

# Recreation Element

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Recreation element provides a description of the park system and an inventory of facilities and standards. It also covers recreation programs.

**Parks System:** provide a parks and recreation system that meets the needs of the resident and visitor population and is convenient, accessible and diverse in programs, locations and facilities.

**Parks and preserve interface:** develop design guidelines for private development adjacent to preserves, washes and open space to promote visibility and access to all park facilities.

**Trails and pathways:** link multi-purpose trails from parks to major open spaces and village cores.

## INTRODUCTION

This element includes a description of the park system; a general inventory of parklands and recreation facilities; and a mission statement, goals and policies for recreation programs and services throughout the city of Phoenix. The goals, policies, and recommendations reflect and support those of approved plans: i.e., the parks plan, the Sonoran Preserve Master Plan, the Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan, and the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The Recreation element relates and, in some areas, overlaps in a complementary fashion several other General Plan elements: Circulation; Bicycling; Public Buildings; Conservation, Rehabilitation and Redevelopment; Safety; Natural Resources Conservation; Neighborhood; Land Use; Open Space; and Growth Area. A list of major accomplishments relating to parks and recreation since the last General Plan update is included in the Accomplishments section.

The City of Phoenix Parks, and Recreation and Library Department provides parks, open space, and recreational facilities that meet the community's physical, educational, social, environmental, and cultural needs. In Phoenix there are over 132 traditional park sites, designated as neighborhood, community, or district parks, as well as desert parks and mountain preserves. The city offers programs at parks, community centers, and schools throughout Phoenix. In addition to facilities and programs offered on city-owned land, the recreation needs of

the community are also met in part by joint use of schools: lighted fields support community programs and relieve demand on parks, and school buildings can be used for after-school and summer recreation programs, as well as by community groups after hours.



**FIGURE 1 - Children Playing at the Park**

The staff of the Parks, and Recreation and Library Department serves the community/Phoenix residents based on this mission statement:

"To enhance the community's quality of life by providing and maintaining the richness and diversity of a safe, accessible, and affordable parks, recreation and library system that fulfills the physical, intellectual, social, cultural, and leisure needs of people

without regard to their race, ethnicity, national origin, sex, religion, age, sexual orientation, or disability."

## BACKGROUND

The social and environmental benefits of parks and recreation are required in order for the city of Phoenix to grow and prosper. Under the Phoenix City Charter, the Parks and Recreation Board sets parks and recreation policy and the City Council approves the budget for services. The city is fully committed to meeting or exceeding the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## FACILITY STANDARDS

Phoenix strives to retain its unique desert character by preserving mountains and open space. Natural open space accounts for 80 percent of Phoenix's parklands. However, developed parkland at the neighborhood and community level is severely deficient based on public demand for facilities. The value of trails is growing in importance, but the existing system is far from the goal of forming a connected network. Growing population and residential densities will result in an increasing demand for recreational open space and trail development. The following is a description of the

department's preferred development standards for parks, community centers, pools, and trails. Figures 4-10 identify the location of existing parks by village. For a detailed inventory or a list of facilities and amenities, contact the Parks Development Division in the Parks, and Recreation and Library Department.

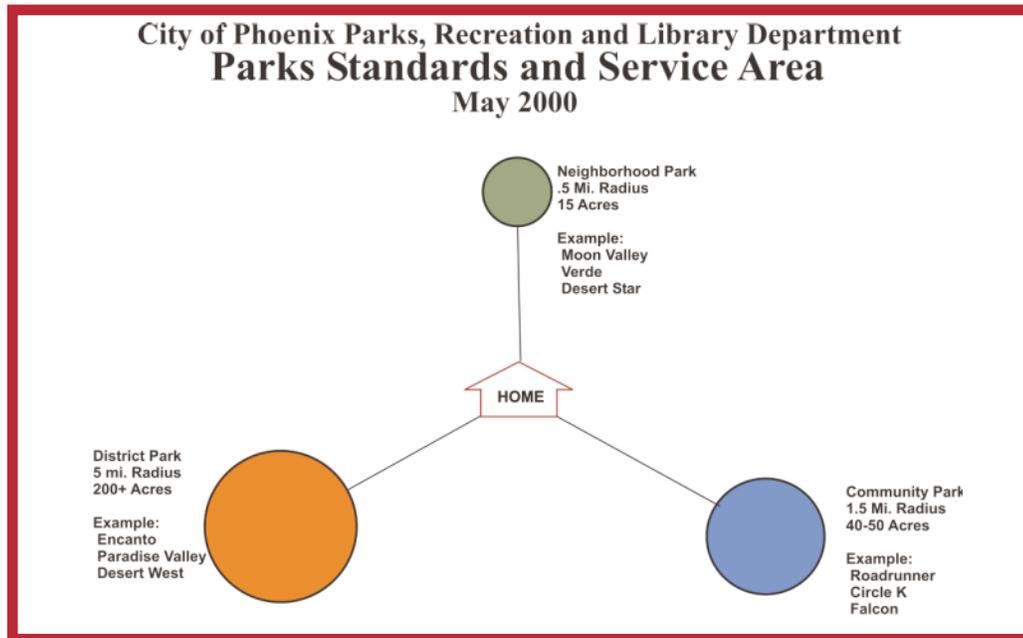
**Neighborhood parks** are designed to serve an area within a radius of one-half mile or a population from 4,000 to 7,000 people; examples include Moon Valley, Verde, and Desert Star. These parks are within walking or bicycling distance of residences and are typically 15 acres in size. Local or collector streets typically border them. Most neighborhood parks include children's playground and picnic areas, open play turf areas, parking, lighted volleyball and basketball courts, and restroom facilities.

Planned community developments may also provide neighborhood recreational facilities and open space. However, these areas tend to be small, private, and limited in recreational opportunities. They are not sufficient to meet a wide range of recreational and public open space needs.

**Community parks** such as Roadrunner, Circle K, and Falcon serve an area of one and one-half miles and a population of 20,000 to 50,000 people. These parks are typically 40 acres or larger, with active recreation

## STATISTICAL OVERVIEW OF KEY PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES

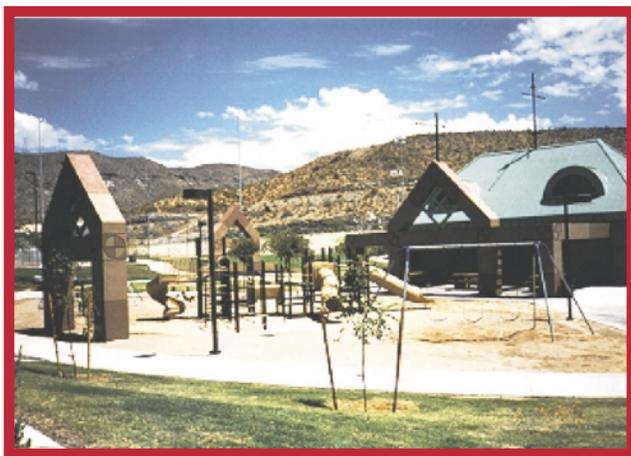
<u>PARKS FACILITIES</u>	<u># OF FACILITIES</u>	<u>ACRES</u>
Mountain preserves	0	23,627
Neighborhood parks	77	791
Community parks	45	1,473
Desert parks	7	5,230
District parks	10	1,822
Recreation centers	13	
<b><u>Recreation services (annual)</u></b>		
Number of visitors		28,075,000
Number of participants		7,945,000
Number of volunteer hours		217,000
Number of after school programs		180
Number of summer recreation programs		121
Number of participants to at-risk youth programs		460,000
Number of rounds of golf at eight courses		700,000
Number of pool participants at 28 pools		925,000



**FIGURE 2 - Park Standards and Service Area**

improvements, and are located on collector or arterial streets. Organized team sports, leagues, and large-activity facilities are located in these parks. Most existing community parks include lighted basketball, volleyball, soccer and softball facilities; playgrounds; picnic areas; and restroom facilities. Pools, lighted tennis courts, and ramadas also may be included. Community parks have turf areas that are unprogrammed open spaces, which can be used for a variety of activities and events.

course, festival area, or an amphitheater. In general, district parks are located on arterial streets, or in areas where the size and function will have minimum impact, i.e., commercial or industrial areas. They also serve the immediate local communities as neighborhood parks or community parks and contain these features: playgrounds and picnic areas, lighted basketball and volleyball courts, lighted racquetball courts, lighted softball and soccer facilities, restroom facilities, lighted tennis courts, and picnic ramadas. District parks include Encanto, Paradise Valley Park, Desert West, and Cave Creek Recreation Area.



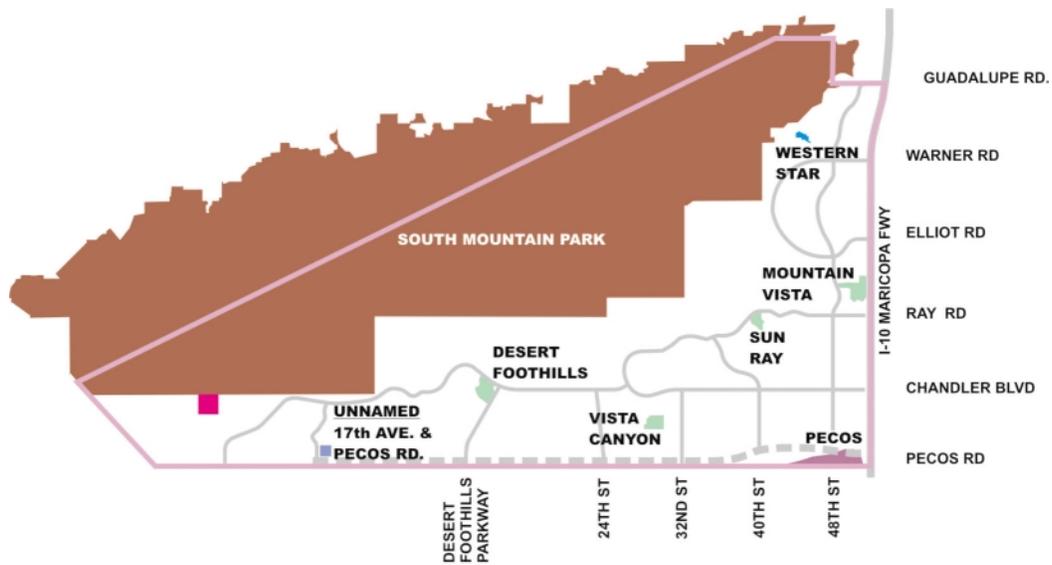
**FIGURE 3 - Desert Foothills Park**

**District parks** draw from several communities and are 200 acres or larger, serving 100,000 to 200,000 people. They provide for active and passive recreation and serve a five-mile service radius. They may include specialized activities such as a golf

### TRAILS

A functional network of urban trails is planned throughout the city that is multi-purpose, easily accessible and convenient, and connects parks, major open spaces, and village cores (see Glossary for definition of cores).

Multi-purpose recreational trails are intended to serve equestrians, pedestrians, and bicyclists. The city, in cooperation with private developers, is working to create or construct multi-use trails. These natural-surface recreational trails are intended to accommodate a variety of nonmotorized uses; however, the surface of the trail, topography, along with trail location, will dictate the primary use.



# AHWATUKEE FOOTHILLS

### PARK CLASSIFICATION

- DISTRICT
- COMMUNITY
- NEIGHBORHOOD
- MOUNTAIN PRESERVE

### PROPOSED PARKS

- COMMUNITY



# ALHAMBRA

### PARK CLASSIFICATION

- DISTRICT
- COMMUNITY
- NEIGHBORHOOD
- GOLF



FIGURE 4 - Parks in Ahwatukee Foothills and Alhambra Villages

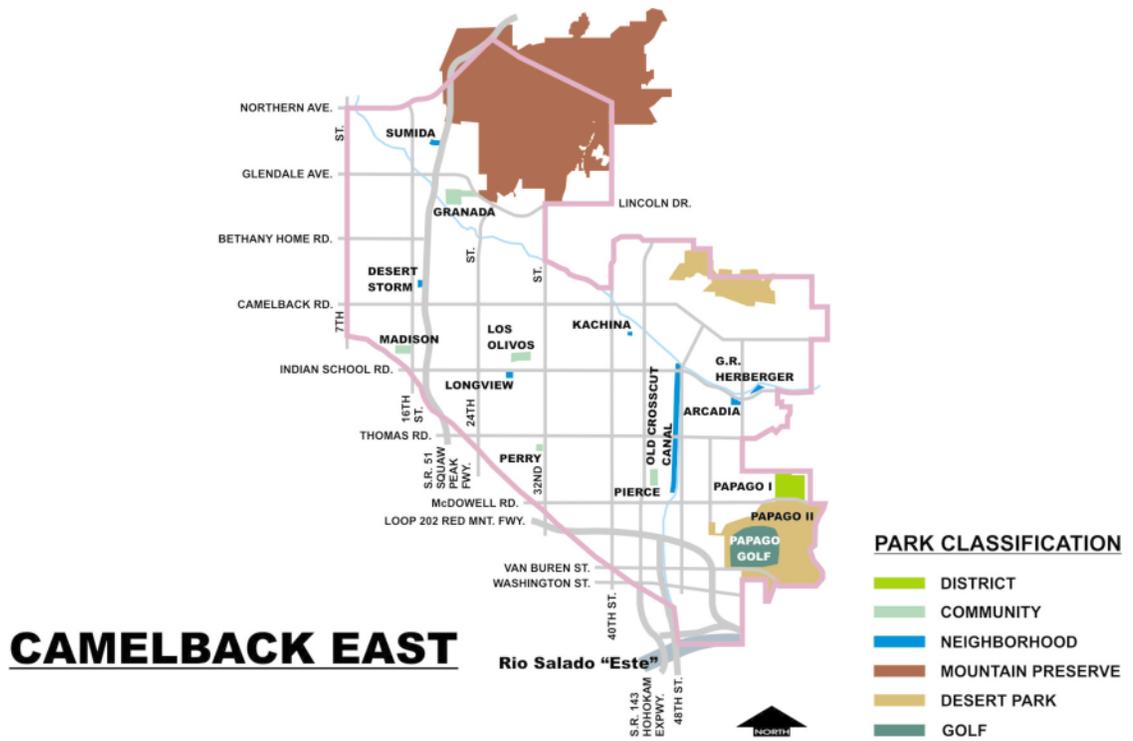
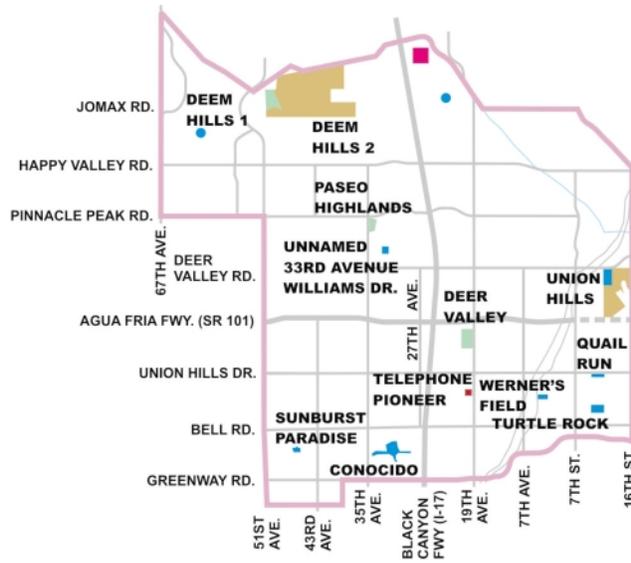


FIGURE 5 - Parks in Camelback East and Central City Villages

# DEER VALLEY



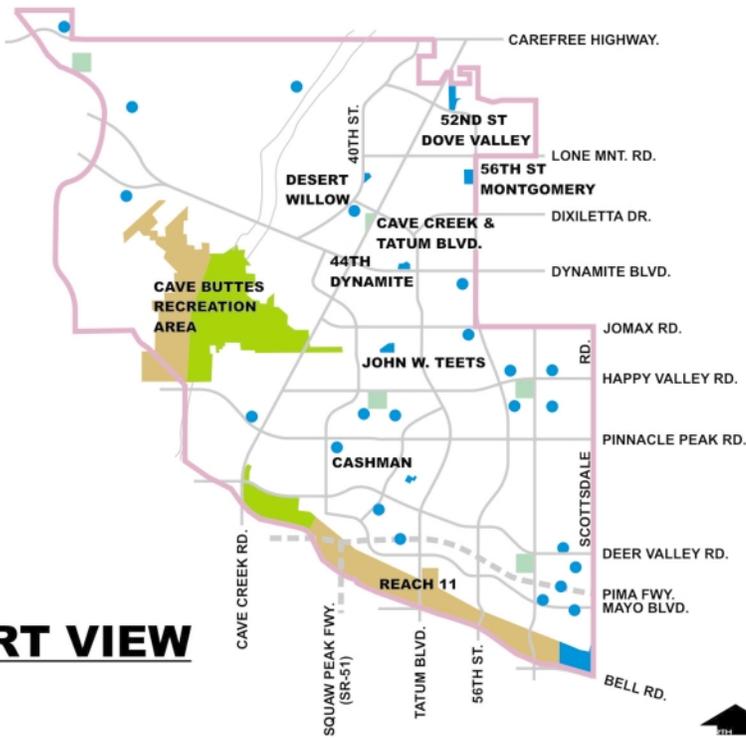
### PARK CLASSIFICATION

- DISTRICT
- COMMUNITY
- NEIGHBORHOOD
- DESERT PARK

### PROPOSED PARKS

- COMMUNITY
  - NEIGHBORHOOD
- NORTH

# DESERT VIEW



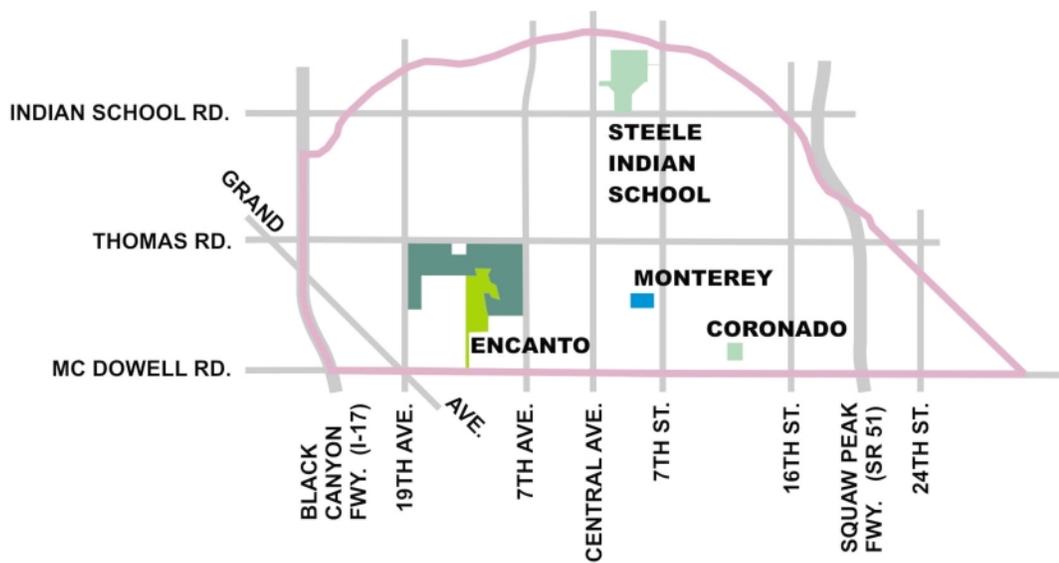
### PARK CLASSIFICATION

- DISTRICT
- COMMUNITY
- NEIGHBORHOOD
- DESERT PARK

### PROPOSED PARKS

- COMMUNITY
  - NEIGHBORHOOD
- NORTH

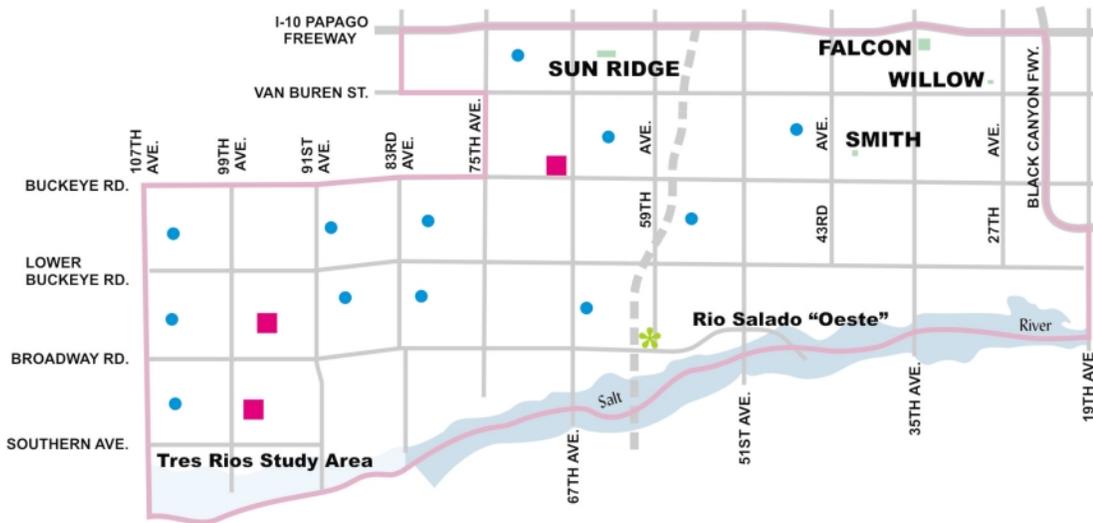
FIGURE 6 - Parks in Deer Valley and Desert View Villages



## ENCANTO

### PARK CLASSIFICATION

- DISTRICT
- COMMUNITY
- NEIGHBORHOOD
- GOLF



## ESTRELLA

### PARK CLASSIFICATION

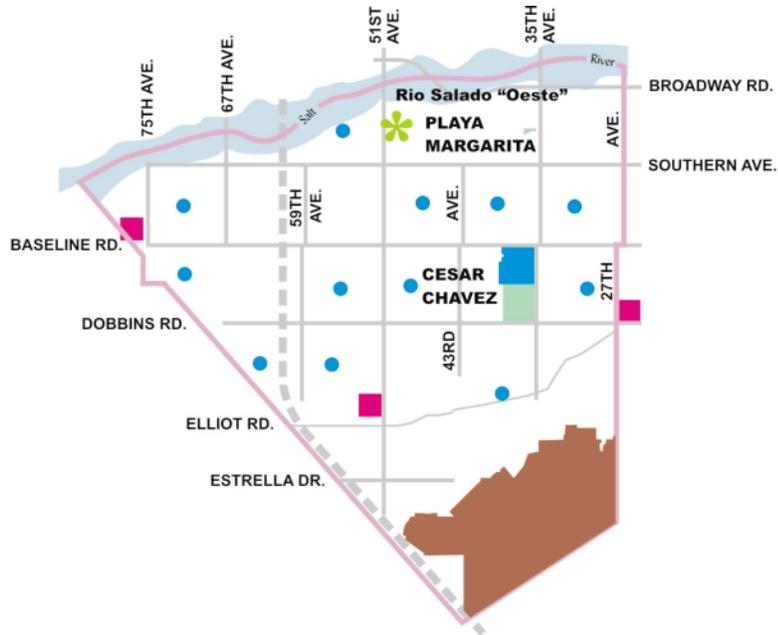
- COMMUNITY

### PROPOSED PARKS

- ✱ DISTRICT
- COMMUNITY
- NEIGHBORHOOD



FIGURE 7 - Parks in Encanto and Estrella Villages



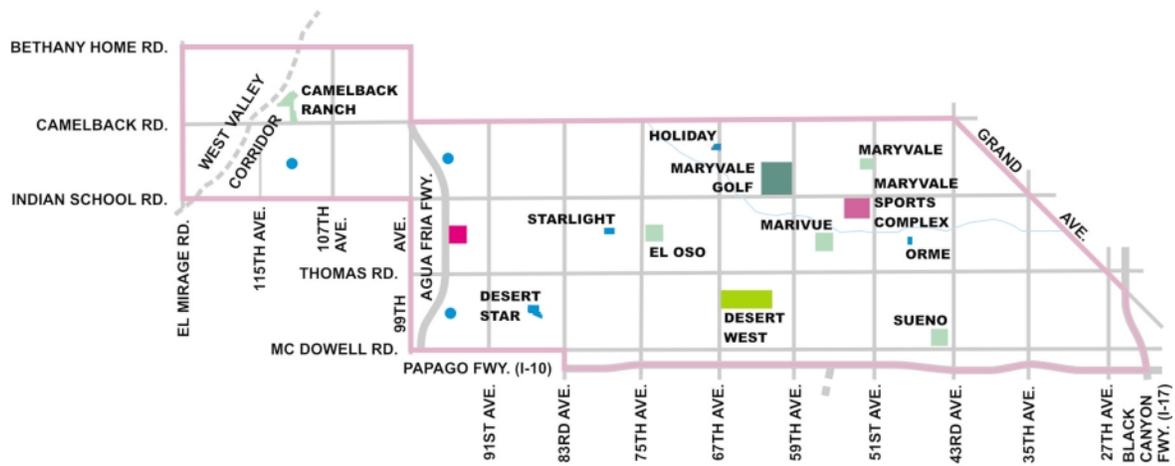
# LAVEEN

## PARK CLASSIFICATION

- COMMUNITY
- NEIGHBORHOOD
- MOUNTAIN PRESERVE

## PROPOSED PARKS

- DISTRICT
- COMMUNITY
- NEIGHBORHOOD



# MARYVALE

## PARK CLASSIFICATION

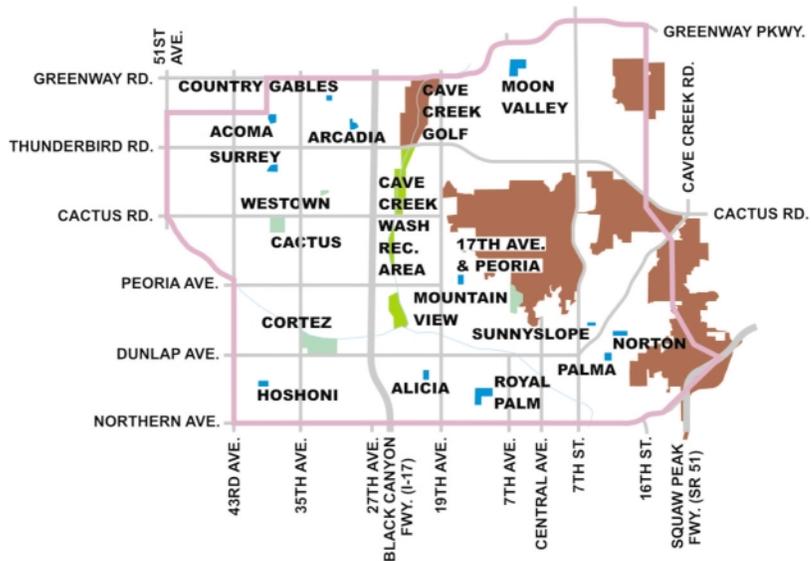
- DISTRICT
- COMMUNITY
- NEIGHBORHOOD
- SPECIAL AREA
- GOLF

## PROPOSED PARKS

- COMMUNITY
- NEIGHBORHOOD



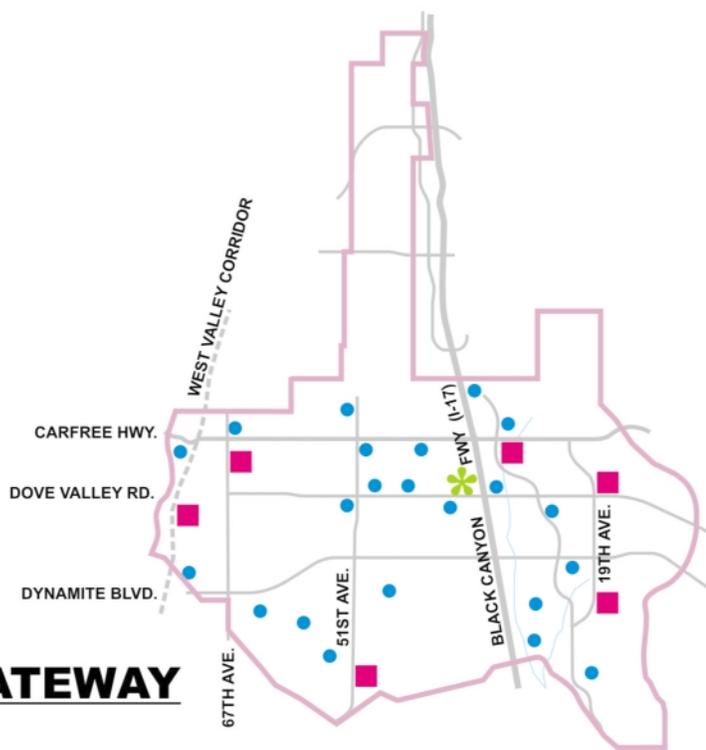
FIGURE 8 - Parks in Laveen and Maryvale Villages



## NORTH MOUNTAIN

### PARK CLASSIFICATION

- DISTRICT
- COMMUNITY
- NEIGHBORHOOD
- MOUNTAIN PRESERVE



## NORTH GATEWAY

### PROPOSED PARKS

- ★ DISTRICT
- COMMUNITY
- NEIGHBORHOOD



FIGURE 9 - Parks in North Mountain and North Gateway Villages

# PARADISE VALLEY

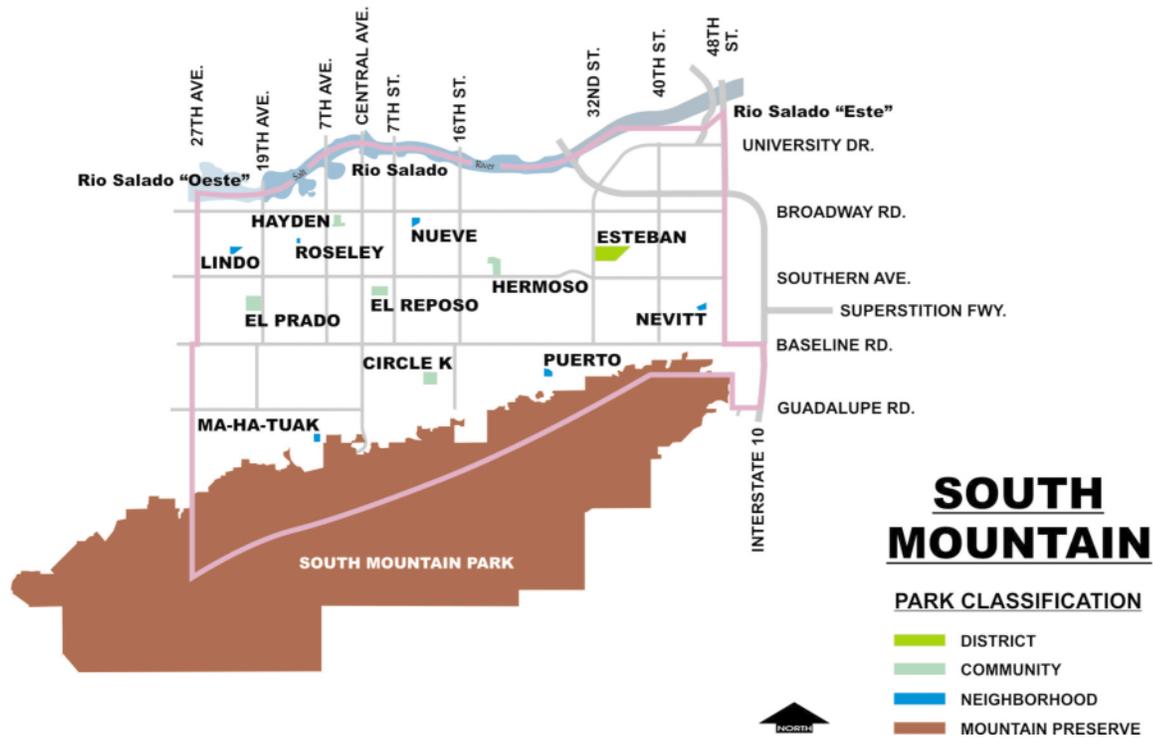
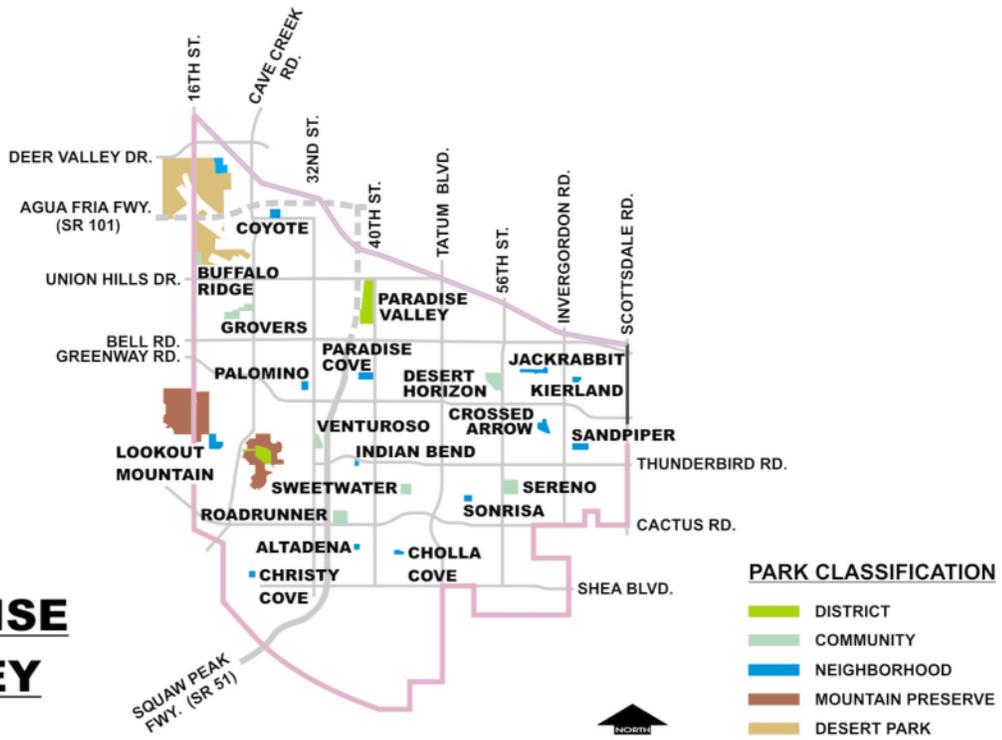
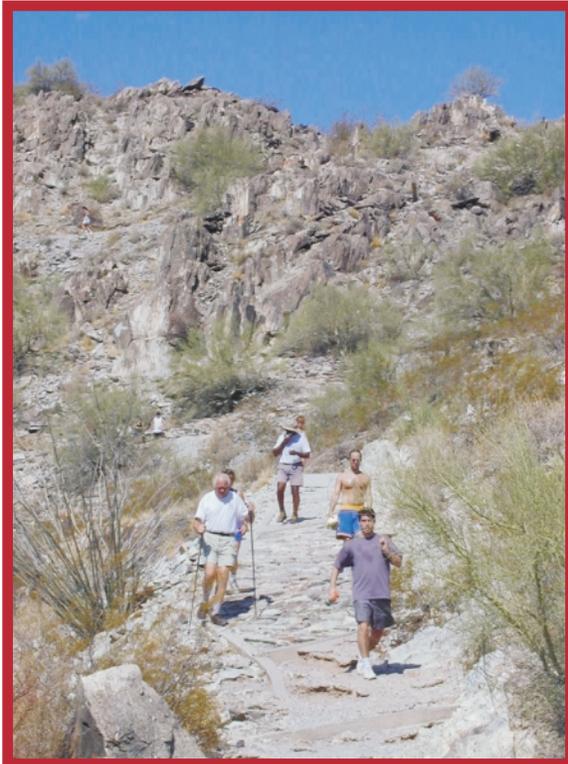


FIGURE 10 - Parks in Paradise Valley and South Mountain Villages

## RECREATIONAL TRAILS

Working in conjunction with the Parks, Planning, Street Transportation, Water Services, and other city departments, the city has identified major trail corridors and destinations, and is working with the public to finalize specific alignments for trails and pathways. Additionally, the city of Phoenix trails coordinator is working with other concerned agencies in the development of a regional trails system, to coordinate funding opportunities and ensure continuity among the trails throughout the entire area.



**FIGURE 11 - Hikers Enjoying the Preserves**

As plans are finalized, several major goals are considered:

- ❑ Trails should be easily accessible and convenient to all Phoenix residents. This includes incorporating the goal of the nationwide trails community of locating a trail within a 10-minute walk, or about one-half mile, of each residence in the community.
- ❑ Local trails should connect with other trails and pathways at municipal boundaries.

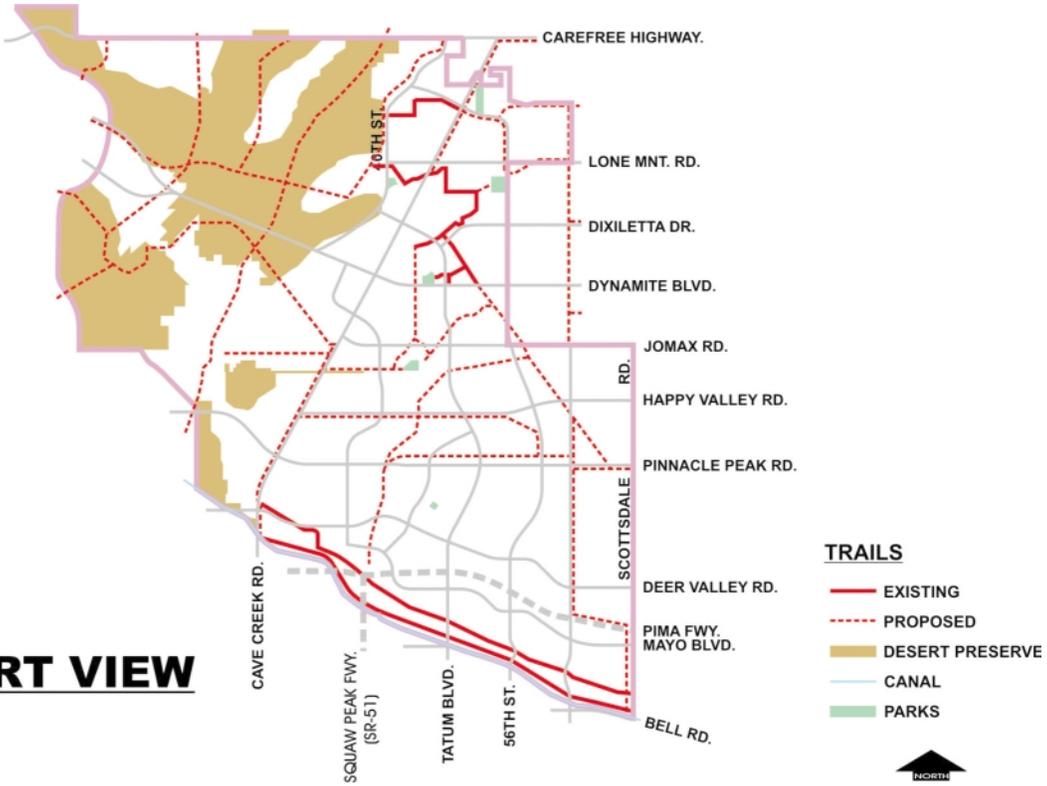
- ❑ The trail and pathway system should include loops of various lengths that connect various landscapes and allow a variety of user experiences.
- ❑ Trails and pathways should accommodate varying degrees of physical ability.

Trail system maps included within the General Plan are conceptual alignments. The trail alignments and crossing locations must be flexible to accommodate the future development of these areas. The completion of any proposed trails will depend upon the availability of funds. The use of existing trails and crossings, and the need for additional ones, will be carefully evaluated to determine where new trails and crossings would be most effective. Specific trails, trail crossing locations and designs will be determined at the time of the plan development review process.

Until they are properly accepted by the city of Phoenix or use agreements are conveyed, proposed trails are designated only as "trail corridors." Mere designation of trail corridors will not be construed to authorize use of public or private property by the public without the permission of the property owners.

Figures 12-15 are trail plans by village.

# DESERT VIEW



# PARADISE VALLEY

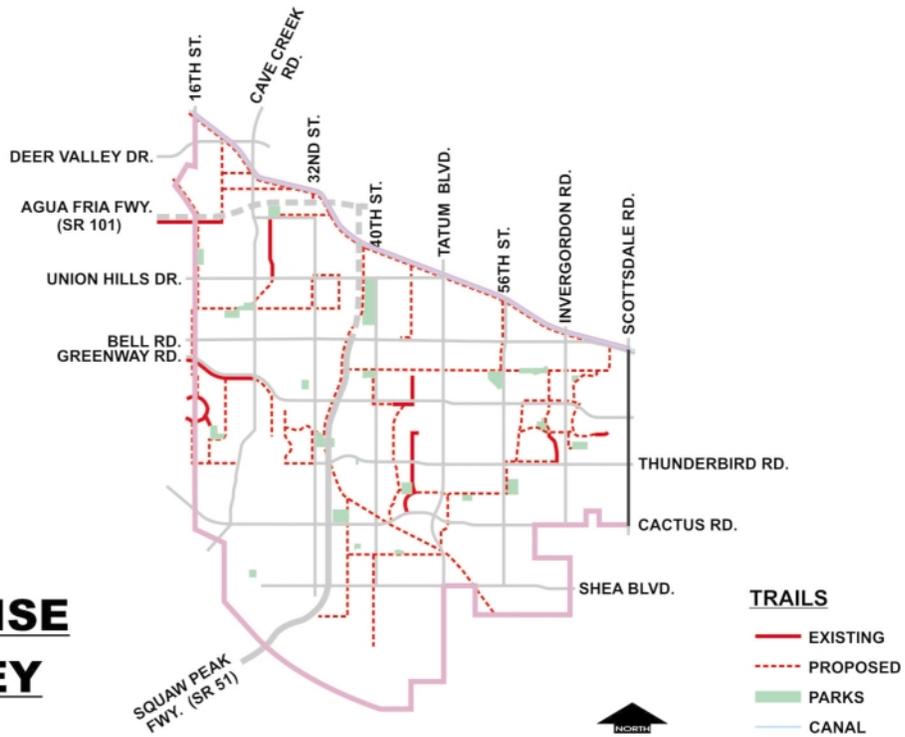
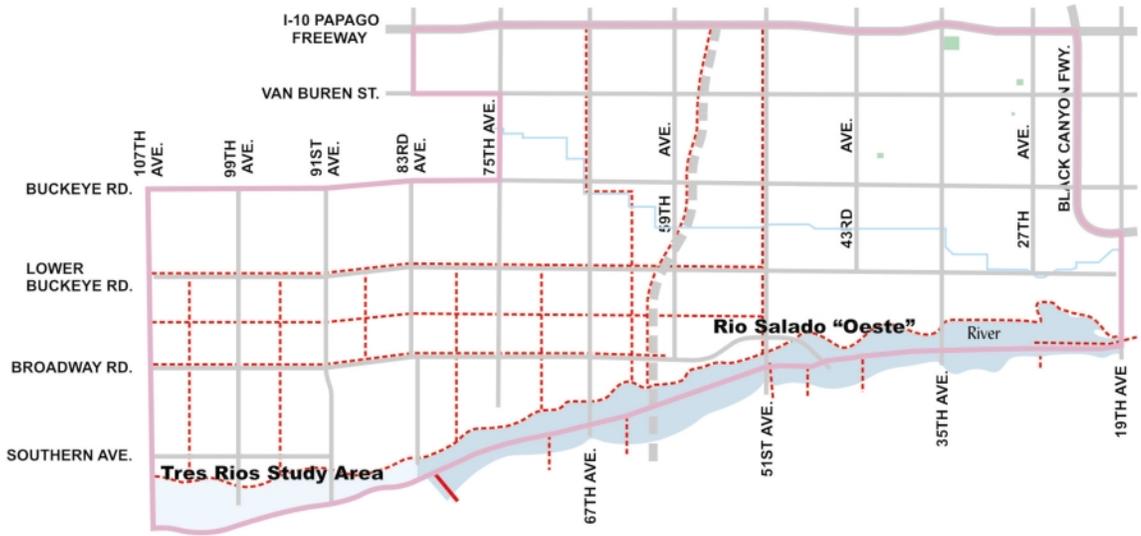
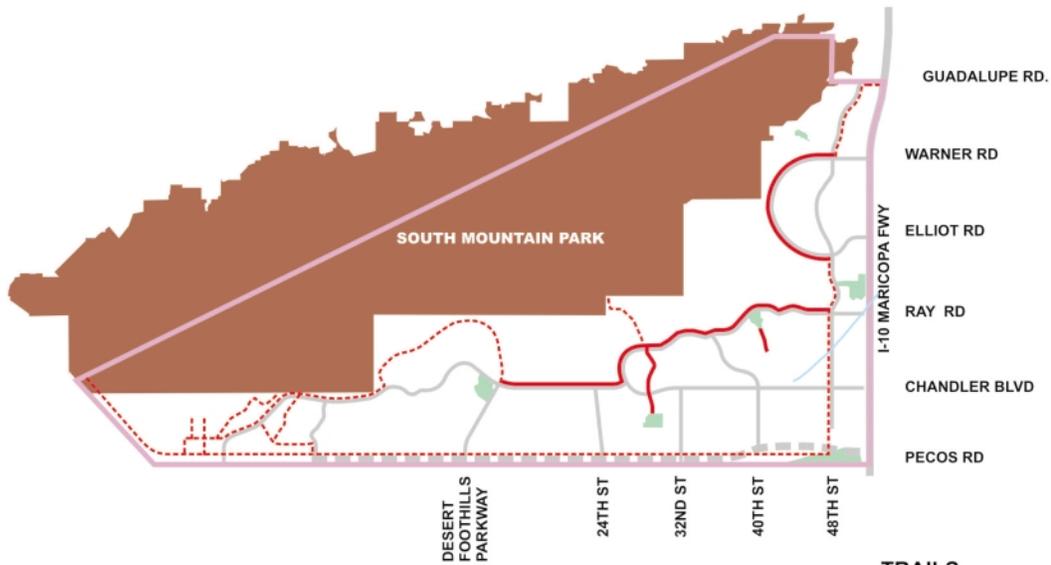


FIGURE 12 - Trails in Desert View and Paradise Valley Villages



## ESTRELLA



## AHWATUKEE FOOTHILLS



FIGURE 13 - Trails in Estrella and Ahwatukee Foothills Villages

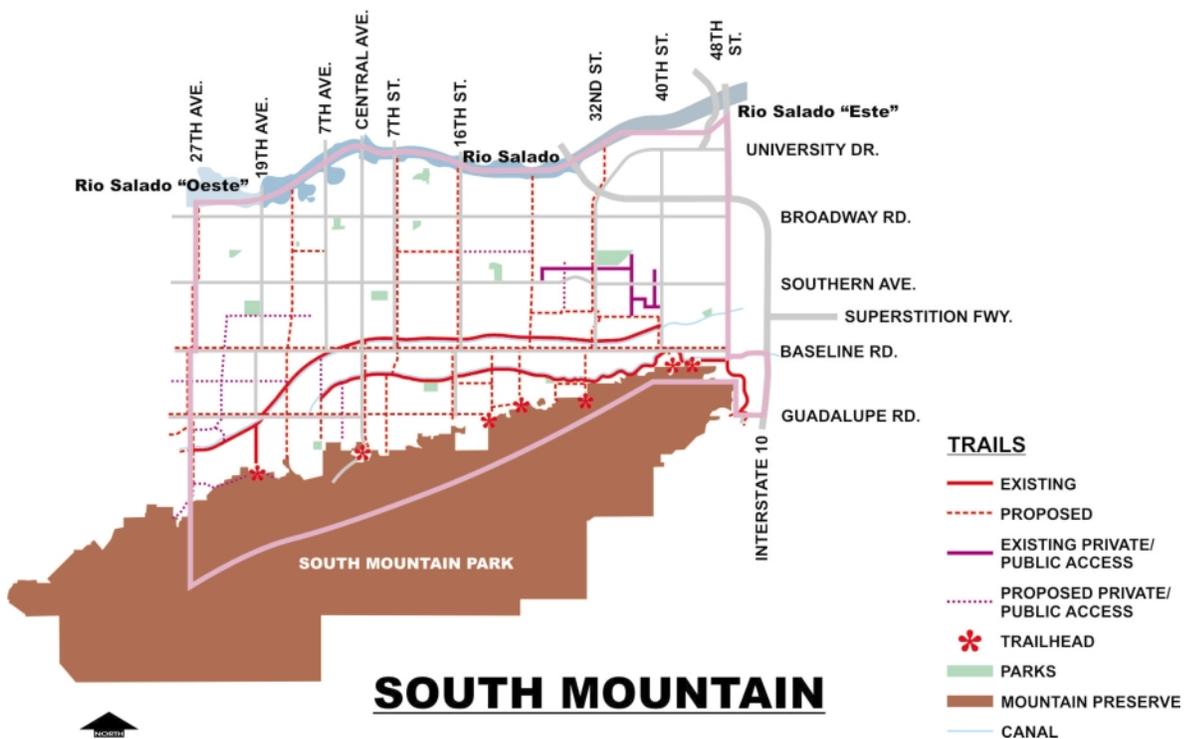
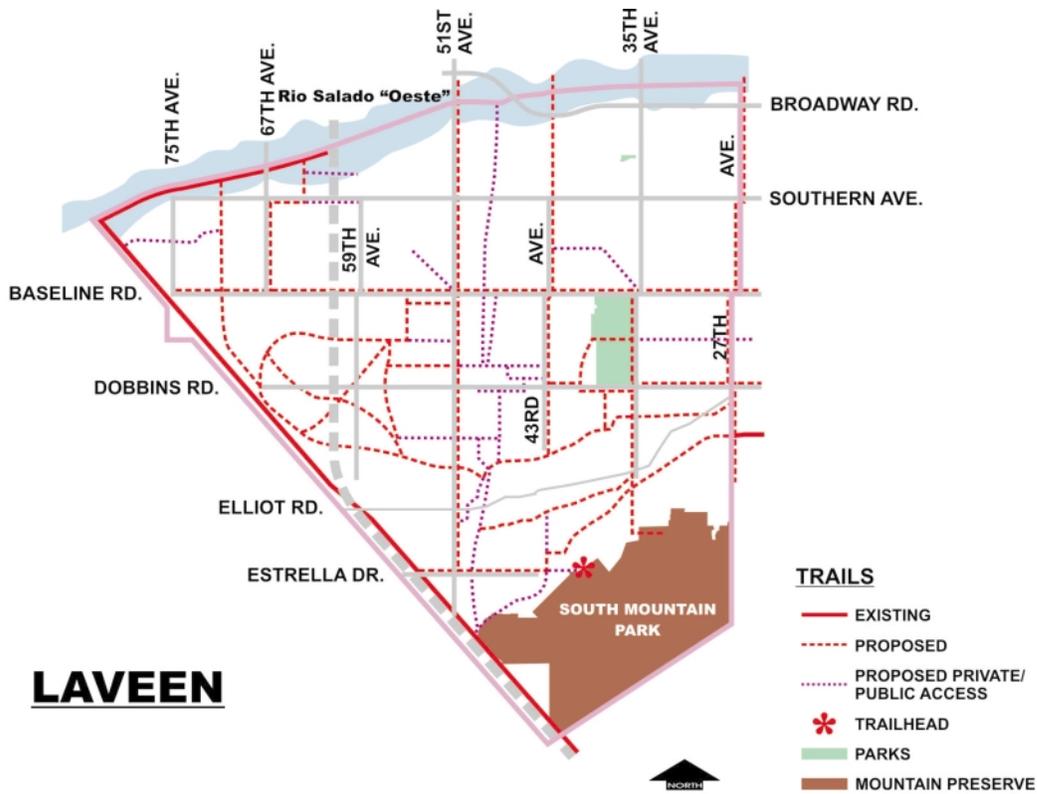
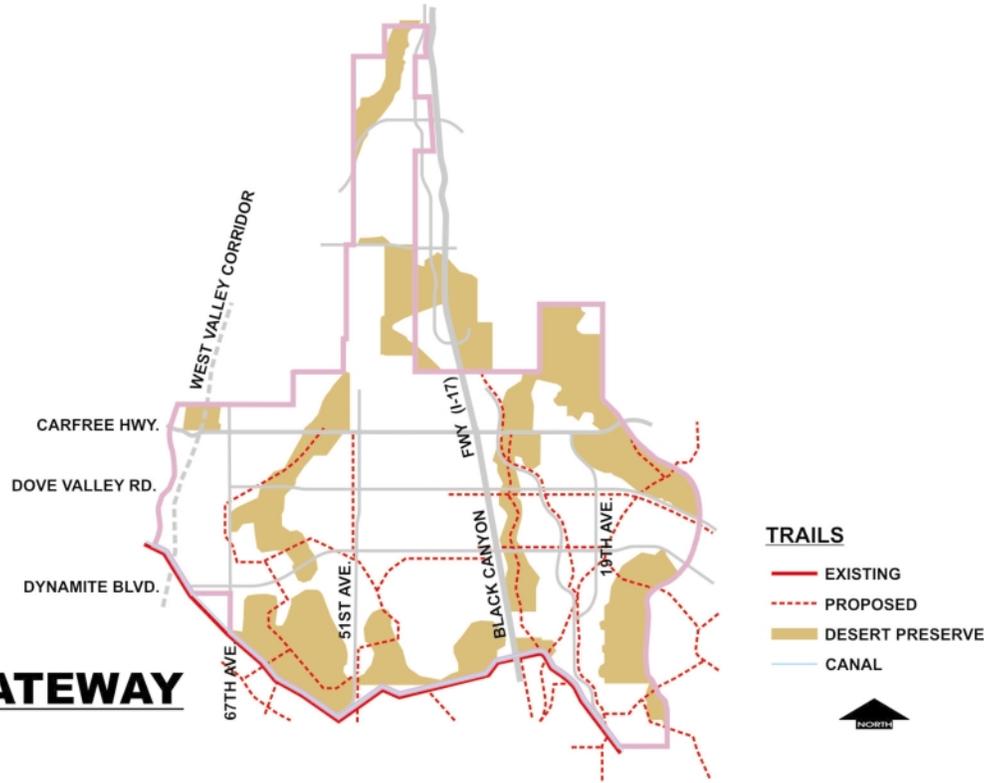


FIGURE 14 - Trails in Laveen and South Mountain Villages

## NORTH GATEWAY



## DEER VALLEY

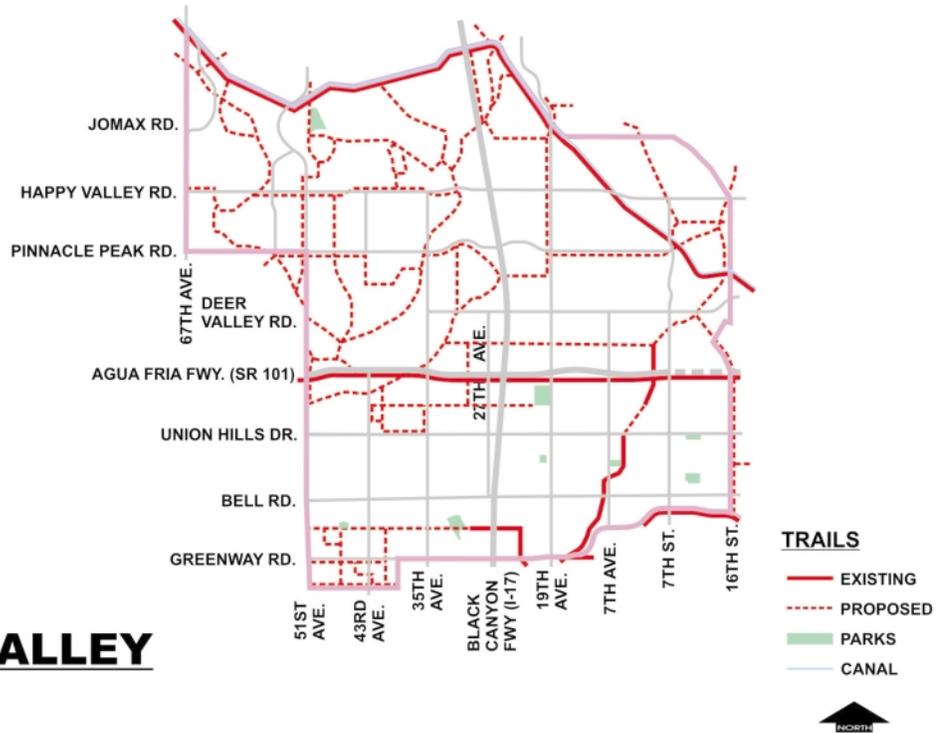


FIGURE 15 - Trails in North Gateway and Deer Valley Villages

**Neighborhood recreation centers** are small indoor facilities under 5,000 square feet, which provide local residents with a safe place to meet and an accessible place to play after school and on weekends. Programs and activities offered at neighborhood centers include arts and crafts, martial arts, exercise and fitness, dance, after school programs, education planning, teen councils, senior citizen programs, community meetings, and special and cultural events. These centers are often located in neighborhood parks. The desired building size is 2,800 square feet and includes a meeting room for 50 to 100 people, a table game area, restrooms, and office/equipment storage room. (See Figure 17.)

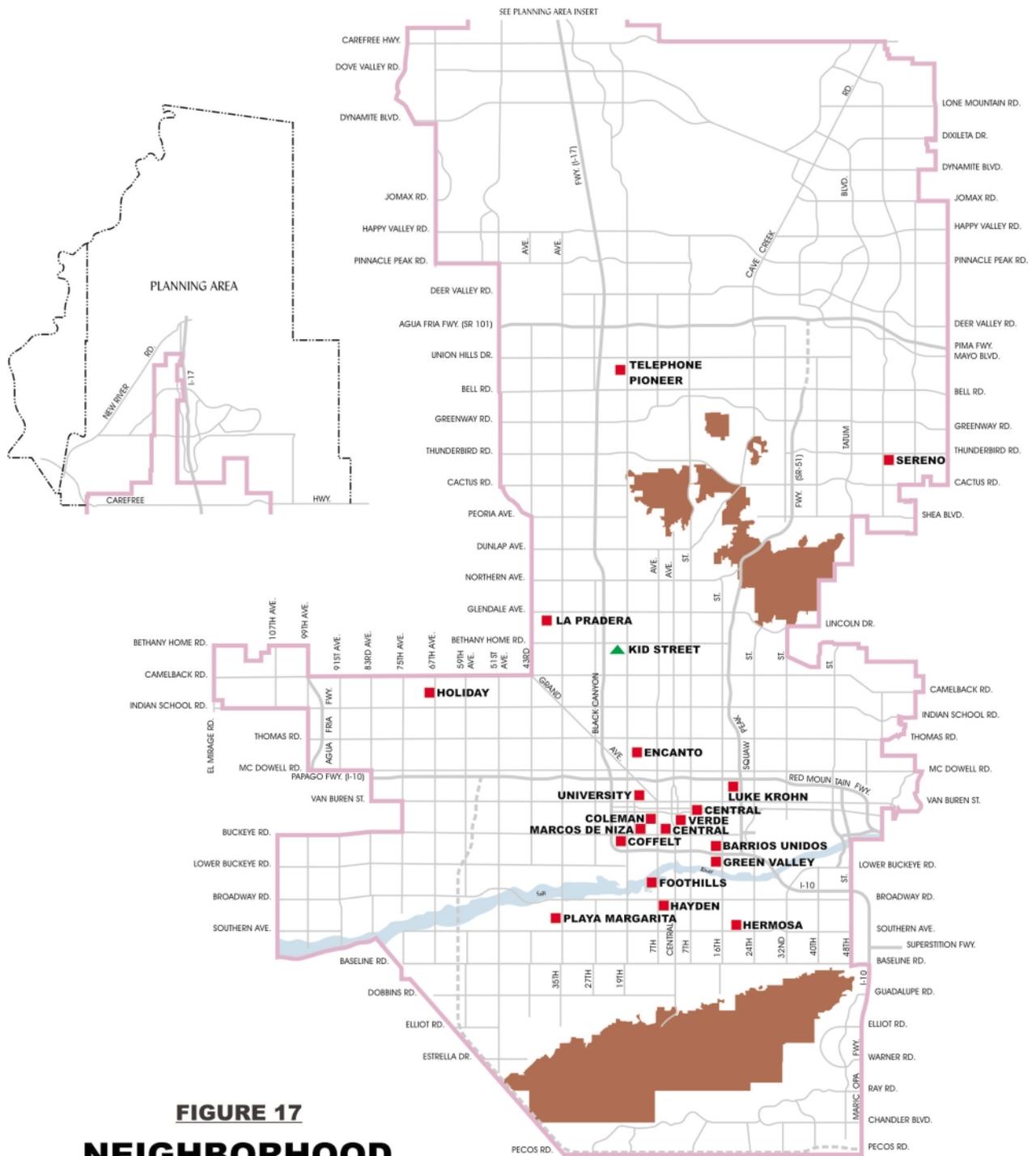


**FIGURE 16 - Verde Community Center**

**Community recreation centers** have a two-mile service area radius and a desired building size of 18,000 square feet. They provide a wide range of programs, including those listed for neighborhood centers, plus a greater variety of classes, lunch programs, and community or social service referral agencies. They may specialize in services for adults, seniors, or youths. Community center amenities typically include a gymnasium, classrooms, lounge, game room, kitchen and staff offices, restrooms, and storage. (See Figure 18.)

**Full-service community centers** are typically 37,000 square feet with planned expansions to 60,000 square feet. Current community centers are Desert West, Paradise Valley, Sunnyslope, South Mountain, and Deer Valley. They have a five-mile service area radius. The centers offer a variety of recreation and city and human services for all ages, including those services provided by neighborhood and community recreation centers. Additional services include cooking and baking, language courses, large-scale special and cultural events for over 3,000 people, and meals-on-wheels preparation. (See Figure 19.)

**Youth/teen centers** have been developed in response to the social, environmental, and economic issues that face young people between the ages of 12 and 19. They have a two-mile service area radius and a desired building size of 15,000 square feet. The focus of a youth/teen center is to provide a range of recreation and social services in a safe and comfortable atmosphere. The centers offer special-interest classes such as dance, health and nutrition, education-related social services and employment training programs, support groups, sports, recreation tournaments, and employment programs. Examples include PAL, South Phoenix Youth Centers, and Thunderbird Teen Center. (See Figure 21.)



**FIGURE 17**  
**NEIGHBORHOOD**  
**CENTERS**

- EXISTING
- ▲ FUTURE



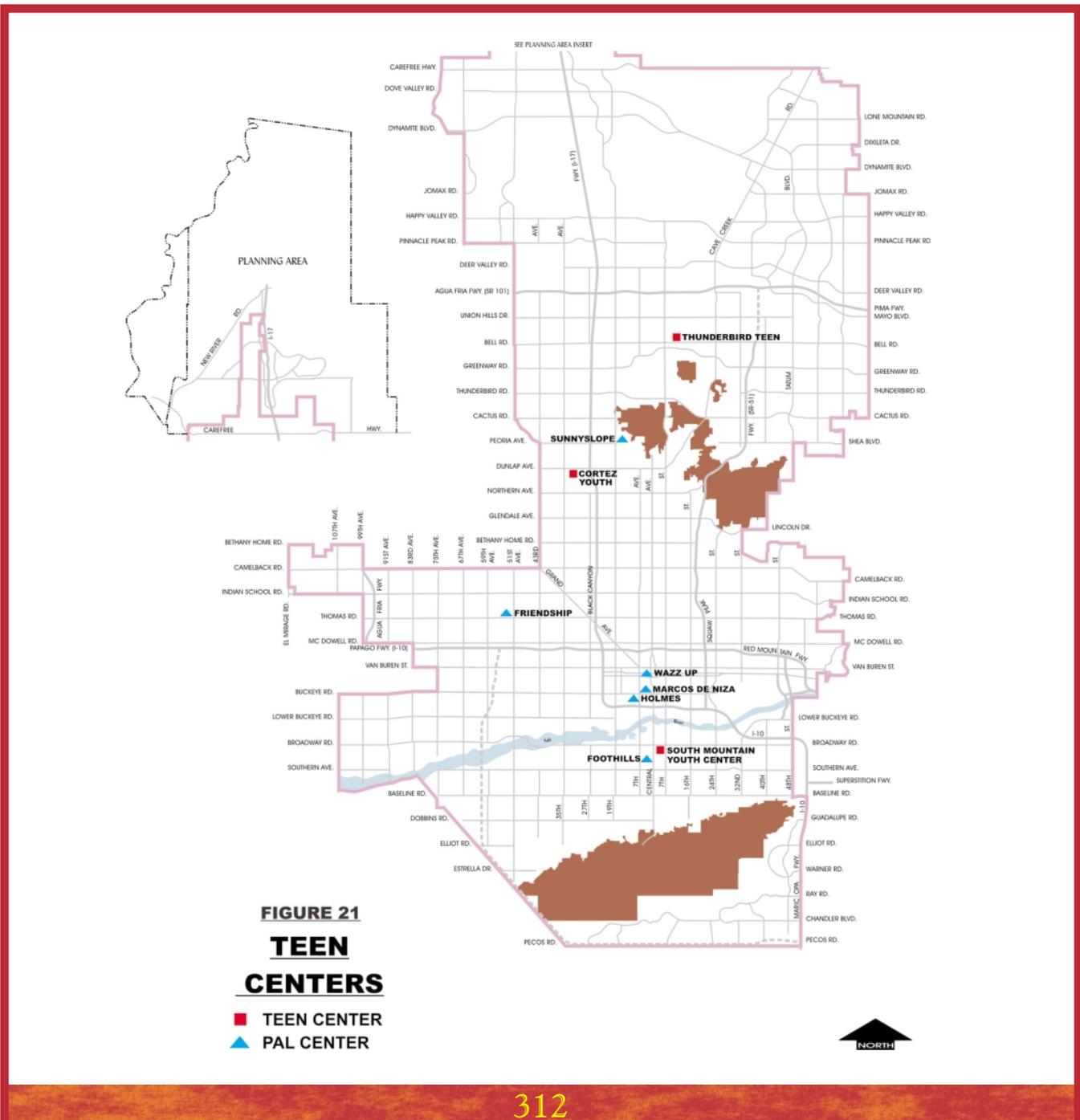


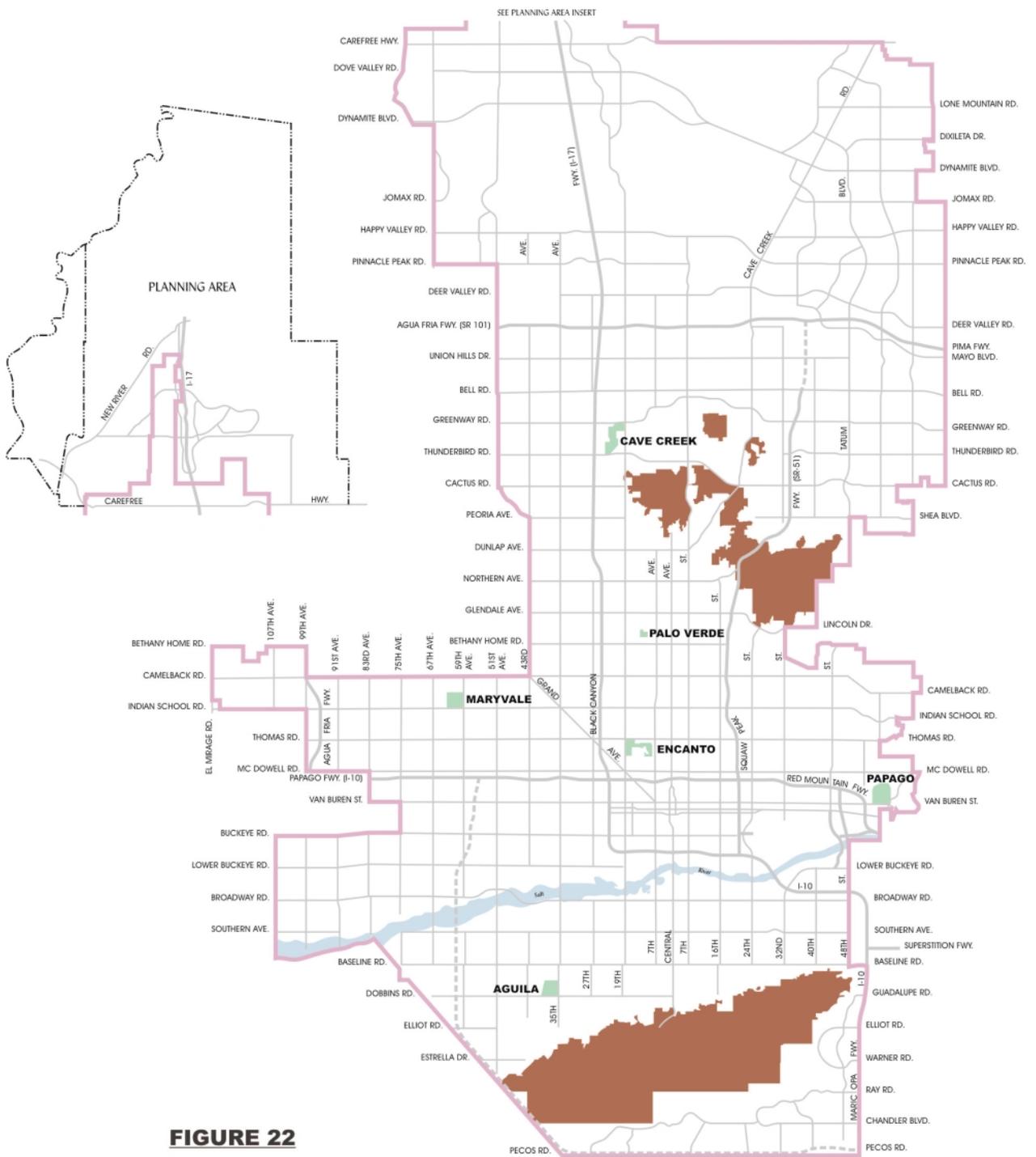




Golf is an enterprise function, which means its revenues pay for all operating costs and debt service. Municipal golf courses are included in district parks or as freestanding facilities as the financing allows. (See Figure 22.) The city provides public golf to give affordable access to Phoenix residents.

FIGURE 20 - South Phoenix Youth Centers





**FIGURE 22**  
**MUNICIPAL**  
**GOLF COURSES**

**Swimming pools** are normally located in community and district parks. There are 28 pools throughout the city, including a special populations-accessible pool with more than 7,500 square feet of water surface area. Typical pool size is 25 meters, and the pool season is 12 weeks. Programs offered at these parks include swim lessons, swim/dive teams, special events, and water safety classes. Public pools are designed to meet a wide variety of user needs, from lap swimming to recreational uses, and are not intended to satisfy all special interests. (See Figure 24.)



**FIGURE 23 - Aquatic Programs**

**Special facilities** fill an important role with the city's park system, as amenities that are unique in their purpose, design, and the needs they fulfill. Such sites/amenities range from historical sites to those providing very specialized services. Some of the facilities in this category include Pueblo Grande Museum, Patriots Park, Maryvale Stadium, Phoenix Municipal Stadium, Oakland Athletics' Training Complex, Heritage and Science Park, Shemer Art Center, Cancer Survivors' Park, Rio Salado and Tres Rios, Tovrea Castle with Carraro Cactus Gardens, the Irish Cultural Center, and the Japanese Teahouse Garden.

**Urban parks** are special parks that are small, pedestrian-oriented and feature green open spaces in the midst of the more densely-developed urban areas. They serve the distinct purpose of providing, for daytime use and pedestrian respite, small areas that beautify the streetscapes of buildings and concrete with trees, plants, seating and art. Existing urban park areas are Cancer Survivors, Caesar Chavez Plaza, Heritage Square, and Patriots Square.

**The West Valley Recreation Corridor** is the longest recreation corridor in the Valley. It extends from Lake Pleasant to Avondale, along the Agua Fria River and New River. The project, spearheaded by developer John F. Long and the Maricopa County Flood Control District, winds its way through eight cities. Phoenix soon will have a six-mile trail system just south of the Carefree Highway, and plans to build the Camelback Ranch Park along the Agua Fria River and Camelback Road. Also, the Bethany Home/Grand Canal Flood Control Project, located between Loop 101 and the Sunset Detention Basin, potentially will be another link to the West Valley Corridor, accommodating the 100-year floodwaters within a flood control facility.

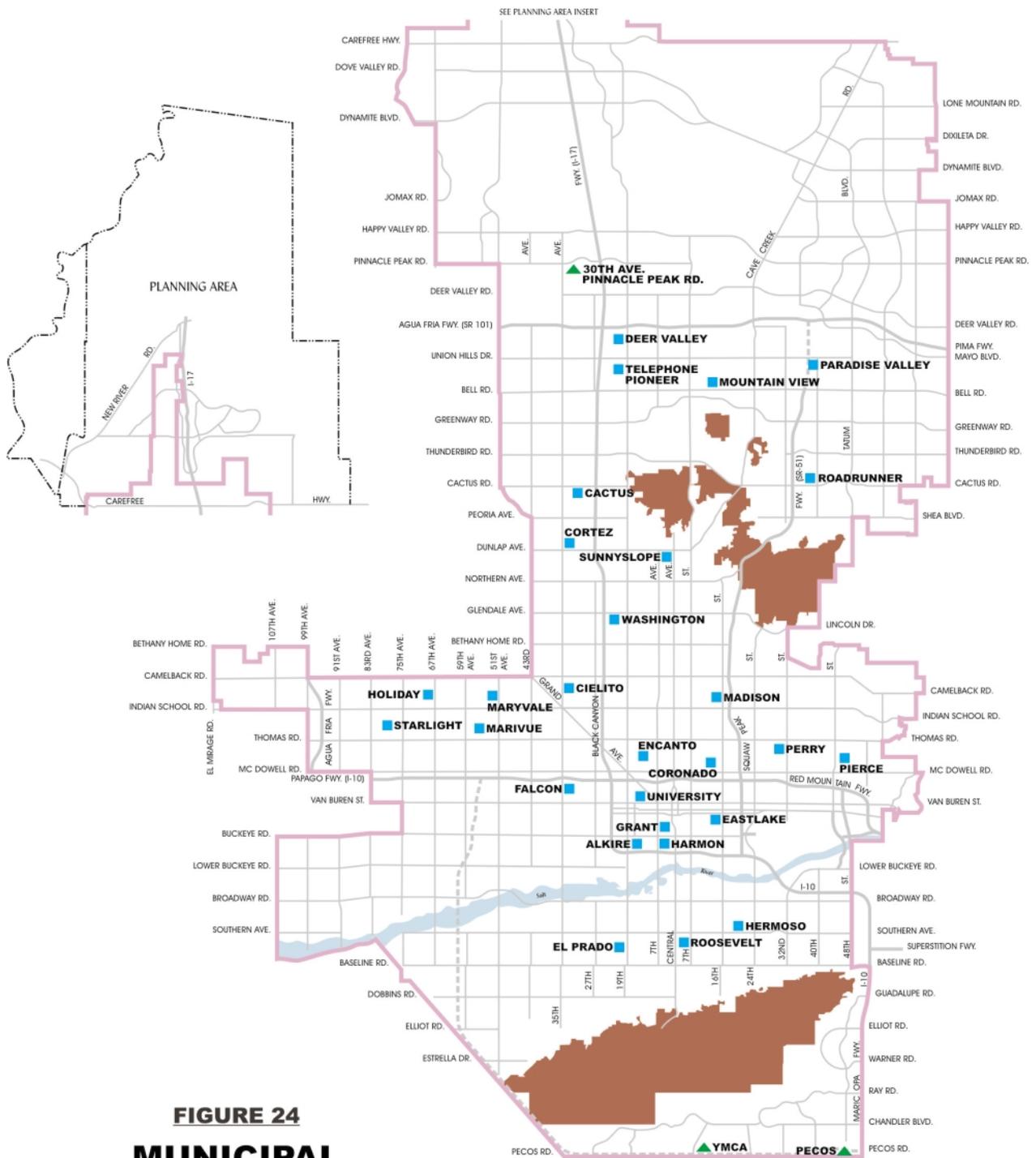
**GOAL 1 PARKS SYSTEM:** THE PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM SHOULD MEET THE NEEDS OF RESIDENTS AND VISITORS, BE ACCESSIBLE, CONVENIENT, AND DIVERSE IN LOCATIONS, PROGRAMS, AND FACILITIES.

**Policies:**

1. Provide, preserve, and manage parks, open space and trails.

**Recommendations:**

- A. Update the Parks and Recreation Long Range Plan, which includes evaluating existing park standards and underlying assumptions as to needs.
  - B. Identify specific sites where land should be acquired for additional public parks and natural open space.
  - C. Use a variety of techniques including impact fees, general obligation bonds, donations, sales tax and other financing, to acquire specific sites.
2. Actively promote private development's involvement to provide open space, trails and public recreational facilities at time of development.
  3. Study the need for community centers of all types in developing areas of the city.



**FIGURE 24**  
**MUNICIPAL**  
**POOLS**

- EXISTING
- ▲ FUTURE



**Recommendation:**

- A. Time new facility development to coincide with residential development as resources permit.
- 4. Develop special facilities where appropriate, based upon how they fit department priorities and available funding, and based upon the needs and interests of area residents.

**Recommendation:**

- A. Design flexible facilities to meet changing needs of the community and to accommodate physically and mentally-disabled users.
- 5. Acquire and develop additional parks and natural open space prior to urbanization when possible.
- 6. Utilize redevelopment opportunities to acquire parks and open space in developed areas.
- 7. Investigate acquiring land adjacent to existing parks in older developed areas that are experiencing residential renewal. Identify innovative measures such as an inventory and identification of surplus public land, and sharing agreements with schools, private owners and developers to provide park areas, open space and trails within the infill neighborhoods currently deficient in those features.
- 8. Continue to provide adjacent park/school facilities that are highly effective in meeting the overall educational and recreational needs of the community, when they do not excessively limit park access to non-school attendees when school is in session.
- 9. As schools close, work in conjunction with the appropriate school district and the residents of the adjoining neighborhoods to evaluate the desirability of maintaining the recreational use of the facility. (A closed school refers to a school that is no longer in operation.)

- 10. Provide active recreational development that generates significant traffic only in community or district parks, or in parks in commercial areas.
- 11. Actively promote open space within the Governmental Mall, the city, county and state office complexes and space between them.
- 12. Provide security lighting in all parks, and appropriate sports lighting in neighborhood, community and district parks.

**Recommendations:**

- A. Provide appropriate security lighting that is operational dusk to dawn in all parks and recreation facilities.
- B. Provide lighted courts in neighborhood parks and facilities located within district parks. Community and district parks will have lighted courts and lighted athletic fields. Lighted facilities are turned off no later than 11 p.m., unless authorized by the city of Phoenix Parks and Recreation Board.
- 13. Provide a diverse and broad range of recreation programs and services. Offer services based on the demonstrated need of the community at large, public interest, and responsible fiscal management of public resources.
- 14. Consider partnerships with other city departments and government agencies to develop facilities and provide programs and services where appropriate.

**Recommendations:**

- A. Evaluate including city services in full-service community centers during the long-range and site planning phases.
- B. Evaluate the potential for locating police and fire stations jointly within community and district parks.

15. Limit commercial activity within parks to licensed uses authorized by the parks and recreation board.
16. Plan and design municipal swimming pools for the recreational needs of the community at large.

**Recommendation:**

- A. The priority of use is:
  - Swim lessons
  - Recreation swim
  - Recreation teams
  - Cooperative agreements with schools
  - General rentals

17. Strive to provide the same level of service for parks facilities and recreation programs in new or growth areas of the city that is provided in the developed areas of the city.

**Recommendations:**

- A. Evaluate the possibilities of developing municipal golf courses in new and proposed park areas.
- B. Assure that, at a minimum, local streets bound all sides of a new park. Streets of the appropriate street classification according to the street classification map can be placed around community and district parks.
- C. Maintain service level standards for facilities in growth areas by using bond funds, impact fees, donations, and sales tax revenue.

18. Develop, improve and renovate existing park sites at all levels as resources, condition, and need dictate.

**Recommendations:**

- A. Renovate and maintain older parks according to current community needs and department standards.

- B. Acquire land in accord with department standards, for neighborhood and community parks in older, developed areas that are experiencing residential renewal.
- C. Evaluate the need for retaining park facilities in areas that have lost their residential base.

19. Provide public streets around all sides of new neighborhood, community and district parks.
20. Continue programs for public participation in the planning and design of new and renovation of existing parks, open space, trails, and other recreational facilities.

**GOAL 2 PRESERVE INTERFACE: THE INTERFACE OF PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT AND PARKS, PRESERVES, AND NATURAL AREAS IS CRITICAL TO THE NATURAL FUNCTIONS AND PUBLIC ENJOYMENT OF THESE AREAS.**

**Policies:**

1. Establish design and management standards for natural washes and connected open spaces that will preserve the natural ecological and hydrological systems while allowing for appropriate public use, such as multi-use trails.

**Recommendations:**

- A. Implement any design guidelines adopted by the City Council that preserve natural washes by encouraging nonstructural flood control, and include wide, natural wash corridors that are substantially undisturbed and allow for the growth of natural vegetation for controlling erosion and sustaining ecological systems.
- B. Implement fire management policies that allow homeowners to clear annual plant material and create a firebreak. For example, non-native species such as tumbleweed should be removed regularly. Allow access to wash areas for fire and emergency vehicles.



**Figure 25 - Past Development Practices on Hillside**

2. Propose new design standards that address drainage, use of native plants, edge effect, and access both visual and physical for private development adjacent to public preserves, parks, washes and open spaces.

**Recommendation:**

- A. Implement any design guidelines adopted by the City Council that require private development adjacent to preserves, washes, and open spaces to provide visual and physical access to the public from a variety of land uses. These guidelines should include orienting development to open space, single-loaded streets as predominant edge, native plant policy, public access points, and transition areas.

**GOAL 3 TRAILS AND PATHWAYS: A FUNCTIONAL NETWORK OF SHARED URBAN TRAILS THAT ARE ACCESSIBLE, CONVENIENT, AND CONNECTED TO PARKS, MAJOR OPEN SPACES, AND VILLAGE CORES, SHOULD BE DEVELOPED THROUGHOUT THE CITY. THE TRAILS SHOULD CONNECT WITH FUTURE REGIONAL TRAIL SYSTEMS WHEREVER POSSIBLE.**

**Policies:**

1. Update the city trails/pathways plan, including an inventory by location, types of surface, and management responsibilities.

**Recommendations:**

- A. Actively encourage and, where appropriate, require private developers to provide private trails with public access within their developments.
- B. Prior to abandonment or altering of any existing right-of-way, assure that trails or trail easements are maintained.
- C. Prepare and distribute maps, brochures, and other information on the trails and pathway system in order to inform the public of current and future opportunities. Trail system route maps will indicate best or recommended routes depending on the type of trail. An interactive World Wide Web site should be an accessory component of this system.

2. Work with other agencies to assure the availability and accessibility of canal banks for trail usage.
3. Connect public parks with pedestrian destinations and open space areas created in conjunction with urban development.
4. Plan, design, and develop pedestrian linkages between parks, open spaces, village cores, neighborhood shopping centers, neighborhood schools, and neighboring municipalities.

**Recommendation:**

- A. Develop the pedestrian linkage system as a joint responsibility of the private and public sectors, as new development and infill development occurs. As appropriate, the city should enhance the pedestrian linkage system through the development of new parks.

5. Provide, preserve, and manage trails in parks and open space.
6. Encourage the widest possible range of opportunities for non-motorized recreation and multi-modal transportation systems.

**Recommendations:**

- A. Plan, design and install trail signs, to help identify the trail system and for public safety.
  - B. Post signs along multi-use trails, which state that motorized vehicles are prohibited except for emergency and maintenance vehicles.
7. Prepare standards for planning, design, and management of trails and pathways within parks, preserves, open space, and rights-of-way.

**Recommendations:**

- A. Utilize the city's trail standards to integrate public trails into new developments.
  - B. Proactively seek trail easements within planned trail corridors as development occurs adjacent to the corridors. Seek trail easements along existing developed properties where no trail connections currently exist.
  - C. Create trail design and construction standards, signage, locational criteria, and other design guidelines to establish consistency within the trails and preserve system.
8. Create linear open space with multi-use paths and offer recreational elements such as ramadas, playground equipment and landscaping to attract urban wildlife.