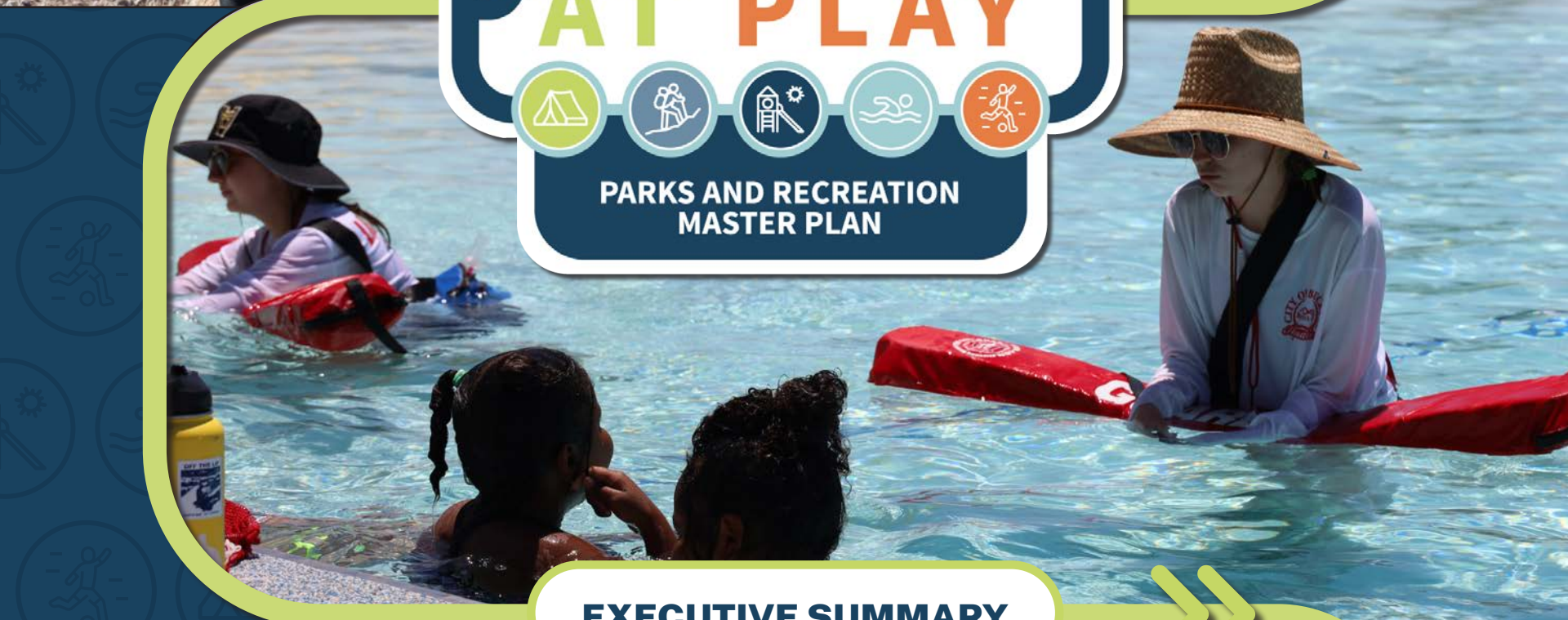




BUCKEYE AT PLAY

PARKS AND RECREATION
MASTER PLAN



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

May 2025

CONTENTS

01

INTRODUCTION
AND GOALS



02

PARKS AND RECREATION
DEPARTMENT



03

DEMOGRAPHICS AND
TRENDS ASSESSMENTS



04

COMMUNITY NEEDS
AND OUTREACH



05

ANALYSIS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS



06

THEMES



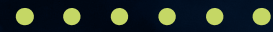
07

VISIONARY PROJECTS



01

INTRODUCTION AND GOALS



What is the Buckeye Parks and Recreation Master Plan?

The Buckeye Parks and Recreation Master Plan is a long-range plan that identifies key initiatives, policies, and implementation strategies to guide Buckeye's Community Services Department projects and services over the next 10+ years. The purpose of the plan is to offer strategies, recommendations, and operational guidelines that will allow the City to meet the needs of current and future City of Buckeye residents.

Goals of the Plan:

The master plan enables the City to engage in a public process to ensure future parks, recreation, open space, and trails priorities and goals meet the evolving demands of the Buckeye community for the next 10+ years. To carry out this mission, the plan has been organized around the following goals:



Create a comprehensive and compelling vision and direction for Buckeye Parks and Recreation



Propose various approaches for accommodating growth while keeping the fiscal picture in balance



Strategically identify gaps and prioritize future improvements and programming for Parks and Recreation



Assess current and desired service levels to strategically approach population growth sustainably as a department



Understand potential partnership opportunities and funding options

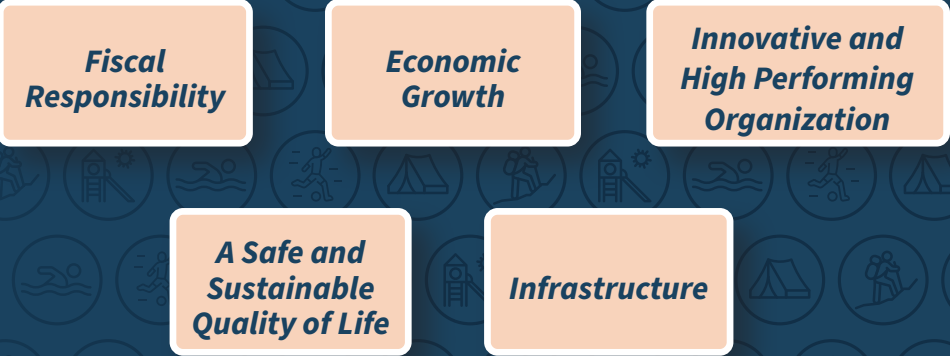


Evaluate operations and maintenance practices with an aim to generate long-term sustainability, efficiencies, and resilience benefits

The City of Buckeye is committed to providing high-quality parks and recreation experiences to all residents while contributing to the economic wellbeing of the City.

Alignment with the Council’s Strategic Goals

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan’s goals and recommendations align with the Council’s Strategic Plan 2025-2028 and its identified focus areas:



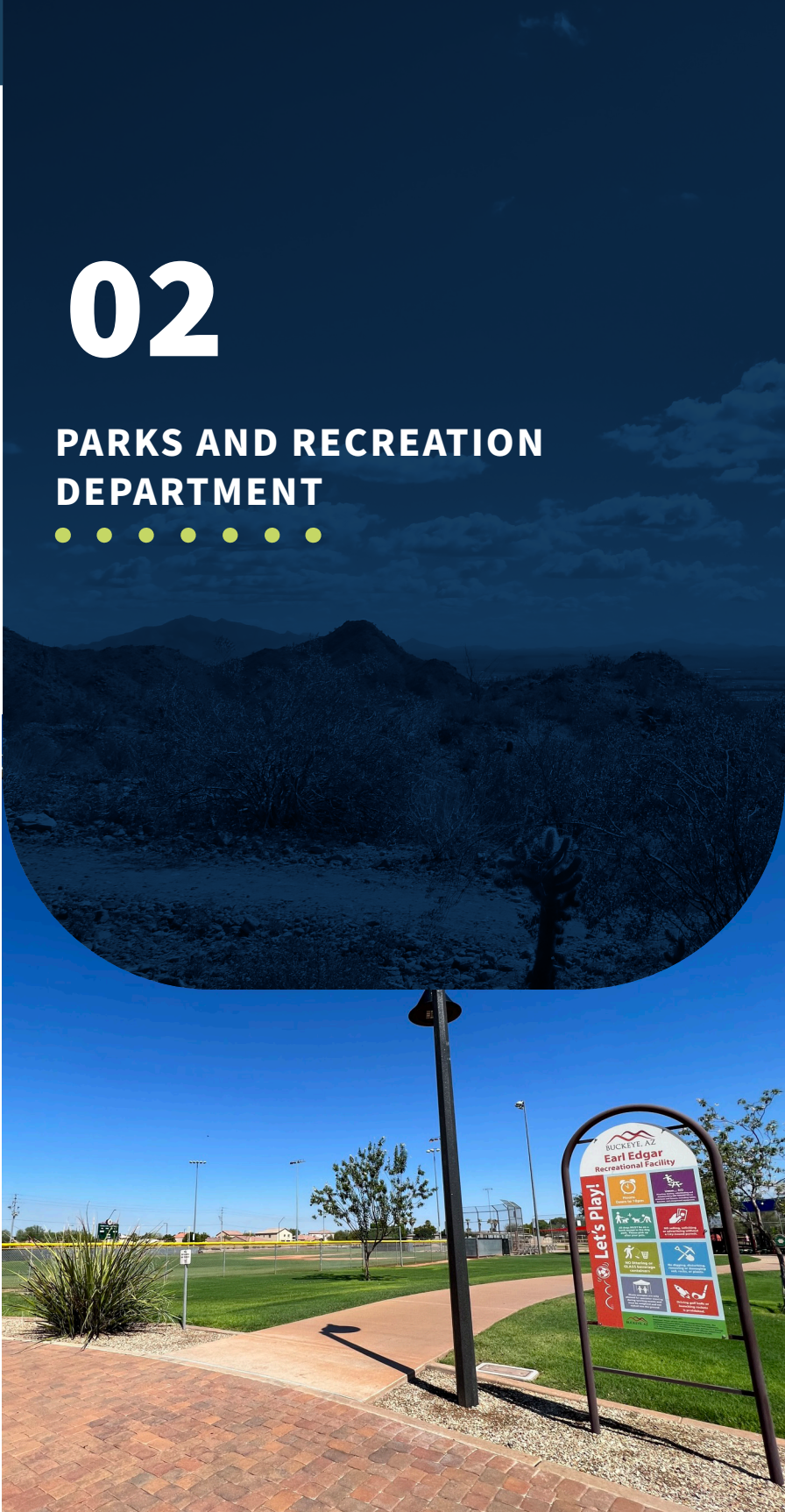
“ Buckeye is committed to providing the best quality of life for our residents. A place they can be proud of while raising a family, working close to home, and enjoying our unique amenities. – Council Strategic Plan ”

Alignment with Key Planning Documents

The City of Buckeye and other agency partners have completed recent and relevant planning efforts. This plan’s goals and recommendations were formed in the context of the following planning documents:

- Imagine Buckeye: General Plan 2040 (2018)
- Buckeye in Motion Transportation Master Plan (2019)
- Buckeye Active Transportation Plan (2019)
- Buckeye Library Master Plan (2023)
- Buckeye Low Impact Development (LID) Manual (2023)
- White Tank Mountains Conservancy (WTMC) White Tank Mountains Regional Connectivity Initiative (2024)
- Flood Control District of Maricopa County (FCDMC) Sun Valley Area Drainage Master Plan (ADMP) Update (2023)
- FCDMC Buckeye ADMP
- Downtown Buckeye Specific Area Plan (2024)
- The Landing Specific Area Plan (ongoing)
- El Rio District Area Plan (2019)
- El Rio Trail Assessment Plan (2020)
- Central Arizona Conservation Alliance (CAZCA) Regional Open Space Plan (2018)





02

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT



Existing Parks and Recreation System

The Buckeye Parks and Recreation system is an integral part of the community, dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for its residents through a variety of recreational facilities and programs. The system includes numerous parks, trails, and open spaces designed to accommodate a wide range of programs and activities.

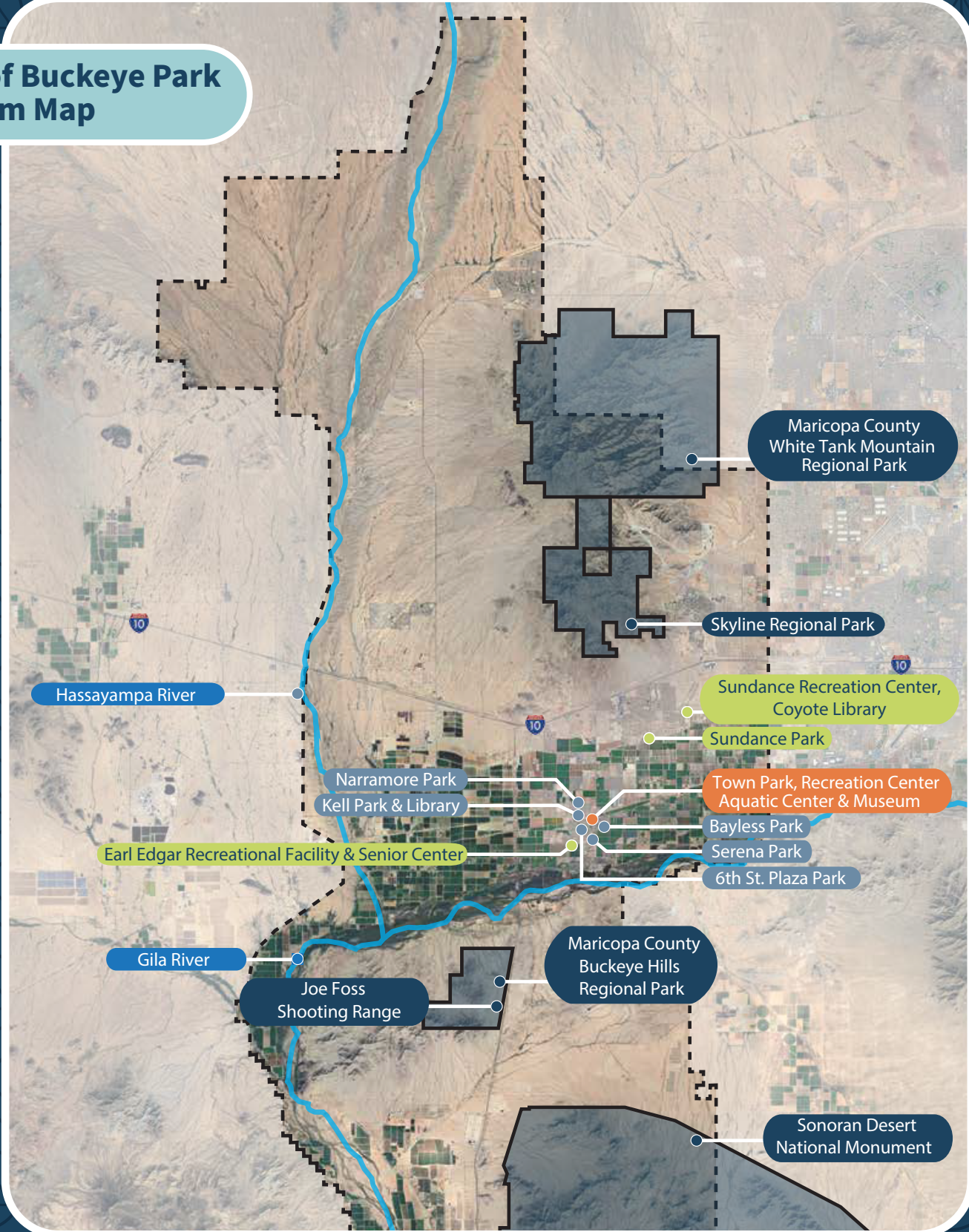


Department Overview

The Community Services Department is responsible for a number of diverse offerings and elements. The department supports the following functions:



City of Buckeye Park System Map



Department Mission, Vision, Goals, and Objectives

The Department’s vision is simple and succinct: “We are vital to Buckeye being a desired community.” This vision, in tandem with the Department’s mission of “enriching the quality of life and creating memorable experiences for all generations,” is a core facet of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The Department is committed to remaining engaged and informed of the needs and priorities of Buckeye residents and Parks and Recreation’s role in meeting those needs. The following section highlights the Department’s mission, vision, goals, and objectives, which have been crucial in shaping the Plan and will remain central to its implementation.

Core Values and Guiding Principles

The Department has identified six core values for continued programming success:

- 1 Embrace the New
- 2 Do Right
- 3 Lend a Hand
- 4 Find a Way
- 5 Enjoy Our Work
- 6 Celebrate Uniqueness

In tandem with the Department’s vision and mission, Buckeye utilizes these core values as strategic anchors when setting operational and budgetary goals.



Parks and Recreation Goals and Objectives

The Department maintains progress towards multiple goals that directly link the provision of Parks and Recreation services to overall community advancement. These include:

- Offer comprehensive programs that satisfy varying age levels, physical abilities, and special interests
- Protect and preserve Buckeye’s parks, facilities, and open space for long-term sustainability
- Provide a variety of health and wellness programs that promote and support personal health
- Optimize financial and physical resources
- Market the worth of the Department and services we offer

To help achieve these objectives, the Department provides a broad range of recreation and leisure programming, supported with dedicated spaces which includes neighborhood and community parks, a signature regional park, recreation centers, a Senior Center, a swimming pool, and trails.

All programs and events are required to relate to, support, or directly align with the Department’s priorities and goals for the future, identified in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The goals, objectives, and general directions set forth in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and other fundamental Department documents are brought into action through this Plan.



03

DEMOGRAPHICS AND TRENDS ASSESSMENTS



Trends Assessment

A national and regional trends analysis was conducted and resulted in the following key recommendations:

Develop/expand adult fitness and wellness programming



Develop/expand additional sport courts



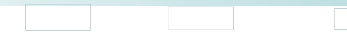
Expand outdoor adventure and nature-based programming



Develop/expand enrichment programs and classes for all ages



Develop a multi-generational recreation center for indoor recreation opportunities



Demographics Assessment

Buckeye is currently one of the fastest-growing cities in the United States. The city has experienced tremendous growth over the past decade and is anticipated to continue this fast-paced trajectory.

Buckeye is unique, as it is home to many large master planned communities which present a myriad of opportunities for partnership with the private development community. The city and its partners need to grow Buckeye's parks and recreation system in order to meet current and future resident demands.



Population

- 2024 Population: 119,110
- Annual growth rate: 7.10%
- Total Households: 34,663



Age

- Median age: 34.5
- Largest age segment: 35-54
- Continued growth of 0-17 population through 2038



Race and Ethnicity

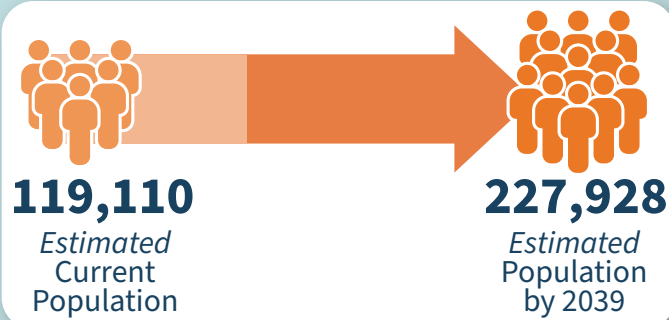
- 57% White Alone
- 7% Black or African American
- 39% Hispanic/Latino



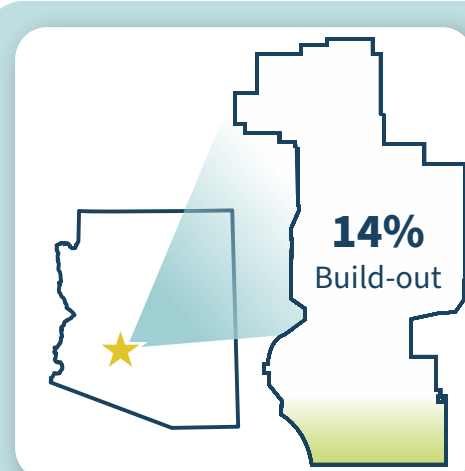
Income

- Median Household: \$91,360
- Per Capita: \$35,674
- Continued economic growth through 2038

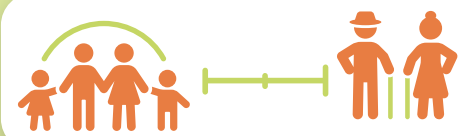
2024 Buckeye Population Demographics



The estimated current population in Buckeye is **119,110** and by 2039, the estimated population will be **227,928**.



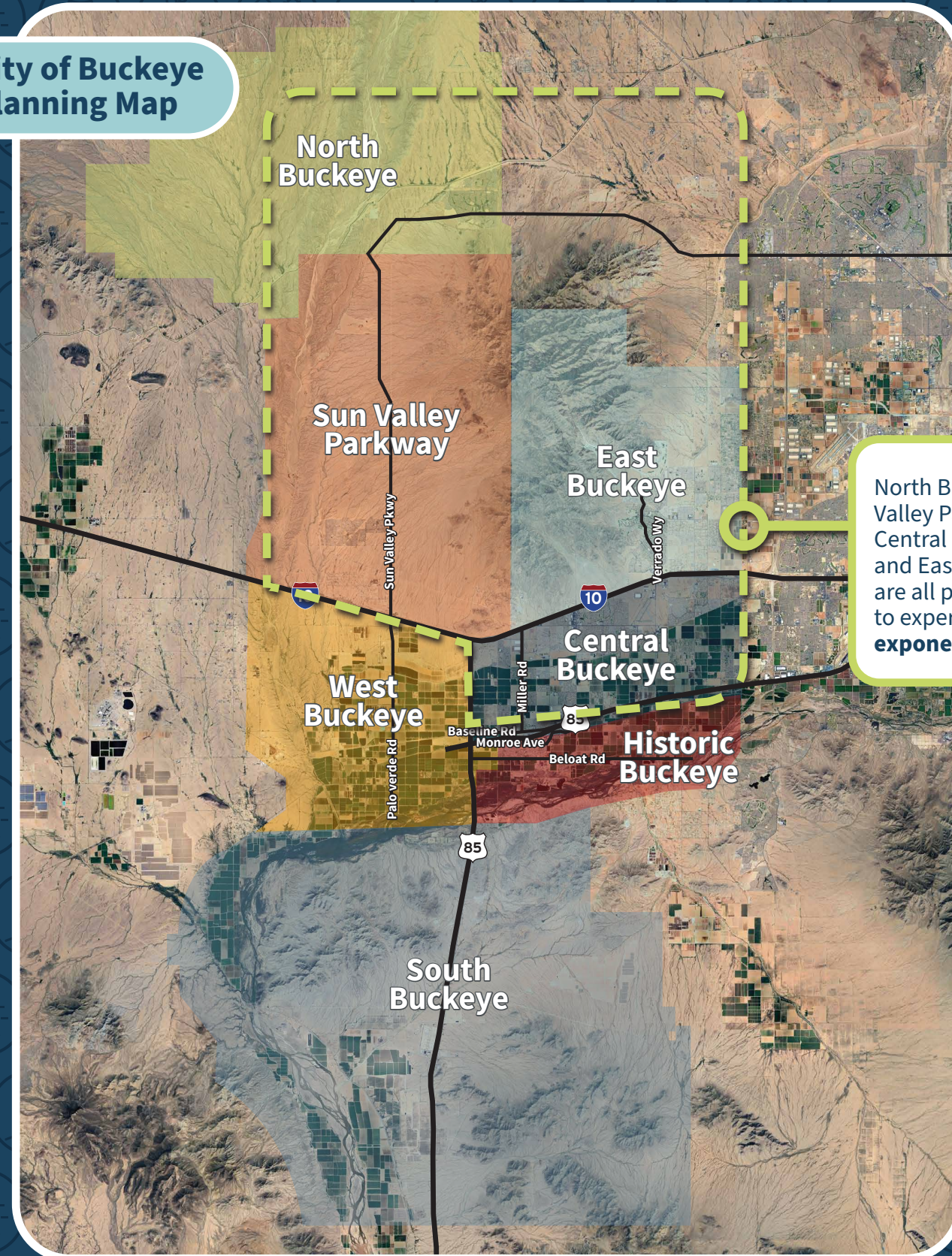
Buckeye is Arizona's largest city geographically and is only at 14% build-out.



Younger families are moving to Buckeye. Amenities should be designed to appeal to an increasing middle-age population while remaining accessible for elderly and young children.

To fully assess and best understand the needs and priorities of residents within this large geographic area, this plan divided the city into multiple planning areas. These planning areas were used throughout the plan, including in the identification of demographics and trends.

City of Buckeye Planning Map



North Buckeye, Sun Valley Parkway, Central Buckeye, and East Buckeye are all projected to experience **exponential growth**





04

COMMUNITY NEEDS AND OUTREACH

Community Engagement

The community outreach and stakeholder engagement plan was tailored to provide Buckeye residents with multiple ways to provide input and feedback throughout the entire planning process. The outreach included:

- Community workshops
- Citywide special events
- Individual interviews with leadership
- Focus group meetings
- User group meetings
- Interactive project website
- Statistically Valid Survey
- Citywide Findings/Outcomes Presentations



The community involvement underscores the vital role that resident engagement plays in the parks and recreation system. Recognizing that the success of the parks system hinges on the active participation and input of the community, the outreach program provided several opportunities for the community to provide meaningful input at every stage of the planning and implementation process.

Community Needs Assessments Findings

The following pages provide the outcomes from the community outreach for programming and amenities for both citywide and specific planning areas.

TOP 12 AMENITY NEEDS BASED ON STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY

1

Aquatics/Pools



2

Fitness & Exercise



3

Art Performances



4

Outdoor Adventures



5

Splash Pads



6

Natural Preserves



7

Paved Multi-Use Paths



8

Indoor Ball Courts



9

Community Center



10

Fishing Areas



11

Multi-Use Paths



12

Nature Center



TOP 12 PROGRAM NEEDS BASED ON STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY

1

Hobby/Interest Classes



2

Fitness Programs



3

Special Events/Festivals



4

Arts Programs



5

Arts Performances



6

Family Programming



7

Educational Classes



8

Nature Programs



9

Pop-Up Programs



10

Swim Lessons



11

Adult Sports



12

Water Fitness Programs





The City of Buckeye divided into multiple planning areas helps to understand the 1 to 1 correspondence between community needs and planning areas.

Due to the size of the City, the team cross referenced the outreach results by planning zones to better understand the specific programming and amenities needs for each area

TOP 5 COMMUNITY NEEDS: PROGRAMS

North Buckeye

1. Art Programs
2. Fitness Classes
3. Nature/Environmental Classes
4. Adaptive Recreation Programs
5. Hobby/Interest Classes

West Buckeye

1. Art Performances
2. Hobby/Interest Classes
3. Performing Arts
4. Arts Programs
5. Water Fitness Classes

Historic Buckeye

1. Pickleball Lessons/Leagues
2. Educational Classes
3. Art Performances
4. Nature/Environmental Classes
5. Teen Programs

East Buckeye

1. Pickleball Lessons
2. Adult Sports
3. Hobby/Interest Classes
4. Art Performances
5. Water Fitness Classes

Sun Valley Parkway

1. Art Programs
2. Hobby/Interest Classes
3. BMX/Biking
4. Pickleball Lessons/Leagues
5. Adult Sports

Central Buckeye

1. Pickleball Lessons/Leagues
2. Adult Sports
3. Hobby/Interest Classes
4. Fitness Classes
5. Educational Classes

South Buckeye

1. Water Fitness Classes
2. Educational Classes
3. Hobby/Interest Classes
4. Intergenerational Programs
5. Nature/Environmental Classes



The City of Buckeye divided into multiple planning areas helps to understand the 1 to 1 correspondence between community needs and planning areas.

Due to the size of the City, the team cross referenced the outreach results by planning zones to better understand the specific programming and amenities needs for each area

TOP 5 COMMUNITY NEEDS: AMENITIES

North Buckeye

1. Indoor Exercise Facilities
2. Outdoor Exercise Equipment
3. Aquatics/Pool Facilities
4. Outdoor Fitness Exercise Facilities
5. Recreation Center

Sun Valley Parkway

1. Aquatics/Pool Facilities
2. Indoor Fitness Facilities
3. Pickleball Courts
4. Outdoor Fitness Exercise Facilities
5. E-Sports Room

West Buckeye

1. Indoor Walking/Running Track
2. Aquatics/Pool Facilities
3. Indoor Fitness Exercise Facilities
4. Outdoor Exercise Equipment
5. Pickleball Courts

Central Buckeye

1. Indoor Walking/Running Track
2. Aquatics/Pool Facilities
3. Pickleball Courts
4. Indoor Fitness Exercise Facilities
5. Outdoor Fitness Exercise Facilities

Historic Buckeye

1. Pickleball Courts
2. Indoor Walking/Running Track
3. Indoor Fitness Exercise Facilities
4. Outdoor Exercise Equipment
5. Disc Golf Course

South Buckeye

1. Aquatic/Pool Facilities
2. Outdoor Exercise Equipment
3. Indoor Walking/Running Track
4. Outdoor Fitness Exercise Facilities
5. Multi-Use Paths and Trails

East Buckeye

1. Pickleball Courts
2. Aquatics/Pool Facilities
3. Indoor Fitness Exercise Facilities
4. Recreation Center
5. Indoor Walking/Running Track



Comparative Analysis Findings

The City conducted benchmarking analysis that included seeking information from representative municipalities to determine whether the City adequately provides municipal parks for residents to use. The representative municipal agencies included: Boulder Parks and Recreation, Casa Grande Parks and Recreation, Glendale Parks and Recreation, Goodyear Parks and Recreation, Avondale Parks and Recreation, and Peoria Parks and Recreation.

05

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Total Developed Park Acreage per 1,000 Residents

The following table provides the benchmarking totals for the levels of service provided for developed parks per 1,000 residents.

| Benchmarking Developed Park Acrea / 1,000 Residents Agency | Population | Total Acreage of Developed Parks Less 2 Acres | Total Acreage of Developed Parks 3 - 15 Acres | Total Acreage of Developed Parks 16-50 Acres | Total Acreage of Developed Parks over 51 Acres | Total Developed Acres/1,000 Residents* |
|---|------------|---|---|--|--|--|
| Avondale Parks and Recreation | 95,509 | 3.9 | 26.2 | 42.8 | 134.1 | 2.2 |
| Boulder Parks and Recreation | 108,250 | 28.35 | 169.1 | 236.49 | 423.53 | 7.92 |
| Buckeye Community Services | 119,110 | 6.55 | 7.39 | 47.75 | 68 | 1.09 |
| Casa Grande Parks and Recreation | 66,949 | 10.78 | 70.5 | 76.7 | 535 | 10.00 |
| Glendale Parks and Recreation | 252,136 | 6.3 | 318 | 100.4 | 537.1 | 3.81 |
| Goodyear Parks and Recreation | 111,508 | 4 | 53 | 190 | 0 | 2.22 |
| Peoria Parks and Recreation | 199,424 | 0 | 237.56 | 61.68 | 349.75 | 3.25 |
| *Note: Does not include special use areas. | | | | | | |

Total Indoor Recreation and Outdoor Aquatics Square Footage per 1,000 Residents

The following table provides benchmarking totals for indoor recreation facilities and aquatic facilities.

| Benchmarking Indoor Recreation Facilities and Aquatics Facilities Agency | Number of Indoor Recreation Facilities | Total Indoor Recreation Facilities Square Footage | Number of Outdoor Aquatic Centers/Pools | Total Outdoor Aquatic Center/Pool Square Footage | Indoor Recreation Square Footage Per 1,000 Residents | Outdoor Aquatic Centers Square Feet Per 1,000 Residents |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|---|
| Avondale Parks and Recreation | 2 | 90,500.00 | 1 | 16,944.00 | 947.55 | 177.41 |
| Boulder Parks and Recreation | 3 | 150,950.00 | 5 | 121,104.00 | 1,394.46 | 1,118.74 |
| Buckeye Community Services | 3 | 22,345.00 | 1 | 7,500.00 | 187.60 | 62.97 |
| Casa Grande Parks and Recreation | 3 | 100,200.00 | 1 | 11,967.00 | 1,496.00 | 178.75 |
| Glendale Parks and Recreation | 5 | 121,648.00 | 2 | 24,176.00 | 482.47 | 95.88 |
| Goodyear Parks and Recreation | 2 | 50,000.00 | 2 | 105,910.00 | 448.40 | 949.80 |
| Peoria Parks and Recreation | 1 | 42,000.00 | 3 | 40,156.00 | 210.61 | 110.32 |

Buckeye is significantly behind when compared to benchmark cities in:

Developed Park Acreage

Indoor Recreation Square Footage

Desired Level of Service for Amenities and Parks

Since the 2016 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the city has more than doubled in population from 57,000 residents to 119,110 residents. Currently, the city provides 1.09 acres of parks per 1,000 residents. To determine Buckeye’s desired level of service standards, the City used information gleaned from the survey issued to the jurisdictions in Maricopa County on the number of park acres, facilities and amenities. In addition, the city gathered information from the National Recreation and Parks Association. The following table provides a comparison of level of services amongst the benchmarking cities as well as the other agency findings.

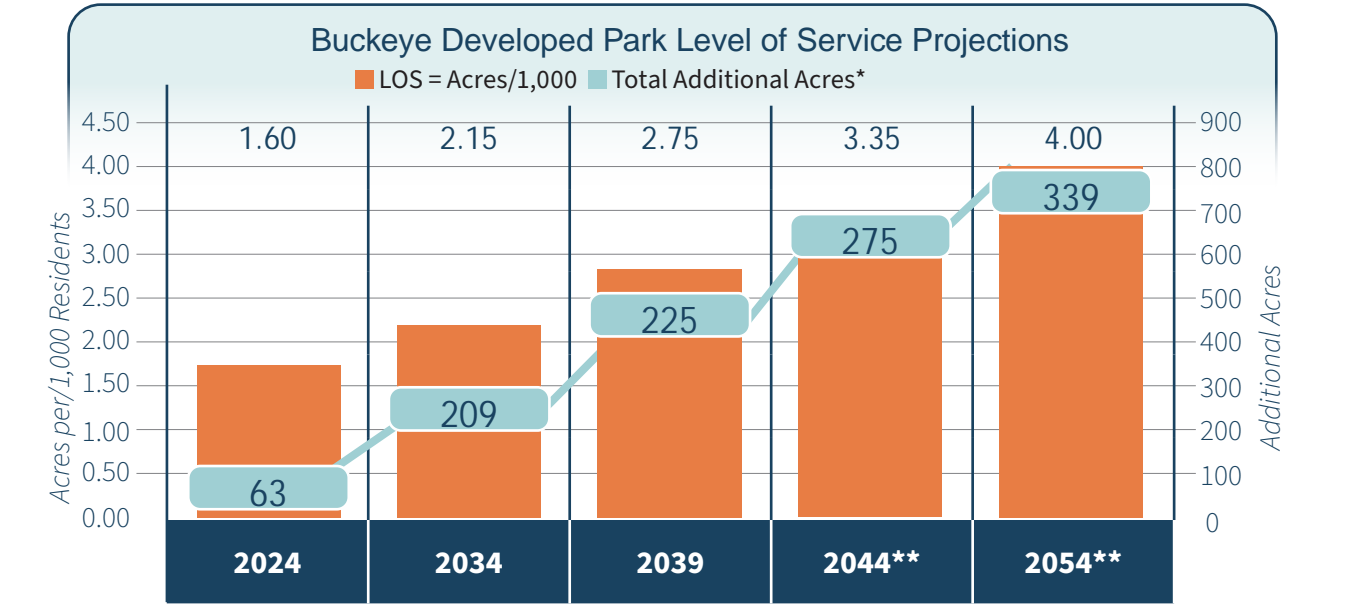
| Desired Level of Service Comparison Matrix | | | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Amenity | City of Buckeye Existing Level of Service | Valley-Wide Average Level of Service* | Benchmarking Valley-Wide Median Level of Service* | National Recreation and Parks Association** | City of Buckeye Desired Level of Service |
| Multi-Use Diamond Fields | 1 Per 14,889 Residents | 1 Per 8,000 Residents | 1 Per 16,873 Residents | 1 Per 6,821 Residents | 1 Per 12,000 Residents |
| Multi-Use Fields | 1 Per 17,015 Residents | 1 Per 13,000 Residents | 1 Per 13,471 Residents | 1 Per 7,375 Residents | 1 Per 13,000 Residents |
| Outdoor Basketball Court | 1 Per 17,015 Residents*** | 1 Per 10,000 Residents | 1 Per 10,029 Residents | 1 Per 9,643 Residents | 1 Per 10,000 Residents |
| Outdoor Pickleball Court | 0 | 1 Per 8,300 Residents | 1 Per 19,826 Residents | 1 Per 20,244 Residents | 1 Per 10,000 Residents |
| Outdoor Tennis Court | 0 | 1 Per 8,300 Residents | 1 Per 11,885 Residents | 1 Per 8,731 Residents | 1 Per 10,000 Residents |
| Outdoor Sand Volleyball Court | 1 Per 29,777 Residents | 1 Per 8,300 Residents | 1 Per 24,597 Residents | 1 Per 46,517 Residents | 1 Per 10,000 Residents |
| Playgrounds | 1 Per 19,852 Residents | 1 Per 8,000 Residents | 1 Per 13,276 Residents | 1 Per 5,016 Residents | 1 Per 8,000 Residents |
| Ramadas | 1 Per 4,107 Residents | 1 Per 4,000 Residents | 1 Per 7,407 Residents | N/A | 1 Per 4,000 Residents |
| Swimming Pools | 1 Per 119,110 Residents | 1 Per 46,000 Residents | 1 Per 111,780 Residents | 1 Per 65,697 Residents | 1 Per 50,000 Residents |
| Recreation Center/ Multi-Generational Center/ Community Center | 1 Per 39,703 Residents | 1 Per 50,500 Residents | 1 Per 62,000 Residents | 1 Per 57,750 Residents | 1 Per 50,000 Residents |
| Dog Park | 1 Per 119,110 Residents | 1 per 91,000 Residents | 1 Per 90,760 Residents | N/A | 1 Per 30,000 Residents |
| Park Acres | 1.09 Acres Per 1,000 Residents | 3.8 Acres Per 1,000 Residents | 3.7 Acres Per 1,000 Residents | 7 Acres Per 1,000 Population | 4 Acres Per 1,000 Residents |

*From 2022 City of Chandler Parks and Recreation Master Plan
**From NRPA Performance Review Report
*** Includes the 3 courts at 6th Street Plaza

Master Planned Communities / HOAs

Buckeye is comprised of several master planned communities which include HOA developed parks. The following table compares similar valley cites and the total developed park acreage for both agency and HOA parks. Each of these agencies utilize both City and HOA developed park acreage when defining the current level of service for developed park acreage per 1,000 residents. The table provides a comparison of the current and recommended service levels for developed park acreage per 1,000 residents.

| Developed Park Acreage - City and HOA Parks | | | | | | |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Agency | City Inventory (Acres) | HOA/Other Inventory (Acres) | Total Inventory (Acres) | Current % of Inventory Provided By City | Current Level of Service | Recommended Service Levels |
| Casa Grande | 693 | 551 | 1,244 | 56% | 22.1 Acres Per 1,000 Residents | 19 Acres Per 1,000 Residents |
| Chandler | 1,486 | 801 | 2,287 | 65% | 8.2 Acres Per 1,000 Residents | 8.5 Acres Per 1,000 Residents |
| Goodyear | 254 | 449 | 703 | 36% | 6.6 Acres Per 1,000 Residents | 8.8 Acres Per 1,000 Residents |
| Buckeye | 129 | 508 | 637 | 20% | 5.3 Acres Per 1,000 Residents | 8 Acres Per 1,000 Residents |



*Based on current inventory
** Notes: Uses 2039 Projected Population

Recreation Program Plan Strategies

The following identified Program Strategies are important for the Department to consider moving forward. These strategies will act as a guide for the implementation of this plan and the improvement of the Department. These strategies, as a result, should be updated and utilized by staff to implement and track progress on this Recreation Programming Plan’s recommendations.

| Recreation Programs and Services Strategies |
|--|
| Short-Term Strategies |
| Develop new programs that residents have identified as a need within fitness, hobbies and special interests, and special events. Specific program areas noted as “High Priority” in the Statistically Valid Survey included hobby and interest classes, fitness programs, community special events and festivals, art programming, family programming, educational classes and lectures, and nature programs. |
| Develop a program that follows a decision matrix to assess new opportunities incorporating (at a minimum) local trends, community interest/need, cost recovery goals, and age segment and population segment served by location among other Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). |
| Further develop the gap mapping for programs and locations to include overlaying similar provider locations onto program maps for a more detailed perspective. |
| Begin to address gaps in programming identified within the program mapping. |
| Enhance and optimize the Department’s marketing strategy for all programming. According to the community survey, 61% of respondents preferred the Eye on Buckeye publication and 43% preferred social media as their methods of learning about programming. With this information, and the everchanging preferred methods of communication, the Department should stay vigilant in understanding how their residents and participants can best be reached. |
| Ongoing Implementations |
| The Department should evaluate Core Program Areas and individual programs, ideally on an annual basis, to ensure offerings are relevant to evolving demographics and trends in the local community. |
| Staff should continue to monitor the effectiveness of the various pricing strategies they employ and adjust as necessary. It is also important to regularly monitor for local competitors and other similar service providers as an increase in competition may alter program pricing. |
| Continue to monitor demographic shifts and program offerings to ensure that the needs of each age group are being met. It would be best practice to establish a plan including what age segment to target, establish messaging, identify which marketing method(s) to utilize, create a social media campaign, and determine what to measure for success before allocating resources towards a particular effort. |
| Complete a Program Lifecycle Analysis on a regular basis and ensure that the percentage distribution closely aligns with desired performance. Include annual performance measures for each Core Program Area to track participation growth, customer retention, and percentage of new programs as an incentive for innovation and alignment with community trends. |

Organization Structure Assessment

Staffing

When comparing staffing in Buckeye to other parks and recreation agencies in the region of central Arizona and Boulder Colorado, similar results emerge. Buckeye falls below the median of other agencies and, excluding seasonal employees, actually ranks among the lowest staffing levels per 10,000 residents of the agencies evaluated. This data is illustrated in the tables below. *Only Parks and Recreation FTE’s are included in the data below.

With Seasonal Employees

| Agency | Population | Total Full-time Equivalents (FTEs) | Total FTEs per 10,000 Residents |
|--|------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Boulder Parks and Recreation | 108,250 | 358.45 | 33.11 |
| Goodyear Parks and Recreation | 111,508 | 167.1 | 14.99 |
| Buckeye Community Services | 119,110 | 94.3 | 7.92 |
| Peoria Parks and Recreation | 199,424 | 150.1 | 7.53 |
| Avondale Parks and Recreation | 95,509 | 41.8 | 4.38 |
| Glendale Parks and Recreation | 252,136 | 103.8 | 4.12 |
| NRPA Median for agencies serving 100,000 to 250,000: 120.0 Total FTEs, 7.9 FTEs per 10,000 residents | | | |

Without Seasonal Employees

| Agency | Population | Total Full-time Equivalents (FTEs) | Total FTEs per 10,000 Residents |
|--|------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Boulder Parks and Recreation | 108,250 | 358.45 | 33.11 |
| Goodyear Parks and Recreation | 111,508 | 167.1 | 14.99 |
| Peoria Parks and Recreation | 199,424 | 150.1 | 7.53 |
| Buckeye Community Services | 119,110 | 66.8 | 5.60 |
| Avondale Parks and Recreation | 95,509 | 41.8 | 4.38 |
| Glendale Parks and Recreation | 252,136 | 103.8 | 4.12 |
| NRPA Median for agencies serving 100,000 to 250,000: 120.0 Total FTEs, 7.9 FTEs per 10,000 residents | | | |

In terms of full-time equivalents comparison with the other benchmark cities, Buckeye is fourth out of the seven benchmark cities when looking at FTEs with season employees. In terms of acres of developed parks, both Buckeye and Goodyear have 1.5 acres per FTE. When comparing FTEs without seasonal employees, Buckeye is second lowest out of the seven benchmark cities with only Glendale providing fewer number of FTE per 10,000 residents. Buckeye is below the NRPA FTE per 10,000 residents which is 7.9 compared to Buckeye’s 4.28 FTE without seasonal employees.



Staffing Recommendations

There is already a very strong culture of “partnership” within the city and especially within the Community Services Department. The City relies heavily on other organizations, entities, agencies, and individuals to serve the residents of Buckeye in an operationally efficient manner. It is expected this practice will continue and grow in the years to come. Even with this strong commitment to partnerships to leverage the staffing needs of the city, improvements can

be made for parks and recreation to elevate the high quality of this public service. Based on a thorough assessment of existing staffing in the Department as well as best practice findings from similar agencies both regionally and nationally, the following recommendations were developed to improve efficacy of parks and recreation in Buckeye as a progressive and resilient public service.

Strategic Hires

- Community Research and Data Management Specialist
- Asset Management/Logistics Specialist
- Business Analyst
- Volunteer Program Manager
- Communications and Community Engagement Coordinator

Modernize Employment Practices and Support

- Improve job descriptions with greater specificity and modern terminology
- Develop and manage a consistent and thorough on-boarding process for new or transferred employees
- Develop a formalized training program for all divisions of the Department
- Complete “career mapping” for each position within the Department to identify logical growth opportunities
- Develop a formalized incentive program aligned with Department performance objectives

Additional Staffing

- Specialized/certified maintenance staff
- Front-line staff and maintenance crew leaders



06

THEMES



Based on what we heard, the following themes were identified from the key recommendations.



Based on what we heard the following themes were identified based on key recommendations.



CELEBRATE OUR NATURAL RESOURCES

Most Supported Key Recommendations

- Explore partnership opportunities for nature center with organizations like Audubon
- Continue the investment in Rio Reimagined
- Conduct a grant study on land purchase opportunities
- Partner with FCDMC to maximize green infrastructure drainage solutions as the need develops

What We Heard



“We’re unique in a lot of ways and the biggest is all of the open space we have. Would like to see the City buy the land adjacent to the White Tanks to ensure its preservation.”

73%

Of Residents Support Dedicated Funding Options that Enable the Preservation of Open Spaces and Development of Parks and Trails*

“Have done a good job at preserving and protecting wildlife corridors with the White Tanks Conservancy. Making sure that is not an afterthought and it’s an upfront priority is important as development continues to occur.”

87%

Of Residents Support Preserving Open Space and High-Value Natural Resources*

*Based on statistically-valid survey



ENHANCE COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY

Most Supported Key Recommendations

- Create a trail connection between Skyline and White Tank Mountains Regional Parks
- Add a trailhead to the west side of Skyline Regional Park
- Connect rivers to ridges in the City
- Create a ten-year Arts and Culture Plan
- Special Events and Festivals

What We Heard



“I would like to see trails that connect. Trails that go beyond the immediate community.”

#1

Resident
Need is
Special
Events and Festivals*



79%

Of Residents Support Development
of Multi-Use Paths and Trails*



**based on statistically valid survey*

“There are some groups that aren't as fluent on social media as others. Communication needs to be a combination of tried-and-true communication like mailings mixed with social media and more technology-based solutions.”



GROW A WELL- DISTRIBUTED PARKS SYSTEM

Most Supported Key Recommendations

- Create a shared-use performing arts space
- Work with developers on opportunities to construct parks in master planned communities that could be conveyed to the city
- Partner and co-locate future schools with land for a community park, recreation center, and aquatics facility
- Master plan and build multi-generational center and aquatics facility

What We Heard



“We need a more centralized aquatic center/rec center. Buckeye is so large and driving out to the current center is too far.”

80%

Of Residents Support Identifying
and Acquiring Land to Develop
More City Parks*



“I would love to see a Buckeye sports complex that can provide year-round sports opportunities and host tournaments.”

84%

Of Residents Support Developing
New Indoor Recreation Facilities



**Based on statistically-valid survey*



REINVEST IN EXISTING ASSETS

Most Supported Key Recommendations

- Add 10+ pickleball courts to Sundance Park
- Implement park ranger program
- Implement formal volunteer program
- Create a gateway on the Monroe Avenue realignment near Town Park, study connection options between 6th Street Plaza and City Hall for events

What We Heard



“I wish there were more shaded play areas and large shade trees in the parks.”

73% 

of Residents Support Improving the Existing Aquatics Facility*

“Please invest in the communities in the far west and historic Buckeye areas. We have no close recreation areas and the park areas available to us lack amenities.”

81% 

of Residents Support Investment in Updating and Improving City Parks*

**based on statistically valid survey*



STRATEGICALLY PROVIDE PROGRAMMING OPPORTUNITIES

Most Supported Key Recommendations

- Partner with HOAs to host special events in various areas throughout the city
- Assess partnership opportunities to expand nature based education programs
- Provide adaptive recreation programming for all ages
- Explore opportunities to provide recreation programming in master planned communities

What We Heard



“Our biggest challenge is that there is no indoor space for additional programs.”

#1

Hobby and Interest Classes is the Top Programming Priority for Residents 

“Please consider additional art classes for those of us who don't live in a 55+ community.”

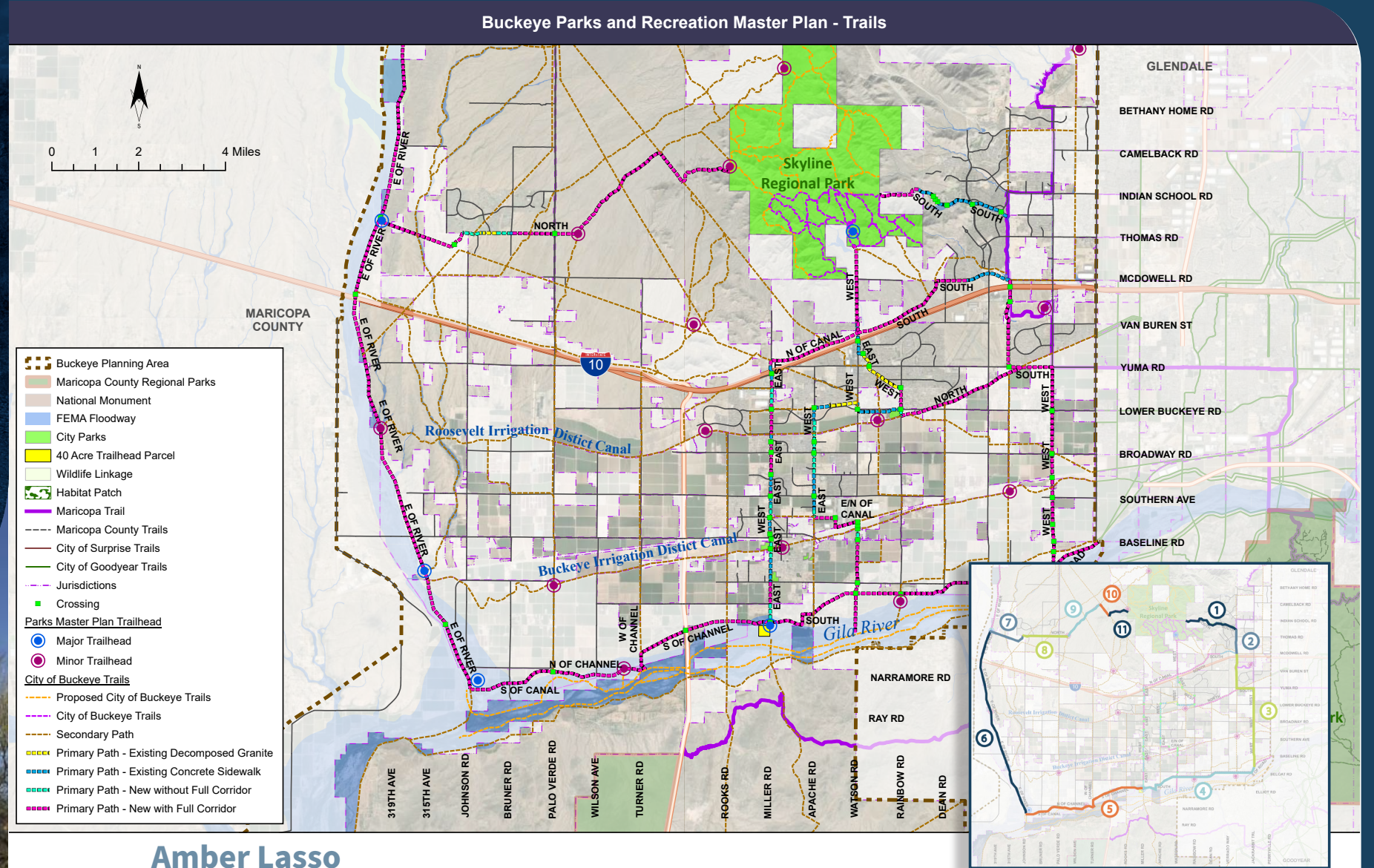
71% 

Of Residents Identify Hobby and Interest Classes as a Need



07

VISIONARY PROJECTS



Amber Lasso

The vision for the “Amber Lasso” is to develop a nature-based regional trail providing passage to the Rivers to Ridges areas and connecting the existing natural and cultural assets. The Amber Lasso is a looped trail alignment that includes a southern and northern perimeter loop with Skyline Regional Park at the central core of the two loops. The two irrigation canals (RID and BWCCD) provide east/west connections within the southern loop of the Amber Lasso as well. Several additional primary pathway connections from the Amber Lasso include north/south connections with Watson Road and Miller Road which provide connectivity to Skyline Regional Park, Sundance Park, Earl Edgar Park, and the Gila River.

The Amber Lasso alignment utilizes existing pathways and corridors that include Lost Creek Trail in Verrado, Maricopa Trail, El Rio corridor, and the Hassyampa corridor. Key initial recommendations include an Amber Lasso site specific trail master plan to further define the trail alignment, create branding identity and signage standards, explore partnerships, and identify grant opportunities.

Rivers to Ridges

Within the City of Buckeye's municipal planning area lies a multitude of existing natural and cultural assets, such as the Sonoran Desert National Monument, White Tank Mountain Regional Park, Skyline Regional Park, Buckeye Hills Regional Park, Robbins and Powers Butte Wildlife Areas, and the Gila and Hassayampa rivers. Yet, these features exist as isolated assets that should be integrated and connected by pathways and trails.

Primary paths should be constructed to connect the White Tank Mountains to both the Gila and Hassayampa rivers. Similarly, the Buckeye Hills and the Sonoran Desert National Monument are recommended to be connected via primary paths where topography does not constrain the path width or surface material. Major and minor trailheads are utilized for accessing the Rivers to Ridges Paths.

The Maricopa Trail and El Rio Trail are prime examples of the City's proposed Rivers to Ridges trail along the Gila River. The Maricopa Trail already has regional significance and connections to communities throughout the Valley. The El Rio has also been identified as a regional pathway and trail corridor to provide connectivity to the neighboring cities of Goodyear and Avondale to the east.

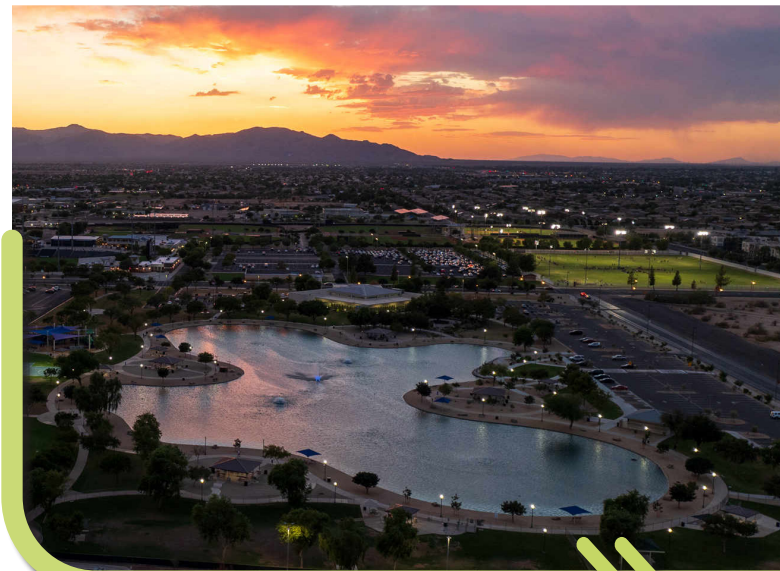
In 2016, the El Rio Design Guidelines and Planning Standards Master Plan was developed in a collaborative effort between the cities of Buckeye, Avondale, and Goodyear; Maricopa County Planning and Development; and Flood Control District of Maricopa County. The master plan provides a shared vision to continue to restore the Gila River and provide the county and cities with a consistent design and planning standard to maintain the focus and increase awareness and appreciation of the Gila River.

In 2020, Buckeye developed the El Rio Trail Assessment which provided an assessment of the El Rio corridor within the jurisdictional limits of Buckeye. The plan evaluated alignment alternatives along the river and identified a preferred alternative.



Municipal/Recreation Campus

The community has identified a need to provide more indoor recreation space. The City has identified the vision of developing a public municipal campus to include a recreation center and aquatics facility with other community facilities like libraries and public safety facilities. This could become the model to provide a municipal / recreation campus within or around the City planning areas. Other valley cities such as Surprise, Avondale, Glendale and Goodyear are utilizing this model to create efficiencies with infrastructure and development to provide access to community-based facilities within a municipal campus setting. A recommendation from this plan is for the City to conduct a feasibility assessment to identify potential sites for a municipal campus.

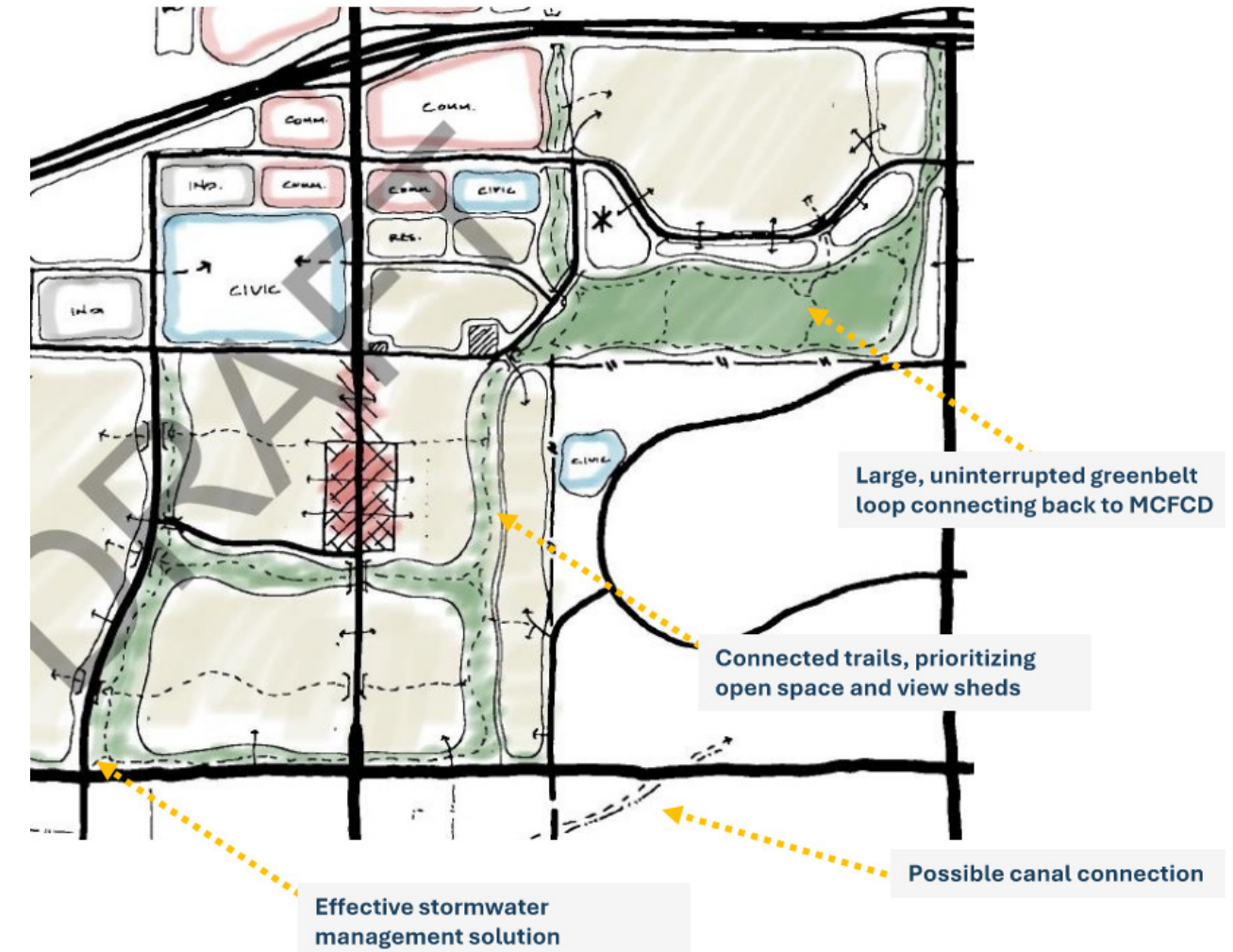


Presence at the Landing

The Landing is a 2,100-acre (3.4 square mile) project site located just south of I-10 and Verrado Way. It is a critical growth area for Buckeye and offers an opportunity to integrate an entertainment hub with unique and diverse recreational and living opportunities. The Landing also provides the city with another way to incorporate recreational amenities and programming into the area.

The Landing project area includes the Flood Control District of Maricopa County Flood Retaining Structure 4. This flood retaining structure provides 100-year flood protection for downstream landowners. The dam is maintained and operated by the FCDMC with Arizona Department of Water

Resources (ADWR) as the regulating agency. This property provides 205 acres of land use within the FCDMC flood retaining structure. FCDMC is open for joint use recreation opportunities and has several examples of this kind of application throughout the Valley. FCDMC provides recreation easements for the use of the land. Park development and maintenance costs are the responsibility of the City. An example of a similar use within a FCDMC facility is the City of Phoenix's Reach 11 sports complex. The Community Services Department should continue to be involved during the planning process to identify recreation opportunities and be part of this diverse development.



The Landing Land Use Concept

BUCKEYE AT PLAY

PARKS AND RECREATION
MASTER PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

