maintenance.
- Implement maintenance techniques that protect natural resources and minimize disturbance to natural vegetation and habitat.





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## Funding

General recommendations for funding parks and recreation are noted below. Specific funding strategies, pending direction from the Town Council, are discussed in Chapter 7.

### *Capital Funding*

- Expand or capitalize on existing funding sources to support park and facility development, such as increasing park impact fees for residential development.
- Continue devoting staff resources to securing outside grants, cash or in-kind donations, and other sources of capital project funding.
- Increase efforts to obtain land donations. Only accept donations that meet the goals and intent of this Plan, or sites that can be sold or exchanged to benefit the public.
- Update Quimby requirements for land dedication based on the existing park land inventory and the 2010 U.S. Census Data.
- When the timing is right, consider a sales tax measure, bond package or other capital funding sources as possible financing tools for priority projects.

### *Operations Funding*

- Consider providing additional General Fund support for parks, recreation programs, and parks maintenance as integral elements of the Town's vision and goals.
- Ensure that all designated parks and recreation revenues are reinvested in the parks and recreation system. This should include all revenue generated in parks (e.g., facility rentals and cell phone tower leases) and by recreation programming.
- If new revenue streams are introduced in lieu of current funding mechanisms, assure these funds will continue to support parks and recreation.
- Review the Town's fee philosophy to determine pricing guidelines for recreation in consideration of cost recovery goals and public benefit. Review facility use fees, rental fees, programming fees, and event fees and adjust them as needed according to this philosophy.



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- Develop financial operations plans for major facilities (e.g., a proposed new recreation center), including both cost recovery and participation goals. Regularly evaluate performance based on these metrics.
  - Evaluate leases related to recreation services to establish a fair market cost for each. Evaluate each lease agreement in conjunction with associated operating and maintenance costs, the Town's fee philosophy, and cost recovery goals for the facility.
  - Seek ways to increase the revenue-generating capacity of the park and recreation system, such as:
    - Sell naming rights to major facilities.
    - Charge vendor fees for tournaments and special events, according to the Town's pricing strategy.
    - Charge market-value prices for facility reservation and use.
    - Identify/develop fee opportunities for services, such as event parking fees, Town-provided or leased concessions, reservable banners/marquee advertising in parks, etc.
  - Continue seeking outside funding, such as sponsorships and cash or in-kind donations, from individuals, foundations, and corporations for recreation programs and facility development.
  - Consider new funding sources and programs to support a higher level of park maintenance. These may include maintenance sponsorships, adopt-a-park programs, and the establishment of landscape maintenance districts for parks in new residential developments. Also consider joint maintenance districts for the maintenance of trails and parks.

## Partnerships

- Pursue partnerships as a key means for leveraging community resources and minimizing duplications of effort.
- Continue to work with partners in the Healthy Apple Valley Coalition to promote healthy eating and cooking, physical activity, and health education.
- Continue to partner with hospitals and medical groups to foster community health and wellness through programs.
- Improve partnerships with a variety of sports organizations to support

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traditional and emerging sports as a field and gymnasium provider.

- Continue to engage and expand partnership support of equestrian and trail-related recreation program areas.
- Work with the Police Activities League to expand low- and no-cost activities at James Woody Park, such as drop-in activities and open gym times.
- Partner with neighborhood watch and public safety groups to create an eyes-in-the-park volunteer group who can call to report behavioral or maintenance problems in parks.
- Collaborate with the Apple Valley Senior Center to meet recreation needs for seniors and older adults.
- Strengthen partnerships with the School District to address needs for indoor programming space.
- Consider collaborative efforts with the School District to create school parks in areas where land acquisition opportunities are limited and new neighborhood parks are needed. Design and develop these sites to address needs for recreation and outdoor education.
- Involve the School District in the development of new parks located adjacent to or near schools, such as the proposed Standing Rock Community Park (CP-2) and Sitting Bull Neighborhood Park (NP-4).
- Create a policy on the provision of concession stands in parks to ensure that these structures are provided in a similar style and design as other elements in the park. Indicate whether concession stands will be managed and operated by the Town or by other entities, and if run by other entities, spells out the financial responsibilities of those groups.
- Provide program development advice to help non-profit and volunteer-based organizations become more proficient at the recreation service provision.

## Marketing

- Implement a public information program to increase awareness of the “brand” and benefits of Apple Valley parks, facilities and programs.
  - Include “A Better Way to Play” in all marketing materials, emails, brochures, etc.

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- Communicate with Town leaders and residents the range of benefits provided by parks and recreation, including individual, community/social, environmental, and economic benefits.
  - Increase awareness of recreation programs, events, parks, and facilities.
    - Continue to support online announcements of programs and events through the Town's website and social media.
    - Consider adding an electronic marquee sign at the entrance to Civic Center Park or Town Hall that can be seen from Dale Evans Parkway.
    - Increase diversity in program participation by providing public information, such as flyers, brochures, maps, and signage, in Spanish.
    - Continue to publicize events and programs through the Apple Valley Unified School District.
    - Continue to expand department publicity through non-traditional avenues such as advertisements on trash bills, banners displayed at prominent community locations, program fliers distributed at all community events, booths at community events, etc.
    - Strengthen relationships with all local media.
    - Implement marketing strategies to increase program awareness and participation among targeted groups, such as youth and seniors.
  - Encourage the Parks and Recreation Commission to become more engaged in political and community outreach for parks and recreation.
    - Encourage informal annual or bi-annual meetings with individual Town Councilors to highlight accomplishments and needs for parks and recreation.
    - Consider hosting community open houses or giving presentations to neighborhood groups, school groups, businesses, etc. to discuss the benefits of parks and recreation and community needs.
    - Consider meeting with businesses, potential partners, and sponsors to discuss opportunities for collaboration that are consistent with the goals of this plan.

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## Customer Service

- Implement an online registration and facility reservation system.
- Use the website to highlight the location of parks, developed trails, and equestrian easements in Apple Valley.
- Establish customer service protocols for all employees and conduct in-house training.
- Develop and implement consistent user feedback methods for programs and classes. Continue the annual resident satisfaction survey to measure overall satisfaction with the parks and recreation system.
- Improve programs and services for diverse participants, such as developing programs and outreach materials to attract Spanish speakers.
- Develop work credit programs, scholarships, and other mechanisms to support recreation access and defray costs associated with event and user fees for residents in need.
- Expand exchange-of-service and work credit programs for non-profits to defray costs associated with facility reservation and use.









## Chapter 5: Our High Desert Destinations



# Our High Desert Destinations

## CHAPTER 5: OUR HIGH DESERT DESTINATIONS

As part of its effort to become the premier destination of the High Desert, the Town of Apple Valley will strive to enhance parks and facilities throughout town. Potential improvements include replacing worn and aged amenities, renovating and refreshing parks, and acquiring and developing new parks. Given the distance most residents must travel to park sites, the overall goal is to provide high quality parks and facilities that are viewed as recreation destinations, attracting people from a few miles away, across town, or from surrounding areas.

The chapter presents site-by-site recommendations for existing and proposed community parks, neighborhood parks, mini parks and special use parks. Park recommendations are followed by recommendations for various types of facilities. All park development should be consistent with the design and development guidelines presented in Appendix C.

### COMMUNITY PARKS

Community parks are larger, multi-purpose parks that typically support organized, active recreation and large-group recreation opportunities that draw people from throughout the community. These sites may also include unique landscapes and natural areas. Recommendations for community parks include enhancements at Civic Center Park, James Woody Park and the Lenny Brewster Sports Center, as well the acquisition and development of three proposed new parks.



#### Civic Center Park

Located in the center of Apple Valley off of Dale Evans Parkway, this 21.2 acre master-planned park includes the Civic Center Park Aquatic Center, Amphitheatre, Town Hall Recreation Center, a playground, dog park, open grass area, and loop pathway. The next phase of development is anticipated to include a restroom and shade/picnic shelter. The 2004 site master plan also included two tennis courts, a volleyball court and small community center (10,000 square feet).

The Aquatic Center features a 25 meter x 25 yard Junior Olympic size pool equipped with an ADA-compliant chair transfer, locker rooms (with

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restrooms and showers), and water and snack vending machines. Original plans also included a proposed sprayground/splash pad. The Town Hall Recreation Center provides 2,372 square feet of program space. It includes a large multi-purpose room that can be divided into four separate rooms, as well as a kitchen and restrooms.

Recommendations for this site include:

- Proceed with the development of planned site elements, with the exception of the community center. (See the recreation/community center recommendations later in this chapter. A larger facility is needed.)
  - Add a large picnic shelter and restroom near the playground.
  - Provide tennis courts.
  - Consider adding exercise or outdoor fitness stations around the looped trail.
  - Consider adding smaller shade structures at various sites in the park.
- At the Civic Center Park Aquatic Center, add the sprayground/splash pad and large permanent shade structures. Consider the following:
  - Provide support amenities such as umbrella tables, chairs and lounge chairs.
  - Improve staff and office space.
  - Add classroom or meeting space to support swim lessons, training and rentals.
  - Add walls on the south and west sides of the pool deck to minimize wind. This could potentially reduce energy consumption and improve the public's enjoyment of the facility.
  - Add a revenue-generating concession stand to support both the pool and amphitheater.
- At the circular drop-off drive, add an entry plaza with features such as a shaded seating area, artwork, information kiosk, and interpretive signage with information on the Town's history.
- Consider adding an electronic marquee sign at the entrance to the park or Town Hall to illuminate park events and programming.



### *James Woody Park*

Located on Navajo Road, south of Highway 18, James Woody Park is the Town's oldest park, acquired in 1951. At 23 acres, this site includes the James A. Woody Community Center, two playgrounds, seven lighted ball fields, two practice fields with backstops (one lighted), two concession stands, a skate park, full basketball court, and several picnic areas.

The Community Center (17,627 square feet) includes an auditorium, two multi-purpose rooms, the Ward Room and Arts and Crafts room, kitchen, full size gym, mini-gym, Sheriff's sub-station and office space.

Recommendations for this site include:

- Develop a complete master plan for the park that makes the most of the existing investment and improves circulation and sight lines. Consider the following:
  - Evaluate options to renovate or replace the James A. Woody Community Center, as per the conclusions of a recreation center financial feasibility and market study. (See recreation/community center recommendations later in this chapter.) Identify the best use of this site if the structure is removed.
  - Identify opportunities for water-use reduction. Identify areas where turf can be replaced with low water-use plantings.
  - Update the common areas between facilities. Add a hard-surfaced pathway linking all facilities, path lighting, and landscaped areas.
  - Replace the back concession stand. Create a more attractive social space, with a grouped picnic shelter, restrooms, and concession stand in one gathering area.
  - Move maintenance areas and storage sheds to less obtrusive spaces that can be screened from view.
  - Consider adding windscreens in appropriate locations.
  - Develop a separate BMX Freestyle facility, renovate the nearby restroom, and redevelop the basketball court as planned when funding is available.
  - Add a second basketball court and/or another active use facility.
  - Consider implementing the redesign of the baseball field diamonds as developed in the 2004 master plan. Note: This site is critical to Apple Valley's recreation programs. If improvements are



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made, alternate fields should be secured to continue programs during field renovations.

- Use a standard set of amenities (e.g., benches, trash cans, picnic tables, drinking fountains) throughout the park to enhance its image.
- Renovate or replace existing playground structure (front structure).
- Consider enhancements to all ballfields to include fence toppers, larger and more defined foul poles, and warning tracks. (Note: Turf removal to install warning tracks could help reduce water usage.)
- Update lighting in the main gymnasium and add clear signage on gymnasium(s).
- Consider options such as murals to enhance the aesthetics of the Community Center and other facilities.
- Provide a taller, opaque fence or screen to limit visibility of adjacent truck storage area.
- Replace the concession stand near Don Ferrarese Field in a similar style as other park elements. Develop use agreements with sports providers consistent with a new concessions provision policy.
- Redesign, repair or repave the parking lots. Incorporate landscaped medians to improve circulation and lot attractiveness.
- Consider installation of a camera system that would be monitored by the Police Department throughout the entire park.

### *Lenny Brewster Sports Center*

Located on Otoe Road, this 38.6 acre sports park provides 11 full-size soccer fields, 2 full-size baseball/softball fields, 23 horseshoe pits, two half basketball courts, a playground, picnic area (15 tables and two barbecues), a permanent restroom, concession stand (managed by the Apple Valley Storm), a display garden, and a perimeter trail. The site also includes a repurposed house used for maintenance storage.

Recommendations for this site include:

- In the short term, increase shade by providing a small shade structure for picnic tables near the playground.
- Continue to modify the soil profile in the expansion area to support proper turf growth.
- Construct dugouts with team benches on both softball fields.



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- Replace the existing concession stand with a large covered picnic shelter that includes tables, snack bar, restrooms, and equipment storage as an accessible focal point in the middle of the complex. Ensure that the structure can serve large groups (capacity 150-200+ people or approximately 25-30+ tables) with appropriate amenities.
  - Consider adding a reservable meeting room for sports groups. The room would also support tournament use and other purposes.
  - Consider the development of a higher-class multi-use championship field with field lighting, spectator bleachers, team benches, etc.
  - Pave the perimeter road to eliminate dust hazard and ensure continued desirability of facility for large scale soccer events. Create a separate perimeter path for walking and jogging.
  - Create a separate northwest park entrance that includes restrooms and parking.
  - Consider opportunities to acquire additional land (30-40 acres) for soccer field development and support amenities, such as parking, restrooms, shade shelter, picnic tables, etc. to expand capacity for tournaments and local sports.
  - Work with the appropriate agencies designing the proposed water reclamation plant to properly redesign the south end of the park. Consider the following:
    - Design a new entrance with signage. Evaluate the need for a cashier building at this entrance for large-scale events, such as soccer tournaments. Consider access to the temporary overflow parking space used for events.
    - Replace the two half basketball courts with a full court that meets court dimension standards.
    - Move the horseshoe complex, redeveloping it on a smaller scale at a different site.
    - Integrate the display garden into the park, connecting it by pathways to other facilities.
    - Create a curbed parking area to discourage motorized vehicles from driving on the turf.
    - Add an adjacent parking area to increase parking capacity.
    - Add hookups in the main parking area for vendor use during tournaments.

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- Evaluate maintenance needs to determine if the maintenance building should be replaced at this site. If so, consider a side location away from the main entrance, screened from view.

### *CP-1 North Pointe Park*

A 60-acre, developer-built community park is proposed to serve northwest Apple Valley in the vicinity of the planned North Pointe Subdivision. Recommendations for this site include:

- Coordinate with developers so that this 60-acre site meets Town design and development guidelines.
- Work with other Departments to ensure this site is connected to nearby proposed Class I Bikeways and Lifeline Trails.
- Ensure that appropriate shade shelters and support amenities are provided.
- Design the irrigation system for reclaimed water use (or easy transition to this system when available).



### *CP-2 Standing Rock Park*

Located in east Apple Valley on Central and Standing Rock Avenue (near Granite Hills High School), this 20 acre site is currently undeveloped. Recommendations for this site include:

- Create a site master plan, involving all key stakeholders in the planning process. Collaborate with the School District to consider options for joint planning, development, and programming.
- Develop this site as a community park, ensuring that the site is connected to the proposed Class I Bikeways on Central Road and Standing Rock Avenue.



### *CP-3 Deep Creek Park*

A community park is proposed to serve the rapidly-growing area of southwest Apple Valley. Recommendations for this site include:

- Acquire a site of approximately 50 acres. If feasible, select a site adjacent to the proposed multi-purpose Lifeline Trail in this area, or work with other Departments to connect the park to the trail.
- Create a site master plan.

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- Develop this site as a community park, considering the following:
    - Consider this site as a potential location for a new multi-purpose recreation center.
    - Consider the outdoor recreation needs of seniors and older adults, given the presence of a large retirement community in this section of Town.
    - Consider this site for the development of a tournament horseshoe facility to replace the one that will be eliminated at Lenny Brewster Sports Center.

## NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Neighborhood parks are moderately-sized parks that provide traditional recreation opportunities and play space. Larger than mini parks, most neighborhood parks in Apple Valley include one or two sports fields for practice or league play. Existing sites that meet this definition include Mendel Park, Sycamore Rocks Park, Thunderbird Park, and Virginia Park. In addition, six new neighborhood parks are proposed in underserved areas. Recommendations for existing and proposed neighborhood parks are noted below.



### *Mendel Park*

Mendel Park is located off Tussing Ranch Road, adjacent to Mariana Elementary. At 3.5 acres in size, this park provides a playground, small covered picnic shelter (reservable), two practice ball fields (lighted), and a portable restroom. Shade trees surround the playground and picnic area and separate the park from the school. New trees have been planted along Tussing Ranch Road. This site has a well for irrigation.

Recommendations for this park include:

- Reclassify and plan for this site as a neighborhood park.
- Add an active use amenity.
- Renovate or replace the existing playground structure to include playground amenities for 2 -5 year olds. Upon replacement, consider adding a synthetic safety surfacing rather than engineered wood chips to minimize blowing wood chips in high winds.
- Consider building a seat wall around the sand box (leaving an entry) to create a wind break and minimize blowing sand, while providing family seating.

- Consider removing the backstop and protective fence near the playground to open up the turf area for more versatile practice or play space for other turf sports.
- Move the picnic tables away from trees to avoid damage to tree base and roots. Consider concrete pads to anchor tables.
- Place a concrete pad under the benches adjacent to the play area to minimize turf damage in that area.
- Consider adding a perimeter walking trail or track at this site if there is room beyond the sport field boundaries.

### *Sycamore Rocks Park*

This 4.1 acre park is located at the corner of Joshua and South Roads, adjacent to Sycamore Rocks Elementary School. Park amenities include a playground, open grass area, two practice ball fields with backstops, two soccer fields, a picnic area (with four tables and 2 barbecues on concrete pads), and a portable restroom. The park is irrigated with well water. Recommendations for this site include:



- Add an active use amenity at this site.
- Cover at least one of the two picnic areas to provide shade.<sup>1</sup>
- Renovate or replace existing playground structure to include playground amenities for 2 -5 year olds.
- Place a concrete pad under the benches adjacent to the play area to minimize turf damage.
- Provide a paved area at the base of the staircases at the hill.

### *Thunderbird Park*

This 6.3 acre park is located on the corner of Thunderbird and Wichita Roads, adjacent to the Phoenix Academy and the AAE Thunderbird campus. Park amenities include two playground areas (separate for ages 2-5 and 5-12), an open grass area, a picnic shelter, two practice fields with backstops, one soccer field, a full basketball court, and a portable restroom. Shade trees are provided throughout the park. Recommendations for this park include:



<sup>1</sup> A large-group picnic shelter with a capacity of 75-100 people (as noted in the 2004 Parks and Recreation Master Plan) is not recommended for this site. See design and development guidelines.



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- Renovate or replace both existing playground structures.
  - Renovate basketball court with non-slip surfacing and paint lines on courts to indicate dimensions and features (mid-court, key, etc.)
  - Relocate drinking fountain to existing pathway or continue pathway to existing drinking fountain.



### *Virginia Park*

This 4 acre park is located south of Papago Road, about 1/4 mile north of Waalew on Central Road. Amenities include a playground, two practice fields with backstops, a soccer field, reservable picnic area (tables and barbecues), and a portable restroom. Large trees shade the picnic area and line the eastern edge of the site. Recommendations for this site include:

- Reclassify and plan for this site as a neighborhood park.
- Add an active use amenity at this site. Consider a volleyball court or horseshoe pit to support site reservations for group picnics.
- Install a playground structure to include playground amenities for 2 - 5 year olds.
- Consider adding a small picnic shelter or concrete pad (capacity 25-30 or 4 -5 tables) with an accessible path connected to the parking lot to support group reservations at this site.
- Provide concrete pads under individual tables to protect the turf.

### *NP-1 Stoddard Wells Park*

Located in north Apple Valley on Dale Evans Parkway, this 5.1 acre site is currently undeveloped. Recommendations for this site include:

- Create a site master plan or design involving nearby neighbors and stakeholders in the planning process.
- Develop this site as a neighborhood park, with unique features to draw residents from surrounding lower-density development.

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### *NP-2 Desert Knolls Park*

A neighborhood park is proposed to serve residential development in west Apple Valley, south of Highway 18 and west of the Apple Valley Golf Course. Desert Knolls Elementary is located in this general vicinity.

Recommendations for this site include:

- Acquire a site of approximately 8 acres. If feasible, select a site adjacent to the proposed multi-purpose Lifeline Trail in this area, or work with other departments to connect the park site to the trail.
- Create a site master plan or design involving nearby neighbors and stakeholders in the planning process.
- Develop this site as a neighborhood park to serve nearby residents.

### *NP-3 Paraiso Park*

A neighborhood park is proposed to serve residential development in southwest Apple Valley, in the vicinity of Rio Vista Elementary and Yucca Loma Road. Recommendations for this site include:

- Acquire a site of approximately 8 acres. If feasible, select a site adjacent to the proposed multi-purpose Lifeline Trail in this area, or work with other departments to connect the park site to the trail.
- Create a site master plan or design involving nearby neighbors and stakeholders in the planning process.
- Develop this site as a neighborhood park to serve nearby residents in surrounding development.
- Work with other Departments to assess the feasibility of connecting this site to NP-4 via an off-street trail through the wash to the south.

### *NP-4 Sitting Bull Park*

A neighborhood park is proposed to serve residential development in southwest Apple Valley, in the vicinity of Sitting Bull Academy.

Recommendations for this site include:

- Work with developers to acquire a site of approximately 8-10 acres.
- Create a site master plan or design involving nearby neighbors and stakeholders in the planning process.
- Develop this site as a neighborhood park to serve nearby residents in surrounding development.

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- Work with other departments to assess the feasibility of connecting this site to nearby Lifeline Trails, as well as NP-3 via an off-street trail through the wash to the north.

#### *NP-5 Navajo-Kiowa Park*

A neighborhood park is proposed to serve residential development in south-central Apple Valley, in the vicinity of Apple Valley High School and Sandia Elementary School. Recommendations for this site include:

- Acquire a site of approximately 8 acres. If feasible, select a site adjacent to the proposed multi-purpose Lifeline Trail or Class I bikeway in this area, or work with other departments to connect the park site to these trails.
- Create a site master plan or design involving nearby neighbors and stakeholders in the planning process.
- Develop this site as a neighborhood park with unique features to serve nearby residents in surrounding development as well as draw residents from surrounding lower-density development.

#### *NP-6 Joshua Tree Park*

A neighborhood park is proposed to serve residential development in southeast Apple Valley, in the vicinity of Joshua Road, Mesquite Road, and Vanguard Preparatory School. Recommendations for this site include:

- Acquire a site of approximately 8 acres. If feasible, consider a site connected to the proposed multi-purpose Lifeline Trail in this area.
- Create a site master plan or design involving nearby neighbors and stakeholders in the planning process.
- Develop this site as a neighborhood park with unique features to serve nearby residents in surrounding development.

### **MINI PARKS**

As small parks with basic play facilities and green space, mini parks provide essential recreation opportunities for nearby neighbors. Given their small size and limited facility development, mini parks rarely draw residents from distances such as 2 miles away, which is the maximum desired travel distance to essential recreation opportunities. For this

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reason, the acquisition and development of new mini parks is not recommended.

Recommendations for existing mini parks are noted below. These include Corwin Park, Norm Schmidt Park, and Yucca Loma Park. For recommendations for Mendel Park and Virginia Park, see Neighborhood Parks. For recommendations for Lion’s Park, see Special Use Parks.

### *Corwin Park*

Located about 1/4 mile north of Highway 18 on Corwin Road, this 3.7 acre park provides a playground, open grass area, small covered picnic area with tables (reservable), uncovered picnic tables, and permanent restroom. There are many large shade trees located throughout the park. Recommendations for this site include:

- Add an active use amenity.
- Consider seatwalls in the hill to create a small amphitheater/gathering place.
- Improve the pathway system in the park to provide a more comprehensive circulation system and support exercise. Connect the play area to the parking lot via a more direct route. In addition to creating a better circulation system, it will help avoid damaged turf in between the parking lot and play area.



### *Norm Schmidt Park*

Located in the Symeron Estates off of Ochoa Road, this 2.4 acre, L-shaped park is located in a retention basin. Set 8-10 feet below street level, it provides a playground, practice ball field with backstop, picnic area, and shade trees throughout the park. On-street parking is available. Recommendations for this site include:

- Add an active use amenity.
- Move the picnic tables away from trees to avoid damage to tree base and roots. Consider a concrete pad to anchor the table and provide for easier maintenance.
- If feasible, consider a walking trail that links to facilities as well as the three entrances to the park.





### *Yucca Loma Park*

This 2 acre park is located on Yucca Loma Road, adjacent to Yucca Loma Elementary School (home of the Paul Swick Family Center). It provides a playground, outdoor fitness equipment, open grass area, a practice field with a backstop, picnic area (three tables and a barbecue), as well as a portable restroom. Trees shade the picnic tables and part of the playground. Recommendations for this site include:

- Renovate or replace existing playground structure to include playground amenities for 2 – 5 year olds.
- Extend the accessible path to the exercise equipment.
- Investigate opportunities to add a loop pathway around the field at this park.

## **SPECIAL USE PARKS**

Special use parks are typically occupied by facilities that provide unique recreation opportunities and draw people from throughout town. Examples include the Apple Valley Golf Course, Horsemen’s Center, and Lion’s Park. In addition to these existing sites, the undeveloped Sitting Bull site is recommended for development as a special use park.



### *Apple Valley Golf Course*

Located on Rancherias Road, the Apple Valley Golf Course transitioned to a municipal golf course during this planning process. While considered a recreation amenity, the golf course is not operated or funded with Parks and Recreation fund dollars. Instead, it is operated separately by a management company as an enterprise facility. Site improvements, operations and services do not have an impact on other park and recreation projects and, consequently, are not noted in this plan. The site includes an 18-hole golf course, driving range, two tennis courts, bar and grill, Pro Shop, banquet room, meeting room and interior courtyard with a swimming pool that is not operational.

### *Horsemen's Center*

Located on Highway 18 three miles east of Central Road, this 80.2 acre park is located outside the Town limits but within Apple Valley’s service area. Nestled in a unique rock formation, this park provides a playground, open grass area, picnic area (29 tables and 25 barbecues), a perimeter



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hiking trail, two horse arenas, a BMX Moto Park, concession stand, seven primitive camp sites, and one permanent restroom.

The BMX track was renovated in 2009 to create a national-caliber track. It has lighting for races and practicing at night, and a sound system. Recommendations for this site include:

- Continue to work with the contracted BMX operator to expand BMX riding and race opportunities and support ancillary sports.
- Investigate options to improve the upper concessions area to create an attractive social space, adding a picnic shelter, tables, permanent restrooms, and landscaping. Remove the portable restroom and barrel trash can next to the flag pole/memorial.
- Combine the shade shelters that were removed from Mendel, Corwin, and Thunderbird Parks into a shade structure for this site.
- Add an active use amenity.
- Provide a more visible trailhead and add signage to identify where trails are located at this site.
- Incorporate the unique rock formation into a developed vista or viewpoint to encourage activities such as nature interpretation, photography, weddings, picnics, etc.
- Consider upgrades to the tent camping area to support group site uses. Consider installation of required hook-ups for RV camping near the entrance to the facility.
- Partner with equestrian groups who are willing to fund equestrian facility improvements. Consider horse trailer parking, stalls and corrals, shaded bleachers, an announcer's booth, watering system, and additional arena improvements.



### *Lion's Park*

Lions Park is located just east of Dale Evans Parkway on south outer Highway 18. This 1.6 acre park features an open grass area, two picnic tables and barbecues, and a portable restroom. The entire park can be reserved. Trees shade the picnic tables. Recommendations for this site include:

- Reclassify and plan for this site as a special use area. Add electrical hookups, additional tables, picnic shelter, or other amenities to support this site as a reservable special events area.



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- Provide concrete pads for picnic tables.
  - Provide a paved path from the parking lot to information kiosk to the water fountain, pet waste station, and picnic tables for accessibility.
  - Replace the barrel trash cans with standard covered receptacles. Move trash cans away from tree bases to avoid root damage.



#### *SU-1 Sitting Bull Park*

Located in west Apple Valley at the end of Sitting Bull Road, this undeveloped 2.1 acre site has access to the Mojave River. In both the 1996 and 2004 Park and Recreation Master Plans, this site was recommended as a trailhead for the Mojave River Corridor Trail System. That trail system remains part of the long-term vision for Apple Valley. Recommendations for this site include:

- Create a site master plan, involving all key stakeholders in the planning process.
- Develop this site as a special use park focusing on passive uses. Consider the following:
  - Protect this site as a natural riparian area, with interpretive signage and opportunities for environmental education.
  - Investigate opportunities to connect this site to the proposed Mojave River Trail, which is noted in existing trail plans as a Class I bikeway and Lifeline Trail.

## UNDEVELOPED PARKS

Undeveloped parks are properties held in reserve for possible future park development. Three of the four sites that are currently undeveloped are recommended for development as other types of parks.

Recommendations for the remaining site are noted below.

#### *Cramer Family Park*

Located on the corner of Serrano and Rimrock Roads, this 2.8 acre park was closed in Spring 2012. The closure was recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee on Parks and Recreation in response to vandalism, a reduced operations budget, and the proximity of this site to Thunderbird Park. This site is located less than a half mile from Thunderbird Park, but it provided close-to-home play opportunities for disadvantaged youth and served an underserved area toward Corwin Road. Recommendations for this site include:



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- Monitor park needs in this vicinity.
  - Consider other options for serving this area, such as a mobile recreation program.
  - If park needs and available funding warrant reinstating this site as a mini park in the long term, consider adding a playground, swings, picnic tables and an active use feature to enhance site use. An adopt-a-park program should be in place before new facilities are added to give nearby neighbors a stake in maintaining this site. Avoid providing a restroom at this site.

## RECREATION FACILITIES

For recreation programming, the Needs Assessment noted a facility capacity issue that hampered the development and expansion of recreation programs in Apple Valley to meet current and future needs. Recommendations for indoor and outdoor recreation facilities are noted below, particularly as these relate to maintaining or increasing the level of service for recreation programming.

### *Recreation/Community Center*

The James A. Woody Community Center is an aging facility in need of many improvements. The Town Hall Recreation Center offers multi-purpose programming space, but lacks specialized amenities. Both facilities lack the capacity to meet growing needs for indoor recreation. The 2004 Parks and Recreation Master Plan recognized this problem and recommended renovations to the James A. Woody Community Center<sup>2</sup> or demolition and replacement. At the time, the Plan anticipated the development of a new 10,000 square foot community center at Civic Center Park for classes, programs, and rentals. The 2004 Plan also included recommendations for a teen center; an increase in teen, senior, and early child development programs; and an increased diversity in the offerings of community classes and programs. In 2012 and the next 20 years, far more space will be needed to meet forecasted program needs.

Current trends for community/recreation centers favor developing larger centers (30,000-40,000+ sf) to incorporate a variety of different uses, including specialized and multi-purpose space. This size allows room to incorporate recreation opportunities for all ages in one center, rather

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<sup>2</sup> The 2004 recommendations for renovation were mainly efforts to update heating, cooling, and kitchen facilities, while giving other parts of the facility a minor “facelift.”

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than establishing separate senior or teen centers elsewhere. Large centers are also more financially viable, due to increased efficiencies in staffing and opportunities to generate revenue.

In order to maintain and eventually enhance indoor recreation programming in the long-term, the following is recommended:

- Use the new Conference Center in the Development Services building as a reservable banquet room for increased community events, programs, and rentals.
- Acquire additional indoor programming space to be used until a new multi-purpose recreation center can be constructed. Consider partnerships, leases/rental opportunities, or purchases to address the shortage of existing indoor space and meet short-term needs.
- Conduct a financial feasibility and market study with an operating pro forma to assess options to fund and develop a new multi-purpose recreation and community center. Identify the best size, location, programming and use for this type of facility, taking into account options for revenue-generation. Address whether the James Woody Community Center should be replaced or renovated as a center for the arts (see next page).
- When financially feasible, pursue the design and development of a new multi-purpose recreation and community center. Locate the facility at a highly-accessible location. Consider amenities and facilities that support fitness and healthy living, without duplicating the services of private health clubs. Consider the following:
  - A large, multi-purpose room that can be divided for programs, classes, meetings, and rental opportunities
  - Gymnasium space (basketball, pickleball, volleyball)
  - Fitness and dance studios (yoga, kickboxing, dance, aerobics)
  - Specialized indoor courts (e.g., tumbling, indoor tennis, indoor soccer, racquetball/handball)
  - Showers/locker rooms
  - Childcare/preschool space
  - Teen/youth drop-in room
  - Community gathering space (sitting area in lobby, coffee shop, reading room)

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- Programming equipment storage
  - Arts programming space if not supported at a renovated James A. Woody Community Center
  - Continue to maintain the James A. Woody Community Center for the short term, pending the conclusions and recommendations of a financial feasibility study for a separate facility. Avoid major capital projects at this site, unless a comprehensive renovation is recommended.
    - In the long term, consider renovating this site as an indoor arts facility, with specialized activity rooms such as a theater, children's art studio, music studios, dance studios, ceramics/visual arts studios, coffee shop, etc.
    - In the long term, keep the main gymnasium and consider a partnership with the Police Activities League to add an activity center for youth/teens/young adults (with pool tables, foosball, pinball, air hockey, etc.) to serve nearby residents. Identify appropriate drop-in times for unprogrammed and programmed activities.

### *Sports Fields*

The Needs Assessment identified a need for nine new baseball/softball fields, eight new soccer fields, and two multi-purpose fields for sports such as football, lacrosse, rugby, and Ultimate Frisbee. Meeting these needs will allow the Town to maintain the existing level of service (LOS) for soccer, and slightly increase its LOS for baseball/softball. It will provide opportunities for other types of sport field play in the future as new trends emerge in Apple Valley. Recommendations for meeting these needs include the following:

- Develop game-quality sport fields to meet needs for at least nine new baseball/softball fields, eight soccer fields, and two multi-purpose grass fields. Distribute these fields for easy access at the Lenny Brewster Sports Center, North Point Community Park (CP-1), Standing Rock Park (CP-2), and Deep Creek Community Park (CP-3).
- Provide practice-quality sport fields at all proposed new neighborhood parks. Do not provide lighting at these sites. Consider the following:
  - If proposed sites are adjacent to schools, consider school needs in sport field development.



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- Ensure that the space for multi-use fields is sufficient to accommodate a variety of intended sports.

### *Trails*

As indicated in the Needs Assessment, trail demand in Apple Valley is high, and connectivity is a key component of the community's core values, vision, and goals. However, other Town Departments—instead of Parks and Recreation—are tasked with the responsibility for trail development and maintenance.

The Town of Apple Valley has two adopted trails plans (one for recreation/Lifeline Trails and another for bikeways), as well as a planned process in place for trail development and maintenance. In undeveloped areas, developers are required to include trails and pathways in their development plans. Upon construction, maintenance of these developer-built trails will be funded through Landscaping and Lighting Districts (LLDs), managed through Public Works. In areas of Apple Valley that are already developed, planned trails can be added when streets are re-developed.

While the Parks and Recreation Department will not be actively involved in trail development outside of parks, the Department can help meet trail-related recreation needs in a variety of ways. Recommendations include:

- Develop hard and soft-surfaced trails in parks to support walking, biking, exercise, nature interpretation, and other non-motorized trail activities. Provide loop trails in all new community parks and in neighborhood parks where feasible.
- Enhance access to new parks by either acquiring land for park development adjacent to proposed multi-purpose Lifeline Trails and Class I bikeways or by working with other Town Departments to connect new parks to these trails.
- Encourage Apple Valley to consider other trail opportunities that would enhance connections to the park and trail system. For example, consider the following:
  - Consider trail development along the Paraiso Wash to connect proposed parks NP-3 and NP-4.

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- Collaborate with Victorville and Hesperia to create a regional trail system by linking trails.
  - Work with other departments to provide an attractive trails map to encourage trail use. Show existing equestrian easements and off-street pathways (noting trail surfacing, amenities provided, distances, etc.).
  - Work with other departments to provide interpretive signage about the natural and historic environment along trails where feasible to increase opportunities for self-directed stewardship and learning (both conservation and preservation).



## Chapter 6: Our Investment



# Our Park Investment



## CHAPTER 6: OUR INVESTMENT

The recommendations noted in the last two chapters provide directions for creating the park system envisioned by Town residents. However, funding availability and the Town’s desired level of investment will determine which (if any) projects move forward in the next 20 years. Given the current economic climate and decreased funding for park and recreation services, it is extremely important to align services with available funds. In the short term, this may mean cutting services, and in the long term, reinvigorating parks and programs as funding allows.

To understand the current status of funding for park maintenance, operations, renovation, and development, this chapter presents:

- An overview of Apple Valley’s park and recreation funds;
- A summary of Ad Hoc Committee recommendations to address the funding deficit;
- Cost estimates for capital projects that will help achieve the community’s vision for parks and recreation;
- Maintenance impacts that would be associated with any potential new park development; and
- Prioritization criteria that can be used to determine which projects should move forward first when funding allows.

This information provides a foundation for Town staff and leaders to consider best options for making a future investment in parks and recreation.

## PARKS AND RECREATION FUNDS

The Town of Apple Valley uses a variety of funding mechanisms to develop, maintain, and operate its parks, recreation facilities, programs, and special events. Dedicated funds to support parks and recreation are divided into two separate funds that are restricted for parks and recreation spending. As noted in the Apple Valley Annual Budget, these include:



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- *Parks and Recreation Fund (Fund 2510)*: Approximately 4.6% of the total property tax paid by residents of Apple Valley supports parks and recreation through this fund. While the tax provides a consistent source of funding, revenues fluctuate with changing property values. Property tax monies in this account are supplemented by the revenue generated by parks, facilities and programs, such as fees collected for programs and events, facility rentals, and cell tower surcharges. This fund provides the majority of monies used for park and facility development, maintenance, and operations, as well as recreation programming and events. In FY 2008/09, this account received nearly \$3.1 million in revenues. In FY 2010/11, this dropped to \$2.75 million.
  - *Parks and Recreation Quimby Fund (Fund 2520)*: As per the Quimby Act, the Town of Apple Valley receives dedicated parkland or fees in lieu when residential land is subdivided. Quimby fees must be used for new park and facility development, and cannot be used for maintenance, operations or existing system improvements. Quimby fees are highly variable, providing revenues only during times of economic growth and development. For example, in FY 2005/06, the Town collected \$2.3 million in Quimby revenues. As land subdivisions slowed with the recession, revenues dropped to less than \$10,000 in both FY 2009/10 and FY 2010/11.

*Since 2008,  
dedicated  
funding for  
parks and  
recreation has  
decreased  
substantially.*

In the past, grant funds were held in a separate fund, the *Parks and Recreation Grant Fund (Fund 4910)*. In FY 2011/12, this fund was merged into a *Miscellaneous Grant Fund* to support capital projects of all types. Grants are important funding sources for parks and recreation, but grant funding also varies substantially from year to year. In FY 03/04, grant fund revenues were less than \$400,000, but they exceeded \$3.6 million FY 2006/07. Grant funding typically supports capital projects, but not maintenance and operations.

### Funding Deficit

Dedicated funding for parks and recreation (Funds 2510 and 2520) has declined substantially during the recession. Most notably, revenues associated with the property tax base are considerably less because of declining property values. Quimby funds for new park development also have dropped significantly since 2008. The decline in parks and recreation revenues makes it challenging to care for existing assets and continue to provide services at the existing service levels.



In addition to declining funding during the recession, the Parks and Recreation Department faces another funding challenge. Since the Town took over the parks and property tax base of the former Apple Valley Recreation and Park District in 2001, it has invested approximately \$500,000 annually to supplement services for parks, recreation facilities, programs and events. These additional services were provided as part of the Town's effort to provide expanded and enhanced services for residents. Until FY 2011/12, the additional services were sustained by deficit spending with the Parks and Recreation Fund, which was noted as a negative fund balance in that fund. The negative fund balance as of FY 12/13 is estimated at \$5.5 million.

Beginning in FY 2011/12, operating transfers from the General Fund were used to offset the current year's funding shortfall in the Parks and Recreation Fund. However, decisions on whether to use General Fund dollars to support parks and recreation are made on an annual basis. No ongoing level of General Fund support has been designated for parks and recreation.

### **AD HOC COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

To address the accumulated fund deficit and current operating deficit, the Town of Apple Valley began identifying short-term fiscal strategies for parks and recreation. In July 2011, Town Council established an Ad Hoc Committee on Recreation to evaluate potential cost savings and service efficiencies. The Committee met on four occasions between August and December 2011. They developed a set of recommendations to be implemented in FY 2012/13, and other cost-cutting strategies to carry out in upcoming fiscal years.

FY 2012-13 recommendations included:

- Increase the efficiency of PIO Special Event Department expenditures by increasing cost recovery, reducing hours in the Event Assistant position, and properly allocating staff time to more accurately reflect the work that should be charged to the Parks and Recreation Fund.
- Add a surcharge to all Aquatic Center programs operating during the winter (October – April).
- Close Cramer Family Park.

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- Adopt a 10% increase in Parks and Recreation programming user and facility fees where feasible.
  - Establish a participation fee of \$10 per participant per season for all assisted user groups that use Town facilities and have fees waived (e.g., Little League, Pony, and youth football and youth soccer).

In addition, the Ad Hoc Committee recommended the following long-term actions:

- Attempt to negotiate with Golden State Water to donate all or a large portion of the water used to irrigate Virginia Park or establish a formal sponsorship of that park with Golden State Water.
- Evaluate the feasibility of establishing non-resident fees where applicable for Parks and Recreation Services.
- Work with contract instructors to ensure the Instructor Class program area collects sufficient revenue to cover all direct costs and allocated staff time, through fee increases and adjustments to the revenue split with instructors.
- Develop a formal cost recovery policy for all Parks and Recreation programming. This will determine what level of indirect cost coverage is expected for each programming area.
- Continue to look for grant opportunities for a pool enclosure to reduce operational expenditures and increase revenue opportunities at the Aquatic Center.

Many of the short-term recommendations have been implemented, reducing the annual funding deficit by an estimated 25-30% (\$240,000 to \$300,000). At the same time, the Parks and Recreation Department also has decreased its spending on park maintenance, deferred needed repairs and improvements, postponed planned equipment purchases, and cut other services where feasible to operate on a reduced budget. If the situation continues, parks assets will slowly deteriorate. There are already signs of stress at parks and facilities as routine maintenance is reduced and deferred.

Since additional cuts would be needed to operate the Parks and Recreation Department on a break-even basis, the Parks and Recreation Commission asked Town Council to develop a formal guideline regarding the ongoing investment of General Fund dollars in park and recreation operations. At this point, no decision has been made.





## NEEDED INVESTMENT

While the short-term funding deficit poses a serious challenge, the *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* must take a longer-term look at investment needs for the next 20 years. The short-term funding reductions will increase needs for capital reinvestment in the long term as parks and facilities age and depreciate, and maintenance projects are deferred. In addition, new parks and programs will be necessary in the future to maintain the current level of service as the Town grows. This does not even address the higher level of investment desired by the community.

To help understand the level of investment needed to support parks and recreation, Table 9 compares Apple Valley's per capita investment to park and recreation expenditures for Hesperia, Temecula, and Lancaster.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> These three communities were chosen by the Project Coordination Team and Parks and Recreation Commission as similar cities to use as benchmarks to measure Apple Valley's existing level of service. This analysis was conducted before Ad Hoc Committee recommendations were implemented.

**Table 9: Per Capita Expenditures for Parks and Recreation (FY 2009/10)**

Town/City	Expenditures	Total Population	Gross Per-Capita Cost <sup>1</sup>
Hesperia	\$10,343,881	88,184	\$117.30
Lancaster	\$12,188,515	134,032	\$90.94
Temecula	\$11,382,421	105,029	\$108.37
Apple Valley	\$5,409,856	74,266	\$72.84

Sources: Hesperia Recreation and Park District, City of Lancaster Program & Financial Plan; City of Temecula Budget; Apple Valley Annual Budget.

<sup>1</sup>Gross cost per capita is based on total expenditures for parks and recreation in each jurisdiction, as taken from the FY 2009/10 budgets.

As noted in the table, Apple Valley funds park and recreation services at \$18-\$44 less per resident than the three benchmarking communities. To be on park with their level of investment, Apple Valley would have to spend approximately \$2 million dollars more annually (i.e., approximately \$100 per person). To be clear, this plan is not advocating for a \$2 million increase in annual expenditures—especially while Apple Valley is looking to reduce its investment in park services. The information is presented to illustrate the need for serious decisions about the right level of investment for Apple Valley.

## CAPITAL PROJECTS

Apple Valley’s park and recreation system plays an important role in supporting community livability, health, wellness, and economic vitality. Recommendations in Chapters 4 and 5 suggest several ways to enhance parks and facilities to achieve Apple Valley’s vision and goals. Some of these enhancements will be costly, but many are needed to offset the deterioration caused by deferred maintenance and repairs.

All recommended projects in this Master Plan (with the exception of the Apple Valley Golf Course)<sup>4</sup> are integrated in a park system cost model that portrays the planning costs for capital development, park reinvestment, and maintenance (Appendix D). The purpose of the cost model is to present planning level cost estimates for capital projects (improvements, acquisition and development), while simultaneously showing the amount of maintenance funding that will be needed when new projects are implemented.



<sup>4</sup> The Golf Course is not included here because its development and operations are not funded by Parks and Recreation Fund dollars.



Using information from the cost model, Table 10 summarizes costs for recommended capital projects. To achieve the vision noted in this plan, an estimated \$15 million is needed to renovate and enhance existing parks. Another \$95 million will be needed to acquire land and develop new parks in unserved areas. An estimated \$26.7 million is needed for system-wide projects, such as restrooms in neighborhood and mini parks, water efficiency and conservation improvements, and a new community center. Together, all projects total more than \$136.7 million. Clearly this is more than can be accomplished in the next 20 years.

**Table 10: Estimated Park System Capital Costs**

Project Type	Existing Parks	Proposed Parks	Other System-Wide Projects	Total
Acquisition	\$0	\$9,500,000	-	\$9,500,000
Planning & Design	\$150,000	\$975,000	-	\$1,125,000
Development	-	\$83,767,000	-	\$83,767,000
Renovation (Minor)	\$2,017,000	\$0	-	\$2,017,000
Renovation (Major)	\$6,158,000	\$0	-	\$6,158,000
Other Project Costs	\$6,720,000	\$735,000	\$26,695,000	\$34,150,000
<b>Total Park System</b>	<b>\$15,045,000</b>	<b>\$94,977,000</b>	<b>\$26,695,000</b>	<b>\$136,717,000</b>

Note: Costs are presented in 2012 dollars, not accounting for inflation.

While Table 10 presents capital costs to build and develop the park system, Table 11 presents the general costs associated with the maintenance and replacement of landscaping and park amenities in existing and proposed parks at build out.<sup>5</sup> As explained in Appendix D, these costs include:

- *Annual Maintenance:* The maintenance costs reflect the amount of general care and stewardship of park land and outdoor facilities at a minimum standard level. This provides a basic level of maintenance, including litter removal, graffiti removal, restroom cleaning, mowing, tree pruning, and irrigation. It provides the minimum level of effort needed to preserve existing assets. In comparison, the FY 13/14 maintenance budget allocates approximately 70% of the estimated costs needed to provide this standard of maintenance.
- *Annual Capital Reinvestment:* A reinvestment fund prepares for the inevitable need to repair or replace amenities and facilities when they are worn out or damaged. The reinvestment costs noted in Table 11

<sup>5</sup> These numbers reflect per-acre costs that do not include specific costs for specialized facilities such as aquatic or recreation centers. They do not include costs for system-wide projects, which will be assigned independently.

are conservatively estimated to cover the cost of updating 1/4 of each park every 20 years. This includes refreshing landscaping and replacing general park facilities, but not renovating or replacing specialized facilities such as recreation or aquatic centers.

**Table 11: Estimated Annual Park Maintenance and Reinvestment Costs**

Cost	Existing Parks	Proposed Parks	Total
Annual Maintenance	\$1,557,000	\$2,763,000	\$4,320,000
Annual Reinvestment	\$678,000	\$1,059,000	\$1,737,000
<b>Total Park System</b>	<b>\$2,235,000</b>	<b>\$3,269,000</b>	<b>\$6,057,000</b>

Note: Costs are presented in 2012 dollars, not accounting for inflation.

As shown in Table 11, the Town’s annual park maintenance budget would exceed \$4.3 million if all parks were developed at once and maintained at a minimum standard level. Approximately \$1.5 million will be needed to take care of existing parks (with some renovated or added facilities). Because of budget cuts, the Town currently does not provide sufficient funding to support this standard of maintenance. Maintenance costs for existing parks (excluding the golf course) are estimated at approximately \$1.1 million in the FY 13/14 Adopted Budget.

In addition, it is recommended that the Town set aside approximately \$1.7 million annually for capital reinvestment. This reflects a conservative amount to be held in reserve each year, so that the Town has enough money on hand to replace facilities at the end of their lifespan. At this time, the Town does not have any funds set aside to replace old or worn-out facilities and equipment.

### **PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA**

The *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* includes far more projects than the Town of Apple Valley can afford to implement in the next 20 years. For this reason, prioritization criteria were developed to assist Town leaders in weighing priorities for parks and recreation. These criteria can be used to prioritize projects as funding becomes available. By applying these criteria, the Parks and Recreation Department, in conjunction with the Parks and Recreation Commission and Town Council, can make decisions about which projects to move forward first in alignment with the community values and visions as set forth in the Plan.



The following criteria can be used to prioritize park projects:

- *Utilizes available funding or partnerships.* Projects that have potential to be funded through grants, donations, partner contributions, or voter-approved funds should be considered a high priority.
- *Reduces operating costs or generates revenue:* Projects that can create additional revenue for the Parks and Recreation Department, improve maintenance or operations efficiencies, and conserve water or reduce water usage should be given high priority.
- *Enhances community health and public safety:* Park and recreation projects that support fitness, healthy living and public safety should be prioritized. This includes decommissioning or replacing well-worn or potentially unsafe equipment and facilities.
- *Completes park development:* Projects that represent the second phase of development for a new or existing park with an adopted site master plan should be considered a high priority.
- *Addresses underserved populations:* Projects that serve underserved areas, as identified in the Community Needs Assessment, should be considered a high priority—especially in existing residential areas (with higher density development) and rapidly growing areas such as southern Apple Valley.
- *Renovates existing parks and facilities:* Cost-effective projects that enhance facilities at existing sites and/or support new facility development in underdeveloped parks to enhance recreation opportunities should be considered a priority.
- *Supports recreation programming and events:* Projects that support top programming interests and provide cost-effective opportunities for indoor and outdoor recreation and special events should be considered priorities. These include facilities that will help meet indoor programming needs, provide outdoor special events, leagues, or classes, and/or provide reservable facilities for community use.
- *Strengthens the community:* When affordable, proposed projects that strengthen the Town’s identity as the premier destination of the High Desert should be given priority in order to attract new residents and businesses and support a better way of life.

Projects that meet several of the eight criteria described above should be given preference. However, the availability of funding (as noted in the first criteria) will be the major factor in determining what is implemented.





## Chapter 7: A Better Way to Play





# A Better Way to Play



## CHAPTER 7: A BETTER WAY TO PLAY

The mission of the Parks and Recreation Department is to provide a *better way to play*. High quality parks and programs support health and fitness, strengthen youth and families, foster community cohesiveness, preserve community heritage, support economic development, and promote Apple Valley as an attractive destination. Even in a recession, most residents recognize that parks and recreation are integral to the Town's efforts to provide a better way of life, as noted in the public involvement findings.

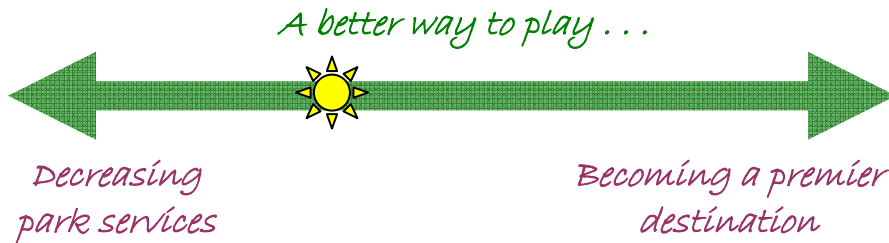
The Town of Apple Valley is at a crossroads. In one direction is an unsustainable park system, with insufficient funding to maintain the current level of park service. This is the path the Town took last year, reducing expenditures for parks and recreation, closing Cramer Family Park, decreasing park and facility maintenance, delaying the replacement of aging facilities, and increasing fees for recreation programming.

Many residents in Apple Valley would like to see the Town move in a different direction—toward a more sustainable future for parks and recreation, where the stewardship of park assets and the provision of special events and programs are recognized as important community investments. This direction is based on achieving the vision of clean, green parks, well-maintained facilities, and popular events and programs that strengthen Apple Valley and support a high quality of life.



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As the Town balances funding priorities, it should strongly consider the level at which parks and recreation services are funded. Somewhere in between “decreasing services” and “becoming a premier destination” is an investment level that will provide Apple Valley residents a better way to play.



## COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

To help identify the level of investment that residents are willing to support, community priorities for parks and recreation were tested in a statistically-representative Parks and Recreation Implementation Survey. In November 2011, 400 randomly-selected registered voters in Apple Valley were interviewed in a telephone survey that was designed to:

- Profile residents’ use of Apple Valley parks and recreation facilities and programs;
- Measure residents’ perceptions of parks and recreation facilities on key dimensions such as safety, appearance and overall quality;
- Identify residents’ priorities from a list of recreation projects and services that are (or could be) offered by the Town;
- Gauge residents’ willingness to pay for high priority parks and recreation services through a variety of potential mechanisms; and
- Identify the types of services residents’ are most willing to cut/reduce if additional revenue is not secured for parks and recreation.

A summary of survey findings is presented below. Survey results are presented in their entirety in Appendix F. These results reflect the priorities of Apple Valley residents within a margin of error of  $\pm 4.86\%$ .<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The margin of error refers to the difference between what was found in the survey of 400 voters for a particular question and what would have been found if all Town voters had been surveyed.





## Survey Findings

The Implementation Survey results indicated that many residents use Town parks and programs and appreciate the benefits they offer. Parks, recreation programs and events are valued most because they contribute to the Town's heritage, sense of community, and sense of place.

Survey results noted a high level of support for maintaining existing park and recreation assets and providing programs and events that support youth development and foster community cohesion. While minor improvements such as providing restrooms and replacing/upgrading worn equipment also showed strong levels of support, there appeared to be only moderate public support for large-scale projects at this time. Specific survey findings are bulleted below.

- When asked to prioritize 15 projects and services for future funding, more than 80% of respondents indicated that the following projects were medium or high priorities: continuing to adequately maintain and repair parks and recreation facilities (96%), maintaining the number and variety of recreation programs and classes for youth (87%), adding or improving restrooms at existing parks where needed (85%), upgrading or replacing worn-out recreation and playground equipment (83%), and continuing to provide a variety of special community events such as movies in the park, concerts, and festivals (82%).
- At the other end of the spectrum, half or nearly half of all residents polled indicated the following projects were medium or high priorities: constructing a new, centrally-located community recreation center (45%), adding smaller parks to serve neighborhoods (51%), and creating additional large parks to serve the entire community (54%).

The findings suggest that smaller-scale, community-oriented projects, such as upgrades to existing parks, are more likely to receive broader community support. Voters clearly want Town leaders to re-prioritize funding, even cutting some services to be able to focus on maintenance, asset stewardship and enhancement, and programs/events.

- When asked to identify services they would be most willing to cut in the absence of additional revenue, respondents supported reducing the frequency of watering grass (68%), closing the Aquatics Center in winter months (64%), reducing the amount of grass in parks (62%), and closing underused parks (62%).

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Survey results suggested that a majority of residents were willing to support increasing fees to support priority services. These included facility use fees, non-resident fees, commercial impact fees, and to a lesser extent, fees for programs, classes, and sports leagues. Just under half of residents showed support for increasing the sales tax by one-half or one-quarter percent. In the professional opinion of the survey researcher, this level of support is high, considering respondents were not given any information about why additional funding was needed. An increase in general recreation fees was supported by approximately the same number of people.

- Several mechanisms garnered majority support, including increasing the fees paid by non-residents for using Apple Valley’s facilities and programs (76%), establishing/increasing the fees for using the pool and rental facilities (58%), and increasing the fee on new commercial developments (51%).
- Although not quite a majority, support for several tax and fee options did come close to this threshold, including increasing the sales tax by one-half (46%) and one-quarter (47%) percent, and increasing the fees for recreation programs, classes and sports leagues (48%).

The results of the Implementation Survey suggest that residents are willing to consider additional fees, funding mechanisms, and even service cuts to lower priority services to be able to support priority services. Past experience indicates that an effective public outreach and information campaign for parks and recreation mostly likely would increase the number of voters who are willing to support some type a funding measure or greater investment in parks and recreation services.

## THE PATH TO THE FUTURE

The *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* identifies the community’s vision for parks and recreation in Apple Valley. This Plan aims to be realistic, recognizing that specific steps and a solid funding plan are needed so that the Town of Apple Valley make incremental progress as it blazes its own trail into the future.

### Priority Funding Strategies

Feedback from residents, staff and members of the Town Council, Ad Hoc Committee on Parks and Recreation, and Parks and Recreation Commission suggest that the timing is right to pursue a variety of funding mechanisms that will allow the Town to address its funding deficit for

*There is at least moderate public support for additional fees and funding measures to improve park and recreation services.*





parks and recreation, continue to provide the level of service available when this planning process started, and make small incremental steps towards enhancing and expanding services.

Priority funding strategies are summarized in Table 12 and explained in more detail below. If evaluated and pursued in the next 1-3 years, these strategies will help resolve the immediate operating deficit and increase revenues for future development. Additional funding strategies should be considered as well. Appendix E lists potential funding sources that would support park and recreation projects and services.

- *Update Quimby requirements.* Dedicated land or fees charged under the Quimby Act may be calculated according to a State-approved ratio of the amount of developed park acreage in relation to the Town's population as shown in the 2010 U.S. Census. Although the Golf Course is separate from the Parks and Recreation Fund and its operations are included in its own enterprise fund, the acquisition of the Apple Valley Golf Course can be used to re-calculate Quimby requirements. The current ration is based on a level of service of 3 acres per 1,000 residents.

Quimby fees will supplement the Parks and Recreation Quimby Fund (Fund 2520) and should be used to develop new parks or enhance the use of existing parks and recreational facilities to serve new residents in the areas where these funds were collected. This funding mechanism is critical for the Town to be able to meet future park needs in developing areas.

- *Establish an ongoing level of General Fund investment:* In Spring 2012, the Ad Hoc Committee asked Town Council to consider an annual investment of General Fund dollars to support Parks and Recreation services. Nearly five years ago, a similar recommendation was made to adopt guidelines for this investment in the low range of 2- 3% of the overall General Fund. Town staff and Council should revisit this question now to designate an investment amount based on budget priorities in lieu of making an annual appropriation each year. This strategy, however, should allow budgetary flexibility within the General Fund should Council need to react to changing budget conditions due to future economic shifts.

**Table 12: Overview of Priority Funding Strategies**

Funding Type	Definition	Restrictions on Spending	What's Needed to Implement?
<b>Existing Funding Sources</b>			
Quimby Act land or funds	Land dedication or fees paid by developers when residential land is subdivided. Revenue is highly variable and depending on development market.	Funds capacity-enhancement capital projects to support <b>new park development</b> ; based on existing level of service between 3 -5 acres per 1,000 residents.	Town must update fee methodology, taking into account recent acquisitions. Council approval needed.
Mitigation Fee Act impact fees	Increase in current rates on fees paid by developers when building permit is issued to offset the impact of residential or commercial projects. Amount is calculated as per standard based on a nexus between new development and the need for expanded parks and facilities.	Used to fund <b>new park development</b> . Cannot charge new development to address any existing deficiencies or upgrades to existing park system.	Evaluation of current impact fee rates; update of fee methodology. Council approval of new rates.
General Fund dollars	Approval of specific budgeted amount of the Town's General Fund to support the Parks and Recreation Department.	None; may be used for <b>capital projects, maintenance, operations, programming and other services</b> .	Council approval of budget.
Recreation and reservation fees	Evaluation of Town's fee philosophy to identify ways to increase returns on direct and indirect investment in recreation programs, events, and services. Generally assists in cost recovery, but is not a large source of revenue.	None; often reinvests collected funds back into <b>operations and programming</b> to support fee-based services.	Cost Recovery Study to evaluate and set targets; fee review and recommendation by the Parks and Recreation Commission; Council approval of new fees.
Revenue generation	Identification of new fee-based services or update of concessionaire agreements to increase revenues (e.g., naming rights, vendor fees, event parking fees, advertising, etc.)	None; often reinvests collected funds back into <b>operations and programming</b> to support fee-based services.	Vendor/concessionaire approval of agreements; fee review and recommendation by the Parks and Recreation Commission; Council approval of new fees.

Funding Type	Definition	Restrictions on Spending	What's Needed to Implement?
Sponsorships, partnerships, donations	Funds, materials or other resources and support from businesses, non-profits or private groups/individuals.	Usually supports <b>one designated project or service</b> .	Staff time to recruit sponsors, partners, or donors; may require a partnership agreement to define responsibilities.
Grants	Funding typically from non-profits or state and federal sources to support specific projects or services. Availability of funds fluctuates from year to year.	Usually supports <b>one designated project or service</b> ; may require matching funding or be restricted in how/where spent.	Staff time for grant applications and management; Council approval in use of CDBG funds for park improvements.
<b>New Funding Sources</b>			
Sales tax	½ or ¼-cent tax on goods and services; provides a consistent, steady source of funding; is more equitable in that it is collected from Town residents and visitors.	None; may be used for <b>parks and recreation operations, maintenance, programming and capital projects</b> ; may also support other Town services.	Majority voter approval for general ballot measure; 2/3 voter approval for a specific measure. Preliminary voter survey is often desired to test ballot language and public support; public education and outreach campaign enhances likelihood of voter approval.
Lighting and Landscape Districts (LLDs)	An assessment on housing units or land parcels within a designated district to fund a variety of services, including park acquisition, development, and maintenance.	Must be used for <b>improvements or maintenance within assessment district</b> .	Simple majority vote of property owners in district; often set up with developer (one owner) before land is subdivided.

Note: LLDs have been used in Apple Valley to fund landscaping for rights-of-way. LLDs are noted as a new funding source here, because districts have not been established previously to support park and facility maintenance or improvements.

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- *Conduct a cost recovery study to revise recreation and facility use fees and charges.* A cost recovery study would help identify a fee philosophy and market-based pricing structure to increase the costs recovered by recreation programs, events and services. Currently, fees for most sports programs and recreation events recover all direct costs and offset a small portion of indirect costs. As part of the adopted Ad Hoc Committee recommendations, fees were increased by 10%. The cost recovery methodology should evaluate the current structure and identify best options for increasing revenue by adjusting costs. It should identify targets for recovering direct and indirect costs, based on types of programs offered, the extent of benefits provided, and the numbers and demographics of people served. As noted in the Implementation Survey, it should consider options such as increasing the fees paid by non-residents and increasing fees for swimming and rental facilities.



- *Implement policies and procedures to enhance revenue generation.* The Town of Apple Valley should define policies and pursue all opportunities to increase the revenue-generating capacity of the existing park and recreation system. Realistic revenue generation targets should be factored into the aforementioned cost recovery study. Potential strategies may include:
  - Selling naming rights to major facilities.
  - Charging vendor fees for tournaments and special events according to the Town’s pricing strategy.
  - Creating or revise agreements with all concessionaires in Town parks to recapture or share revenues to reinvest in existing assets.
  - Identifying and develop fee opportunities for services, such as event parking fees, Town-provided or leased concessions, reservable banners/marquee advertising in parks, recreation guide advertisements, etc.
- *Recruit corporate sponsors and partners to support heritage special events.* The Town of Apple Valley should seek partners, sponsors and investors to support its heritage special events, community programs and services that do not recover costs. To do this, more staff time may be needed to market the Town’s recreation and events services, establish partnerships, and solicit sponsorships, partnerships, donations, and foundation support. Realistic sponsorship targets should be factored into the aforementioned cost recovery study.

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- *Continue to pursue grant funding.* Apple Valley has been successful in obtaining grants to support small park projects, such as the new playground at Thunderbird Park that was funded through a Community Development Block Grant. The Town should continue to devote staff resources in pursuit of grant funding and apply these funds to replace, renovate or enhance existing assets.
  - *Investigate a ¼ or ½ cent sales tax.* As noted in the Implementation Survey findings, there is a surprising amount of public support for a ¼ or ½ cent sales tax to support parks and recreation. This funding mechanism is more equitable than an increased property tax, in that it collects revenues from Town residents, out-of-area visitors, and residents of the former Apple Valley Recreation and Park District service area. It can also fund essential recreation projects and services such as maintenance, operations, and programming, or be used to support other Town services. Since this funding mechanism must be voter-approved, a public outreach campaign should be conducted prior to any ballot measure to educate the community about its benefits. A ballot survey also may be useful in testing different taxing alternatives (¼ vs. ½ cent), the potential wording of the measure, as well as the specific level of support for this type of initiative.<sup>2</sup>
  - *Increase impact fees.* Park impact fees are paid by developers at the time a building permit is acquired to offset the impact of residential or commercial projects on the existing park system. Apple Valley has established impact fees for single family units (\$3,208), multi-family units (\$2,614), and commercial buildings (\$0.0062 per sf). The Town should evaluate options for increasing impact fees based on the needs identified in this plan. While the Implementation Survey noted more public support for commercial rather than residential impact fees, few people are familiar with developer fees or realize that they are an equitable way to fund new park construction made necessary by residential growth and new development. Impact fees must be based on the current level of service to ensure that new development does not pay for any existing deficiencies in the Town’s park system.

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<sup>2</sup> This type of ballot survey is different from the Implementation Survey, which tested public opinion around services levels in general and a variety of funding options.



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- *Investigate options to use Lighting and Landscape Districts (LLDs) to fund park and trail maintenance.* The Landscaping and Lighting Act permits a public agency to assess housing units or land parcels within a designated district to provide a variety of services, including park acquisition, development, and maintenance. District establishment requires a simple majority vote of property owners. For this reason, it is much easier to establish an LLD before land owned by a single developer is divided and sold as individual housing units. While LLDs are typically used to support park maintenance, these funds can be used to enhance new park development (in combination with capital funds via the Quimby Act or AB 1600). The Town of Apple Valley has used an LLD previously to fund landscaping and right-of-way maintenance, so this type of funding initiative is not entirely new.



### Priority Services

In an underfunded system where deferred maintenance is hastening the speed at which park assets are deteriorating, some of the Town's highest priority investments should be made to support park operations and services. This includes parks maintenance, coordination with volunteers and partners, and the provision of events and programs. Priority services are summarized below. These should be implemented in 1-5 years following plan adoption, or as soon as funding allows.

#### *Park Maintenance*

- To preserve existing assets and prevent further deterioration, increase the level of maintenance funding to the minimum standard recommended in this plan.
- Develop a Maintenance Management Plan to define a tiered maintenance program to increase maintenance efficiencies and target maintenance efforts at high demand, high use sites.
- Regularly assess long-term maintenance, repair, and replacement needs for all parks, facilities, vehicles and equipment.
  - Create a capital reinvestment program and fund to replace aged, deteriorating facilities.
  - Develop a vehicle and equipment replacement protocol and fund to afford new equipment when needed.

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### *Partnerships and Volunteerism*

- Develop and promote an Adopt-a-Park program and strengthen the Adopt-a-Trail program.
- Strengthen the use of volunteers in all program areas. Expand volunteer opportunities for youth and seniors. Provide direction for sports groups to channel labor and resources into field maintenance.
- Pursue partnerships with non-profit and for-profit entities as a key means for leveraging community resources and minimizing duplications of effort.
- Continue to work with partners in the Healthy Apple Valley Coalition and the health industry to promote health and wellness.
- Strengthen partnerships and involve the School District in addressing needs for indoor and outdoor programming space, especially in unserved areas where new parks are needed.

### *Events and Programs*

- Implement an online program registration and a facility reservation system to increase participation and access to events, programs, and reservable indoor and outdoor facilities.
- Maximize the use of existing parks and facilities for revenue-generating events, programs and services. For example, provide tournaments, races, wedding venues/services and private group or public community events that draw people to Apple Valley, support the Town's economy, contribute to its heritage, and also enhance its image as a destination community.
- Strengthen family activities and multi-generational recreation opportunities, recovering costs where it is feasible to do so.
- Create a Mobile Recreation Program to provide recreation activities to youth in unserved areas, using schools and other community destinations where park land is not available.
- Support the Healthy Apple Valley initiative with programs and events that promote healthy living and physical activity and contribute to a healthy community.



## Priority Projects

As operations are being stabilized by focusing on priority services, the Town of Apple Valley should also evaluate and identify priority projects to implement as soon as funding is available. This sense of urgency is captured in the follow four categories for project classification:

- *Essential:* Essential projects are the highest priority for use of funding resources. They are critically or urgently required to meet regulatory requirements, improve public safety or health, replace worn or unsafe facilities or prevent further deterioration.
- *Necessary:* Necessary projects improve maintenance efficiencies, reduce operating costs, or reflect top community priorities for enhancing park use, such as the completion of planned development at existing parks, improvements to aging infrastructure at high-demand high-use sites, the provision of necessary amenities for park use, and the acquisition of parkland in rapidly developing areas before the opportunity is lost to do so.
- *Highly Desirable:* Projects are considered highly desirable if they address significant service deficiencies in existing parks or through the development of new parks in key areas.
- *Important:* A variety of other projects noted in this plan are important to the community's long term vision and goals for parks and recreation. These projects can be prioritized using the prioritization criteria noted in Chapter 6. Needs have been identified for all of these



projects, which may move up in priority if and when outside funding becomes available or if other circumstances change. Generally speaking, the implementation of important projects is dependent on the availability of alternative funding sources and partnerships not foreseen at this time.

Several key projects have been classified below as essential, necessary, and highly desirable. Using the general planning level costs from the cost model in Appendix D, a general range of costs is noted for each category. In all cases, project priorities and their timeline for implementation can be reassigned as circumstances change within the 20-year planning horizon. These categories will help make decisions about the types of projects to advance when the Town has the opportunity to do so.

#### *Essential*

The following essential projects represent a planning level cost of approximately \$2.5-3.5 million.

- Create a facility replacement fund to address deferred maintenance and remove and replace unsafe, worn or damaged facilities.
- Create a vehicle/equipment replacement fund to replace unsafe or worn maintenance equipment.
- Install paved parking and a drive path at the Lenny Brewster Sports Center to minimize dust and improve visibility at the park.
- Provide restrooms in mini and neighborhood parks.

In addition to these capital investments, it is also essential to upgrade park maintenance to the minimum standard recommended in this plan. That represents an annual operational increase of approximately \$475,500 (from FY 13/14 budgeted dollars).

#### *Necessary*

The following necessary projects represent a planning level cost of approximately \$6-7.5 million.

- Make general improvements to all parks, including the provision of ADA accessible paths and features, cement pads under signs and picnic tables, covered trash receptacles, etc.
- Complete the Civic Center Park development, including the picnic shelter, restroom, sprayground, exercise equipment, tennis courts, and signage.

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- Install the relocated picnic shelter at Horsemen’s Center Park to provide shade.
  - Improve James Woody Park, including replacing or renovating restrooms, the front playground, and concession areas. Add shade shelters and hard-surfaced paths connecting facilities.
  - Upgrade the sports field at the Lenny Brewster Sports Center to address deferred maintenance.
  - Improve water efficiency and irrigation systems to reduce water costs.
  - Acquire property for Deep Creek Community Park in south Apple Valley.
  - Acquire property for a neighborhood park in south Apple Valley.



In addition to these capital investments, it is also necessary to support priority events, programs and services as recommended in this plan. Following the targets and savings identified in a cost recovery study, this may represent an annual operational cost ranging from \$50,000 to \$150,000. Additionally, adding amenities, field space and new park land will increase annual maintenance and operations costs for the Department. Estimated increases are included in Appendix D: Capital and Operations Cost Model that is included in this plan.

### *Highly Desired*

The following highly desired projects represent a planning level cost of approximately \$15-20 million.

- Add active use amenities and perimeter walking paths in mini and neighborhood parks.
- Enhance the Lenny Brewster Sports Center in conjunction with the development of the Water Reclamation Facility; the addition of a northwest entrance and the development of center shelter and concessions facility with restrooms.
- Complete Phase 1 development of Deep Creek Community Park in south Apple Valley.
- Develop a neighborhood park in south Apple Valley.
- Redesign and improve the sports fields at James Woody Park.

These capital investments will require additional maintenance funding when two new parks are brought online and two others are improved.



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Additional funding will also be needed to support events, programs and services at these sites. This may represent an annual operational increase ranging from \$350,000 to \$600,000.

### A BETTER WAY TO PLAY

The *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* provides the vision and tools necessary for the Town of Apple Valley to make strategic choices on preserving park assets and continuing its legacy of providing recreation programs and special events. The Town has a good inventory of parks and provides many popular events and programs that serve tens of thousands of people each year. However, it lacks the funds to enhance the park system or, in light of budget cuts, to continue to provide the same level of recreation services available in the past. In the face of funding challenges, allowing the park system to deteriorate is neither a cost-effective nor sustainable choice. This Plan sends a resounding message that Town leaders must make some key decisions to preserve park assets and invest in Apple Valley's future, and it provides the tools and action plan to do so.

Decision-making is not a static process. To meet community needs, the Parks and Recreation Department will need to take action based on the guidance and framework of this Plan, evaluate progress, and make continuous adjustments in the next 20 years. During that time, the support of the Town Council and residents will be needed if the Parks and Recreation Department is to provide *a better way to play*. The community must be willing to work together to achieve this vision for the future.

*Apple valley residents really want a better way to play. Adequate funding is needed to achieve this vision.*





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