



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department



MISSION AND GOALS

The **City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department** builds healthy communities through parks, programs, and partnerships; making the City a better place to live, visit and play.

Using the “Power of Parks,” the department promotes health, wellness, conservation and social equity by providing the community with opportunities to improve quality of life through access to local parks, recreation and cultural facilities, sports programming and open spaces.



LEADERSHIP

Cynthia Aguilar, Director
Brandie Barrett, Assistant Director
Martin Whitfield, Assistant Director
Bob Adams, Deputy Director, Northwest Division
Alonso Avitia, Deputy Director, Downtown Division
Scott Coughlin, Deputy Director, Special Operations Division
Joe Diaz, Deputy Director, South Division
Theresa Faull, Deputy Director, Management Services Division
Danielle Poveromo, Deputy Director, Northeast Division
Jarod Rogers, Deputy Director, Natural Resources Division
Todd Shackelford, Deputy Director, Parks Development
Shereka Jackson, Lead User Technology Specialist
Felicita Mendoza, Special Projects Administrator



GOVERNANCE

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

Mayor Kate Gallego
Vice Mayor Debra Stark (District 3)
Ann O'Brien (District 1)
Jim Waring (District 2)
Laura Pastor (District 4)
Betty Guardado (District 5)
Kevin Robinson (District 6)
Carlos Galindo-Elvira (District 7)
Kesha Hodge Washington (District 8)

PHOENIX PARKS AND PRESERVE INITIATIVE (PPPI) OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Patricia Duarte
John Furniss
Ira Feldman
Gary Kaasa
Sarah Porter

PHOENIX PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD

Kelly Dalton (Chair)
Aubrey Barnwell
Dorina Bustamante
Antonio Moya
Sarah Porter
Emma Viera
Ed Zuercher

PHOENIX SONORAN PRESERVE AND MOUNTAIN PARKS/PRESERVES COMMITTEE

Jesse Cuiilty
William Fallon
John Furniss
Vashti “Tice” Supplee
Tamera Zivic



A MESSAGE FROM THE PARKS & RECREATION DIRECTOR



CYNTHIA AGUILAR
Director

2024 was a remarkable year for the Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department; one defined by progress, investment, and community collaboration. Together with our residents and the direction of City leadership, we continued advancing our mission to provide safe, inclusive, and exceptional parks, programs and facilities that enrich quality of life for all who call Phoenix home.

This year, we celebrated major milestones across the city. From the completion of major renovations at South Mountain, Deer Valley, Paradise Valley, and Holiday Park Community Centers, to a revitalized Sunnyslope Youth Center, our recreation spaces are better equipped than ever to serve residents of all ages.

We also celebrated 100 years of stewardship at South Mountain Park and Preserve and the reopening of the South Mountain Visitor Center (formerly South Mountain Environmental Education Center), offering an improved educational experience for those exploring the area.

Innovation and inclusion remained at the forefront of our work with several upgrades to parks and green spaces across Phoenix, including the installation of Phoenix's first cricket pitches, a new ADA-accessible playground at Encanto Park, and improvements to parks and trails including Roadrunner Park and Cholla Trail at Camelback Mountain. And in September 2024, we proudly launched the public engagement process for the Parks Master Plan, inviting residents to help shape the next generation of parks and recreation in Phoenix.

Every accomplishment reflects our shared goal of ensuring every resident has access to vibrant, welcoming spaces that foster connection, health and community pride. None of this would be possible without the dedication of our Parks and Recreation team, our City partners, and the residents who support and celebrate our parks each day.

As we look ahead, we remain focused on strengthening our park system, expanding recreation opportunities, and preserving the natural beauty that defines Phoenix. Thank you for helping make 2024 a year of lasting impact.

With Gratitude,

Cynthia Aguilar

POPULAR AMENITIES

50,150 acres of desert parks and mountain preserves
273 miles of trails and **40** trailheads
187 parks
58 parks featuring a FitPHX WalkPHX path
62 outdoor and **30** indoor pickleball courts
34 community and recreation centers
29 pools
14 splash pads
13 dog parks
8 golf courses
8 lakes stocked for fishing
7 skate plazas and **3** skate parks

2024 BY THE NUMBERS



3 MILLION
hikers counted by trail counters

800 active teenagers in PHXTeens programming

PHXteens



41,680
youth sports participants



254,277
community/recreation center visits



889,600
residents used
FitPHX/WalkPHX paths



252,644
new visitors to department website

PHOENIX



427,603
rounds of golf played



1,500
trees planted



my phx my park
VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

40,534 hours of service

\$146,021,755
total annual operating budget for 2023-24

social media followers

f 17,492 **X 8,888** **@ 18,381**

INVESTMENTS IN FACILITIES

98 parks received upgrades
17 new playground structures installed
15 courts repaved
12 public restrooms renovated
6 community/recreation centers upgraded





READY, SET, REC! >>>>

Participation in Parks and Recreation programs continues to soar. Youth sports and recreation programs saw a **90%** increase from 2023, growing from **21,924** to **41,680** participants. Adult programs also experienced impressive growth, up **45%** from **7,488** to **10,862** participants.

From the courts to the fields, Phoenix residents are getting active, connecting with their communities, and discovering new ways to play.



MAKING A SPLASH!

Aquatics participation continued to grow in 2024, with **12,200** youth and adults enrolled in swim lessons, a **16.2%** increase over the previous year. City pools also welcomed **267,000** visitors, up **7.3%** from 2023, reflecting the community's strong interest in water safety, recreation, and accessible summer activities.





CELEBRATING MILESTONES



AND NEW BEGINNINGS



CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF STEWARDSHIP AT SOUTH MOUNTAIN PARK AND PRESERVE



In November, the Parks and Recreation Department formally celebrated 100 years of stewardship at **South Mountain Park and Preserve** with a community-wide centennial celebration. The event highlighted the preserve's rich history, natural beauty and the City's commitment to continued preservation of the beloved destination.

The milestone also marked the grand reopening of South Mountain Visitor Center, formally known as South Mountain Environmental Education Center. The renovated facility now features upgraded exhibits, improved accessibility and modernized amenities to enhance the visitor experience for generations to come.



 **South Mountain Visitor Center**
10409 S Central Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85042




NEW FULLY ADA

ACCESSIBLE PLAYGROUND



This year, the Parks and Recreation unveiled a new, fully ADA-accessible playground at **Encanto Park**, ensuring children of all abilities can play, explore, and connect. With inclusive play structures, sensory features, and safe, accessible pathways, the playground reflects the City's commitment to creating spaces that every child can enjoy, regardless of their ability. Encanto Park is now a place where fun truly has no limits.

 **Encanto Park**
2499 N 15th Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85007



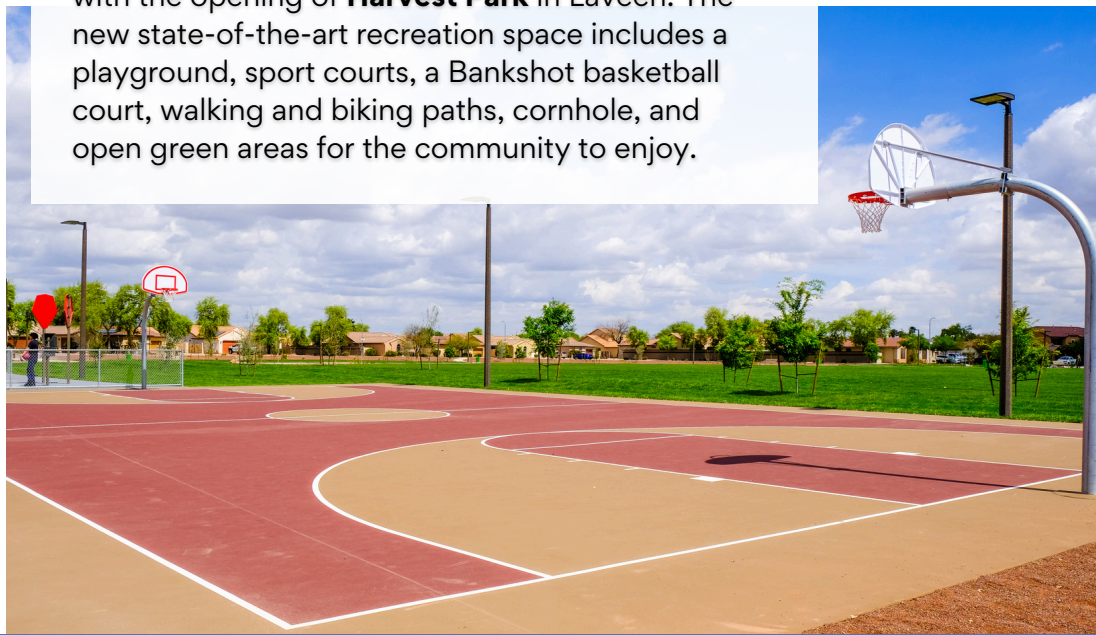
WELCOMING PHOENIX'S FIRST CRICKET PITCHES

The Parks and Recreation Department introduced the City's first-ever cricket pitches at **Turtle Rock Basin Park**, opening a new world of athletic opportunities for residents. These international-standard fields provide a space for youth and adult athletes to enjoy the globally beloved sport of cricket, while expanding Phoenix's commitment to diverse and inclusive recreation options.






In 2024, Parks and Recreation added its 187th park with the opening of **Harvest Park** in Laveen. The new state-of-the-art recreation space includes a playground, sport courts, a Bankshot basketball court, walking and biking paths, cornhole, and open green areas for the community to enjoy.



HELLO, HARVEST PARK!



 **Harvest Park**
5400 W Gwen St, Laveen Village, AZ 85339



NEW LOOK, SAME COMMUNITY SPIRIT.

Several Phoenix recreation centers and parks received upgrades in 2024.



DEER VALLEY COMMUNITY CENTER

📍 2001 W Wahalla Ln, Phoenix, AZ 85027



PARADISE VALLEY COMMUNITY CENTER

📍 17402 N 40th St, Phoenix, AZ 85032



ROADRUNNER PARK

📍 3502 E Cactus Rd, Phoenix, AZ 85032



MARYVALE PARK & COMMUNITY CENTER

📍 4420 N 51st Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85031

NOTHING BUT NET IN PHOENIX!

From hosting the NCAA Final Four Fan Festival and WNBA All-Star Clinic to the HBCU All-Star Game event, 2024 was a slam dunk year for basketball events in Phoenix Parks and Recreation.





EASTLAKE LEGACY PROJECT

Eastlake Park Community Center

underwent major renovations through the Eastlake Legacy Project, a partnership with the NCAA in celebration of the Final Four in Phoenix. The eight-month project brought a new gym floor, updated backboards and rims, new bleachers, fitness equipment, and resurfaced outdoor courts.

As part of the effort, Phoenix artist Giovannie Dixon created a mural honoring community leaders selected by the Eastlake Park Neighborhood Association. Completed in three weeks and donated by the NCAA, the mural and facility upgrades celebrate Eastlake's rich cultural legacy and enduring spirit of community.





STRENGTHENING OUR TRAILS

RANGER GRADUATION AND HIKE RIGHT PHX LEAD THE WAY

The Parks and Recreation Department proudly welcomed nine new Park Rangers following their graduation from the Ranger Academy. These dedicated professionals will serve across Phoenix's urban parks and mountain preserves, enhancing safety, supporting conservation efforts, and engaging with the community.



Hike Right PHX continued to connect residents with Phoenix's trails through ranger-led hikes focused on safety, preparedness, and desert awareness. These guided outings give participants the chance to learn from experienced Park Rangers while exploring the city's mountain preserves, encouraging confident, responsible, and enjoyable hiking experiences for all.



LET EVERY HOLIDAY SHINE



The 37th Annual APS Electric Light Parade once again brought thousands of residents together to celebrate the magic of the holiday season. With dazzling illuminated floats, community performers, and festive displays created by local groups and City departments, the parade continued its long-standing tradition of lighting up Phoenix with creativity, joy, and community spirit.

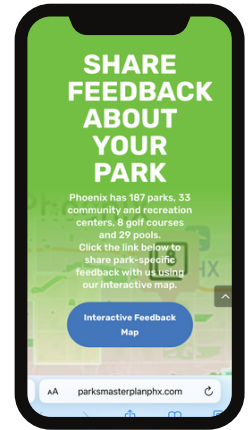


YOUR PARK. YOUR VISION.

PARKS MASTER PLAN

ENTERED THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PHASE

In the fall of 2024, the **Parks Master Plan** community engagement process officially launched, providing residents with multiple ways to share their ideas for local parks and recreation centers. Through an online survey and Interactive Feedback Map, community members contributed feedback that will help shape priorities and guide improvements across Phoenix's park system for the next decade.



NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM



TO INVEST 1.5 MILLION IN MINOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

The Parks and Recreation Department launched the **Neighborhood Parks Enhancement Program**, a new initiative funded by the voter-approved General Obligation Bond Program and designed to invest in local parks through community-driven improvements. Residents and neighborhood organizations were invited to submit project ideas for minor capital improvement projects, helping ensure that parks across every council district reflect the needs and priorities of the communities they serve.

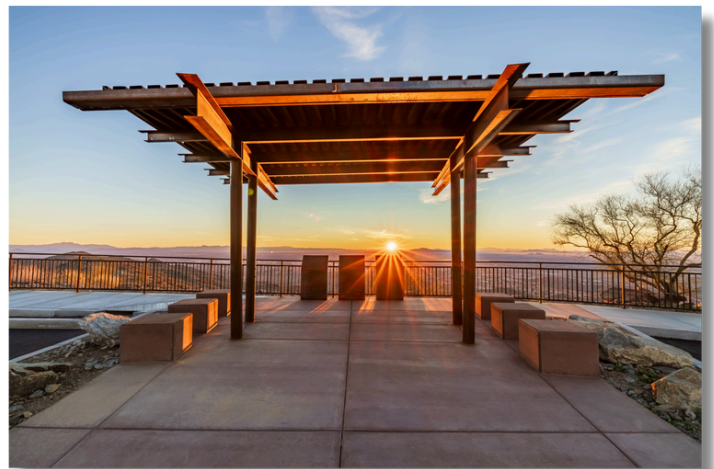




HONORS AND AWARDS

PHOENIX MAYOR'S COMMISSION ON DISABILITY ISSUES

The newly renovated **Gila Lookout at South Mountain Park and Preserve** earned the Mayor's Commission on Disability Issues Architectural Award for its fully ADA-accessible design. The project transformed the lookout into an inclusive space where visitors of all abilities can enjoy sweeping desert views, thoughtful amenities, and improved access to one of Phoenix's most iconic destinations.



**Arbor Day
Foundation™**

For the 37th consecutive year, the City of Phoenix earned the **Tree City USA** designation. In 2024, the Parks and Recreation Department planted 1,500 trees across city park properties, marking the sixth consecutive year the department has achieved this milestone, reinforcing Phoenix's commitment to a greener, more sustainable urban environment.

