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WASCO RECREATION BALLPARK



Wasco Ballpark Renovation
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city of wasco

urban greening, parks and open space master plan

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Executive Summary



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Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

In December 2012, the City of Wasco initiated development of a comprehensive Urban Greening, Parks and Open Space Master Plan. The City of Wasco is the recipient of a State of California Natural Resources Agency Proposition 84 – Urban Greening for Sustainable Communities Planning Grant. The grant is being used to develop a Master Plan that will enable the City to consolidate and update policies and standards relating to parks, greenbelts, and open space. Although the City of Wasco owns five of the public parks located within the city, the Wasco Recreation and Parks District also owns four other parks within the city and manages all recreation programs and park maintenance. As such this study will be shared with the Parks District. In order to assist with the development of this Master Plan, the City retained the services of Moore Iacofano Golstman (MIG), Inc., who worked closely with both

the City of Wasco and the Parks District.

KEY ISSUES

The City of Wasco and the Wasco Recreation and Parks District are facing a number of issues that influence the provision of parks and greenbelts, recreation facilities and recreation services. The City of Wasco Urban Greening, Parks and Open Space Master Plan is designed to address these issues, positioning the City and the District to better serve residents now and into the future. These challenges and opportunities were identified by gathering information through a public outreach process, in which approximately 260 community members participated, and in conjunction with a needs assessment analysis that utilized current and projected future population levels, service area analyses and benchmarking other comparable park districts.



Above: Park Pavilion.

Parkland Deficits: With its current ratio of 2.67 acres per 1,000 residents, Wasco falls short of meeting the State Quimby Act required standard of a minimum of 3 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, and would require an additional 6.85 acres to achieve this standard. **However from the standpoint of its municipal code and General Plan standard of providing 6 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, Wasco has an even more acute deficit of 3.33 acres per 1,000 residents and to achieve this higher standard would need 69 acres of additional park land (see Tables ES.1 and ES.2).** The park deficit is most acute for those park types that provide the types of amenities that residents use and need for everyday recreation activities. This

includes neighborhood parks, where Wasco's existing ratio of only 0.27 acres per 1,000 residents, represents a deficit of 2.23 acres per 1,000 residents compared to its General Plan and Municipal Code Standard of 2.5 acres per 1,000 residents. Similarly, the current ratio for community parks is 1.99 acres per 1,000 residents, for a deficit of 1.01 acres compared to the standard of 3 acres per 1,000. The neighborhood and community park deficits have contributed to the overuse of existing facilities. This overuse has led to the accelerated deterioration of these facilities along with increased maintenance costs, and ultimately an increase in deferred maintenance items when financial resources cannot keep up with maintenance requirements. Eventually

Table ES.1: Parkland Goals and Standards.

Parkland Classification	Recommended Standard Acres per 1,000 Residents	Existing Acres 2013	Existing Parkland Ratio per 1,000 Residents	Surplus (or Deficit) per 1,000 Residents from the Recommended Standard
Neighborhood Parks	2.5	6	.27	(2.23)
Community Parks	3	41	1.99	(1.01)
Total Combined Parkland	6.0	55	2.67	(3.33)

Table ES.2: Park Needs.

Existing Standards	2013 Population - 20,729 Surplus (Deficit)
Municipal Code/Park District Standard - 2.5 acres per 1,000	0.17 acres
To meet Quimby Act Minimum Standard of 3 acres per 1,000 Residents	(6.85 acres)
To meet Current City General Plan Standard of 6 acres per 1,000 Residents	(69 acres)

this cycle leads to community complaints, as cited below, about scheduling and a lack of access to needed facilities and programs.

Access to Parks and Facilities: Parks that are located too far away and the lack of facilities were both frequently identified as reasons why people never or rarely visited the parks in Wasco. In other interviews and focus groups, it was also stated that people need better access to neighborhood parks. This observation is supported by a service area analysis showing that there are six areas in Wasco not served by any park type within a ½ mile radius. In addition, managers of local sports teams, local youth and the business focus group all complained about a shortage of sports fields and facilities for practice. Although Wasco already does provide a broad range of different types of recreation facilities, the public perception that there is shortage of such facilities is supported by an analysis of current and future needs which shows a significant deficit in almost every facility category. This analysis is based on the existing population of 20,729 in 2013 and a projected 2023 population of 28,419 residents.

Park Maintenance: Dissatisfaction with the current level of maintenance of park grounds and recreation facilities was frequently cited throughout the public outreach process, including stakeholder interviews, focus groups and the community questionnaire.

Specific complaints included the poor state of restrooms, turf management and gopher holes and damage caused by vandalism. It was also acknowledged that because of budget constraints there have been a number of deferred maintenance issues.

Funding Challenges: Insufficient funding was cited as the reason it was so difficult to properly maintain some facilities. Residents complained there simply were not enough resources to keep park lawns sufficiently watered and green. Others observed that limited financial resources as well as limited facility availability constrained the capacity of the Park District to deliver a broader range of recreational programming. Increasing local taxes to help fund parks and recreation was not seen as a viable option.

It should be noted that WRPD spends less on programs and capital improvements and, despite complaints about park maintenance, spends more on park and facility maintenance and administration and overhead than the average of other districts surveyed by MIG. Maintenance costs are higher for WRPD due, in part, to not having the financial ability to upgrade its park systems and operations as most other districts have been able to do. WRPD has identified almost a million dollars in unfunded long term needs.

Park Security: Feeling unsafe was frequently cited as a reason for not visiting parks in the community. Although Wasco was described as a

reasonably safe community without the gang problems experienced in other nearby cities, some still wanted to see an increased police presence in local parks. One of the most frequently cited reasons people hope to see a more extensive recreation program in the future is to keep local youth busy and engaged in positive activities that will keep them out of trouble.

Agency Coordination and Responsibilities: Residents expressed the hope that the City, Park District and the School Districts will succeed in improving their capacity to work together in order to more effectively meet the needs of community residents, especially the youth of Wasco. Some stated that it is unclear how responsibility for the delivery of parks and recreation services is now divided between the City and Park District. The sharp contrast between the high quality of recreation/sports facilities provided by the local high school and those available to the general public was frequently noted.

Community Awareness and Involvement: Many commented on what they saw as general lack of public interest on the part of the community as well as a low level of trust in government. Although a small percentage of local residents were seen as engaged in community life, the majority are simply struggling to earn a decent living in a difficult economy. The lack of a central community gathering place was

seen as a factor contributing to this problem.

Water Usage and Urban Greening: Existing landscaped areas in the Wasco park system appear to be in compliance with current State of California water usage regulations. The latest regulations set an upper limit for the amount of water that can be applied annually to an established landscape area, and the City and Park District parks fall well below their established limit.

However, in light of the current drought in the Central Valley, the City of Wasco and the WRPD should pursue all available water conservation and water use efficiency opportunities. In particular, they should adopt low impact development practices that manage storm water as a resource rather than as a waste product. This will enable the City and Park District to enhance the local environment, protect public health and improve community livability – all while saving money – especially in the maintenance of parks and green belts.

Greenbelts and Walking Paths: The City of Wasco has a number of opportunities to build on their existing greenbelt and walking path system. An enhanced system will improve resident's access to City and District parks and recreation facilities while encouraging alternative modes of transportation that can provide greater connectivity throughout the community.

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

The City of Wasco Urban Greening, Parks and Open Space Master Plan is specifically designed to address community priorities for parks and recreation services in Wasco. Determining where Wasco should apply its parks and recreation resources was one of the key questions asked during stakeholder interviews, focus groups and in the community questionnaire. There was general agreement that upgrading existing parks, providing more recreation programs and improving park maintenance should be the priorities for the City and the District.

In terms of specific facility needs, individuals participating in the interview and focus groups indicated that sports facilities, especially more practice facilities, are the number one priority for future need. Other top priority facilities included a new community center, possibly with a gymnasium; aquatic facilities; greenways/paths for running, biking, dog walking and family exercise; providing, upgrading or replacing park restrooms; and better lighting in all parks.

There was a consistent request to see a wider range of recreation programming, especially for youth but also for other segments of the population. However, youth development was identified more than any other choice as a key benefit of parks and recreation. Wasco was consistently described as a

community in which there was very little for youth to do after school. Sports and recreation are seen as a way to provide local youth with a positive outlet for the energy and as a major deterrent against delinquency.

It was recognized that limited financial resources and the lack of a community center was constraining the capacity of the Parks District to provide more varied programming. Among the types of recreation programming the public would like to see special events were by far the most popular choice followed by sports programming and before and after school programs.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Urban Greening, Parks and Open Space Master Plan presents goals, policies, and recommendations for the City of Wasco to implement as resources permit. The Wasco Recreation and Park District is also welcome to adopt these policies and implement them as resources become available. The overarching goal is to provide a comprehensive system of urban green spaces, local parks, and recreation programming that will meet resident's needs and is accessible to the entire community. The goals have been developed to directly take advantage of the strengths and opportunities in Wasco and to mitigate, to the extent possible, the challenges and obstacles facing the City and Park District.

Addressing Parkland Deficits

The parkland deficits constitute the most significant challenge as it underlies many of the other issues summarized above. There are two strategic actions the City and Park District can take to address park deficits. The first will require District actions and will target increasing the capacity of existing parks and facilities by upgrading, improving and expanding these parks. Current park capacity can also be increased through new agreements with the school districts and other potential partners that will provide expanded facility access to current residents for recreational programming.

The second way to address the park deficits is to develop new neighborhood and community parks that increase the size and scope of the overall park system. This can be achieved by having the City adopt local park ordinances requiring parkland dedication and development impact fees. These efforts will help the City and Park District acquire the land and funding needed to develop new neighborhood and community parks. The following is a list of goals for pursuing strategic actions that address the park deficits. These are described in greater detail Part III - Chapter One of this Master Plan.

Goal 1 – Provide a system of park classifications and amenity requirements for future parks that serve their intended purpose.

Goal 2 – Increase capacity of existing parks to meet user demand

Goal 3 – Improve the operational capacity of existing City and WRPD parks and facilities by making improvements that address deferred maintenance issues and respond to public concerns.

Goal 4 – Adopt a long term strategy to acquire and develop neighborhood and community parks in the defined gap areas per the ½ mile service area analysis map to work toward the General Plan goal of 6 acres of combined parkland per 1,000 residents.

Goal 5 – Pursue the development of a new community park containing the types of facilities and amenities the community identified would meet future demand for recreation in Wasco.

Goal 6 – Pursue development of a new Kern County Regional Park within the boundaries of the Wasco Recreation and Park District

Goal 7 – Meet current and future sports fields demand by better utilization of the Annin Avenue Soccer Park.

Addressing Urban Greening, Conservation and Connectivity

These goals are recommended as ways to create a greener and more environmentally sustainable city.

Goal 8 – Expand and improve multi-use trail systems

Goal 9 – Seek to implement community urban greening projects

Goal 10 – Insure low impact public development by using “green” building techniques

Goal 11 – Work to replace trees and plants within landscaped areas with species that are compatible with the area environment, conserve water and require minimal maintenance

Broadening Program Offerings

Implementation of these goals will impact community health and wellness while promoting the constructive use of leisure time.

Goal 12 – Broaden direct programming and help facilitate partner program offerings for all ages

Goal 13 – Address the growing demand for senior programs and services

Improving Communication and Capturing Community Spirit

Getting community residents involved in community life is vital for building community support and establishing a positive community image and sense of place.

Goal 14 – Seek ways to market and brand the “Wasco image.”

Goal 15 – Seek to provide good customer service

Goal 16 – Encourage community volunteers

City and Park District Organizational Responsibilities

The following goals will help the City and Park District maintain a mutually beneficial relationship that will best serve the community of Wasco.

Goal 17 – Seek to develop a master agreement between the City of Wasco and the Wasco Recreation and Park District that defines each agencies role in the acquisition, development, operation and maintenance of the Wasco parks and recreation system

Goal 18 – Seek to educate the community on the relationship and responsibilities of the City and the WRPD for parks and recreation services.

Building Stronger Community Partnerships

Establishing stronger community partnerships will enable Wasco to more effectively leverage community-wide resources for the delivery of parks and recreation services.

Goal 19 – Improve the partnership between the Wasco Recreation and Park District and the Wasco Union Elementary School District and between the Wasco Recreation and Park District and the Wasco Union High School District by developing a master agreement for the sharing of facilities.

Goal 20 – Create a parks and recreation delivery system where equitable partnerships are developed and managed with other public agencies, not-for-profit organizations, commercial recreation providers, and independent contractors to maximize the City and Park District's resources in meeting the community needs for recreation and park services.

Goal 21 – Seek new partnerships for commercial recreational prospects and concessions.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AND FUNDING STRATEGIES

The final chapter in the Master Plan presents recommended policy criteria the City and WRPD can apply when considering a decision to fund or allocate resources to a capital project. Making sure a capital project meets one or more of the following criteria will insure that the City and WRPD are allocating funding and resources to projects that meet the goals and are consistent with the Urban Greening and Open Space Master Plan.

Improved Access for all Users — renovation projects to reduce accessibility barriers and generally make the facilities more user-friendly for customers of all ability levels.

General/Deferred Maintenance — renovation projects to address wear and tear on existing facilities and prepare them to continue to serve the community for the next decades.

Enhance Revenue — projects to strengthen the City's and/or the WRPD's ability to generate revenue through asset management, such as, increasing community rental space, expanding recreation program capacity, and/or improving facilities to attract new users and retain existing users.

Enhance Efficiency — projects to reduce City and/or WRPD operating and utilities costs through strategies such as increased energy efficiency,

reduced equipment repair and replacement, or reduced maintenance labor.

Enhance Programs — facility projects to improve the quality, participant experience, and range of programs or special events available to the community through the WRPD and/or the City.

Enhance the Wasco Image — projects that enhance the park and recreation customer experience and upgrade the aesthetic of community facilities to reflect the high quality of its programs, services, staff, and community expectations.

A Capital Improvement Plan presented in this same chapter lists projects that are needed to support the goals and recommendations of the Master Plan. The estimated cost, recommended funding source and applicable policy criteria are shown for each project. In addition, these CIP recommendations have been separated into three priority levels so that decisions on the allocation of financial resources can be made based on community priority needs:

- Level 1 – Priority projects to meet current needs
- Level 2 – Projects for which there is a demand for in the community if funding and resources can be obtained.
- Level 3 – Projects that the community desires if there is a way to fund them in the future.

Funding options available to the City and WRPD to address the funding needs of the CIP projects include both traditional tax dollars and fees; and unconventional options, such as, facilitating delivery through partnerships and collaborations with other agencies, organizations, and commercial recreation operators; volunteer services; donations/sponsorships; fund raising projects; use of assets to generate revenue; public and private grants; and, various financing options.

In particular, this chapter emphasizes how the City and WRPD can utilize neighborhood parkland dedication/ in-lieu fees and community park development impact fees to address its neighborhood and community park deficits. It describes how to accomplish this by increasing the recommended acres per 1,000 residents the City and WRPD should use in its Quimby formula for its Parkland Dedication/In-Lieu Fee Ordinance to a total of 3 acres per 1,000 residents for Neighborhood Parks. Finally, over and above the Quimby fee requirements, a Park Development Impact Fee Ordinance is recommended to achieve 3 acres per 1,000 residents for Community Parks, which would allow the City to meet its municipal code and general plan standard of providing 6 acres of total overall parkland per 1,000 residents.

These recommended park fees and other funding strategies should provide the City and WRPD with the strategies needed to implement a long term capital improvement program and pursue the additional recreation amenities desired by the community that are contained in the master plan recommendations; while freeing up the WRPD General Fund dollars for ongoing operations, maintenance and programs.

Master Plan Overview





Overview

The following sections are included in this chapter:

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Plan Purpose
- 1.3 How the Plan was Developed
- 1.4 Additional Planning Resources
- 1.5 Master Plan Organization

INTRODUCTION

In December 2012, the City of Wasco retained the services of Moore Iacofano Golstman (MIG), Inc., to prepare a comprehensive Urban Greening, Parks and Open Space Master Plan. The City of Wasco was the recipient of a State of California Natural Resources Agency Proposition 84 – Urban Greening for Sustainable Communities Planning Grant, and utilized that grant for the development of this Master Plan.

This Master Plan will enable the City to consolidate and update its policies and standards relating to parks, greenbelts, open space, and water conservation. The City

of Wasco owns five of the public parks located within the city, while the Wasco Recreation and Parks District (WRPD) owns the other four parks and manages all recreation programs and park maintenance. As such, this study will include the Parks District facilities and programming as well as the City facilities. MIG worked closely with both the City of Wasco and the Wasco Recreation and Parks District to develop this Master Plan.

PLAN PURPOSE

The planning process was initiated because the City of Wasco lacked an Urban Greening Plan that could consolidate and organize all policies related to open space, greenbelts and water conservation. At the same time, the only existing Parks Master Plan for the Wasco community had been previously adopted by the Wasco Recreation and Park District over seven years ago. As this Parks Master Plan did not address any City-owned parks



Top: Wasco Recreation & Parks District

Bottom: Wasco Recreation Ballpark

or connectivity to and from park facilities within Wasco, it was by itself too limited in its scope to adequately serve the park and recreation needs of the entire community.

Given this background, the plan has three major purposes: Describe current and future needs, interests and community preferences for parks and other open space, recreation and facilities; Present a long-term vision and goals for parks, recreation and open space in the City of Wasco for the next 10 years; and Identify priorities and develop recommendations for action that will guide future development and management of open space in Wasco, including all parks and greenbelts, as well as the recreation facilities and programs that utilize these areas.

The Master Plan is an essential first step that will enable the City of Wasco, working closely with the District and other partners, to develop policies and specific plans that will coordinate development of facilities between the two jurisdictions, provide greater connectivity and consistency between their facilities, and reduce water consumption within all these areas.

HOW THE PLAN WAS DEVELOPED

Development of the Master Plan has been a collaborative process involving staff from the City of Wasco, the Wasco Recreation and Parks

District, elected officials, community leaders and residents. In addition, the City engaged the services of MIG, Inc., a private parks and recreation planning firm to help develop the Master Plan.

Phase I – Existing Conditions: Where Are We Now?

The first phase of the planning process focused on existing park and recreation resources in the Wasco Area. This chiefly involved an inventory, mapping and evaluation of all existing parks, greenbelts and recreation facilities provided by the City and WRPD. In order to acquire a more comprehensive picture of recreation assets available to residents, the assessment was extended to include parks and facilities of other service providers including Wasco Union High School District, Wasco Union Elementary School District, and other private non-profit associations. To establish a baseline understanding of the communities served by WRPD, demographics and other information about the Wasco area were collected and assessed. Finally, interviews were conducted with community leaders and other stakeholders representing various organizations and other groups that interact with the District. This preliminary outreach was undertaken to develop an initial profile of key issues, priorities and perceived needs that would help guide subsequent outreach and planning activities.



Top: Wasco Rose Festival

Bottom: Water Tower

Phase II – Community Needs Assessment: Where Do We Want To Be?

Phase II focused primarily on public outreach and analysis of the park system to determine key recreation needs in the community. The public was provided an array of different methods for providing their input regarding current recreation needs and perceived gaps, and to identify priorities for future park and recreation services. These opportunities included a community questionnaire, sports group questionnaires, focus groups, and two community workshops. Findings from these outreach tools, together with an analysis of the existing park system, including comparisons with other park and recreation districts that serve communities with demographics similar to Wasco, provided the project team with a picture of the how well the WRPD’s current parklands, recreation facilities and programs are meeting the needs of the community today, and where it needs to be in the future.

Phase III – Plan Development: How Do We Get There?

Phase III drew upon findings that emerged from the preceding phases to formulate recommended goals and strategies for achieving them. Given the gap between the existing park system and where it should be in the future, these recommendations chart a path to enable the City, District and other potential partners to fully meet the recreational needs

of the community. These goals and recommendations include proposals for new recreational facilities, improvements to existing facilities, and how the City and District working together can develop the financial resources and ongoing revenue necessary to implement all these recommendations.

Phase IV – Plan Refinement and Adoption

Acceptance of the Urban Greening, Parks and Open Space Master Plan document and its recommendations by the Wasco City Council, as well as the WRPD Board of Directors, is the final hurdle. During this final phase, MIG provided an Administrative Draft for review by staff from the City of Wasco and the WRPD. Feedback received was used to confirm and refine the overall strategic direction and specific recommendations of the Master Plan, resulting in a Draft Master Plan for further community review. Following the presentation of the Draft Master Plan to the City for review and comment, the Final Master Plan will be generated. Upon its acceptance by the Wasco City Council, it is hoped that the Master Plan will also be used by the WRPD to update its current Parks Master Plan, so it can help provide a consistent guide for the future development of urban greening, parks, open space and recreation throughout the Wasco community.



Workshops were held to obtain input from community members.

ADDITIONAL PLANNING RESOURCES

Development of this Master Plan has benefitted from other planning documents developed and adopted in recent years. Some of the most significant documents are highlighted below.

2010 Urban Water Management Plan, City of Wasco, June 2011.

Bicycle Master Plan, City of Wasco, September 2013.

General Plan, City of Wasco, Adopted October 2002.

General Plan Annual Report Planning Year 2012, City of Wasco, March 2013.

Housing Element, City of Wasco, July 2009.

Municipal Code, City of Wasco.

Parks Master Plan, Wasco Parks and Recreation District, 2005.

School Traffic Study, City of Wasco, September 2013.

Urban Greening Planning Grant Application, City of Wasco, April 2010.

Vision and Strategic Plan, City of Wasco, 2011.

Wasco Recreation and Parks Proposed Operating Budget, 2012-2013.

By drawing upon information contained within these and other planning documents, as well as current public input, the resulting Master Plan reflects not only the priorities and preferences of the Wasco community, but also planning data provided by these other sources.

MASTER PLAN ORGANIZATION

The Wasco Urban Greening, Parks and Open Space Master Plan is introduced by the Executive Summary and this Introduction. Following these two sections, the bulk of the Master Plan is divided into three major components. Each of these three parts of the Master Plan parallel and reflect work completed during the first three phases of planning process, as described above in section 1.3.

Part One – Existing Conditions Summary Report

The first major part of the Master Plan summarizes the results of all planning and analysis activities completed in Phase I. This includes primarily a snapshot picture of the existing open space, parks and recreation system in Wasco, including all parks and facilities owned and/or operated by the City of Wasco and the Wasco Recreation and Parks District. The overview features a profile of each individual park, including current amenities, uses, conditions and water usage. In addition, a summary of WRPD recreation program offerings is provided. Finally, a demographic profile of the Wasco community provides context for the existing park and recreation system, as does a description of how the major public institutions in Wasco, including the local school districts, are organized for the management of open space assets located within Wasco.



Top: Westside Park

Bottom: Skate Park

Part Two – Community Needs Assessment

The second major part of the Master Plan integrates results from the preceding existing conditions report and additional analysis conducted during phase II, along with input from residents, to detail park and recreational program needs of the community, both present-day and projected future needs as the population grows. Results from all the community outreach activities are summarized to help identify community priorities as reflected in the views of community members concerning local parks, recreation facilities and programs. The existing park and recreation facility is also analyzed by comparing it with the offerings of comparable park and recreation districts and by analyzing the capacity of the existing parks and recreation facilities to meet current and future projected needs. The assessment also examined the potential to improve health and wellness of local residents by leveraging recreation trends and other opportunities, and then concludes by examining the financial capacity of WRPD to deliver the service level that is desired by the community.

Part III – Implementation

The third and final part of the Master Plan presents specific goals, policies and recommendations for the City of Wasco and the WRPD to implement, as resources permit. The purpose of these proposals, if implemented, is to provide a comprehensive system of urban green spaces, local parks and recreational programming that will meet the needs and priorities of residents as previously identified through the needs assessment process. The third component of the Master Plan also presents estimated costs for capital projects and non-capital projects that have been recommended. It concludes with a financial plan and funding nexus to facilitate actual implementation of these recommendations, including funding options for the maintenance and improvement of existing parks and facilities, the design and development of new parks and facilities, and the for the delivery of recreation programs and services.

Appendices

The Master Plan also includes other related documents and information generated during the course of the project. These include a water usage assessment of existing landscaped areas in accordance with the Water Conservation in Landscaping Act of 2006 (AB1881), and a green Infrastructure analysis that provides an overview of low impact development (LID) practices that have the potential to be used throughout the City of Wasco, including all parks and greenbelts, as an economically efficient and environmentally sustainable way to manage stormwater and other local water resources. Finally, as separate documents, the appendix to the Master Plan includes documentation from all community outreach activities conducted during the planning process, and all environmental documentation for this project as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

PART I - EXISTING CONDITIONS

CITY OF WASCO
URBAN GREENING, PARKS AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN
2014

Introduction

to Existing Conditions

PART I - CHAPTER ONE





Cormack Park

Introduction to Existing Conditions

1.1 OVERVIEW

The Existing Conditions section is a product of the first phase in the master planning development process. It establishes and documents baseline information about existing open space, greenbelts, parks, recreation facilities and programs within the City of Wasco, about the institutions within Wasco that have primary responsibility for these assets and also about the community these organizations serve. It also includes information derived from an assessment of existing irrigation demands for these landscaped areas within Wasco conducted by Quad Knopf as part of this overall planning process.

The snapshot picture of the existing open space, parks and recreation system that emerged during this first phase was derived from background planning documents provided by the City of Wasco, Wasco Recreation and Parks

District, interviews with City and District staff, field inspections, and community input. All of this information has been consolidated to produce this Existing Conditions Report. It provides a solid foundation for understanding what will be required to enhance and expand the community's green infrastructure and improve quality of life and recreational opportunities available to residents. This information will be used throughout the Plan development process, including the needs assessment that takes place during the second phase.

1.2 SECTION CONTENTS

The Existing Conditions Section contains the following elements:

- Chapter 2 - Community Profile
- Chapter 3 - Organizational Structure
- Chapter 4 - Programs
- Chapter 5 - Facilities



Top: Walking Path.

Bottom Left: Ball Field Maintenance.

Bottom Right: Disc Golf Basket.

Community Profile

PART I - CHAPTER TWO





Wasco Branch Library

Community Profile

2.1 PLANNING CONTEXT AND SERVICE AREA

The City of Wasco and the Wasco Recreation and Parks District (WRPD) serve the City of Wasco and the surrounding unincorporated areas. The City of Wasco has a resident population of approximately 20,000 individuals, with a scattering of small farming homesteads making up the rest of the population within the Recreation and Parks District. Local services are available within the City's downtown area and along the State Highway 46 corridor. Many individuals also travel to the nearby city of Bakersfield to access major shopping centers and hospital facilities.

Wasco is easily accessible by CA State Routes 43 and 46, which meet on the eastern end of town. Covering a total area of 9.4 square miles, including about 900 acres of undeveloped land, Wasco maintains a small town feel. The City contains

many significant community assets. It is home to nine parks, school district amenities, a general aviation airport (located outside City Limits), and the annual Festival of Roses.

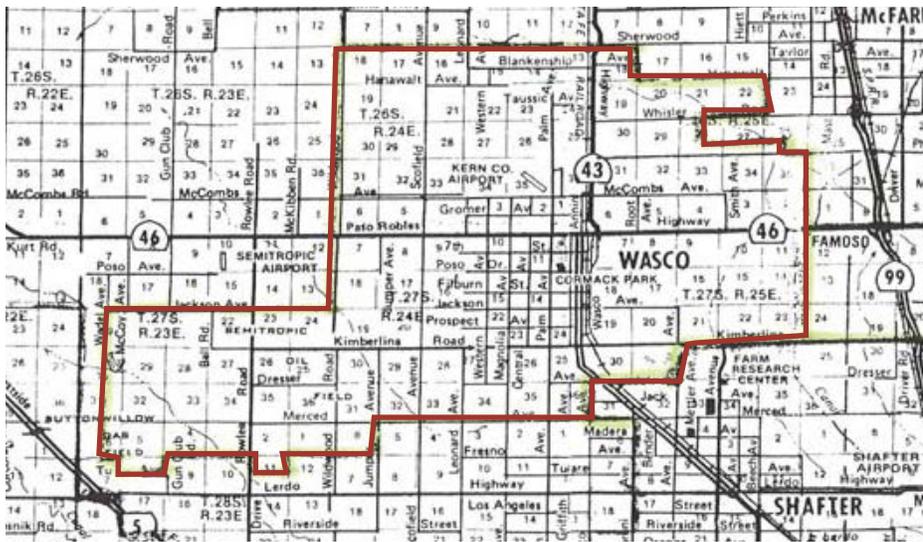
Both the City of Wasco and its Sphere of Influence lie within the larger geographic territory within the official boundaries of the Wasco Recreation and Parks District (Figure 1-2.1). However, the study area for the Master Plan is confined to the more compact area defined by the City of Wasco's incorporated boundary and its Sphere of Influence. All areas of the District that lie beyond Wasco's sphere of influence are not a part



Top: Community Garden.

Left: Wasco High School.

Figure 1-2.1: Wasco Recreation and Parks District Boundary



of this study. Nevertheless, since all of the Park District's facilities are located within the incorporated boundaries of the City of Wasco, its parks and recreation facilities remain a significant element of the Master Plan. In contrast, the periphery areas of the Park District that extend beyond the sphere of influence consist mostly of agricultural lands with no public parks or recreation facilities.

2.2 POPULATION DATA

Population growth is a key component for increasing demands for parks and recreation in most areas. Additionally, demographic characteristics can influence recreational interests and levels of participation. For example, age and income affect an individual's ability to pursue and participate in recreational activities. To a lesser extent, employment, education and ethnicity can also play a role.

A demographic overview is presented here as a basis for the needs assessment analysis. Data for the City of Wasco was obtained from the California State Department of Finance Demographic Research Unit (CA DOF), the U.S. Census, and the City of Wasco 2010 Urban Water Management Plan. The majority of the following data is from the CA DOF, unless otherwise noted.

General demographic trends

The local economy has been hit hard by the national recession, and in May 2013 the unemployment rate was 20.4%. In comparison to California's overall unemployment rate of 8.1% for the same time period, Wasco is experiencing a much higher rate of unemployed individuals (State of California Employment Development Department)¹. Agriculture and oil extraction dominate the local economy but the area's single largest employer is the Wasco State Prison.

Employment rates within a local community and other related economic trends can impact park usage by either increasing or reducing the time that is available to participate in recreation activities. For instance, high unemployment can lead to an increase in individuals seeking a positive outlet for their time, especially among the youngest members of the labor force. At the

¹ State of California, Employment Development Department, Labor Market Information Division, "Monthly Labor Force Data for Cities and Census Designated Places (CDP)", May 2013- Preliminary, <http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov> (accessed 15 July, 2013)

same time, this development can shape whether the public perceives its local parks as a place their families can safely enjoy.

Total population

The current population for the City of Wasco is 25,710 according to 2013 population estimates from the California Department of Finance². This represents a 21% increase from the 2000 population count of 21,263³. During the same time period, Kern County's population has increased by an even larger ratio of 29%. Although the nearly 2% per year Wasco population growth rate between 2000 and 2013 has been substantial, the growth rate is significantly less than the explosive 71% growth experienced between 1990 and 2000, or 7% annually, when population climbed from 12,412 in 1990 to 21,263 in 2000⁴.

The population of Wasco is projected to resume its rapid growth in coming years. Information from the Kern Council of Governments projects 10 years from now in 2023 a total population of 33,130, a nearly 29% increase⁵. In other forecasts from Kern

COG, the population of Wasco is projected to increase to 38,100 by the year 2030 and 42,600 in 2035⁶.

All total population figures for Wasco include the population of inmates at the Wasco State Prison. For instance, the 2013 population estimate of 25,710 includes 4,981 persons in group quarters at the Wasco State Prison. **Deducting the prison population from the overall total yields a more accurate estimate of 20,729 residents living within the area. This number will be used to plan for current park and recreation needs for the purposes of this report, as it better reflects the potential users of these amenities.** For a similar reason, the Wasco State Prison population should be deducted from projected future population estimates to determine future park and recreation needs⁷. On this basis, the resident population of Wasco ten years from now in 2023 (excluding the inmate population) is projected to be 28,419⁸.

Age

Age distribution is often used to determine a community's need for various recreation opportunities. In general, youth participate in recreation activities more frequently than any other age group. Youth

² California Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit, "Table 2: E-5 City/County Population and Housing Estimates, 1/1/2013", <http://www.dof.ca.gov/research/demographic> (accessed 16 July, 2013)

³ California Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit, "Table One Population Change 1990-2000, Incorporated Cities by County", <http://www.dof.ca.gov/research/demographic/> (accessed 16 July, 2013)

⁴ 1980-2000 (April) data from U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2020-35 (July) Kern COG growth forecast by Regional Statistical Areas (RSA), adopted October 2009

⁵ Kern Council of Governments, "Kern Regional Housing Data Report, Wasco Housing and Jobs Projections, Table 1", page 63, March 2013.

⁶ Table 3-1 Kern County Population and Housing (Peter Smith, Kern COG)

⁷ Inmate population of Wasco State Prison as of July 2013 is 5,143; State of California, Data Analysis Unit, Department of Corrections, "Weekly Report of Populations", July 3, 2013.

⁸ Deduct current prison population of 4,981 from Kern COG estimated total population in 2023 of 33,130 to yield future resident population of 28,419.

also generally favor more active and competitive activities, such as traditional sports (e.g., baseball, basketball, and soccer) and extreme sports (e.g. mountain biking, skateboarding, rock climbing). As people age, their participation in active or competitive recreation typically decreases. However, new trends show that seniors are staying active longer. Many older adults and seniors continue to participate in recreation as they age to promote health and wellness, to stay socially connected, and to engage in life-long learning. Inter-generational and family-oriented activities also appeal to residents in communities with a balanced age distribution.

Table 2.1 depicts the age distribution of Wasco residents based on the percentage each age group comprises the overall population in 2010⁹. This information is based on the U.S. Census Bureau; American Fact Finder reported findings, which do not deduct the Wasco State prison

population. It can be assumed that most of the 4,981 inmates fall into the 21 and over category. Using this assumption, an additional column of data is presented to show a more likely breakdown of age groups for potential users of park and recreation amenities.

A large portion of the resident (non-prison) population (38.9%) is under 19 years of age. As stated above, this age group is most likely to utilize recreation and park amenities and programs, especially active and competitive programs. Many people in the community are between the ages of 20 and 54 (47%), and while these adults might participate less due to work constraints and busy schedules, many still find time to enjoy team sports, social events, and opportunities to stay fit. A smaller percentage of the population is over 55 years of age (12.1%) but still represents a major age category that seeks recreation and health and fitness opportunities. A corresponding ratio of programs and services should be geared towards

⁹ The most recently available population data on age, ethnicity and other topics is based on 2010 U.S. Census data, when the total population was 25,545 rather than the 2013 population estimate.

Table 2.1: Age Distribution, 2010.

Age Group	Percent in 2010 (minus inmate population)
Under 5	11.1%
5-19	27.8%
20-54	47.0%
55-64	5.6%
65-74	3.9%
75 and over	2.6%

each of these age categories.

Ethnicity

Culture and ethnicity often play a role in the recreation preferences and level of participation in various activities. This could increase the demand for certain types of recreation facilities and programs. Overall ethnic diversity in the City of Wasco has shifted between 2000 and 2010, with Hispanics increasing as a percentage of the overall population, while all other ethnic/racial groups experiencing a decline. Specifically, the Hispanic population has increased over the past ten years from less than 67% of the overall population to nearly 77%, while the Non-Hispanic White population has declined from more than 21% to just over 14% of the total. The African American proportion of the population has also declined during the same period from slightly more than 10% to just over 7%. The Wasco Union High School District reports a similar change in demographics. Hispanic students represented approximately 77% of the total school

population in the 2000-01 school year and by the 2011-12 school year that percentage had increased to nearly 91%¹⁰. Many of these students speak Spanish as their primary language. Supplementary school sessions are held after the regular school day ends so that these students can have extra support to succeed in school. The needs and schedules of these young people should be considered when developing new recreation programs.

Household type

In 2010, there were a total of 5,131 households in the City of Wasco¹¹. Family households; households consisting of two or more members related by birth, marriage or adoption; accounted for 85% of this total. Not all households contain families since a household may include groups of unrelated people living together or one person living alone. These accounted for 15% of the total.

Of the family households, 66% included married-couple families

¹⁰ Wasco Union High School, "School Accountability, Report Card 2000-2001 and 2011-12, (www.wasco.k12.ca.us)

¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder, DP-1: Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics: 2010

Table 2.2: Ethnicity by Percent Population, 2010 & 2000.

Race/Ethnicity	Percent of 2010 Population	Percent of 2000 Population
Non-Hispanic	14.4%	21.3%
Hispanic/Latino	76.7%	66.7%
Black/African American	7.1%	10.3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.6%	0.7%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.4%	1.0%
Some Other Race Alone	0.3%	
Two or More Races	0.5%	

U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder, Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics: 2010
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Table DP-1, Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: Wasco City, California

and 34% included single-parent families, with no spouse present. In comparison, the State of California's total number of family households for 2010 included 72% married-couple families.

Income and poverty

In recreation planning, trends show that people with more disposable income tend to be more active and participate in more expensive types of leisure activities. Many low-income families take advantage of free or low-cost recreation opportunities, such as playing in parks and attending City-sponsored programs and events. However, parents with low incomes, and single-parent families, may also spend more of their time at work, leaving less time for recreational pursuits.

According to the US Census American Community Survey (2007-2011), the median household income of the City of Wasco was \$40,295¹². In comparison, the California median household income for the same time period was \$61,632. Therefore, Wasco is considered a disadvantaged community. A disadvantaged community is one that has a median household income less than 80% of the statewide average. A significant percentage of people in Wasco are living in poverty including 24% of families and 34.6% of persons under 18 years of age.

¹² U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder, DP03: Selected Economic Characteristics, 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

2.3 PUBLIC HEALTH

There are two major public health problems facing the community of Wasco in the areas of air pollution and childhood obesity that an Urban Greening, Parks and Open Space Master Plan can help to address.

First, in its 2013 State of the Air Report, the American Lung Association (ALA) identified the Bakersfield Metropolitan Statistical Area, in which Wasco is located, as the most polluted metropolitan area in the country for both short-term (24-hour) particle pollution and annual particle pollution. It ranked third worst for ozone pollution.

Second, Wasco is experiencing among the highest, if not the highest, childhood obesity rates in the state of California. A 2004 report from the California Center for Public Health Advocacy (CCPHA) described results from tests of students in the 5th, 7th and 9th grades, revealing that 42% of the students tested in Wasco were overweight. This was the highest percentage of overweight students of any city in Kern County, which overall had a student obesity rate of 30%. In contrast, the Kern County city with the lowest percentage of overweight students was Tehachapi, where less than 14% tested as overweight. In that same year, 28% of students in California were overweight.

Unfortunately, in the years since that first report, childhood obesity rates in Wasco have not improved. A

2012 report from the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research with the CCPHA shows that nearly 47% of the children in Wasco are now overweight, again among the highest percentages in the state. Children who are overweight are more likely to grow up to be overweight as adults and are more likely to suffer serious health risks such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and musculoskeletal disorders.

2.4 SUMMARY

Parks, recreation facilities and programs should align with the characteristics and needs of the community in which they are located. Wasco is a geographically isolated, small, agricultural based community with a largely low-income, family-centered, Hispanic population. Over one-third of the population is under 19 years of age, over half of the population are adults (20 to 64), and seniors (65 and over) account for only 6.5 per cent of the residents. Given these conditions, parks and recreation programs should cater to the needs of a family-based culture and target what is a relatively young population with few local outlets for their time and energy outside of school and work.

Wasco is classified by the Federal government as a disadvantaged community; a situation made worse by high unemployment. The community is also being stressed by public health concerns stemming from high rates of childhood obesity and poor air

quality. Access to parks, open space and recreation facilities is vitally important in all communities, but even more so in poor communities with few other opportunities for physical activity, the lack of which can increase the risk of obesity and other chronic diseases. The impacts of the high unemployment rate, low median income, and significant child obesity rates will be analyzed in the needs assessment, so that strategies and recommended actions can be developed in the master plan to help address these issues.

Organizational Structure

PART I - CHAPTER THREE





Wasco Recreation and Parks District Office

Organizational Structure

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Several major public institutions share responsibility for the management of open space assets within the city limits of Wasco. These primarily include the City of Wasco and the Wasco Recreation and Parks District. This responsibility, however, could extend to the two current school districts: the Wasco Union High School District, and Wasco Union Elementary School District; all of whose school grounds and facilities could potentially be a part of the larger parks system within Wasco. Given this shared responsibility, the successful development and implementation of an Urban Greening, Parks and Open Space Master Plan for the community of Wasco will require close interagency cooperation between these distinct jurisdictions.

The City of Wasco and the Wasco Recreation and Parks District have established a long-standing mutual

relationship for the management of parks and the delivery of recreation services in Wasco. The City of Wasco currently owns five of the nine public parks serving residents within the community of Wasco, while the District owns the remaining four parks. Although the City of Wasco owns the majority of public parks within the city, it does not operate its own parks department or directly maintain any of its park facilities. Instead, with the exception of two mini-parks, the maintenance and operation of all its

Below: WRPD Office



parcs is contracted out to the Parks District. In addition, the Parks District is the primary provider of recreation programs for the general public in Wasco. The District operates from its headquarters building located on City property in Barker Park, which it leases from the City.

3.2 CITY OF WASCO

While the City may not be directly involved in the maintenance of public parks or the delivery of recreation programs, it does play a vital open space management role. The Land Use Element of the City of Wasco 2002 General Plan requires that the City “provide sites for adequate public facilities to serve projected growth.” These public sites include among others, sites for schools and hospitals, designated “ areas of permanent open space, parks and/or areas precluded from major development.” It also establishes standards for parks and open space, as described later in Chapter 5. Although the City contracts out

maintenance of its parks to the Parks District, its Public Works Department directly maintains the entire 2.33 mile network of greenbelts and walking paths that extend throughout many neighborhoods in the city.

3.3 WASCO RECREATION AND PARKS DISTRICT (WRPD)

The WRPD was established in 1948 by the Kern County Board of Supervisors for the purpose of providing the community of Wasco with recreation programs and park facilities. As an independent special district, it does not operate within the departmental structure of either the City of Wasco or County of Kern, but instead has its own independent governing body and staff. The District is governed by the Board of Directors, whose duties are “to organize, promote, conduct and advertise programs of community recreations; establish systems of recreation and recreation centers, including parks and parkways, and to acquire, construct, improve,

Table 3.1: Parks and Open Space - Size and Ownership.

City of Wasco	Acres	WRPD	Acres	Schools	Acres
Barker Park	8.62	Annin Avenue Soccer Park	9.62	Wasco Union ESD	0.83
Pecan Park	1.26	Cormack Park	5.65	Karl F. Clemens Elementary School	4.93
Westside Park	14.04	Recreation Ball Park	8.84	John L Pruitt Elementary School	7.43
Skate Park	2.04	South Gate (15th St) Park	0.30	Palm Avenue Elementary School	8.04
7th St Park	0.32			Teresa Burke Elementary School	10.89
Filburn Ave Greenbelt	4.65			Independence Continuation	0.71
				Jefferson Middle School	7.20
				Wasco High School	20.45
Total Acreage	30.93		24.41		60.48

Notes: Most of the school facilities are not available for public use. Total school acreage noted includes recreational open space, multi-use turf fields and play fields. Please refer to Figure 5.2 in Chapter 5 for the map illustrating the locations of existing parks of Wasco.

maintain and operate recreation centers within or without the territorial limits of the public authority.” The Board of Directors is comprised of five members, two members are appointed by the Kern County Board of Supervisors and three are appointed by the Mayor of the City of Wasco. Each member serves a four-year staggered term.

Although the WRPD is the primary provider of recreation programs within Wasco, it does not operate entirely alone. Other providers whose services are available to the community at large include private non-profit associations, some of which operate in partnership with the District and use its facilities. These include sports specific organizations such as the Wasco Bengals Youth Football, Wasco Little League, and Wasco Tiger Sharks Swim Club. Other entities providing recreation services operating largely independently of the District include the Kern County Sheriff’s Activities League in Wasco and some of the local churches.

3.4 SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The sports fields, recreation facilities and athletic programs of the two school districts in Wasco, especially the Wasco Union High School, represent significant open space and recreation assets that need to be factored into the planning process. In fact, the over 60 acres of sports fields and landscaped areas maintained by the school district exceeds the 55

combined acres of parks and open space maintained by the City and District. However, with the exception of some tennis courts and limited access to the gymnasium at Thomas Jefferson Middle School, most of these school recreation facilities are currently not open to general use by the public.

3.5 INTER-AGENCY RELATIONSHIPS

Given the domination of open space, parks and recreation facilities in Wasco by the City, Parks District and School Districts, it will be important to maintain and strengthen existing inter-agency relationships. This will facilitate physical connections between all their facilities, while enhancing a mutual capacity to provide urban greening and open space benefits for the general public. The purpose of the new Master Plan that is now being developed is to build on the foundation of the existing relationship by unifying City and District policy with regard to park standards, maintenance and financing.

The relationship with the local school districts is more complex but is also evolving. For many years, the Wasco Union High School District utilized the recreation facilities of the Parks District, such as the Recreation Ball Park, for some of its athletic programs and events. With the significant expansion of its athletic and recreation facilities following the passage of a school bond in

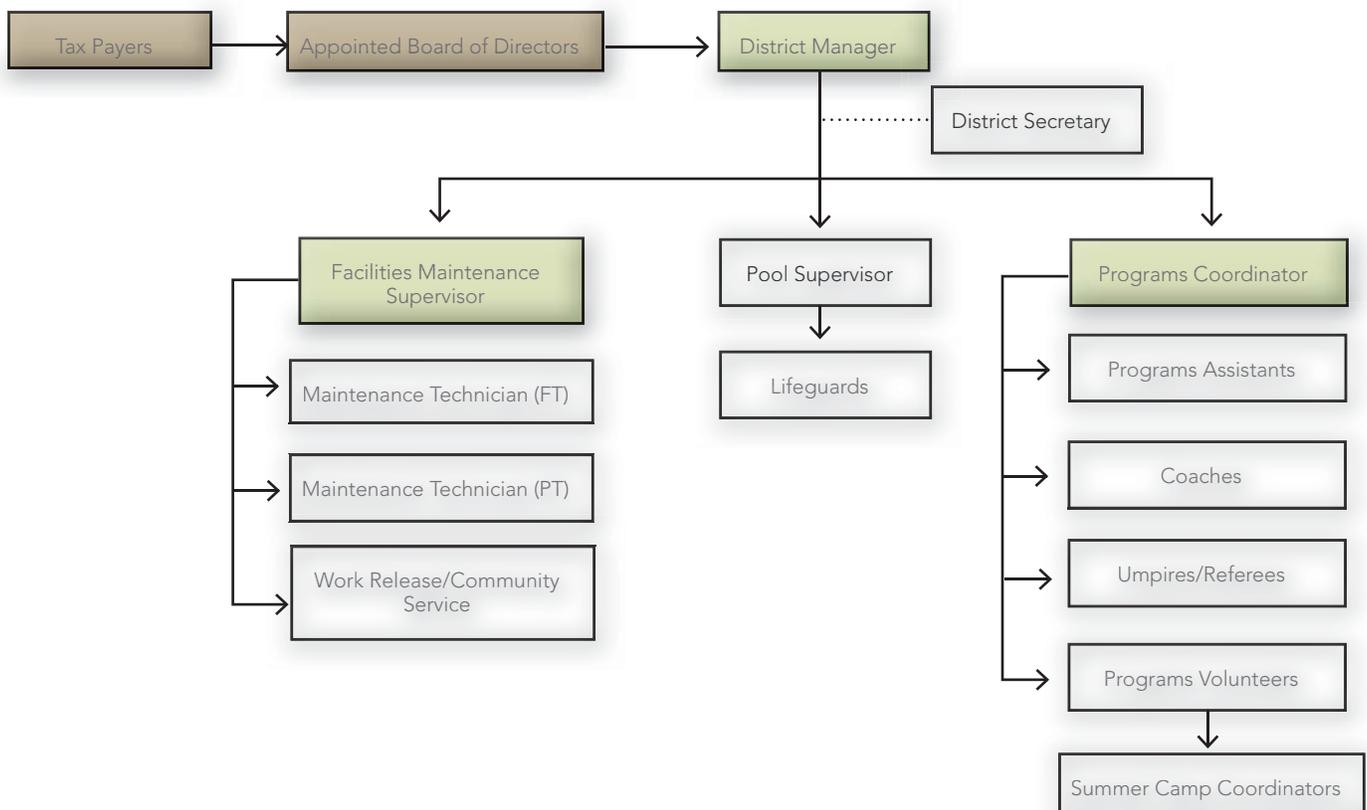
2008, the need of the School District to use WRPD facilities has greatly declined, although its swim team still relies on the WRPD swimming pool in Barker Park and the junior varsity football team also uses its facilities for practice. The high school has also relied on WRPD sports programs such as the swim club and those of sports organizations like the Bengal Tigers to operate as feeder programs for the high school athletic programs. Also, the City and Wasco Union Elementary School District have worked together to fund new facilities such as the gymnasium at Thomas Jefferson Middle School. However, this has also been the source of some controversy as the need of the School District to

charge for the use of this and other facilities to cover its operating and maintenance costs have made it difficult for the WRPD to utilize these facilities for its programs.

3.6 WRPD ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND STAFFING

For many years the WRPD operated without a full time executive director and with Board members sometimes assuming responsibilities normally reserved for staff. Since then the WRPD has adopted a new Personnel Policy Manual and organizational structure that provides for a clear separation of powers between the

Figure 1-3.1: WRPD Organizational Structure, 2012-2013.



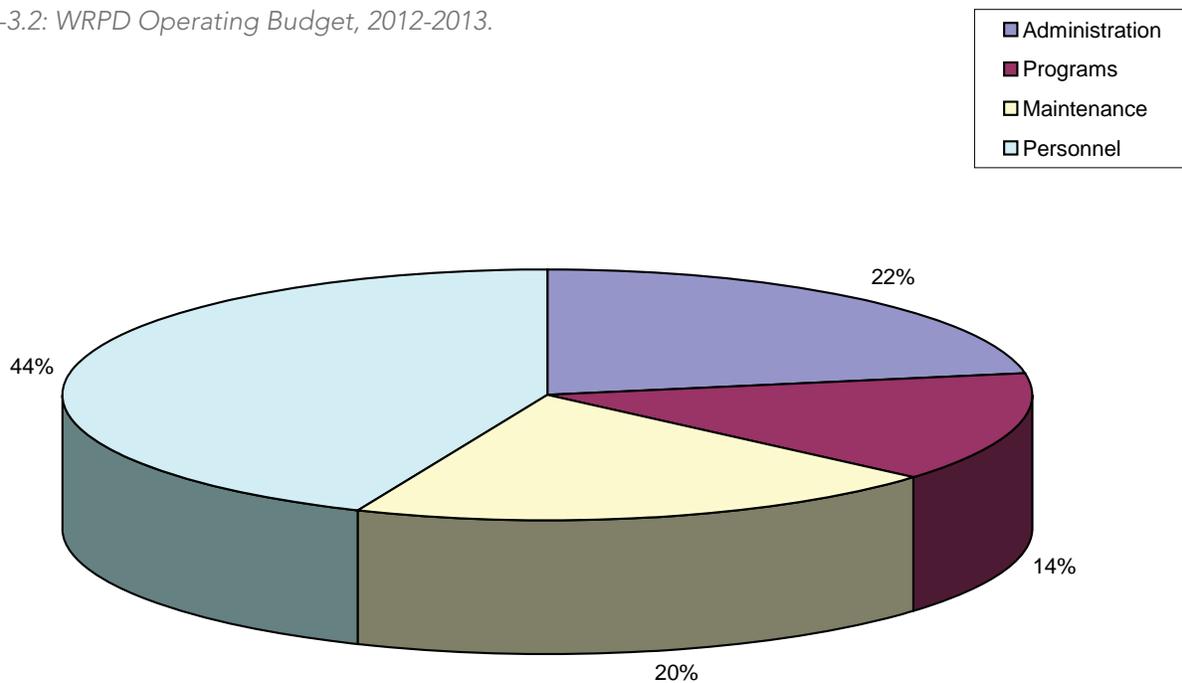
board and its chief executive officer, while also providing clear direction for all its employees.

According to the organization chart provided by the District in its proposed 2012-2013 operating budget, WRPD has an organization consisting of a District Manager and District Secretary; a Maintenance Division with two full-time positions, one part time position and (volunteer positions); and a Programs Divisions, led by a new full-time Programs Coordinator, supported by program assistants, coaches, umpires/referees and others operating on a volunteer basis. A pool supervisor, along with 12 lifeguards, also operates directly under the District Manager.

3.7 WRPD OPERATING BUDGET

The proposed budget for fiscal year 2012-13 includes total expenditures in the amount of \$703,575. This amount includes maintenance and utility expenses (\$140,750), personnel (\$307,475), programs (\$99,100) and administration (\$156,250). Figure 1-3.2 shows the breakdown of operational expenses. An assessment of the WRPD budget will be provided in the Needs Assessment report, where it and other elements are examined in the context of comparable Parks Districts.

Figure 1-3.2: WRPD Operating Budget, 2012-2013.



3.8 SUMMARY

Both the City of Wasco and the Wasco Parks and Recreation District own parkland in Wasco. With the exception of the greenbelt walking paths, some landscape areas and two mini-parks maintained by the City, the Park District maintains and operates all the public parks in Wasco. The Park District is also responsible for all the recreation programs provided in Wasco, both those it provides directly or indirectly in coordination with local sports organizations. The two local school districts also own and maintain a significant portion of the open space assets in Wasco, but most of these facilities are not available for public use. The Master Plan will focus on the parks and recreation facilities owned by the City and the Park District. Although even limited public access in the future to school district recreation facilities cannot be assumed, for comprehensive planning purposes these recreation assets need to be acknowledged.

Programs

PART I - CHAPTER FOUR





Barber Park Swimming Pool

Programs

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Wasco residents have access to a variety of recreation activities, programs and services. Although the City of Wasco and the Wasco Recreation and Parks District (WRPD) work together to provide the parks and recreation facilities that serve as the primary venue for recreational pursuits in the community, the Recreation and Parks District is the primary provider of recreation programs to residents throughout Wasco. Other entities that also provide recreational services for Wasco residents include the Wasco Union High and Elementary School Districts, and the Kern County Sheriffs Activity League.

Recreation facilities owned by the City but managed by the Recreation and Parks District for delivery of recreation programs and services include both the Veteran's Hall Building, and the Swimming Complex located in

Barker Park, In addition, Westside Park and the Skate Park are also City owned parks used by the WRPD for delivery of recreation services, After school and summer recreation programs are operated by the WRPD but are also provided through the Wasco Union High and Elementary School Districts.

Wherever they are offered, recreation programs play a vital role in the life of a community as they can benefit individuals, families, businesses, neighborhoods and households of all ages, income

Below: Wasco Soccer Clinic



levels, cultures and abilities. Among the many benefits that recreation programs and services can provide to communities and individuals include the following:

- Unique identity and character
- Sense of belonging
- Healthy lifestyles
- Lifelong learning
- Professional growth
- Safety and security
- Youth development
- Strong family units
- Cultural enrichment
- Economic development
- Environmental stewardship
- Fun and celebration

Recreation programs that are typically provided by public recreation agencies or districts range from organized activities such as sports, classes, youth activities, family programming and community events, to more passive endeavors such as picnics, hiking, bicycling and walking.

This section summarizes the existing inventory of recreation programs and services in Wasco.

4.2 PROGRAM INVENTORY

Toddler & Preschool Programs

Most toddler and preschool programs available to Wasco residents are through a contract service provider in the Supplemental Education Services program operated by the Wasco Union Elementary School District. The Wasco Recreation and Park District does offer some programs for toddlers and preschool ages including T-Ball and swimming lessons. WRPD does not operate typical Tiny Tot programs or summer toddler/preschool camps.

There are a number of private schools, churches, and commercial preschool facilities Wasco residents can take advantage of including North Kern Christian School, St John's School, and the Semitropic School District, all of which offer fee based toddler and preschool programs.

Youth And Teen Programs

The Wasco Recreation and Park District seems to concentrate on this age group and spends most of its resources providing and coordinating activities for youth and teens. This reflects the importance the community and the District put on keeping youth and teens active and involved.

Programs operated by WRPD and available to Wasco youth and teens include the following:

- Girls Softball (Ages 7 – 16)
- Boys Baseball (Ages 13 – 16)
- Co-Ed Soccer (Ages 5 -14)
- Co-Ed Basketball (Ages 5 – 14)
- Flag Football (Ages 7-14)
- Swim Lessons
- Lifeguard Classes
- Recreational Swimming
- Summer Youth Camp (Ages 5-14)

In addition to operating direct programs for youth and teens, WRPD coordinates the use of facilities for the following community organizations that offer youth and teen programs:

- Wasco Bengals Youth Football
- Wasco Bengals Youth Cheerleading
- Wasco Little League
- Tigers Tae Kwon Do
- Kern County Sheriff's Activity League Mentorship Program
- Tiger Sharks Competitive Swim Team

In addition to the above efforts, WRPD would like to expand program offerings for youth and teens. For instance, it has announced plans to partner with the US Junior Olympic program to offer a track and field program for youth and teens. It also has plans to develop a gymnasium of its own so that it can expand indoor basketball, volleyball, and other activities for youth and teens.

As reported by WRPD staff, the skate park adjacent to Westside Park is very popular with youth. The skate park is so popular, both with local youth and teens and skaters from the surrounding areas, overuse has caused some overcrowding and maintenance problems.

Adult Programs

WRPD offers a variety of adult sports programs and coordinates facility use for several contract instructors for exercise classes for adults. WRPD operated programs for adults include:

- Adult Basketball
- Men's Softball
- Women's Softball
- Co-Ed Softball
- Water Aerobics
- Recreational Swimming

WRPD also coordinates the facility use for community organizations and contract instructors that offer the following activities for adults in Wasco:

- Grace Community Church Adult Basketball
- Zumba Classes by Stephanie Rodriguez
- Taekwondo Classes by Champions Taekwondo

Senior Programs

WRPD does not offer any direct programs or activities exclusively for seniors, although there are seniors in the Zumba classes. A local knitting club composed primarily of seniors meets weekly at the Veterans Hall in Barker Park. WRPD does coordinate facility use for the County of Kern to provide the senior nutrition program at Veterans Hall, along with other county services for seniors. Local churches, clubs and organizations, such as the Wasco Women's Club, also engage seniors as well as other community members in their activities.

Special Events

WRPD offers movie in the park nights, usually on Thursday nights, during the summer. They coordinate with the Wasco Chamber of Commerce and the City for the annual Rose Festival, which for many years has been the most notable community-wide event held on an annual basis. In 2013, the City, Park District and Chamber of Commerce worked together to host a 4th of July Fireworks show

and community event in Westside Park. The Wasco Historical Society & Museum, located at 918 6th Street, offers exhibits and special events periodically throughout the year.

In addition to local recreation facilities and programs, Wasco residents do have access to regional facilities in the nearby city of Bakersfield at which recreational activities and programming will be available including:

- Bakersfield Auditorium
- California Living Museum (CALM) Zoo
- Fox Theater
- Ice Sports Center
- Kern County Fair
- McMurtrey Aquatic Center
- Rabobank Arena, Theater & Convention Center

WRPD Program Attendance Figures

Table 4.1: Attendance Figures for Contracted Classes.

Contracted Class	Age of Attendees	Attendance
Aerobics	Adult/Seniors	20 per class
Zumba	Adults/Seniors	25-30 per class
Tigers Tae Kwan Do	Youth/Teens	20 per class
Champions Tae Kwan Do	Teens/Adults	30 per class

Table 4.2: Attendance Figures for Youth Camps.

Youth Camps	Age of Attendees	Attendance
Summer Youth Camp	Youth	30 per week

Table 4.3: Attendance Figures for Community Events.

Community Event	Age of Attendees	Attendance
Rose Festival	All Ages	3
Movies in the Park	All Ages	100+ per night

Table 4.4: Attendance Figures for Swim Programs.

Swim Programs	Age of Attendees	Attendance
Swim Lessons	Youth/Teens	30 per Class 3x per Day
Recreation Swim	All Ages	Average 150 per Session
Tiger Sharks Swim Club	5-18 Years of Age	70 per Session

Table 4.5: Attendance Figures for Adult Sports.

Adult Sports	Age of Attendees	Attendance per Session
Wasco Men's Basketball	Adults	100
Grace Church Basketball	Adults	20
Softball	Adults	120

Table 4.6: Attendance Figures for Youth Sports.

Youth Sports	Age of Attendees	Attendance per Session
Basketball	Youth	223
Softball	Youth	226
T-Ball	Toddler/Preschool	227
Baseball	Youth	75
Soccer	Youth	246
Wasco Little League	Youth/Teens	150
Bengals Youth Football	Youth/Teens	100
Bengals Cheerleading	Youth/Teens	60

Table 4.7: Program Fees.

Program	Fee
Adult Basketball	\$450 per team
Adult Softball	\$450 per team
Adult Aerobics	\$20 per month
Recreational Swimming	\$1 per person
Swim Lessons	\$40 per person
WRPD Youth Sports	\$40 per person

4.3 SUMMARY

Wasco residents have access to a variety of recreation programs and services. However, meeting the recreational activities of youth and teens is seen by many as a community priority¹. For this reason, a large proportion of Wasco Recreation and Park District program resources appear to be devoted to this age group. In addition, to the programs the WRPD provides directly to youth and teens, it also coordinates the use of its facilities with several sports oriented community organizations that also offer youth and teen programs.

¹ This is based on findings from public outreach conducted for this master plan, including the community questionnaires, stakeholder interviews, and focus groups.

Facilities

PART I - CHAPTER FIVE





Facilities

5.1 INTRODUCTION

As part of the planning process, open space, greenbelts, parks and recreation facilities are evaluated to assess the general condition of the parks, equipment, amenities and furnishings.

The observation of the parks, recreation facilities and greenbelts takes into account the general attractiveness, usability, accessibility, maintenance, up-to-date standards, circulation, shelter and shade provided and whether the facility is meeting the needs of area residents.

These evaluations are not a substitute for a thorough infrastructure or architectural examination, nor do they take the place of a formal ADA assessment.

This chapter portrays the scope and nature of the existing Wasco park system. Specifically, this chapter:

- Describes the current park classification systems now used in Wasco, and places each of the existing nine parks in the appropriate category as defined by these classifications.
- Presents guidelines for each park type as currently prescribed by the WRPD.
- Portrays the extent to which there is sufficient park acreage in the current park system to serve a community of nearly 21,000 residents (excluding the prison population)
- Assesses existing water usage to determine if it is in compliance with current regulations.
- Reviews the existing inventory of parks and facilities through a profile of each park in the system.

5.2 WASCO PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

A park classification system provides a way to plan for park, recreation and open space needs in the future. Park categories can reflect several factors, including the size of the park (in acres), the level of service (in terms of acres per 1,000 population), and the type of amenities and facilities provided by each. Ranging from the smallest park type to the largest, parks are typically classified as:

- Mini Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks and
- Regional Parks.

An additional category such as Special Facilities based not on size but on specialized functions, such as a teen center or a dog park, can also be applied.

Below: Pavilion at Wasco Recreation Ballpark



Both the City of Wasco and the Wasco Recreation and Parks District have established park standards, as defined in the Land Use Element in the 2002 General Plan for the City of Wasco and the 2005 Master Plan for the Park District. These standards as defined by acres, service area and service ratio are currently not aligned with each other, as shown in table 5.1.

An additional complication arises from the apparent conflict between the overall service ratio (i.e. total parkland objective) presented in the City's General Plan (6 acres per 1,000) and in the Title 16, subdivisions of the municipal code (chapter 16.46) that establishes a park dedication standard of only 2.5 acres 1,000. The latter is consistent with the overall service ratio standard of the Park District.

In terms of park acreage, the two park classification systems currently used in Wasco do not appear to be consistent with the actual function that many of the existing parks play in the Wasco community. As tables 5.1 and 5.2 show, regardless of whether the City or Park District park classification system is applied, there appears to be a surplus of neighborhood parks and a deficit of community parks in Wasco. In fact, some of the most important parks in Wasco fall outside the parameters of all the park categories.

Cormack Park satisfies the acreage criteria established by the City for a neighborhood park but at

least technically is too small to be considered a neighborhood park by Park District standards. At the same time it is too large to be considered a mini-park. Similarly, none of the existing parks in Wasco are large enough to qualify as a community park by either City or District standards except possibly Westside Park, which falls just below the District standard. However, Barker Park and Recreation Ball Park, which lie adjacent to each other, and if viewed as single combined entity with a total acreage of 17.46 acres, could qualify as a community park by District standards.

The issue is not with the parks themselves, but with the City's current park classification systems, which include gaps between park categories and significantly overstates the size required for community parks. With the adoption of a more realistic park classification system, there will emerge a different balance between existing neighborhood and community parks that will provide a more understandable basis for determining actual park needs in the community.

The inconsistencies between the classification systems and the real function of each park as well as the discrepancies between the two different classification systems can lead to confusion when dealing with developers, writing grants, and planning for future park development.

Table 5.1: City vs Parks District Standards

Park Category	Acres		Service Area		Service Ratio	
	City	District	City	District	City	District
Mini	0-2	Up to 3		1 block to 0.25 miles	0.5 acres/1000	None
Neighborhood	5-10	6-10	0.75 miles	1 mile radius max.	2.5 acres/1000	1.5 acres/1000
Community	20-60	15-25+	1.5 miles	12 sq. miles	3 acres/1000	1.0 acres/1000
Regional	None	None	None	None	None	None
			Total Parkland Requirement		6 acres/1000	2.5 acres/1000

Note: City Service ratio standards from 2.0-1.2 of the City of Wasco General Plan.

Table 5.2: Existing Park Types as Defined by the City and Parks District Park Classifications

Existing Park	Total Acres	Park Type - City	Park Type - District
Mini Park Classification	City of Wasco - 0 to 2 acres		
	Wasco Recreation and Parks District - Up to 3 acres		
South Gate (15th Street Park)	0.30	Mini	Mini
7th Street Park	0.32	Mini	Mini
Pecan Park	1.26	Mini	Mini
Skate Park	2.04	Mini	Mini
Neighborhood Park Classification	City of Wasco - 5 to 10 acres		
	Wasco Recreation and Parks District - 6 to 10 acres		
Cormack Park	5.65	Neighborhood	
Barker Park	8.62	Neighborhood	Neighborhood
Recreation Ball Park	8.84	Neighborhood	Neighborhood
Annin Avenue Soccer Park	9.62	Neighborhood	Neighborhood
Community Park Classification	City of Wasco - 20 to 60 acres		
	Wasco Recreation and Parks District - 15 to 25+ acres		
Westside Park	14.04		Community

It is important for the City and the Wasco Recreation and Parks District to decide on a common set of park standards, consistent with the roles of each park type, which they both can adopt so as to avoid conflicts when acquiring and developing parkland, and which is one of the goals of this Master Plan.

Although these problems and inconsistencies do exist, the Parks District Master Plan does clarify the division of responsibility among local agencies for each park type. It states that “responsibility for local parks within its boundaries has been accepted by the Park District with regional park and recreation services provided by the city and county¹.” It goes on to say that the District, “... concentrates on satisfying neighborhood and community park needs leaving mini park development

and maintenance to private entities.” However, it can choose to participate in the development and maintenance of mini and regional parks, if they are designed to incorporate amenities that will meet neighborhood or community needs².

5.3 WASCO PARK STANDARDS

In addition to the park classifications based on size, service area, and service ratio, the Parks District 2005 Master Plan provides other additional descriptive criteria for each park type. As shown below, only limited information is offered on the types of amenities and facilities that should be provided by each park type³. The City of Wasco General Plan does not address this topic at all except to say that “facilities for each park type shall be consistent with the

¹ Wasco Recreation and Parks District, Park Master Plan, Adopted September 2005, pages 34.

² Wasco Recreation and Parks District, Park Master Plan, Adopted September 2005, pages 35-37.

³ Wasco Recreation and Parks District, Park Master Plan, Adopted September 2005, pages 35-37.

PARKS DISTRICT GUIDELINES FOR MINI-PARKS

- Area: Standard subdivision lot to 3 acres
- Population served: 500-2,000 people
- Service Area: One block to ¼ mile radius

Limitations and Other Criteria

- Encourage development and maintenance by homeowner groups, apartment complexes and condominium developments.
- Provide in areas isolated from other park and recreation services.
- In new development, the District will provide in areas of severe deficiency where needs can't be met by a homeowner group or development project.

PARKS DISTRICT GUIDELINES FOR NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

- Area: Minimum size 6 usable acres; Optimum size 10 usable acres
- Standard: 1.5 acres per 1,000 population
- Population served: 4,000 – 8,000
- Service Area: Maximum 1 mile radius

Location

- Ideally located along residential streets and where possible adjacent to elementary school sites

Limitations and Other Criteria

- Not suitable for major traffic generating recreational purposes
- Develop to meet the needs for nearby recreation
- Should have access to public transportation routes
- Generally will not include lighted playing fields

PARKS DISTRICT GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNITY PARKS

- Area: Preferred minimum size 15 usable acres; Optimum size 25+ usable acres
- Standard: 1 acre/1,000 population
- Population served: 20,000 or more
- Service Area: Approximately 12 square miles

Location

- Should be located along major collector or arterial streets and where possible adjacent to high schools and/or junior high schools.
- Preferred location is near mass transportation routes

Limitations and Other Criteria

- Sumps, drill sites and easements may be included to increase park sizes, while not increasing additional costs for land acquisition
- All large scale recreational activities should occur at these facilities
- Water play, community centers and lighted sports facilities will generally be provided at these sites.
- At least 20% of the site area should be maintained as open space for spontaneous park activity
- Subject to the availability of land and existing and/or proposed development at other sites within the same service area, community park needs may be provided at multiple sites.

Note: No facility or amenity guidelines are provided for either regional parks or special facilities.

Wasco Recreation and Parks District Development Standards.”

5.4 PARKLAND SERVICE RATIO

Providing a standard minimum ratio of total parkland to the population, expressed in terms of acres per 1,000 residents, is a common way for agencies to assess the extent to which the existing park system is large enough to meet the demand for park space that a community of its size will typically generate. As already described above, however, existing service ratio standards at use in Wasco are currently not in agreement between the City and the Recreation District.

The Wasco Recreation and Parks District’s current park and recreation master plan calls for a total parkland goal of 2.5 acres per 1,000 residents. This is consistent with the City of

Wasco municipal code but not with the City of Wasco General Plan. As illustrated in table 5.3, the total parkland is made up of the park classifications for Neighborhood and Community Parks.

The City of Wasco’s current land use element sets a different park standard, as illustrated in the table 5.4.

To avoid conflicts and confusion when dealing with developer requirements, planning for future parks, and determining the amount of surplus or deficit parkland within the area, it is important for the City and District to agree and adopt a common park level of service standard and each agency amend its governing documents accordingly.

State law, under the Quimby Act, sets 3 acres of total local parkland (mini, neighborhood and community parkland) as the minimum standard each park jurisdiction should enforce. The National Recreation and Park Association recommends a total parkland ratio (including Regional Parks) of 5 acres per 1,000 residents.

Consequently, if the Wasco Recreation and Parks District would adopt the City general plan parkland requirements, both the City and District would meet the Quimby minimum requirement and the NRPA recommended guideline and would have a common and consistent parkland dedication requirement.

Table 5.3: WRPD Current Level of Service of Parkland per 1000 Population.

WRPD Park Classification	Required Acres per 1000 Residents
Mini Parks	0 acres/1000
Neighborhood Parks	1.5 acres/1000
Community Parks	1 acres/1000
Regional Parks	0 acres/1000
Total Parkland Requirement	2.5

Table 5.4: City of Wasco’s Current Level of Service of Parkland per 1000 Population.

City Park Classification	Required Acres per 1000 Residents
Mini Parks	.5 acres/1000
Neighborhood Parks	2.5 acres/1000
Community Parks	3 acres/1000
Regional Parks	0
Total Parkland Requirement	6 acres/1000

Current Parkland Service Ratios

Applying the current park classification systems of both the City of Wasco and the Wasco Recreation and Parks District is problematic given some of the inconsistencies described in the previous sections. Even with these difficulties a table has been constructed that provides an overview of the current park system in Wasco, including both City-owned and Park District- owned parkland.

Table 5.5: Wasco Parkland Total Acreage.

Mini Parks and Greenbelts --City (0-2 acres) --District (Up to 3 acres)	Total Acres
South Gate (15th Street) Park	.30
7th Street Park	.32
Pecan Park	1.26
Skate Park	2.04
Greenbelts	4.65
Total Mini Parks and Greenbelts	8.57
Neighborhood Parks --City (5-10 acres) --District (6-10 acres)	
Cormack Park (District Owned)	5.65
Barker Park	8.62
Recreation Ball Park	8.84
Annin Avenue	9.62
Total Neighborhood Parks	32.73
Community Parks --City (20-60 acres) --District (15-25+ acres)	
Westside Park	14.04*
Total Community Parks	14.04
Regional Parks --No current classification	
None	
Total Combined City and District Parkland	55.34

*Based on a loose interpretation of the current Park District standard for community parks. Otherwise Westside Park would technically be classified as a neighborhood park by both the City and the District.

Table 5.6: Current Wasco Parkland Ratio per 1,000 Residents.

Parkland Classification	Total Acres	Current Ratio Acres per 1,000 Residents
Mini Parks & Greenbelts	8.57	0.41
Neighborhood Parks	32.73	1.58
Community Parks	14.04	0.68
Regional Parks	0	0
Total Combined Parkland	55.34	2.67 acres/1000

Table 5.7: Parkland Classification Ratio Comparison with City of Wasco Municipal Code/General Plan Standards.

Parkland Classification	Total Acres	Current Ratio Acres per 1,000 Residents	Wasco City Code Standard Acres Per 1,000 Residents	Surplus (Deficit) Acres Per 1,000 Residents
Mini Parks & Greenbelts	8.57	0.41	.5	(0.09)
Neighborhood Parks	32.73	1.58	2.5	(0.92)
Community Parks	14.04	0.68	3	(2.32)
Regional Parks	0	0	0	0
Totals	55.34	2.67	6.0	(3.33)

Table 5.8: Parkland Classification Ratio Comparison with Wasco Parks and Recreation District/2005 Master Plan Standards.

Parkland Classification	Total Acres	Current Ratio Acres per 1,000 Residents	Park District Standard Acres Per 1,000 Residents	Surplus (Deficit) Acres Per 1,000 Residents
Mini Parks & Greenbelts	8.57	0.41	None	N/A
Neighborhood Parks	32.73	1.58	1.5	+0.08
Community Parks	14.04	0.68	1.0	(0.32)
Regional Parks	0	0	0	0
Totals	55.34	2.67	2.5	+0.17

Table 5.6 takes into account the total acres of parkland owned WRPD and the City of Wasco and a population served of 20,729 residents (excludes the prison population). It shows the current ratio of parkland classifications per 1,000 residents.

When the current ratio of parkland classifications are compared to the City of Wasco general plan standards for each type of park classifications, the result shows that the City /general plan standard is being met for mini parks and greenbelts, but there are deficits for neighborhood and community parks. This is illustrated in table 5.7.

The City’s general plan standard calls for a combined parkland ratio of 6 acres per 1,000 residents, so the current combined parkland ratio of 2.67 means there is a deficit of 3.33 acres per 1,000 residents. Based on its current standard, the City of Wasco needs an additional 69 acres of combined parkland classifications to meet its current general plan standard.

In contrast, when the current ratio of parkland classifications are compared to the Wasco Parks and Recreation District 2005 Master Plan standards for each type of park classifications, the result shows that the Park District standard is being met for neighborhood parks but there is still a deficit in community parks. This is illustrated in table 5.8.

In addition, the Park Districts standard calls for a relatively low combined parkland ratio of only 2.5 acres per 1,000 residents, significantly less than the 6 acres per 1,000 required by the City. As a result, the current combined parkland ratio of 2.67 means from the perspective of the District rather than a park deficit, there is actually a very modest surplus of 0.17 acres per 1,000 residents. If the Districts current standard of 2.5 acres per 1000 residents were to remain in place, then no additional park acreage would be required unless the population in Wasco were to increase in coming years.

With its combined parkland ratio of 2.67 acres per 1,000 residents, Wasco does fall short of meeting the State Quimby Act required standard of a minimum of 3 acres of combined parkland per 1,000 residents. It would require an additional 6.85 acres of parkland for a total of 62.19 acres of parkland to achieve the Quimby standard. The Needs Assessment Report will provide a more in depth analysis of the WRPD and City of Wasco level of service pertaining to parkland acres using comparisons with other agencies and comparisons with national desired standards and Quimby Act minimum standards. The recommendations section of the master plan will address where there are deficits within the park type classifications of the City and District and whether park standards need to be revised or additional parkland

should be acquired to meet the needs of Wasco residents in the future.

5.5 EXISTING WATER USAGE

A water usage assessment focused on landscape areas within Wasco was prepared to review existing irrigation demands. A fuller treatment of findings from this assessment, which was developed by Quad Knopf, Inc., will be incorporated into the Needs Assessment portion of the Master Plan.

The landscaped areas assessed in this analysis included all parks maintained by the City of Wasco and the Wasco Recreation and Park District, landscaped areas maintained by the school districts, and all City-owned and maintained greenbelts, broadly-defined. While all "greenbelts" are included in the water usage analysis, only one greenbelt segment along Filburn Avenue offers users a park like experience and recreational benefits. For that reason, only the Filburn greenbelt is included along with the parks in the following summary of existing water usage in Wasco parks.

As shown in table 5.9, the parks of both the City and the Park District account for a total of 43.13 landscaped acres, and the Filburn Avenue greenbelt, another 4.34 landscaped acres, for a total of 47.46 landscaped acres. Landscaped acres excludes all non-permeable surfaces such as buildings, parking lots and sidewalks, so it is necessarily less than

Table 5.9: Maximum Applied Water Allowance (MAWA) for Existing Landscaped Areas.

Parks & Open Space	Landscaped Areas			MAWA	
	Square Foot	Acres	Eto	Gallons per Year	Acre Feet per Year
1. Annin Ave. Park	418,887	9.62	57.9	12,029,477	39.62
2. Westside Park	540,686	12.41	57.9	15,527,637	47.66
3. Barker Park	245,580	5.64	57.9	7,052,665	21.65
4. 7th St. Park	13,885	0.32	57.9	398,755	1.22
5. Pecan Park	34,288	0.79	57.9	984,696	3.02
6. Skate Park	73,762	1.69	57.9	2,118,327	6.50
7. Cormack Park	230,379	5.29	57.9	6,616,116	20.31
8. Recreation Ball Park	315,102	7.23	57.9	9,049,225	27.77
9. 15th Street Park	5,966	0.14	57.9	171,334	0.53
Sub-Total	1,878,525	43.13		53,948,232	165.57
Filburn Avenue Greenbelt	Landscaped Areas			MAWA	
	Square Foot	Acres	Eto	Gallons per Year	Acre Feet per Year
34. Tract 6589 (Palm Ave/Filburn Ave)	73,007	1.68	57.9	2,565,099	7.87
37. Tract 6308 (Filburn Ave/Griffith Ave)	24,611	0.56	57.9	707,765	2.17
38. Tract 5821 (Filburn Ave/Poplar Ave)	17,947	0.41	57.9	516,213	1.58
39. Tract 5641 (Filburn Ave/Broadway)	21,780	0.50	57.9	626,061	1.92
42. Tract 6432 (Filburn Ave/Poplar Ave)	33,236	0.763	57.9	916,375	2.81
43. Tract 5246 (Filburn Ave/Palm Ave)	18,383	0.422	57.9	528,821	1.62
Sub-Total	188,964	4.34		5,426,744	16.66
Total - Parks & Greenbelts	2,082,587	47.46		59,374,976	182.23

Data derived from "Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance Assessment for Existing Landscape Areas" prepared by Quad Knopf, Inc. May 2013.

Maximum Applied Water Allowance (MAWA) = (ETAF)(Eto)(LA)(0.62) = gallons per year.
 0.80 = Evapotranspiration adjustment factor (ETAF)
 Eto = Referenced evapotranspiration for Wasco is 57.9, per Appendix A of WELO
 LA = Landscape Area in square feet (0.62 = Conversion factor to gallons)

the combined park acreage of 55.34 acres reported earlier⁴.

Water usage is assessed in terms of the Maximum Applied Water Allowances (MAWA) which was developed from the Model Water Efficient Ordinance published by the State of California on September of 2009. MAWA is the upper limit of annual allowed water for an established landscaped area, calculated based on the size of the landscape and the Eto, or evapotranspiration rate for Wasco, which is 57.9 The MAWA provides a standard against which to compare actual water usage.

Given the 47 landscaped areas for parks and greenbelts identified in the above table 5.9, the Maximum Applied Water Allowance for the existing park system in Wasco is approximately 182-acre feet per year (AFY). The City of Wasco 2010 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) indicated that the existing water usage demand for parks and landscaped areas is 348-AFY generated by a total of 210 acres of landscaped areas within the city. These 210 acres included the 47 acres of City and Park District parks and greenbelts but also landscaped acres associated with the school districts and a local cemetery and golf course. 348-AFY and 210 acres translates into 1.65 AFY per acre of park area.

⁴ The total combined park acreage of 55.34 acres includes the landscaped areas of 47.46 acres plus additional acreage including paved parking areas, sidewalks and building that are not water permeable.

Applying this value to 47.46 acres for parks and greenbelts results in an Estimated Total Water Usage (ETWU) of 78.30 AFY, which is well below the MAWA of 182.33 AFY.

In addition, the City of Wasco Water Master Plan projects an approximate usage of 2,000-gallons per day per acre (gpda) for future parks. This equals approximately 2.24 AFY, which would interpolate the same 47 acres of existing park landscape with an ETWU of 105.28 AFY, which is still less than the MAWA of 221-AFY. Based on this analysis, existing landscaped areas in the Wasco park system appear to be in compliance with regulations.

5.6 SUMMARY

Both the City of Wasco and the Wasco Recreation and Parks District have established park standards, as defined in the Land Use Element in the 2002 General Plan for the City of Wasco and the 2005 Master Plan for the Park District. These standards are currently not aligned with each other. In addition, the City of Wasco appears to have two different service ratio objectives respectively in its General Plan and the municipal code, only one of which is consistent with the Park District. Moreover, the two park classification systems include gaps between park types and significantly overstate the size required for community parks. It will be important for the City and the Parks District to decide on a common set of parks

standards to avoid conflicts when acquiring and developing park land.

Depending on whether the City of Wasco's general plan policy objective of 6 acres per 1,000 is used or the Wasco Parks and Recreation District standard of 2.5 acres per 1,000 is applied, Wasco has a deficit of 3.33 acres per 1,000 residents (and needs 69 acres of additional park land to achieve its standard, or already has a surplus of 0.17 acres. Regardless, with its current parkland ratio of 2.67 acres per 1,000 residents, Wasco does fall short of meeting the State Quimby Act required standard of a minimum of 3 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, and would require an additional 6.85 acres to achieve this standard.

Estimated Total Water Usage of all the City and Park District parks in Wasco plus the greenbelt along Filburn Avenue is 78.30 acre feet per years, which is well below the Maximum Applied Water Allowance of 182.33 acre feet per year.

5.7 EXISTING PARK INVENTORY AND CONDITIONS

In early 2013, members of the MIG project team spent two days in Wasco visiting each park site, facility and greenbelt to observe conditions at that time. Refer to maps for locations of existing City and District parks and facilities (Figure 1-5.1 and Figure 1-5.2).

Below: Skate Park

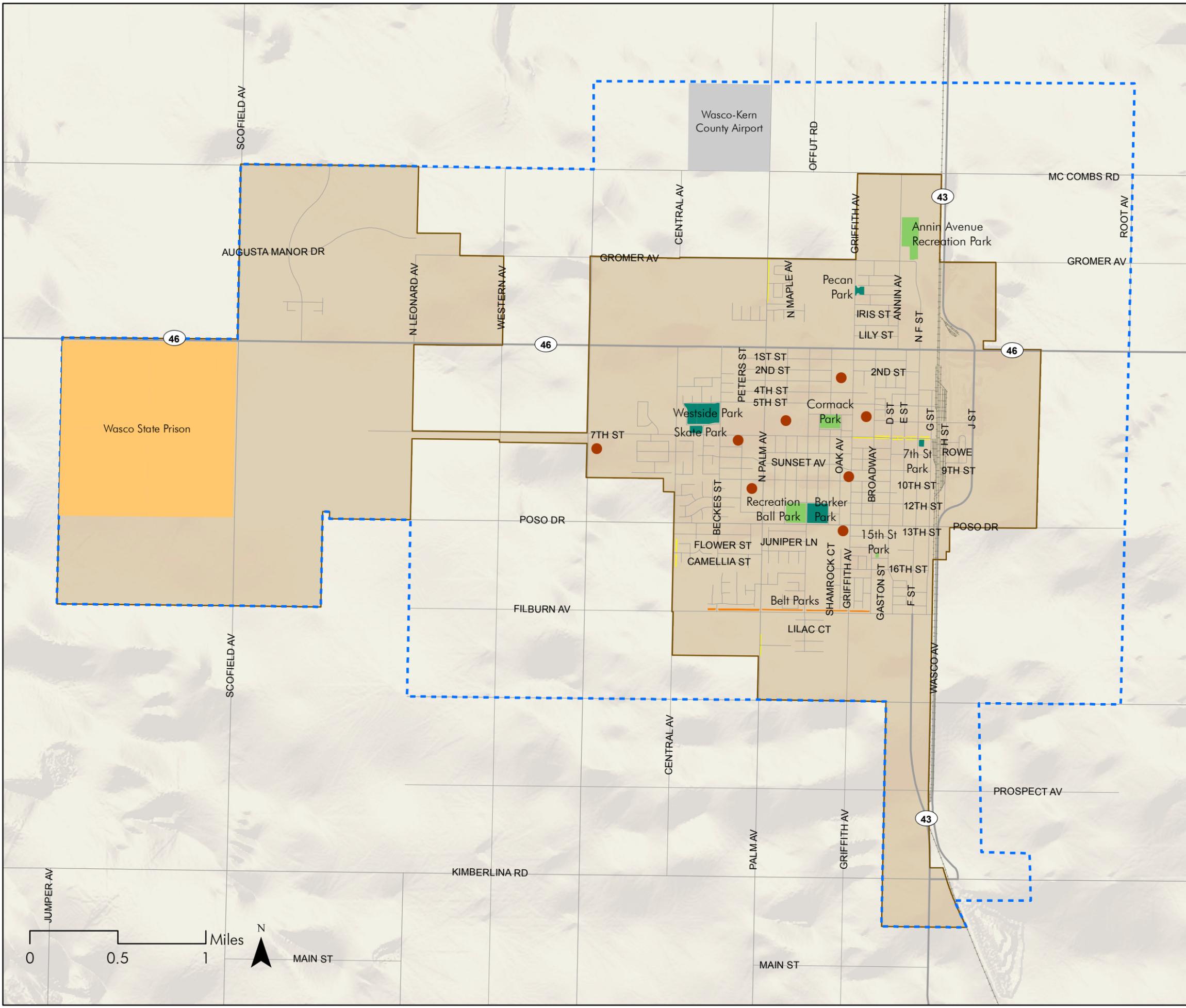


The pages following the maps of existing parks and facilities identify each park and school facility visited and the conclusions reached by the team members. Each park profile presents the following information:

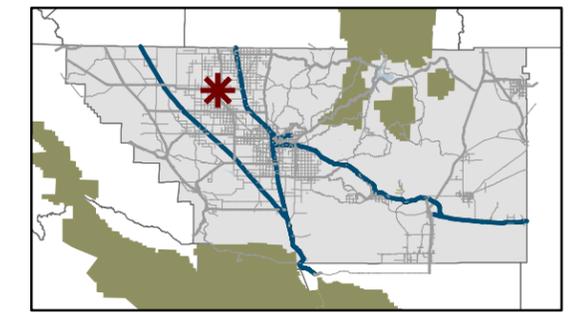
- Size in acres
- Park classifications (City and District classification systems are both indicated).
- Description of park facility
- Existing site amenities
- Current uses
- Current conditions

In addition, the “Parks Table” at the end of each profile presents an assessment of each of the following aspects of each park:

- Park Condition – Good, Fair, or Poor
- Tree Coverage – Good, Fair or Poor
- Greenbelt/Walking Path Connection – Yes or No
- Sustainable Systems (that are present) – Irrigation, Lighting, Paving, Grading, Site Furnishing
- Future Greenbelt/Walking Path Connection – Yes or No
- Plant Water Usage – Low, Moderate or High
- Maximum Applied Water Allowances (MAWA) Gallons per Year

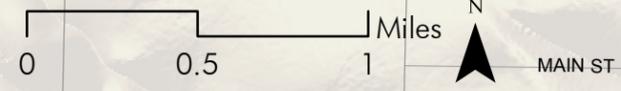


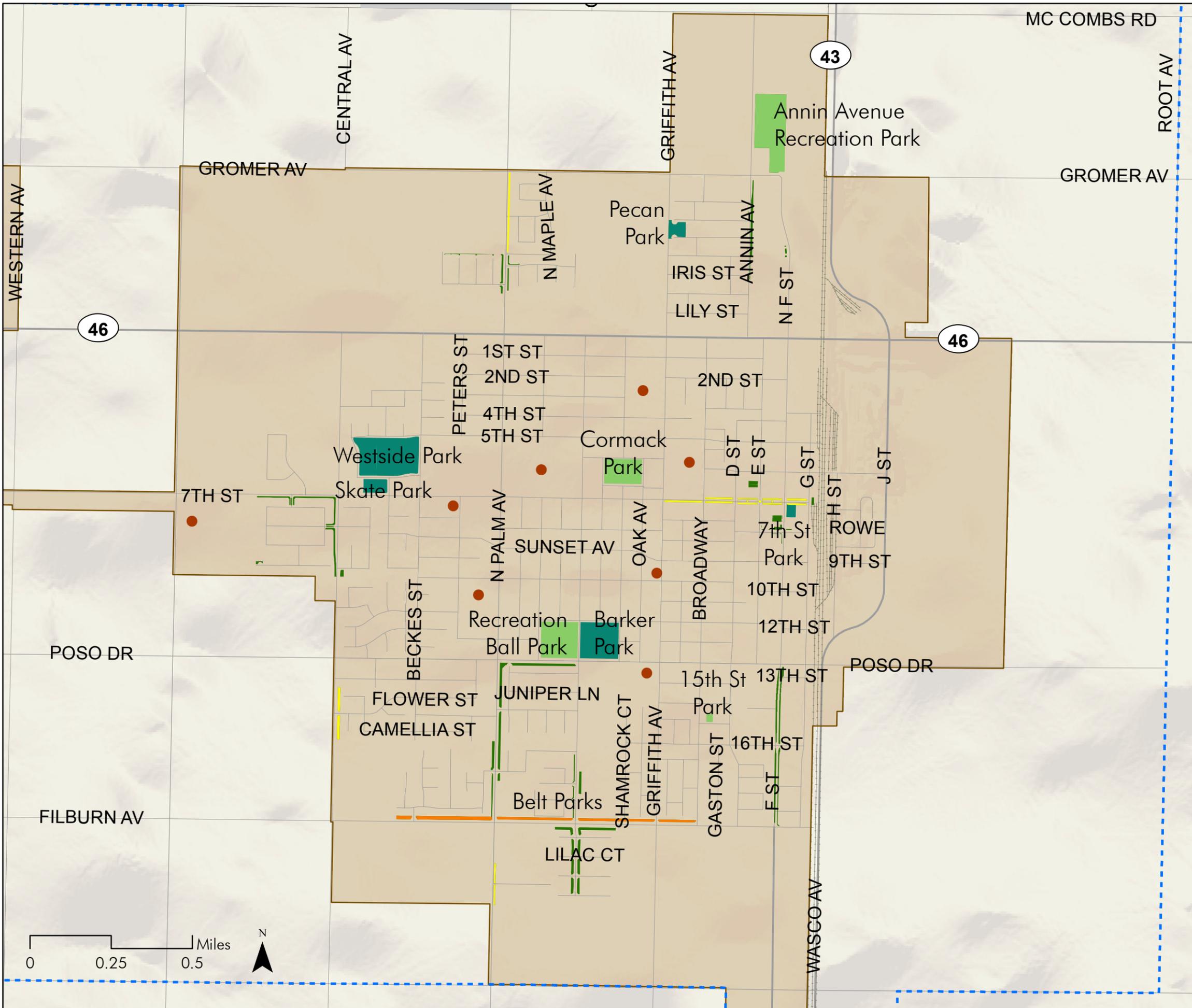
- Sphere Of Influence
- School
- City Park
- District Park
- Greenbelts (City Maintained)
- Walking Paths (City Maintained)
- Airport
- Railroad
- Freeway
- Highway
- Major Road
- Local Road
- City Limits



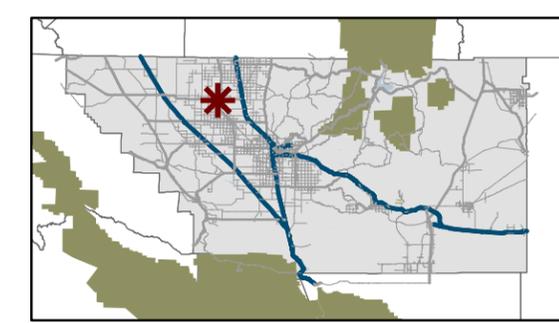
Key Map N.T.S.

**Figure 1-5.1:
Existing Parks
and Facilities**





- Sphere Of Influence
- School
- City Park
- District Park
- Greenbelts (City Maintained)
- Walking Paths (City Maintained)
- Landscape Areas (City Maintained)
- Airport
- Railroad
- Freeway
- Highway
- Major Road
- Local Road
- City Limits



Key Map N.T.S.

Figure 1-5.2: Existing Parks and Facilities
 City Maintained Greenbelts, Walking Paths, and Landscape Areas

7TH STREET PARK
F STREET

CLASSIFICATION City: Mini Park
SIZE .32 acres
District: Mini Park

DESCRIPTION OF PARK FACILITY

Located at the northwest corner of 7th Street and F Street, 7th Street Park is a .32 acre pocket park that is owned and maintained by the City of Wasco. The park is located in the downtown area and is surrounded by business to the north and west and along the east and south side by a vacant property. The park amenities include picnic tables, a drinking fountain, trash receptacles, a monument sign, mature trees, irrigated turf, fencing along the eastern edge and street parking.



EXISTING AMENITIES

- Four (4) Picnic Tables
- Drinking Fountain
- Trash Receptacles
- Monument Sign
- Irrigated Turf
- 3-Rail PVC Fencing along east edge

The site is also used as a neighborhood gathering site, especially on warm summer nights, and serves to provide space for community dialog and social interaction. Parents bring their small children to play under the shade trees. Expansion opportunities are limited, however, the site could serve as a connector and starting point for a greenbelt trail, or walking path system through the downtown area.

CURRENT USES

7th Street Park is a passive park located in the eastern portion of downtown and fronts Hwy 43. It serves as green buffer and respite space in a central business district and nearby industrial area. There are no programmed activities and the site is mostly used for leisure activities and picnics.

CURRENT CONDITION

Mature trees within the park provide a fair amount of shade, park amenities appear to be maintained to a satisfactory level to keep them safe and functioning, park landscaping is well maintained, and the overall condition rating of the park is fair.

Park Condition			Tree Coverage			Greenbelt/ Walking Path Connection		Sustainable Systems					Future Greenbelt/ Walking Path Connection		Plant Water Usage			MAWA Gallons Per Year
Good	Fair	Poor	Good	Fair	Poor	Yes	No	Irrigation	Lighting	Paving	Grading	Site Furnishing	Yes	No	Low Water Usage	Moderate Water Usage	High Water Usage	
	X		X			X						X				X	X	398,755

SOUTH GATE (15TH STREET) PARK
15TH STREET

CLASSIFICATION **SIZE**

City: Mini Park .30 acres

District: Mini Park

DESCRIPTION OF PARK FACILITY

15th Street Park is located in a residential area in the southeast portion of the City of Wasco between Broadway and D Street. This District owned park contains amenities such as one full basketball court, a children’s play area, a small group picnic area, a barbecue, drinking fountain, trash receptacle, bollards along 15th Street, walkways and a restroom.

EXISTING AMENITIES

- Full Basketball Court (concrete)
- 2-5 Year Children’s Play Area
- Small Group Picnic Shelters w/ Tables
- Barbecue
- Drinking Fountain
- Trash Receptacle
- Metal Pole Bollards along 15th Street
- Mature Tree
- Walkways
- Restroom Building

CURRENT USES

15th Street Park is a mini park that serves as a neighborhood park for residents in the southeast part of the community.



The basketball court and children’s play structures are heavily used. The park was put in to serve a high density area of the city. Vandalism and over-use create maintenance issues that need to be addressed. Limited financial resources prevent a higher level of maintenance and supervision of the site. Expansion possibilities are limited as there are residential homes surrounding the site. There are no programmed activities. However, the site is used for basketball practices, family picnics, neighborhood gatherings, and family social activities. There is a heavy concentration of youth in this area that could benefit from additional park space or a structured program like a Boys & Girls Club.

CURRENT CONDITION

The park amenities and landscaping looks to be in poor condition. With the exception of one mature tree; the landscaping and turf are minimal throughout the park. The level of maintenance appears inadequate and the overall condition rating is poor.

Park Condition			Tree Coverage			Greenbelt/ Walking Path Connection		Sustainable Systems					Future Greenbelt/ Walking Path Connection		Plant Water Usage			MAWA Gallons Per Year	
Good	Fair	Poor	Good	Fair	Poor	Yes	No	Irrigation	Lighting	Paving	Grading	Site Furnishing	Yes	No	Low Water Usage	Moderate Water Usage	High Water Usage		
		X		X			X						X		X				171,334

ANNIN AVE. RECREATION PARK (SOCCER COMPLEX)
AT ANNIN AVE. AND GROMER AVE.

CLASSIFICATION

City: Neighborhood Park

District: Neighborhood Park

SIZE

9.62 acres

DESCRIPTION OF PARK FACILITY

Annin Avenue Recreation Park is now classified as a 9.62 acre neighborhood park which is located at the north east corner of Annin Avenue and Gromer Avenue. The Wasco Recreation and Parks District owns the park which consists of nine non-regulation size soccer fields. Amenities within the park include team benches, trash receptacles and portable toilets. On-site, non-paved parking is located along the west side of the park. The fields are irrigated and there are several newly planted trees throughout the site, outside of the field of play. The park is also maintained and programmed by the Parks District.

EXISTING AMENITIES

- Nine (9) Non-Regulated Soccer Fields
- Team Benches
- Irrigated Turf
- Trees
- Non-Paved Parking Lot
- Perimeter 3-Rail PVC Fencing
- Trash Receptacles
- Two (2) Portable Toilets
- Two (2) Trash Dumpsters



CURRENT USES

Annin Avenue Recreation Park is currently a dedicated sports facility used primarily for youth soccer leagues as well as for practice space and casual pick-up games. The site is not a walk in site and does not serve local neighborhood park uses in addition to sports field uses. The site has potential to be a major community park with both sports fields to serve organized and programmed activities and to serve future neighborhood park needs in the north east portion of the city.

CURRENT CONDITION

The surrounding 3-Rail PVC fencing appears to be in good condition, however, some areas of the turf appear to be uneven, the soil is compacted and the turf is in poor condition. The level of maintenance appears inadequate and the overall condition rating is poor.

Park Condition			Tree Coverage			Greenbelt/ Walking Path Connection		Sustainable Systems					Future Greenbelt/ Walking Path Connection		Plant Water Usage			MAWA Gallons Per Year
Good	Fair	Poor	Good	Fair	Poor	Yes	No	Irrigation	Lighting	Paving	Grading	Site Furnishing	Yes	No	Low Water Usage	Moderate Water Usage	High Water Usage	
		X			X		X	X				X	X				X	12,029,477

PECAN PARK
BETWEEN PECAN STREET AND HAZELNUT STREET

CLASSIFICATION
City: Mini Park
District: Mini Park

SIZE
1.26 acres

DESCRIPTION OF PARK FACILITY
Pecan Park is a small pocket park located at the end of Pecan Street and Hazelnut Street in a residential neighborhood. A trail runs adjacent to the park along the west side. This City owned 1.26 acre park contains picnic tables, irrigated turf and trees, a fenced retention basin and one solar powered security light.



- EXISTING AMENITIES**
- Three (3) Picnic Tables
 - Adjacent Walking Trail (Undeveloped)
 - Irrigated Turf
 - Trees
 - Fenced Retention Basin
 - Solar Powered Security Light

CURRENT CONDITION
The turf areas and park amenities at Pecan Park are maintained to a satisfactory level and appear to be able to sustain the current uses. The overall condition rating is fair.

CURRENT USES
Pecan Park is used for passive activities such as picnics and for accessing the adjacent trail for walking. It is almost exclusively used by neighborhood residents. The primary purpose for development of the park was to provide a green space buffer between the neighborhood and the retention basin. No planned activities or programs take place at the site.

Park Condition			Tree Coverage			Greenbelt/ Walking Path Connection		Sustainable Systems					Future Greenbelt/ Walking Path Connection		Plant Water Usage			MAWA Gallons Per Year
Good	Fair	Poor	Good	Fair	Poor	Yes	No	Irrigation	Lighting	Paving	Grading	Site Furnishing	Yes	No	Low Water Usage	Moderate Water Usage	High Water Usage	
	X			X			X	X			X	X	X				X	984,696

BARKER PARK

POPLAR AVE. BETWEEN 11TH ST. AND POSO DRIVE

CLASSIFICATION

City: Neighborhood Park

SIZE

.30 acres

District: Neighborhood Park

DESCRIPTION OF PARK FACILITY

Barker Park is now classified as an 8.62 acre community park centrally located within the City of Wasco. The park is surrounded by single family residences along the north, south and east sides of the park and by Recreation Ballpark along the west side of the park. The City of Wasco owns the park which is mostly bordered by mature trees. Barker Park contains the Wasco Recreation and Parks District Building, the Veteran's Hall Building and the swimming pool. Other amenities include a children's play area, group picnic shelters, barbecues, two half-basketball courts, two volleyball courts (one turf, one sand), drinking fountains, trash receptacles, security lighting, mature trees, irrigated turf and asphalt parking within the park and at the edge of the park. The park is maintained by the Wasco Recreation and Parks District.



EXISTING AMENITIES

- Four (4) Group Picnic Shelters w/ Tables
- 2-12 Year Children's Play Area
- Two (2) Half Court Basketball Courts
- Turf Volleyball Court
- Sand Volleyball Area
- Drinking Fountains
- Barbecues
- Trash Receptacles
- Bench Seating
- Swimming Pool (enclosed by fencing)
- WPRD Office Building
- Veteran's Hall Building w/ Meeting Rooms and Kitchen
- Security Lighting
- Mature Trees
- Irrigated Turf
- Parking Lot
- Walking Path at South End of Park

CURRENT USES

Current uses for Barker Park include community use of the basketball court, volleyball court, swimming pool, picnic area and children playground area. The Veteran's Hall contains several meeting rooms that are used throughout the week for groups such as the Rotary Club and the Seniors Group. The annual Wasco Festival of Roses is also held at Barker Park. The site used to be the home of the Rose Garden Club and walkways and an abandon fountain are remnants of a bygone era. The park is heavily used by families and youth for informal activities. Jogging and dog walking are very popular at the site. The swimming pool complex is the main attraction and the only public pool in Wasco for lessons and free swimming, in addition to the competitive swim program. Security and vandalism are a maintenance concern of the WRPD who maintains and operates the site, although it is owned by the City. The site currently serves both Neighborhood and Community Park uses and is a major green space to serve the central area of the city.

BARKER PARK (CONT.)

CURRENT CONDITION

Barker Park’s amenities appear to be maintained to a satisfactory level. The turf and landscaping show signs of heavy use, but is maintained to a usable condition. Because of the parks’ popularity and size, the number of parking spaces may be too few to adequately accommodate enough parking during high volume use. The overall condition rating is fair.

Park Condition			Tree Coverage			Greenbelt/ Walking Path Connection		Sustainable Systems					Future Greenbelt/ Walking Path Connection		Plant Water Usage			MAWA Gallons Per Year
Good	Fair	Poor	Good	Fair	Poor	Yes	No	Irrigation	Lighting	Paving	Grading	Site Furnishing	Yes	No	Low Water Usage	Moderate Water Usage	High Water Usage	
	X		X				X	X				X	X				X	7,052,665

CORMACK PARK

6TH STREET BETWEEN CEDAR AVENUE AND OAK DRIVE

CLASSIFICATION

City: Neighborhood Park

District: Neighborhood Park

SIZE

5.65 acres

DESCRIPTION OF PARK FACILITY

Cormack Park is a 5.65 acre park that is owned, operated, and maintained by the Wasco Recreation and Parks District and is classified by the City of Wasco as a neighborhood park. The park is surrounded by single family residences along the west, north and east sides of the park. A church, a few commercial businesses and the Wasco Chamber of Commerce run along the south side of the park on 6th Street. The park amenities include two full concrete basketball courts with lighting, two softball fields, a children’s play area, group picnic shelter area, barbecues, drinking fountains, trash receptacles, mature trees, irrigated turf and on-street parking.

EXISTING AMENITIES

- Two (2) Lighted Full Basketball Courts (concrete)
- Two (2) Softball Fields (skinned infield) with: Backstops, Partial Baseline Fencing, Outfield Fencing, Portable Aluminum Bleachers
- 2-5 Year Children’s Play Area
- Two (2) Swing Sets
- Picnic Tables
- Group Picnic Area
- Barbecues
- Drinking Fountains
- Trash Receptacles
- Security Lighting
- Flag Pole w/ Monument Base
- On-street Parking
- Trees
- Irrigated Turf



CURRENT USES

Cormack Park serves as both a neighborhood and community park providing neighborhood park amenities such as tot lots and open turf areas and picnic facilities, while also serving community sports needs with softball fields and basketball courts. The site is the primary green space of the surrounding community. Its close proximity to the Karl Clemens Elementary School and Wasco High School make it a convenient park location for students to access. Because of its central city location the park is heavily used for both informal uses and planned activities.

CORMACK PARK (CONT.)

CURRENT CONDITION

Cormack Park’s basketball courts and ball fields are in good condition and seem to receive the proper maintenance attention to handle the amount of users. The lack of restroom facilities is an issue for the users. The conditions of the turf areas appear to be poor and in need of a higher level of maintenance. The overall condition rating is poor.

Park Condition			Tree Coverage			Greenbelt/ Walking Path Connection		Sustainable Systems					Future Greenbelt/ Walking Path Connection		Plant Water Usage			MAWA Gallons Per Year
Good	Fair	Poor	Good	Fair	Poor	Yes	No	Irrigation	Lighting	Paving	Grading	Site Furnishing	Yes	No	Low Water Usage	Moderate Water Usage	High Water Usage	
		X	X				X	X					X				X	6,616,116

WASCO RECREATION BALLPARK (WEST OF BARKER PARK)
 POPLAR AVENUE BETWEEN 11TH STREET AND POSO DRIVE

CLASSIFICATION **SIZE**
 City: Neighborhood Park 8.84 acres
 District: Neighborhood Park

DESCRIPTION OF PARK FACILITY

The Wasco Recreation Ballpark is an 8.84 acre park centrally located within the City of Wasco, which is now classified by both the City and the District as a neighborhood park. The park is surrounded by single family residences along the north, south and west side of the park and by Barker Park along the east side. The Wasco Recreation and Parks District owns and maintains the park which is mostly bordered by mature trees. The park contains Wasco’s premier adult baseball stadium with covered stadium seating, two little league fields; one in the southeast corner of the park and the other in the southwest corner of the park, a children’s play area, a concession restroom building, group picnic shelters, barbecues, drinking fountains, trash receptacles, mature trees, irrigated turf and street parking.

EXISTING AMENITIES

- Lighted Baseball Stadium (turf infield) with: Scoreboard, Outfield/Baseline Fencing, Covered Stadium Seating Structure, Batting Cages
- Lighted Little League Baseball Field (located in the southeast corner of the park site) with: Turf Infield, Outfield/Baseline Fencing, Concession/Restroom Building, Covered Dugouts, Batting Cages, Portable Aluminum Bleachers, Bullpen, Drinking Fountains for Players at Dugouts
- Little League Field (located in the southwest corner of the park site) with: Turf Infield, Outfield/Baseline Fencing, Covered Dugouts, Chain Link Fence Backstop
- 2-5 Year Children’s Play Area
- Group Picnic Shelter w/ Picnic Tables
- Drinking Fountains
- Barbecues
- Trash Receptacles
- Mature Trees
- Irrigated Turf



CURRENT USES

Recreation Ballpark functions as a community park hosting sports programs and special events. Uses include baseball and softball leagues serving ages 5 years to adults. Community sports organizations that use the park include Wasco Little League and Wasco Bengals Youth Football. The Wasco Recreation and Park District uses the park for special events and summer recreation camp activities. Group picnics sponsored by community organizations also take place on site. The children’s play area is a popular neighborhood amenity. In addition to being a major sports facility for the community the park and its adjacent Baker Park provide a large green space for the central portion of the city.

WASCO RECREATION BALLPARK
(CONT.)

CURRENT CONDITION

Recreation Ballpark appears to receive the most maintenance attention, probably because it hosts the most organized programming and community activities. Because of the parks' popularity, the park size and the number of fields; the number of parking spaces may be too few to adequately accommodate parking during high volume use. The overall condition rating for the fields and sports facilities is good, while the overall rating for the park amenities is fair.

Park Condition			Tree Coverage			Greenbelt/ Walking Path Connection		Sustainable Systems					Future Greenbelt/ Walking Path Connection		Plant Water Usage			MAWA Gallons Per Year
Good	Fair	Poor	Good	Fair	Poor	Yes	No	Irrigation	Lighting	Paving	Grading	Site Furnishing	Yes	No	Low Water Usage	Moderate Water Usage	High Water Usage	
X	X		X				X	X				X	X				X	9,049,225

SKATE PARK
SOUTH OF PARKSIDE DRIVE

CLASSIFICATION

City: Mini Park

District: Mini Park

SIZE

2.04 acres

DESCRIPTION OF PARK FACILITY

The skate park is located south of Westside Park. It is a concrete, in-ground skate park that is enclosed with tubular steel fencing at the perimeter. Amenities include surrounding turf areas containing a small group picnic area with tables, barbecues, benches and trees. The park is maintained by the Wasco Recreation and Parks District.

EXISTING AMENITIES

- In-ground Skate Park
- Metal Perimeter Fencing
- Small Group Picnic Shelter w/ Picnic Tables
- Barbecues
- Benches
- Irrigated Turf
- Mature Trees

CURRENT USES

The skate park serves primarily local youth for skateboarding activities, although it does attract skaters from as far away as Bakersfield and other surrounding communities. It is a popular special interest facility and is heavily used. Vandalism and security have been a concern of the WRPD and adjacent neighbors. Benches and picnic tables, along



with trees provide shaded areas for spectators. No programmed activities, such as lessons or competitions, take place, although participants interviewed on site said they would welcome organized activities like lessons and competitions. The facility primarily serves youth through young adults and appears to be a needed facility to provide physical activity opportunities to this age group.

CURRENT CONDITION

The skate park provides an alternative to traditional sports for park users and appears to be adequately maintained to support safe use. However, the entrance to the park is often muddy which may be indicative of some drainage issues. The overall condition rating is fair.

Park Condition			Tree Coverage			Greenbelt/ Walking Path Connection		Sustainable Systems					Future Greenbelt/ Walking Path Connection		Plant Water Usage			MAWA Gallons Per Year
Good	Fair	Poor	Good	Fair	Poor	Yes	No	Irrigation	Lighting	Paving	Grading	Site Furnishing	Yes	No	Low Water Usage	Moderate Water Usage	High Water Usage	
	X		X				X	X					X				X	2,118,327

WESTSIDE PARK

BECKES STREET BETWEEN 5TH STREET AND PARKSIDE DRIVE

CLASSIFICATION

City: N/A*

District: Community Park

SIZE

14.04 acres

*exceeds the size of a Neighborhood Park and falls below the City standard for a Community Park

DESCRIPTION OF PARK FACILITY

Westside Park is a 14.04 acre park located in the northeast portion of the City of Wasco, which is best classified as a community park in terms of the District park classification system. The park is mostly surrounded by single family residences with the exception of the Wasco High School athletic fields that run along the eastside of the park. The City of Wasco owns and operates the park which contains a newly constructed baseball and two softball fields, a basketball court, a children’s play area, a restroom building, group picnic shelters, barbecues, drinking fountains, trash receptacles, walking paths, a Frisbee golf course, security lighting, mature trees, irrigated turf and two lighted asphalt parking areas. The park is maintained by the Wasco Recreation and Parks District.

EXISTING AMENITIES

- Lighted Baseball Field (newly constructed) with: Backstop, Baseline Fencing, Outfield Fencing
- Lighted Softball Field with: Backstop, Dugouts, Scoreboard, Baseline Fencing, Outfield Fencing
- Softball Field (under construction) with: Backstop, Baseline Fencing
- Full Basketball Court (concrete)
- Restroom Building
- Children’s Play Area
- Two (2) Group Picnic Shelters w/ Picnic Tables
- Barbecues
- Trash Receptacles
- Two (2) Asphalt Parking Areas
- Irrigated Turf
- Mature Trees
- Walking Paths
- Benches
- Frisbee Golf Course
- Security Lighting
- General Parking Lot Lighting



- Mounding throughout Park
- Perimeter Walking Path

CURRENT USES

Westside Park serves the west portions of the city for neighborhood and community park purposes. The neighborhood park amenities such as the tot lots and picnic facilities attract families and local neighborhood groups. The recent addition of the new baseball and softball fields at Westside Park, along with the existing ball field and basketball court, has increased the parks popularity for community sports use. The parks close proximity to Wasco High School make it a convenient park location for students to access and is heavily used by this age group, particularly because the skate park is adjacent to Westside Park. WRPD runs its organized youth and adult softball programs at the site. The park hosts an informal Frisbee golf course that is popular with local residents. The park is also a popular place for walking and exercising.

WESTSIDE PARK (CONT.)

CURRENT CONDITION

Westside Park amenities appear to be maintained to a satisfactory level to accommodate the current use and be in fair condition. The park landscaping, walkways, and turf areas are in need of a higher maintenance level to accommodate the heavy use they receive. The overall condition rating is fair for the park sports fields and amenities and poor for the landscaping, turf and walkways.

Park Condition			Tree Coverage			Greenbelt/ Walking Path Connection		Sustainable Systems					Future Greenbelt/ Walking Path Connection		Plant Water Usage			MAWA Gallons Per Year
Good	Fair	Poor	Good	Fair	Poor	Yes	No	Irrigation	Lighting	Paving	Grading	Site Furnishing	Yes	No	Low Water Usage	Moderate Water Usage	High Water Usage	
	X	X	X				X	X				X	X				X	15,527,657

JOHN L. PRUEITT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
30501 SEVENTH STREET

CLASSIFICATION
Public Elementary School

SIZE
7.43 acres (recreational space which includes playing fields and multi-use turf areas)

MAWA (Maximum Applied Water Allowance)
9,300,827 gal/yr

EXISTING AMENITIES

- Kindergarten Areas with: Play Structure with Sand Surfacing, Turf Area
- Large Play Area with Fibar Surfacing
- Large Play Area with Sand Surfacing
- Two (2) Soccer Fields
- Three (3) Basketball Courts (concrete)
- Two (2) Play Areas (one with Fibar surfacing and one with sand surfacing)
- Irrigated Turf
- Trees



KARL F. CLEMENS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
523 BROADWAY AVENUE

CLASSIFICATION
Public Elementary School

SIZE
4.93 acres (recreational space which includes playing fields and multi-use turf areas)

MAWA (Maximum Applied Water Allowance)
6,165,381 gal/yr



EXISTING AMENITIES

- Four (4) Play Areas with: Play Structure w/ Sand/Fibar Surfacing, Asphalt Play Area
- Two (2) Soccer Fields w/ Goals
- Seven (7) Backstops
- Two (2) Portable Backstops
- Four (4) Basketball Courts (3 asphalt, 1 concrete)
- Volleyball Court Overlay
- Four (4) Tetherball Courts in Sand Area
- Irrigated Turf
- Trees

EXISTING SITE AMENITIES AT DAYCARE

- Play Area with: Play Structure w/ Fibar Surfacing, Four (4) 2-bay Swingsets
- Basketball Court (non-regulation)
- Half Basketball Court
- Picnic Table
- Irrigated Turf
- Trees

THOMAS JEFFERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL
305 GRIFFITH AVENUE

CLASSIFICATION
Middle School

SIZE
7.20 acres (recreational space which includes playing fields and multi-use turf areas)

MAWA (Maximum Applied Water Allowance)
9,009,996 gal/yr

EXISTING AMENITIES

- Four (4) Baseball/Softball Fields w/ Backstops
- Regulation Soccer/Flag Football Field
- Eight (8) Basketball Courts (asphalt)
- Four (4) Volleyball Courts
- Lighted Parking Area
- Irrigated Turf
- Trees

EXISTING SITE AMENITIES AT REC CENTER

- Full Indoor Court
- Two (2) Side Indoor Courts
- Retractable Bleachers
- Office
- Concession Area
- Restrooms
- Storage / Custodian Closet
- Ticket Sales Area



WASCO HIGH SCHOOL
1900 SEVENTH STREET

CLASSIFICATION
Public High School

SIZE
20.45 acres (recreational space which includes playing fields and multi-use turf areas)

MAWA (Maximum Applied Water Allowance)
25,584,418 gal/yr

EXISTING AMENITIES

- Practice Field (Soccer & Football)
- Lighted Soccer/Football Field w/ Scoreboard
- Two (2) Lighted Softball Fields with: Backstops, Covered Dugouts, Scoreboards, Batting Cages, Outfield Fencing (at 1 field), Bleachers
- Baseball Field with: Backstop, Covered Dugout, Scoreboard, Batting Cage, Outfield Fencing, Restrooms, Bleachers
- Football/Soccer Lighted Stadium with: Home and Visitor Permanent Bleachers, Scoreboard, Long Jump/Triple Jump Pit, Shot Put/Discus Area, Track and Field, Concession Stand on Home and Visitor Side, Restrooms, Flagpole
- Six (6) Basketball Courts (4 Courts with Volleyball Court Overlay)
- One (1) Volleyball Court
- Eight (8) Lighted Tennis Courts (Fenced)
- Two (2) Handball Courts
- One (1) Concession/Restroom/Storage Building
- One (1) Grounds Facility (Building)
- One (1) Gymnasium with: Weight Room, Locker Rooms, Office, Wrestling Room



PALM AVENUE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
1017 PALM AVENUE

CLASSIFICATION
Public Elementary School

SIZE
8.04 acres (recreational space which includes playing fields and multi-use turf areas)

MAWA (Maximum Applied Water Allowance)
10,057,614 gal/yr

EXISTING AMENITIES

- Kindergarten Areas with: Play Structures w/ Fibar Surfacing, Asphalt Play Area
- Two (2) Regulation Soccer Fields w/ Goals
- Two (2) Baseball Fields w/ Backstops
- Small Baseball Backstop
- Six (6) Basketball Courts (concrete)
- Two (2) Play Areas (one with Fibar surfacing and one with sand surfacing)
- Irrigated Turf
- Trees



TERESA BURKE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
1301 FILBURNE AVENUE

CLASSIFICATION
Elementary School

SIZE
10.89 acres (recreational space which includes playing fields and multi-use turf areas)

MAWA (Maximum Applied Water Allowance)
13,619,213 gal/yr

EXISTING AMENITIES

- Kindergarten Play Area with: Play Structures w/ Fibar Surfacing, Asphalt Play Area
- Two (2) Large Play Areas with: Play Structures w/ Fibar Surfacing
- Large Asphalt Area with: Six (6) Basketball Courts, Six (6) Tetherball Courts, Six (6) Volleyball Courts
- Two (2) Regulation Soccer Fields
- Two (2) Baseball/Softball Fields w/ Chain Link Backstops
- Multi-purpose Facility
- Parking



INDEPENDENCE HIGH SCHOOL
1445 POSO DRIVE

CLASSIFICATION

Continuation School

SIZE

.71 acres (recreational space which includes playing fields and multi-use turf areas)

MAWA (Maximum Applied Water Allowance)

882,717 gal/yr

EXISTING AMENITIES

- Softball Field with: Chain Link Fence Backstop, Turf Infield
- Half Basketball Court
- Three (3) Horseshoe Pits
- Volleyball Turf Court
- Irrigated Turf
- Weight Training Room (Open Air)

PART II - NEEDS ASSESSMENT

CITY OF WASCO
URBAN GREENING, PARKS AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN
2014

Introduction

to the Needs Assessment

PART II - CHAPTER ONE





Introduction to the Needs Assessment

1.1 OVERVIEW

This Community Needs Assessment Section represents a major milestone of the Wasco Urban Greening, Parks and Open Space Master Plan process. It builds on public input received to date and the extensive observation and analysis of the existing park system, which was previously documented in the Existing Conditions Section.

The purpose of the Needs Assessment is to understand and clarify present day and projected park facility and recreational program needs of the community¹. These current and projected needs are based on a current 2013 population of 20,729 residents (excluding inmates at Wasco State Prison)² and an estimated future population of 28,419 residents

¹ The study area for the Master Plan is confined to the more compact area defined by the City of Wasco's incorporated boundary and its Sphere of Influence.

² The total population for the City of Wasco in 2013 is estimated at 25,710 residents by the California Department of Finance, including 4,981 persons in group quarters at Wasco State Prison. Source: California Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit, "Table 2:E-5 City/County Population and Housing Estimates, 1/1/2013

ten years from now in 2023³. This knowledge will provide a firm basis for Plan recommendations, including how many parks and facilities are needed in Wasco both now and in the future, as well as the most appropriate mix of improved and new parks, greenbelts, recreation facilities and programs.

This section presents an evaluation of identified needs based on input from the community and an assessment of the existing park and recreation system. The City of Wasco and the Wasco Recreation and Park District may choose not to respond to some of these needs at this time or some needs may be met by other partners or providers.

³ According to estimates from the Kern COG, the projected population for Wasco in 2023 is 33,130, and excluding the prison population will be 28,419. Source: Kern Council of Governments, "Kern Regional Housing Data Report, Wasco Housing and Jobs Projections, Table 1, page 63, March 2013.

Priority needs and specific plans and strategies for achieving these needs, including partnerships, funding and maintenance strategies, will be identified in the next phases of the planning process and presented in the Master Plan.

1.2 PLANNING PROCESS

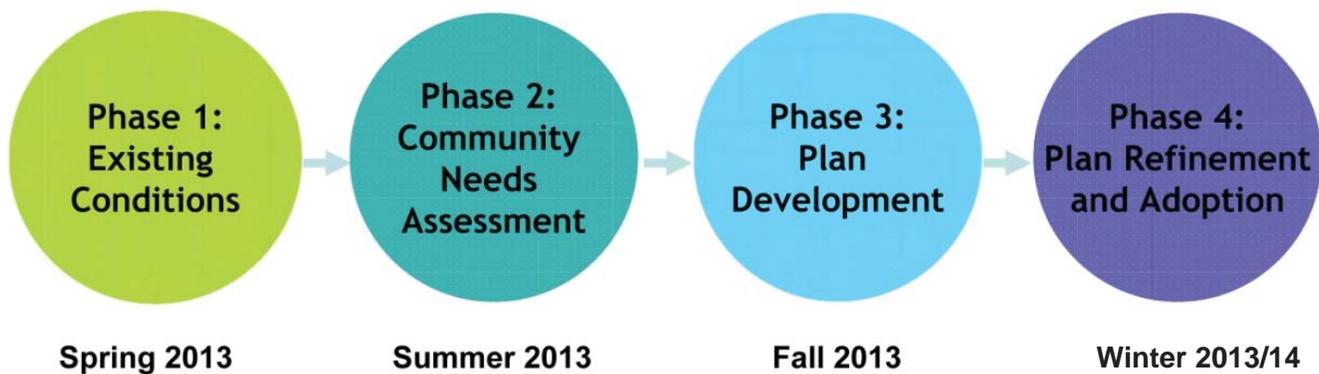
The planning process for the Urban Greening, Parks and Recreation Master Plan includes four major phases (Figure 1-1). As noted, the Community Needs Assessment follows the evaluation of Existing Conditions and precedes the development of the Master Plan. While needs identified in this report are discussed in terms of potential policies and options, this analysis should not be interpreted as recommendations. Rather the Needs Assessment is intended to spark discussions about desired policy directions and allow for informed decision-making about the strategies needed to achieve the urban greening, parks and recreation goals of the community.

1.2 SECTION CONTENTS

The Community Needs Assessment is organized in terms of the process used to analyze community needs and develop key findings from the analysis.

- Chapter 2: Public Involvement Findings – distills and analyzes information gathered from the public outreach tools used to develop an understanding of current recreation patterns and future recreation needs in the community.
- Chapter 3: Comparison to Other Districts – provides a benchmark for park and recreation services by comparing what is provided to Wasco by the Wasco Parks and Recreation District with services received in other comparable communities served by park districts.
- Chapter 4: Recreation Facility Analysis – analyzes the capacity of the community’s existing inventory of recreation facilities to meet current and future needs given the current population (20,729) and projected future population (28,419).

Figure 2-1.1: Planning Process.



- Chapter 5: Parkland Needs Assessment – analyzes park land needs from the perspective of a revised park classification system, and in terms of connectivity, accessibility, park standards and other guidelines.
- Chapter 6: Recreation, Health and Wellness Analysis – evaluates recreation trends, preferences, methods and programs that have the potential to improve recreation opportunities, and the health and wellness of Wasco residents.
- Chapter 7: Baseline Financial Analysis – provides an overview of the WRPD’s financial ability to deliver the desired service level the community would like to see in its park and recreation system as determined by the findings in the public involvement process.
- Chapter 8: Summary and Next Steps – reviews key findings emerging from the Needs Assessment and how these will be used to develop park, facility and program recommendations in the next phase of the planning process.

Public Involvement Findings

PART II - CHAPTER TWO





Public Involvement Findings

2.1 INTRODUCTION

To develop a master plan that reflects the needs and desires of Wasco residents, a number of different public outreach methods were used to obtain feedback from a diverse group of residents. Approximately 260 community members participated, providing information about their vision, needs and preferences that is critical to the needs assessment.

2.2 COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROCESS

The community involvement process succeeded in generating a wide range of responses related to urban greening, recreation participation and park use in Wasco. The public involvement process included the following elements.

Community Questionnaire:

Between March and May 2013, an online questionnaire was posted on the City of Wasco website. Paper copies of the questionnaire were also sent to all city households with

their water utility bills and made available at WRPD headquarters, City of Wasco offices and other locations throughout the community. The questionnaire was available in both English and Spanish versions. In total there were 205 responses to the questionnaire, including 36 in Spanish. The questionnaire provided important qualitative information, but as it did not rely on a random sampling method to gather statistically valid input, the data generated is not necessarily representative of all Wasco residents.

Stakeholder Interviews: Six one-on-one interviews were conducted with community leaders, including interviews with city officials, coaches of youth sports teams and other stakeholders.

Focus Groups: A series of three focus groups were held to obtain input from specific groups, including seniors, business community leaders and high school



Above: Interactive 'Dot Board' from the June 19th Community Workshop.

students. Over thirty individuals participated in the focus groups
 Public Workshops: Two community outreach events were held to elicit feedback from the general public. The first was an open house intercept event held on June 13 at a Wasco Affordable Housing apartment complex. It was designed to reach a segment of the community that would be less likely to respond to other outreach methods. The second was a more traditional public workshop held on June 19 at Veterans Hall in Barker Park. Together, the two events provided feedback from 10 individuals.

the views and perspectives of those community members who participated in the planning process.

2.3 KEY BENEFITS OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Over 80% of respondents to the community questionnaire considered parks and recreation “very important” to Wasco, and another 9% thought they were “somewhat important.” These same community members were then asked to select what they considered to be the most important benefits of parks and recreation. How these responses track with results from the other outreach methods are also detailed below.

Promoting youth development

emerged as a major theme of both the stakeholder interviews and focus groups, where Wasco was consistently described as a community in which there is very little else for youth to do after school, on weekends or during the summer months. Sports and recreation are also seen as a way to model positive behavior, develop character and as a major deterrent against delinquency. This finding was strongly reinforced by respondents to the community questionnaire. Youth development was identified more than any other choice (over 44%) as a key benefit of parks and recreation. It was also the most popular choice among participants at the June 19th public workshop.

Providing opportunities to enjoy

Sports Organization Questionnaire:

The managers of three local sports organizations completed a survey that provided a profile of their teams and their utilization of Wasco recreation facilities.

KEY FINDINGS

The community outreach process identified community preferences, desires and needs for parks and recreation. The key findings include results from all the outreach tools described above. Findings are presented below in five categories:

- Key benefits of parks and recreation,
- Issues and challenges,
- Community priorities,
- Parks and recreation facilities, and
- Recreation programs.

This information represents solely

Below: June 13th Community Workshop Flyer



nature and the outdoors was the second most popular choice (36%) by respondents to the community questionnaire when residents were asked to identify the benefits they considered most important. This was also the most important benefit identified by participants at the June 13 open house, where it tied with the benefit of protecting the natural environment. These findings are surprising in that benefits related to the outdoors and the natural environment did not come up as major considerations during either the stakeholder interviews or focus groups.

Improving health and wellness was the third most popular benefit identified by respondents to the community questionnaire (34%). It was also a popular choice among those who participated in the two public events. During the open house on June 13, health and wellness was the second most frequently identified benefit, after enjoying nature and protecting the natural environment, which both tied for first choice. Improving public health was noted as a key benefit in many of the stakeholder interviews, where organized athletics and other recreational activities were seen as a major aid in battling the important community issue of youth obesity.

Connecting people together and building stronger families and communities was the fourth most popular benefit (32%) among

respondents to the community questionnaire. Supporting families, providing a sense of community and instilling community pride was also a consistent theme in the stakeholder interviews. During these interviews, parks were also seen as the centerpiece of the community and as a key indicator of the quality of life within a community. The lack of a large shared public space for people and activities that could be offered by a community center was described as a constraint on civic life in Wasco.

2.4 ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Nearly 90% of respondents to the community questionnaire indicated they had visited one or more parks in Wasco over the past year. However, a large percentage (nearly 60%) also identified factors explaining why they never or rarely visited any of these parks. The most frequently identified factors for deterring park visits were poor maintenance, no time, lack of facilities, too far away and feeling unsafe. Those factors that are potentially within the control of the City of Wasco and the Park District are discussed below.

Park Maintenance: Dissatisfaction with the current level of maintenance of park grounds and recreation facilities was a common complaint in both the stakeholder interviews and the focus groups. In the community questionnaire, it was also the most frequently cited reason for why

people rarely or never visited parks in Wasco. In the same questionnaire, nearly 1 in 4 (24%) indicated they were unsatisfied or dissatisfied with the current level of maintenance. Only 46% had expressed any level of satisfaction with park maintenance. Further confirming this challenge, improving park maintenance was the second most frequently cited option for where Wasco should focus its parks and recreation efforts. Specific complaints included the poor state of restrooms, turf management and gopher holes. Vandalism was identified as a major underlying maintenance issue, a problem especially prevalent at 15th Street Park, but also an issue at Barker and Westside Parks. It was also acknowledged that because of budget constraints there have been a number of deferred maintenance issues.

Access to Parks and Facilities: Parks that are located too far away and the lack of facilities were both frequently identified as reasons why people never or rarely visited the parks in Wasco. Focus groups confirmed the “too far away” by noting that the southeast portion of the city is lacking parks and in need of more attention. There is only one small mini-park in this area (15th Street Park). In other interviews and focus groups, it was also stated that people need better access to neighborhood parks. Managers of local sports teams, local youth and the business focus group

all complained about a shortage of sports fields and facilities for practice. Similarly, some expressed a need for a more compact, central place where sports facilities are grouped together rather than scattered all over town. The youth focus groups stated there was a need for more centrally located soccer fields. Annin Recreation Park was viewed as being too far away and inaccessible for most residents.

Park Security: Feeling unsafe was the fourth most frequently cited reason for not visiting parks in the community. Safety concerns were also raised in the focus groups. Although Wasco was described as a reasonably safe community without the gang problems experienced in other nearby cities, some still wanted to see an increased police presence in local parks. One of the most frequently cited reasons people hope to see a more extensive recreation program in the future is to keep local youth busy and engaged in positive activities that will keep them out of trouble.

Agency Coordination and Responsibilities: The relationship between the City, Park District and School Districts was raised during some stakeholder interviews and focus groups. Residents expressed the hope that these three institutions will succeed in improving their capacity to work together in order to more effectively meet the needs of community residents, especially the youth of Wasco. Some also stated

that is it unclear how responsibility for the delivery of parks and recreation services is divided between the City and Park District. Others mentioned what they considered a lack of clear direction from the city and community leadership, i.e., priorities seemed to shift unexpectedly. Finally, the sharp contrast between the high quality of recreation/sports facilities provided by the local high school and those available to the general public was frequently noted.

Funding Challenges: Funding was identified as a major issue in many stakeholder interviews. Insufficient funding was cited as the reason it was so difficult to properly maintain some facilities. Given the size of parks like Barker, residents complained there simply were not enough resources to keep the lawn sufficiently watered and green. Others observed that limited financial resources as well as limited facility availability constrained the capacity of the Park District to deliver a broader range of recreational programming. During the stakeholder interviews some suggested that Wasco take the initiative to approach some of the local agricultural companies or oil corporations who have made grants to other local cities to help fund some recreation facilities. The new recreation facility in nearby Lost Hills was cited as a prime example. Increasing local taxes to help fund parks and recreation was not seen as a viable option. Results from the community questionnaire

tend to support this observation. When asked how willing would they be to pay an increase in taxes to fund the types of parks, trails, recreation, and sports activities important to them and their household, less than 55% stated they were somewhat or very willing. Nearly 27% stated they were not willing and another 18% were not sure.

Community Awareness and Involvement: In this regard, others commented on what they saw as general lack of public interest on the part of the community as well as a low level of trust in government. Although a small percentage of local residents were seen as engaged in community life, the majority are simply struggling to earn a decent living in a difficult economy. Others stated that residents were very involved in their community but the primary vehicle for that engagement was their local churches. The lack of a central community gathering place was seen as a factor contributing to this problem.

2.5 COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

Determining where Wasco should focus its parks and recreation efforts was one of the key questions asked during the stakeholder interviews and focus groups. In most cases, participants responded by indicating the type of recreation facility or program they would like to see in the future, which is detailed in the next sections. Some did point to the need

for the Park District to improve water conservation and recycling, while at the same time upgrading efforts to “green the parks” by restoring beautiful lush lawns.

However, the community questionnaire did create an opportunity to take a broader perspective by requesting that participants in the survey select two priorities from a choice of six broad options. These included (1) acquiring land for future parks; (2) developing new parks; (3) upgrading existing parks; (4) building new recreation facilities in existing parks; (5) improving park maintenance; or (6) providing recreation programs.

Table 2.1 shows the community responses in terms of the percentages of responses for each answer to where Wasco should focus its park and recreation resources. These responses are a result of all community questionnaires received (including both English and Spanish language versions).

By far the most frequently selected priority was the need to upgrade existing parks, which had a 66% response rate in the community questionnaire. Not surprisingly, given other previously discussed findings, improve park maintenance was the second most frequently identified priority (37%) among all those who responded to the community questionnaire, followed by building new facilities in existing parks (35%), and providing recreation programs (28%). However, developing new parks (12%) or acquiring land for future parks (11%) were considered much lower priorities among all respondents to the community questionnaire.

Table 2.1: Future Focus.

Where Should Wasco Focus its Parks and Recreation Efforts?	
Upgrade existing parks	66%
Improve park maintenance	37%
Build new recreation facilities in existing parks	35%
Provide recreation programs	28%
Develop new parks	12%
Acquire land for future parks	11%

Table 2.2: Most Needed Parks and Facilities.

What Type of Parks and Recreation Facilities are Most Needed in Wasco?	
Sports facilities	28%
Indoor community center	17%
Trails, walking paths and greenbelts	15%
No new parks or facilities are needed	10%
Large parks for the entire community	9%
Dog park	9%
Small parks in my neighborhood	7%
Natural areas	6%

2.6 PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

After selecting overall park and recreation priorities, respondents to the community questionnaire were also asked to identify the types of parks and recreation facilities they believed were most needed in Wasco. Sports facilities (such as basketball, baseball/softball, football, and soccer facilities) received the highest response rate among all

residents (28%) who responded to the questionnaire. An indoor community center was ranked second by all residents (17%), followed closely by trails, walking paths and greenbelts (15%). There were some who believe no new parks or facilities are needed in Wasco (10%).

When asked to consider whether small parks within a neighborhood or large parks for the entire community were needed, all respondents ranked both as relatively low facility priorities (only 7% and 9% respectively).

Facility priorities were also identified during the stakeholder interviews, focus groups and public workshops, complementing results from the questionnaires.

Most expressed the view that there is a shortage of **sports fields** in Wasco for the general public, and existing fields are in need of substantial upgrades, reinforcing similar findings from the community questionnaire. Some praised recent improvements made to the Little League field while expressing the wish that all sports facilities in Wasco could be improved to meet that higher standard. While residents stated there is definitely a need for new facilities, they also believe it is critical to make sure all new facilities are properly designed and built from the beginning. In this regard, residents are grateful for the new soccer fields at Annin Recreation Park, but at the same time point to its uneven slope, soil problems and

other deficiencies as an example of what to avoid in the future. Others simply assert that sport facilities should be more conveniently located and accessible. As an example, Annin Recreation Park is seen as far away and inaccessible. In general, there was a desire to either consolidate sports fields for one sport at one park site or to group all sports facilities together rather than scatter them all over town as they now characterize the situation. With this need in mind, the Park District has considered reconfiguring the soccer park at Annin Recreation Park into a multi-sport community sports complex, although its location in the northeast corner of the city works against achieving the improved accessibility desired by many.

The shortage of sports fields also means that many teams find it difficult to locate places in which to **practice their sport**. Some even asserted that there are too many trees in existing parks that get in the way of sports activities and create wasted space that could otherwise be used for active recreational activities.

In both interviews and focus groups, a **recreation center** was repeatedly identified as a top priority for the community. Some even stated it should be the first priority. Again, this mirrors similar results from the community questionnaire, where a recreation center was second only to additional sports fields as a priority. In a community where the current lack of shared public

space is seen as a constraint on civic life, the recreation center was characterized as a vital hub where community members could interact with each other and also get information on events, programs and city wide activities. It also offers the opportunity of providing a place that can offer residents a wider range of recreational programming than now possible due to lack of space. A recreation center was viewed as a critical component of community efforts to meet the recreational and social needs of local youth, including providing a safe place in which to observe and practice positive social behavior. Although a building originally conceived as a community center was built at the Thomas Jefferson Middle School, its location on school grounds as well as operational and security considerations have limited public access and use of the building as a functioning community center. Some identified the area adjacent to the swimming pool in Barker Park as the best location for the proposed community center.

A **gymnasium**, perhaps as part of the recreation center, was identified by some community members as a priority. During the June 13 open house, a gymnasium was the most frequent response to the question of what is missing from Wasco parks.

Although the swimming pool in Barker Park has recently seen some upgrades, some residents asserted

during the public workshop that the current pool facility is completely and totally inadequate. An **aquatic fitness center** was requested, including a 10- to 16-lane competition pool, diving well, shade structure over the pools and a shallow pool for lessons and recreation. Responses to the community questionnaire included written comments requesting larger, improved swimming facilities. The questionnaire also included requests for **splash pads and water parks**, especially needed during the hot summer months. This need was also raised during the open house and during the youth focus group. Finally, an iconic water feature was advocated during some stakeholder interviews as a way to make Wasco parks a more distinctive attraction for residents and visitors to the city.

The community questionnaires also shed some light on the types of sports and recreation facilities that might be needed in the future to meet the needs and interests of the community. Although sports like soccer, football, baseball and softball were frequently identified during the stakeholder interviews as the most popular sports, the sport activities most frequently selected in response to the question what would you like to do if you had the time and money were **basketball** (20%), **swimming** (17%) and **volleyball** (17%). Baseball and soccer both came in at fourth (14%) followed by tennis (12%), softball and football (each 7%). Although basketball was

never mentioned in any stakeholder interviews or focus groups, results from the questionnaire suggest it is very popular in the community.

In response to the question, what recreation activities have you done in the past two years, most often individual, informal recreational activities such as **running, walking and dog walking** were reported. However, among sports, baseball appeared to be the most popular on both a daily basis and in the overall rating count, followed by soccer and swimming.

A system of **greenways and bike paths** were identified more than once during the stakeholder interviews as a desired feature for Wasco. Stakeholders cited the network of greenbelts, paths and trails in Valencia as an example of what they would like to see in their community. Trails, walking paths and greenbelts were also the third most popular facility priority selected by respondents to the community questionnaire. Likewise, during the June 13 open house, using trails and greenbelts to connect the community to parks, recreation and schools was the third most popular choice when participants were asked to identify what recreational benefit was most important to themselves and their family. It was pointed out that the ample open space surrounding Wasco could provide the location for a bike path circling the city. During interviews others cited the possibility

of creating a bike path that could link to trails in other nearby cities. Those who wanted to see more walking paths thought they should also include outdoor exercise stations to help the community get out and engage in more healthful outdoor activities.

The need to upgrade or replace some of the existing park **restrooms**, add more restrooms and provide better maintained restrooms in all the parks was an almost universal issue expressed during interviews and focus groups. Some also asked for improved lighting in all restrooms. At minimum efforts should be made to ensure restrooms are unlocked and accessible during sporting events. Annin Recreation Park, a facility which has hosted several soccer teams at once, completely lacks restroom facilities, a situation aggravated by its location in an isolated corner of the city. Restrooms for Barker and Cormack Parks were requested by folks responding to the community questionnaire. Adding restrooms is a high priority for WRPD staff.

Other facility and park amenities that were requested during interviews and the public workshops included more **lighting** in all parks. In addition, the need for more picnic tables, shaded pavilions and barbecue areas in parks, especially Barker and Westside, was raised. Families who are heavy users of the parks find the existing supply of picnic areas inadequate to meet current high demand, especially

during weekends and holidays. More and larger children's play equipment was also requested during the public events. Finally, although four tennis courts on the grounds of the high school are available for public use, the need for more tennis courts as well as volleyball facilities were raised by some workshop participants and community questionnaire respondents.

2.7 RECREATION PROGRAMS

The community questionnaire provided several opportunities for respondents to discuss recreation programs, as did the stakeholder interviews, focus groups and public events. When asked to identify which groups in the community need more or better recreation services, families (29%), children (20%) and teens (18%) were identified the most frequently. Other groups, such as seniors (8%) and people with disabilities (10%) were selected much less frequently. Adults were selected by only 10% of community respondents as a group needing recreation services.

These responses track with comments made during the interviews and focus groups, where there was a strong emphasis on meeting the needs of families, but with a focus on the needs of local youth. Repeatedly, people worried that the relative lack of things for teens and other children to do in Wasco after school and during summer months was socially unhealthy. Much more needs to be

done by providing youth with positive outlets for their time and energy in an effort to keep them out of trouble during an especially crucial phase in their lives. One stakeholder expressed his desire to see many more youth involved in local recreation programming, stating he would like to see every child under 14 involved in at least one sport sponsored by the community. He judged there to be approximately 2,000 under that age and at most only 400 or 500 of local youth were involved in any formal sport program.

Unfortunately, many of these youth come from low income families and cannot afford to pay the fees that would enable them to participate in recreation programs or sports teams. The local sports organizations recognize this problem and offer scholarships for those children whose families cannot otherwise afford the \$35 or higher fee to participate, but it is not known how many are still excluded because of this financial barrier.

During the interviews, several stakeholders suggested there was a need to offer more programs and facilities for seniors. However, this did not emerge as a high priority among respondents to the community questionnaire.

In the community questionnaires, when asked to identify where they go to participate in recreation programs, the Park District was selected the

most frequently (49%) followed by local schools (36%) and sports groups (32%).

When asked to rate the quality of local recreation programming, the largest percentage (or 44%) rated them only as fair. Less than 40% rated them as good and less than 6% rated them as excellent. Those who considered them poor consisted of 11% of all responses.

When asked why they did not participate in local recreation programs, the most frequently cited reason in the community questionnaire was not being aware of the programs (44%). In this regard, it is significant to note that during the stakeholder interviews, many made the observation that the Park District needs to do a much better job marketing their programs, especially at the start of each sports season. Other reasons people cited for not participating in the recreation programs were being too busy (38%) or not having enough time (30%).

The community questionnaire also provided participants with an opportunity to identify the types of recreation programs they would most like to see. By far the most popular choice in the overall community questionnaire was Special Events (54%). This was followed by Sports, both competitive and recreational (33% among all responses) and Before and After School Programs (33%).

Consistent with the strong emphasis on meeting the needs of youth in Wasco, after school programs was the recreation program selected most frequently during the June 13 open house. Similarly, participants in the youth focus group were strong advocates for before and after school programs.

In the interviews and focus groups there was a consistent request to see a wider array of diverse recreation programming. The advent of a new recreation program manager at the Park District was seen as very positive step and improvements were already being seen in sports-related programming. However, there was also an expressed desire to see programming in areas such as the arts, cooking and music. It was acknowledged that two factors continued to constrain the capacity of the Parks District to deliver a range of recreation programming: limited financial resources and limited facility availability. The latter was the reason that many viewed the development of a community recreation center as their top priority.

To further gain a better understanding of the types of recreation programs that people would like to see in the future, the community questionnaire asked people to select the five activities they would most like to do if they had the time and money. Leading the way were attending concerts (nearly 36%), followed by

fairs and festivals (33%), exercising/aerobics (32%), gourmet cooking (28%), and bicycling (25%). Responses in the Spanish language version overlapped these responses but not in all respects. Attending concerts was relatively low (less than 17%), while bicycling was by far the most popular activity at nearly 39%, followed by fairs and festivals (28%) which tied with exercising and aerobics (28%), as well as dancing (28%) and dog walking (28%).

The community questionnaire also asked individuals to report on which activities they had participated during the past two years, and how frequently they engaged in those activities. Activities that were reported most often included running/walking, fairs and festivals, exercising and aerobics, dog walking and bicycling. Fair and festivals, it should be noted, was not an activity in which people engaged on a daily

or even frequent basis, but it was still the second most reported activity in which people had spent some time over the previous two years. The most popular daily activities included both running/walking and dog walking.

2.8 SUMMARY

The public involvement process provided insight into the vision, perceived needs and facility and program preferences of community members, stakeholders, special interest groups, community organizations and civic leaders. Information from the public was gathered through several different outreach tools, including a community questionnaire, stakeholder interviews, focus groups, public workshops and a sports organization questionnaire. Over 260 community members used these tools to provide input into the planning process.

Table 2.3: Benefits of Parks and Recreation.

Which of the following benefits [of parks and recreation] are most important to you?	
Promote youth development	44%
Provide opportunities to enjoy nature/outdoors	36%
Improve health and wellness	34%
Connect people together, building stronger families and neighborhoods	32%
Help seniors and people with disabilities to remain active	26%
Enhance community image and sense of place	21%
Protect the natural environment	13%
Using trails and greenbelts to connect the community to parks and recreation	10%
Provide cultural opportunities	7%
Provide opportunities for lifelong learning	6%

Youth development emerged as a major theme throughout the outreach process. During the interviews and focus groups, individuals consistently spoke of the need to provide local youth with more positive ways in which to spend their time simply because Wasco currently offers little else for youth to do after school and during the summer months. They called for a wider range of recreational programs designed especially for youth as well as recreational facilities and a venue where these activities could occur in a safe and productive way. These findings mirrored results from the community questionnaire, where youth development was identified far more than any other as the key benefit of parks and recreation.

During interviews and focus groups, **dissatisfaction with the current level of maintenance** emerged as one of the foremost issues and challenges facing the park and recreation system. In turn, many pointed to **insufficient funding**, another major challenge, as the major factor underlying the maintenance concern. Other major challenges identified during the interviews were the need **to improve agency coordination and responsibilities** and to **increase community awareness and involvement** in the park and recreation system.

Poor maintenance was also identified in the community questionnaires as

Figure 2-2.1: Challenges Facing Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities.

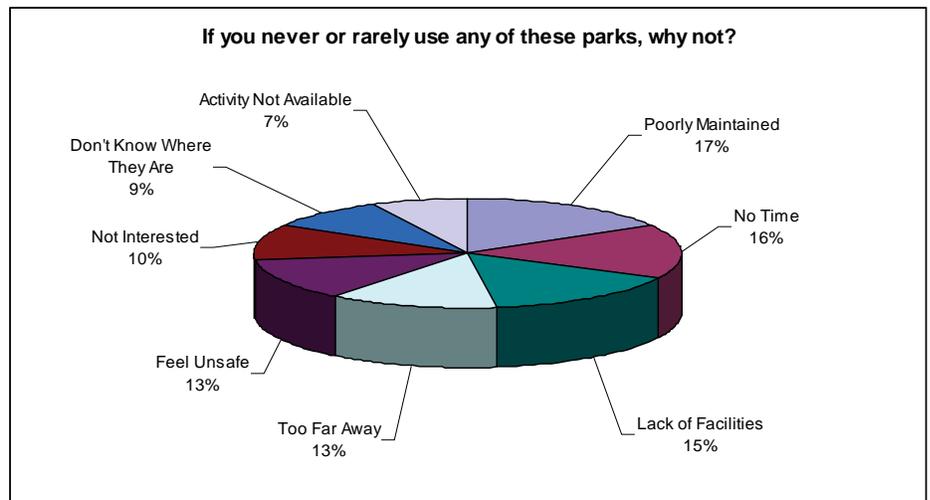


Figure 2-2.2: Community Priorities.

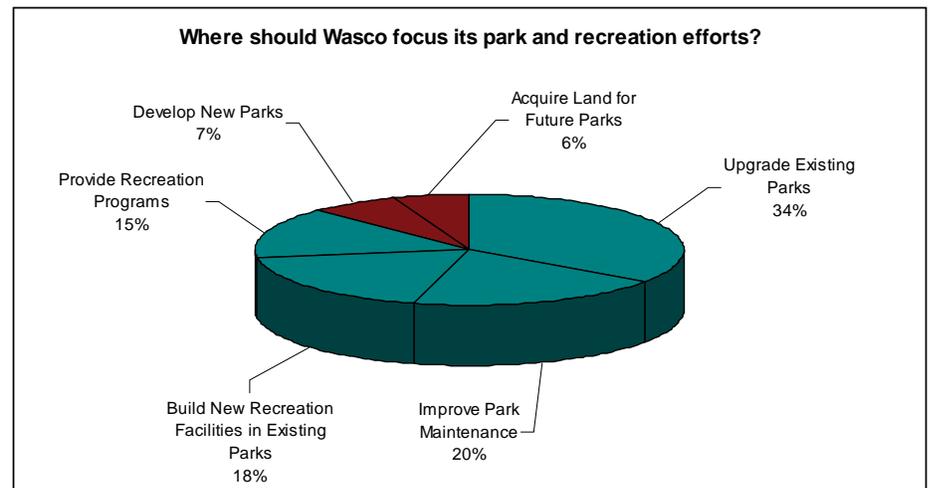
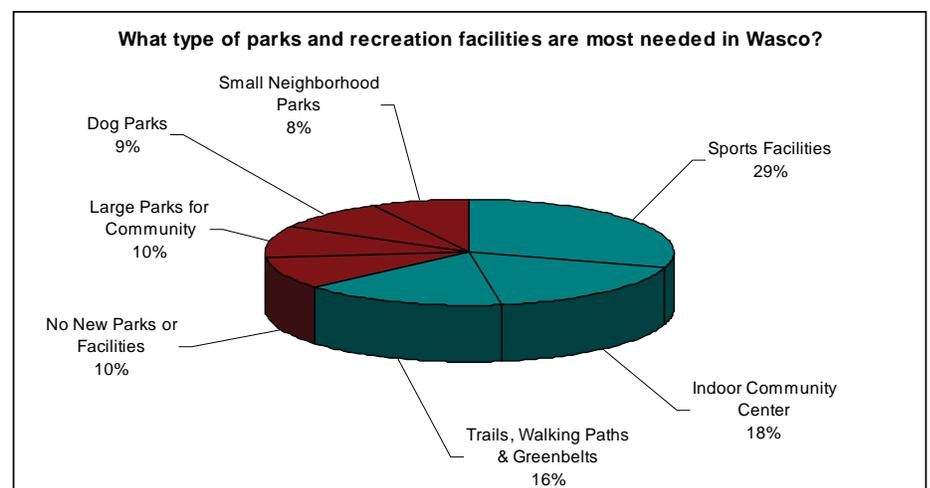


Figure 2-2.3: Types of Parks and Recreation Facilities Preferred by Survey Respondents.



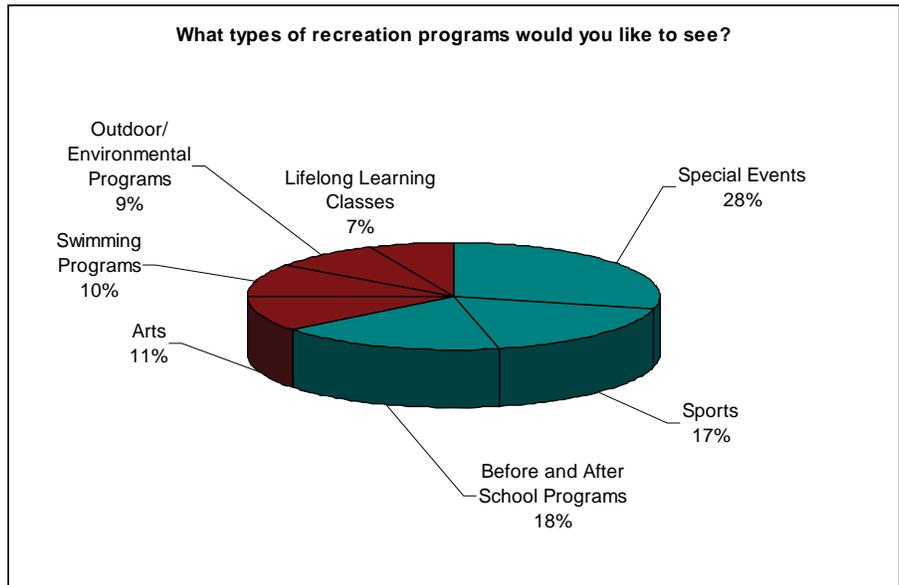
the most frequent reason why people never or rarely used the parks. This along with park security and access to park and facilities are factors potentially within the control of the City of Wasco and the Park District.

The community also used the questionnaires to identify what they believe should be priorities for facilities and programs. There was general agreement that **upgrading existing parks, providing more recreation programs and improving park maintenance** should be the priorities for the City and the District.

In terms of specific facility needs, individuals participating in the interview and focus groups indicated that **sports facilities**, especially more practice facilities, are the number one priority for future need. Other top priority facility included a new **community center, possibly with a gymnasium; aquatic facilities; greenways/paths for running, biking, dog walking and family exercise; providing, upgrading or replacing park restrooms; and better lighting in all parks**. Responses to the community questionnaire showed a similar pattern.

In the interviews and focus groups there was a consistent request to see a wider range of recreation programming, especially for youth but also for other segments of the population. It was recognized that limited financial resources and the

Figure 2-2.4: Types of Recreation Programs Preferred by Survey Respondents.



lack of a community center was constraining the capacity of the Parks District to provide more varied programming. The types of recreation programming the public would like to see was identified in the community questionnaire, with **special events** being by far the most popular choice, followed by **sports programming** and **before and after school programs**.

The findings from the public involvement process will be used, along with other factors, as a basis for determining community needs and for developing the recommendations and strategies for the Urban Greening, Parks and Open Space Master Plan.

Comparisons to Other Districts

PART II - CHAPTER THREE





Comparisons to Other Districts

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Several neighboring cities in the region are also served by Park Districts. By examining the recreation facilities and programs that these other cities are receiving from their respective Park Districts, it is possible to assess the extent to which the City of Wasco is receiving comparable service from the Wasco Recreation and Park District (WRPD). In this way other surrounding Park Districts serve as benchmarks which can be used to establish practical expectations for the Wasco parks and recreation system. This information can be used to help develop attainable goals and policy recommendations in a number of key areas, including determining the:

- Amount of developed park acreage,
- Types of recreational facilities, and
- Scope of recreational programming to be provided to the community.

The comparisons between Park Districts are also a crucial source of data concerning funding, staffing, and resources required to maintain quality parks. These will be addressed in Part II - Chapter 7: Baseline Financial Analysis.

Finally, the comparisons will help identify areas of concern that can lead to recommendations for how WRPD can strengthen its capacity to deliver quality services and well maintained parks for the City of Wasco.

3.2 COMPARABLE RECREATION & PARK DISTRICTS

The Recreation and Park Districts selected for comparison were chosen because they are located in the same region as the WRPD, serve communities with similar demographics and operate neighborhood parks and recreation facilities similar to WRPD.

Recreation and Park Districts are public agencies with special



Top: Westside Park Play Environment.

Bottom left: Bench Seating.

Bottom right: Solar Lighting.

characteristics that distinguish them from city or county park and recreation departments. Districts may encompass several cities and unincorporated areas within their service areas, thus serving several constituents, whereas city agencies only serve one incorporated constituent area. County recreation and park departments tend to provide mostly regional facilities and not neighborhood parks, which is the case in Kern County. Also, most Recreation and Park Districts partner with the local cities and counties within their jurisdictions to deliver services and avoid duplication. Such is the case in Wasco, where the WRPD provides park maintenance, recreation facilities and programs to serve City of Wasco residents in addition to the wider unincorporated areas within the District's boundaries.

The population figures used for the City of Wasco are from the Existing Conditions Report, which exclude the prison population. Budget, staffing, types of programs, and park acreage used in the comparison tables comes from each agency's own documents and research done as of May 2013.

Some of the data shown is from the 2010-2011 fiscal year and in other instances it is from 2011-2012 or 2012-2013, depending on the information available from each individual District and city. All of the data represents each District's operation and the services that were provided to their respective cities at that point in time, and thus, can be used to convey an accurate portrayal of services between the Districts and the cities they serve. The cities and the corresponding Recreation and Park Districts used for comparison were:

The City of Wasco and the Wasco Recreation and Park District have a somewhat unique relationship, in that both own parkland within the City boundaries. There is a division of responsibilities for maintaining the parkland based upon the practical capabilities each agency has for maintaining green space. Even though city and county agencies can provide the same type of recreation service, a more reliable analysis of comparable service can be made by examining surrounding Recreation and Park Districts with similar inter-agency relationships.

Bottom: Swimming Pool at Barker Park.



BUTTONWILLOW – BUTTONWILLOW RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT (BRPD)

City population 1,508

- Recently used a bond issue passed by 75% to build a new 16,500 s.f. Multi-Purpose Facility that includes a conference room, fitness room and offices for the recreation and park district staff. Outside the facility are new swimming pools, a softball field, a soccer field and a refurbishment of park facilities.

SHAFTER - SHAFTER RECREATION & PARK DISTRICT (SRPD)

City population 16,750

- Shafter Recreation & Park District offers Basketball, Baseball, Swimming, Soccer, Volleyball, Tennis, Flag Football, and Senior Citizen programs.

TAFT – WEST SIDE RECREATION & PARK DISTRICT (WSRPD)

City population 6,422

- The stated purpose of the West Side Recreation & Park District is to provide a well-rounded, wholesome program of leisure time activities for people residing in the District. This is accomplished by acquisition and development of park and recreation center areas, the development of supervised programs, construction and management of recreation facilities, and cooperative efforts with other agencies in the areas in which they provide like services.

MCFARLAND - MCFARLAND RECREATION & PARK DISTRICT (MCRPD)

City population 11,689

- McFarland Park is McFarland’s community park and contains a swimming pool, activity center, picnic areas and sports fields. McFarland Recreation and Park District depends heavily on McFarland Unified School District facilities for delivering recreation space and programs.

WASCO - WASCO RECREATION & PARK DISTRICT (WRPD)

City population 20,729

- The Wasco Recreation and Park District partners with the City of Wasco to maintain and operate a recreation system that includes: mini parks and green belts, neighborhood parks for local residents, and community parks for all residents in Wasco. Special facilities include a skate park, sports park, pool complex and a community building. Some parks are owned by the City and maintained by the District. WRPD does not have any current agreements with the school districts for access to school facilities for recreation. However, negotiating future agreements with the school districts is a high priority for the WRPD. Currently, access to the Thomas Jefferson Middle School Gym is provided on case by case/season by season basis. WRPD also partners with the local little league organization and other sports groups for use of its facilities.

3.3 PARKLAND COMPARISON

Table 3.1 shows how Wasco compares with the selected other Cities and their respective Recreation and Park Districts in terms of providing parkland for its residents as measured against the current Wasco municipal code/General Plan guideline. The total parkland acreage includes parks and green belts owned and operated by both the Cities and their respective Recreation and Park Districts.

Each District is compared against the current Wasco General Plan guideline of 6 acres per 1,000

residents¹. Using this as a standard measurement tool enables us to see how well surrounding Cities/ Districts would perform if they had the same park acreage guideline as Wasco. There is a wide range in total parkland provided within each of Wasco’s surrounding Cities/Districts, resulting in significant variations in the parkland service ratio. With a service ratio of 2.67, Wasco has a deficit of 3.33 acres per 1,000 residents in meeting its desired code. At the same time, Buttonwillow and Taft exceed

¹ Although the City of Wasco General Plan calls for 6 acres per 1,000 residents, the Wasco municipal code establishes a standard of 2.5 acres per 1,000, which has also been adopted by the Park District.

Table 3.1: Comparison of Total Parkland per 1,000 Residents Using Wasco Municipal Code/General Plan Guideline.

District Name	Area Population	Total Developed Park Acreage (without schools)	Total Park Acreage Per 1,000 Residents	Wasco Code/GP 6 acres per 1,000 Residents	Surplus (or Deficit) per 1,000 Residents
Wasco/WRPD	20,729	55.34	2.67	6	(3.33 ac)
Buttonwillow/BRPD	1,508	27.28	18.1	6	+12.1 ac
Shafter/SRPD	16,750	21.8	1.31	6	(4.69 ac)
Taft/WSRPD	6,422	47.79	7.47	6	+1.47
McFarland/MCRPD	11,689	13.9	1.18	6	(4.82)

Table 3.2: Comparison of Parkland per 1,000 Residents Using Each Agency’s Own Code Guideline.

District Name	Area Population	Total Developed Park Acreage (without schools)	Total Park Acreage Per 1,000 Residents	Municipal Code/GP Guideline Per 1,000 Residents	Surplus (or Deficit) per 1,000 Residents
Wasco/WRPD	20,729	55.34	2.67	6/1,000	(3.33 ac)
Buttonwillow/BRPD	1,508	27.28	18.1	3/1,000	+15.1 ac
Shafter/SRPD	16,750	21.8	1.31	3/1,000	(1.69)
Taft/WSRPD	6,422	47.79	7.47	5/1,000	+2.47
McFarland/MCRPD	11,689	13.9	1.18	3/1,000	(1.82)

the Wasco code, while Shafter and McFarland have even larger acreage deficits than Wasco.

In reality, the other Cities/Districts do not have the same code guidelines as Wasco has adopted. Table 3.2 shows the same comparison, but using each Cities/Districts own municipal code/ General Plan guideline.

Again, the picture is the same, Buttonwillow and Taft exceed their own guideline and Wasco, Shafter and McFarland have deficits compared to their own individual guidelines.

Wasco would need to add a little over 69 acres of parkland and green belts to meet its current desired guideline. Part II - Chapter 5: Parkland Needs Analysis, will look at actual demand for total parkland and assess whether the City and WRPD should look at ways to acquire more parkland to meet the guideline, or, alternatively, if the guideline should be adjusted based on the report findings.

3.3 FACILITY COMPARISON

Table 3.3 shows how Wasco compares with the selected other cities and their respective Recreation and Park Districts in terms of providing recreation facilities for the residents they serve. An analysis of table 3.3 will help formulate recommendations for the types of facilities the City of Wasco and the WRPD can provide to ensure a comparable level of service for Wasco residents.

Table 3.3: Facility Comparisons.

Type of Facility	Wasco/ WRPD	Buttonwillow/ BRPD	Shafter/ SRPD	Taft/ WSRPD	McFarland/ MCRPD
Swimming Pool	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Activity Center	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Community Center	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Senior Center	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Meeting Rooms	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gymnasium	No*	Yes	Yes	No*	No*
Baseball Fields	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Softball Fields	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Soccer Fields	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tot Lots	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Skate Park	Yes	No	No	No	No
Walking Paths/Trails	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Passive Turf Areas	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Spray Pool	No	No	No	No	No
Outdoor BB Courts	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Outdoor VB Courts	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Picnic Shelters	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Band Shell	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Regional Park	No	No	No	No	No
Greenbelts	Yes	No	No	Yes	No

*Does have access to a school gym

The City of Wasco and the Wasco Recreation and Park District provide the same types of facilities to their residents as the surrounding cities/districts. Basic ball fields, courts, turf areas, picnic facilities and children’s play areas are provided by all. Each city/district provides a public swimming pool and public meeting rooms. Buttonwillow and Taft have recently built new community centers to serve their residents that include

conference rooms, fitness equipment, and offices for the recreation and park district staff. Wasco has a skate park which the other cities/districts do not provide. Taft and Wasco are the only two agencies that have started a green belt trail system. Overall, the type of recreation facilities being provided in each of these communities is fairly comparable between all the recreation and park districts.

Table 3.4: Program Comparison

Type of Program	Wasco/ WRPD	Buttonwillow/ BRPD	Shafter/ SRPD	Taft/ WSRPD	McFarland/ MCRPD
Swimming Lessons	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Open Swim	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fitness Equipment	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Senior Programs*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Meeting Rooms	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Youth Basketball	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Youth Softball	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adult Softball	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Skateboard Activities	Yes	No	No	No	No
Organized Walking	No	No	No	Yes	No
Tiny Tot Programs	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Exercise Classes**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Special Events	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Youth Summer Camp	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Arts & Crafts	No	Yes	No	No	No
Dance Classes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Music Classes	No	No	No	Yes	No
Theater Classes	No	No	No	Yes	No
Concerts in the Park	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Bowling	No	No	No	Yes	No

3.4 PROGRAM COMPARISON

Table 3.4 shows how Wasco compares with the selected cities and their respective recreation and park districts in terms of providing various types of recreation programs for the residents they serve. This comparison analysis will also be used to help formulate recommendations for the types of programs the City of Wasco and the WRPD should collaborate on providing to ensure the availability of comparable program services for Wasco residents.

The WRPD program offerings currently emphasize sport programs, supplemented by a limited number of other program types, such as exercise classes provided on a contract basis. Although this range of programs appears to be similar to those provided by some of the surrounding recreation districts, both Buttonwillow and Westside Districts have new community centers with fitness equipment rooms, theater

*Limited number of senior services provided by Kern County Aging and Adult Services at Veteran’s Building in Barker Park

**Services provided by contracts with private instructors

capabilities, classrooms, and even a bowling facility in the WSRPD’s Community Center, which allow them to provide more programming than Wasco, McFarland and Shafter. Wasco does have a skateboard park which provides programming the other districts do not have. Findings from the public outreach process will also be a crucial source of information for determining the types and extent of recreational programming needed in the Wasco community. As a result, the master planning process will use these comparative program findings in conjunction with findings from the community outreach process to develop recommendations regarding programs the City and WRPD should provide in the future to meet community needs.

3.5 GREENING TECHNOLOGY COMPARISON

The term “technology” refers to the application of knowledge for practical purposes. The field of “green technology” encompasses a continuously evolving group of methods and materials, from techniques for generating energy to non-toxic cleaning products.

Table 3.5 provides a list of greening actions, the goal of which are to provide a sustainable community that will meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Cities and recreation and park districts should strive to implement these

greening actions in order to become more sustainable communities. The table shows where each of the cities/districts is currently implementing these actions.

While some of the recreation and park districts have instituted various green technologies, none have fully implemented recommended green actions to meet the goal of becoming a sustainable community. Recommendations for implementing

Table 3.5: Greening Technology Action Practices

Type of Greening Action	Wasco/ WRPD	Buttonwillow/ BRPD	Shafter/ SRPD	Taft/ WSRPD	McFarland/ MCRPD
Smart Meter Irrigation for Parks and Greenbelts	None	None	Some	Some	None
Drought Tolerant Landscaping	None	None	None	Some	None
Solar Lighting for Park Security Lighting	None	Some	Some	Some	None
Water Runoff Capture Systems	None	Some	Some	Some	None
Permeable Systems for Parking Lots/Walkways	None	Some	Some	Some	None
Use of Recyclable Site Furnishings	Some	Some	Some	Some	Some
Urban Forest/Tree Planting Programs	None	None	None	None	None
Trails for Alternative Transportation Modes	Some	None	Some	Some	None
Green Purchasing Practices	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Only Use of Non-Toxic Cleaning Supplies	No	No	No	No	No
Alternative Fuel Vehicles	Some	None	Some	Some	None
On-Site Energy Generation	None	Some	None	Some	None
On-Site Recyclable & Waste Receptacles	Some	None	Some	Some	None

them in Wasco will be addressed in the recommendations and action strategies section of the master plan.

3.6 SUMMARY

The extent and types of parks, facilities, programs and other services that are being provided by nearby park districts provides a benchmark against which to assess the current performance of the Wasco parks and recreation system. It can provide a basis for establishing performance targets that are both reasonable and achievable for the future.

Wasco has a deficit of 3.33 acres per 1,000 residents when measured against the general plan parkland standard of providing 6 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. Strategies to reduce this deficit by either modifying standards or acquiring additional parkland will be included in the master plan recommendations.

Wasco compares well with the selected cities and park districts in the types of facilities it provides to its residents. Comparisons show that WRPD provides typical facilities such as activity centers, sports fields, tot lots, etc. Strategies and recommendations should focus on what the community involvement process has identified as future needs as well as needs identified in the Recreation Facility Analysis.

WRPD also provides a range of program types similar to those

offered by the other selected districts. However, a fuller determination of the types and extent of program offerings needed by the community will utilize input gathered through public outreach. For instance, two areas of programming that could be improved are more opportunities for youth and teens and future programs for a small but growing senior citizen population.

When looking at greening technology comparisons, it appears that all of the park districts included in the survey should focus on strategies to put into practice the types of greening actions listed in the survey analysis. WRPD already implements some of these greening technologies. However, there are opportunities to expand the scope of their greening activities, especially in dealing with ways to more economically and sustainably manage scarce water resources. This will be discussed later in the recommendations section of the Master Plan.

Recreation Facility Analysis

PART II - CHAPTER FOUR



I was here I was here
CORMACK
FUCK

FUCK YOU
TJ

PARK

CLOSED 10:PM TO 6:AM.



Recreation Facility Analysis

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Wasco residents have access to a variety of recreation facilities provided by the City and Wasco Recreation and Parks District. The School Districts are the other major provider of recreation facilities in the city. However, the public does not currently have access to school facilities for recreation use. Appendix A presents a summary of recreation facilities that are provided in Wasco parks and those that are provided on school grounds.

This chapter analyzes the need for facilities to accommodate the City's current population (20,729) and projected future population in 2023 (28,419). It includes an analysis of need based on recreation facilities guidelines for major public facilities and sports facilities. It also includes a discussion of the need for several other facilities, including skate parks, dog parks, community gardens, and children's play and spray grounds.

4.2 RECREATION GUIDELINES ANALYSIS

One method of analyzing need is to compare a city's existing inventory of facilities to meet its current and projected populations with a commonly accepted service ratio. Table 4.1 summarizes this analysis. It utilizes the 1990 National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) guidelines for recreation facilities as adapted by MIG, Inc. for rural communities as the service ratio. These guidelines are widely accepted by professionals as the minimum acceptable to meet the needs of communities.

For each facility type, Table 4.1 lists:

- **NRPA Guidelines (per 1,000 residents):** The NRPA service ratio guideline
- **Total Need:** The total number of facilities currently needed in 2013 for Wasco's population of 20,729 based on the service ratio guidelines
- **Existing Wasco Facilities:** The number of existing Wasco facilities excluding school facilities

Below: Ball Field Facility at Westside Park.



- **Additional Need:** The number of additional facilities that are currently needed to meet the needs of the 2013 population (total need minus Wasco existing facilities)
- **2023 Total Need:** The total number of facilities that are needed to meet the needs of Wasco’s projected 2023 population of 28,419 based on the service ratio guidelines
- **2023 Additional Need:** The number of additional facilities that are needed to meet the needs of the 2023 population (2023 total need minus Wasco existing facilities)
- **Existing School Facilities:** The number of facilities of this type currently provided at schools in the city

It is recognized that residents do not have access to recreation facilities at local schools. Table 4.1 and the discussion that follows focuses primarily on City and Park District facilities, as they are open to the general public, while school facilities are not. For that reason, the surplus/deficit analysis will be exclusively in terms of City and Park District facilities. Although the number of facilities on School District grounds will be identified, they are not factored into the surplus/deficit analysis.

Table 4.1. Capacity of Existing Inventory of Facilities to Meet Current and Projected Population Needs

Type of Facility	NRPA Guidelines (per 1,000 residents)	Total Need (Population 20,729)	Existing Wasco Facilities (Excludes Schools)	Additional Need (Population 20,729)	2023 Total Need (Population 28,419)	2023 Additional Need (Population 28,419)	Existing School Facilities
Baseball Fields	1/4,000	5	2	3	7	5	4** (+6)***
Dedicated LL Fields	1/4,000	5	2	3	7	5	0
Youth Softball Fields	1/4,000	5	3	2	7	4	3
Adult Softball Fields	1/5,000	4	1	3	5	4	6****
Soccer Fields	1/2,000	10	5*	5	14	9	4
Large Soccer/Football Fields	1/8,000	2	0	2	3	3	4****
Outdoor Basketball Courts (Full)	1/2,500	8	4	4	11	7	34
Outdoor Basketball Courts (Half)	1/2,500	8	2	6	11	9	2
Multipurpose Community Centers	1/25,000	1	0	1	1	1	1
Public Pool	1/25,000	1	1	0	1	0	0

*Nine non-regulation soccer fields equal five regulation fields
 **Includes one small baseball field
 *** Four baseball fields + 6 baseball/softball fields
 **** Combination soccer/football fields at high school

An analysis of need for each facility type based on Table 4.1 follows, and includes major findings of the public involvement process. According to the community questionnaire, improvements to recreation facilities were a medium priority to residents overall. Improving **sports facilities** was the highest priority park or facility improvement noted by all residents and by those responding to the Spanish language version of the questionnaire.

BASEBALL FIELDS

Baseball is one of the top sports in Wasco in terms of current participation. Wasco Recreation Ballpark includes one lighted adult baseball stadium. An additional, newly constructed adult baseball field is also provided in Westside Park. The NRPA guideline for baseball fields is one field per 4,000 residents. Three additional baseball fields are currently needed and a total of five fields will be needed by 2023.

The School Districts have six multi-use baseball/softball fields and four baseball fields.

DEDICATED LITTLE LEAGUE FIELDS

Wasco residents value high quality sports fields for youth, such as dedicated Little League fields. The NRPA guideline for Little League fields is one field per 4,000 residents. Two Little League fields are currently provided at Wasco Recreation Ballpark. By 2023, a total of five additional Little League fields will be

needed. The School Districts do not provide any dedicated Little League fields. These should be provided in a sports complex with other needed sports fields.

SOFTBALL FIELDS

Softball was identified in the stakeholder interviews as one of the most popular sports in Wasco. The Parks District operates popular youth softball and T-ball programs as well as an adult softball program.

YOUTH SOFTBALL FIELDS

The NRPA guideline for youth softball fields is one field per 4,000 residents. Five fields are currently needed in Wasco, and three are now provided. There are two youth softball fields in Cormack Park and a third one is under construction in Westside Park. By 2023, a total of four additional youth softball fields will be needed.

At this time, the School Districts' have three youth softball fields and six multi-use baseball/softball fields.

ADULT SOFTBALL FIELDS

The NRPA guideline for adult softball fields is one field per 5,000 residents. Four fields are currently needed in Wasco. One adult softball field is provided at Westside Park. By 2023, a total of four additional adult softball fields will be needed.

The School Districts' six existing baseball/softball fields, mentioned above, should also apply to this category.

SOCCER FIELDS

According to the community questionnaire, soccer is one of the top sports activities in Wasco in terms of current participation. In addition, a significant number of residents expressed an interest in participating in soccer more often. Youth soccer is one of the largest youth sports programs offered by the District.

REGULATION SOCCER FIELDS

The NRPA guideline for regulation soccer fields is typically one field per 8,000 residents. However, due to a number of factors, a higher guideline of one regulation field per 2,000 residents is recommended. These factors include:

- Soccer has traditionally been very popular among Hispanic residents, and Wasco has a very high Hispanic population.
- The City also has a higher household density than the California average – many residents may have large families resulting in a large number of children, youth and young adults who may prefer soccer.
- Wasco is an isolated community, and residents would have to travel over 30 minutes to use facilities in other communities.
- Since the NRPA guidelines were developed in 1990, soccer has grown in popularity.

Based on the guideline of one regulation field per 2,000 residents, a total of 10 regulation fields are currently needed. The nine non-regulation size soccer fields provided at Annin Avenue Recreation Park are

equivalent in size to five regulation size fields. By 2023, a total of 14 regulation soccer fields will be needed. With the five fields provided at Annin Avenue Recreation Park, nine additional regulation fields will be needed in 2023.

The School Districts currently provide four regulation fields at Palm Avenue and Teresa Burke Elementary Schools. In addition, four additional non-regulation soccer fields are also available at John L Prueitt and Karl F. Clemens Elementary Schools.

LARGE SOCCER/FOOTBALL FIELDS

The NRPA guideline for large soccer/football fields is one field per 8,000 residents. Two fields are currently needed in Wasco, and none are provided. By 2023, three large soccer/football fields will be needed.

At this time four large soccer/football fields are provided by the School Districts.

OUTDOOR BASKETBALL COURTS

According to the community questionnaire, basketball is one of the top sports activities in Wasco in terms of current participation, and the top sport that residents would like to participate in more often if time and money were available. Outdoor basketball is a popular form of informal recreation activity for people of all ages.

FULL COURTS

The NRPA guideline for outdoor full court basketball is one court per

2,500 residents. Eight full courts are currently needed in Wasco, and four are now provided at South Gate, Cormack and Westside Parks. By 2023, seven additional full courts will be needed.

The School Districts currently have 34 full courts.

HALF COURTS

The NRPA guideline for outdoor half court basketball is one court per 2,500 residents. Eight half courts are currently needed in Wasco, and only two provided at Barker Park. By 2023, nine additional half courts will be needed. The City and Parks District should consider developing additional half court basketball in parks that do not currently have a full or half court such as Wasco Recreation Ballpark and Pecan Park.

The School Districts currently have two half courts.

MULTI-PURPOSE COMMUNITY CENTERS

The Veteran's Building is the primary recreation facility used for indoor recreation in Wasco, and is undersized and inadequate for a major recreation facility. There are two recreation buildings in the School Districts – one at Theresa Burke Elementary and the other at Thomas Jefferson Middle School. Neither is used for community programming at this time nor are these facilities adequate to meet community center needs. In the community involvement

findings, a recreation center was repeatedly identified as a desire of the community. It was viewed as a vital community hub that would bring the community together, and also as a place where the recreational and social needs of youth would be met. Some community members mentioned a gymnasium as a priority. A gymnasium is one of the top facility priorities of the Parks District. Of all community questionnaire responses, a community center was the second highest priority, although it ranked lower among Spanish speaking respondents.

The NRPA guideline for community centers is one community center per 25,000 residents. The City of Wasco currently needs a community center, and that need will continue to grow over the next 10 years. Since the City is also short of indoor gymnasium space, a new community center should provide a gymnasium. It should be a minimum 20,000 square feet in size to provide basic services to the community. The center should be located along an arterial or collector street in a central location with pedestrian, transit and auto access.

PUBLIC POOL

According to the community questionnaire, swimming is the second most popular activity that residents would participate in more if time and money were available. It is also one of the most popular sports in

terms of current participation. During the community involvement process, demand was noted for an aquatic center that would provide expanded and updated aquatic opportunities for the community. These could include amenities such as lap and recreational pools, hot tubs, spray elements, lockers, exercise facilities, etc. An appropriate mix of facilities is important in determining operational costs and potential cost recovery.

The NRPA guideline for public pools is one pool per 25,000 residents. One pool will continue to serve community needs through 2023. When the existing pool needs replacement or when funding can be obtained, the City and Parks District should provide a major new aquatic facility.

The current pool is a popular facility but in the recent past has been in need of repair and renovation. A new pool pump and filter were recently installed and additional work is anticipated.

OTHER RECREATION FACILITIES

This section describes the need for other recreation facilities, including skate parks, dog parks, community gardens and children's play/spray grounds.

SKATE PARK

Skateboarding is an alternative sport that has growing appeal, especially for teens and younger adults. The Wasco skate park in Westside Park is the most popular facility for youth

and teens in the city, and is a region-wide attraction. No skate parks are provided in nearby Recreation Districts. However, the skate park is small in size and outdated when compared to modern skate facilities. The City and District should consider updating its skate park facilities to provide a large, modern facility that can also host programs and events and will encourage youth health and wellness. Amenities typically provided at skate parks include benches, picnic tables, shade, lighting and water. The site should have clear sight lines from the street into the park to increase safety.

DOG PARK

Dogs and dog owners enjoy the opportunity to run, play, relax and socialize together in park settings. Due to the need to regularly exercise dogs, dog owners often become one of the most regular users of parks and trail corridors. In areas where dogs are off-leash, enclosed dog parks are needed for patron safety. These dog parks not only provide exercise opportunities for dogs and their owners, but become an important social hub in the community.

Many Wasco residents are dog owners, and dog walking is one of the top recreation activities in the city. Nationally, about 47% of park and recreation agencies provide dog parks for off-lease recreation opportunities. The space for the dog park does not have to be extensive,

but must provide a fenced area with seating, garbage cans and lighting. Walking paths and trails need to be provided for access to the park.

Dog parks are extremely popular and increase use of parks, contributing to park safety and security. Wasco residents need one or two dog parks, and the City and District can utilize dog parks to increase safety in their parks. The dog parks can be located in a larger, centralized park, such as Barker Park or Westside. However, dog parks can also be located in smaller sites that need more positive community activities. Providing a dog park in the north and south area of the city would be ideal. Including amenities, such as water, benches or picnic tables, shade, and perimeter trails, increases dog park use and user comfort. In addition, providing separate areas for large and small dogs is preferred for animal safety.

COMMUNITY GARDENS

Nationally, about 38% of park and recreation agencies offer community gardening opportunities. According to the community questionnaire, about 48% of residents participate in gardening and about 15% would like to spend more time gardening. Community gardens help make healthy food available to residents of all income levels, connect children to the food growing process, build a sense of community and create opportunities for physical activity. Community gardens can

create positive activities in parks, and, therefore, decrease crime and undesirable activities. No community gardens are currently provided in Wasco. However, a 110-acre agricultural farm and 10-acre agricultural lab is provided through the Wasco High School Agriculture Department.

The most common form of this activity within a park system is the self-directed gardening of a small plot rented at a community garden. Community gardens can occur in a variety of small spaces, including parks, government property, school grounds, church property, and left over spaces, such as vacant lots and landscape strips along sidewalks.

The size and number of community garden plots vary. Community gardens should be located where accessible to pedestrians, bicyclists and people with disabilities in an area that is convenient to residents. The gardens can be co-located with other facilities, such as schools and community centers. Raised beds can provide greater access to older adults and people with disabilities. Soil testing should be done to identify possible pollutants.

Sites should provide access to at least 6 hours of sun daily, access to water, defined garden plots, tool storage and compost bins. Providing pathways, perimeter fencing, a bulletin board and a gathering place/ outdoor classroom is desirable.

Perimeter planting can screen the garden area from adjacent uses. The appearance of the garden throughout all seasons may not appeal to all.

At least one community garden should be provided. Once this garden is established the City and District can expand community gardening to two to four gardens located in dispersed geographical areas as demand grows.

CHILDREN'S PLAY/SPRAY ENVIRONMENTS

Play occurs in many formal and informal settings. Play for children is defined as an activity supported by a space or feature that is designed specifically to encourage playful interactions. Examples include developed play areas (slides, swings, platforms and installed toys), nature play areas and interactive water features.

Developed play environments are generally provided in all neighborhood and community parks. They are also desirable in mini parks, where space allows, and at special use areas such as sports facilities. Areas must be designed for 2-5 years or 5-12 years and should be easily accessed from all the neighborhoods. A play environment can also be provided for 2-12 years, but it is less challenging for the older users since it must meet safety requirements for the younger children.

Nature play areas can support play where policies allow park access,

exploration and interaction, such as digging holes, hiding, climbing, making forts, splashing in a creek, skipping rocks, building dams, building bike ramps, blazing trails, picking flowers and leaves, chasing butterflies, interacting with wildlife and a variety of other exploratory activities that connect children to their environments.

Interactive water features, or spray parks, feature equipment that provides for water play. These features are very popular. Because of this, spray features should be placed in larger parks with ample parking, especially if the spray elements are not common in the park system. These can become regional attractions.

The City of Wasco has play areas in South Gate, Barker Park, Cormack Park, Wasco Recreation Ballpark and Westside Park. The School District has 14 play areas within their elementary schools. The City and District should provide developed play areas at additional existing parks, such as Pecan Park. Developed play areas should be provided at all future mini, neighborhood and community parks. To increase play area diversity, the City and District could consider providing a natural play area at a suitable site and a spray park at a large neighborhood or community park as a major attraction.

4.3 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

This chapter analyzes the current and future need for recreation facilities to accommodate the City's current population (20,729) and projected future population in 2023 (28,419). Wasco residents have access to a variety of recreation facilities provided by the City and Wasco Recreation and Parks District. The School Districts are the other major provider of recreation facilities in the city. However, the public does not currently have access to school facilities for recreation use.

The following recreation facilities will be needed in 2023:

- 5 additional baseball fields
- 5 additional Little League fields
- 4 additional youth softball fields
- 4 additional adult softball fields
- 9 additional regulation soccer fields
- 3 large soccer/football fields will be needed.
- 7 additional full court basketball courts and 9 half courts will be needed
- Half court basketball should be provided in larger parks without a full or half court, including, Wasco Recreation Ballpark and Pecan Park
- A multi-use community center (minimum 20,000 square feet), including a gymnasium
- A major aquatic facility when the existing pool requires replacement or major renovation
- An updated skate park
- 1-2 dog parks
- 1 community garden, increasing to 2-4 gardens as demand grows
- Provide developed play areas at additional existing parks, such as Pecan Park and Barker Park.
- Consider providing a natural play area and a spray park

Parkland Needs Analysis

PART II - CHAPTER FIVE





Westside Park

Parkland Needs Analysis

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Parklands are an essential part of urban greening. Parks provide environmental benefits such as shading, decreased flooding from stormwater runoff and increased habitat for urban animals and insects. Large, mature trees make the air feel cooler by releasing water vapor from their leaves. They break up heat islands and absorb carbon dioxide. Green infrastructure is the ecological framework needed for environmental sustainability, in addition to providing recreation and respite to community members.

Building a comprehensive park system requires a variety of park types to serve various recreation needs of residents. This chapter evaluates how Wasco currently provides for the parkland needs of its residents, identifies which areas of the City are within ½-mile of parks (a commonly accepted standard for the distance most people are willing to walk to a

park), discusses preliminary findings from the community participation process regarding how connectivity can be improved, and evaluates how the City of Wasco is currently meeting its parkland standards. This information and analysis will form the basis for developing recommendations for future parkland acquisition and development.

5.2 PARK CLASSIFICATION DEFINITIONS

A park classification system provides a way to plan for park, recreation and open space needs in the future. The City of Wasco has a set of park standards in its municipal code that states Mini Parks are 1-2 acres, Neighborhood Parks are 5-10 acres, and Community Parks are 20-60 acres. The Wasco Recreation and Park District defines parks standards in its current Park and Recreation Master Plan as follows: No standard for Mini Parks, Neighborhood Parks



Above: Westside Park Disc Golf.

are 8-10 acres, and Community Parks are 15 to 20 acres.

This discrepancy can lead to confusion when dealing with developers, writing grants and planning for future park development. It is important for both the City and the Wasco Recreation and Park District to decide on a common set of park standards that both agencies can adopt to avoid conflicts when acquiring and developing parkland.

The park classifications defined in the next several pages are recommended for the City of Wasco and the WRPD. They are intended to replace the current park classification systems of the City and the Park District discussed earlier in the Part I - Chapter 5: Facilities. If adopted by both the City and the Park District they will ensure that there is a uniform park classification system in place and that the park categories are consistent with the actual roles that these parks play in the Wasco community. This is especially important for determining park needs within the community and to carry out other related planning activities. For instance, these park classifications can be used as development guidelines when acquiring parkland, negotiating development agreements, partnering with other public agencies, seeking grants and accepting land donations.

In addition to developing a set of park classifications, MIG also has developed guidelines for the

types of facilities and amenities that should be included in each park classification. The guidelines for each park type are presented later in Part III - Chapter One: Goals, Policies, and Recommendations. By adopting a set of park classifications and guidelines, and by providing parks that meet these requirements, the City and Park District can develop a park system that meets community needs and satisfies its residents.

The following park classifications and guidelines can provide the City of Wasco and the District with an effective planning tool when determining how best to meet the park and recreation needs of the community.

MINI PARKS

Typically one half acre to two acres in size, mini parks are small parcels that are intended to provide recreation opportunities to local residents, often in high density areas of the city. Mini parks can also serve as an open space buffer or as a respite from intense use areas. The parks may be simply a small park setting in a downtown district or a landscaped area next to an historical site.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Neighborhood parks provide nearby residents with access to basic recreation opportunities. Typically three acres to five acres in size, these parks provide easy access, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists, to

close-to-home park and recreation facilities. Neighborhood parks can be developed in conjunction with elementary schools, libraries or other complementary, compatible public facilities when opportunities are available.

COMMUNITY PARKS

Community parks are larger parks (6-19 acres) that serve the active and passive recreational needs of the surrounding community. Typically, community parks accommodate large group activities and offer a wide variety of facilities such as athletic fields, aquatic facilities, activity centers, gymnasiums, children's playground equipment, walking paths, event space and picnic areas. Community parks should have restrooms that accommodate all the intended uses. The site should allow for organized group activities and offer other recreational opportunities too impacting or too large-scale for the neighborhood park level. The site should be easily accessible by motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists. Community parks may be developed in conjunction with a junior high or high school or other compatible public facilities when opportunities are available.

REGIONAL PARKS

Regional parks are large (20 acres or greater), multiuse parks that can include a wide variety of facilities. The parks draw visitors from a very large geographic area due to the

unique facilities, setting or theme. These parks can be larger versions of community parks that provide sports fields, specialized facilities for performance or large group gatherings, or unique facilities that are not appropriate for local parks due to intensity of use. Other regional parks are themed around a particular facility, historical reference or natural resource that attracts a high level of interest, including areas that preserve significant environmental features. This classification is desirable if the site is contiguous to or encompasses unique natural features. Regional parks are intended to attract visitors in addition to serving locals.

NATURAL AREAS

Preserving natural areas in a community can be an important component of a comprehensive park system. Natural areas are park land that is managed to ensure an open, more natural state. Uses on these lands are typically limited to passive or low impact activities, such as wildlife viewing, hiking, jogging, bicycling and nature photography.

GREEN BELT

Green belts are corridors of land that connect parks and resources, providing public access to trails and their surrounding areas. These corridors may include developed or natural areas where the primary facility is a pathway or trail connecting community destinations or segments of the trail system. Green belts are

important resources to the local community, and may have a larger draw as part of a complete trail system.

SPECIAL USE AREAS

Special use areas are defined as facilities that provide a specific recreational use. Special use areas in the local park system are facilities like sports fields, skate parks, dog parks, community centers, aquatic

centers, rose gardens, and other special interest or one function type amenities. Promoting the development of special use areas within a park system can meet specific needs and desires of local residents and enhance community life. Special use parks that have a community or regional draw may require supporting facilities such as parking or restrooms.

5.3 ANALYSIS OF EXISTING PARKLAND

Table 5.8 shows how each of Wasco’s parks are classified using the recommended park classification guidelines developed for Wasco. This will provide the information necessary to determine parkland needs.

5.4 CONNECTIVITY ANALYSIS

An analysis of green belt and walkway connectivity has identified the need to improve neighborhood and community access to City of Wasco and Wasco Recreation and Parks District recreational facilities, the downtown district, civic facilities, schools, and public transportation. During the community involvement process, residents communicated their desire to improve pedestrian and bicycle access between neighborhoods and public facilities and business areas. Residents indicated that access could be improved by expanding current walking pathways, greenways, and green belts, and by developing new ones.

Table 5.8: Wasco Park Classifications

Park Classifications	Size
Mini Parks (.5 to 2 acres)	
Pecan Park	1.26 acres
7th Street Park	.32 acres
South Gate (15th Street) Park	.30 acres
Total Mini Park Acres	1.88 acres
Neighborhood Parks (3 to 5 acres)	
Cormack Park	5.65
Total Neighborhood Park Acres	5.65
Community Parks (6 to 19 acres)	
Barker Park	8.62
Annin Avenue Soccer Park	9.62
Westside Park	14.04
Recreation Ball Park	8.84
Total Community Park Acres	41.12
Regional Parks (20 Plus Acres)	
None	0
Total Regional Parks	0
Trails/Walkways/Greenways	
Filburn Avenue greenways/walking path	4.65
Total Trails/Walkways/Greenways	4.65
Special Use Areas	
Skate Park	2.04
Total Special Use Areas	2.04
Total Parkland Acres	55.34

*Does have access to a school gym

The connectivity analysis identifies opportunities for expanding the City's current walking path and green belt system to create a network of non-motorized transportation corridors that provide residents with an opportunity to bicycle, walk or jog from their neighborhoods to City and District recreational facilities. There are opportunities to improve and extend current walking paths that will connect neighborhoods to neighborhoods, and neighborhoods to parks and recreation facilities. Through development standards and planning policies, there are opportunities to incorporate walking paths and green belts as part of new residential development. There are also opportunities for walking paths and green belts on the outer edges of the City.

Connectivity is an important component of urban greening. Providing safe and convenient access to pedestrian walking paths, bicycle paths and green belts that connect neighborhoods to recreation facilities, parks, schools, retail and commercial areas help promote healthy life styles and reduce air pollutants.

Important planning, design, construction, and operational considerations for an urban greening approach to connectivity include:

- Providing community education programs for healthy lifestyles and exercise that get residents to use trails, greenways, green belts and pathways to travel to and from neighborhood sites instead of driving in their automobiles
- Adopting policies that lead to establishing Wasco as a "Healthy City" designation
- Promoting alternative modes of transportation including bicycling, walking and skateboarding
- Providing neighborhood connections to public facilities
- Using neighborhood connections to public transportation
- Encouraging neighborhood connections to local businesses
- Improving opportunities for accessibility and connections to existing trails, green belts and walking paths
- Developing new trails, green belts and walking paths
- Seeking funding for new walking paths and green belts through development impact fees
- Completing street opportunities for multi-modal transportation, promoting local sustainability and improving water quality
- Introducing urban forestry practices to assist in the reduction of heat island effect and conserving resources
- Making sure Low Impact Development (LID) practices are implemented
- Using drought tolerant and low water use plant materials
- Installing smart irrigation technology
- Developing alternative energy sources
- Using recycled materials in park amenities and recreation facilities
- Improving park maintenance by using green practices in maintenance operations
- Implementing environmental programming that teaches green practices

Supporting this effort, the City is also preparing a Traffic and Bicycle Safety Master Plan which will identify the community's needs and desires for neighborhood connectivity to recreational facilities using bicycle paths that enhance traffic and bicycle safety.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

During the community outreach process, residents communicated their strong desire for more walking paths and green belts that would connect their neighborhoods to parks, schools and the downtown business district. Community members asked for more walking paths and green belts with exercise stations to assist children, adults and seniors in becoming more active. A citywide system of green belts (or Belt Parks) and bike paths were cited during stakeholder interviews as a desired feature for Wasco. According to the community questionnaire, trails, walking paths and green belts are among the top recreation facilities most desired by residents. Running, walking and dog walking – which all can be done on trails – were the most popular daily recreation activities among residents. Bicycling was identified as an activity that residents would most like to do if they had the time and money. In general, residents believe that trails, walking paths and green belts should be an important part of the recreation and park system.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Currently, the City of Wasco has a number of existing walking paths, green belts or Belt Parks located within the City limits:

BELT PARKS

The City currently defines Belt Parks as 40-foot wide landscaped corridors that are usable for park and recreation purposes. The corridor landscaping currently includes trees and large panels of turf which flank the walkways. There are no seating areas or rest areas, and the trees provide little shade to the people using the green belts. The high percentage of turf in the corridors adds to the high water use. The only location within the City that meets this classification is the landscaped corridor located in the southern portion of the City along the north side of Filburn Avenue. There are reaches of the belt park or green belt along Filburn Avenue that contain an eight-foot wide asphalt paved path which meanders through the greenbelt.

URBAN GREENING PEDESTRIAN CORRIDORS

City walking paths, such as the sidewalk along 7th Street between Griffith and G Street, are defined by the City as Urban Greening Pedestrian Corridors. The existing walking paths are constructed of interlocking pavers at the street corners of intersections and concrete paving fields with interlocking paver banding. Lighted bollards, trash receptacles, benches,

double-headed street lights and street trees in tree wells are provided.

OPPORTUNITIES

The City of Wasco has a number of opportunities to build on their green belt and walking path system. An enhanced system will improve the community’s access to City and District facilities while encouraging alternative modes of transportation, creating safer walking paths and green belts, and providing greater connectivity.

During the June 13th and June 19th community meetings, the community used aerial maps of the City to identify possible green belt and walking path locations. The locations that were suggested by the community and a corresponding map are located in the appendix. These suggestions from the community were later used in conjunction with additional analysis by the consultant team to develop specific connectivity recommendations for the Master Plan, which are detailed in the Part III - Chapter One: Goals, Policies and Recommendations.

Sustainability and conservation of natural resources are also important components of this urban greening plan. In considering expansion and improvement to the City’s green belt or Belt Park system, there is an opportunity to conserve water and reduce mowing and trimming expense by creating and implementing landscape policies

that include restoring the ecological health of the soil, composting, reducing the use of synthetic fertilizers, and using plant materials that are low water use, alternative groundcovers instead of turf, and water-conserving Smart Irrigation Systems. These considerations will also be incorporated into Master Plan recommendations.



Top: Existing Greenbelt, City of Wasco.

Bottom: Examples of Low Water Use Greenbelt Plantings.

5.5 SERVICE AREA ANALYSIS

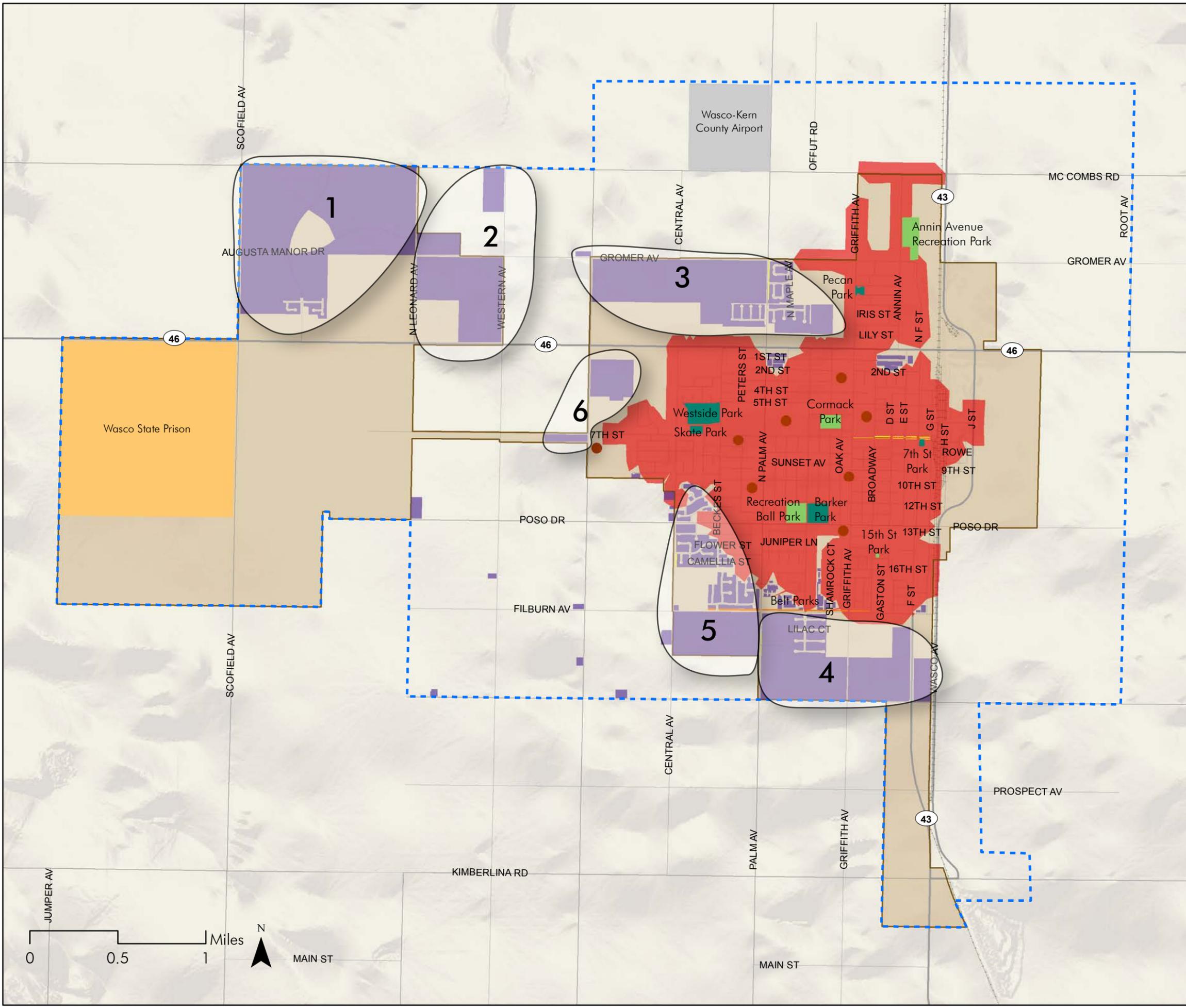
Wasco residents desire public access to parks within walking or biking distance of their homes. For planning purposes, walking and biking distance is measured at a maximum ½-mile radius. This is the typical distance that residents will walk or bike to reach a park. Research shows that convenient access to parks and recreation facilities promotes increased physical activity that results in improved health and wellness.

Figure 2-5.1 shows the ½-mile service area analysis for the City and its sphere of influence. This travel distance was analyzed using ESRI ArcGIS Network Analyst™. Travel distance was simulated using City GIS data for streets and trails. It shows residential areas that have access to a park of any classification within ½-mile of a residence as shaded red areas. It also shows areas which are currently residential or will be developed as residential areas that do not have access to any park type within ½-mile as numbered lavender areas.

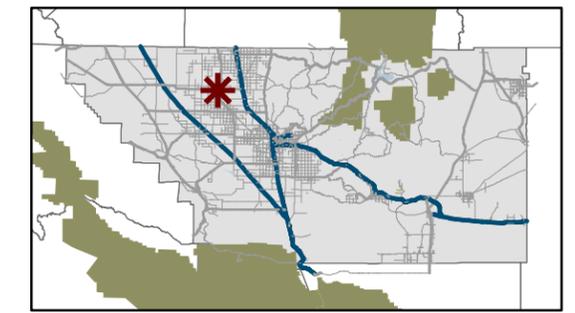
There are six areas within the sphere of influence that are not served by any park type within ½-mile radius:

1. Northwest: the area north of the Highway 46 and bounded by Scofield Avenue, McCombs Road and North Leonard Avenue.
2. Northwest 2: The area bounded by Highway 46, North Leonard Avenue, McCombs Road and Western Avenue
3. North Central: The area west of Pecan Park, north of Highway 46 and south of Gromer Avenue.
4. Southeast: The southern area of the city which lies between the eastern city limits and Palm Avenue.
5. Southwest: The southwestern area of the existing city limits between Central Avenue and Palm Avenue.
6. 7th Street: A small region in the vicinity of 7th Street within the existing city limits.

If these areas were served in the future with parks providing neighborhood-serving elements, such as such as play areas, trails, and picnic and sports facilities, a total of up to 115 acres would be needed, depending on the type of park provided (mini park vs. neighborhood park vs. community park). However, a larger regional park or special use area could also be provided with neighborhood- and/or community-serving amenities. Parks of the size of community parks (6-19 acres) and larger would have the capacity to provide neighborhood-serving amenities to the area and accommodate the City's great need for additional recreation facilities, such as additional sports fields.

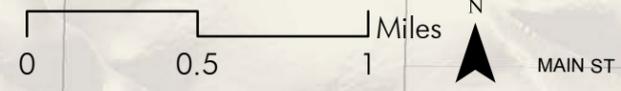


- Sphere Of Influence
- Underserved Residential Parcels
- School
- City Park
- District Park
- Greenbelts (City Maintained)
- Walking Paths (City Maintained)
- 1/2 Mile Parks Service Area
- Airport
- Railroad
- Freeway
- Highway
- Major Road
- Local Road
- City Limits



Key Map N.T.S.

**Figure 5.2:
1/2 Mile Service
Area Analysis**



5.6 PARKLAND STANDARD ANALYSIS

Table 5.9 shows the recommended standards for park land for the City of Wasco and the Recreation and Parks District. These standards were developed specifically for Wasco based on an evaluation of needs. This needs assessment resulted in a recommendation that the City and District **adopt the City of Wasco General Plan Standards with three exceptions:**

- **Regional Parks and Special Use Areas:** As previously described, these park facilities are planned and designed to accommodate specific needs that often have large space requirements, such as collections of sports fields. For this reason, it is recommended that the City and District consider providing regional parks and special use areas when needed to accommodate facility needs. No specific standard per 1000

population is proposed. This is consistent with 1990 NRPA guidelines for special use areas.

- **Green Belts:** The City of Wasco Municipal Code/General Plan Standards previously incorporated a green belt standard into a combined standard with mini parks (.5 acres per 1000 population). The NRPA recommends that acreage be acquired as necessary to complete the trail system. Green belts were highly desired by the community. Green belts can benefit residential areas as well as commercial and industrial areas, providing health benefits to employees. Since it is difficult to predict when and where the City will develop in the future, it is recommended that the NRPA's flexible standard be adopted to allow trail development to occur with the physical development of the city.
- **Natural Areas:** The City of Wasco has no existing standard for natural areas. These could be provided as a self-contained site or as part of another classification. If provided as a self-contained site, the area should be adequate to protect the resource as recommended by the NRPA.

Table 5.9: Recommended Parkland Standards

Parkland Classification	Recommended Standard Acres Per 1,000 Residents
Mini Parks	.5
Neighborhood Parks	2.5
Community Parks	3
Regional Parks/Special Use Areas	As needed to provide needed facilities*
Greenbelts	As needed to complete the system*
Natural Areas	As needed to protect the resource*

*NRPA 1990

ANALYSIS

Table 5.10 shows a summary of parkland classifications, their recommended standards, existing acreage, and 2023 future need. Based on these figures, the final column lists how many additional acres will be needed in 2023.

■ **Mini Parks:** Mini parks were once a popular park facility to address daily recreation needs, especially in planned subdivisions. These park types are more costly to maintain than larger parks, and mini parks fell out of favor for this reason. More recently these parks have increased in popularity because the parks provide close-to-home opportunities for physical activity. However, the limited size of mini parks makes it difficult to accommodate a range of park activities, particularly sports

facilities that are greatly needed in Wasco. An additional benefit would be providing small green spaces in commercial areas. The need for mini parks can also be met by larger park types with neighborhood-serving elements, such as play areas, trails, and picnic and sports facilities. Based on the standard of .5 acres per 1000 residents, a total of 8.48 acres of mini parks are currently needed and 12.3 acres will be needed in 2023. Based on Wasco’s need for sports facilities that require greater acreage than provided in mini parks, the best option for the City and District to **meet these needs are park types that provide greater acreage and can accommodate a diversity of facilities.** However, if there is an opportunity to acquire and provide a mini park in an existing

Table 5.10: Parkland Classification 2013 and 2023.

Parkland Classification	Recommended Standard Acres Per 1,000 Residents	Existing Acres 2013	Total Future Need 2023 Pop 28,419	Additional Acres Needed 2023
Mini Parks	.5	1.88	14.2	12.3
Neighborhood Parks	2.5	5.65	71	65.4
Community Parks	3	41.12	85.25	44.14
Regional Parks/Special Use Areas	As needed to provide needed facilities*	2.04	TBD	TBD
Greenbelts	As needed to complete the system*	4.65	TBD	TBD
Natural Areas	As needed to protect the resource*	0	TBD	TBD
Subtotal	6.0	55.34	170.5	121.84
Totals	6.0	55.34	170.5	115**

*Based on NRPA Guidelines, 1990.

**Total Need minus all existing acres, including Special Use and Greenbelts.

residential neighborhood with high density, the City should consider this option also as a way to meet its standard.

- **Neighborhood Parks:** At three to five acres in size, neighborhood parks in Wasco are small in size and designed to meet daily needs. Although either mini or neighborhood parks could meet the needs of Wasco's six unserved areas, the limited size of these parks makes it difficult to accommodate a range of park activities - particularly sports facilities that are greatly needed in Wasco. The need for neighborhood parks can also be met by larger park types with neighborhood-serving elements, such as play areas, trails, and picnic and sports facilities. Based on the standard of 2.5 acres per 1000 residents, a total of 51.82 acres of neighborhood parks are currently needed and 65.4 acres will be needed in 2023. Based on Wasco's need for sports facilities that require greater acreage than provided in small neighborhood parks, the best option for the City and District to meet these needs is **park types that provide greater acreage and can accommodate a diversity of facilities**, such as Community Parks with neighborhood-serving elements.

- **Community Parks:** Community parks serve the entire community and at 6 to 19 acres in size,

these parks can accommodate a greater diversity of facilities. As noted in Chapter 4, the City of Wasco has a great need for a diversity of sports facilities. These sports facilities are often grouped together, providing multiple fields in one location for ease of programming and maintenance. Based on the needs identified in Chapter 4, the City of Wasco will require about four large parks to accommodate future sports needs totaling approximately 90 acres. Depending on the park character, these large parks could serve community and neighborhood park needs in addition to providing needed community sports facilities. The parks could also meet the needs of the 6 areas in Wasco currently unserved by parks. Based on the standard of 2.5 acres per 1000 residents, a total of 21.06 acres of community parks are currently needed and 44.14 acres will be needed in 2023. Based on Wasco's need for sports facilities that require greater acreage than provided in small neighborhood parks, the best option for the City and District for **meeting sports needs and neighborhood-serving needs is with new community parks or with regional and special use park types.**

- **Regional Parks and Special Use Areas:** Depending on park character, a park over 20 acres could be classified as a special

use area or as a regional park. No specific number of acres per thousand residents is proposed for these sites. However, these park classifications will be **important in meeting resident's needs for sports facilities** as well as other facility needs, such as **future community centers or major aquatic facilities.**

- **Natural Areas:** The City of Wasco has limited natural resources due to the area's agricultural past, but opportunities to experience nature are important to residents. There are no existing natural areas in the city with the exception of an area contained in Pecan Park. Future natural areas could be incorporated into other park types. If any self-contained natural area parks are acquired in the future, the acreage should be adequate to protect the resource. **No specific numerical standard is proposed nor have any specific areas for acquisition been identified.**

- **Green Belts:** An interconnected system of green belts is important to the future of the city, both in terms of promoting health and wellness and as key attraction for residents and businesses. Trail-related recreation is the most popular type of recreation activity in the city, state and nation. Future trail segments should be planned concurrently with future development and to take advantage of other features, such

as LID and green infrastructure components. **Acres devoted to green belts should be adequate to create an interconnected park system.**

5.7 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The City and WRPD have two options they could pursue in the future for meeting their parkland acreage standards. The first strategy could be to pursue acquisition and development of a variety of park classification types to meet acreage standards in each park classification.

The second strategy could be to pursue acquisition and development of larger park types, such as Community, Special Use or Regional parks that would contain both neighborhood serving amenities and community facilities. Given the need Wasco has for community facilities, such as additional sports fields and a community center, as well as the need to provide parks in underserved areas of the city, it appears the best option to pursue is this second option.

In addition, green belt recommendations may require additional land acquisition. Additional walking paths may be recommended in the Master Plan, but these will not require land acquisition. Specific strategies and recommendations for meeting current and future parkland standards will be further developed in Part III - Chapter One: Goals, Policies and Recommendations, based on this input.

Recreation, Health and Wellness Analysis

PART II - CHAPTER SIX





*Dog Walking Benefits Health and Wellness
Yorba Linda Regional Park, Yorba Linda*

Recreation, Health and Wellness Analysis

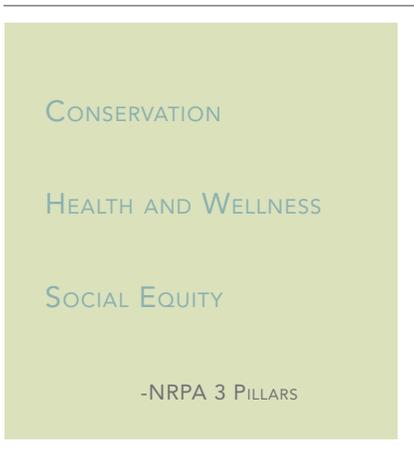
6.1 INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Surgeon General has launched a National Prevention Strategy to move the nation from a focus on sickness and disease to one based on prevention and wellness (www.surgeongeneral.gov/nationalpreventioncouncil). Key strategies in this effort include promoting active living and healthy eating, as well as mental and emotional well-being.

As the primary provider of recreation amenities and programs in the city, the Wasco Recreation and Park District, with the City and School Districts, can have a major impact on community health and wellness. This chapter explores the key trends nationally and locally in how recreation programs play a part in the health and fitness of a community and how they may be employed in Wasco to meet health and wellness goals.

According to the community questionnaire residents filled out

during the public involvement process, increasing recreation program opportunities is a top community priority, especially among Hispanic residents. Another key finding from the public involvement process was that residents want the City and Park District to collaborate on ways to increase physical activity, opportunities to experience nature, increased access to healthy foods, and on methods to build a safe and more connected community. Consequently, this chapter looks at major trends influencing the provision of programs and services and evaluates future program and service opportunities.



This chapter also looks at the administration of the WRPD and presents ways of improving recreation administration within the District to better position the District to deliver programs and services that meet the health and wellness goals of the community and position itself for future growth and success.

6.2 KEY TRENDS NATIONALLY AND LOCALLY

A number of state and national trends should be considered by WRPD when planning future programs that enhance recreation, health and wellness:

■ **NRPA 3 Pillars:** The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) is an organization of park and recreation professionals dedicated to advancing efforts that enhance quality of life. In 2013, NRPA has defined the primary role of parks and recreation today as (Beard 2013):

1. **Conservation:** Protecting open space, connecting children to nature, and engaging communities in conservation practices.
2. **Health and Wellness:** leading the nation to improved health and wellness through parks and recreation; and
3. **Social Equity:** Creating viable, desirable and livable communities to benefit all people.

These three areas are very applicable to Wasco, as they were also the primary goals residents wanted the City and WRPD to focus on in the future. The three NRPA pillars can serve as a general guide to expanding recreation, health and wellness programs and services in Wasco. For example, the WRPD can explore programs that could be offered to connect children with nature or improve fitness, and can determine how the District could provide equitable access to programs for children from low income families and families that are primarily Spanish-speaking.

Lack of Time: Another national and local trend in today's society is a lack of time to participate in programs and activities that can help them develop active lifestyles. With today's families balancing many roles – parent, worker and family member – lack of time has emerged as a major barrier to recreation participation. As noted in the community questionnaire, it is one of the primary reasons why residents do not participate in recreation programs in Wasco. To address this trend, park and recreation agencies are adopting new program formats, including drop-in activities, short term programs, and online programs to facilitate participation. The District should evaluate these approaches and other ways to fit recreation programs and activities into residents' busy schedules in order to reach more residents and increase participation.

The Child in the City: One of the greatest challenges cities are facing nationwide is how to retain and support families. This challenge includes fostering child development – including physical, social and cognitive development – for children and youth of all ages from birth to young adults. It also includes supporting and fostering family connections. Programs that support child and youth development and family interaction address these trends. Youth – including children and teens – and families were noted as the highest priorities in the community questionnaire for improved recreation services in Wasco.

California Outdoor Children’s Bill of Rights: The need to connect youth with the outdoors was one of the priority strategies in the California Outdoor Recreation Plan 2008 . To address this issue, the Outdoor Recreation Plan encourages recreation providers and families to offer opportunities for children and youth to participate in the outdoor recreation activities listed in the California Outdoor Children’s Bill of Rights, including:

- Discover California’s past
- Splash in the water
- Play in a safe place
- Camp under the stars
- Explore nature
- Learn to swim
- Play on a team
- Follow a trail
- Catch a fish
- Celebrate their heritage

Implementing these and other outdoor activities can be a way for WRPD to address the need to connect youth with the outdoors.

Active Aging: Seniors can no longer be lumped into a single category and be effectively served. With healthier lifestyles, people live longer and have more active lives than ever before. Parks and recreation providers need to consider seniors’ diverse interests and multiple life stages. Programs must provide for seniors interested in developing new skills, learning new activities and engaging in volunteerism; those with some health issues and access concerns; seniors desiring passive and more contemplative activities; seniors looking for inter-generational interactions or who are parenting a grandchild; and those who want more quiet environments. The desirability, benefits and cost effectiveness of helping seniors remain in their own homes is well-recognized. Recreation programs and services are critical in supporting senior independent living. While seniors are not the top priority in the Wasco community, programs should continue to be available to address seniors’ diverse life cycle needs and support independent living.

Technology: Technology is offering parks and recreation providers new opportunities as well as new challenges. Technology can provide a mass communication tool while

improving affordability, accessibility, and efficiency of community facilities and services. Opportunities for tech-aided recreation are growing while a conflicting trend for techno-free experiences and environments also is emerging. Technology is adopted and embraced differently by different population groups. For example, younger residents tend to be more technology dependent, and, therefore, desire more high tech experiences. Finding the right balance and appropriate use for technology in facilities and programs will be an ongoing challenge to WRPD. To respond to this trend, the District's use of technology will need to be evaluated at frequent intervals, and a technology plan developed and updated frequently to guide improvements.

Local Foods: As recently as the 1950s, many communities produced about half of their own food. Today, in many communities, most food consumed is transported from outside the community – and often

is transported from international locations. Spurred by the interest in health and wellness as well as the growth of organic and natural foods, community gardens and urban agricultural farm parks have developed in many communities across the country. Besides providing healthy foods for people of all incomes, growing food within a community increases local food security, ensuring that food is available regardless of transportation, environmental or other potential crises. Participating in local gardening opportunities can build a sense of community among residents, and provide community jobs and business opportunities. In addition to increasing community sustainability, local gardening opportunities can help people experience the outdoors and create a stronger sense of community. Programs that WRPD may wish to consider that could be provided that build on this trend include community gardening, farmer's markets, and classes in gardening, cooking and food preservation.

Recreation's Role in a Healthier

California: The California Outdoor Recreation Plan 2008 recognizes the connection between accessible recreation activities and health. Nationwide, the U.S. is experiencing an obesity crisis, and the City of Wasco is no exception. As noted in the Existing Conditions Summary Report, obesity rates among Wasco

youth are among the highest in the state of California. Obesity and being overweight increases the risk of chronic diseases, including heart disease, diabetes and cancer. Physical activity reduces the risk of these chronic diseases, regardless of weight. Providing accessible recreation opportunities has been shown to increase activity levels and promote health. To respond to this trend, the District can continue to provide programs for children and families – and residents of all ages – that promote a diversity of activity types. The District and City need to ensure that information about these programs as well as recreation facilities that support active use is readily available.

Partnerships and Resource Sharing:

An additional trend in government services is an increased reliance on partnerships to provide facilities, services and programs to residents. Agencies are finding that no one agency can do it all. Potential partners include the private sector, other public agencies and nonprofit organizations. For example, the City of Wasco and WRPD can strengthen their relationship with the Wasco Union Elementary School District and Wasco Union High School District to make more indoor and outdoor recreation facilities available to residents. Other public agencies, such as Kern County Mental Health Department, can collaborate with the City and District to promote community mental

health. Relationships with non-profit organizations, such as Community Action Partnership of Kern County's Food Bank, can be maintained and expanded to increase services to residents. Private providers, such as the current instructors of adult exercise programs, can be utilized to expand recreation programming. Both nonprofit and private organizations have collaborated with local government agencies in other communities to provide major facilities, such as health and wellness facilities, sports complexes and community centers.

6.3 RECREATION, HEALTH AND WELLNESS ANALYSIS

The Wasco Recreation and Park District has focused primarily on sports programming. While these programs have made a valuable contribution to community health and wellness, expanding the range of programs offered in collaboration with community partners could increase the District's impact. In some areas, other partners may continue to be or become the lead agency. Because of the District's limited staff and facility resources, any expansion of programs in the future will require additional resources.

To improve recreation, health and wellness, the following programs and services could be considered as potential areas for implementation or expansion by WRPD.

NATURE AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

About 56% of park and recreation agencies offer environmental education opportunities nationally. According to the Wasco community questionnaire, providing opportunities to enjoy nature/outdoors was one of the benefits of parks and recreation that was most important to the community. Environmental education opportunities meet the goals of the California Outdoor Recreation Plan by getting residents outdoors and connected to nature. Children and youth are a special priority of the California Outdoor Recreation Plan.

Environmental education can inform residents about their bio-region, its physical features, and plant and animal life. A wide range of activities can be included – from bird watching to stargazing. Potential partners include local outdoor enthusiasts and nonprofit organizations, such as Audubon California, the Sierra Club, Ducks Unlimited, Tulare Basin Wetlands Association, etc.

OUTDOOR RECREATION

Outdoor recreation can be defined as any activity that takes place in the outdoors, especially in natural or semi-natural settings. Examples include disc golf, backpacking, bicycle touring, camping, canoeing, canyoning, caving, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, hunting, kayaking, mountaineering, mountain biking,

photography, rock climbing, running, sailing, skiing and surfing. While some activities may require travel to special environments, others do not or require settings that are more accessible to Wasco residents. Some activities can be adapted for “in City” participation and can promote and/or take advantage of Urban Greening. For example, many park and recreation agencies are offering occasional family camping nights in local parks or geocaching opportunities around their community. Geocaching can occur in parks, on school grounds, or on under-utilized public land in areas where appropriate. Getting people to explore their local environment can also inspire them to care for these urban green spaces. Outdoor recreation can be attractive to youth and adults who do not participate in sports and can contribute to higher levels of fitness. Some activities, such as rock climbing and mountain biking, can appeal to youth who are “thrill-seeking” and provide a positive alternative for these youth. Potential partners include local outdoor enthusiasts and nonprofit organizations, such as Audubon California, the Sierra Club, Ducks Unlimited, Kern County Sheriff’s Activity League and outdoor recreation retail businesses. Providing opportunities like these within the urban environment is an important part of connecting youth to nature.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

COMMUNITY GARDENS

About 38% of park and recreation agencies offer community gardening opportunities nationally. According to the community questionnaire, about 48% of residents participate in gardening and about 15% would like to spend more time gardening. Community gardens help make healthy food available to residents of all income levels, connect children to the food growing process, build a sense of community and create opportunities for physical activity. Community gardens can create positive activities in parks, and, therefore, decrease crime and undesirable activities. No community gardens are currently provided in Wasco. However, a 110-acre agricultural farm and 10-acre agricultural lab is provided at Wasco High School.

Community gardens can occur in a variety of small spaces, including parks, government property, school grounds, church property, and left over spaces, such as vacant lots and landscape strips along sidewalks. Potential partners including schools, churches, the City, gardening clubs and enthusiasts, the agricultural facility at Wasco High School and retail businesses that provide gardening and landscaping supplies.

SPORTS

Sports are the focus of District programming as well as the focus

of several nonprofit organizations in the City of Wasco. Nationally, about 83% of park and recreation agencies provide organized team sports and 70% provide water safety (NRPA 2013). Sports are an excellent means of improving physical and mental health, and also promote the development of teamwork skills.

Sports were also identified as the top priority for program improvements. The community involvement findings identified sports that currently have the greatest participation and those that residents would participate in if they had more time. If sports programming was increased, these are areas that could be considered for further expansion. The most popular sports in terms of current participation are swimming, basketball, baseball and soccer. Residents would like to participate in basketball, swimming and volleyball more often if they had the time and money. Among Latino residents, more participation in basketball and soccer was desired. District staff has noted a need for men's basketball, travel basketball, track and competitive swimming. These are also areas to consider for short term program improvements. Other sports, such as lacrosse and rugby, and alternative sports, such as disc golf and ultimate Frisbee, are seeing a growth in popularity nationally, and could be considered for program expansion. Opportunities for active seniors, such as softball, soccer or basketball, might also be

successful as well as drop-in activities for adults and youth.

EXERCISE PROGRAMS

Nationally, about 86% of park and recreation agencies provide fitness programs (NRPA 2013). In the community questionnaire, exercise and aerobics was among the top three activities that residents would do more often if time and money were available. Exercise and aerobics is also the third most popular activity in Wasco in terms of current participation. The District has partnered with private instructors to make exercise classes available to residents. This strategy could be continued to expand exercise program opportunities in the future. Partnerships with the School Districts, nonprofit organizations or churches could provide more space to expand exercise programs. Providing programs in parks when weather allows could also be explored.

SKATEBOARDING

Skateboarding is an alternative sport that has growing appeal, especially for teens and younger adults. Many communities provide lessons and contests that attract youth interest and promote physical activity. The Wasco skate park in Westside Park is one of the most popular facilities for youth and teens in the city, and also has a regional draw. Providing skateboarding programs at the existing skate park or using additional portable skate facilities are ways that

Wasco can capitalize on this trend while encouraging healthy activity among teens and young adults and enhancing safety and security at the skate park. Potential partners include local skateboarders and retail businesses.

COOKING

Providing cooking classes that teach residents of all ages – including children and youth – how to prepare healthy food is one strategy to help combat the trend of obesity and the overreliance on fast food. With busy lifestyles, Americans seem to have lost the skills needed to prepare simple, healthy, low cost and fast weeknight meals that promote health. Potential program partners could include the Wasco High School culinary department, the University of California Cooperative Extension Service-Kern County Home and Food Advisors, the agricultural facility at Wasco High School and local restaurants.

HEALTHY MEALS PROGRAMS

Park and recreation agencies are the second highest provider of meals to children in the U.S., second only to schools. The Wasco Recreation and Park District could position itself to provide healthy food to children and youth as part of providing recreation opportunities, addressing hunger and increasing access to healthy foods. Healthy meals programs can also be expanded to the general community. Potential partners include

the Community Action Agency of Bakersfield Food Bank, federal grant programs, such as the Child and Adults Care Food Program and summer Food Service Program administered by the USDA Food and Nutrition Services, local churches, farmers, the agricultural facility at Wasco High School and grocery stores. Partnerships with the Kern County Aging and Adults Services might also be expanded beyond the current senior meals program to serve additional residents. WRPD currently participates in the commodity food program with the County of Kern.

FOOD PANTRIES

Providing a food pantry where low income residents can get free healthy food to supplement their food budget is an important way to increase access to healthy food. The Wasco Recreation and Park District currently provides a food pantry in partnership with the Community Action Agency of Bakersfield Food Bank at the Veteran's Hall Building on the fourth Friday of each month. The City and District could seek additional funding in partnership with the Food Bank to offer this food pantry more frequently. The City and District could also seek funding to expand other Food Bank programs, such as the Backpack program that provides children with food on weekends, to the Wasco community. In addition to the Food Bank, other potential partners include community organizations, churches, the agricultural facility at Wasco High

School, local grocery stores and farmers.

HEALTHY VENDING

The vending industry in the U.S. generates over \$40 billion in sales annually . While providing convenient access to snacks and beverages, most vending machine options are high in calories, fat and sugar, and low in nutrients. The City and the District could partner with the School Districts to create healthy vending machine food guidelines for the City that would improve the nutritional value of vending machine food. These guidelines could be phased in over several years to improve local nutrition, especially among children and youth who frequently use vending machines to obtain snacks.

FARMER'S MARKETS

Farmer's markets are surging in popularity nationally. In 2011, there were over 7,000 operating in the U.S. – a 17% increase from 2010 . The benefits of farmer's markets include: enhancing access to healthy local foods, creating a community gathering space, providing economic opportunities for vendors and revitalizing downtowns and neighborhoods where the markets are located. The most successful markets also provide entertainment, and can provide health education opportunities, such as connecting residents with local resources and providing cooking classes and demonstrations. The City or the

Park District could organize a farmer's market – preferably in a downtown location – to provide health, economic and community-building benefits to the city. Potential partners include farmers, musicians and entertainers, food vendors, local crafts persons, businesses in the market area, community organizations, the agricultural facility at Wasco High School, the Community Action Agency of Bakersfield Food Bank, and the University of California Cooperative Extension Service-Kern County Home and Food Advisors. In order to have a Farmer's Market, a Certified Market Manager from Kern County that is interested in running one in Wasco will be needed.

WALKING

"Walking is safe, simple and doesn't require practice or fancy gear," said U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Regina Benjamin when she announced plans for a Call to Action on Walking. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention notes that walking is American adults' favorite physical activity and that doing it for as little as 30 minutes a day can produce significant health benefits. According to the community questionnaire, walking/running and dog walking were the most popular daily activities among Wasco residents. The Recreation and Park District and the City can promote walking by publicizing fun and safe walking routes around the city, organizing

walking groups based in each Wasco park, promoting walking to school by children, and create walking races and events. Key partners include the School Districts, nonprofit organizations and local walkers and runners.

STREET EVENTS

Open street events, or a Ciclovía Recreativa, involves temporarily closing streets to motorized vehicles to create a safe and free space for recreational and sports activities (restreets.org). Events can be held regularly or on designated days during the year during specified hours. Events have grown over the years throughout the west. For example, Portland Sunday Parkways connects neighborhoods and people: walkers, runners, bicyclists, seniors, adults and children all enjoying streets filled with surprises, performers, physical activities and food – and traffic-free. The 6-8 mile routes connect Portland's beautiful parks and offers opportunities to listen to music and try other activities along the way. The District and City could partner to sponsor such an event, which would build community, provide opportunities for physical activity and support businesses along the recreation route. A downtown route would be preferred.

SUMMER, TEEN AND BEFORE/ AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

According to the community questionnaire, youth development

is a top priority that residents desire from parks and recreation in the City of Wasco. Youth and teens were also identified as one of the highest priorities for program and service improvements. Before and after school programs were identified as one of the top program and service needs. Nationally, about 64% of park and recreation agencies offer specific programs for teens, 77% offer summer programs and 49% offer before and after school programs.

The Wasco Recreation and Park District did not offer a summer program in 2013, and does not offer before and after school programs. Existing teen programs are swimming or sports programs. Some programs may be available at local schools or at the Kern County Sheriff's Activity League. However, it appears that there is additional demand for expanding these programs. Wasco Union High School offers a wide array of sports programs and dozens of special interest clubs. However, recreation programs at Independence High School appear to be limited.

The District could consider offering before and after school programs, summer program and programs for teens when expanding recreation services. Children's afterschool programs in unserved schools should be a priority as well as programs at Independence High School. The School Districts would be a potential partner who could provide

facilities. Cost may be a major barrier to participation. Community and corporate sponsorships could be developed to provide free programs or scholarships. Another barrier may be that low income and Hispanic families often rely on informal childcare options. Marketing could inform residents about the availability and benefits of new programs, such as physical activity, homework assistance, and a safe, supervised environment.

TOBACCO FREE LIVING, SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION AND MENTAL HEALTH

The City and District could partner with local prevention and mental health agencies to publicize opportunities to enhance substance abuse prevention and improve community mental health. The City and District could also provide facilities when feasible. For example, Kern County Mental Health currently provides several prevention and early intervention programs in Wasco for children, foster care youth and seniors. The City and District could partner with the County in publicizing these programs to residents.

SENIOR PROGRAMS

Nationally, about 71% of park and recreation agencies provide senior programs. Kern County Aging and Adult Services operates senior services at the Veteran's Building, including a lunchtime nutrition program that operates Monday through Friday. As noted in the public

involvement findings, expanding programs for adults and seniors is not a high community priority. However, these programs are important to maintaining senior physical and mental health, and to helping seniors remain in their own homes. At a minimum, the City and District could partner with the County to publicize existing senior programs offered in Wasco as well as additional social services provided by the County that would assist seniors.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

COMMUNITY AND FAMILY EVENTS

Outdoor concerts, fairs and festivals are one of the top desired recreation activities in the nation and in the City of Wasco according to residents responding to the public involvement process surveys and workshops. Nationally, over 84% of park and recreation providers offer special events. Special events were ranked as one of the most desired program improvements in the community questionnaire and also had one of the highest levels of current participation. These events appeal to a range of age groups and income levels, build a sense of community, and attract residents, visitors and tourists. Naming rights, space for vendors and other advertising options provide additional opportunities to generate revenue. Downtowns and business districts also can benefit from these events by building on event themes and through increased sales that result from attracting more people to

the business district.

The District and the City have sponsored a number of special events in the past, but could expand events that promote family recreation, health and wellness, and increase cultural understanding and celebrate community history. The agencies could also offer events that promote community economic development. Examples include concerts or movies in parks; Hispanic cultural festivals, such as Cinco de Mayo; community runs, walks, and bicycle races; food, wine and beer festivals; holiday parades; etc.

NEIGHBORHOOD TOURS

Neighborhood tours provide a series of destinations where a program theme can be experienced and interpreted. Examples include family bike rides; art walks; tours of home gardens or historic properties; a series of music or theater venues; progressive food events; and tours, such as tours of gardens, low water landscaping or grey water recovery systems, green buildings or backyard chicken coops. To promote health and wellness, event locations can be selected to encourage active modes of transportation, such as walking or biking between venues. These events can feature selected business districts or neighborhoods. They can increase awareness of cultural or environmental topics, and raise funds for organizations. Sometimes walking tour maps are provided

at various locations along the way. Often other entertainment, such as theater or music performances, and refreshments are offered in addition to programs related to the selected theme. If the event occurs in a business district, local businesses and restaurants are frequently open to serve participants. The City or District could consider offering a neighborhood tour event to provide a fun opportunity to increase physical activity while learning about health and/or environmental topics. Community organizations and businesses could be key partners.

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Volunteer activities are very popular and can be considered a recreation offering in themselves. According to the community questionnaire, about 55% of respondents volunteer at least annually. The District utilizes many volunteers – mostly as volunteer coaches in the sports program. The District also places other volunteers if requested, but does not have a formal volunteer program. Developing and marketing a volunteer program would attract additional volunteers who could assist in caring for parks and facilities, improving safety and security, expanding programs and improving community health and wellness.

DOG WALKING AND DOG EVENTS

Many Wasco residents are dog owners, and dog walking is one of the most popular recreation

activities in the city. Nationally, about 47% of park and recreation agencies provide dog parks for off-lease recreation opportunities (NRPA 2013). These parks not only provide exercise opportunities for dogs and their owners, but become an important social hub in the community. Dog parks are extremely popular and increase use of parks, contributing to park safety and security. Other communities also provide recreation programs for dogs and their owners, including obedience classes and special events, such as pet Halloween parades and doggie swims (for dogs only on the last day of pool operations before the pool is cleaned). The District could explore these opportunities to increase programs and services. Pet-based recreation opportunities use residents' love of pets to motivate these residents to increase their activity levels and connect with their neighbors. Potential partners include retail businesses and veterinarians.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Community education was also a priority in the public involvement. The District should do further research to identify specific program needs, and partner with other community organizations, such as the Wasco Union High School District, North Kern Vocational Training Center, University of California Cooperative Extension Service, nonprofit organizations, churches and the local business community to provide

desired self-improvement and life-long learning classes and the facilities needed to program them.

RECREATION ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

A park and recreation system is only as good as its administration and management. Without a solid, stable and experienced administrative and management staff, implementing the above program strategies will be very difficult. This section discusses various aspects of recreation program administration in the Wasco Recreation and Parks District, including program development and supervision, partnership development, collection of participation data, serving minorities, low income and people with disabilities, registration processes, marketing programs and activities, cost recovery, program evaluation, safety and cleanliness, and use of technology. It also looks at improvements in these areas that will be necessary for WRPD to position itself for future growth and expansion.

PARTICIPATION DATA

A review of the WRPD's collection of participation data for each of its programs indicates that there is no standardized process for collecting participation data. This needs to be improved to provide better program accountability. Without accurate attendance figures and participant feedback, programs and activities cannot be adequately evaluated to see if they are effective or if they

should be changed or deleted in favor of other programs.

SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that people with disabilities be served in public recreation programs in the most integrated setting possible. The District is required to have an ADA Transition Plan in place that addresses barrier removal in its parks and facilities and a self-evaluation plan that identifies and addresses barriers to program participation by people with disabilities. Currently no such plan exists. This is a major need that should be addressed.

REGISTRATION PROCESS

Most park and recreation agencies provide a variety of ways for participants to register for recreation programs, including online, and by mail, fax or phone. This allows participants to select the registration method that is most convenient for them. WRPD currently offers only walk-in registration. As a future improvement, the District should expand the methods available to register for programs, especially opportunities for online registration.

MARKETING

Most recreation and park districts publish an activity guide that informs residents about available recreation programs and provides access to the guide online. With growing costs and environmental concerns, many

are relying more and more on web-based activity guides and reducing the distribution of printed guides. WRPD does not have an active website or an activity guide. It relies on flyers distributed in schools and on newspaper advertising to attract users. Developing a marketing plan should be a top priority for the future administration of the District.

According to the responses from the community questionnaire, “not being aware of programs” is the primary reason why residents do not participate in WRPD programs. Consequently, developing a marketing plan that addresses traditional marketing methods, as well as social media, to better publicize programs is a definite need.

COST RECOVERY

Although District program fees are low, it strives for 100% cost recovery from its programs. In general, recreation programs are typically subsidized in part by the sponsoring agency. Overall, programs are often approximately 25-30% self-supporting. The District might consider reevaluating its cost recovery policy to increase youth participation in programs, which is a very high priority to the community. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the City’s poverty level is nearly double that of the state of California . The District should develop or expand a scholarship program aimed at increased program participation by

low income residents.

SAFETY AND CLEANLINESS

Maintenance and concerns about safety are major reasons why residents do not use parks and facilities, according to the results of this plan’s public involvement process. WRPD and the City need to make safety and cleanliness a very high priority to change the current community image of poorly maintained and unsafe parks. In addition to the need to increase maintenance, the District could consider other measures, such as developing volunteer “watch” programs and volunteer Adopt-a-Park programs. The Kern County Sheriff’s Department may be a potential partner for this effort.

TECHNOLOGY

To implement improvements in programming, administration and management of the District, new technology will be needed. The District needs to develop an annual technology plan that identifies its budgetary needs for phasing in these improvements, which may include hardware, software, consulting services, etc.

6.4 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

As a nation, we are focusing more on disease prevention and wellness. The Recreation and Parks District in Wasco is the primary provider of recreation programs in the City and could have a great impact on

community health and wellness. While recognizing that improving programs for recreation, health and wellness in the District are contingent upon improving facilities and securing more resources, there are a number of potential improvements that could be considered in the future.

The goals of conservation, health and wellness, and social equity can serve as an overarching guide to expanding recreation, health and wellness programs and services in the City of Wasco.

There are a wide variety of ways to provide additional programs and services that increase recreation, health and wellness. Potential partners can be identified for all of these additional services. Sports, community events, before and after school programs, and community education are some areas that are viewed as very important potential improvements by the community.

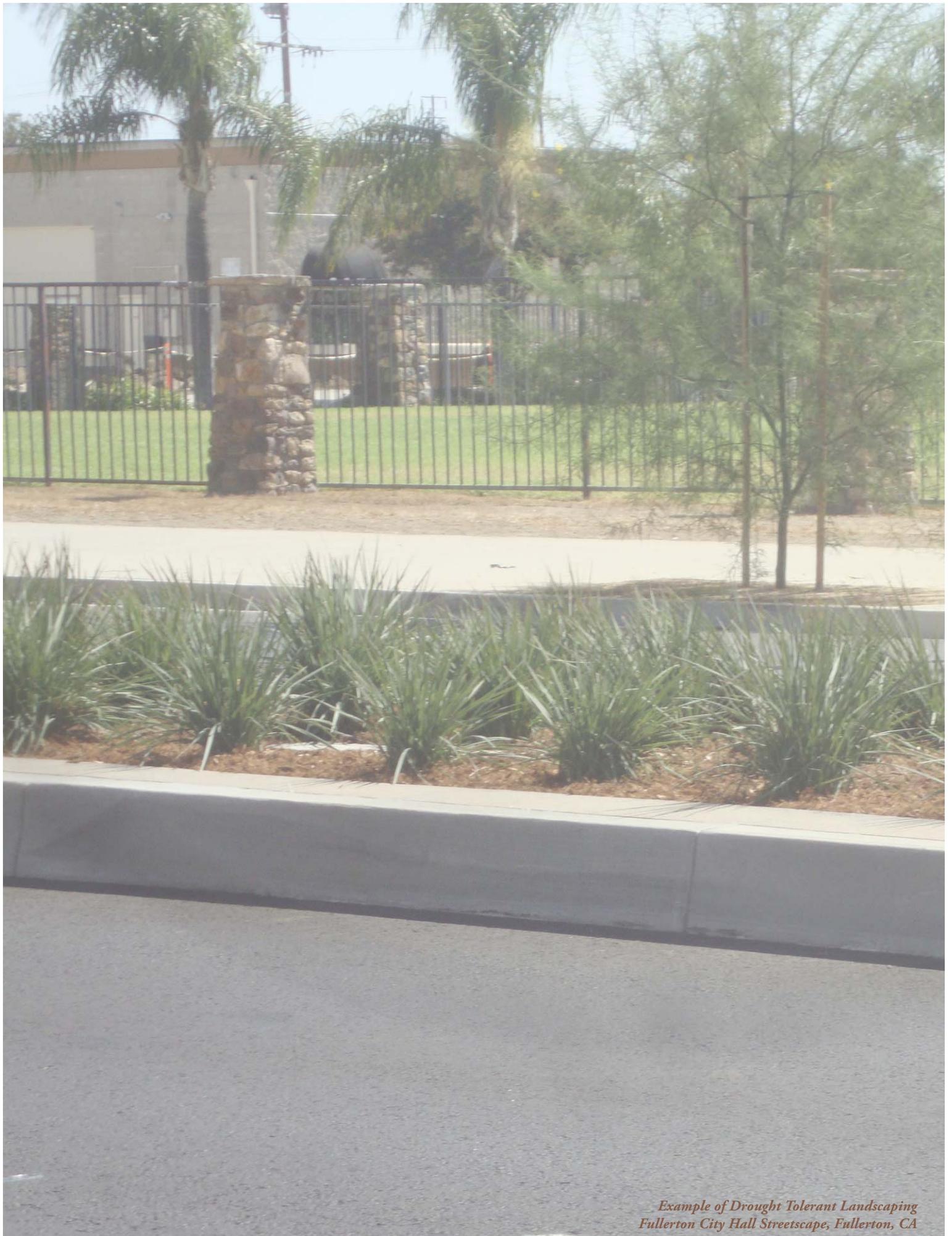
The District needs to improve the administration and management of its recreation programs, including tracking of participation; providing services for people with disabilities; improving the registration process for programs and activities; improving marketing techniques; making programs financially affordable by setting cost recovery goals and providing scholarships for low income individuals; establishing program evaluation systems; improving park maintenance and enhancing safety

and cleanliness; and, identifying proposed annual costs for technology upgrades.

Baseline Financial Analysis

PART II - CHAPTER SEVEN





*Example of Drought Tolerant Landscaping
Fullerton City Hall Streetscape, Fullerton, CA*

Baseline Financial Analysis

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Historically the City of Wasco has assisted the Wasco Recreation & Park District (WRPD). This assistance has included help with grant funding for capital projects and administration of park fees collected through the Quimby Act. However, while the City also expends money to maintain some open space and green belt areas, and administers park fees collected through the Quimby Act, the primary financial obligation for providing and maintaining park & recreation facilities falls upon the WRPD. Consequently, the baseline financial analysis concentrates on WRPD revenue and expenses for providing those park & recreation operations to City residents.

Given a Wasco service area population of 20,729 (which does not include the prison population); the annual revenue per resident is \$33.94. Using this figure to compare with the average revenue per

resident of other Recreation and Park Districts is not very helpful due to differences in population, various tax assessments used by Districts and the variety of funding sources in each District. However, by itself it is a necessary and important number for determining the revenue increase per resident that will be needed to implement action items and recommendations in the Urban Greening Parks and Open Space Master Plan and for developing financial strategies needed to carryout the Plan.

The WRPD projected total revenue for its 2012-13 operating budget (excluding capital improvements) is \$703,575.

Of that total:

- 73% is from property taxes,
- 14% from rentals (Pool, Picnic Shelter, Veteran's Hall, and Ball Fields),
- 12% is from programs (registration fees, sponsors, community activities, soccer and Bengals football), and
- 1% is from interest on reserves and dividends.

The \$513,609 the Wasco Recreation and Park District received from property taxes for 2012-2013 represents a 13.5% increase over property taxes received in 2011-2012.

The purpose of this chapter is to give an overview of the WRPD's financial ability to deliver the desired service level the community would like to see in its park and recreation system as determined by findings from the public involvement process. This chapter looks at the following items.

1. Revenue and expenses for park and recreation services and how they compare with the averages of other selected Districts;

2. Expenditures on park and facility maintenance versus programs and capital improvements and how that compares to other Districts

3. Funding sources used by WRPD to generate revenue for services compared to those used by other Districts.

All together this analysis will provide insight into the District's current financial situation and suggest funding strategies it may want to pursue to deliver a park and

recreation system that is sufficient to satisfy community expectations.

7.2 EXPENSES BY CATEGORY

The baseline financial analysis of the WRPD proposed budget for 2012-2013 is divided into four categories:

- Park/Facility Maintenance
- Programs
- Administration/Overhead (Includes Capital Equipment Outlay)
- Capital Improvements

The WRPD 2012-2013 proposed budget expenses for each category are shown in Table 7.1.

7.3 COMPARISON OF EXPENDITURE PERCENTAGES BY CATEGORIES

In addition to the five park Districts used for the comparative analysis presented in Part II - Chapter 3, MIG has obtained financial data from other park districts. Data from these park districts has been used to develop baseline averages and to analyze the funding needs for park and facility maintenance, programs, and capital improvements. All the Districts that were included in this financial analysis, in addition to WRPD, included:

- Tehachapi Valley Recreation and Park District
- North of the River Recreation and Park District
- McFarland Recreation and Park District
- Westside Recreation and Park District

Table 7.1: WRPD Expenditures by Category.

	FY 2012-2013 Proposed Expenses
Park/Facility Maintenance	\$448,225
Programs	\$99,100
Administration/Overhead (Includes Capital Equipment Outlay)	\$156,250
Capital Improvements	\$25,720*
Total Proposed Budget Expenditures	\$729,295

*There was a mid-year budget adjustment of \$25,720 for installation of electricity and related lighting improvements for Westside Park restroom facilities. To fund these improvements, the District requested Quimby Funds from the City. If approved, this would change the 2012-2013 Capital Improvements proposed budget from zero to \$25,720. For purposes of analysis and comparisons it is assumed that this request will be approved by the City, and that the District will proceed with the capital improvement project, and thus, total proposed Capital Improvements for 2012-2013 will be \$25,720.

- Carmichael Recreation and Park District
- Strawberry Recreation District
- Feather River Recreation and Park District
- Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District
- Soledad Mission Recreation and Park District
- Shafter Recreation and Park District

Data from these Districts was used to determine the percentage of each District’s total budget spent on the four major expense categories listed below. An overall average for each expense category, as a percent of the total budget for all the Districts, was then calculated (table 7.2).

Table 7.3 shows how WRPD compares to the averages for expenses by category. Based on this comparative analysis, WRPD spends less on programs and capital improvements and more on park and facility maintenance and administration and overhead than the average of the Districts surveyed. This is primarily due to the fact that costs for park and facility maintenance are higher for WRPD because it has not had the financial ability to upgrade its park systems and operations as most of the other Districts have been able to do. New irrigation systems, new maintenance equipment, upgraded computer capabilities, and increased park security to decrease vandalism would decrease maintenance costs and allow a greater percentage of the District’s budget to go to

Table 7.2: Overall Average for Expense Categories, as a Percent of Total Budget for All Districts.

Expense Category	Percent of Total Budget
Park/Facility Maintenance	52%
Programs	28%
Administration/Overhead	7%
Capital Improvements	13%

Table 7.3: Comparison of Expense Percentages by Category.

Expense Category	Survey Average	WRPD	Difference
Park/Facility Maintenance	52%	61%	+9%
Programs	28%	14%	-14%
Administration/Overhead	7%	21%	+14%
Capital Improvements	13%	4%	-9%

programs and capital improvements. Administration and Overhead are higher than the average because WRPD’s capital equipment outlay is included in this category and in most Districts it is accounted for in the cost of park and facility maintenance.

7.4 PARK/FACILITY MAINTENANCE EXPENDITURE COMPARISON

Together, the City of Wasco and the Wasco Recreation and Park District provide a total of nine parks/facilities, in addition to green belts, to benefit both residents and visitors in the Wasco service area. The City has an agreement with the WRPD to maintain its larger parks/facilities and the City maintains its green belts/walkways/landscaped areas directly, mostly through contracts funded by a landscape assessment district. The total acres maintained for recreation purposes, excluding the green belts is 50.69 acres. This total does not include school sites as neither the City nor WRPD maintain any school

sites. In FY 2011-2012, the Wasco Recreation and Parks District spent \$448,225 to maintain these 50.69 acres. This comes to an average of \$8824 per acre per year for park and facility maintenance. During the same time period, the City of Wasco spent \$69,159 to maintain the greenbelts which comes to an average cost of \$14,823 per acre. The following table compares this amount to the average cost of park/facility maintenance per acre according to MIG’s 2012 survey of the 10 Recreation and Park Districts statewide.

While WRPD spends a greater percentage of its budget on maintenance than the average for other Districts, the WRPD spends (as shown in table 7.5) about 40% less on park and facility maintenance per acre than the average of other Districts. They spend less on turf management for over-seeding and fertilizing turf, tree maintenance, equipment replacement, painting, parking lot resurfacing and upgrading irrigation systems. This is probably one of the primary reasons the parks and facilities in Wasco were mostly rated in only fair condition instead of good to excellent in the park inventory section of the Existing Conditions Report. To increase the rating to good or excellent, most likely additional funding would need to be secured to increase the expenditure per acre to a level comparable to the survey average. It should be noted the \$14,823 per acre that the City spends

Table 7.4: Combined City and Recreation & Park District Parks/Facilities/ Greenbelts Used for Recreation Purposes.

	Parks Acreage	Green Belts Acreage	Total Acreage
City of Wasco	26.28	4.65	30.93
WRPD	24.41	0	24.41
Total Acreage	50.69	4.65	55.34

Table 7.5: Comparison of Park/Facility per Acre Maintenance Costs.

	Park/Facility Maintenance Expenditure per Acre
WRPD	\$8,824
Survey Average*	\$14,806
Service Ratio Difference	(\$5,982)

* FY 2011-2012 Survey included the following Districts: Tehachapi Valley Recreation and Park District, North of the River Recreation and Park District, McFarland Recreation and Park District, Westside Recreation and Park District, Carmichael Recreation and Park District, Strawberry Recreation District, Feather River Recreation and Park District, Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District, Soledad Mission Recreation and Park District, Shafter Recreation and Park District.

to maintain its greenbelts is almost identical with the \$14,806 average cited in table 7.5.

7.5 COMPARISON SERVICE RATIOS FOR PARK MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL

The MIG 2012 survey also looked at the number of acres each park maintenance person has to maintain. The average was determined to be fifteen and a half acres. The 15.5 average acres maintained per maintenance person represents a fair to good service ratio for park maintenance. The higher the acreage ratio, the lower level of service.

Wasco personnel have about the same amount of park and facility acreage to maintain as the survey average. This indicates the current staffing level for park and facility maintenance is consistent with the industry average, and what it actually should be given the amount of total acres that must be maintained to keep parks and facilities in a fair to good condition. However, the reason WRPD has not been able to achieve comparable park conditions is due to two factors. First, WRPD personnel spend more of their time repairing old equipment, hand watering, repairing vandalism, and doing field preparation than the other Districts. Second, as already mentioned, WRPD is spending less on over-seeding and fertilizing turf, tree maintenance, equipment replacement, painting, parking lot resurfacing, upgrading

Table 7.6: Comparison of Maintenance Acres per Maintenance FTE

	Total FTE for Park/Facility Maintenance	Total Park/Facility Acreage	City/WRPD # of Acres to Maintain per Park Maintenance Personnel	Comparison Average # Acres per FTE	City/WRPD Difference from Average
City/WRPD	3.5*	55.34	15.81	15.50	.31 acres more per person

* City FTE for Park Facility Maintenance + WRPD FTE for Park Facility Maintenance = 1.0 FTE + 2.5 FTE= 3.5 Combined FTE

irrigation systems, etc. These two factors working together can account for the lower rating in the condition of parks and facilities.

7.6 COMPARISON OF FUNDING SOURCES

Table 7.7 depicts the types of funding sources each of the five selected comparison Districts use to generate revenue to pay for the services, programs and facilities they provide to their respective cities. A review of the various funding options used by other Districts that the WRPD is not using, may provide some options the WRPD will want to pursue to maintain a quality service ratio comparable to the other Districts.

The funding sources used by the comparison recreation and park districts to provide recreation programs, park facilities, and park maintenance are fairly comparable. The Westside Recreation and Park District and City of Taft do make

greater use of assessment districts and grant opportunities for parks and recreation. They also have established a Parks Foundation that is successful in raising donations and supporting grant proposals, both public and private, that the other Districts, including Wasco, do not take advantage of to fund their operations. None of the Cities/Districts have a comprehensive asset management plan to provide concession leases, sponsoring opportunities, or naming rights programs.

7.7 QUIMBY FUNDS

Since 2004 the City of Wasco and the WRPD have collected \$476,416 in Quimby fees from developers. Table 7.8 includes a breakdown of how those funds have been spent to date. Historically, the District has come to the City when they need Quimby funds for a specific project. The funds are disbursed by the City on a reimbursement basis.

While the District requests Quimby funds from the City for capital improvement projects to the park system, it is the City’s responsibility to collect Quimby Fees and to make sure the projects the District wishes to implement are eligible.

Table 7.7: Comparison of Funding Sources.

Funding Sources	WRPD	Buttonwillow Rec & Park District	Shafter Rec & Park District	Westside Rec & Park District	McFarland Rec & Park District
Property Tax	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Additional Property Tax Assessment	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Maintenance Assessment	No	No	No	No	No
Facility Rental Fees	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Program Fees	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lease of Property	Yes	No	No	No	No
Advertising	No	No	No	No	No
Naming Rights	No	No	No	No	No
Donations	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Foundation Fund	No	No	No	Yes	No
Volunteers	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Public Grants	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Private Grants	No	No	No	Yes	No
Sponsors	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Non Resident Fees	No	No	No	No	No
Quimby Fees	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
DIF (Development Impact Fees)	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Park Bonds	No	Yes	No	No	No
Revenue Bonds	No	No	No	No	No
Joint Powers Agreements	Yes	No	No	No	Yes

7.8 PLANNED FUTURE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND PROJECTED FUNDING NEEDS

The 2012-2013 proposed WRPD budget identified some capital improvements that the District plans to proceed with in the near future. These include using a State of California per capita grant to upgrade the Cormack Park irrigation system. This will allow for a significant savings in staff time and in water consumption. By upgrading to an automated irrigation system the park can now be programmed to water at night which is more prudent and efficient. The District also plans to remove nuisance trees that create problems at Barker Park. These trees will be replaced with more viable

species over the next two years that are better suited to the environment and will not produce above ground root bundles, thus eliminating safety issues.

WRPD has done an estimation of long term costs for equipment needs and park improvements. While no specific funding source(s) have been identified for these items, the fact that they have been identified in the WRPD’s budget for the first time represents a significant effort towards planning for future needs. WRPD used 2012-2013 dollar figures in estimating the costs of its future needs. As time goes on these figures will have to be adjusted according to the annual rate of inflation. The current list of WRPD’s long term needs is presented in tables 7.9, 7.10, 7.11 and 7.12.

WRPD has identified almost a million dollars in unfunded long term needs. These identified needs along with the future needs identified by the community outreach and needs assessment will be included in the recommendations section of the Master Plan and funding strategies will be addressed in the financial section.

7.9 SUMMARY

The data presented in this Chapter will be used, along with the needs analysis and public involvement key findings, to address the following financial issues.

Table 7.8: Quimby Expenditures 2004 - Present.

Total Quimby Fees Collected 2004 - Present	\$476,416.00
Project	Quimby Expenditure
Cormack Park T-Ball Field	\$4,194.81
Install Pad for City Park Project	\$49,454.78
Annin Avenue Recreation Park	\$192,544.94
Barker Park Bathroom Project	\$32,900.00
Playground Structure at Little League Area	\$38,796.00
Total Quimby Expenditures to Date	\$317,890.53
Quimby Grant Reimbursements	\$14,048.41
Current Quimby Fund Balance	\$154,453.88

Table 7.9: Future Long-Term Funding Needs: Equipment.

Equipment Needs	Estimated Cost in 2012-2013 Dollars
New Utility Vehicle	\$9,000
New Low Boy Trailer	\$8,000
New 3/4 Ton Truck	\$32,000
New Light Duty Truck	\$25,000
New Riding Lawn Mower	\$24,000
New Multi Gang Lawn Mower	\$80,000
Total New Equipment Needs	\$178,000

In comparison, the City of Wasco and Wasco Recreation and Park District spend about 10% more than the average of other Districts that were surveyed for park and facility maintenance. WRPD also expends more than 10% less than the average of other Districts on programs. Strategies to reduce park and facility maintenance costs and increase programs will be addressed in Part III - Chapter One: Goals, Policies and Recommendations.

Table 7.10: Future Long-Term Funding Needs: Park Capital Improvements.

Park Capital Improvements	Estimated Cost in 2012-2013 Dollars
Playground Surfacing for Barker Park	\$8,500
Replacement of Playground Equipment at Various Park Sites	\$35,000
Swimming Pool Resurfacing	\$35,000
Barker Park Parking Lot Improvements	\$12,500
New Park Picnic Shelter at Westside Park	\$32,500
Lighting at Westside Park	#340,000
Barker Park Restroom Construction*	\$200,000
New Dual Pack Units for Veteran's Hall	\$10,000
Replace Flooring at Veteran's Hall	\$15,500
Siding and Surfacing at Veteran's Hall	\$20,000
Total Park Capital Improvement Needs	\$709,000

Table 7.11: Future Long-Term Funding Needs: Program Equipment.

Program Equipment Needs	Estimated Cost in 2012-2013 Dollars
Soccer Nets	\$3,000
Portable Scoreboard	\$5,600
Basketball Equipment	\$2,000
Volleyball Equipment	\$2,500
Pitching Machines	\$2,500
Umpire and Officials Uniforms	\$500
Office Equipment	\$1,000
Football Field Markers	\$650
Equipment Bags	\$1,000
Total Park Capital Improvement Needs	\$18,750

Table 7.12: Future Long-Term Funding Needs: Total.

Funding Needs	Estimated Cost in 2012-2013 Dollars
New Equipment Needs	\$178,000
Park Capital Improvement Needs	\$709,000
Program Equipment Needs	\$18,750
Total Long-Term Funding Needed	\$924,500

*Barker Park Restrooms are scheduled to be funded through a City grant and request of Quimby funds by the WRPD.

Although the WRPD and the City spend more on total park maintenance, they actually spend 37% less than the average of other Districts on a per acre service ratio. Strategies to increase revenue for park maintenance and to maintain parks and facilities more efficiently will also be addressed in Part III - Chapter One.

In looking at the comparison of funding sources, there are a number of revenue opportunities that other Districts use. The 2012-2013 WRPD adopted budget message indicates a desire to explore new funding alternatives. Strategies for funding alternatives will be included in Part III - Chapter One.

Finally, the City has a current fund balance of about \$172,000 in Quimby Funds that can be used to implement some of the capital improvements recommendations that will be developed as part of the recommendations and 10-year capital improvement programs in Part III - Chapter Two of the Master Plan. WRPD has taken steps to identify future needs and those also will be included when looking at strategies for funding.

Needs Assessment

Summary

PART II - CHAPTER EIGHT





Downtown Wasco

Needs Assessment Summary

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The Community Needs Assessment is a key step in the development of the Wasco Urban Greening, Parks and Open Space Master Plan. It is based on both community involvement findings and a technical assessment of the existing parks, recreation facilities and greenbelts within the City. Key findings from the needs assessment are summarized below.

8.2 KEY FINDINGS

Wasco residents who provided input for the master planning process indicated that upgrading existing parks, providing more recreation programs and improving park maintenance should be priorities.

Sports facilities emerged as the number one facility need according to those participating in the public outreach process. Other top facility needs community residents identified included a community

center, possibly with a gymnasium; improved aquatic facilities, greenways/paths for running, biking and dog walking; additional park restrooms and better lighting in all parks.

Promoting youth development was seen by the public as an especially important benefit of parks and recreation, followed by providing opportunities to enjoy nature and the outdoors, improving health and wellness and connecting people, families and community.

Recreation programs offered by WRPD currently emphasize sports, supplemented by a limited range of other program types. This is similar to program offerings of other nearby park districts but community input indicates there is a desire for a broader range of programs, especially for youth.

Recreation programs can have a major impact on community health and wellness. Although the lack

of a community center, as well as staff and financial limitations, has constrained the ability of the WRPD to fully meet this need, there are opportunities to improve and expand recreation programs including partnerships with other organizations, such as other government agencies, nonprofits, churches and local businesses.

Although Wasco does provide a broad range of different types of recreation facilities, an analysis of current and future needs shows a significant deficit of recreation facilities in almost every category. This analysis is based on the existing population of 20,729 in 2013 and a projected 2023 population of 28,419 residents.

Community input further suggested there is a shortage of sports and other recreation facilities to serve the general public. This analysis did not include the recreation facilities of the local school districts, which may be a solution if more public access to school facilities can be obtained.

Wasco has a deficit of 3.33 acres per 1,000 residents according to its municipal code and General Plan standard of providing 6 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. There is a need to add approximately 69 acres of new parkland and greenbelts to meet the currently desired guideline.

There are six areas within the sphere of influence of the City of Wasco

that are not served by any park type within a ½ mile radius. To ensure that all residential areas have improved access to nearby parks, Wasco will need to develop parks with neighborhoods-serving elements in these areas.

The City of Wasco and the WRPD have an opportunity to adopt low impact development practices that manage storm water as a resource rather than as a waste product. This will enable the City and Park District to enhance the local environment, protect public health and improve community livability – all while saving money – especially in the maintenance of parks and green belts.

To develop an interconnected system of green belts, future trail segments should be planned concurrently with future development and take advantage of features, such as LID and green infrastructure components.

WRPD spends less on programs and capital improvements and more on park and facility maintenance and administration and overhead than the average of other districts surveyed by MIG. Maintenance costs are higher for WRPD due, in part, to not having the financial ability to upgrade its park systems and operations as most other districts have been able to do.

WRPD has identified almost a million dollars in unfunded long term needs. At the same time there are new funding alternatives WRPD may

want to explore including revenue opportunities utilized by other park districts that WRPD is not currently pursuing.

PART III - GOALS, POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CITY OF WASCO
URBAN GREENING, PARKS AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN
2014

Goals, Policies and Recommendations

PART III - CHAPTER ONE





Amtrak Station

Goals, Policies and Recommendations

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents goals, policies, and recommendations for the City of Wasco and the Wasco Recreation and Park District to implement, as resources permit. The overarching goal of these policies and recommendations is to provide a comprehensive system of urban green spaces, local parks, and recreation programming that will meet resident's needs and is accessible to the entire community. The following is based on the analysis of findings from Part I and Part II of this Master Plan. The goals have been developed to directly take advantage of the strengths and opportunities in Wasco and to mitigate, to the extent possible, the challenges and obstacles facing the City and the WRPD.

As pointed out by the community during the community outreach process, Wasco's strengths and opportunities include its small town rural feel, involved citizens, and

a community that values healthy lifestyles and family activities.

Wasco's challenges and obstacles, as identified by the public outreach process, include the following:

- Funding park maintenance, existing park improvements, and new parks and facilities
- Meeting the community's desire for a larger variety of recreational programs for all ages
- Providing local youth with positive and safe recreational outlets
- Providing opportunities to enjoy nature and the outdoors
- Improving community health and wellness
- Conserving water and other resources while providing improved park maintenance and green space; and,
- Connecting people by building stronger neighborhoods and community identity

The community outreach and the needs assessment results were also the basis for determining the



Above: Welcome to Wasco.

specific strategies and recommended actions contained in this chapter.

Consequently, this chapter is organized into the following headings that contain the goals, policies, and recommendations to address these challenges and obstacles. The City, District and their partnering agencies can utilize the recommended strategies and actions to pursue answers to the aforementioned questions.

The chapter headings include:

1.2 ADDRESSING PARK STANDARDS AND DEFICITS

1.3 INCREASING EXISTING PARK CAPACITY AND ADDING ADDITIONAL PARKS

1.4 ADDRESSING URBAN GREENING, CONSERVATION AND CONNECTIVITY

1.5 BROADENING PROGRAM OFFERINGS

1.6 IMPROVING COMMUNICATION AND CAPTURING COMMUNITY SPIRIT

1.7 CITY AND PARK DISTRICT ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1.8 BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The goals and policy recommendations to address funding opportunities and strategies are presented in Part III - Chapter 2: Funding Strategies and CIP.

1.2 ADDRESSING PARK STANDARDS AND DEFICITS

As shown in Part II - Needs Assessment, the City's General Plan and Municipal Code combined park standard goal is 6 acres per 1,000 residents. This includes all park classifications, including mini parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, regional parks, greenbelts, and special use facilities. Although the City has not been able to attain this goal to date, currently only having 2.67 acres per 1,000 residents of combined parkland, the 6 acre per 1,000 resident's goal is important to pursue in order to meet the needs of the community.

While mini parks, regional parks, greenbelts, and special use facilities contribute to the overall quality of life and are important components of an overall park system, the ratio of neighborhood and community parks per 1,000 residents are the most important classifications. They are the park types that provide the everyday amenities that residents use and need access to for recreation and community programming.

Wasco's existing ratio for neighborhood parks is .27 acres per 1,000 residents and 1.99 acres per 1,000 residents for community parks. The recommended standard and goal for the City's General Plan and Municipal Code is 2.5 acres per 1,000 residents for neighborhood parks and 3 acres per 1,000 for community parks.

The neighborhood and community parks deficits in Wasco have contributed to the overuse of existing facilities. This overuse has led to the accelerated deterioration of these facilities along with increased maintenance costs, and ultimately an increase in deferred maintenance items when financial resources cannot keep up with maintenance requirements. Eventually, this cycle leads to community complaints about scheduling and a lack of access to needed facilities and programs.

There are two strategic actions the City and Park District can take to address park deficits. The first requires increasing the capacity of existing parks and facilities by upgrading, improving and expanding these parks. Current park capacity can also be increased through new agreements with the school districts and other potential partners that will provide expanded facility access to current residents for recreational programming.

The second way to address the park deficits is to develop new neighborhood and community parks that increase the size and scope of the overall park system. This can be achieved by adopting local park ordinances requiring parkland dedication and development impact fees. These will help the City and Park District acquire the land and funding needed to develop new neighborhood and community parks.

The following are goals and recommendations for pursuing these strategic actions.

Goal 1: Provide a system of park classifications and amenity requirements for future parks that serve their intended purpose

Recommendation: Adopt the recommended Parkland Classification Standards.

To insure future parks in Wasco are the proper size and contain the appropriate amenities for their intended purpose, the following park classifications (first presented in Part II - Chapter 5: Parkland Needs Analysis) are recommended for adoption. These classifications include recommended size guidelines and service radiuses for each park type.

Mini-Parks

Mini-parks, also known as pocket-parks, are small lots designed primarily for small child use or as an oasis to break up densely populated areas. They may also be green space areas providing a buffer between residential and commercial areas, or a small park adjacent to a school where joint use is desired. They are typically 2.5 acres or less and may include limited facilities such as open grass area, a children’s playground, park benches, and/or a small picnic area. The service area is typically one-quarter mile. Mini parks normally should not be counted in meeting developer parkland dedication requirements, but could be accepted as parkland donations or meeting open space requirements if a retention basin, buffer area, or greenbelt would serve and benefit the intended residential development.

GUIDELINES FOR WASCO POCKET (MINI) PARKS

Typical Size: 0.5-2.5 acres

Minimum Recommended Amenities & Facilities

- Security Lighting
- Small turf and landscaped area
- Walking access via local neighborhood
- Signage to identify the park and post any rules necessary for use
- Seating Benches or seating wall

- Children's Play Area with equipment amenities for ages 3 to 6
- Trash Receptacles

Optional Amenities and Facilities

- Family Picnic Area
- Bicycle Racks
- Drinking Fountain

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are intended for non-supervised, non-organized recreation activities. They are medium in size (2.5 to 5 acres) and serve people living within approximately one-half mile of the park. Neighborhood parks are intended for use by all members of the family and are located within walking and bicycling distance of most users. The typical activities and amenities they offer to serve the neighborhood include children's playgrounds, family picnic areas, walking paths, trees and grass for passive use, outdoor basketball/volleyball courts, and multi-use open grass areas for youth sports practice. Neighborhood parks may be accepted to meet developer required 2.5 acres per 1,000 residents parkland dedication, if the location and terrain can accommodate the following amenities.

GUIDELINES FOR WASCO NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Typical Size: 2.5 - 5 acres

Minimum Recommended Amenities and Facilities

- Perimeter walking paths with security lighting
- Open turf area for active recreation activities
- Landscaped areas
- Off-Street on-site parking, including ADA Stalls (If less than 300 linear feet of street frontage exists) 10 spaces per acre
- Signage for park identification and posting of use regulations
- Park Benches and/or seat walls
- Two children's play areas, one for 2-5 year olds and one for 5-12 year olds
- Two Family Picnic Areas
- Trash Receptacles
- Bicycle Racks
- Drinking Fountains

Optional Amenities and Facilities

- Basketball Court
- Sand or Grass Volleyball Court
- Spray pool feature
- Group picnic shelter for larger parties

Community Parks

A community park is intended to provide active and structured recreation opportunities for all ages. They are typically a minimum of 5 to 20 acres in size. They are intended to be driven to and thus contain off-street parking and restroom facilities. The service radius is three miles. Community parks can contain neighborhood park facilities and community type facilities, which may include sports playfields, tennis courts, swimming pools, community centers, children's play areas, group picnic facilities, and community event facilities. Community parks may be accepted to meet developer required 3 acres per 1,000 residents parkland dedication, if the location and terrain can accommodate the following types of amenities.

GUIDELINES FOR WASCO COMMUNITY PARKS

Typical Size: 5-20+ acres

Minimum Recommended Amenities and Facilities

- Perimeter walking paths with security lighting
- Open turf areas for active recreation activities
- Landscaped areas
- Signage for park identification and posting of use regulations
- Park Benches and/or seat walls
- Two children's play areas, one for 2-5 year olds and one for 5-12 year olds
- Minimum two (2) group picnic shelters
- Minimum three (3) individual small family picnic areas
- Restroom facilities
- Trash Receptacles
- Bicycle Racks
- Drinking Fountains
- Off-Street on-site parking, including ADA Stalls at a minimum of 10 spaces per acre (additional parking if optional special use facilities are included in the community park)

Optional Amenities and Facilities

- Lighted sports fields
- Band shell/stage area for concerts and community events
- Community Center
- Gymnasium
- Municipal Pool Complex
- Splash pad feature
- Special Use facilities (Skate Park, Dog Park, Community Garden, Amphitheater, etc.)

Regional Parks

Regional parks are large recreation areas (greater than 20 acres) designed to serve an entire region. By definition, a regional park is not the type of park which would be developed, owned or operated by a city or a local park district. For planning purpose, however, a park classification system to be complete and comprehensive should recognize all major park categories, including regional parks. Where such parks exist they will inevitably impact recreation patterns of local residents. As described later in Goal 6, it is recommended that the WRPD initiate discussions with the County of Kern to promote the development of a regional park. If a regional park were developed by the Kern County Parks and Recreation Department and located within the boundaries of the WRPD, it would also serve Wasco city residents.

Often regional parks are acquired to provide a specific and sometimes unique recreation opportunity such as an ecological, cultural or historical feature that attracts visitors from throughout the region. Regional parks may be composed of one large site or several sites located in proximity that together provide a significant recreation area for the region. These parks may be supported by a wide variety of specialized facilities such as indoor recreation centers, large group picnic areas, special event facilities/festival space, lakes and campgrounds. Regional parks are not normally acquired through park dedication requirements of residential development as they are not intended to serve neighborhood needs.

GUIDELINES FOR REGIONAL PARKS

Typical Size: Greater than 20 acres

Minimum Recommended Amenities and Facilities

- Walking/Hiking Trails
- Preservation of open space and natural elements
- Trash Receptacles
- Off-Street on-site parking, including ADA Stalls at a minimum of 5 spaces per acre (additional parking if optional special use facilities are included in the regional park)
- Signage for park identification and posting of use regulations
- View areas with seating
- Restroom facilities
- Drinking Fountains

Optional Amenities and Facilities

- Lakes for fishing/boating
- Large group picnic shelter
- Campground
- Nature Center or Activity Center

Greenbelts and Walkways

Greenbelts are corridors of land that connect parks and resources, providing public access to trails and their surrounding areas. These corridors may include developed or natural areas where the primary facility is a pathway or trail connecting community destinations or segments of the trail system. Greenbelts are important resources to the local community, and may have a larger draw as part of a complete trail system.

Walkways include all engineered surfaces or structures designed as passages or paths for walking along including: sidewalks, footbridges, stiles, stairs, ramps, tunnels and air bridges. They also provide important connections to parks and resources.

As later described in Goal 8 and presented in Figure 1.1, in conjunction with minor additions to the existing greenbelt, there are numerous opportunities to develop pedestrian walkways throughout Wasco.

GUIDELINES FOR NEW GREENBELTS IN WASCO

Typical Size: dependent on corridor length

Recommended Amenities and Facilities:

- Park identification sign
- Site furnishings
- Trail or pathway: Decomposed Granite Pathway or Concrete to City Standard - 8 feet wide
- Turf area - 25% coverage
- Groundcover and California Friendly Shrub Materials - 50% coverage
- Mulch area - 25% coverage
- Trees - 36 inch box
- Smart Irrigation Systems including automatic controller (central system control capabilities), flow sensors, master valve, drip irrigation systems, micro-sprays, sub-surface irrigation systems, weather station, and low precipitation irrigation heads
- Seating Areas
- Trash Receptacles

*Lighting would be provided as part of the street lighting system.

GUIDELINES FOR RENOVATION OF EXISTING GREENBELTS IN WASCO

Renovation of the existing greenbelts which would meet the low water use/sustainability standards and urban greening methodology and should include the following:

- Turf Area - 25% coverage
- Groundcover and California Friendly Shrub Materials - 50% coverage
- Mulch Area - 25% coverage

- Decomposed Granite Pathway or Concrete to City Standard- 8 feet wide
- Smart Irrigation Systems including automatic controller (central system control capabilities), flow sensors, master valve, drip irrigation systems, micro-sprays, sub-surface irrigation systems, weather station, and low precipitation irrigation heads
- Seating Areas

Optional Amenities and Facilities

- Shelter, shade structure or gazebo
- Trailhead or entry area
- Lighting
- Natural areas
- Trees
- Landscaped areas
- Interpretive signage
- Exercise/par course equipment

GUIDELINES FOR NEW WALKWAYS IN WASCO

- Permeable Pavers - 6 feet wide (from back of curb to back of walk)
- Concrete Paving - 6 feet wide (from back of curb to back of walk)
- Street Trees at 25 feet on-center
- Tree-Well Covers for the street trees (3 foot x 3 foot)
- Irrigation Systems for the street trees
- Way Finding Signage
- Steel Bollards - 4 at each corner - (8 total)
- Seating Areas - two per block
- Trash Receptacles - three per block

GUIDELINES FOR RENOVATION OF EXISTING WALKWAYS IN WASCO

The walkway easements are 6 feet wide plus 6 inches for top of curb totaling 6.5 feet wide. Any necessary new street curbs, curbs and gutters and street lighting are not included in these guidelines. The blocks are assumed to be 300 feet in length. The existing concrete will remain in place except for the areas that will be permeable pavers. For areas receiving new permeable pavers, the existing concrete will be saw cut and removed.

The guidelines for renovating existing walkways include:

- Permeable pavers - 6 feet wide (from back of curb to back of walk)
- Saw cutting and removal of concrete paving for new permeable pavers - 6 feet wide (from back of curb to back of walk)
- Street trees at 25 feet on-center - 4 new 24 inch box trees per block. Existing street trees will remain in place
- Tree-well covers for the street trees (3 foot x 3 foot)

- Irrigation systems for the new street trees - repair irrigation systems at existing street trees
- Way-Finding signage
- Steel bollards - 4 at each corner
- Seating areas - two per block
- Trash receptacles - three per block

Special Use Areas

Special use areas are defined as facilities that provide a specific recreational use. Special use areas in the local park system are facilities like sports fields, skate parks, dog parks, community centers, aquatic centers and rose gardens. They provide special interest or single function type amenities. Promoting the development of special use areas within a park system can meet specific needs and desires of local residents and enhance community life. Special use parks that have a community or regional draw may require supporting facilities such as parking or restrooms.

GUIDELINES FOR WASCO SPECIAL USE AREAS

Typical Size: dependent on special use

Minimum Recommended Amenities and Facilities

- Designated special use and necessary support facilities
- Park identification sign
- Site furnishings

Optional Amenities and Facilities

- Turf area
- Playground or play features
- Spray grounds
- Sports courts
- Parking
- Concessions or vendor space
- Commercial lease space (restaurant, bookstore, coffee shop, etc.
- Restroom
- Natural areas
- Landscaped areas
- Memorials
- Lighting
- Maintenance facilities
- Any resource or use that supports the primary special use

HAVING THESE GUIDELINES TO REFER TO WHEN MAKING DECISIONS ON LAND DEDICATION OR POSSIBLE ACQUISITION OF PARKLAND WILL INSURE THAT THE CITY AND PARK DISTRICT ACQUIRE PARKS THAT ARE ABLE TO SERVE THEIR INTENDED PURPOSE. IT WILL ALSO GIVE POTENTIAL DEVELOPERS THE PROPER GUIDELINES FOR DECIDING WHAT TYPES AND HOW LARGE THEIR PARK DEDICATION OR DEVELOPMENT NEEDS SHOULD BE TO SERVE THE COMMUNITIES THEY ARE DEVELOPING.

1.3 INCREASING EXISTING PARK CAPACITY AND ADDING ADDITIONAL PARKS

The community input process clearly identified the community's desire for improving existing parks and facilities. Adding amenities to existing parks and facilities would increase their capacity, allow WRPD to provide more programs, and increase community access and enjoyment.

Goal 2: Increase capacity of existing parks to meet user demand

Recommendation: In coordination with the Wasco Recreation and Park District promote the upgrading, facility improvement and the expansion of existing parks and facilities by pursuing the following types of capital improvements.

- Upgrade existing restrooms and add additional restrooms to existing parks
- Fix building and facility infrastructure (Roofs, floors, electrical, plumbing, etc.)
- Improve parking lots and entryways
- Add general park lighting and additional athletic field lighting
- Switch to artificial turf on high traffic multipurpose athletic fields
- Expand children's play areas
- Upgrade existing pool facilities and expand pool capacity
- Add walkways and pathways to perimeters of existing parks
- Reconfigure fields to allow them to serve multiple sports
- Upgrade and expand family picnic areas/shelters
- Add amenities to accommodate community events (band shell, stage, electrical outs, etc.)

Goal 3: Improve the operational capacity of existing City and WRPD parks and facilities by making improvements that address deferred maintenance issues and respond to public concerns

Recommendation: Make the following improvements to existing Wasco parks and facilities as funding permits:

The public outreach tools provided a priority list of improvements and deferred maintenance items for the City and Park District to address. Prioritizing these items will help to meet the community's expectations for efficient, clean, and safe parks and facilities.

BARKER PARK

MAINTENANCE OR DEFERRED MAINTENANCE IMPROVEMENTS

1. Repair/replace/upgrade pool locker and restrooms, including drains, plumbing, fixtures, lighting, etc.
2. Upgrade turf irrigation system with advanced technologies and software to manage water use responsibly to save money, prevent run off, and reduce utility costs, while continually enhancing park turf appearance and improving playability.
3. Repair the roof on Veteran's Hall
4. Reconstruct parking lots and entryways
5. Renovate worn turf areas

IMPROVEMENTS THAT BENEFIT PROGRAMMING AND RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES

1. Reconfigure and expand children's playground to provide a section for 2 to 5 year olds and a section for 5 to 12 year olds with safety surfacing, improved ADA access and themed play equipment
2. Replace trees that need replacing per tree policy and tree list contained in the master plan
3. General ADA access improvements to all areas of the park
4. Add a walking path around the perimeter of the park
5. Expand pool amenities to include a splash pool, fenced in picnic/event area
6. Add a community band shell/stage for concerts in the park
7. Add an area within the park to accommodate weddings, community socials, and special events which could be connected with Veterans Hall

RECREATION BALL PARK

MAINTENANCE OR DEFERRED MAINTENANCE IMPROVEMENTS:

1. Upgrade turf irrigation system with advanced technologies and software to manage water use, prevent run off, and reduce utility costs, while enhancing park turf appearance and improving playability
2. Renovate Little League field in the Southwest portion of the park to include a new backstop, covered dugouts, and baseline fencing
3. Install concrete beneath spectator seating at the Little League field located in the Southwest corner of the park
4. Add lighting to existing Little League field at southwest corner of park
5. Add two (2) group picnic areas with group shade shelters

IMPROVEMENTS THAT BENEFIT PROGRAMMING AND RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES

1. General ADA access improvements to all areas of the park
2. Continuation of the walking path on the south side of the park around the perimeter of the park
3. Reconfigure outfield of main diamond and west side of the park to a multipurpose lighted turf area that can accommodate multiple sports

ANNIN AVENUE PARK

(These items are recommended only if implementing a re-master planning of Annin Park as described in Goal 6 is not pursued)

MAINTENANCE OR DEFERRED MAINTENANCE IMPROVEMENTS:

1. Refurbish turf and irrigation system, upgrade turf irrigation system with advanced technologies and software to manage water use, prevent run off, and reduce utility costs, while enhancing park turf appearance and improving playability
2. Re-grade soccer fields to improve quality of play and install new turf as needed

IMPROVEMENTS THAT BENEFIT PROGRAMMING AND RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES

1. Add perimeter field lighting to entire complex
2. Add permanent restrooms to the site
3. Upgrade parking lots

WESTSIDE PARK**MAINTENANCE OR DEFERRED MAINTENANCE IMPROVEMENTS:**

1. Install self-contained solar lighting along the entire length of perimeter walkway
2. Retain the services of a certified California Arborist to evaluate all park trees for trimming, removal and/or new planting
3. Resurface and restripe parking areas
4. Upgrade turf irrigation system with advanced technologies and software to manage water use, prevent run off, and reduce utility costs, while enhancing park turf appearance and improving playability

IMPROVEMENTS THAT BENEFIT PROGRAMMING AND RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES

1. Add seating areas along the perimeter walkway at the children's play area
2. Add small shade shelters over the new seating along the walkway at the children's play area
3. Provide walkway systems from the public sidewalks to primary park elements including the softball fields, children's play area, and group picnic areas
4. Provide seating areas along existing walkway
5. Provide mileage/distance makers along walkway for walkers
6. Use existing topography to create amphitheater seating for a small concert in the park venue

CORMACK PARK**MAINTENANCE OR DEFERRED MAINTENANCE IMPROVEMENTS:**

1. Retain the services of a certified California Arborist to evaluate all park trees for trimming or removal and new planting
2. Renovate turf in park
3. Install new infield mix at softball fields

IMPROVEMENTS THAT BENEFIT PROGRAMMING AND RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES

1. Install individual picnic shelters over the picnic tables
2. Install shelters over existing group picnic areas with lighting
3. Install covered dugouts and new backstops at two (2) existing softball fields
4. Install concrete pads beneath existing bleacher systems at existing softball fields
5. Install score boards at existing softball fields
6. Install field lighting at the existing softball fields

7. Create a more prominent Cormack Park monument surrounded by trees and seating areas
8. Provide walkway systems from the public sidewalks to primary park elements including the softball fields, children's play area, and group picnic areas
9. Provide seating areas along existing walkway
10. Provide mileage/distance makers along walkway for walkers

SKATE PARK

(These items should only be done if the recommendation for a concessioner in Goal 21 is not pursued)

MAINTENANCE OR DEFERRED MAINTENANCE IMPROVEMENTS:

1. Replace perimeter fencing and gates with more vandal resistant design
2. Repair and add additional signage on rules for use of facility

IMPROVEMENTS THAT BENEFIT PROGRAMMING AND RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES:

1. Install modular or permanent restrooms
2. Add additional shade structure for spectators

SOUTH GATE (15TH STREET) PARK

MAINTENANCE OR DEFERRED MAINTENANCE IMPROVEMENTS:

1. Upgrade irrigation system with advanced technologies and software to manage water use, prevent run off, and reduce utility costs, while enhancing park turf appearance and improving playability
2. Plant new turf along southern edge of park

IMPROVEMENTS THAT BENEFIT PROGRAMMING AND RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES:

1. Remove existing steel pole bollards from along back edge of public sidewalk and replace with decorative fencing and gateless entry
2. Re-stripe basket court
3. Add new drinking fountains in the park
4. Add security lighting in the park
5. Reconfigure and expand children's playground section for 2 to 5 year olds including: safety surfacing, improved ADA access, themed play equipment, and water play feature
6. Add fencing along the northern edge of the park area to provide a buffer to the existing alley
7. Provide new lighting for basketball court
8. Consider two options for the existing rest room building:
Option 1: If the neighborhood would like to expand the children's

play area, the building could be removed to make room for the expansion. Southgate Park is a mini neighborhood park and normally such parks do not have restrooms, as they primarily serve a neighborhood use and residents can go home to use their own facilities.

Option 2: If the neighborhood wants to keep a restroom in the park, then the rest room should be renovated or replaced with an energy efficient, vandal resistant rest room to serve the users.

7TH STREET PARK

MAINTENANCE OR DEFERRED MAINTENANCE IMPROVEMENTS:

1. Upgrade turf irrigation system with advanced technologies and software to manage water use, prevent run off, and reduce utility costs, while enhancing park turf appearance and improving playability
2. Install concrete pads beneath the four (4) existing picnic tables

IMPROVEMENTS THAT BENEFIT PROGRAMMING AND RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES:

1. Add three (3) more picnic tables with concrete pads
2. Install three (3) individual picnic shelters over the picnic tables
3. Install barbeques at four (4) existing and three (3) new picnic table areas
4. Add decorative split rail fencing along F Street

PECAN PARK

MAINTENANCE OR DEFERRED MAINTENANCE IMPROVEMENTS:

1. Upgrade turf irrigation system with advanced technologies and software to manage water use, prevent run off, and reduce utility costs, while enhancing park turf appearance and improving playability
2. Install concrete pads beneath the three (3) existing picnic tables
3. Add trash receptacles in the park
4. Renovate turf

B. IMPROVEMENTS THAT BENEFIT PROGRAMMING AND RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES:

1. Plant three (3) large canopy shade trees
2. Add two (2) sand volleyball courts in the park
3. Add more security lighting (solar lighting)

GREEN BELT AND WALKWAY IMPROVEMENTS

Greenbelts and walkways constitute another important element of a parks and recreation system. Currently, Wasco has one green belt along Filburn Avenue between Galston Street and Beckes Street. In addition, there is a walkway located along 7th Street in downtown Wasco between G Street (near the Amtrak Station) and Griffith Avenue. This single green belt and walkway are too limited in their reach to provide the level of pedestrian connectivity desired by residents in Wasco. The capacity of the green belt and walkway system can best be improved by developing a more extensive network of these links throughout the city, as described later in Goal 8 as part of section 15.8.

The guidelines for greenbelts and walkways presented earlier in Goal 1, as part of section 15.2, should be applied to these two existing pathways to ensure they are consistent in both appearance and function with any new greenbelts or walkways constructed in Wasco. The existing walkway along 7th street between Broadway and G Street served as the basic model for these proposed design improvements. However, that is not the case for the more western section of 7th Street between Griffith and Broadway. The recommended improvements to the existing greenbelt on Filburn Avenue and the existing walkway along 7th Street between Broadway and G Street are both included in a comprehensive list of recommended greenbelts and walkways presented later in Goal 8.

Goal 4: Adopt a long term strategy to acquire and develop neighborhood and community parks in the defined gap areas per the ½ mile service area analysis map (Figure 2-5.2) to works towards attaining the General Plan goal of 6 acres of combined parkland per 1,000 residents.

Recommendation: Coordinate with WRPD to pursue the following strategies and policies to progress towards meeting the recommended 6 acres per 1,000 residents combined park standard in the City's General Plan

- Acquisition of neighborhood parkland in defined gap areas through parkland dedication and in-lieu fee ordinances, grants and land donations
- Adopt a Community Park Development Impact fee requiring new developments to contribute to the cost of providing community facilities (See Part II - Chapter Two: Funding Strategies and CIP, for implementation strategies)
- Work with the WRPD to promote the purchase and development of infill lots for mini parks in densely populated areas of the city
- Include neighborhood park amenities in the future design and development of community parks
- The WRPD can partner with Kern County for development of a future regional park with neighborhood park amenities in the undeveloped unincorporated areas of the District.
- Give residents in the underserved areas the opportunity to consider the formation of a neighborhood park assessment if they want a neighborhood park in their area
- Ensure that land dedicated for park purposes meets the park standards described previously
- Consider development of neighborhood parks adjacent to schools to maximize open space and share facilities
- Consider acquisition of school sites for park purposes if they are declared surplus by a school district by the use of the Naylor Act in acquiring one or more of surplus school sites for 25% of their appraised value
- Explore the idea of setting up Beneficiary Land Trusts, whereby people can donate land for park purposes to the City or WRPD in exchange for tax benefits and naming rights when they pass away

Goal 5: Pursue the development of a new community park containing the types of facilities and amenities the community identified would meet future demand for recreation in Wasco

Recommendation: In planning for future recreation needs of the community, pursue the development of a new community park that would contain a multipurpose community center, gymnasium, aquatic center, and sports complex.

While it is practical for the Park District to take a leadership role in providing new park and recreation facilities in Wasco, it is not practical to think the Park District alone can fund, develop and maintain all of the facilities the community desires.

With its limited resources the WRPD's strategy should be to focus its efforts on upgrading existing parks and increasing their capacity for programming, while coordinating the development of other desired park types and recreational facilities with its partner agencies, including the City of Wasco and the County of Kern Parks and Recreation Department. This approach will enable the City of Wasco to focus on providing greenbelt corridors and other special interest facilities, like historical places of interest, while the WRPD concentrates on upgrading and maintaining existing parks and facilities. Both the WRPD and the City of Wasco should coordinate efforts to involve the County, and possibly the State, in pursuing a regional park for the Wasco area.

The new facility development recommendations for WRPD and the City to pursue include:

1. A new "Multi-Use Community Park"

A new multi-use, community park, and specific components located within the park, were requested throughout the public outreach process. Currently available sports fields are operating at capacity and other facilities such as the pool complex and Veteran's Hall are either limited in availability or do not have sufficient space to meet programming demands. It is recommended that the Park District take the lead, supported by the City, in pursuing the development of a large multi-use community park. This park would be designed around a new multi-purpose community center with space for youth, teen and senior programs. In addition, the park would contain lighted sports fields, a pool

complex, a gymnasium, outdoor basketball and sand volleyball courts, an amphitheater/events area, a tot lot, a spray pool, walking paths, picnic shelters, and support amenities. It could also include a new Park District/City Hall office complex and Council/Park Board auditorium that could double as a community auditorium. The project can be phased with each of the recommended amenities to be developed as funding is secured. A description of each component of the new multipurpose master planned community park is as follows:

MULTIPURPOSE COMMUNITY CENTER

A new community center located within the new community park to provide the following elements and functions:

- Activity and studio space for fee based enrichment classes, clubs and organizational activities, pre-school/toddler programs, teen programs, and senior programs.

SPORTS FIELDS

Sports fields within the community park should accommodate:

- 4 multi-age group softball fields, 2 large soccer fields, 2 medium soccer/lacrosse fields and 4 small soccer fields. This would provide enough multipurpose field space to attract regional tournaments for soccer, lacrosse, flag football, field hockey, dog shows and other events in need of a large open space.

POOL COMPLEX

The strategy for development of a new pool complex within a new community park should be approached as a joint project between the WRPD and the Wasco Unified High School District, with possible participation from County of Kern and the Wasco Tiger Sharks Competitive Swim Team. The proposed complex should consist of:

- Indoor and outdoor pools to provide for year-round competitive swim and recreational swim programs.
- The outdoor pool should include water slides and play amenities to serve summer residents and visitors and to generate revenue that will pay for the facility.

EVENT FACILITY

The new community park should be designed for a future events facility that includes:

- An amphitheater for community concerts in the park, summer performing arts performances, themed festivals and commercial events to generate revenue to pay for the community park operations.

GYMNASIUM & FITNESS CENTER

A multiuse gymnasium large enough to accommodate:

- Basketball courts and volleyball courts
- Indoor soccer, badminton and other team and family sports
- A fitness center with equipment and exercise space
- Locker rooms, restrooms, showers and sufficient storage space
- Children's playrooms for gymnastics, dance and children's party rentals

CITY AND PARK DISTRICT OFFICES AND COUNCIL/BOARD/COMMUNITY AUDITORIUM

Including a new civic center component in the new community park would be an option that would benefit both the City and the Park District, as well as the community. The current office space for the City and Park District is inadequate and both agencies need more efficient space for their operations. If enough land were available the community park could include: Park District offices, City Hall offices and a multipurpose auditorium that could host City Council, various City Commissions, and Park District Board and committee meetings. Designed appropriately, the auditorium could also be available for rent to organizations and community groups for community meetings and community performing arts productions. A 200 seat split-level auditorium should meet the needs described above.

2. Potential Locations and Development Options:

First Option: Acquire property in either the southern (Option IA) or northwest (Option IB) area of the city and develop a new community park (Figures 3-1.1 and 3-1.2).

The southern area of the city is already at a population density where it could benefit from a new community park. The northwest area of the city is currently developing, and will need community park space in the future. Since it is highly unlikely the WRPD and City will be able to fund, develop, and operate two new community parks, a choice between the two areas will have to be made.

The deciding factor will be which area the Park District and City can most affordably acquire 15 to 25 acres of land to build a new community park. Whichever area is chosen, the remaining area should receive neighborhood parks as shown.

Second Option: Demolition and Redevelopment of Barker Park and Recreation Ball Park (Figure 3-1.3).

Barker Park and the adjacent Recreation Ball Park are centrally located within the city and easily accessible from all areas of the city. Both properties have

been developed over the last 60 years with no specific master planning effort. The facilities were built because the community had a need for them. Several park amenities have come and gone, including a former rose garden. Currently the park space is heavily but inefficiently used. Between the two sites there are almost 18 acres that could be redesigned and master planned to accommodate the recommended amenities for a new community park in Wasco.

There will certainly be issues of historical preservation and community impacts, but the advantage to this option is that the land for a new community does not have to be acquired, thus significantly reducing the total cost of developing the desired amenities. Another advantage is that the new amenities can be smart designed to conserve energy and resources and to resolve water retention and run off and to decrease maintenance costs.

The remaining area should receive neighborhood parks as shown.

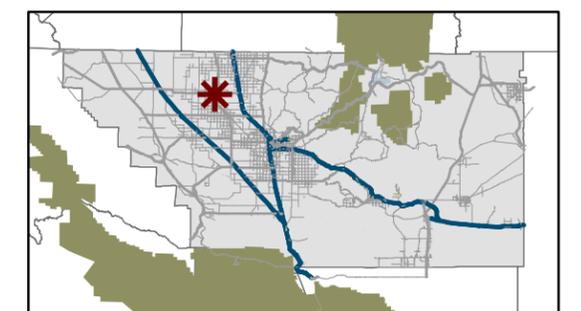
Projected costs and funding strategies for both options are presented in Part III - Chapter 2: Funding Strategies and CIP.

- Schools
- City Parks
- Wasco Recreation and Park District Parks
- Greenbelts (City maintained)
- Walking Paths (City maintained)

Proposed Parks - Option IA

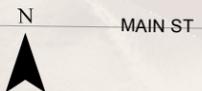
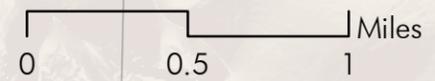
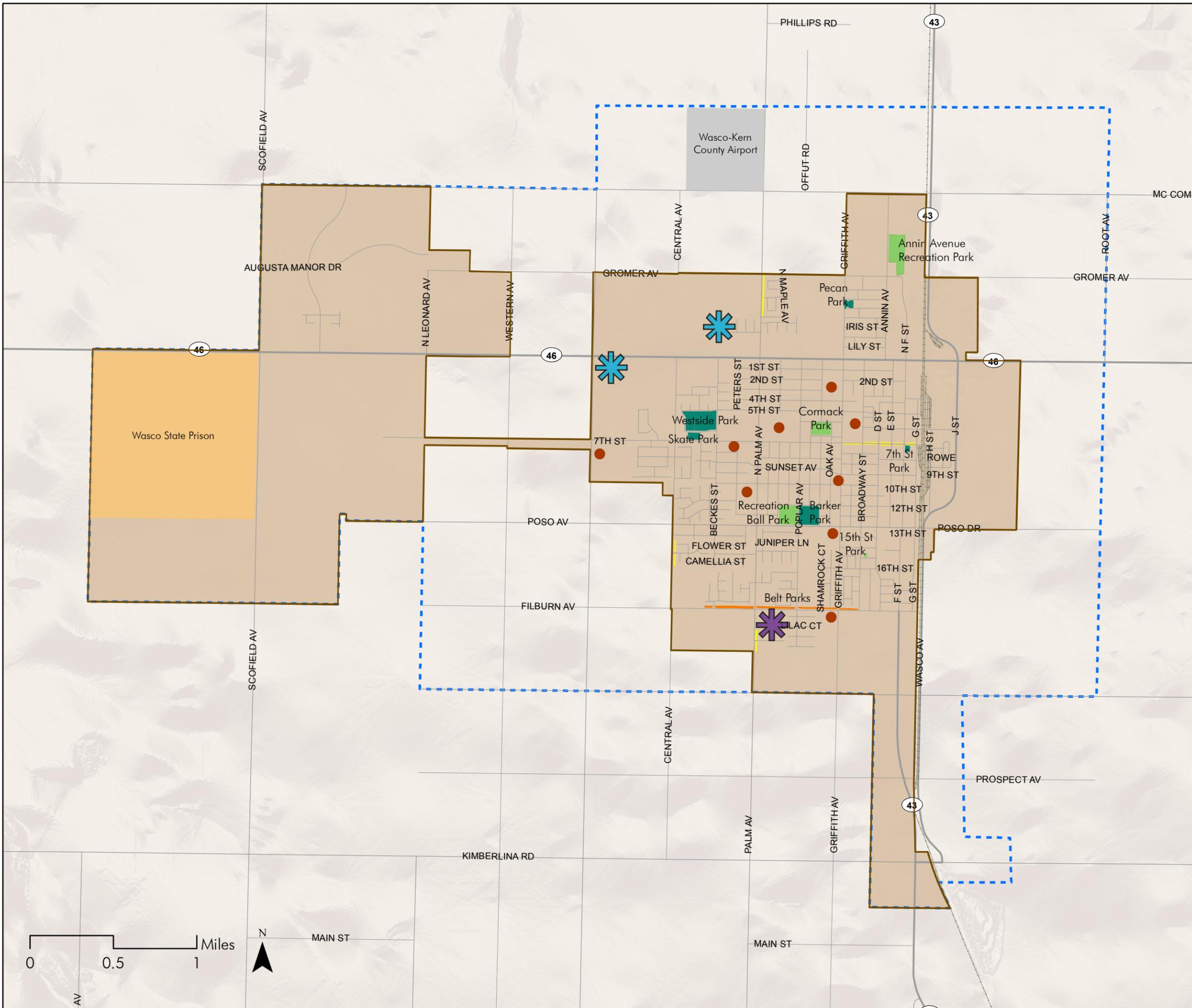
- ✱ Option IA for future Community Park
- ✱ Option IA for future Neighborhood Parks

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



Key Map N.T.S.

Figure 3-1.1 Proposed Parks Option IA

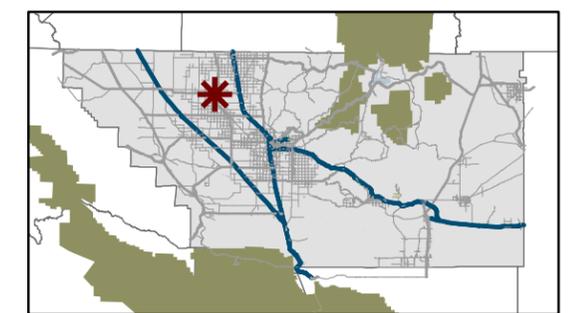


- Schools
- City Parks
- Wasco Recreation and Park District Parks
- Greenbelts (City maintained)
- Walking Paths (City maintained)

Proposed Parks - Option IB

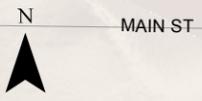
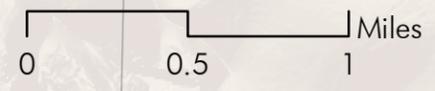
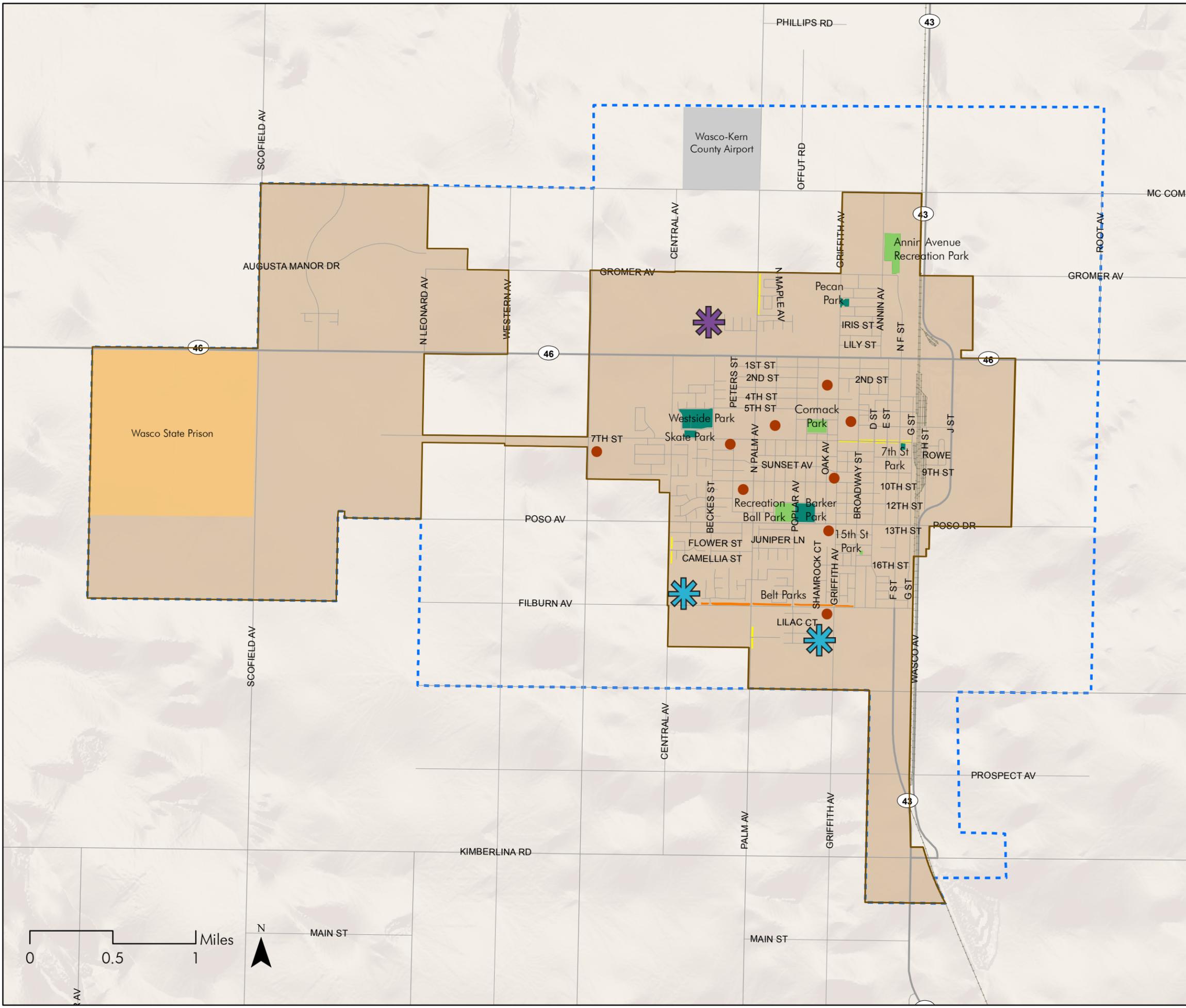
- ✱ Option IB for future Community Park
- ✱ Option IB for future Neighborhood Parks

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



Key Map N.T.S.

Figure 3-1.2 Proposed Parks Option IB

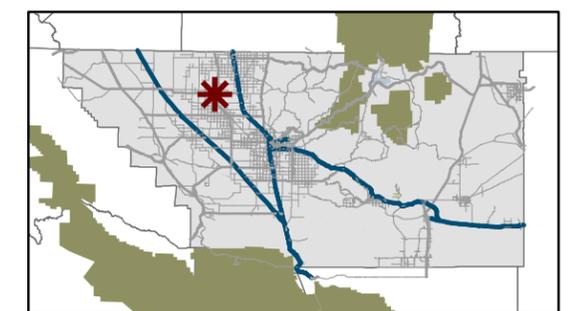


- Schools
- City Parks
- Wasco Recreation and Park District Parks
- Greenbelts (City maintained)
- Walking Paths (City maintained)

Proposed Parks - Option II

- ✱ Proposed Option II for future Neighborhood Parks
- ✱ Proposed Option II for a Community Park

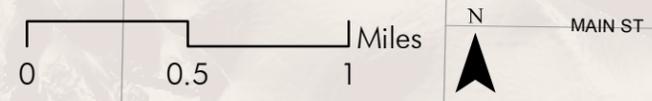
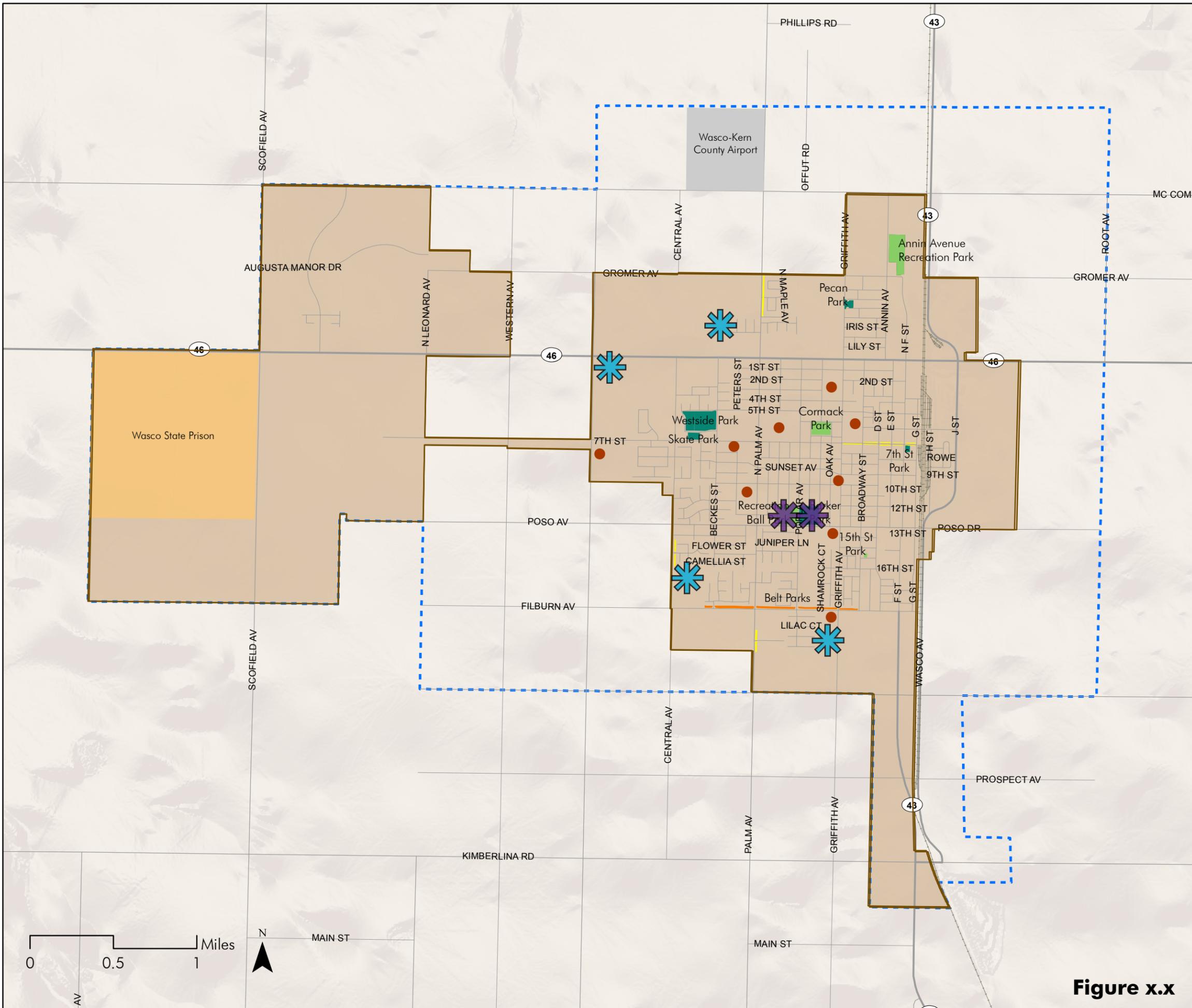
Note: This map is for illustrative purposes only. The actual locations of the proposed parks have not been determined.



Key Map N.T.S.

Figure 3-1.3
Option II

Figure x.x



Goal 6: Pursue development of a new Kern County Regional Park within the boundaries of the Wasco Recreation and Park District

Recommendation: WRPD should take the lead, with support from the City and community organizations, in designating a site or area and conceptually master plan a regional park that would provide the outdoor adventures, hiking trails, natural areas, interpretative center, and possible other destination amenities desired by the greater Wasco community to use to entice and negotiate with the County of Kern to develop a County Regional Park within the WRPD boundary.

The nearest County Regional Park to Wasco is in Delano. The public outreach results indicated a strong desire from the community for more local opportunities for outdoor adventures, hiking, nature areas and interpretative programs. To interest the County in developing a Regional Park within the boundaries of WRPD it will take an organized political effort by WRPD, the City, and community groups and organizations working with the County Supervisor's office and Kern County Parks and Recreation Department. It will also require a local commitment of either land or funding and in-kind services by the WRPD and City to bring the County to the negotiating table. Prior to approaching the County, the Park District and City should formulate a strategy and develop a conceptual plan for the type of Regional Park they would like to see developed within WRPD.

If there is a consensus of local agencies, an area or site identified, and a concept of what type of Regional Park is needed; then a specific request can be presented to the County for them to put on their future Regional Park Development Capital Improvement Program. Once the County agrees a Regional Park is needed within the WRPD boundaries, then a funding campaign and political strategy can be initiated to make the project a reality.

Goal 7: Meet current and future sports fields demand by better utilization of the Annin Avenue Soccer Park

Recommendation: Pursue the re-master planning of the Annin Avenue Soccer Park to change it from single use type natural turf soccer fields to multi-size multipurpose artificial turf lighted soccer fields.

The Annin Avenue Soccer Park property has recently been deeded to the Park District from the City. It is the major soccer facility in the Park District. The site is developed with natural turf soccer fields and permanent soccer goals. Field configurations have been set up to accommodate the various age youth soccer programs operated at the site. Adult soccer programs have also started using the site. There are portable restrooms and the parking lots are gravel lots. There are no lights on the fields.

There is a need to make the most efficient use of the space in order to extend the capacity for youth and adult soccer programming. On a year-round basis, it is important to accommodate recreation and competitive soccer as well as summer soccer camps. The space could also be configured to host community events and regional tournaments. It is recommended that the Park District coordinate with the City to pursue a new master plan for the property that would include:

- Installation of artificial turf with perimeter lighting of the entire site to game lighting standards
- Use of portable soccer goals that can be reconfigured as different age groups use the fields
- A permanent restroom and concession building
- A group picnic shelter on a concrete pad with a concrete stage area
- A tot lot and children's play area
- Perimeter fencing and controlled access to the site
- A pervious turf block parking lot to capture run off from the artificial turf fields
- Improved access to the site along Annin Avenue and crossing Hwy 46 to make it safer for bicycles and autos coming from areas south of Hwy 46.

Projected costs, development, and funding strategies are presented in Part III - Chapter 2: Funding Strategies and CIP.

1.4 ADDRESSING URBAN GREENING, CONSERVATION AND CONNECTIVITY

Urban Greening is the term used to describe the enhancement of open space and recreation programming in order to create opportunities for a greener and more environmentally sustainable city. Strategies for accomplishing this include: increasing connectivity, creating green places to enjoy, improving parks and greenways, identifying new avenues for people to interact in outdoor environments, and encouraging non-motorized travel via trails and bikeways.

Goal 8: Expand and Improve Multi-use Trails Systems

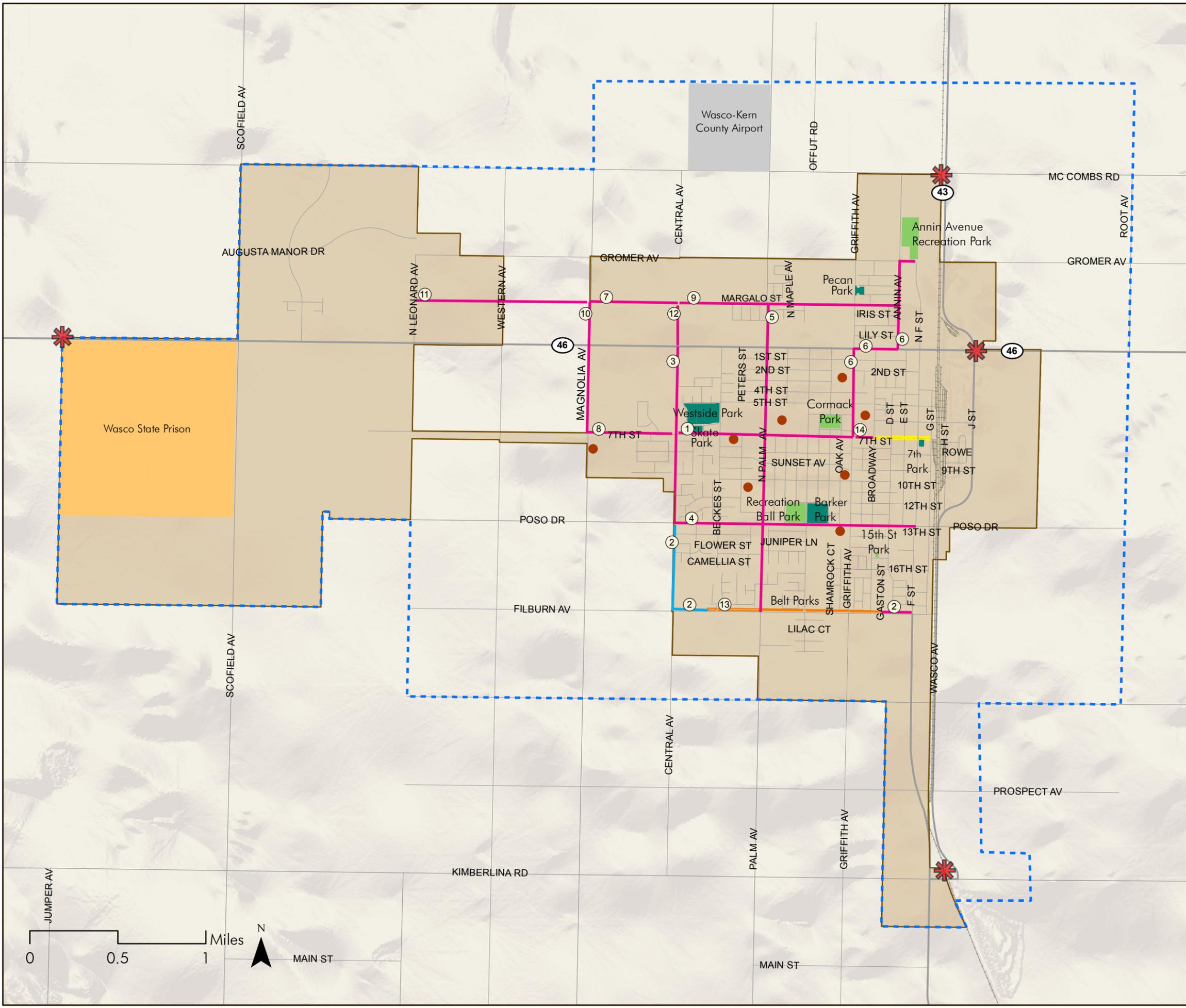
Recommendation: Add more walking, hiking and biking trail opportunities.

One of the priorities identified in the community workshops was to add more walking, hiking and biking trail opportunities. A comprehensive multi-use trail system provides more than just recreational opportunities; it provides valuable links to civic, retail and educational destinations. These important connections, in combination with the environmental benefits of decreased vehicle use due to increased alternative forms of transportation, are all significant components of Urban Greening. Providing landscaping alongside appropriate stretches of bikeways and trails can also be an important contributor to greening the urban environment. Plants and trees enhance the aesthetics of the trail system and contribute to greater usage by pedestrians and bicycle riders. Landscaping provides shade and shelter and often equates to a more positive association with the route and surrounding community.

The environmental impacts of decreased vehicle use due to increased walking, hiking and biking are measurable benefits to the community. An expanded trail network also has economic development potential. It offers visitors a compelling reason to extend their visits by providing an accessible way to explore the features that exist within and around the community. It is recommended that a Greenbelts and Trails Map be developed by the City and implemented in partnership with the WRPD. This Map can be included in both City's General Plan and the WRPD's Park & Recreation Master Plan, or it can be created as a standalone document.

As described previously in this chapter, the City can undertake efforts to renovate its existing greenbelt along Filburn Avenue and the walkway along 7th Street. There are also priority locations for the development of new greenbelts and corridors which will provide key connections not only to the parks throughout the city but also to key civic, retail and educational destinations. The following is a list of recommended new greenbelts and walkways that are presented in priority order as determined by the Project Team. These greenbelt and walkway recommendations are also presented in figure 3-1.4 Connectivity Plan: Greenways and Walkways at the end of this chapter. The connectivity benefits of this expanded network of greenbelts and walkways can be further realized if developed in relation to the new bikeways proposed in the recently completed City of Wasco Bicycle Master Plan.

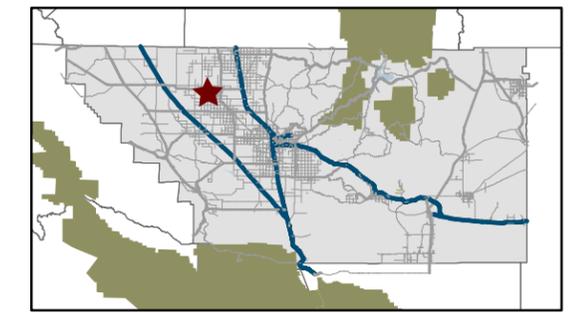
1. 7th Street between Griffith and Central - 5,263 L.F. of walkway (.99 of a mile)
2. (a) Filburn between F Street to Gaston Street - 865 L.F. of greenbelt (.16 of a mile), (b) Filburn between Central and just west of Beckes - 180 L.F. of greenbelt (.03 of a mile) and 485 L.F. of greenbelt (.13 of a mile), (c) north of Central between Filburn and Poso - 890 L.F. of greenbelt (.17 of a mile)
3. Central between Poso Drive and Hwy 46 - 5,265 L.F. of walkway (1.0 of a mile)
4. Poso Drive between F Street and Central - 7,260 L.F. of walkway (1.4 of a mile)
5. Palm between Filburn and Margalo - 9,230 L.F. of walkway (.76 of a mile)
6. (a) Griffith between 7th Street and Hwy 46 - 2,666 L.F. of walkway (.51 of a mile), (b) Hwy 46 between Griffith and Annin - 1,345 L.F. of walkway (.26 of a mile), (c) Annin Ave between Hwy 46 and Annin Avenue Recreation Park - 3,200 L.F. of walkway (.61 of a mile)
7. Margalo between Magnolia and Central - 2,640 L.F. of walkway (.50 of a mile)
8. 7th Street between Central and Magnolia - 2,630 L.F. of walkway (.50 of a mile)
9. a) Margalo between Central to Annin - 5,292 L.F. of walkway (1 mile), (b), 1,318 L.F. of walkway (.25 of a mile)
10. Magnolia between 7th St and Margalo - 3,925 L.F. of walkway (.74 of a mile)
11. Margalo between Magnolia and Leonard - 5,265 L.F. of walkway (.98 of a mile)
12. Central between Hwy 46 and Margalo - 1,260 L.F. of walkway
13. Filburn Avenue between Galston Street and Beckes Street - 5,000 linear feet of existing greenbelt improvements
14. 7th Street between Griffith and Broadway, including both the north and south sides of the street (for a total of 1,300 of linear feet of improvements to existing walkway)



- Sphere Of Influence
- School
- City Park
- District Park
- Airport

Connectivity Symbols Legend:

- Existing Greenbelts
- Proposed Greenbelts
- Existing Walkway
- Proposed Walkway
- ✱ Proposed Gateway
- # Priority Projects (Goal 8)



Key Map N.T.S.

**Figure 3-1.4 Connectivity Plan:
Greenways and Walkways**

Goal 9: Seek to implement Community Urban Greening projects

Given the limited resources of the City and Park District to implement Community Urban Greening projects, the approach should be to accomplish simple projects in the short term that provide a basis for more involved urban greening projects in the future. Short-term project goals should include the implementation of programs that involve community residents in a volunteer capacity and result in increasing the number of trees in the community and the amount of healthy food available to residents. Trees provide many benefits to the community including: decreased energy use in neighboring buildings, decreased flooding from stormwater runoff, absorption of carbon dioxide, production of life-sustaining oxygen, and reduced water use of understory lawns and shrubs.

Creating opportunities for small-scale urban gardening and agriculture can also benefit the residents of Wasco in many ways. Small-scale growing is often healthier for the environment and humans, as small farms and gardens tend to use fewer chemicals. The products of community gardens and farms are easily accessible to neighboring residents and these sites can provide opportunities for learning and sharing knowledge.

Community urban greening projects that result in more trees being planted and maintained in Wasco and more families learning to grow their own healthy food will significantly increase the quality of life for Wasco residents and promote healthy lifestyles for future generations.

The following recommended urban greening projects should accomplish these goals in Wasco and are projects that are within the ability of the City and Park District to implement. Funding for these projects is discussed in the next chapter.

SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

ARBOR DAY TREE PLANTING

It has been over 135 years since J. Sterling Morton founded Arbor Day. His simple idea of setting aside a special day for tree planting is now more important than ever. The City and Park District can get ideas on how to celebrate Arbor Day in Wasco through the National Arbor Day Foundation.

The Arbor Day Guidebook from the National Arbor Day Foundation shows you a smorgasbord of possibilities. The city and Park district can pick and choose what makes sense for the Wasco community. The PDF version of the guide is available for free download at <http://www.arborday.org/arborday/celebrate.cfm>.

Some of their ideas include:

- Organize a beautification project in a public area
- Get people into action. Ask a civic or service group to promote a paper drive to gather paper to be recycled and save a tree. Use the proceeds to buy a special tree to plant in a park or other special public place
- Hold a poster contest, or a poetry contest
- Sponsor a children's pageant or play
- Fill the air with music. Have an Arbor Day concert of songs about trees, or with tree names in their titles
- Partner with a local nursery to sponsor a tree trivia contest. Give away trees to winners
- Conduct a tree search. Ask people to find large, unusual or historic trees in your community. Once the results are in, publish a map that highlights the winners, or hold a walk showcasing them
- Tell people to take a hike—a tree identification hike—and have girl scouts or boy scouts act as guides
- Dedicate a forest, or a tree, or a flower bed in a park, and make it an occasion to talk about stewardship
- Encourage neighborhood organizations to hold block parties and get their members to adopt and care for street trees in front of their homes. This Arbor Day event could lead to a "Neighborhood Tree Planting Program" in the long term.

Another short-term community urban greening project that could be implemented by the Park District as part of their lifestyle recreation and leisure activities programs is Home Gardening classes. As part of either the implementation of fee-based lifestyle classes or grant offered classes (depending on how this activity may be funded as explained in the next chapter) the Park District should include "Home Gardening" classes in its recreation and leisure program offerings. There is a large movement across the nation to promote home gardening for fun and healthy lifestyles.

The most successful programs are those that involve the whole family. Parent-child home gardening classes are also popular and have the added benefit of providing quality time between parent and child. Offering “How To” gardening classes builds self-esteem and provides a base of knowledge about food and gardening that can stay with a person throughout their life. Some people will prefer a backyard garden for growing vegetables and other items over a community garden program, so it is important to pursue offering both opportunities.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

The above recommended short-term urban greening projects could provide a basis for implementing more involved, longer-term urban greening projects such as:

COMMUNITY GARDENS

Community gardens foster the growth and distribution of fresh fruits, vegetables and flowers for rural and urban neighborhoods. In the early 1980s, community gardeners gathered to form an official organization: the American Community Gardening Association. This nonprofit organization provides educational resources, workshops and support to community gardeners across the United States.

Ever since the ACGA’s establishment, gardeners have continued to grow fresh foods in specially-designated areas of their communities. Community gardens serve as a centralized place for urban and rural gardeners to plant, maintain and harvest fresh foods and/or flowers. Depending on how the community sets up its garden, the space may include only vegetables, herbs or flowers, or it may accommodate a mixture of many different plant types. The garden may exist as one single plot or may be divided into individual plots per person or family.

Community gardens require planning prior to breaking ground. The City and Park District would have to recruit community members to form a program, secure a location(s) and then form various committees to oversee the project’s development and sustainability. For example, a finance committee ensures that the project receives enough funding from start to finish. This funding may derive from membership dues, donations, grants or a combination of various sources (Wasco’s relationship to major growers should be an advantage in getting seed money for such projects and the next chapter provides a list of sources for community garden grants). A children’s committee can work with the youth in the neighborhood and establish a section of the garden just

for children. Another committee may coordinate rotating shifts for watering, weeding, composting and harvesting throughout the growing season.

Membership in a community garden depends on how the planning committee establishes its rules. Individuals may simply “sign up,” or they may need to agree to a special contract that spells out the regulations of the garden. Some agreements may instruct members how often they need to tend to their plots or what pesticides, if any, they can and cannot use. Other regulations in a contract may address membership fees and interference with other community members’ plots.

The primary benefit of a community garden is the fresh food that it produces, with some communities implementing 100 percent organic gardening practices. Gardeners may tend to the produce for their own families or they might donate the entire harvest to local food banks, shelters and other nonprofit organizations. In addition to fresh foods, the garden itself beautifies neighborhoods and supports green living. Furthermore, the social interaction of children, adults, families and friends working in a garden helps to strengthen relationships within a community.

A community garden runs the possible risk of vandalism and theft, so location and security need to be considered when developing a program. Developing a volunteer community garden program in Wasco with two or three sites in different parts of the city will require the City and Park District to partner and coordinate efforts. The City should seek to provide the sites and the Park District should oversee the program. Getting grants and funding for the program will also have to be a coordinated effort.

NEIGHBORHOOD TREE PLANTING PROGRAM

Implementing a neighborhood tree planting program in Wasco would be a significant community urban greening project. Participants would be required to plant and water the trees. Residents would get to know their neighbors by working toward a common goal, thus building a stronger sense of community. In addition to increasing property values by up to 20%, studies have shown that trees can reduce crime rates, slow the speed of traffic on residential streets, dampen noise, reduce stress and promote a feeling of wellness.

How a Neighborhood Tree Planting Program would work:

- The City would establish a tree list per the recommended tree list in the master plan and budget for the purchase of trees for the program on an annual basis. Funding for the cost of the program is discussed in the next chapter.

- One person from a neighborhood area agrees to be the volunteer neighborhood coordinator and serves as the link between the City of Wasco and the participating group of residents.
- A group of 25 to 75 residents (addresses) must commit to plant the trees in the parkway and to water the trees after planting.
- The maximum number of addresses allowed to sign up for a single tree planting project should be 75 in order for the volunteer coordinator to be able to manage the program.
- It is the neighborhood’s responsibility to plant the trees or find volunteers if needed.
- Residents may rank their preferred tree(s) on the sign-up sheet. However, there is no guarantee that he or she will receive the preferred tree.
- A waiting list is in effect and tree planting projects are on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Once a neighborhood’s place on the waiting list is near the top, the City should arrange a date for the City to deliver the trees to a secure location (typically the neighborhood coordinator’s backyard).
- A week or two prior to delivery, the City would survey the participating neighborhood and mark optimal planting locations within the parkway, according to spacing and visibility requirements.
- The City should also hold tree planting classes, possibly through the Park District, to teach volunteers the proper way to plant the trees and care for them.
- The City would inspect the tree after planting and give a notice to correct any deficiencies if necessary.

Many cities across the United States have implemented volunteer neighborhood tree planting programs, contributing to a vast source of best practices and information on how to start and sustain them. The tree planting program would provide a large-scale contribution to urban greening in Wasco.

Goal 10 - Insure low impact public development by using “Green” building techniques

When planning and designing for new facilities and improving the existing facilities the City and Park District should be committed to incorporating as many energy saving technologies as possible to assist in water conservation, energy sustainability , reducing energy consumption and lower CO2 gas emissions.

The following are a list of the site planning techniques that should be utilized when building new facilities and doing existing improvements:

CONSIDER A VARIETY OF LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT (LID) PRACTICES FOR STORM WATER MANAGEMENT; INCLUDING ON SITE STORM WATER RECHARGE.

- Use of “Bio-retention-areas,” “Dual use storm drainage basins or swales”, and “Bio-swales” (or vegetated swales) to capture run-off water on site
- Use of tree box filters/planter boxes containing street trees to capture stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces.
- Use of sand filters to capture stormwater runoff from parking lots
- Use of permeable or “porous” paving
- Parking lot filter strips adjacent to impervious surfaces
- Use rain barrels or cisterns to capture runoff from rooftops
- Potential for a “Green Roof” on the recommended new community center.
- Underground storage of stormwater runoff

DEVELOP REGENERATIVE LANDSCAPES TO MAXIMIZE PLANT HEALTH

- Application of erosion and sediment control measures to protect soil from being removed by rainfall
- Protection of existing plants & trees
- Increase ecological health through careful choice of plants and introduce new plantings from diverse communities of plant species well adapted to the site
- The use of mulch in planted areas
- Water efficiencies through the grouping of plants with like water requirements
- Increased irrigation efficiencies through hydro zoning according to plant requirements and site microclimates, in addition to sensors to reduce over irrigation

APPLY BETTER SITE DESIGN TECHNIQUES TO PROMOTE ENERGY CONSERVATION AND EFFICIENCY.

- Building locations that take advantage of site options for natural light & solar access
- Building shape, thermal mass and window location to minimize excess energy consumption
- Utilization of recycled building materials
- Natural day lighting by use of windows and the production of on-site electricity through the use of solar window technologies

Goal 11 – Work to replace trees and plants within landscape areas with species that are compatible with the area environment, conserve water and require minimal maintenance.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS FOR TREE SELECTION AND PLANTING

For all new development and redevelopment projects, the following implementation process for replacing trees should be followed. It is recommended that tree species are selected from the Urban Greening Tree Palette. A list of all species included in the palette immediately follows this section. A detailed description including tree growth habits, planter size, height, growth rate, roots and soil preferences can be found in the Appendix.

Step 1. Define the aesthetic characteristics of the tree to be planted for each project. Take into consideration project/neighborhood theme, shade, color, size, flower, etc.

Step 2. Plan for utility undergrounding and street widening, along with the time frame for overhead vs undergrounding utilities if applicable. Utilize the tree palette to determine specie selection based on height at maturity.

Step 3. Review existing site conditions and consider design alterations for the spacing requirements above and below ground. In certain cases, increasing planting space will be necessary to allow larger trees to reach maturity. Consider other site characteristics and conditions that may influence specie choice such as type of traffic, adjacent structures and available water.

Step 4. Select specie based on design consideration and specie attributes.

Step 5. Have the appropriate City departments and/or consultants review plans for specie and site condition compatibility.

Step 6. Use standard planting specifications for newly planted trees. Where there are unique requirements, the appropriate City department or consultant should review the conditions and revise the planting specifications accordingly.

URBAN GREENING TREE PALETTE

The following is a list of tree species recommended for the Wasco area. This list is adapted from the City of Wasco Approved Street Trees, Parking Lot Shade Trees, and Park Site Trees.

<p>15 feet to 20 feet diameter trees</p> <p>Botanical Name</p> <p>COMMON NAME</p> <p>Acer palmatum JAPANESE MAPLE</p> <p>Cercis Canadensis EASTERN REDBUD</p> <p>Malus purpurea 'Eieyi' ELEY CRABAPPLE</p> <p>Podocarpus gracilior FERN PINE</p> <p>Pyrus kawakami EVERGREEN PEAR</p>	<p>30 feet to 35 feet diameter trees</p> <p>Botanical Name</p> <p>COMMON NAME</p> <p>Celtis sinensis CHINESE HACKBERRY</p> <p>Cinnamomum camphora CAMPHOR TREE</p> <p>Fraxinus o. 'Raywoodi' RAYWOOD ASH</p> <p>Gingko Biloba MAIDENHAIR TREE</p> <p>Magnolia grandiflora SOUTHERN MAGNOLIA</p> <p>Pistacia chinesis CHINESE PISTACHE</p> <p>Plantanus acerifolia LONDON PLANE TREE 'Columbia'</p> <p>Quercus lobata VALLEY OAK</p> <p>Quercus virginiana SOUTHERN LIVE OAK</p> <p>Ulmus sempervirens CHINESE EVERGREEN ELM</p> <p>Zelkova serrata SAWLEAF ZELKOVA</p>
<p>20 feet to 30 feet diameter trees</p> <p>Botanical Name</p> <p>COMMON NAME</p> <p>Koelreuteria paniculata GOLDEN RAIN TREE</p> <p>Pinus eldarica MONDELL PINE</p> <p>Pyrus c. 'Bradford' BRADFORD PEAR</p>	

1.5 BROADENING PROGRAM OFFERINGS

Recreation programs benefit individuals, families, businesses, neighborhoods and households of all income levels, cultures and abilities. In particular, they can have a major impact on community health and wellness. Effective recreation programs promote the constructive use of leisure time and a lifelong commitment to healthy lifestyles, personal development and a strong community.

Goal 12: Broaden Direct Programming and Help Facilitate Partner Program Offerings for all ages

Recommendation: Establish dedicated programs for youth and teens focusing on lifelong learning, creative and performing arts, social activities, mentoring and education enhancement, sports activities and movement/fitness.

Addressing the needs of youth, especially middle and high school ages, was a consistent theme throughout the public input process. Organized programs provide safe places for youth, reduce the incidents of juvenile crime, and encourage youth to engage in community life.

Wasco has a number of challenges in dealing with delivering services to youth. They include the fact that the youth population is spread out over a large area of the community and facilities are mainly centralized within the Wasco city limits. Moreover, the median income of families with youth and teens is in a range that provides very limited discretionary money to pursue recreational pursuits.

This age group is still considered at risk and one of the most important age groups to address in terms of programming and services. Promoting healthy lifestyles and positive experiences that create lifelong skills and self-esteem are important.

Here are some important strategies WRPD can use:

- Work closely with the educational community to monitor youth through the California Healthy Kids Surveys conducted every two years. Utilize data to align recreation programs to address any issues identified in this survey.
- Explore, expand and establish opportunities for youth to participate in the ongoing identification, development and delivery of programs, services and events
- Expand programming to provide targeted volunteer opportunities for this

age group to support the park system and gain experience and self-esteem through the feeling of accomplishment

- Strengthen existing or facilitate the development of a Park District youth employment program that utilizes teen interns in delivery of programs and supervision of facilities
- Pursue the creation of “alternative” sports programming that is of interest to youth in this age group. Examples noted in the community input process included soccer, box lacrosse, and commercial sports camps
- City planning officials should seek to propose commercial and retail developments that include venues where middle and high school teens like to connect with friends such as movie theatres and bowling centers, etc.
- Increase the contract class offerings for youth and teens in the area of creative arts, like singing, dancing, acting, media, film making, and music production classes

Goal 13: Address the Growing Demand for Senior Programs and Services

Recommendation: Seek to offer programs specifically geared toward the growing senior population

Technology, living independence, education, health, self- improvement, social interaction and environmental concerns will dominate what the senior population will desire in choosing activities to participate in and services they will need in the next decade.

“The New Retirement Survey” released in 2010 by Merrill Lynch focused on how baby boomers, who are quickly approaching retirement age, will have a noticeable impact on all aspects of senior living, including housing. In fact, because baby boomers will fundamentally reinvent retirement by living longer and remaining engaged and employed beyond age 65, the impact will influence all trends in senior programs, social services, and community activities. The survey describes the “turning point”: 76% of boomers intend to keep working and earning after retiring from their current job and even exploring entirely new careers.

This desire to continue working is motivated by earnings and by a desire for “continued mental stimulation and challenge which will motivate them to stay in the game.” This finding provides additional evidence of the need to provide programs specifically geared toward the growing senior population.

The 2011 Mather LifeWays survey shows the demand among seniors for wellness offerings, including classes and recreation, are projected to grow 52% by 2020. The 2011 Mather LifeWays survey also shows that seniors are paying more attention to environmental considerations and want to get involved in “green” activities, such as efforts to preserve the environment, tree-planting programs, and producing locally grown food in community gardens.

13% of Wasco residents are over the age of 55, and this percentage is expected to increase in the next decade, so WRPD will need to design its program offerings to meet the needs of its senior population if it wants to be successful in engaging the entire community in recreation and social programs.

During the master plan outreach process seniors who responded to the community survey said the programs they participated in most included walking their dog and community events.

Based on the data above, it is recommended that the WRPD look for ways to expand programs specifically geared towards seniors in the areas of health/fitness (exercise and fitness classes); technology (computer classes/phone classes); green activities (tree planting, volunteer park improvement projects, community garden); special events (cultural events, health fairs, concerts); and, more lifelong learning and self-help classes (book club, arts and crafts, stop smoking classes, weight loss classes, etc.).

1.6 IMPROVING COMMUNICATION AND CAPTURING COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Getting community residents involved in helping with City and Park District programs and capital projects is vital for building community support and establishing a positive community image and sense of place. Keeping the community informed of what programs are available to them and the status of development projects is also vital to building strong neighborhoods and satisfied residents.

Communicating with residents can be difficult. Busy schedules, lack of time, family commitments, and apathy about what’s going on in the community all play a part in why residents feel disenfranchised from community life. Getting people involved in community life so they want to be informed and communicating to them the information they need to know is the only way to truly build community spirit and take advantage of skills citizens bring to the community. The following goals and recommendations are designed to help the City and Park District accomplish this feat.

Goal 14: Seek ways to market and brand the “Wasco Image”

Recommendation: Use the following marketing and communication strategies to keep the community informed of the City’s and WRPD’s mission, programs, and facilities

Marketing WRPD programs and activities and informing the community of what is available to them should be a priority for staff and budget resources. In order for residents to take advantage of the great programs and healthy activities offered by the District and City, they first need to know what’s available to them.

Traditional methods of promoting programs and activities, such as news releases, flyers, posters, banners and activity guides are being replaced by social media connectivity. This is especially true when trying to reach youth. For example, it may be a better use of financial resources to spend on promoting the Districts web site, Facebook and Twitter accounts to keep the public informed, instead of spending advertising dollars on promoting individual programs and events with flyers and posters.

Consequently, the priorities for marketing and communication expenditures should be:

- To promote the City’s and WRPD’s facilities, programs and services
- To increase participation in programs and activities
- To discover new customers
- To build community awareness

When deciding how to spend advertising and marketing dollars, the Park District should make sure the vehicle used to advertise or market the Park District will accomplish one or more of these priorities.

The first step to effectively communicating recreation and park services is to identify the Park District’s target audience. This can be accomplished by maintaining a database of people who use WRPD programs and people who do not use the District’s facilities and programs. This becomes the basis for the communications plan.

Defining target markets for the facilities, programs and events WRPD and its partnering agencies provide and determining the best way to communicate to those markets is the next step in developing the communications plan.

Finally, the development and implementation of the plan should be a collaborative process, involving both the District and City staff. Collective feedback should be utilized to ensure that the above priorities for marketing and communication to the public are met.

General strategies for a communications and promotion plan include:

- Encouraging innovative marketing activities that keeps traditional patrons engaged and attracts new ones
- Encouraging WRPD to develop a website and online activity registration program which could be funded by selling ads on the web site to local non-profits, community organizations, and commercial businesses. There are companies who will manage a web site and online registration for WRPD for a percentage of the ad revenue. Coordination between the City, community non-profits, and local service clubs to inform the community about WRPD program information
- Developing a relationship with the local media including newspapers, blogs, websites, radio, and television to do public service announcements and editorials informing the public of WRPD activities available to them
- Seeking opportunities to communicate with and reach youth through local schools and social networking sites
- Using databases to send digital newsletters to all registered participants and those patrons who have provided email addresses on weekly happenings in the WRPD
- Regularly update capital project status, introduce and give background information on staff and contract instructors, and post actions of the City Council and WRPD's Board on the websites of both the city and WRPD
- Use direct mail postcard questionnaires and surveys on a regular basis to ask program participants and the community which programs and activities they would like to see offered through the WRPD and what park improvements would get them to use WRPD facilities

Developing a brand and an image is a major initiative and requires that the City and Park District consistently deliver on the brand at all points of contact. Developing the Wasco brand and image will require an integrated marketing strategy and coordination between the City and WRPD. The City has already created its own logo as the primary marketing brand for advertising throughout the community. The Park District should create its own logo that is complementary to the City's. The two logos could then be used together on websites and other marketing material.

The Park District's marketing budget should be weighted toward the beginning of program sessions for fall/winter, spring and summer. Consumer advertising to attract regional markets and enhance visitation and participation at the Rose Festival and other special events should be a combined effort between the City, WRPD and Chamber of Commerce.

WRPD should take the lead with online advertising of its programs and activities and those of its service provider partners, which should be continuous throughout the year.

This strategy will emphasize the positive attitudes and images about Wasco expressed during the community outreach for the master plan. The use of logos and taglines expressing this image on all City and WRPD marketing and communications will reinforce the Wasco brand and lead to better consumer awareness.

Goal 15: Seek to provide good customer service

Recommendation: Adopt the guidelines presented below for providing good customer service and put them into practice.

Staff should strive for excellence in their relationships with patrons. The Park District administrative team should continually communicate to all staff that they are ambassadors for WRPD. Management should also provide staff training in customer service for all new employees and contract workers. Staff training should include determining appropriate responses to challenging situations and dynamics. Staff should also be trained in how to respond to Non-English speaking community members. Good customer service is also being aware of the special needs of people with disabilities and creating opportunities for their inclusion in Park District programs. Finally, management should identify employees who are multilingual and are willing to serve as translation resources.

The following are general strategies for creating excellent customer service standards:

- Clearly identify appropriate channels for the public to obtain information and provide feedback, opinions, and perspectives on City and WRPD programs and capital projects
- Establish avenues for “open door” public communication, including designating a comments email address, phone line, mail address, web form, and paper form at each WRPD facility
- Update Parks and Recreation Frequently Asked Questions for posting to the WRPD website (when it is established)
- Assess and identify needed improvements to telephone customer service protocols

- Develop and implement a two-way communication policy for the City and WRPD to acknowledge and respond to all customer comments
- Assess internal policies, procedures, common practices, and behaviors to ensure they result in excellent customer service
- Clearly communicate response timelines and who is responsible for responding to public requests for information
- Build public engagement and customer service duties and expectations into employee job descriptions and contractor agreements
- Increase awareness and consistency in public engagement activities by maintaining a user friendly master calendar for internal and external use
- Implement follow-up publicity to share success stories which identify the people involved and the benefits to the community

Goal 16: Encourage Community Volunteers

Recommendation: Use the following policies and strategies to enhance the WRPD's volunteer programs

Volunteers provide support to WRPD programs and activities and training opportunities for future employees. Residents have come together in the past to volunteer their time to create recreational opportunities for the community. This community spirit should be embraced and encouraged.

General strategies for encouraging community volunteers are as follows:

- Develop a program outlining effective training and use of volunteers
- Continue to provide a range of volunteer opportunities for people and organizations that want to share their time, energy and resources to improve recreation programs and parks
- Evaluate the need to coordinate volunteer management across programs and services
- Develop a database to organize volunteer contact information and volunteer history
- Develop consistent volunteer orientation and/or training programs to be implemented prior to volunteer activities
- Create a department-wide strategy for youth volunteering, including service learning projects
- Evaluate opportunities, where legally appropriate, to provide more volunteer experiences for adults who have the skills and resources to engage with youth

1.7 CITY AND PARK DISTRICT ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The past relationship between the City and the Park District has evolved over time given shifting perspectives among stakeholders, staff turnover, and funding problems. The basic division of responsibilities between the City and the Park District are spelled out in separate agreements between the City and the Park District for the operation and maintenance of various City owned parks. The past philosophy for dividing up responsibility has been related to which agency collects tax dollars for parks and recreation services. The City's position has been that since the Park District collects property taxes for the express purpose of operating and maintaining parks, and the City does not, the Park District should be responsible for all maintenance and operations of park sites.

The situation gets a bit more complicated when fees and assessments are collected for park acquisition and development. Although the City's current Municipal Code states that developers will dedicate or pay in-lieu fees to the Park District when a new Tract Map is approved, as required by the City's local Quimby Ordinance; in reality the City actually collects the Quimby Fees and tracks their expenditure. This is done for practical purposes, as the Park District does not have the administrative staff to collect and track the Quimby Fees and the City does. When the Park District wants to expend the Park Fees it submits a proposal for expenditure to the City and the City Council then approves the expenditure if it agrees and the proposed expenditure is consistent with the expenditure regulations required by the Quimby Act.

Unless the Park District is able to pass a large increase in its property tax rate, it is highly unlikely it will ever have sufficient resources needed to hire or establish a Finance Division within WRPD to enforce, collect and track Quimby expenditures. Therefore, it is recommended that the City continue to be the lead agency in establishing, enforcing, collecting, approving and tracking Park Fees. This should also be the case for the establishment, enforcement, collection, expenditure approval, and tracking of Community Park Development Impact Fees and for State and Federal Grants the City and WRPD may apply for as joint applicants.

If actual parkland is dedicated as a condition of development, instead of the paying of in-lieu park fees, the City should still be the lead agency in accepting the land dedication under the recommended park standards and requirements of the City's local Quimby ordinance. The City may, at its discretion, transfer ownership to the Park District, or the City may add it to the inventory of City

owned parkland that comes under the agreement with the Park District to maintain.

With regards to maintenance responsibilities, it is recommended that the City and Park District develop more of a Landlord and Tenant relationship with respect to the division of responsibilities on City owned parkland that is maintained and operated by the Park District. It is not practical to think the Park District, which did not acquire or develop City owned parkland, has the resources or the technical ability, to maintain or improve the infrastructure necessary to support the park, i.e. utility systems, sewer systems, storm drains, tree replacement, perimeter curbs and gutters, and streets within a park. Therefore, it is recommended that the division of maintenance responsibilities should be spelled out in a master agreement; whereby, the Park District is responsible for maintaining all tenant improvements necessary for park operations and the City is responsible for maintaining all park infrastructure needed for the park to operate. In other words, the Park District should be responsible for all day to day park and facility maintenance of the City owned parks, and the City should be responsible for public works types of infrastructure maintenance.

Naturally, the Park District will have to be responsible for both day to day and public works types of maintenance items on park property it owns and has developed. Of course, the Park District should contract with the City for the public works types of maintenance on Park District owned park property, as it is impractical for the WRPD to establish a Public Works Division within the WRPD, given its current financial and staffing resources.

In addition to the division of maintenance responsibilities and the division of responsibilities for establishment, enforcement, collection, and expenditure tracking of park fees; the community outreach clearly indicated a community desire for the Park District and City to better communicate, to pool resources, and to jointly pursue funding opportunities for park and recreation purposes.

The following goals and recommendations should help the City and Park District establish a mutually beneficial relationship that will best serve the community of Wasco.

Goal 17: Seek to develop a master agreement between the City of Wasco and the Wasco Recreation and Park District that defines each agencies role in the acquisition, development, operation and maintenance of the Wasco parks and recreation system.

Recommendation: Modify and combine the several separate agreements between the City and Park District into one Master Agreement covering all existing parks and the future acquisition, development, operation and maintenance of parkland.

A master agreement between the City and Park District should be adopted in the form of a resolution by the City Council and the WRPD Board of Directors. Because city council members and board members change over the years and staff members also come and go, it is important to have a document that lists the reasons why the City and the Park District desire to have an agreement, the purpose of the agreement, and the detailed terms and conditions specifically describing the responsibilities of each agency. Currently, there are several separate park maintenance agreements between the City and Park District for specific parks with different terms and conditions of responsibility in each agreement that have been developed over the years. There are also numerous verbal agreements that have been put into practice over the years and have become understanding's of Park District responsibilities and City responsibilities.

As personnel changes in each agency the "understanding's" get redefined and re-interpreted and this can lead to confusion and disagreement about who is responsible for what in the delivery of the park and recreation system for the community, especially if communication channels fail.

To avoid this confusion and insure continuity the resolution agreement between the City and Park District should, at a minimum, contain the following:

- Whereas clauses that spell out the reasons for and the benefits of each agency for entering into the agreement (so there is no confusion as personnel changes as to why there is an agreement between the two agencies)
- Sections that detail the division of responsibility between the two agencies with regards to:
 - Review and approval of park planning and development
 - Establishment of park fees, enforcement, collection, and approval of expenditures

- Level of maintenance and standards for day to day maintenance of parks and facilities
- Responsibility for maintaining the support infrastructure for parks
- Each agencies coordination and level of support policy for community programs operated by the other agency
- A section on the method of communication and schedule for reporting between the two agencies, including notification requirements and setting an annual joint meeting date

Goal 18: Seek to educate the community on the relationship and responsibilities of the City and the WRPD for parks and recreation services

Recommendation: The City and WRPD should coordinate their web sites (when the WRPD establishes a web site) and take advantage of other social media technology to continue to publicize each other's roles and responsibilities and provide links to program information and park development and improvement project information and status to keep the community informed.

Providing a unified voice and factual information on programs, capital projects, events, and roles and responsibilities is vital if the City and Park District want to build community support for their programs and projects and avoid public confusion and political polarization on issues and community concerns. Using the news media and direct web based social media can be the most effective tool the agencies can use to accomplish this effort. Staff of each agency must take the lead to coordinate these efforts.

1.8 BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

A consistent theme in the community surveys and the stakeholder interviews was the fact that there are issues that prevent an equitable sharing of facilities between the Park District and the two School Districts in Wasco. While there have been some staffing and political issues that have led to strained relationships between the three agencies, the primary issue involving the sharing of facilities between the School Districts and the Park District is financial.

The School Districts and the Park District all have very tight budgets and constantly face funding issues with regards to maintenance of facilities and making facility improvements to sustain programming efforts. This

issue manifests itself when the Park District seeks to use school facilities for community programming and the School Districts seek to use Park District facilities for school programs.

In an effort to offset cost for providing use of facilities to other agencies, each agency has adopted fee schedules for use of their facilities by outside users. These fee schedules usually are based on a “full cost recovery” basis. Which means that the fee collected must pay for staff costs in opening and closing a facility, maintenance costs associated with the additional use of the facility, wear and tear on the facility, depreciation/replacement costs for the facility, facility security, and administrative overhead to schedule and permit the use of the facility. Because the School Districts and the Park District are public agencies with limited program budgets, their ability to pay these fees to each other and still make the programs affordable to their students and community residents is very difficult.

Finding alternative ways to deal with the costs associated with joint use of facilities and the sharing of resources will be an important part of meeting program demands and extending existing facility capacity in the future. It will hopefully result in a decrease in the desire to build separate, duplicate facilities for each public agency.

Goal 19: Improve the partnership between the Wasco Recreation and Park District and the Wasco Union Elementary School District and between the Wasco Recreation and Park District and the Wasco Union High School District by developing a master agreement for the sharing of facilities.

Recommendation: That new agreements between the two School Districts and the Parks District should be developed using the following terms and conditions guidelines:

- Whereas clauses that spell out the reasons for and the benefits of each agency for joint use of facilities and why each agency is entering into the agreement (so there is no confusion as personnel changes as to why there is a joint use agreement between the three agencies)
- Sections outlining the responsibilities of each agency when using another agencies facilities
- Fees to be paid
- In-kind alternatives to payment of fees for use of facilities (whereby the requesting agency staff is responsible for opening and closing the facility,

setting up and taking down of equipment, supervision and security of the facility)

- Assumption of user liability and reciprocal hold harmless clauses
- Financial responsibility for damage
- A section on the method of communication and schedule for reporting between the two agencies, including notification requirements and setting an annual joint meeting date

As an alternative to requiring the payment of a “full cost recovery fee”, this type of joint use agreement will allow each agency that is using another agencies facilities to instead accept liability for its use of the facility and assume responsibility for providing the appropriate number of qualified staff to operate the facility. This alternative will allow each agency to maximize its programming potential while still controlling its costs. It is important to note that implementing this recommendation will require additional staff training on each agencies part as to the opening, closing, operating, and security procedures for use of each other’s facilities.

Goal 20: Create a parks and recreation delivery system where equitable partnerships are developed and managed with other public agencies, not-for-profit organizations, commercial recreation providers, and independent contractors to maximize the City and Park District’s resources in meeting the community needs for recreation and park services

Recommendation: Use the following guidelines to deliver programs and facilities through coordinating with other service providers to broaden both the quality and quantity of programs and facilities available to Wasco residents and visitors

- Establish a regional approach to partnerships that will help the City and Park District achieve its master plan goals for land use, facility development and program delivery.
- Continue to provide staff support and coordination to the Chamber of Commerce to ensure future coordination of events and use of Park District and City facilities.
- Have the WRPD explore possible new agreements with the “Artist” community and cultural organizations in the greater Wasco area to provide facilities and support for community art events and to explore other opportunities for jointly providing cultural arts activities for the community.
- Have the WRPD continue the regularly scheduled meetings with the community “Sports Groups” to ensure equitable access to facilities for all

groups, to resolve conflicts between groups, and to solicit input from the sports groups on proposed changes to fees and facilities.

- Have the WRPD recruit independent contract instructors to work on a percentage of class fee basis to deliver life-long learning programs, self-improvement classes, fitness programs and general recreation classes.
- Establish and measure the impact and cost benefit of all partnership agreements the Park District has entered into and make any adjustments necessary to meet the expectations for the partnership agreements.
- Meet at least annually with each partner to review the results of the partnership agreement for the past year and develop a report to the Wasco City Council and WRPD Board of Directors with any recommended changes for the following year.
- Monitor all agreements and review on an annual basis during budget development in order to eliminate unnecessary or entitled partnerships that no longer serve a purpose or meet the Park District's vision and mission for recreation and park services, so as to free up resources that could be used for new activities or programs.

Goal 21: Seek New Partnerships for Commercial Recreational Prospects and Concessions

Recommendation: Consider soliciting proposals for a concessioner for the Westside Park Skate Park.

Operating a skate park brings with it a number of unique issues. These include the special maintenance requirements for a skate park; safety and liability concerns; supervision costs; enforcement of rules, resolving conflicts between types of users; and, how to control access to prevent unauthorized use and vandalism. Skate parks appeal to an age group that can also present challenges. While most cities and their park and recreation agencies have developed skate parks to meet the special interest community demand for such facilities, little, if any, long term planning went into preparing the agencies for these unique challenges and operational concerns.

This situation is also true in Wasco. The skate park at Westside Park is very popular with Wasco residents and residents of surrounding areas and thus presents the Park District with the responsibility of dealing with these unique issues. Given the Park District and City's limited staff and financial resources, maintaining and operating the skate park has been a difficult challenge to overcome. Wasco is not alone in having to address these issues and over the years more and more public agencies who own skate parks have turned

to private sector concessioners specializing in the supervision, operation, maintenance, and programming of skate parks to solve these issues.

One of the most successful examples is Palm Springs, California where Action Park Alliance, has contracted with the city to operate, maintain, supervise, and program their skate park. Private concessioners can provide things and organize activities that public agencies are not in the business of doing, thus reducing public agency costs and giving the skate park users a more varied, safe, and rewarding experience. A concessioner can provide on-site supervision; make improvements to the skate park, like night lighting and a pro-shop/snack bar facility; provide quality maintenance to make the skateboarding more rewarding and safe; and offer lessons, workshops, and tournaments to keep users interested. Their constant on-site presence during all open hours also provides enforcement of State helmet laws.

The fees private concessioners normally charge are \$15 per year for resident membership and \$25 per year for non-residents. They also derive revenue from charging for lessons (group and private), tournament entry fees, and the sale of pro-shop items and food.

It is recommended that the Park District and City jointly study the pros and cons of a possible concession for the operation of the Wasco skate park and prepare a report to the Park District Board and City Council on the findings.

Goal 22: Develop new community partnership opportunities that will enable e more community members to support the WRPD.

Recommendation: Review existing community partnerships of other park and recreation agencies and adapt them to needs of the WRPD.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP EXAMPLES

The outreach effort in Wasco indicated a strong desire for community volunteer opportunities, including community involvement in developing and maintaining WRPD facilities. Tapping into this community spirit requires setting up an organizational structure capable of recruiting volunteers and developing projects where their involvement will help the Park District and provide the volunteer with a rewarding experience. The best example in the nation is the “Partnerships for Parks”, an innovative joint program of City Parks Foundation & NYC Parks Department.

Founded in 1995, this program helps New Yorkers work together to make neighborhood parks thrive. Ultimately, the project work supports a culture of collaboration among people and government that recognizes that parks are vital centers of community life. This partnership program received the prestigious “Innovations in American Government Award in 2000” and is called upon to share best practices with counterparts from cities, both large and small, all over the nation. Using the template developed by New York’s “Partnerships for Parks” to establish community partnership projects in the greater Wasco area, would allow the District to tap into the community spirit and desire to get involved as many residents said they wanted to do during the community input process.

Another example of a highly successful and award winning partnership is the one between Oregon City and its local high school. Since 2003, Oregon City High School has offered an advanced construction class that works on projects throughout the City – particularly at local parks – during class time, after school and on weekends.

Students have helped build or refurbish city park bridges and walkways, volleyball courts, stairs at the municipal pool, and an outdoor event center.

The program teaches students new skills and helps them give back to the community as they participate in every stage of the construction process. A teacher guides them in planning the concept and design, creating models of the proposed project, developing a business plan, and leading onsite implementation in partnership with contractors.

In addition to obtaining in-kind donations from local architects and engineers, students apply for grant funds to pay for materials and conduct presentations to potential donors, city staff and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee. Project ideas originate from both the parks department and students who choose one major project to complete each year.

1.9 SUMMARY

The goals and recommendations in this chapter provide ways for the City and WRPD to address park deficits in terms of: meeting the guidelines for parkland acreage, increasing capacity of existing parks, adding additional facilities, developing stronger partnerships, broadening program offerings, capitalizing on community spirit and keeping residents informed.

Part III, Chapter 2 addresses the financial costs and resources it will take to implement the recommendations. It also describes the priorities for capital improvements and the funding methods WRPD and the City can consider to accomplish the recommendations it wishes to pursue.

Funding Strategies and Capital Improvement Program

PART III - CHAPTER TWO





*Example of Greenbelt with Drought Tolerant Landscaping
West San Gabriel Trail, Lakewood, CA*

Funding Strategies and Capital Improvement Program

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a Capital Improvement Policy for the City and the Wasco Recreation and Parks District (WRPD) to adopt and use to judge whether a proposed capital project should be pursued for the benefit of the community, or if it is a capital request that should not be pursued because it does not meet the criteria contained in the policy. This chapter also contains the estimated costs for the recommended capital improvements for existing Wasco parks and for recommended new facilities in Wasco that were presented in Chapter 1. The recommended Capital Improvement Program also lists the recommended capital improvements by priority and funding source. Finally, recommended park standards, funding and implementation strategies to accomplish the recommendations in Part III - Chapter 1 are presented.

2.2 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT POLICY

Both the City and the WRPD are constantly presented with requests from the public, special interest groups, community organizations, and other community agencies to fund or allocate resources for desired capital projects. In addition, City staff and Park District staff also have ideas for capital improvements and new facilities that they believe would serve the community and make the park system better.

The decision to pursue a capital project or not has to be made by the City Council and/or the WRPD Board of Directors. This is usually done during the annual budget process for both agencies, but it could also happen mid-year if a special interest or emergency request comes before City Council members or Park District Board members. Without a clear policy and set of criteria on how capital projects are approved, decisions may inadvertently be driven by



Above: Farmer's Market, Anaheim, CA.

immediate pressures that are foremost at the time but which can lead to expenditure of funds or staff resources on capital projects that may not be best for the park system or the entire community in the long-term.

By establishing a Capital Improvement Policy that contains a set of criteria that a proposed capital project needs to meet in order to be considered for approval, the decision to pursue it or not will be based on predetermined benefits to the community and how the proposed project meets those benefits.

Consequently, it is recommended that the City Council and WRPD Board of Directors adopt the following policy and approval criteria when considering a decision to fund or allocate resources to a capital project.

ALL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS FOR THE WASCO PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM SHALL MEET ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- A. Improved Access for all Users — renovation projects to reduce accessibility barriers and generally make the facilities more user-friendly for customers of all ability levels.
- B. General/Deferred Maintenance — renovation projects to address wear and tear on existing facilities and prepare them to continue to serve the community for the next decades.
- C. Enhance Revenue — projects to strengthen the City's and/or the WRPD's ability to generate revenue through asset management, such as, increasing community rental space, expanding recreation program capacity, and/or improving facilities to attract new users and retain existing users.
- D. Enhance Efficiency — projects to reduce City and/or WRPD operating and utilities costs through strategies such as increased energy efficiency, reduced equipment repair and replacement, or reduced maintenance labor.
- E. Enhance Programs — facility projects to improve the quality, participant experience, and range of programs and special events that the City and/or the WRPD can offer.
- F. Enhance the Wasco Image — projects that enhance the park and recreation customer experience and upgrade the aesthetic of community facilities to reflect the high quality of its programs, services, staff, and community expectations.

If a proposed capital project does not meet one or more of the above criteria it should not be pursued in the City's and/or WRPD's capital improvement program.

2.3 PRIORITIZED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Capital Improvement Program recommendations for existing facilities, additions/amenities for existing facilities and for new facilities is based on results from the needs assessment including priorities identified by the community through the public outreach process . The CIP recommendations have been divided into three levels so that decisions on the allocation of financial resources can be made based on community priority needs. The three priority levels are:

Level 1 - Priority projects for funding and allocation of resources to meet current needs

Level 2 - Projects that community outreach and comparison studies show there is a demand for in the community if funding and resources can be obtained

Level 3 - Projects that the community desires if there is a way to fund them in the future

There may be situations where there is an opportunity to fund a Level 2 or Level 3 project before a Level 1 project depending on funding sources. For example, if the community decides it is willing to support a Park Bond for a new community park with a sports complex, that project may be funded before a Level 1 project from the Park Fund, because the Park Fund has not yet received enough revenue to fund the Level 1 project.

Finding a permanent revenue stream for the Park Fund, such as a Park Impact Fee, would enhance the City and Park District's ability to implement the CIP, as projects are built as income is received into the Park Fund, i.e. Level 1 projects get funded first, then Level 2 and so on, unless there is a grant, donation, special funding or bond that would fund a project sooner. Some projects benefit all city residents and are recommended for funding from the Park District's General Fund, or if they are not an eligible expense of the Park Fund then they need to be paid for from the Park District's General Fund.

The recommended projects in Part III - Chapter 1 for existing parks and new facilities have been separated into the three levels described above. Selecting which level a project should be placed in is admittedly a subjective process, as what may be an important need for one person might be only a desire for another. However, the consultant team did its best to analyze the public input and match that with the recommended projects to determine what level each

improvement or new facility should be assigned so that there can be some prioritization of projects for allocation of resources.

The City and Park District should review the list of projects each year during their budget process and determine if projects have been completed or need to be moved up or down the priority list.

This section presents options and strategies the City and Park District may wish to consider for implementing the recommendations contained in Chapter 1. The methodology that provided the basis for the cost estimates is provided, along with preliminary cost estimates the City and Park District can use to determine future funding requirements.

The funding implementation strategies are intended to present options the City and Park District can consider for existing park and greenbelt improvement recommendations and new facilities.

The strategies presented are based on ones used by other agencies to successfully fund or finance and implement similar types of facilities that are recommended for Wasco. These options may or may not be right for the City or WRPD, but can at least provide ideas the City and WRPD can use as a basis for discussion to develop an implementation strategy that is right for both agencies.

Elements used to determine probable costs and funding requirements include similar projects developed by other agencies; building industry cost estimates; inflation and economic factors; desired quality of construction; level of service needed to implement the recommendations; and, the types of funding sources that will be used to implement the proposed recommendations.

Facility recommendations are organized according to key findings identified through the community outreach and needs analysis process. Year 2013 dollar amounts are used to calculate projected costs and required funding estimates for going “green” with “LEED Compliant” (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) construction. The cost estimates represent the following LEED compliance:

- Sustainable sites
- Water Efficiency
- Energy and atmosphere
- Materials and resources
- Indoor Environmental quality
- Innovation and design process

Although the cost estimates are for standard quality “green” construction, there are less expensive ways of implementing the recommended facilities if political and financial concerns limit the ability to be LEED compliant.

Costs estimates provided in the following capital improvement program recommendations are intended to aid the City and WRPD in determining potential funding needs for each recommended project. They were developed based on the following data published in July 2013 from the United States Office of Construction and Facilities Management (Los Angeles Area) pertaining to per square foot construction costs for typical types of municipal facilities.

Standard Community or Senior Center	\$429 Square Foot
ADA Compliant Vandal Resistant Restroom	\$382 Square Foot
Artificial Turf U14 Soccer Field	\$800,000
Natural Turf U14 Soccer Field	\$600,000
Softball Field with Natural Turf and 250’ Outfield	\$405,000
Baseball Field with Natural Turf and 300’ Outfield	\$445,000
ADA Compliant Standard 10,000 Square Foot Tot Lot	\$325,000
ADA Compliant 2500 Square Foot Water Play/Spray Pool	\$285,000
Surface Parking with Turf Block and Landscaping	\$1,200 per Space
New Development of Greenbelts	\$363 per Linear Foot
New Walkways	\$300 per Linear Foot
Renovation of Existing Greenbelts	\$230 per Linear Foot
Renovation of Existing Walkways	\$225 per Linear Foot

The construction market is subject to rapid changes brought on by natural disasters and global events. The cost estimates in the following tables are for standard LEED compliant construction and could increase significantly if construction was in a Federal Flood Plain, on fill or slopes requiring pilings or retaining walls, or containing exotic architectural features. Adjustments may need to be made to cost estimates when specific plans are prepared for park and facility projects based on most current market surveys and industry reports.

The cost estimates provided below do not include preparation of plans and specifications, environmental remediation if necessary, cost of financing or any construction contingency the City or WRPD requires for capital projects. As projects go through their final approval process, the cost estimates will need updating to reflect current conditions.

While the funding sources recommended can provide opportunities for funding improvements recommended in the master plan, finding funding to continue

the level of park and facility maintenance the citizens expect and to fund new facilities the community wants will be more difficult.

The Park District’s traditional funding sources, along with grants, will be the primary method for implementing the master plan recommendations. Of course, the economy and political priorities will play a large role in determining the WRPD’s ability to pursue this strategy.

In addition to the capital improvement recommendations for each existing park site presented in Chapter 1, each year there are unforeseen improvements or design projects that need to be undertaken in an expedient manner to respond to issues that cannot wait until the annual budget process. There are also park rehabilitation projects, such as irrigation repair, that must be done in a timely manner to keep facilities functioning properly. Therefore, it is recommended that the annual Capital Improvement Program also contain funding to address these types of timely issues to keep the park system operating in a safe and efficient manner.

The following tables present the prioritized capital improvement recommendations to existing parks and the recommended new parks and facilities contained in Part III - Chapter 1: Goals, Policies and Recommendations.

Table 2.1: Level 1 Priority Projects for Funding and Allocation of Resources to Meet Current Needs.

Project Description	Estimated Cost (2014 Dollars)	Recommended Funding Source	Policy Criteria*
Unforeseen Design Or Repair Project Fund	\$50,000 (Annual Allocation)	WRPD General Fund	B, C
Barker Pool Restroom Upgrade and Improvements	\$400,000	WRPD General Fund, Park Fund, County Participation, Fund Raising	A, B, D, F
Veteran’s Hall Roof Repair	\$80,000	WRPD General Fund	B, D
Veteran’s Hall Floor Repair	\$65,000	WRPD General Fund, Recycle Materials Grant	A, B, F
Veteran’s Hall Exterior Repair	\$125,000	WRPD General Fund	A, B, F
Baseball Field Improvements at Recreation Ball Park	\$70,000	WRPD General Fund, Little League Fund Raising	A, B, D, F
Westside Park Parking Lot Improvements	\$55,000	WRPD General Fund	A, B, F
Westside Park Solar Lighting of Perimeter Walkway	\$200,000	WRPD General Fund, BJA Safe Neighborhoods Grant	A, D, E, F
Replace or Rehabilitate Existing Restroom at South Gate Park	\$100,000	WRPD General Fund, BJA Safe Neighborhoods Grant	B, D, F

* In terms of policy criteria presented in section 2.2 – A:Improved Access for All Users, B: General/Deferred Maintenance, C: Enhance Revenue, D: Enhance Efficiency, E: Enhance Programs, F: Enhance Wasco Image

Table 2.2: Level 2 Projects that community outreach and comparison studies show there is a need and demand for in the community if funding and resources can be obtained.

Project Description	Estimated Cost (2014 Dollars)	Recommended Funding Source	Policy Criteria
Citywide Park Turf & Irrigation Upgrade (Barker Park, Recreation Ball Park, Westside Park, and South Gate Park)	\$800,000	State LWCF Grant , WRPD General Fund	A, D, E , F
Reconstruct parking lots and entryways at Barker Park	\$135,000	WRPD General Fund	B, D, F
Evaluate all park trees for trimming or removal and replacement or new planting	\$300,000	(Multi-Year Project) Arbor Day Grants, Water Conservation Grants, Tree Replacement Program	B, D, F
ADA Compliance Program for all parks	\$1,200,000	(Multi-Year Project) County HUD Grant for Access Improvements, WRPD General Fund, Private Grants for Equipment and Facility Compliance	A, B, C, D, E, F
Recreation Ball Park Perimeter Walking Path	\$150,000	California Conservation Corps Grant, Community Volunteer Project & Recycle Materials Grant	A, D, E, F
New Community Park with multipurpose center, gym, aquatic and sports complexes	\$12 Million	Park Impact Fee, Park Bond with new Tax Assessment, Asset Management, Fund Raising, and County Participation	A, B, C, D, E, F

Table 2.3: Level 3 Projects that the community desires if funding can be secured in the future.

Project Description	Estimated Cost (2014 Dollars)	Recommended Funding Source	Policy Criteria
Barker Park Children’s Play Area Improvements and Expansion	\$225,000	WRPD General Fund Private Foundation Grants & Fund Raising (Naming Rights/ Advertising)	A,B, D, F
Band Shell and Community Events Area at Westside Park	\$90,000	Private Foundation Grants & Fund Raising (Naming Rights/ Advertising)	A, E, F
Annin Avenue Park Option 1 – Refurbish Existing Amenities and Add Lights and Restrooms	\$800,000	LWCF Grant, Recycle Materials Grant, WRPD General Fund and Fund Raising	A, E, F
Annin Avenue Park Option 2 – Re-Master Plan to Reconfigure Fields, add lighting, restrooms, and upgrade irrigation	\$3 to \$4 Million (Depending on Required Infrastructure Improvements and CEQA)	LWCF Grant, Recycle Materials Grant, WRPD General Fund and Fund Raising – Possible Revenue Bond Paid by User Fees	A, B, D, F

A - EXISTING WALKWAY

Improvements include the following criteria:

- The walkway easement are 6 feet wide plus 6 inches for top of curb totaling 6.5 feet wide.
- The existing concrete will remain in place except for the areas that will be permeable pavers. For areas receiving new permeable pavers, the existing concrete will be saw cut and removed.
- Improvements consist of:
 - a. Permeable pavers - 6 feet wide (from back of curb to back of walk)
 - b. Saw cutting and removal of concrete paving for new permeable pavers - 6 feet wide (from back of curb to back of walk)
 - c. Street trees at 25 feet on-center - 4 new 24 inch box trees per block. Existing street trees will remain in place
 - d. Tree-well covers for the street trees (3 foot x 3 foot)
 - e. Irrigation systems for the new street trees - repair irrigation systems at existing street trees
 - f. Way-Finding signage
 - g. Steel bollards - 4 at each corner
 - h. Seating areas - two per block
 - i. Trash receptacles - three per block

Table 2.4 below is a priority listing of the recommended greenbelt and walkway improvements presented in Part III, Chapter 1 (Goal 8). Many of these projects will likely be done by developers as development occurs in these areas of the city. Other ways to fund these improvements include trail grants, future state park bonds, Land and Water Conservation Fund grants, and possible landscape maintenance district programs.

The sidebars accompanying the table specify the improvements that are proposed for each category, i.e. Existing Walkways, New Walkways, Existing Greenbelts and New Greenbelts.

Table 2.4: Capital Improvement Priorities for Greenbelts and Walkways.

Project Description (In order of priority)	Recommended Improvements	Recommended Order of Priority	Policy Criteria
7th Street between Griffith and Central 5,263 LF of new walkway which will be an extension of the existing downtown streetscape along 7th Street, including pavers and tree wells, that now exists between Broadway and G Street.	See Sidebar B - New Walkway Improvements	1	A, E, F
(a) Filburn between F Street to Gaston Street - 865 LF of new greenbelt , (b) Filburn between Central and just west of Beckes 180 LF of new walkway and 485 LF of new greenbelt, and (c) north of Central between Filburn and Poso 890 LF of new greenbelt. Together, these three segments will extend the greenbelt that now exists along Filburn between Beckes Street and Galston, resulting in a single continuous greenbelt along Filburn from F Street to Central Avenue, and north along Central to Poso Drive.	See Sidebar D – New Greenbelt Improvements	2	A, E, F
Central between Poso Drive and Hwy 46 5,265 LF of new walkway. This new north/south walkway will connect with the north end of the greenbelt that ends at Poso Drive (priority project #2), and also intersect with the extension of the 7th Street walkway (priority project #1)	See Sidebar B - New Walkway Improvements	3	A, F
Poso Drive between F Street and Central 7,260 L.F. of new walkway, which will parallel the 7th street walkway, including pavers and tree wells, and also intersect with the new greenbelt that begins at Central and Poso (priority project #2) and the new walkway on Central from Poso to Hwy 46.	See Sidebar B - New Walkway Improvements	4	A, F
Palm between Filburn and Margalo 9,230 L.F. of new walkway, with pavers and tree wells, that will parallel the other new walkway along Central Avenue.	See Sidebar B - New Walkway Improvements	5	A, B, E, F

Project Description (In order of priority)	Recommended Improvements	Recommended Order of Priority	Policy Criteria
(a)Griffith between 7th Street and Hwy 46 2,666 L.F. of new walkway, (b) Hwy 46 between Griffith and Annin 1,345 L.F. of new walkway, and (c) Annin Ave between Hwy 46 and Annin Avenue Recreation Park 3,200 L.F. of new walkway. Together these three new walkway segments will provide a connection between the downtown streetscape along 7th Street and the Annin Avenue Recreation Park , north of Hwy 46.	See Sidebar B - New Walkway Improvements	6	A, E, F
Margalo between Magnolia and Central 2,640 L.F. of new walkway. This is the beginning of a new east/west walkway running along Margalo in parallel with Hwy 46. This 1st segment will border the northern edge of the new Walmart shopping complex.	See Sidebar B - New Walkway Improvements	7	A, E, F
7th Street between Central and Magnolia 2,630 L.F. of new walkway. This is the last segment required to complete the extension of the 7th Street downtown streetscape.	See Sidebar B - New Walkway Improvements	8	A, E, F
a) Margalo between Central to Annin 5,292 L.F. of new walkway and b) 1,318 L.F. of new walkway. This continues the new walkway next to Walmart and links with the new walkway that connects to Annin Avenue Recreation Park (priority project # 6)	See Sidebar B - New Walkway Improvements	9	A, E, F
Magnolia between 7th St and Margalo 3,925 L.F. of new walkway. This new north/south walkway on the western edge of Wasco will provide a connection to the two east/west walkways along 7th Street and Margalo.	See Sidebar B - New Walkway Improvements	10	A, E, F
Margalo between Magnolia and Leonard 5,265 L.F. of new walkway. This is the final segment of the Margalo walkway and extends it to its western terminus at Leonard Avenue, joining the eastern and western halves of Wasco.	See Sidebar B - New Walkway Improvements	11	A, E, F
Central between 46th and Margalo 1,260 L.F. of new walkway. This relatively short segment extends the new Central Avenue walkway (priority project #3) north of Hwy 46.	See Sidebar B - New Walkway Improvements	12	A
Renovation of existing greenbelt on Filburn between Gaston and Beckes 5,000 L.F. and This project will include demolition of sub-standard areas, replacement of turf areas, and other renovations so this existing greenbelt matches the new extensions that were built at either end (priority projects #2)	See Sidebar C – Existing Greenbelt Renovations	13	D, F
Renovation of existing walkway on both sides of 7th between Griffith and Broadway 1,300 L.F. so it more closely matches the existing downtown streetscape between Broadway and G Street.	See Sidebar B - New Walkway Improvements	14	

B - NEW WALKWAY

Improvements include the following criteria:

- The walkway easement would be 6 feet wide plus 6 inches for top of curb totaling 6.5 feet wide.
- Street curbs, curbs and gutters, street lighting, storm drains, and land acquisition
- Improvements consist of:
 - a. Permeable pavers - 6 feet wide (from back of curb to back of walk)
 - b. Concrete paving - 6 feet wide (from back of curb to back of walk)
 - c. Street trees at 25 feet on-center
 - d. Tree-well covers for the street trees (3 foot x 3 foot)
 - e. Irrigation systems for the street trees
 - f. Way-Finding signage
 - g. Steel bollards - 4 at each corner
 - h. Seating areas - two per block
 - i. Trash receptacles - three per block

C - EXISTING GREENBELT

Renovation includes the following criteria:

- 30' to 40' wide greenbelt trail, both hard and soft surface
- Street curbs, gutters, street lighting, storm drains
- Improvements consist of:
 - a. Demolition of sub-standard areas
 - b. Replacement of turf area - 25% coverage
 - c. Addition or replacement of groundcover and California friendly shrub materials - 50% coverage
 - d. Addition or replacement of mulch area - 25% coverage
 - e. DG or permeable pavers' pathway - 8 feet wide
 - f. Tree replacement if needed
 - g. Renovated irrigation systems
 - h. Renovation or addition of seating areas

The number of capital improvement projects and estimated cost of all the recommended capital improvements and projects may seem overwhelming when considering the current financial positions of the City and WRPD. However, if the City and WRPD work together along with other partners in the community by taking each recommendation and applying the funding strategies and possible funding sources outlined in the next section; over time the recommendations can be accomplished. The above list of capital improvements will help the City and WRPD stay focused on long term capital improvement goals that provide the facilities and amenities necessary to implement the recreation programming, urban greening, and healthy lifestyles the Wasco community said they wanted during the master plan process.

By using the capital improvement priority lists in developing annual budgets, seeking funding, and allocating resources the City and WRPD can avoid the haphazard development of facilities and amenities that sometimes happens when budgeting and allocation of resources is a response to political pressure by special interest groups and not long range facility planning.

2.4 FUNDING AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

There are three areas that the City and the WRPD need to address funding for:

- Maintenance and Improvements to existing parks and facilities;
- Design and Development of new parks and facilities; and,
- Delivery of programs, leisure activities, and services to residents.

For purposes of this master plan process, the term "Funding" encompasses a wide range of how to pay for or implement recommendations that address the three areas described above. Funding options available to the City and WRPD include both traditional tax dollars and fees; and unconventional options, such as, facilitating delivery through partnerships and collaborations with other agencies, organizations, and commercial recreation operators; volunteer services, donations/sponsorships, fund raising projects, use of assets to generate revenue, grants, and, various financing options.

The following overview describes a recommended approach for establishing neighborhood parkland dedication/in-lieu fees and community park development impact fees, along with other funding options, that will address funding needs of the projects contained in the tables above.

2.5 PARKLAND STANDARDS AND PARK FEES

The Demand and Needs Analysis, completed as part of the master plan process, was used to develop the recommended park standards for Wasco and is the basis for the nexus to determine the amount of parkland Wasco needs to

meet current and future parkland demand. The park standards are in the form of acres per 1,000 residents per park type, i.e. Mini Parks, Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, and Regional Parks, as shown in table 2.5 which is derived from information in Parts I and II of the Master Plan.

Table 2.5. Recommended Park Standards and Surplus or Deficit

Parkland Classification	Recommended Standard (Acres per 1,000 Residents)	Existing Acres 2013	Existing Parkland Ratio (per 1,000 Residents Pop 20,729)	Surplus (or Deficit) from the Recommended Standard
Mini Parks	.5	1.88	.09	(.41)
Neighborhood Parks	2.5	5.65	.27	(2.23)
Community Parks	3	41.12	1.99	(1.01)
Regional Parks/ Special Use Areas	As needed to provide needed facilities	2.04	.10	NA
Greenbelts	As needed to complete the system	4.65	.22	NA
Natural Areas	As needed to protect the resource	0	0	NA
Totals	6.0	55.34	2.67	(3.33)

The recommended combined total parkland standard of 6 acres per 1,000 residents (which is made up of a .5 acre per 1,000 residents Mini Park Standard, a 2.5 acre per 1,000 residents Neighborhood Park Standard, and a 3.0 acre per 1,000 residents Community Park Standard) is consistent with the City of Wasco’s current General Plan Goal to provide 6 acres of total parkland per 1,000 residents to obtain an adequate park system to serve Wasco.

Wasco’s current total combined parkland ratio of 2.67 acres per 1,000 residents, means that there is a current deficit of 3.33 acres per 1,000 from the recommended combined parkland standard and the City’s General Plan goal of 6.0 acres per 1,000 residents.

To meet the goal of 6 acres per 1,000 residents the City and WRPD would have to increase their combined parkland total by about 67 acres. The City and WRPD acquiring 67 acres of parkland entirely on their own is not realistic, so to address this deficit the City (and WRPD) may have to work with the school districts to gain access to fields and other recreation amenities to count towards meeting this goal. Kern County, and possibly other agencies, like the water district, flood control district, and State and Federal agencies also may be ways to gain parkland and amenities in Wasco that could serve to meet the 6 acres per 1,000 goal.

D - NEW GREENBELT

Improvements include the following criteria:

- 30’ to 40’ wide greenbelt trail, both hard and soft surface
- Street curbs, curbs and gutters, street lighting, storm drains, and land acquisition
- Improvements consist of:
 - a. Turf area – 25% coverage
 - b. Groundcover and California Friendly shrub materials - 50% coverage
 - c. Mulch area - 25% coverage
 - d. DG or permeable pavers’ pathway - 8 feet wide
 - e. Trees - 36 inch box
 - f. Irrigation systems
 - g. Seating areas
 - h. Trash receptacles

While not yet attaining the combined parkland 6 acres per 1,000 resident's, having the goal in the General Plan opens the door to various grants and provides the nexus and justification for pursuing agreements with the Wasco Union Elementary School District and the Wasco Union High School District for public access to facilities. It also provides a reason for the County and State to help Wasco meet their goal.

The Urban Greening and Open Space Master Plan contains a number of recommendations, options and actions for addressing this deficit and how the City and WRPD can pursue strategies for future parkland acquisition and development.

While the General Plan goal and the Urban Greening and Open Space Master Plan recommendation is for a total combined parkland standard of 6 acres per 1,000 residents, the key standard for the City (and WRPD) to focus on is the standard for local neighborhood and community parkland, as that is the standard for which California State law, under the Quimby Act (Government Code § 66477(a)(1)-(9)), allows the City to establish its Parkland Dedication/In-Lieu Fee Ordinance and its Development Impact Fee Ordinance.

2.6 QUIMBY ACT/PARK IN-LIEU FEE ORDINANCE FOR NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS AND FACILITIES

California state law recognizes the special impact development has on parks and recreation. Government Code § 66477 (the "Quimby Act") allows a local government to impose a requirement for the dedication of land or the payment of in-lieu fees, or both, for parks and recreational purposes as a condition of approval of a tentative map or parcel map. (Gov. Code, § 66477(a).) The Quimby Act also details a number of procedures for the calculation of these fees, for the collection and expenditure of fees, and for the return of fees when the fees have not been committed to park and recreational facilities. Furthermore, the Quimby Act sets the minimum and maximum neighborhood park acreage per-capita standard for park and recreational facilities of three acres minimum and five acres maximum per 1,000 population for which park and recreational land dedication and fees may be imposed under the Act.

Local governments can either use the authority of the state Quimby Act (Government Code § 66477(a)(1)-(9)), or they may adopt their own Parkland Dedication/In-Lieu Fee Ordinance (which may have more provisions than Quimby, but not less) and which must meet the Quimby Act dedication requirements containing certain criteria:

- The ordinance must be in effect for 30 days before the tentative map or parcel map is filed.
- The ordinance must include definite standards for calculating the proportion of land in the subdivision to be dedicated for parks and recreational use, or the amount of “in lieu” fees to be paid.
- The land or fees may be used only to develop new, or rehabilitate existing, park or recreational facilities that reasonably serve the subdivision.
- The local legislative body must have adopted a general or specific plan containing policies and standards for park and recreational facilities (This would be the City’s Parks, Urban Greening and Open Space Master Plan and the Wasco Recreation & Park District Park & Recreation Master Plan).
- The amount and location of land to be dedicated or the amount of fees to be paid must bear a reasonable relationship to the projected use of the park and recreational facilities by future inhabitants of the subdivision. (Courts have ruled that only neighborhood park standards can be used to meet Quimby requirements and that regional parks and special use facilities do not qualify for Quimby expenditures).
- The city must develop a schedule specifying how, when, and where it will use the land, fees or both to develop park or recreational facilities. Any fees collected under the ordinance must be committed to an approved Capital Improvement Project or parkland acquisition within five years after payment of the fees or the issuance of building permits on half of the lots created by the subdivision, whichever occurs later. If the fees are not committed, they must be distributed and paid to the then-record owners of the subdivision in the same proportion that the size of their lot bears to the total area of all lots in the subdivision. (Consequently, the City and WRPD should jointly adopt a five year parkland capital improvement program and update it annually to track park fund expenditures by project and to plan for expending park fees within the mandated timeframe).
- Assuming the City and WRPD adopt a local Park Dedication & In-Lieu Fee Ordinance (See example Appendix A) that requires land dedication or payment of in-lieu fees on both residential subdivision and on multi-family residential development, only the payment of fees, and not a dedication of land, may be required for subdivisions of 50 or fewer parcels (or units, in the case of multi-family dwelling developments, such as condos, apartments, mobile home parks, single occupancy facilities, etc., unless the development of a condominium project, stock cooperative or community apartment project exceeds 50 dwelling units in which case land dedication requirements could also be applicable).
- If the sub-divider or multi-family developer provides park and recreational improvements to the dedicated land, the value of the improvements must be credited against the amount of any fees or dedications required by the ordinance.

There are a number of factors that go into the equation as to the amount of the Quimby Act or Local Parkland Dedication and In-Lieu Fee Ordinance. These include: 1) the City's average number of people per household; 2) the appraised value of land; and 3) the number of acres per 1,000 residents required by the City.

First, as to the issue of the average number of people per household, Government Code § 66477(a)(2) states:

"The amount of land dedicated or fees paid shall be based upon the residential density, which shall be determined on the basis of the approved or conditionally approved tentative map or parcel map and the average number of persons per household. There shall be a rebuttable presumption that the average number of persons per household by units in a structure is the same as that disclosed by the most recent available federal census or a census taken pursuant to Chapter 17 (commencing with Section 40200) of Part 2 of Division 3 of Title 4."

This provision of the Quimby Act demonstrates that Census data is not the exclusive means of establishing residential persons-per-household density. Instead, the use of Census data simply results in a "rebuttable presumption" that the person-per-household densities in the ordinance are correct. Therefore, the City can use person-per-household densities different from those established by the Census, but such revised densities must be based upon City-generated data (e.g., a localized person-per-household density study) that rebuts the density data presented by the Census (i.e., the City must show why its data is more accurate in terms of the City population than the Census data). Moreover, because the use of density data other than the Census will abrogate the "rebuttable presumption" of correctness, the use of non-Census data creates a slightly greater risk of exposure to legal challenge. In other words, if the City adopts its own density numbers, it will bear the evidentiary burden of showing that the densities are correct, whereas the use of Census data is presumed to be correct and places the burden of any challenge to the data upon the challenger rather than the City. Consequently, it is recommended that Wasco use the latest Federal Census Data as the basis for the number of persons per household in its formula for its Quimby ordinance. The 2010 census puts the persons per household in Wasco at 3.9.

Second, as to the nature of the appraisal of property values, there are no specific requirements relating to land valuation of dedicated parkland. That said, however, some important general limitations will apply to the City's in-lieu fee and land dedication calculations. The Quimby Act requires that, "The

amount and location of land to be dedicated or the fees to be paid shall bear a reasonable relationship to the use of the park and recreational facilities by the future inhabitants of the subdivision". (Gov. Code, § 66477(a)(5).) This rule is largely a restatement of the general "nexus" requirement applicable to all fees and dedications: exactions (whether in fee or actual dedication) should bear a reasonable relationship to the foreseeable impacts of the subject project.

With respect to the appraisal for in-lieu park fees, the amount of fees to be levied must bear a reasonable relationship to the projected use of the park and/or recreational facilities by future inhabitants of the particular subdivision or multi-family development at issue. (*Assoc. Home Builders v. City of Walnut Creek* (1971) 4 Cal.3d 633.) Thus, the amount of in-lieu fees may be justified if used for park and recreational facilities that are generally available to the developments residents, although not necessarily located in the development itself (This section allows the City and WRPD to use park-in-lieu fees for both neighborhood park and community park development projects). The point of this "nexus" discussion is that whatever appraisal process the City uses for establishing its in-lieu parkland fees, the process must: (1) represent a fair market value of lands in or around the subdivision at issue, and (2) the valuation must reasonably represent the valuation of parkland in the location of the subject development. Moreover, a land appraisal used to establish an in-lieu park fee should be based upon the assumption that the land appraised is appraised as dedicated parkland, rather than "improved property". (*Norsco Enterprises v. City of Fremont* (1976) 54 Cal.App.3d 488, 495).

Although there is no specific language in Quimby on the method a city has to use to establish "fair market value of property that can be reasonably used for local parkland purposes", the courts have upheld fees established by one of three methods. These include:

- I. Doing a certified appraisal of existing park property within the jurisdiction (appraised as unimproved park land).
- II. Doing an appraisal of the property a developer is proposing to pay in-lieu fees for instead of dedicating land (this actually requires two appraisals, one by the city and one by the developer) to establish the fair market value by averaging the two appraisals.
- III. A real estate market survey of property within the city that meets the Quimby criteria that it can be reasonably used for local parkland purposes if purchased (requires a minimum of three (3) comps to establish fair market value).

Consequently, the City will have to choose one of the above methods to find the fair market value to use in its park in-lieu fee formula.

As to the amount of land that a city can require be dedicated (or corresponding fees assessed), Government Code § 66477(a)(2)(A) states:

“The dedication of land, or the payment of fees, or both, shall not exceed the proportionate amount necessary to provide a minimum of three acres of park area per 1,000 persons residing within a subdivision subject to this section, unless the amount of existing neighborhood and community park area, as calculated pursuant to this subdivision or multi-family development, exceeds that limit, in which case a local legislative ordinance may be adopted that calculates the amount as a higher standard not to exceed five acres per 1,000 persons residing within a development subject to this section.”

“The park area per 1,000 members of the population of the city, county, or local public agency shall be derived from the ratio that the amount of neighborhood and community park acreage bears to the total population of the city, county, or local public agency as shown in the most recent available federal census. The amount of neighborhood and community park acreage shall be the actual acreage of existing neighborhood and community parks of the city, park district, county, or local public agency as shown on its records, plans, recreational element, maps, or reports as of the date of the most recent available federal census”.

Therefore, the amount of the Quimby Act in-lieu fee per residential lot or multi-family dwelling unit for new development is a formula consisting of:

$$\frac{[X] \text{ acres times current land value per acre}}{1,000} \times \text{persons per household}$$

The recommendation in the Parks, Urban Greening and Open Space Master Plan for the City/WRPD Parkland Dedication/In-Lieu Fee Ordinance (Example Appendix A) for Neighborhood Parks pursuant to the Quimby Act is 2.5 acres per 1,000 residents (This is also the current requirement in the City's Municipal Code). The recommended standard for Community Parks is 3 acres per 1,000 residents. However, the adopted standard in the Wasco Recreation and Park District's current Park and Recreation Master Plan is for only 1 acre of Neighborhood Parks per 1,000 residents and 1.5 acres of Community Parks per 1,000 residents. If the City adopts the Parks, Urban Greening and Open Space Master Plan recommended standards, the WRPD should amend its Park and Recreation Master Plan to reflect the City park standards.

The nexus for the need for Neighborhood Parks within residential development was presented in the Needs Analysis section of the master plan. This analysis also shows that Community Parks serve local neighborhood uses in addition to providing park and recreation amenities that serve the entire city. Consequently, the basis for establishing the park standard for Wasco’s Parkland Dedication/ In-Lieu Fee Ordinance should be the 2.5 acre standard for Neighborhood Parks and .5 acres of the 3 acre standard for Community Parks. (Note: the remaining 2.5 acres for Community Parks in Wasco will be addressed in the nexus for Community Park Development Impact Fees later in this chapter).

Therefore, the recommended acres per 1,000 residents the City should use in determining its Quimby formula for its Parkland Dedication/In-Lieu Fee Ordinance is a total of 3 acres per 1,000 residents.

MIG is recommending that the city use option III above in determining the “fair market value of property that can reasonably be used for local parkland purposes”. Option I requires an expensive appraisal process of all parkland within the City and Option II would require an appraisal of every piece of property proposed for development at the time of development, which is cumbersome and expensive for both the City and the proposed developer.

If the City decides to proceed with the recommendations in the master plan it will need to do a market survey of local property available for purchase at the time of adoption of the fee ordinance. To establish an example of the probable fee formula, MIG has prepared a market survey of current properties for sale in Wasco (as of April 1, 2014) that would be suitable to meet the Quimby requirement of “fair market value of vacant unimproved land that can be reasonably used for local park purposes”.

Coldwellbanker Informatics © 2014, which is used by the real estate industry as a reliable source of real estate values, lists the following unimproved residential zoned land suitable for parkland purposes currently for sale in Wasco:

- 7.4 acres (322,344 sq. ft.) zoned residential \$550,000 (\$1.70 sq. ft.)
- 89.22 acres (3,886,423 sq. ft.) zoned residential \$2,675,000 (\$.69 sq. ft.)
- 13.59 acres (591,980 sq. ft.) zoned residential \$490,000 (\$.83 sq. ft.)
- 9.9 acres (431,244 sq. ft.) zoned residential \$340,000 (\$.79 sq. ft.)
- 27 acres (1,176,120 sq. ft.) zoned residential \$2,025,000 (\$1.72 sq. ft.)
- 5 acres (217,800 sq. ft.) zoned residential \$990,000 (\$4.55 sq. ft.)

THEREFORE, THE RECOMMENDED ACRES PER 1,000 RESIDENTS THE CITY SHOULD USE IN DETERMINING ITS QUIMBY FORMULA FOR ITS PARKLAND DEDICATION/IN-LIEU FEE ORDINANCE IS A TOTAL OF 3 ACRES PER 1,000 RESIDENTS.

The market value of residential zoned vacant unimproved land in Wasco varies in value depending on location, access (roads), terrain, infrastructure (utilities, storm drains, etc.) and status of approved density.

The above market survey includes a full range of property values from the low end to the high end. If we average the current 6 parcels of unimproved vacant land currently available in Wasco that could be reasonably used for local parkland purposes we can establish the fair market value to use in the park fee formula $(\$1.70 + \$0.69 + \$0.83 + \$0.79 + \$1.72 + \$4.55 / 6)$ equals \$1.72 per square foot or \$74,923 per acre.

Generally, a market survey and fee update is done every five years, or as necessary as economic conditions dictate.

The current persons per household (Source: 2010 Federal Census) is 3.9.

Thus, the estimated recommended Wasco Parkland Dedication/In-Lieu Fee Ordinance formula would be:

$$\frac{3 \text{ acres times } \$74,923}{1,000} \times 3.9 = \$877 \text{ per parcel or unit}$$

*The 3.9 persons per household figure may be adjusted downward if the proposed development project is for studio/one bedroom apartments or 55 and older senior housing.

As stated above, if the developer provides park and recreational improvements to the dedicated land, the value of the improvements must be credited against the amount of any fees or dedications required by the ordinance. If the developer provides private recreation facilities/parks for the development, built and maintained by a Homeowners Association, the developer should receive up to 50% credit on Park-In-Lieu fees. The percentage amount of credit should be determined by the following formula:

Total Park In-Lieu Fee Due minus the value of the land the private recreation facilities/parks were developed on and scheduled to be maintained by the homeowners association times .5.

For example, if a 50 unit condo project were proposed, the Park In-Lieu fee due would be \$43,850 (50 units x \$877 per unit). If the development contained a swimming pool, club house and children’s play area totaling 20,000 square feet, the final Park-In-Lieu fee due would be:

$$\$43,850 - \$17,200 = \$26,650$$

$$(\$34,400 (\$1.72 \text{ sq. ft.} \times 20,000 \text{ sq.ft.}) \times .5 = \$17,200)$$

2.7 DEVELOPMENT IMPACT FEE ORDINANCE FOR COMMUNITY PARKS AND FACILITIES

State law also recognizes that residential development has impacts on the entire community recreation system, in addition to the need for local neighborhood parkland. Thus, there is a number of enabling legislative measures the City can use to impose Park Development Impact Fees (PDIF) in addition to Quimby fees on residential development.

Park Development Impact Fees (PDIF) are normally adopted to fund Community Park development and facilities, such as sports fields, community centers, swim complexes, and other amenities that serve the entire community and would not normally be included in the development of Neighborhood Parks. As shown in the needs assessment for Wasco there are a number of community park improvements and new community park facilities Wasco residents feel are necessary to meet community demands for facilities, so establishing a funding mechanism to address these needs is imperative for Wasco.

As stated above, the recommended standard for Community Parks in Wasco is 3 acres per 1,000 residents. Wasco has a history of developing community parks to serve both surrounding neighborhoods with amenities such as tot lots, picnic facilities, open play areas, ball courts, walking paths, etc. and community facilities, such as the Barker Park Pool and the Westside Park Skate Park. This approach has served the community well and is the recommended approach for future community parks.

This is the basic nexus for including .5 acres of the Community Park standard in the calculation of the recommended Quimby Parkland Dedication/In-Lieu Fee Ordinance.

To address the remaining 2.5 acres per 1,000 population for Community Parks it is recommended that the City establish a Park Development Impact Fee Ordinance (PDIF) for Community Parks & Facilities in addition to the Quimby fee requirements.

The recommended amount of the Park Development Impact Fee per residential lot or dwelling unit for new development is a formula consisting of:

$$\frac{[X] \text{ acres times current land value per acre} \times \text{persons per household}}{1,000}$$

Thus, an example of the estimated recommended PDIF formula would be:

$$\frac{2.5 \text{ acres times } \$74,923}{1,000} \times 3.9^* = \$731 \text{ per parcel or unit}$$

**The 3.9 persons per household figure may be adjusted downward if the proposed development project is for studio/one bedroom apartments or 55 and older senior housing.*

Again, if the sub-divider provides park and recreational improvements to land they dedicated, the value of the improvements must be credited against the amount of any fees or dedications required by the PDIF ordinance. If the developer provides private recreation facilities/parks for the development, built and maintained by a Homeowners Association, the developer should receive up to 50% credit on PDIF fees also. The percentage amount of credit should be determined by the following formula:

Total PDIF due minus the value of the land the private recreation facilities/parks were developed on and scheduled to be maintained by the homeowners association times .5.

Consequently, in the previous example of a proposed 50 unit condo project, the PDIF would be:

$$50 \text{ units} \times \$731 = \$36,550, \text{ less } \$17,200 \text{ (half the value of land recreation improvements were made on i.e. } \$1.72 \times 20,000 \text{ sq. ft.} \times .5 = \$17,200) = \$19,350$$

Thus, the total fees the City would collect on the proposed condo project would be:

Parkland Dedication & Park In-Lieu Fee Ordinance: \$26,650*

Community Park Development Impact Fee (PDIF): \$19,350**

Total Fees to be collected: \$46,000

*Can only be used for Neighborhood Park Facilities

** Can only be used for Community Park Facilities

This example would cost the developer a total of \$920 per condo unit for both Neighborhood Parks and Community Parks and would insure the City (and WRPD) would have a funding source for meeting both neighborhood and

community park needs as expressed in the master plan needs assessment and master plan recommended five year capital improvement program.

An example of a single family residential development park in lieu fee and community park impact fee requirement would be as follows:

Example: Proposed 75 single family home development

Parkland Dedication In-Lieu Fee formula:

$$\frac{3 \text{ acres times } \$74,923}{1,000} \times 3.9 = \$877 \text{ per parcel or unit}$$

Total Park In-Lieu Fee: \$877 times 75 homes equals \$65,775

Community Park Impact Fee formula:

$$\frac{2.5 \text{ acres times } \$74,923}{1,000} \times 3.9^* = \$731 \text{ per parcel or unit}$$

Total Community Park Impact Fee: \$731 times 75 homes equals \$54,825

Total park fees for the project would equal \$120,600 (\$65,775 for Quimby In-Lieu Fee and \$54,825 for Community Park Impact Fee)

The cost to the developer for each home would be \$1,608 per home.

2.8 OTHER FUNDING SOURCES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

It is extremely unlikely that park fees from future residential development will be able to cover all the costs required to adequately address neighborhood and community park needs, and there will also be a need to fund special use facilities, greenbelts, mini-parks, and possibly regional parks. Consequently, both the City and WRPD should pursue all other possible funding strategies available to them in order to supplement funding from park fees for the capital improvement program and to fund other desired facilities.

The following is a list of funding possibilities to pursue and strategies on how to access them.

GRANTS

The first step in grant proposal planning is the development of a clear, concise description of the proposed project. To develop a convincing proposal for project funding, the project must fit into the philosophy and mission of the grant-seeking organization or agency and the need that the proposal is

addressing must be well documented and well-articulated. Typically, funding agencies or foundations will want to know that a proposed activity or project reinforces the overall mission of an organization or grant seeker, and that the project is necessary. To make a compelling case the following should be included in a typical grant proposal:

- Nature of the project, its goals, needs, and anticipated outcomes.
- How the project will be conducted.
- Timetable for completion.
- How best to evaluate the results (performance measures).
- Staffing needs, including use of existing staff and new hires or volunteers.
- Preliminary budget, covering expenses and financial requirements, to determine what funding levels to seek.

When developing an idea for a proposal, it is also important to determine if the idea has already been considered in the applicant's locality. A thorough check should be made with state legislators, County government, and related public and private agencies that may currently have grant awards or contracts to do similar work. If a similar program already exists, the applicant may need to reconsider submitting the proposed project, particularly if duplication of effort is perceived. However, if significant differences or improvements in the proposed project's goals can be clearly established, it may be worthwhile to pursue federal or private foundation assistance.

Community support for many proposals is essential. Once a proposal summary is developed, look for individuals or groups representing academic, political, professional, and lay organizations which may be willing to support the proposal in writing. The type and caliber of community support is critical in the initial and subsequent review phases. Numerous letters of support can influence the administering agency or foundation. Elicit support from local government agencies and public officials. Letters of endorsement detailing exact areas of project sanction and financial or in-kind commitment are often requested as part of a proposal to a federal agency. Several months may be required to develop letters of endorsement since something of value (e.g., buildings, staff, and services) is sometimes negotiated between the parties involved.

While funding is the primary concern for the City and Park District, thought should be given to the kinds of nonmonetary contributions that may be available. In many instances, academic institutions, corporations, and other nonprofit groups in the community may be willing to contribute technical and professional assistance, equipment, or space to a worthy project. Not only will such contributions reduce the amount of money being sought, but evidence of

such local support will be viewed favorably by most reviewers.

The tables above showing the recommended capital improvement projects also indicate a recommended funding source. The recommended funding is usually a combination of local agency funding and possible grant funding that would be appropriate for the particular project. Below is a list of the recommended grant programs and an overview of each:

BJA Safe Neighborhoods Grant – The Bureau of Justice Assistance Grant Program is an annual competitive grant program funded by the United States Department of Justice. It funds projects that make neighborhoods safer. Some examples are park security lighting, access improvements to parks, and park clean-up projects.

Land & Water Conservation Fund Grant – The State of California Department of Parks and Recreation Office of Grants and Local Services administers an annual competitive grant program funded by the Federal Government that provides funding for projects related to preserving open space, creating habitat, water conservation, and providing access to outdoor recreation.

Recycle Materials Grant - The California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) administers competitive grant programs that fund local agency projects that use recycled materials in park development or improvement projects. Examples include the California Integrated Waste Management Board’s grant program to assist local agencies in using recycled materials for children’s playgrounds.

USDA – NIFA Grant – The United States Department of Agriculture administers an annual competitive grant program to facilitate the creation of produce, recreation, and/or wildlife gardens in urban and rural areas. Examples are community gardens, farmers markets, and healthy cooking classes.

Private Foundation Grants – There are a number of private foundations that fund public projects that benefit community life. Most Foundations do not accept unsolicited funding proposals. Personal contact with a Board member who will bring the proposal to their board for consideration is the most successful approach. Request for funding should be for specific capital improvements, equipment or programs. A complete package showing the Wasco Recreation and Park District operation must accompany a funding request. The key is to match the funding request to the mission of the Foundation you are applying to. Follow up and careful study of the granting foundation is the key to successful funding. The following is a list of private foundations that have a track record of funding community projects

in California that WRPD could consider approaching to fund specific park projects or program development:

Coeta and Donald Barker Foundation	Jules and Evelyn Jacobsen Charitable Trust
Cowle Family Foundation	Knee Family Foundation
Glickman Foundation, Inc.	Melzer Family Foundation, Inc.
Greenbaum-Strauss Foundation	Regional Access Project Foundation, Inc.
Marvin and Roberta Holland Family Foundation	Reimer Foundation, Inc.
Lawrence E. & Elaine Smith Irell Foundation	Vivian Ringold Charitable Trust
Herbert R. & Loreen K Jacobson Foundation	Ednah Root Foundation
McKelvey Foundation	Schindler Humanities Foundation
The Mirada Habitat Foundation	Skilling Foundation
George Montgomery Foundation of the Arts	Spear Charitable Foundation
Irvine & Irma Robbins Foundation	Wasserman Foundation
Joseph and Beverly Shore Foundation	Webb Foundation
Alan C Stoneman Trust	Robert L Allardyce Charitable Trust
Stryder Foundation	Jerome and Anastasia Angel Charitable Trust
Webber Foundation, Inc	Berns Family Foundation, Inc.
Weil Family Foundation	Brautigam/Kaplan Foundation
Alderson Family Foundation	Brown Foundation
Barnabas Partners Foundation	Cienega Foundation
Behlman Foundation	Gelfand Foundation, Inc.
Charles R. Knox and Shirley A. Knox Foundation	Griffin Family Foundation
Doering Family Foundation, Ltd	Hitchner Foundation
Louis M. and Birdie Halper Foundation	John F Kimberling Foundation
Marcy and Seymour Hyman Foundation	Ko-So Foundation
Lions Charities	Ernst Krenek Society, Inc.
Robert and Joan Masterson Foundation	Martvest Foundation
The Vine Foundation	Mason Foundation, Inc.,
Marsh Charitable Trust	Larry A Modin Foundation
Bia House Foundation	Robert J Pond Foundation
Boyd Family Foundation, Inc	James E Thomson Foundation
Bragdon R Garrow Foundation	Wiesner Family Foundation
The Golan Foundation	Wilson Foundation for Education
	Enduring Freedom KIA Fund
	Al Horton Memorial Rotary Foundation

Retaining the services of a grant writer familiar with applying to private foundations is highly recommended, as this is a very specialized area and needs someone with expertise to be successful.

There may be other State or Federal grant programs the City and/or the Park District can pursue, so continually checking the State and Federal web sites for available grants is a must.

FINANCING PROJECTS

The following section is an overview and explanation of various funding and financing methods available to municipal agencies and special districts for funding capital projects. This information is provided to inform the reader of options the City and WRPD may consider when funding needed capital improvements.

USE OF BONDS

General Obligation Bonds make sense when an agency has several different types of facilities it needs to develop and there is strong community support. For example, if a city wanted to build a new City Hall, police station, community park, and library, it may bundle all three into one General Obligation Bond. Hopefully this would create a wider voter support to get the two-thirds approval required by General Obligation Bonds. General Obligation Bonds usually do not succeed for special interest facilities. For example, a General Obligation Bond to build a new aquatic facility or sports complex would probably not receive the two-thirds voter approval necessary to issue the bonds.

Some agencies that need to develop a number of recreation and park facilities have had success selling General Obligation Bonds to support the implementation of the recommendations in their park and recreation master plans. When voters know that the bonds will only go to a Park Master Plan that they have approved, they tend to support such initiatives.

General Obligation Bonds are paid for out of the agency's General Tax Allotment Fund. So the allocation of dollars to a General Obligation Bond for park purposes will compete with the WRPD's needs for ongoing operations and other types of needed park improvements. Only park districts or cities with excess general fund capacity are really able to use General Obligation Bonds for park and facility development.

PAYING FOR BONDS

The most common method for implementing recreation and park facility development by the use of bonds is to gain voter approval for an additional

property tax assessment to pay for the debt of the Park Bonds. The bond issuing method is the same as General Obligation Bonds; they require two-thirds voter approval. However, along with the voter approval to issue the bonds, the voters need to approve an additional annual tax assessment to pay for the debt service on the bonds.

This approach is successful if there is strong community support for park facilities and implementing the Master Plan. The key to a successful Park Bond and tax assessment approval campaign is to work with a community foundation to build support for the tax assessment and to educate the voters that the additional tax assessment can only be used for development of the approved park facilities.

Most park districts have found that Park Bonds with a tax assessment are most successful when placed on a general election ballot rather than a special election ballot. It usually takes at least two years to develop a community support foundation, educate the voters, and develop enough community support to get two-thirds approval. Consequently, agencies most likely will only be able to do a Park Bond with a tax assessment once every 10 to 20 years.

Before this financing approach should be undertaken, the WRPD should allocate some resources to doing a statistically valid community survey on how the community perceives the adopted Master Plan and if they would be willing to pay additional taxes to implement it, and if so, how much additional tax would be acceptable.

The public's perception of value is the most important element of generating a two-thirds voter approval. For example, the community may be willing to pay an additional \$30 a year on their property taxes to implement a number of facilities they believe they will use, but not \$100 a year. A statistically valid random phone survey is the only way to find out what the community's level of acceptance might be. This is absolutely necessary if the WRPD and City wishes to finance park facility development by going to the voters for approval of a Park Bond with a tax assessment.

REVENUE BONDS

Revenue Bonds are a popular way for public agencies to finance capital improvements, especially recreation and park facilities, when the facility being developed will generate the necessary revenue to pay the debt service on the bonds. This method is common for development of sports arenas, convention centers, and other facilities that generate revenue through admission, concessions, and rentals. Revenue Bonds require the agency to provide

collateral equal to one and half times the value of the bond issue. An agency must provide collateral in the form of property or properties it owns that have a market value of at least one and a half times the amount of Revenue Bond it wishes to issue.

Revenue Bonds do not require voter approval but do require a four-fifths vote of the Park District Board and/or City Council. Revenue Bonds are usually combined with the establishment of an Assessment District under AB1600.

If the WRPD or the City can design capital improvements with revenue generating components so that the debt service and the cost of maintenance and operations do not impact the WRPD or City's General Fund, Revenue Bonds are a good approach to funding facilities where there is strong community support and political motivation to develop the facilities.

CERTIFICATES OF PARTICIPATION (COPs)

Certificates of Participation (COPs) are similar to Revenue Bonds in that they do not require voter approval, just a four-fifths Park District Board and/or City Council vote. And they require the agency to provide collateral in the form of property equity one and a half times the market value of the proposed issue. The advantage of COPs is that they are issued in script of \$5,000 or \$10,000 which allows for smaller investors to invest, and they are tax exempt, so interest rates are lower. Again, the key to this type of financing is to design the proposed facilities with revenue generating components and/or combine it with an AB1600 Assessment District so that there is no impact on the WRPD or City's existing General Fund to issue the COPs.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

There are two main methods for establishing assessments to pay for recreation and park facility development. These are:

- Lighting and Landscape Assessment Districts,
- Mello-Roos, and other state legislation allowing cities and park districts to create assessment districts for capital improvements.

Each of these requires approval by the property owners who are within the district and are subject to paying the assessment.

State law AB1600 allows local agencies to impose an assessment on properties within an improvement area when the agency can show a nexus that the improvements being made are a benefit to the properties being assessed. Under this method the law allows the city to adopt the proposed assessment so long as no more than 49% of property owners who respond to the vote oppose the proposed assessment.

Agencies typically use enabling legislation for assessment districts for facility improvements that impact or benefit the whole city or a specific area.

Some agencies have had some success using this legislation to fund large community or regional park developments where there is broad community support for the improvements. Newer agencies have had the most success in setting up assessment districts, because they can be established when only a few property owners are within the proposed assessment district.

Established agencies where there are thousands of property owners within the proposed assessment district have had trouble getting 50% approval. This legislation requires the agency to do an engineering study to determine the proportionate benefit each property within the proposed district receives.

AB1600 has several benefits over other assessment legislation in that it is an impact fee. Unlike the benefit assessment districts, the agency does not have to do an engineering study to proportion the cost according to benefit. The agency simply has to make a finding that there is a need for recreation and park facilities based on the impact of the proposed development, and the proposed development is not contributing to mitigate the impact. This is accomplished by preparing a nexus study showing the relationship between the defined impact and the facility or facilities the proposed development's impact.

For example, if the City wanted to use AB1600 to impose an impact fee on new commercial and industrial development, it would need to do nexus studies to determine if existing commercial and industrial properties have an impact on the WRPD's recreation and park services and facilities. If the City finds that employees in commercial and industrial businesses use the recreation and park facilities, employers use the park system and/or recreation programs as recruiting tools, and that as a result commercial and industrial property increases in value are due to a well-developed and maintained park system, the City could use the authority under AB1600 to impose a park fee on new commercial and industrial development within its jurisdiction.

LEASE PURCHASE FINANCING

A newer concept in financing recreation and park improvements being used successfully by public agencies is a form of lease/purchase financing. Under the lease/purchase financing method, the WRPD or City would contract with a financial institution that would put together an investment group. The WRPD or City would then lease the proposed site and facility improvements to the investment group who would provide the funding for the development of the site and facility. The investment group then leases the site and facility

back to the WRPD or City at a lease rate equal to the cost of the financing the investment group provides to the City for the development of the site and facility.

The lease serves as the collateral for the financing, not other real property, as is the case in issuing revenue bonds or COP's. If the WRPD or City defaults on the lease payments, the investment group would own the lease and could operate the facility or contract the operation of the facility to a third party.

The WRPD or City owns the site throughout the lease purchase period, and at the end of the lease period, the WRPD or City owns the improvements free and clear.

This form of financing currently has very attractive interest rates, is tax exempt for investors, and does not impact the agency's bond indebtedness or credit rating.

USER FEES

User fees consist of charges for classes and activities; rental of facilities; reimbursement for use of equipment; admission to events; maintenance fees for use of fields; registration fees; etc. User fees are usually collected to pay for ongoing operations and maintenance of facilities and equipment. User fees can also be used to pay debt service for Revenue Bonds sold to build public facilities that the agency allocates for use to community groups.

For example, some recreation and park agencies have built sports complexes, aquatic facilities, and performing arts facilities by selling Revenue Bonds and dedicating the user fees charged for use of the facilities to paying off the debt and then having the user fees go to ongoing operations and capital improvements.

The most common type of user fees are fees charged for recreation classes and activities. This is done by establishing a "Fee Based" delivery system for a variety of lifelong learning, hobby, exercise, dance, and other special interest recreation classes and group activities whereby the class instructor is an independent contractor that works for a percentage of the class or activity fee charged the participant. The usual percentage split is 70% to the instructor and 30% to the Recreation and Park District. Fee based recreation programs enable the agency to offer a wide variety of classes and activities requested by the community without having the overhead cost of hiring full time recreation staff to teach the classes and conduct the activities. By setting class or participant minimums and charging additional materials fees if they are required for the activity, an agency can insure that their fee based programming will not impact their general fund.

Fee based programming also allows the agency to recruit instructors who have specific experience and expertise in the type of class or activity they are instructing, while at the same time creating employment opportunities for these independent contractors and generating revenue for the recreation district to pay facility operations costs.

Communicating with the community on what types of classes and activities they are interested in, making the community aware of the classes and activities that are available to them, and recruiting qualified independent contractors to conduct the classes and activities are the keys to a successful fee based recreation program system. The WRPD should approach developing a fee based recreation program system as if they are launching a new business venture. A business plan should be developed that includes strategies for communicating and marketing to the community, recruiting instructors, establishing activity fees, handling class and activity registration, assignment of facility space, and a pro-forma of direct and indirect costs and projected revenues. This would include the cost of hiring a professional recreation supervisor specifically assigned to operating the fee based recreation program system.

There have been numerous studies by the National Recreation and Parks Association and the California Parks and Recreation Society that show participation actually increases and community satisfaction with recreation programs increases when there is a fee charged for the class or activity. This was shown true even in low income areas. It is a perception of value, i.e. when a cost is involved in taking a class there is more incentive to attend the class to receive the value one pays for.

Providing access to community members who cannot afford the class fees can be accomplished by providing scholarships to low income participants who want to take classes. Scholarship funding can be obtained through private foundation grants, adding a small registration fee to all classes and activities to build a scholarship fund, support from local service clubs and organizations, and working with the independent contract instructors to reduce their percentage split for scholarship participants.

User fees are established by adopting a fee ordinance, in the case of the city; and a fee resolution in the case of the Park District Board. Interagency fees can be waived or traded for in-kind services, but still should be contained in the fee enabling documents to establish value of the waiver or in-kind payment. Keeping detailed records of fee waivers and in-kind payments is important, especially in applying for grants with other agency partners and in developing annual budgets.

In summary, user fees should be implemented when possible and generally used for paying for maintenance and operations; however, under certain circumstances they may be allocated to pay debt service for capital projects.

CONCESSIONS

In Chapter 1 there are strategies for possible delivery of services through the use of concessions. Most notably is the skate park. Private concessionaires can provide things and organize activities that public agencies are not in the business of doing, thus reducing public agency costs and giving the skate park users a more varied, safe, and rewarding experience. A concessionaire can provide on-site supervision; make improvements to the skate park, like night lighting and a pro-shop/snack bar facility; provide quality maintenance to make the skateboarding more rewarding and safe; and offer lessons, workshops, and tournaments to keep users interested. Their constant on-site presence during all open hours also provides enforcement of State helmet laws.

The fees private concessionaires normally charge are \$15 per year for resident membership and \$25 per year for non-residents. They also derive revenue from charging for lessons (group and private), tournament entry fees, and the sale of pro-shop items and food.

There are several companies that the WRPD could solicit proposals from and negotiate terms and conditions.

ASSET MANAGEMENT

The definition of Asset Management is simply “the use of public property for private purposes for public benefit”. Wasco already has several asset management programs, such as, cell tower leases, special event sponsors, and private donations for recognition in parks and facilities.

Through the community input process and surveys the consensus was that the community understood the need for revenue development and would be generally accepting of some commercialization of these proposed facilities in order to insure quality programming and proper maintenance.

However, there was concern expressed regarding aesthetics and too much commercialization of public facilities.

The three components to developing an asset management plan are:

- Revenue from facility rentals, fees, and charges
- Leases or licenses for private concessions
- Advertising/vending/sponsorship opportunities

Based on the recommended future projects outlined in the master plan MIG has developed the following list of advertising/vending/sponsorship opportunities for consideration by the City and Park District to help it generate additional revenue for which to use in operating and maintaining park facilities:

1. Information and advertising kiosks
2. Telecommunication tower leases
3. Naming rights and/or facility sponsorship
4. Food & Rental concessions.

Several of these revenue categories are advertising programs and the potential revenue is dependent upon the number of impressions that can be generated on the proposed site. In advertising terms, there are two types of impressions, repeat impressions and one-time impressions.

Repeat impressions are those exposures to the same people over and over and one-time impressions are those that people see passing by just once. Companies who are trying to establish a brand identity like to advertise at locations that provide repeat impressions, while established brands prefer one-time locations that provide for brand reinforcement.

The value of these locations is determined by the number of visits and the amount of participation at each site. It is best to “bundle” the sites and offer potential contracts for each category at all sites.

For example, there are several recommended sites for bleacher shelters and shade shelters, at Recreation Ball Park, Westside and Annin parks. All of these could be “bundled” into one shade shelter advertising contract thus generating multiple opportunities for ad placements and increase the potential revenue from such an asset management program.

The extent of advertising programs the City and Park District wishes to use to offset maintenance and operational costs will have to be a policy decision made by elected officials. The key is to design the facilities with these programs in mind so that they fit in and look a part of the environment instead of looking like after thoughts that stand out and are unsightly additions.

They need to be attractive structures, located for maximum exposure and have control as to content, so as not to create public controversy or opposition. The extent of commercial advertising should not be offensive to visitors or participants or it will defeat the purpose and turn people away from using the facilities.

These types of programs need to be reviewed in terms of existing City sign and advertising ordinances so that the City is not doing things it will not allow the private sector to do.

There are several factors that affect the ability and success of Asset Management Programs including:

- The economic makeup and image of the city
- The types of facilities, their projected use and attendance
- The community's perception and acceptance of commercialization
- Income levels, race, ethnicity, and age demographics
- The city's ordinances and regulations regarding signage
- The demand for commercial exposure in Wasco
- The City's and Park District's ability to manage asset management contracts
- The political environment for balancing the need for revenue versus commercialization of public facilities, aesthetics, logistics, and the cost versus revenue benefits of asset management programs

Generating revenue from the use of public facilities is a business venture and thus requires good business decisions and good business practices when implementing asset management programs.

For example, an agency cannot decide to implement an information/advertising kiosk program at its parks and facilities but then decide to hide the kiosk in an obscure location because it doesn't want to appear that it is commercializing its facilities.

By designing the kiosk to be attractive and fit into the theme of the facility the kiosks actually become an integral part of the facility environment and an essential amenity to provide information to site visitors. It is recommended that when the City and Park District proceeds with the design of new facilities that the design process contains an analysis of potential asset management opportunities to generate revenue to offset operation and maintenance costs. By doing this the city can develop attractive quality new facilities that have financial sustainability in the future.

2.9 FUNDING SOURCES AND STRATEGIES SUMMARY

The funding approaches provide the City and WRPD with a combined parkland goal in its General Plan of 6 acres per 1,000 residents, which as the needs assessment shows, is necessary to meet the needs for all types of recreation amenities desired by the community. It also provides a nexus for establishing the 3 acre per 1,000 residents Parkland Dedication/In-Lieu Fee per Quimby

state law. It also provides a funding source to address community park needs and a nexus for charging a Community Park Development Impact Fee to address these needs. The recommended park fees and the other funding strategies outlined in the master plan (facilitating delivery through partnerships and collaborations with other agencies, organizations, and commercial recreation operators; volunteer services, donations/sponsorships, fund raising projects, use of assets to generate revenue, grants, and, various financing options) should provide the City and WRPD with the resources it will need to implement a long term capital improvement program and pursue additional recreation amenities contained in the master plan recommendations, while freeing up WRPD General Fund dollars for ongoing operations, maintenance and programs.

There are other ways to establish park dedication and in-lieu fee requirements, such as, adopting an annual fee resolution with a fixed fee per bedroom or parcel or unit that reflects the current cost of the City's (WRPD) capital improvement program. However, these approaches would require annual adoption of a fee resolution and separate appraisals for each proposed development project. MIG's recommended approach provides a formula approach consistent with state law so that no annual fee resolution has to be adopted, appraisals of the City's parkland only has to be done every five years, and every development project is treated consistently and fairly so as to reduce the risk of challenges to the City's fee ordinances.