



parks and recreation master plan  
county of kern  
parks and recreation department

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# acknowledgments

We would like to thank the many citizens, staff, and community groups who provided extensive input for the development of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This project was truly a community effort, ensuring that this plan will meet the needs and desires of all residents in Kern County

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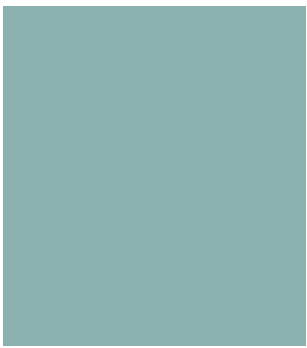
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



executive summary



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RECREATION DEPARTMENT DEVELOPS  
AND MAINTAINS A SAFE, ACCESSIBLE,  
HIGH QUALITY REGIONAL SYSTEM OF  
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RECREATIONAL FACILITIES TO SUPPORT  
AND ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE  
FOR OUR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.*

**KERN COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION  
DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT**

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# executive summary

IN THE SPRING OF 2008, Kern County began the development of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan to evaluate the County's current park and recreation resources, assess the needs for the future, and develop a road map to achieving those needs. The development of this plan was a collaborative effort involving staff from the Parks Department, elected officials, representatives from other park agencies, and stakeholders and residents from communities throughout Kern County. This plan represents the first master plan developed for the County of Kern Parks and Recreation Department.

The primary purpose of this master plan is to help guide decision-makers in the development of the Kern County park system over the next twenty years. The recommendations, goals and strategies presented here were developed based on an assessment of all existing County parks and public input to identify community priorities.

## 1.1 KEY ISSUES

Kern County is facing a number of issues that influence the development and management of parks, recreation facilities and recreation services. The 2010 Kern County Parks and Recreation Master Plan is designed to respond to these issues, positioning the Kern County Parks and Recreation Department to better serve residents and other visitors to the Kern County park system now and into the future.

### Landscape, Development and Population - Scale and Diversity

The third largest county in the state of California, Kern County is a unique and diverse place in terms of its natural resources, land use, development and people. Its widely varied landscape is shaped by mountains, deserts, and valleys, include some of the most productive agricultural lands in the country as well as still active, burgeoning oil fields. Although Kern County has been among the fastest growing counties in California, much of



that growth has been focused in the Bakersfield metropolitan region. The eastern desert and mountain areas, as well as the western edges of the County, remain comparatively sparsely populated and rural in character. This diversity of conditions coupled to the sheer geographic size of the County underlies the operational and management challenge facing the Parks and Recreation Department.

### **Demographic and Socio-Economic Change**

The influx of new residents from other parts of California as well as a growing Hispanic population has gradually altered the demographic and socio-economic profile of the County. This shift in the demographic makeup of the population has gradually led to a new set of expectations regarding parks and recreation services that are different from what existed in earlier decades when much of the present-day County park system was developed. In addition, unincorporated areas in and near the Bakersfield metropolitan area have experienced rapid urbanization, creating areas that lack adequate parks and recreation services. Although Kern County, along with the rest of California, is now experiencing a severe economic and housing downturn, the potential

for more growth in the future remains strong. When the economy recovers, it is anticipated that much of that new growth will be in the form of more compact, dense development, requiring an even greater need for accessible parks, recreation services and trails to serve the residents in these communities.

### **Overlapping Jurisdictions**

In addition to the Kern County Parks and Recreation Department, there are many different cities, independent park districts, private organizations, and State and Federal agencies, providing parks, open space, and recreation facilities throughout Kern County. Overlapping jurisdictions, goals and strategies have helped create an interesting patchwork of parks, open space and recreation programs. Some areas of the County have multiple park and recreation providers, whereas other areas depend almost exclusively on the Kern County Parks and Recreation Department as the major provider. The need for increased cooperation and coordination between these multiple park and recreation providers to avoid unnecessary duplication, as well as gaps, in facilities and services remains an important challenge.

### Regional and Local Parks

The Kern County Parks and Recreation Department manages an extensive system of large regional parks designed to serve the entire countywide population, and small neighborhood and community parks intended primarily to meet the recreational needs of nearby residents in unincorporated communities where no other recreation providers are present. Over the several decades since the Department was established in 1952, cities have expanded their territories through annexation and independent park districts have been established in many unincorporated areas of the county. Despite these changes, the Kern County Parks and Recreation Department still operates and manages a large number of local parks located within the geographic jurisdictions of local cities and park districts. This failure to shift responsibility to the appropriate jurisdictional level has placed an undue burden on the limited resources available to the County to sustain its park system.

### Funding

The Kern County Parks and Recreation Department lacks sufficient funding to be able to adequately address all its responsibilities to maintain and up-

grade its parks and facilities, acquire and develop new sites, provide more trails, and support the maintenance increases that new parks will require. The County has relied primarily on its General Fund to support its park system which must compete with public safety and other County departments for needed funding. Revenue from other sources such as user fees constitutes a relatively small portion of the overall budget. By not adequately implementing the County's Quimby program or putting in place a system of development impact fees, a significant opportunity to generate revenue needed for acquisition of park land and the development of new parks was missed during the growth period of the last two decades. No new County parks have been built in decades despite this population growth, and the overall condition of existing parks and facilities has gradually declined.

### Deferred Maintenance

Because of past funding shortages, the Kern County Parks and Recreation Department has a significant backlog of deferred maintenance, the effects of which over the years have become increasingly evident. The underground infrastructure in parks is aged,

and documentation or mapping of it is scarce, missing or doesn't exist. The recreation, senior and veterans buildings managed by the Parks Department are in various stages of dilapidation, as the basic infrastructure in many of these structures has not been improved or upgraded in decades. A related problem that can also be traced to limited financial resources are concerns about safety and security, which are aggravated by difficulties in responding to signs of vandalism that mar some parks. Animal infestation has gone largely unchecked in some parks, undermining the turf in sports fields, while also damaging wiring and irrigation lines, further adding to the cost burden.

### Recreation Programs

Soon after the passage of Proposition 13, Kern County discontinued its recreation programs as a cost saving measure. Although many recreation programs are provided at the local level by cities and park districts, the range of recreation services available in Kern County varies geographically. Residents in unincorporated areas of the County outside of independent park districts, rely primarily on private organizations, community groups, and local schools for recreation

services. Although Kern County is able to support these local programs by providing parks and recreation facilities, there is concern that young people in these communities do not have adequate access to recreation services needed to provide a positive outlet for their time and energy.

### 1.2 PLANNING PROCESS

The Kern County Parks and Recreation Master Plan is specifically designed to address community priorities for parks and recreation services in Kern County. The planning process began with an on-site assessment and evaluation of all parks and facilities owned by the county, as well as an inventory of parks owned by cities, park districts and State and Federal agencies. To ensure the preferences of community residents were represented in this Plan it drew upon the findings of earlier, complementary planning processes, while also implementing an extensive, multi-faceted, public outreach program.

Existing planning documents reviewed to identify past and current directions for parks and recreation services included:

- Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan

- Kern County General Plan
- Kern River Plan Element
- Kern River Specific Trails Plan
- Kern County Strategic Plan
- Kern County Capital Improvement Plan<sup>1</sup>
- Kern Regional Blueprint

Although these other plans were developed in earlier years by different organizations and for different reasons, they succeeded in identifying many of the same challenges described in this Master Plan. In addition, these separate, independent planning processes have led to many of the same conclusions and recommended solutions.

Public involvement represented the core of the planning process, and included a variety of complementary outreach tools designed to gauge the recreation preferences and needs of County residents. Nearly 2000 community members were reached through these varied forums, and their input and feedback provided the

<sup>1</sup>There are minor variances between the Kern County CIP and the Kern County Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This is primarily due to changes in the existing inventory of County park land that occurred between the nearly two years that passed after approval of the CIP and the subsequent development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Other differences may stem from the opportunity to conduct a more detailed, critical analysis to prepare a plan focused exclusively on the Kern County park system, rather than the CIP which had the challenge of addressing the full range of Kern County public facilities.

foundation for the issues and recommendations described in this plan. Also, to facilitate the implementation of the outreach and analysis of results, the county was divided into five geographic areas. Described more extensively in Chapter 4, outreach activities included:

- **Stakeholder Contacts** – interviews were conducted with elected officials, parks and recreation commissioners, and other community leaders representing all areas of the county.
- **Telephone Survey** – a statistically valid survey of 750-randomly selected households was conducted.
- **Web and Self-Administered Questionnaire** - over 1,000 individuals completed on-line and hard copy versions of a questionnaires; one for adults and another for youth, available in both English and Spanish.
- **Focus Groups** - ten focus groups were conducted throughout the county, inviting participants representing different communities, as well as park agencies and the business/development community.
- **Community Visioning Workshops** – two rounds of community workshops took place in each area of the county. The first set of workshops gathered initial input and the second set confirmed findings and proposed recommendations.

Many consistent issues and themes emerged throughout the outreach process:

- The public held its parks in high esteem, valuing the contribution they make to the quality of life in Kern County.
- The County should first concentrate its resources on improving and upgrading its existing parks, before building new parks in underserved areas of the county.
- Safety and security within parks should be established as an integral element of improving existing parks.
- Concerns expressed about poor conditions of existing parks and facilities, led by complaints about poor restroom conditions or lack of restroom facilities.
- A strong desire for more trails and trail connections.
- Shortage of sports facilities and playing fields, along with a desire for more up-to-date recreational facilities of all kinds, such as multi-use community/recreation centers.
- A lack of facilities and programs to hold the interest of youths and teens.
- Support for the concept of the County partnering with other organizations and community groups to help meet the recreation needs of local communities.

### 1.3 GOALS AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing on public outreach findings, the review of other planning documents, and the evaluation of conditions in existing parks, a policy framework of key goals and recommendations were developed.

**POLICY I** – Develop and maintain a countywide system of regional parks, natural open space and recreational facilities which together provide opportunities for both active and passive recreation, serving the wide ranging recreation and social needs of the diverse, varied communities of Kern County.

- **GOAL 1** – Rehabilitate, renovate and modernize existing parks and recreational facilities in the Kern County park system.
- **GOAL 2** - Provide a minimum standard of 5 acres of park land per 1,000 residents. This standard would apply to regional parks serving the entire County, as well as local parks in unincorporated areas of the County not served by a local park district.
- **GOAL 3** - Provide access to various types of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities with the capacity to support increased recreation programming and provide year-round recreation opportunities for all County residents.

- **GOAL 4** - Expand trail connections and pathways throughout Kern County.
- **GOAL 5** - Ensure that all Kern County parks and recreation facilities maintain a high level of safety and security for visitors and employees.
- **GOAL 6** - Incorporate natural areas and unique ecological and archeological features into the park and open space system to protect threatened species, conserve significant natural and cultural resources and retain critical habitat areas that are unique to Kern County.

**POLICY II** - Maximize resources and expand opportunities for the County-wide parks and recreation system by reforming the financial support structure for the park system, enhancing organizational capabilities, and proactively engaging other organizations and the community at large through partnerships and other cooperative arrangements.

- **GOAL 7** - Achieve sustainable long-term financial viability for the Kern County park system to satisfy operational needs, capital requirements and desired recreation services.
- **GOAL 8** - Coordinate with other park agencies, park and recreation districts and private providers to ensure that the parks and recre-

ation needs of all Kern County residents are being met.

- **GOAL 9** – Continue to support the development and delivery of recreation programs and services provided by other park agencies, non-profit groups, and community organizations in Kern County.
- **GOAL 10** - Engage Kern County residents in the planning, stewardship, and programming of park and recreation resources, and provide effective community outreach and marketing to increase public awareness and support of recreation services.
- **GOAL 11** – Design and manage County parks and recreation facilities to support families, provide youth with healthy and safe recreational activities, and to encourage community building.
- **GOAL 12** - Develop, train, and support a professional parks department staff that effectively serves the community in the realization of the goals and objectives of this Plan.

Some of the key recommendations derived from these policies and goals include:

- Maintain and improve existing parks as a first priority.
- Build new parks in under served areas of the County.
- Provide a range of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities.

- Expand trails and pathways throughout the County.

#### **1.4 PARK STANDARDS AND LEVEL OF SERVICE**

Among these recommendations are those intended to address the current deficiency of parks in the County, primarily at the local level in unincorporated areas of the county that are not served by park districts. The 176,200 residents living in these areas of the county are served by 293 acres of local parks. The current level of service for these residents is 1.66 acres of park land per 1,000 residents although the current standard in both the Kern County General Plan and the Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan is 2.5 acres per thousand. This translates into a deficiency of 147 acres of local park land. The level of service is even lower in those parts of the County, primarily unincorporated areas in and near the Bakersfield metropolitan area, which have experienced the most growth but no new parks have been developed to serve these communities.

Even if the existing standard of 2.5 acres were being met, it is believed that this would be insufficient to meet the park and recreational needs of County residents. This standard has

been in place for decades despite the gradual transformation of people and places that occurred in Kern County during that period. The population has increased, including many young families new to Kern County that have higher expectations for more parks and recreation services, a need that was voiced repeatedly throughout the public outreach process. This need will grow only more intense in coming years as a shift to more compact residential developments creates a greater need for public spaces, including especially parks. Increasing the standard to 5 acres per thousand will bring it more in line with the old minimum standard of 10 acres per thousand established by the National Recreation and Park Association back in the 1980's and 90's, while also enabling other local park districts and cities in Kern County to follow suit.

If the 5 acres per 1,000 residents standard is established, then the existing deficit in local parks will be 588 acres. However, the population in these unincorporated communities is expected to increase to 240,000 residents by 2030. If that occurs, then the overall deficit in park acres will increase to 907 acres if no new parks are built during this period. Approxi-

mately 52 new local parks (a mix of 10-acre, 20-acre and 40-acre parks) will be required to fully address this deficiency.

With 4282 acres of regional parks to serve a countywide population of 779,100 residents, the existing level of service for regional parks already exceeds the proposed 5 acres per 1,000 standard. But as the county population is projected to increase to nearly 1.2 million by 2030, the County will need to increase regional park acreage by another 1725 acres to maintain its current level of service. The number of new regional parks required to achieve this goal will vary depending on the size of the parks and/or the possible expansion of existing parks.

The amount of new park acreage recommended here is high, but this is a consequence of no new County parks being built for decades during an extended period of growth. The projected growth in the population over the next two decades will further compound the deficiency. Even if the rate of population growth is slower than anticipated due to the recent economic downturn, the bulk of the park land deficiency will remain and should still be remedied.

## 1.5 ORGANIZATIONAL REFORM

To further facilitate the improvement of existing parks and the development of new parks, the County is also encouraged to pursue a set of organizational recommendations. The organizational and financial model that supports the County park system remains unchanged after decades of demographic and economic changes and so no longer fits contemporary realities.

A regional park authority in the form of an independent park district is a potential organizational solution. One of the potential benefits would be the establishment of a dedicated funding source for parks and recreation facilities, which is crucial to the future of the park system. A park district can secure funding for capital and operations in a variety of ways. A park district has taxation and bonding authority, subject to voter approval, and can create benefit assessment districts, such as landscape and lighting districts. This funding mechanism permits public agencies to assess housing units or land parcels for a variety of services. Assessment revenues can be used for park land acquisition, development and/or maintenance.



The agency can choose to use revenue generated on a pay-as-you go basis or can sell bonds to receive a lump sum amount.

A similar organizational model can be applied at the local level, where there is a growing desire for more community control of local parks. The eight existing independent park districts in Kern County constitute a long standing model that could be replicated again in areas like Frazier Park and the Kern River Valley. Other organizational options include county service areas, community service districts, and pub-

park authority will require the concurrent establishment of a benefit assessment district to ensure its financial viability, the same or similar financing mechanism will be needed for the local park districts. These organizational reforms are further reinforced by encouraging results from both the telephone survey and web-based questionnaire which indicate that a majority of Kern County residents may be willing to pay a small additional tax or fee (\$15 annually) to help improve their County parks, especially at the local level.

<b>TOTAL PARKS FACILITIES COSTS THROUGH 2030 (5 ACRES 1,000 PARK STANDARD)</b>	
<b>PARK TYPE</b>	<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>
<i>Rehabilitation – Community/Local Parks</i>	<i>\$37,822,500</i>
<i>Rehabilitation – Regional Parks</i>	<i>\$192,690,000</i>
<i>New Parks – Community/Local Parks (910 acres)</i>	<i>\$285,740,000</i>
<i>New Parks –Regional Parks (1800 acres)</i>	<i>\$244,800,000</i>
<i>Special Use Facilities</i>	<i>\$41,130,000</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$802,182,500*</i>
<i>*At the 3 acres per 1,000 park standard the cost for new parks (local and regional) will be approximately \$377 million rather than \$531 million; total park facilities costs will then be \$648,322,500.</i>	

lic utility districts. A school district or other existing public authorities can also jointly establish a local community system for providing recreation and park services. Also, just as a regional

**1.6 FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Kern County Parks and Recreation Master Plan represents community and regional desires and needs for parks and recreation. In response to those needs it specifies strategies and recommendations for renovating existing parks and facilities, acquiring new park sites, and maintaining County park and recreation resources for the future residents of Kern County. Funding these needs will be a tremendous challenge.

Although some projects and strategies can be implemented in the near future, most others will need to be

carried out over the long terms, within the 20-year timeframe of this Plan, or even beyond. At the 5 acres per thousand residents standard, the total cost for implementing this Plan is approximately \$802 million, as summarized in the table at the left.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to capital expenditures, the addition of new park land will also increase annual park and operations and maintenances costs. At the five acres per thousand residents standard these costs are estimated to be approximately \$1.6 million annually.

Existing County resources for parks and recreation facilities are limited (\$13.9 million in FY 2008-09 CAO recommended budget), and must compete with other County departments for funding. Over the past five years, the General Fund provided for approximately 80 percent of funding for the Parks and Recreation Department. Service charges for use of parks and recreational facilities provided approximately 15 to 17 percent of funding.

To achieve the goals outlined in this

<sup>2</sup>Cost assumptions – (1) land acquisition costs are estimated at \$188,000 per acre for local community parkland and \$10,000 per acre for regional parkland. (2) Rehabilitation costs are estimated at \$90,000 per acre for local community park land and \$45,000 per acre for regional park land. See Chapter VIII for more factors used to estimate these cost factors.

Master Plan, Kern County will no longer be able to rely on the current funding structure which has remained largely unchanged for decades. Instead it should consider a range of funding options with the goal of establishing funding sources that are dedicated for park and recreation, both to fund improvements to existing parks and to develop new parks.

Funding for new parks can be substantially improved by establishing a development impact fee and by improving implementation of its existing Quimby in-lieu dedication fees. Although Kern County currently does not have development impact fees in place, they were identified in the recently approved Kern County Capital Improvement Plan as a potential funding source for new park projects. A nexus study is currently being conducted, as a required step for possible implementation of development impact fees in the future. Even though the housing market is now at the lowest point it has been in decades, putting a development impact fee in place at this time will ensure the County will be in a stronger position financially in the future to fund new park development once growth resumes. As described in more detail

in Chapter VIII, it is estimated that a development impact fee at the 5 acres per 1,000 standard could generate \$345 million in revenue.<sup>3</sup>

Although, the County already has Quimby in-lieu dedication fees in place, this program has not in the past generated the level of revenue required to acquire new park land. Increasing the Quimby standard to 5 acres per 1,000 to match the recommended LOS will help. It will also be critically important that payments of a fee in lieu of land dedication be based on the fair market of the land as assessed at the time it has been subdivided and improved for development, rather than as agricultural or other unimproved land, as has been the practice in the past. The latter practice reduced the amount of revenue the County would otherwise have received for the acquisition of new park land, under cutting the purpose for which the Quimby program was established.

Another potential revenue source to fund parks projects is a voter approved bond measure. A general obligation bond could provide a sub-

<sup>3</sup>Please note that for development impact fee schedule, figures listed in the Kern County CIP will take precedence over those contained in the Kern County Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

stantial amount of funding up front for the Park Department's capital needs. Results from the telephone survey, where 74 percent of those surveyed indicated a willingness to support an annual property tax increase of \$15, suggests this may be a viable option worth further exploration. A bond measure that increased the annual tax rate by a modest 0.020% could generate an estimated \$217 million.

Utilizing these new funding sources will greatly improve the financial basis of the County park system. However, given the projected costs for new park lands and existing park improvements, there will still be a significant gap between projected needs and available funding. For this reason, it will be important for the County to explore other additional funding options and cost efficiencies, as summarized below:

- Compared to other California counties revenue from charges for services is low. Cost recovery for certain recreation programs could potentially be increased without negatively impacting recreational activity participation. A user fee study should be implemented to determine the feasibility of increasing user charges to achieve a higher services cost recovery rate.

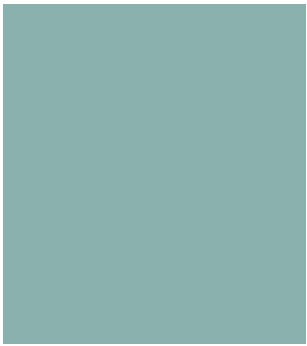
- Facilitating the formation of park and recreation districts, along with the concomitant establishment of a benefit assessment district, as previously described, can provide an ongoing revenue stream.
- Cost efficiencies could also be achieved by transferring the control of public buildings currently located in cities and park districts or when facilities are incorporated into other jurisdictions through annexation. Alternatively, the County can contract out maintenance responsibilities to other public agencies or private vendors located near these buildings, where transfer of ownership is not yet feasible.
- Public-private partnerships can also be pursued as a way to develop special recreational facilities, especially those with the potential to

serve a regional market. Typically, a public agency constructs a facility then leases that facility to a private entity in exchange for a share of the revenue generated by the facility. A potential public private partnership could be the means for a regional Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) park in Kern County.

Finally, it will be essential that Kern County pursue a cooperative and collaborative approach with all other entities responsible for parks and recreation services. Inter-agency cooperation and partnerships with local communities will avoid unnecessary duplication and achieve cost savings, while also ensuring that park and recreation needs are being met county-wide.




CHAPTER ONE



1

introduction



*THE KERN COUNTY PARKS AND  
RECREATION DEPARTMENT DEVELOPS  
AND MAINTAINS A SAFE, ACCESSIBLE,  
HIGH QUALITY REGIONAL SYSTEM OF  
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# introduction

IN THE SPRING OF 2008, Kern County began the development of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan to evaluate the County's current park and recreation resources, assess the needs for the future, and develop a road map to achieving those needs. The development of this plan was a collaborative effort involving staff from the Parks Department, elected officials, representatives from other park agencies, and stakeholders and residents from communities throughout Kern County. This plan represents the first master plan developed for the County of Kern Parks and Recreation Department.

## 1.1 PLAN PURPOSE

Kern County has experienced significant changes over the nearly six decades since the formation of the Kern County Parks and Recreation Department in 1952. The extensive countywide park system that now exists was for the most part developed and completed over two

decades ago. Since that time the recreation needs and expectations of the community have continued to change, while the park system has remained largely unchanged. The park system today must serve a significantly larger and more diverse population, but is trying to do so with parks and recreation assets built long before many of its current users were even alive. At the very same time that the need to adapt has grown more urgent, complex financial conditions appear to be making it even more of a challenge for the park system to effectively respond to these stressful circumstances.

The Master Plan is an essential first step in finding solutions that will enable Kern County and its park system to move forward past current challenges and toward a stronger position where it can more effectively meet the future recreation needs of the community. Given this overall purpose, the plan has three corollary purposes to fulfill:



*Kern Park train. Bakersfield Californian newspaper file photo*

- Present a long-term vision and goals for the Department and the community for the next 20 to 25 years.
- Describe current and future needs, interests and community preferences for parks, recreation and facilities.
- Identify priorities and develop recommendations for action that will guide future development and management of the park and recreation system.

### 1.2 HOW THE PLAN WAS DEVELOPED

The Master Plan was developed through the active involvement of staff, residents and elected officials who participated in meetings, interviews, community workshops, focus groups, telephone surveys and on-line questionnaires. Nearly 2000 community members provided opinions and input that was used to develop

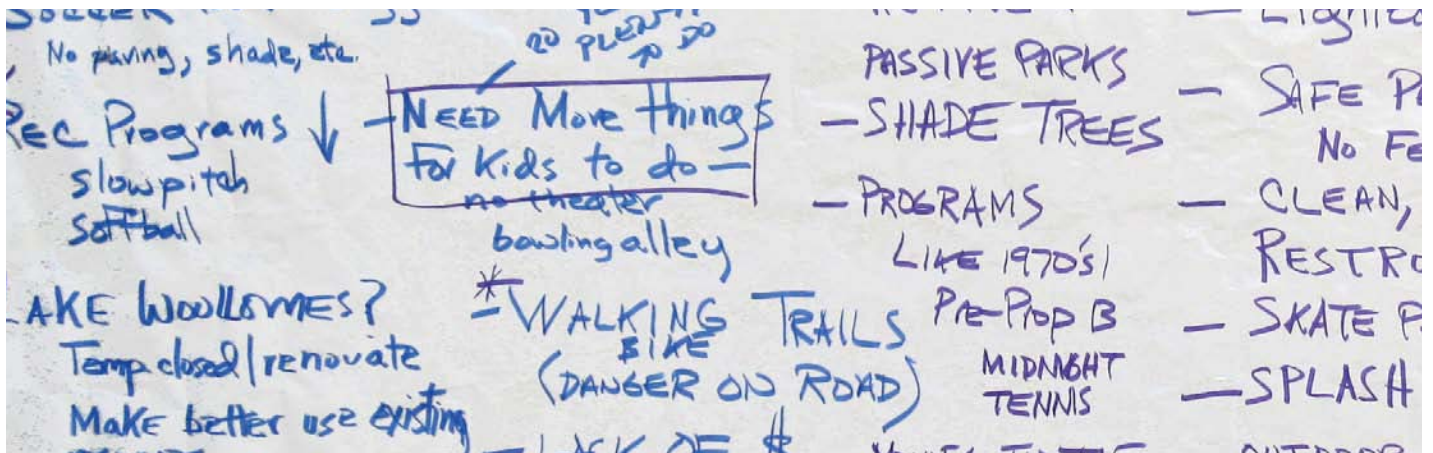
this plan. The Project Management Team, composed of staff from the Kern County Parks and Recreation Department and MIG staff, met and communicated on a regular, on-going basis throughout the planning process. At key milestones, the Project Management Team presented and reviewed findings from the planning process with the Parks and Recreation Commission. The resulting master plan reflects current priorities and interests and provides the Department with the direction it needs to respond effectively to the changing needs of the Kern County community.

The development of the Master Plan involved four phases, which are noted in Figure #1 .

#### Phase I – Where Are We Now?

The first phase of the planning process focused on existing park and

Portion of large wall graphic where input was recorded at Delano Focus Group





recreation resources in Kern County. This chiefly involved an inventory, mapping and evaluation of all existing parks and recreation facilities provided by the County of Kern Parks and Recreation Department. To develop a more comprehensive picture of recreation assets available to Kern County residents in both incorporated and unincorporated areas of the County, the assessment extended beyond those of the Department. It also encompassed an inventory of parks, recreation facilities and programs offered by other providers in Kern County, including city park departments and special park districts. This first phase also included early community outreach activities, including interviews with stakeholders representing communities from all regions of Kern County. This preliminary outreach was undertaken to develop an initial profile of key issues, priorities and perceived needs.

### Phase II – Where Do We Want To Be?

The second phase 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



Figure 1

needs and perceived gaps, and to identify priorities for future park and recreation services. These opportunities included ten focus groups and five community workshops held in every region of the County, as well as a telephone survey of 750 randomly selected households. In addition, community questionnaires for adults and youth, provided in both English and Spanish, were available online and distributed in libraries, parks and other venues throughout the County. Findings from these various outreach tools, together with an analysis of the existing park system, provided an emerging profile of where the park system is today and where it needs to be in the future.

### Phase III – How Do We Get There?

The third phase of the planning process drew upon the overall strategic direction emerging from the preceding stages to identify the goals,

NEARLY 2000 COMMUNITY MEMBERS PROVIDED OPINIONS AND INPUT THAT WAS USED TO DEVELOP THIS PLAN. THE PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM, COMPOSED OF STAFF FROM THE KERN COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT AND MIG STAFF, MET AND COMMUNICATED ON A REGULAR, ON-GOING BASIS THROUGHOUT THE PLANNING PROCESS.

strategies and actions that would be needed to improve the park system. Given the gap between the existing park system and where the park system should be in the future, these recommendations are designed to chart a path forward which over time will enable the County to achieve its goals for the park system. This undertaking includes organizational

*Below: Panorama Park, Bakersfield*



and financial strategies that will be needed to more effectively carry out the Plan.

#### **Phase IV – Finalizing the Plan**

During the final stage, results from the planning process were shared with those who had participated in the development of the Master Plan. This effort included a second round of community workshops during which findings from earlier outreach, as well as key Plan elements and recommendations, were presented. Opinions expressed during these workshops were used to help refine the continued development of the draft Master Plan, which was subsequently reviewed by Department staff and elected officials. The draft Master Plan was also made available for public review and comment on the website of the Kern County Parks and Recreation Department. Information gathered during this time was used to confirm and refine the overall strategic direction and specific recommendations of the Master Plan. Following the presentation of the Draft Plan to the Kern County Board of Supervisors for their review, a final version of the Master Plan was developed to reflect and incorporate their views in conjunction with feedback provided by County staff. Upon approval by the Board of Supervisors,

the Final Master Plan will guide parks and recreation service delivery for the next 20 years.

### 1.3 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Although this is the first Kern County Parks and Recreation Master Plan, its development has benefited from a number of other plans that have been developed and adopted in recent years. Some of the most significant planning documents that bear most directly on this Master Plan are highlighted below.

#### Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan (2002)

The Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan (MBGP) is a policy document designed to give long range guidance to those making decisions affecting the future character of the 408 square mile Metropolitan Bakersfield planning area. Development and implementation of the MBGP was a joint effort of the City of Bakersfield and the County of Kern. Initially developed in 1990, the most recent version of the Plan was adopted in December 2007, and drew upon significant input from the Greater Bakersfield Vision 2020, Inc.: a broad based community effort to create a vision for the Metropolitan Bakersfield area.

The Parks Element of the MBGP identified many issues that are also addressed in this Master Plan, including:

- The shortage of local parks
- Limited tax revenues making it increasingly difficult for local governments to provide parks and recreational facilities.
- The need for improved interjurisdictional coordination to create more consistent standards and avoid duplication of efforts.

It states that neighborhood parks should be supplied at a minimum of 2.5 acres per 1,000 persons. As an overall goal, however, it further recommends that four acres of park and recreation space be provided for each 1,000 persons.<sup>1</sup> This minimum standard encompasses a range of general recreation opportunities, including mini-parks, neighborhood parks, community parks and regional parks.

The MBGP also proposes organizational and funding solutions similar to those in this Plan, including:

- “Allow the formation of special park districts which provide higher park standards that the minimum stated...”
- “Consider the formation of Community Facilities Districts, especially in newly developed areas.”

<sup>1</sup>Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan – 2002, Chapter XI – Parks Element, Goals #2 and # 3, page XI-4

**COLLABORATIVE DOCUMENTS**

- **Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan (2007)**
- **Kern County General Plan (2004)**
- **Kern River Plan Element (1985) and the Kern River Specific Trails Plan (2003)**
- **Kern County Strategic Plan (2005/2008)**
- **Kern County Capital Improvement Plan (2008)**
- **Kern Regional Blueprint (2008)**
- **Kern IRWMP (Present)**
- **Metropolitan Recreation Center Master Plan (2000)**

- “Consider the use of special taxes for financing services or facilities”
- “Provide for the creation of benefit assessment districts for park acquisition, development and maintenance.”
- “Encourage a community-wide parks and recreation district to equitably distribute support for the park system.”

**Kern County General Plan (2004)**

The Kern County General Plan addresses planning issues in the unincorporated areas of Kern County, excluding those areas that lie within the Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan. The Land Use, Open Space and Conservation Element of the Kern County General Plan, which was adopted in 2004, include implementation measures for public facilities including some for parks and recreation facilities. It states as a requirement that Kern County should implement a level of service standard of 2.5 acres of park area per 1,000 residents, and that it periodically evaluate that standard to ensure it is sufficient to meet the needs of County residents. Other policy statements assert that the County

- “Provide recreation opportunities for all citizens of Kern County while avoiding duplication between jurisdictions.
- “Provide a balanced system of

recreational facilities to meet Kern County’s diverse needs, and clearly define responsibility for the provision of these facilities.”

- “Provide a variety of park and recreation programs that offer safe, equitable and balanced recreation opportunities for all residents and visitors.”

In order to achieve the 2.5 acres per 1,000 standard and to effectively carry out these policies, it also states the Kern County Parks and Recreation Department, “will evaluate the possibility of alternative funding sources for the development, rehabilitation and operation of park and recreational facilities. These funding sources shall include the possible implementation of development fees and/or special assessment districts such as used for lighting and landscaping, under a County Service Area (CSA).”

**Kern River Plan Element (1985) and the Kern River Specific Trails Plan (2003)**

In 1982, the Land Use, Open Space and Conservation Element of the Kern County General Plan recognized the importance of preserving riverbeds like the Kern River segment in Bakersfield as linear parks. This recommendation led to the development of the Kern River Plan Element, which was adopted in 1985 by both the City of Bakersfield and Kern County as a

part of the Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan. The Kern River Plan Element proposed multi-use trails along both sides of the Kern River and called for the development of a Kern River Specific Trails Plan (KRSTP) to facilitate the implementation of this trail. Adopted in 2003, the Kern River Specific Trails Plan guides the planning and development of multi-use trails along unincorporated areas of the Kern River corridor. The KRSTP is intended to complement the City of Bakersfield's Kern River Parkway Plan which is designed to establish trails along portions of the river that are incorporated into the City of Bakersfield. Together, the KRSTP and the Kern River Parkway Plan, create a comprehensive plan along the Kern River corridor, as originally identified in the Kern River Plan Element.

### **Kern County Strategic Plan (2005/2008)**

The Kern County Strategic Plan was undertaken in 2005 and completed in 2008. Recreation and Culture are identified as one of seven strategic goal areas. Among its recommended strategic outcomes was the identification of unmet community needs for park and recreation facilities. This was to be accomplished "through (an) adopted Master Plan and devel-

opment of funding mechanisms to support phased approach to development of new facilities and rehabilitation of existing facilities." Among the suggested funding mechanisms were development fees, maintenance fees, use fees, county service areas, and landscape and lighting districts.

### **Kern County Capital Improvement Plan (2008)**

Completed in 2008, the Kern County CIP reviewed and identified current and future infrastructure needs in Kern County based on projected development through 2030. The CIP identified all major capital improvement projects in nine different facility categories, including park and recreation facilities. At the time the CIP was being developed, staff from the Kern County Parks and Recreation Department identified five new facilities for the CIP, which included four new parks and a community center. Given the projected increase in population between 2008 and 2030, it was determined that these five planned facilities by themselves would not be sufficient to maintain the existing level of service. Additional parks and facilities, especially at the local community level would be required. This finding set the stage for the development of the current Parks and Recreation Mas-

*Young sapling along perimeter of soccer field in Boron*



ter Plan, which has been coordinated with the CIP. In turn, it is expected that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan will be used to help revise the Kern County CIP in the parks and recreation facilities category at its next update.

### **Kern Regional Blueprint (2008)**

Initiated in 2007 and completed in 2008, the Kern Regional Blueprint was developed through an extensive, public participatory planning process led by the Kern Council of Governments. Designed to address the impact of growth on Kern County over the next 50 years, the Blueprint consists of a set of growth management principles, crafted by participants from throughout Kern County, that are intended to inform decision-making at both the regional and local level. Many of the themes that emerged from the Blueprint planning process are similar to those that have come out of the public outreach process for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Participants in the Blueprint process envisioned enhancements to the park system at both the regional and local level that maintain or improve their conditions and functions. Some participants suggested creating more

parks and recreation opportunities in areas where it was important to conserve undeveloped lands and natural open spaces. They also stressed that youth require new and expanded park and recreation opportunities that address their physical activity and care needs. To achieve these objectives, participants suggested that improved coordination between local and regional governments should occur. It was also critical that existing community assets and infrastructure be improved and that new funding mechanisms would be necessary to achieve these improvements.

### **Kern IRWMP (Present)**

More formerly known as the Tulare Lake Basin Portion of Kern County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan, the Kern IRWMP is a concurrent, ongoing collaborative planning process undertaken by water suppliers, public agencies, environmentalists, business groups and other interested community stakeholders. The Kern IRWMP is being developed in accordance with the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Act of 2002 (Proposition 50). This new state mandate requires all local agencies and communities with responsibilities that impact the management of local

and imported water supplies to plan, develop and implement an integrated water management plan to improve the quality, quantity and reliability of those water supplies.

The Kern IRWMP will provide the necessary pre-condition to seek funding for the implementation of a variety of water management strategies and multi-benefit projects, some of which could support the goals of the Kern County Parks and Recreation Master. Among these will be new sites for groundwater recharge, some of which could be in existing parks or new parks located in areas where development has not yet occurred, enabling these sites to provide dual groundwater recharge and recreation functions.

### Metropolitan Recreation Center Master Plan (2000)

The Metropolitan Recreation Center is a Kern County regional park located within the City of Bakersfield. It includes Stramler Park, as well as numerous other cultural and recreational facilities; most notably the Kern County Museum and the Sam Lynn professional baseball team. The MRC Master Plan, adopted in 2000, was developed in anticipation that the museum would experience future exhibit and development growth. The



*Typical concession window at ball park.*

MRC Master Plan was designed to create a vision for the entire site that would ensure the continued compatibility of the many different cultural and recreational functions located within this regional park facility.

In addition to these countywide and regional planning documents, it is important to point out that Kern County is not the only public agency responsible for the delivery of parks and recreation services in Kern County. As explained in more detail elsewhere in this Plan, there are also five municipal

park and recreation departments, eight independent park districts, and a community services district providing park and recreation services at the local level. In addition, California State Parks and federal agencies like the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management are major providers of parks and recreation services within Kern County, as explained further in chapter II. All of these jurisdictions (local, state and federal) have been and will be engaged in parks and recreation planning to one extent or another. Some of the most recent planning efforts at the local level include the City of Bakersfield Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the City of McFarland Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and the Rosamond Community Services District Park System Master Plan, all of which were completed in 2007. Examples of recent recreational planning activities at the

federal level have included proposals by the U.S. Forest Service to increase access fees for high impact recreation areas around Lake Isabella, as well as development of a Motor Vehicle Travel Management Plan in the same area. Elsewhere, the most notable recent planning effort which will expand recreational opportunities in Kern County is the creation of the 240,000 acre Tejon Ranch Preserve, which will include among many other elements, a realignment of the Pacific Crest Trail through Tejon Ranch and the creation of a major State Park.

In order to successfully achieve the objectives of this Master Plan, it will be critically important for Kern County to work closely with these local park jurisdictions, and also the relevant state and federal agencies, as they and the County have over the years collectively developed what now func-

*Ballfield in Boron*





tions as a countywide park system but are independently operating separate parts of that system. To ensure these different components are aligned to work well together, avoid duplicative roles and responsibilities, and fill avoidable gaps in the delivery of recreation services, then inter-jurisdictional planning and implementation will be a necessity.

#### **1.4 PLAN ORGANIZATION**

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan is organized as eight chapters and appendices (to be published as a separate document).

*Chapter 1: Introduction* describes the purpose of the Plan, phases in the development of the plan, the involvement of County residents, the relationship between this Plan and other planning documents, the organization of the Plan document, and an overview of Plan policies and goals.

*Chapter 2: Planning Context* provides an overview of Kern County, including background relevant to the plan, such as the County's geographical context, history, demographics, community profiles and other park agencies and jurisdictions. It also defines the five subareas (or regions) in Kern County that provided a useful framework

for better understanding the varied communities and vast landscape that shape the County.

*Chapter 3: Existing Parks and Recreation System* provides a profile of all parks and recreation facilities currently managed and operated by the Kern County Parks and Recreation Department. It also identifies parks and recreation facilities offered by other local park jurisdictions in Kern County, as well as recreation programs offered by these park agencies and other providers.

*Chapter 4: Park, Facility and Program Needs* presents key findings from the public involvement process and summarizes community needs for parks, recreation facilities and programs based on a desired level of service and the community's vision for their ideal, future park system.

*Chapter 5: Policies, Goals and Actions* presents a framework for the overall management of the Kern County parks and recreation system, encompassing a set of policies and goals, and recommended actions for achieving these goals. These goals and actions are designed to achieve the needs and priorities of residents as identified through the needs assessment process.

*Chapter 6: Implementation/Capital Improvement Plan* presents specific recommendations for improving existing parks, developing new parks and other improvements to the park system.

*Chapter 7: Organizational Reform of County Park System* is a regional look at how Kern County, other park agencies and the community can work together in a new way to meet the park and recreation needs of the Kern County residents

*Chapter 8: Funding Options and Recommendations* presents recommended capital and operations funding strategies that will be needed to implement the policies, goals and actions outlined in this Plan.

*Appendices:* These materials are assembled in a volume published separately from the Master Plan.

## 1.5 PLAN OVERVIEW

The management framework for the Kern County Parks and Recreation Master Plan consists of the following key elements:

### Mission

The Kern County Parks and Recreation Department develops and maintains a safe, accessible, high

quality regional system of parks, open spaces, landscapes, and recreational facilities to support and enhance the quality of life for our residents and visitors.

### Policies

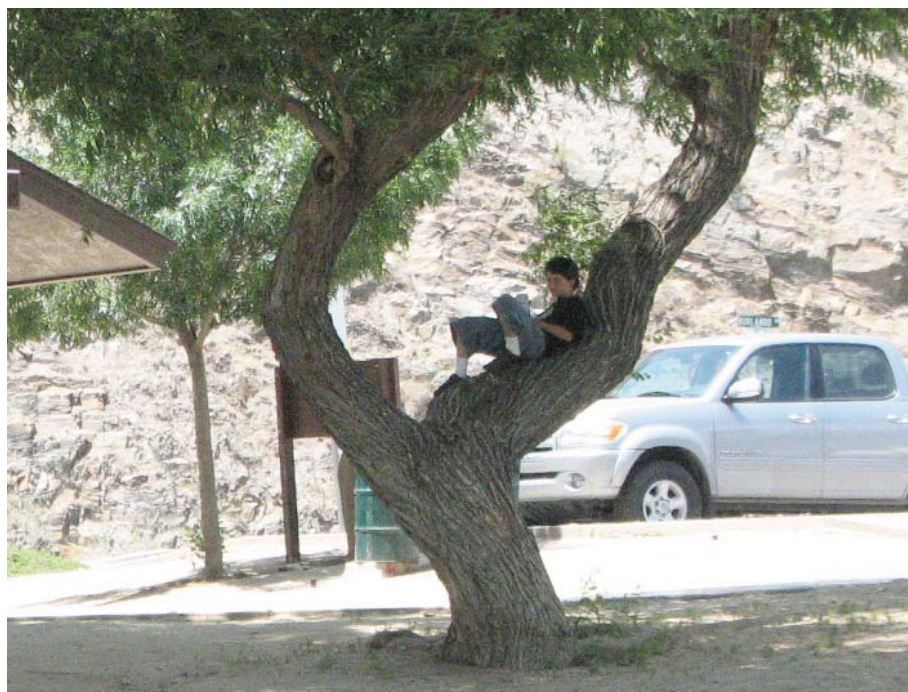
- Policy I – Develop and maintain a countywide system of regional parks, natural open spaces and recreational facilities which together provide opportunities for both active and passive recreation, serving the wide ranging recreational and social needs of the distinctive, varied communities of Kern County.
- Policy II - Maximize resources and expand opportunities for the County-wide parks and recreation system by reforming the financial support structure for the park system, enhancing organizational capabilities, and pro-actively engaging other organizations and the community at large through partnerships and other cooperative arrangements.

### Goals

- *Goal 1* - Rehabilitate, renovate and modernize existing parks and recreational facilities in the Kern County park system consistent with park standards.
- *Goal 2* – Provide a minimum standard of 5 acres of park land per 1,000 residents. This standard would apply to regional parks serving the entire County, as well as

local parks in unincorporated areas of the County not served by a local park district.

- **Goal 3** - Provide access to various types of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities with the capacity to support increased recreation programming and provide year-round recreation opportunities for all County residents
- **Goal 4** - Expand trail connections and pathways throughout Kern County
- **Goal 5** - Ensure that all Kern County parks and recreation facilities maintain a high level of safety and security for visitors and employees.
- **Goal 6** - Incorporate natural areas and unique ecological and archeological features into the park and open space system to protect threatened species, conserve significant natural and cultural resources and retain critical habitat areas that are unique to Kern County.
- **Goal 7** - Achieve sustainable long-term financial viability for the Kern County park system to satisfy operational needs, capital requirements and desired recreation services.
- **Goal 8** - Coordinate with other park agencies, park and recreation districts and private providers to ensure that the parks and recreation needs of all Kern County residents are being met.
- **Goal 9** – Continue to support the development and delivery of



*Above: Perfect tree for shady reading.*

recreation programs and services provided by other park agencies, non-profit groups, and community organizations in Kern County.

- **Goal 10** - Engage Kern County residents in the planning, stewardship, and programming of park and recreation resources, and provide effective community outreach and marketing to increase public awareness and support of recreation services.
- **Goal 11** – Design and manage County parks and recreation facilities to support families, provide youth with healthy and safe recreational activities, and to encourage community building

THIS PLAN CHARTS A PATH FORWARD, RECOGNIZING THAT IT IS MEANT TO SERVE AS A GUIDE FOR THE COUNTY AND ITS DECISION-MAKERS OVER THE NEXT TWO DECADES.

- **Goal 12** - Develop, train, and support a professional parks department staff that effectively serves the community in the realization of the goals and objectives of this Plan.

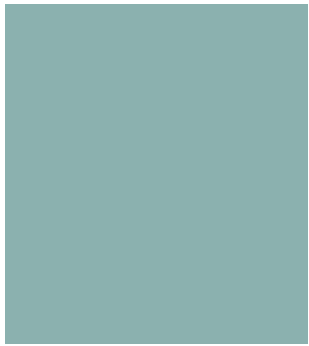
### 1.6 IMPLEMENTATION

This plan will serve as a framework for future decision making, priority setting and budgeting. It also describes a desired future for the park and recreation system. Achieving this desired future condition is necessarily a long term process. The time required to carry out physical improvements on the ground in the form of existing parks renovated and new parks built in communities now without parks should not be underes-

timated. The same can also be said for the time required to undertake changes in the underlying institutional structure for developing, operating and financing the park system, which are also recommended in this Plan. These organizational changes will likely prove challenging to undertake and will require careful planning and implementation over a number of years. Successfully achieving these organizational and financial reforms, however, will greatly facilitate the implementation of improvements to the park system itself. This Plan charts a path forward, recognizing that it is meant to serve as a guide for the County and its decision-makers over the next two decades.

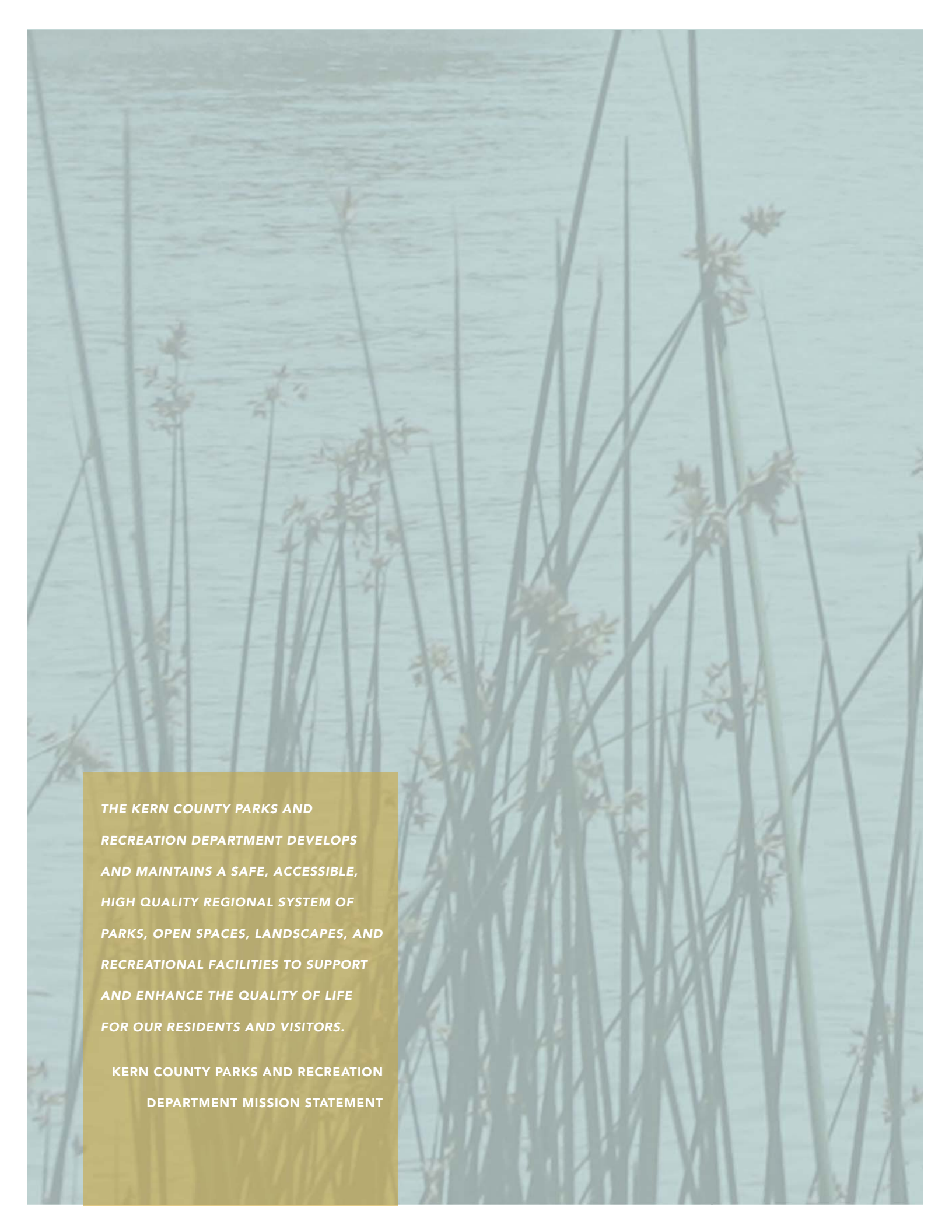


CHAPTER TWO



2

planning context



*THE KERN COUNTY PARKS AND  
RECREATION DEPARTMENT DEVELOPS  
AND MAINTAINS A SAFE, ACCESSIBLE,  
HIGH QUALITY REGIONAL SYSTEM OF  
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, LANDSCAPES, AND  
RECREATIONAL FACILITIES TO SUPPORT  
AND ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE  
FOR OUR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.*

KERN COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION  
DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

# planning context

A THOROUGH UNDERSTANDING of Kern County's planning context is a key component of a successful planning process. This chapter of the Kern County Parks and Recreation Master Plan summarizes the context in which the Kern County park system operates. Specifically, this chapter:

- Provides an overview of the Kern County planning area,
- Discusses the history of Kern County,
- Profiles the Kern County community in terms of population growth, development and other related demographic information,
- Notes the various governmental jurisdictions within Kern County that are involved in planning park and recreation services.

## 2.1 REGIONAL CONTEXT

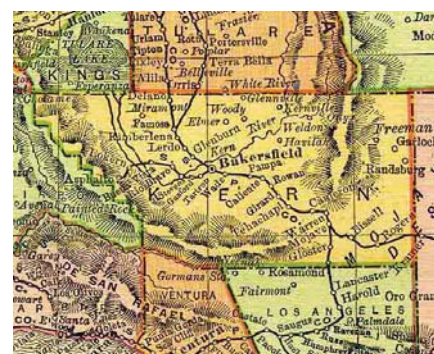
The County of Kern is located in the Central Valley of California and is the third largest county in the state. With a total area of 8,170 square miles, Kern County, like California

as a whole, encompasses a diverse terrain and climate that runs the gamut from desert to snow capped mountains. It shares its borders with eight other counties, the greatest number of any county in California.

The latest information from the California Department of Finance estimates the total population of Kern County to be 827,173.<sup>1</sup> The vast majority of the population, 40 percent, is concentrated in the city of Bakersfield where the county seat is located.

To place Kern County in perspective, the table below compares the area, population, density, park acreage and park acreage per person of five other California counties: Fresno, Riverside, San Bernardino, Madera and Tulare.

<sup>1</sup>California Department of Finance, E-1: City/County Population Estimates with Annual Percent Change: Total population 1-1-09 .



*Above: Excerpt from an 1895 California atlas.*

*Below: Bakersfield Inn with original sign as it was built in 1949. Photo courtesy of the Kern County Library.*



There are eleven incorporated cities within the County: Arvin, California City, Delano, Maricopa, McFarland, Ridgecrest, Shafter, Taft, Tehachapi, Wasco and metropolitan Bakersfield, which includes a number of unincorporated communities within its area of influence. Of those incorporated cities, seven own and operate their own park system: Arvin, Bakersfield, California City, Delano, Maricopa, Ridgecrest, and Shafter.

In addition to the cities mentioned above that operate and maintain their own parks, there are several independent park districts throughout the county that serve the recreation needs of residents living beyond the

influence of Bakersfield. These will be discussed in Section 2.4 of this chapter.

## 2.2 HISTORY

The Spanish first claimed the Kern County area in 1769. It was eventually ceded to the U.S. in 1848 under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The discovery of gold in the 1850s was responsible for the first influx of American settlers. News of the discovery spread fast, and pioneers and miners traveled from all over to make their fortune. The Kern River gold excitement produced several large discoveries until mining eventually gave way to farming.

Kern County was officially formed on April 2, 1866 from portions of Los Angeles and Tulare Counties. The next large discovery for Kern County was oil. In 1894 the Midway-Sunset Oil Field, the third largest in the United States, was discovered. Numerous other large producing oil fields were discovered throughout the County, including the Kern River

COUNTY POPULATION, DENSITY AND PER CAPITA COMPARISONS					
County	Population <sup>1</sup>	Density Persons <sup>1</sup>	County Area/ Sq. Mi. <sup>1</sup>	Park Acreage	Park Acreage p/1000 persons
Kern	827,173	101	8,170	4,702	5.7
Fresno	942,298	157	5,998	1,361	1.53
Riverside	2,107,653	291	7,243	44,000 <sup>2</sup>	20.28
San Bernardino	2,060,950	102	20,164	9,200 <sup>3</sup>	4.46
Madera	152,331	71	2,147	253.62	1.66
Tulare	441,481	90	4884	460	1.04

<sup>1</sup>Source: California State Association of Counties website - 2008

<sup>2</sup>Source: Riverside County Regional Park & Open Space District website

<sup>3</sup>Source: Annual 2008-09 San Bernardino County budget



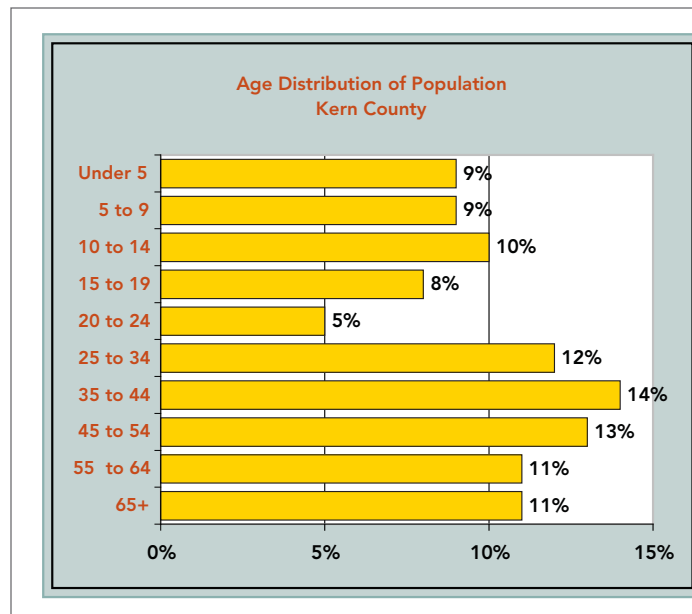
Oil Field which is the fifth largest in the United States.

Numerous noteworthy events mark the history of Kern County. Several large earthquakes have taken place in the area, including the 1952 quake that measured a 7.2 on the Richter scale and caused the deaths of 12 people, and the Lone Pine earthquake of 1872 which was the second strongest quake in California history. Kern County is also home to two major aeronautic and military research and development facilities. Edwards Air Force Base is the site of the first supersonic flight and the first landing of the Space Shuttle. The China Lake Naval Weapons Center in Ridgecrest develops and tests airborne weapon systems.

### 2.3 COMMUNITY PROFILES

#### Housing

The Central Valley of California has seen significant housing growth between 2000 and 2007. Kern County housing units grew from 231,567 in 2000 to 276,602 in 2008; a 19% increase that almost doubles the overall 10% growth of housing units in all of California during the same time period.



The current number of persons per household in Kern County is 3.11 compared with 2.94 for the State of California.

*Chart provided by Research Network Ltd. from telephone survey conducted Jan. 2009*

#### Demography

As of 2007 the ethnic make up of the County was 63 percent White; 6 percent African American; 4 percent Asian; and 27 percent were of other races. The mix of Hispanic and non-Hispanic populations is roughly equal, although the percentage of Hispanic residents at 45.1% is expected to continue to grow.

#### Education

During the 2007-08 school, the total number of students enrolled in Kern

County schools between grades K-12 was 174,180. Of adults 25 and over, 71 percent had graduated high school and 14 percent had completed a bachelor's degree or an additional graduate degree. Nearly one-third of the population left high school before graduating.

Kern County ranks second in the state for increase in school enrollment and is projected to maintain that level of growth for the next 10 to 20 years according to the California Department of Finance.

### **Income and Economy**

The median household income of Kern residents as reported during 2005-2007 was \$44,620 while per capita income was \$19,477. These numbers are significantly lower than comparable figures for the rest of the State which are \$50,007 and \$26,178 respectively.

The Central Valley of California, of which Kern County is a part, is known as one of the most productive agricultural areas in the world. Kern County leads the state in the production of several crops; including almonds, pistachios, carrots, watermelons, sheep and wool, helping to make the County the fourth in California

agricultural production after Fresno, Tulare and Monterey counties.

Agriculture has been Kern County's number one industry for many years. Approximately one out of every four jobs in Kern County is related to agriculture. However, the number of farm jobs is shrinking due, in part, to the sell off of farmland. Government jobs account for the greatest growth during the years 2007-2008 in Kern County according to a California Employment Development Department report of November 2008.

Kern County is also rich in minerals and underground resources and supplies the largest portion of oil production in California.

### **Geography**

Because Kern County covers such a vast territory, and because its regions vary so dramatically in topography, population, commerce, demography and economy, for purposes of this planning document the county is divided into five Areas which can be seen on the Kern County Map fold-out in this chapter. Looking at the county in terms of five geographic Areas facilitated the community outreach process and the analysis of findings from each of these regions.

This ensured that the perspective of residents living in the smaller more rural communities in unincorporated parts of the County would not be overshadowed by the larger population centers in and near Bakersfield.

For this same reason it was necessary to define one of these Areas, Area 5, as consisting of two separate subareas, one lying north and the other south of Bakersfield. It was determined that although these two subareas are not contiguous to each other, they are similar demographically and needed to be viewed as a single territory to provide a population base large enough for purposes of the telephone survey and subsequent analyses.

**Area 1 – North East Kern County** –a significant portion of this area lies within the Sequoia National Forest, encompasses the many small rural communities of the Kern River Valley, and includes only one incorporated city, Ridgecrest, near the eastern edge of Kern County.

**Area 2 – South East Kern County** –encompasses the mountain communities of Frazier Park and Tehachapi, along with communities further to the east that lie in the Mojave Desert. In

addition to Tehachapi, the only other incorporated city in this area is California City. Edwards Air Force Base is also located in this area.

**Area 3 – Greater Bakersfield** – lying at the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley, this expansive metropolitan area is the demographic, economic and political center of Kern County.

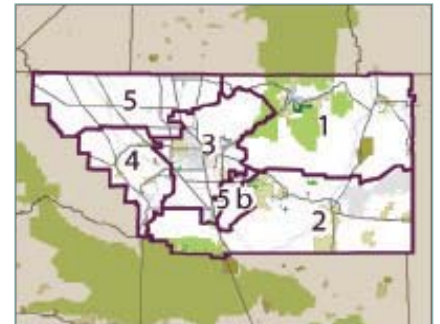
**Area 4 – West Kern County** – a part of the San Joaquin Valley located to the west of Bakersfield, it includes the incorporated cities of Maricopa and Taft. This area remains the center of oil production in Kern County.

**Area 5 – Valley North of Bakersfield and Sub-Area 5B- South of Bakersfield** – a rich, agricultural area that includes several incorporated cities including Arvin (in area 5B to the south of Bakersfield), and Delano, McFarland, Shafter and Wasco to the north of Bakersfield

A more complete list of cities and communities within these five geographic areas are identified below.

## 2.4 LOCAL PARK JURISDICTIONS

In Kern County, there are many different cities, districts, agencies, depart-



*Map showing the five areas used to identify geographic regions of the County.*

**AREA 1 – NORTH KERN COUNTY**

- Alta Sierra
- Bodfish
- Glennville
- Inyokern
- Johannesburg
- Kernville
- Lake Isabella
- Mountain Mesa
- Onyx
- Randsburg
- Ridgecrest
- South Lake
- Twin Oaks
- Wofford Heights

**AREA 2 – SOUTH KERN COUNTY**

- Boron
- California City
- Frazier Park
- Mojave
- North Edwards
- Rosamond
- Tehachapi

**AREA 3 – GREATER BAKERSFIELD**

- Bakersfield
- East Bakersfield
- Greenfield
- Lamont
- Oildale
- Rosedale
- Shafter
- South Bakersfield

ments, and public and private groups involved with the provision of parks, open space, and recreation facilities on local, county, state and federal levels. Overlapping jurisdictions, goals and strategies have helped create an interesting patchwork of parks, open space, and recreation programs.

**Kern County Parks and Recreation Department**

Created in 1952, the Kern County Parks and Recreation Department (Department) provides public parks to the residents of Kern County, focusing especially on regional parks for the entire County population and on more local recreation needs of residents living in unincorporated areas. This is especially true for residents in unincorporated communities not living within one of the independent park districts, where the County is the

only provider of parks and recreation services. In addition, however, the Department still operates and manages a large number of local neighborhood parks located within independent park districts and some cities.

The Department owns approximately 4,702 acres of parkland at 48 sites. Over 90% (or 4282 acres) lie within the 7 regional parks owned and managed by the Department. There is at least one regional park in each of the five areas of the County:

- Greenhorn Mountain Park (Area 1)
- Leroy Jackson Park (Area 1)
- Tehachapi Mountain Park (Area 2)
- Kern River County Park (Area 3)
- Metropolitan Recreation Center/Stramler Park (Area 3)
- Buena Vista Aquatic Recreation Area (Area 4)
- Lake Woolomes (Area 5)

**AREA 4 – WEST KERN COUNTY**

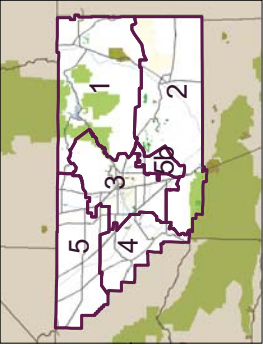
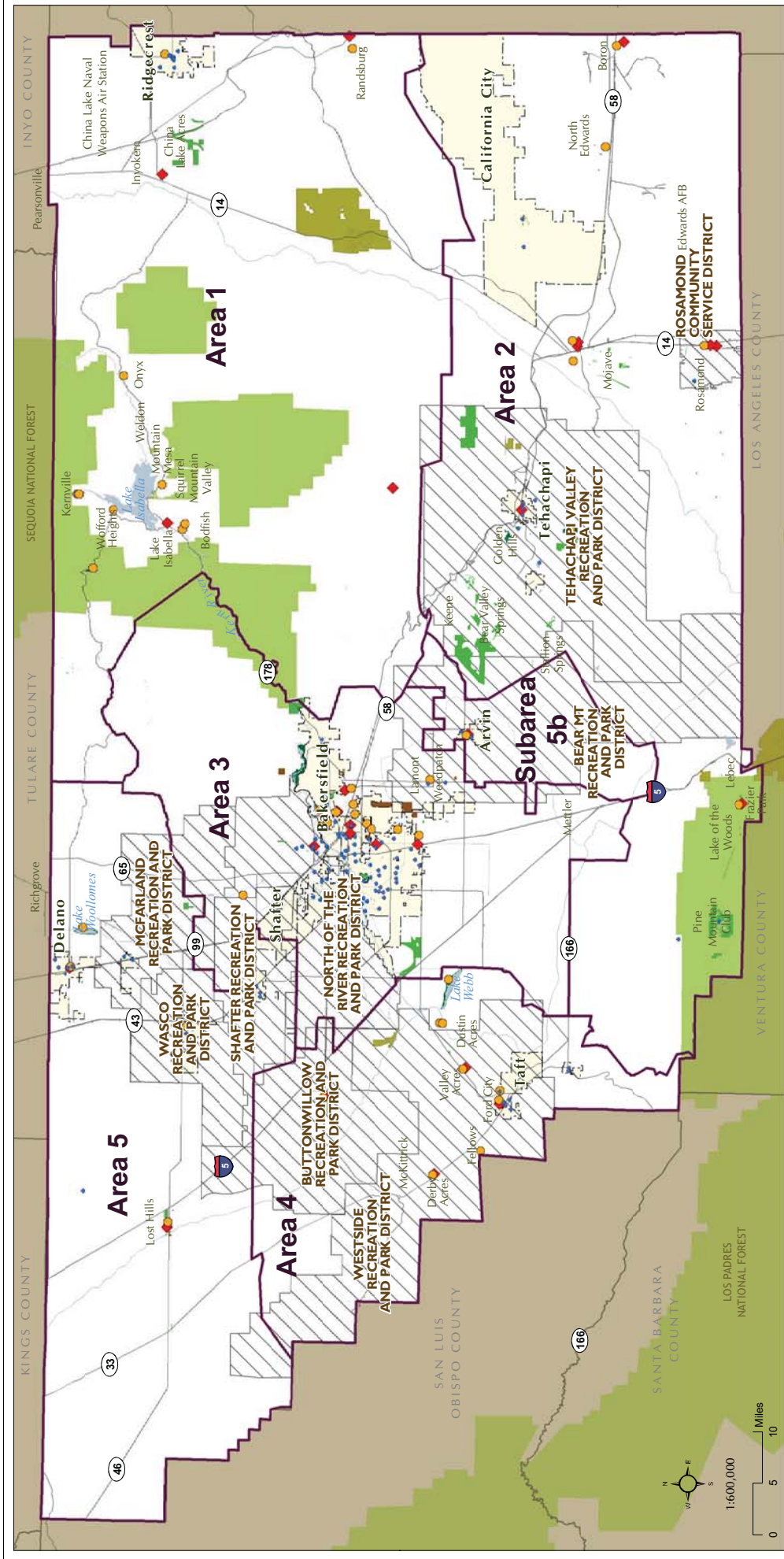
- Buttonwillow
- Derby Acres
- Dustin Acres
- Fellows
- Ford City
- Maricopa
- McKittrick
- Taft
- Valley Acres

**AREA 5– VALLEY/NORTH OF BAKERSFIELD**

- Delano
- Lost Hills
- McFarland
- Shafter
- Wasco

**SUBAREA 5B – VALLEY/SOUTH OF BAKERSFIELD**

- Arvin



- Kern County Facilities**
- County Facility
  - County Building
  - Regional Park

- Other Jurisdiction Facilities**
- City or Park District Facility
  - Park, Open Space & Greenway
  - Publicly Owned Facility
  - State Park

- National Forest
- Park Districts
- Subject Area
- Other Subject Area
- City Limits

- Other County
- Interstate/Highway
- Major Road
- Railroad
- Water Feature



**Kern County**  
Kern County, California

The remaining 420 acres of County park land is divided among 40 small local neighborhood parks, ranging in size from one to forty acres, distributed throughout all parts of the County. In addition to these 47 parks, the County park system includes 23 public buildings, encompassing community and recreation centers and senior and veterans buildings, also located in communities throughout the region. The Department's facilities also include three golf courses, fishing lakes, individual campgrounds, and boating and sailing facilities. In the case of the Lake Isabella Recreation Area, a major regional recreation asset, the Kern County Parks and Recreation Department does not own any land but it does provide recreation services. A complete inventory of Kern County parks and facilities owned and operated by the Department is provided in Chapter III.

### City Parks and Recreation

In addition to the local and regional parks provided by the Kern County Parks and Recreation Department, there is also an extensive network of parks provided by other local jurisdictions. Seven of the 11 incorporated cities in Kern County provide their residents with parks and recreation services. The City of Bakersfield, with over 50 parks, is the largest of these

CITY PARKS	
<b>CITY OF BAKERSFIELD</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aera Park (under construction)</li> <li>Amberton Park</li> <li>Beach Park</li> <li>Beale Park</li> <li>Bill Park Greens</li> <li>Campus Park North</li> <li>Campus Park South</li> <li>Castle Park</li> <li>Centennial Park</li> <li>Centennial Plaza Park</li> <li>Central Park</li> <li>Challenger Park</li> <li>Coral Keys Park</li> <li>Corvallis Park</li> <li>Deer Peak Park</li> <li>Garden Park</li> <li>Granite Pointe Park</li> <li>Greystone Park</li> <li>Grissom Park</li> <li>Haggin Oaks Park</li> <li>Jastro Park</li> <li>Jefferson Park</li> <li>Joshua Park</li> <li>Kern River Parkway</li> <li>Kroll Park</li> <li>Lowell Park</li> <li>Martin Luther King Jr. Park</li> <li>Park at River Walk</li> <li>Patriots Park</li> <li>Pin Oak Park</li> <li>Planz Park</li> <li>Quailwood Park</li> <li>River Oaks Park</li> <li>Saunders Park</li> <li>Seasons Park</li> <li>Siemon Park</li> <li>Silver Creek Park</li> <li>Solera Gardens</li> <li>Stiern Park</li> <li>Stone Creek Park</li> <li>Tevis Park</li> <li>Tradewinds Park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>University Park</li> <li>Wayside Park</li> <li>Weill Park</li> <li>Weston Park</li> <li>Wilderness Park</li> <li>Wilson Park</li> <li>Windemere Park</li> <li>Windsor Park</li> <li>Yokuts Park</li> </ul>
<b>CITY OF ARVIN</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kovacevich Park</li> <li>Smothermon Park</li> </ul>	
<b>CITY OF DELANO</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cecil Park</li> <li>Cesar Chavez Park</li> <li>Heritage Park</li> <li>Jefferson Park</li> <li>Morningside Park</li> </ul>	
<b>CALIFORNIA CITY</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Balsitis Park</li> <li>Central Park</li> </ul>	
<b>CITY OF MARICOPA</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>John Burke Park</li> <li>Maricopa Memorial Park</li> </ul>	
<b>CITY OF RIDGECREST</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freedom Park</li> <li>Hellmers Park</li> <li>James M. Pearson Memorial Park</li> <li>Kerr McGee Youth Sports Complex</li> <li>Leroy Jackson Park Sports Complex</li> <li>Ridgecrest Skate Park</li> <li>Sgt. John Pinney Memorial Pool</li> <li>Upjohn Park</li> </ul>	
<b>CITY OF SHAFTER</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mannel Park</li> <li>Hudson Park</li> <li>New Community Park</li> <li>Rodriguez Park</li> </ul>	

## SPECIAL PARK DISTRICTS

### BEAR MOUNTAIN RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT

- Bear Mountain Park
- Weedpatch Park

### BUTTONWILLOW RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT

### MCFARLAND RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT

- Browning Road Park
- McFarland Park

### NORTH OF THE RIVER RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT

- Almondale Park
- Emerald Cove Park
- Fruitvale Norris Park
- Greenacres Community Center
- Liberty Park
- Madison Grove Park
- McCray Park
- Mondavi Park
- North Beardsley Park
- North Highland Park
- North Meadows Park
- North Rosedale Park
- Olive Park East
- Olive Park West
- Rasmussen Center
- Riverview Park
- San Lauren Park
- Sears Park
- Standard Park
- Westdale Park

### ROSAMOND COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

- Open Space Park

city park systems. Included among these parks is the Kern River Parkway, a key regional recreation resource that the City of Bakersfield has been developing in cooperation with Kern County. When fully complete it will extend for 30 miles along the Kern River from near the mouth of the Kern River Canyon to Enos Lane near the I-5 Freeway. Another 23 local parks are provided by the remaining six city park departments, as listed below. All of these local parks are featured in the area maps that appear in Chapter III. Many of these city park departments also provide recreation programs, also described in Chapter III.

### Special Park and Recreation Districts

Alongside the city park departments, there are nine special park and recreation districts encompassing over 50% of the unincorporated area of Kern County and 40% of its unincorporated population. Park districts are found in all but one of the five park planning areas, previously described (See map insert). Residents living within these park districts are less dependent on Kern County Parks and Recreation Department for local parks.

Eight are independent park districts, and the ninth is a community services

district (Rosamond). Together these park districts provide over 40 parks or recreation facilities, along with local recreation programming. The extent and variety of parks and programs does vary between districts depending on the level of local financial support and the primary mission of the organization.

## 2.5 OTHER PARK AND RECREATION PROVIDERS

### National Forests and other Federal Recreation Resources

Significant portions of two national forests maintained by the U. S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service are located in Kern County. The Los Padres National Forest lies in the southwestern corner of Kern County adjacent to Frazier Park. The Sequoia National Forest dominates large areas in the north central and northeastern portions of the county, with much of it surrounding the Lake Isabelle Regional Recreation Area. Both national forests provide camping facilities and an extensive range of other outdoor recreation opportunities. The Bureau of Land Management is another major federal land owner in Kern County offering recreational opportunities, including a portion of the Pacific Crest Trail which traverses Kern

County along a route that lies east of Tehachapi and Lake Isabella. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service operates the Kern National Wildlife Refuge, an 11, 249 acre site west of Delano that serves as a major wintering habitat for waterfowl.

### State Parks

California State Parks manages four parks in Kern County. Three of these parks were established to preserve significant historic, cultural or natural resources, including Fort Tejon State Historic Park, Tomo-Kahni State Historic Park, and Tule Elk State Nature Reserve. The fourth park, Red Rock Canyon State Park, features spectacular desert cliff and rock formations, as well as camping and other outdoor recreational opportunities.

### Educational Institutions

Kern County has a variety of educational institutions that contribute to the supply of open space, community and recreational facilities within the county. There are forty seven public school districts collectively operating 269 school sites located throughout the county that contribute to the recreational needs of the school age population, and some adults. Among post-secondary educational institu-

tions located in Kern County, there is a four-year state university and two community colleges that also offer significant recreational facilities and programs that help meet community recreation needs.

### Military Institutions

Kern County is also home to two significant military installations located in the Mojave Desert, Edwards Air Force Base and the China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station. Both bases offer a variety of recreation facilities and programs for military personnel, their families, and civilian employees.

### Private Providers

Private providers contribute many more recreation facilities and programs within the County. Significant providers include organizations such as the Boys & Girls Club and the YMCA, along with many more sports leagues, clubs and other organizations providing diverse sporting events, programs and league activities throughout Kern County. A more detailed overview of these recreation programs is provided in Chapter III.

An especially significant regional recreation facility is provided by the Kern County Soccer Foundation which operates the Kern County Soccer

## SPECIAL PARK DISTRICTS

### SHAFTER RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT

### TEHACHAPI VALLEY RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT

- Dye Natatorium
- Brite Lake
- Central Park
- Meadowbrook Park
- Morris Park
- West Park

### WASCO RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT

- Barker Park
- Westside Park
- Cormack Park

### WESTSIDE RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT

- Taft Community Center
- Fitness Center
- Skate Escape
- Community Center Park (Skate Park)
- Franklin Field Complex (27 acre complex)
- "A" Street Park
- Mil Potrero Park
- Westside Mountain Park (Camp Condor is leased from the County)



Park. This major sports complex is part of the Kern River County Park and includes over 24 soccer fields.

## 2.6 PLANNING CONTEXT IMPLICATIONS

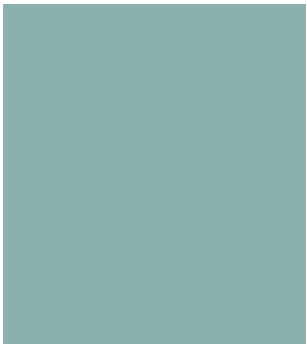
As described in this chapter, Kern County's geography, population growth, land use and development, natural resources, and overlapping political jurisdictions all affect provision of parks, recreation facilities, open space and programs. These factors are noted here to provide important context for the description of Kern County's Parks and Recreation Department inventory or parks and facilities, which appears in Chapter III.



*Cliffside of Red Rock Canyon State Park.*



CHAPTER THREE



# existing parks and recreation system

The background of the page is a photograph of tall, slender reeds or grasses growing in a body of water. The reeds are dark green and have small, light-colored flower heads at their tips. The water is a calm, light blue-grey color. The overall image has a soft, slightly blurred quality.

*THE KERN COUNTY PARKS AND  
RECREATION DEPARTMENT DEVELOPS  
AND MAINTAINS A SAFE, ACCESSIBLE,  
HIGH QUALITY REGIONAL SYSTEM OF  
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, LANDSCAPES, AND  
RECREATIONAL FACILITIES TO SUPPORT  
AND ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE  
FOR OUR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.*

KERN COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION  
DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

# existing parks and recreation system

THE PARK SYSTEM WITHIN Kern County consists of a variety of parks and recreation facilities owned by numerous public agencies. The Kern County Parks and Recreation Department contributes approximately 4,726 acres of parks and open space to this system. These parks provide a variety of recreation experiences for people who live, work, visit and play in Kern County.

The Kern County Parks and Recreation Department was established in 1952 with the consolidation of the Kern County Parks Department with the Kern County Recreation and Cultural Commission. It currently manages and operates seven regional parks<sup>1</sup>, 40 local parks<sup>2</sup>,

<sup>1</sup>The Kern County Capital Improvement Plan identifies 2 additional regional recreation facilities. They are not included here as (1) Camp Condor is operated by the Westside Recreation and Park District under a long term lease with Kern County, and (2) the transition of the Kernville Fish Hatchery from the USFS to Kern County Parks has not yet occurred.

<sup>2</sup>The 2008 Kern County CIP indicates a total of 4843.90 acres instead of the 4702 acres shown here. These differences are, in part, due to changes in the park inventory that have taken place in the past year, the

23 public buildings and provides services within a regional recreation area. It is also responsible for supervising three golf courses and providing landscape services for 76 county buildings.

This chapter of the Kern County Parks and Recreation Master Plan portrays the scope and nature of the existing County park system. Specifically, this chapter:

- Presents the park classification system
- Reviews the existing park and facility inventory
- Outlines current recreation programming available in the County through other providers

## 3.1 PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

Within the extensive park system described above, the Parks and Recreation Department provides a wide variety of recreation opportunities. Some of its parks are locally oriented, while others serve

need to include leased parkland instead of only County owned parkland in the CIP, and other factors. A detailed review of the differences can be found on fold out Table 3.1 (inserted after page III-84).

residents on a regional scale. A park classification system provides a way to plan for park, recreation, and open space needs in the future. These park categories are defined in the next several pages.

### Neighborhood Parks

These sites serve a small area and a small population within a densely developed residential area. Neighborhood parks are typically six to ten acres in size, although the determining factor in size is the anticipated type of use. These parks are intended to provide easy access – particularly for pedestrians and cyclists – to frequently used park and recreation facilities, such as children’s playgrounds, turf fields and sports courts, as well as walking paths and picnic areas. Neighborhood parks can also be small green oases that are primarily intended for enjoying nature. Restrooms should be provided when there are large picnic facilities, high levels of programmed activities or when the park is of a larger size. Amenities and facilities should support casual use, be designed at a scale for those living within the service area and accommodate a variety of age and user groups. The site should be easily accessible to the neighborhood population and geographi-

cally centered with safe walking and bicycle access. 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 in size and focus on serving the active and passive recreational needs of several neighborhoods. Typically community parks will be ten acres or more, in order to accommodate a variety of facilities and activities. A community park may include sports fields and courts, athletic complexes, aquatic facilities, activity centers and gymnasiums, children’s playground equipment, walking paths, natural areas, event space and picnic areas. Community parks support programmed activities and provide space for casual use. Community parks should have restrooms in at least one part of the park site. The site should allow for organized group activities and offer other recreational opportunities too impactful 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 (200 acres or greater), multi-use parks that can include a wide variety of facilities. These parks can be very large versions of community parks that provide large complexes of sports fields, specialized facilities for performance or large group gatherings, or unique facilities that are not appropriate for local parks due to the large number of people using them. Other types of 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. The primary distinction of a regional park is that it draws visitors from a very large geographic area due to the uniqueness of the facilities, setting or theme within the region. Regional parks are intended to serve the population of the entire County.

### Regional Recreation Areas

Regional recreation areas provide access to significant ecological, cultural, or historical features or unique

facilities that attract visitors from throughout the entire region (including incorporated and unincorporated areas). Regional recreation areas 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 include areas of significant natural resources, as well as more developed activity sites. Regional recreation areas may be supported by a wide variety of specialized facilities such as indoor recreation centers, large group picnic areas, special event facilities/festival space, and campgrounds.

The Kern River County Park is an example of a regional recreation area consisting as it does of a cluster of regional parks and recreational facilities, including Hart Memorial Park and the Kern County Soccer Park. The Lake Isabella Recreation Area is another example. Although the Kern County Parks and Recreation Department does not own land here, it does provide some recreational services within what is a major regional recreational resource area.

### Special Use Facilities

Special use areas are sites that are occupied by a specialized facility or fulfill a particular purpose. Typical

special use sites include boat ramps, sport field complexes or community centers. These facilities can serve either a local or a regional function, depending on the type of activity and the availability of that activity in other locations. Examples include the three golf courses owned and managed by the Kern County Parks and Recreation Department, as well as the Kern County Soccer Park, which is operated by a private organization on land leased from the County.

### 3.2 EXISTING PARK INVENTORY AND CONDITIONS

The Kern County Parks and Recreation Department owns approximately 4,702 acres of parks at 47 sites ranging from the very large 1445 acre Kern River County Park to the very tiny 0.1 acre Circle Park in Bakersfield.

To make its evaluation of the parks and facilities owned by the county, the MIG Team visited each site and observed the general condition of the parks' facilities, equipment, amenities, furnishing and buildings.

The observation of the sites takes into account the general attractiveness,

usability, accessibility, maintenance, up-to-date standards, circulation, shelter and shade provided, along with whether the facility is fulfilling its need for the community in which it is located.

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

There are a number of similar conditions that were observed in many sites throughout the County.

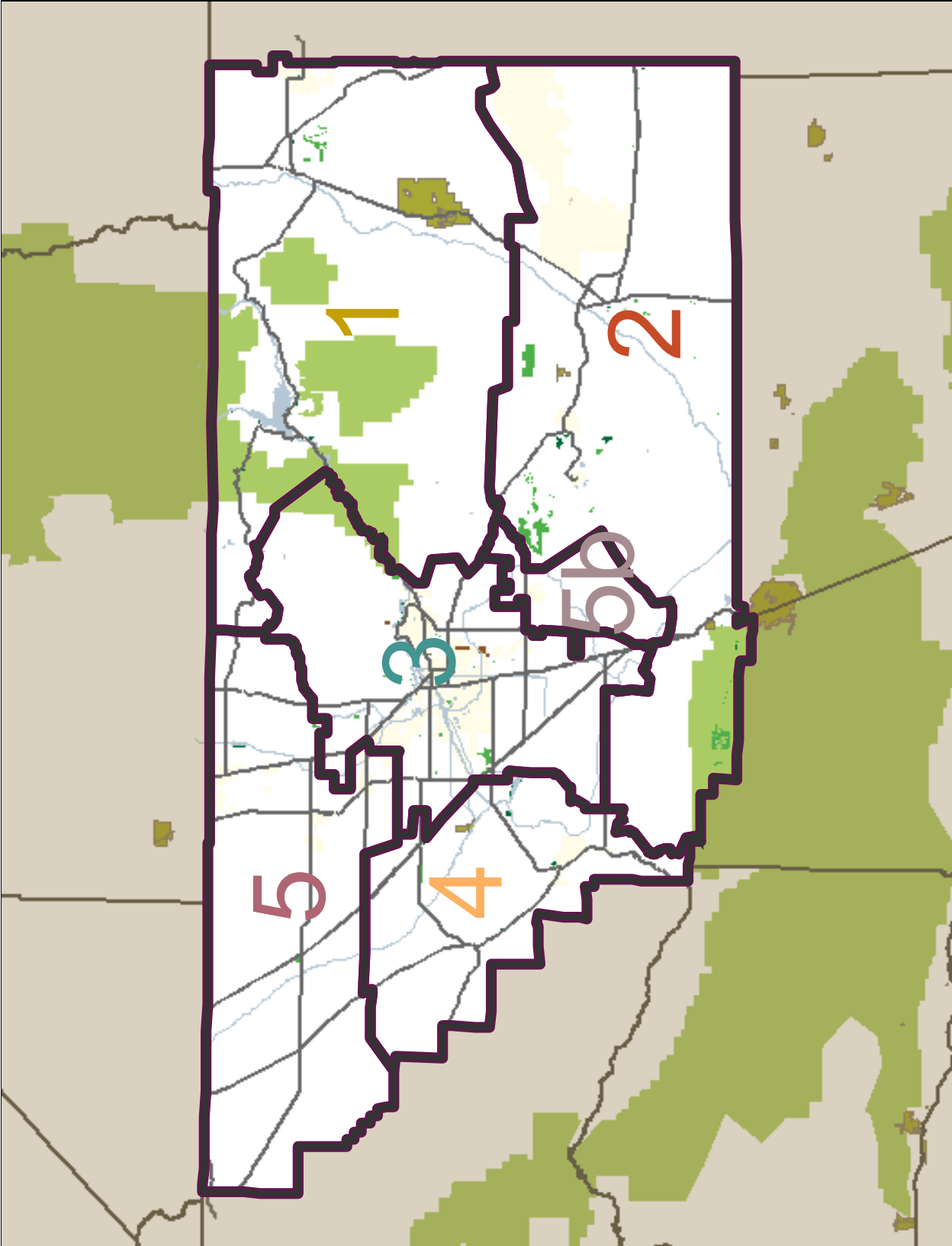
- Although much of the children's play equipment in parks has been replaced with new, old and outdated equipment is still on site.
- The majority of parks that offer ball fields or soccer fields appear to be suffering from ground squirrel infestation making the surface at least uneven and in some cases treacherous for play.
- Parks outside the major metropolitan Bakersfield area are in need of the most care and attention.

Recommendations for addressing the specific needs of the facilities reviewed in this report will be found in Chapter VI.

PARK TYPES	NUMBER OF SITES	ACRES OF PARK LAND	% OF PARK SYSTEM
<i>Regional Parks</i>	7	4282	92%
<i>Local/Neighborhood Parks</i>	40	420.25	8%
<i>Public Buildings</i>	23		

**AREA COLOR KEY**

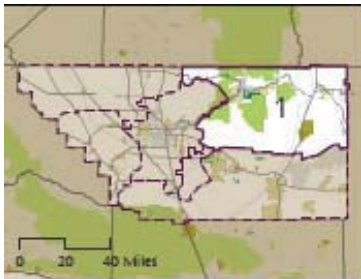
This map illustrates the areas used to identify the various regions of Kern County. Each area section was assigned a color to provide easier recognition





### Area 1 – North Kern County (Lake Isabella to Ridgecrest)

This northeastern part of the county, encompassing both mountain and desert communities, is bordered by Tulare and Inyo counties on the north and San Bernardino County to the east, and includes a major portion of the Sequoia National Forest. It is served by two regional parks, nine local/neighborhood parks, four public buildings, and a regional recreation area. Altogether this section of the park system encompasses 427 acres of County park land. A key recreation asset, the 11,217 acre Lake Isabella Regional Recreation Area, is located in Area 1. Although the Kern County Parks and Recreation Department does not own this park land, it does provide recreation services, including a patrol boat to monitor boating activities and safety compliance as well as perform rescue operations as needed on the lake.



#### AREA 1 – NORTH KERN COUNTY (LAKE ISABELLA TO RIDGECREST)

##### Regional Parks

NAME	ACRES	LOCATION
Greenhorn Mountain Park	110	Alta Sierra
Leroy Jackson Regional Park	100	Ridgecrest

##### Regional Recreation Area

Lake Isabella Recreation Area*	11,217	Lake Isabella
--------------------------------	--------	---------------

*\*Not an official part of the Kern County park system, but the Kern County Parks and Recreation Department provides recreation services inside the park area.*

##### Local/Neighborhood Parks

Circle Park	1	Kernville
Inyokern Park (see Senior Center)	3	Inyokern
Lake Isabella Park	40	Lake Isabella
Mountain Mesa Park	5.2	Mountain Mesa
Ed Oakley Park (see Memorial Hall)	1.7	Twin Oaks
Randsburg Park	0.2	Randsburg
Riverside Park	5	Kernville
Scodie Park	4	Onyx
Wofford Heights Park	7	Wofford Heights

##### Public Buildings

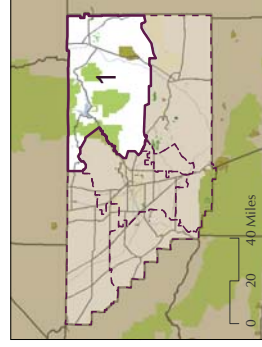
NAME	LOCATION	CAPACITY
Inyokern Senior Center	Inyokern	160
Kern River Valley Veterans/Senior Center	Lake Isabella	764
Ed Oakley Memorial Hall	Twin Oaks	227
Rand Community Building	Johannesburg	190



# Kern County Parks Master Plan

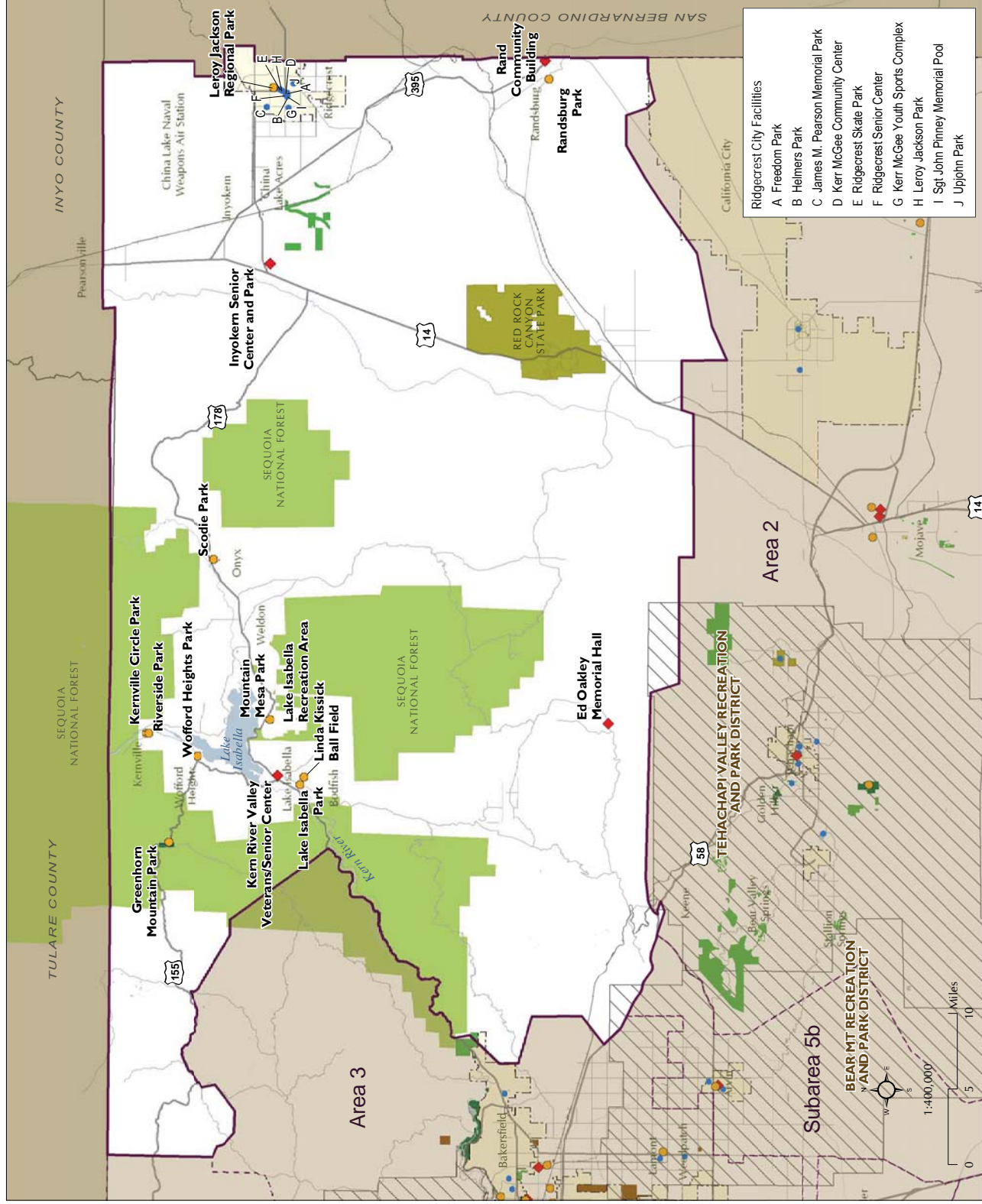
Kern County, California

- Kern County Facilities**
- County Facility
  - County Building
  - Regional Park
- Other Jurisdiction Facilities**
- City or Park District Facility
  - Park, Open Space & Greenway
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  - Other Subject Area
  - City Limits
  - Other County
  - Interstate/Highway
  - Major Road
  - Railroad
  - Water Feature



## Area 1: North Kern County

March 2009 | Data Sources:  
Kern County GIS, Calif. Spatial  
Data Library, and ESRI USA 2006





### GREENHORN MOUNTAIN PARK

Classification:	Regional Park
Acres:	110
Status:	Partially Developed
Existing Facilities	Family campsites, Group campsites, picnic tables and BBQ, Camp Yenis Hante with cabins, mess hall, showers and toilets.
Conditions	Some signs are dated. The destination signs are in good condition. The roads are in poor condition.
Observations/Comments:	Natural mountains campground
Recommendations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Routine maintenance of signs, picnic areas and resurface roads.</li> <li>• Cabins and mess hall need work.</li> <li>• Restrooms &amp; showers need replacement.</li> <li>• Damage from vandalism needs to be repaired.</li> <li>• A water system needs to be developed for Camp Kaweah.</li> <li>• The water tank needs to be replaced for the campground and Yenis Hante.</li> <li>• An alternate water supply needs to be evaluated.</li> </ul>

### AREA 1

## LEROY JACKSON REGIONAL PARK

<i>Classification:</i>	Regional Park
<i>Acres:</i>	100
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Shade shelter with picnic tables and BBQ, various picnic tables, 20 horse-shoe pits, 2 half basketball courts, 2-5 tot lot and 5-12 play area separated by a walk. Also open space, and lighted parking lot. A city-owned skate park is on the site.
<i>Conditions</i>	Overall good condition. Some trees are new, most are fully grown. Play areas are current.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	Play equipment looks interesting and popular with children. Some picnic tables and new trees are located in a DG area. An evergreen wind break protects this area from gusts. Restroom looks dated. Ball diamond next to the park belongs to the school.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Routine maintenance.



### AREA 1



**LAKE ISABELLA RECREATION AREA**

Classification:	Regional Recreation Area
Acres:	11,217 lake surface
Status:	Recreational areas around the lake are federally owned, but the County patrols and maintains the waterways.
Existing Facilities	Camping, fishing, golf, hiking, motocross driving, photography, snow skiing, boating, sailing, water skiing, jet-skiing, windsurfing, fishing; and whitewater rafting, kayaking, and fishing on the Kern River.

**AREA 1**

### CIRCLE PARK

<i>Classification:</i>	Pocket Park
<i>Acres:</i>	1
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Picnic tables, benches, lighting and no structures.
<i>Conditions</i>	
<i>Observations/ Comments:</i>	Small green space in the center of a commercial area. A sequoia stump slice is exhibited in the park. A computerized information kiosk is in the park.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Routine maintenance



### AREA 1



**LAKE ISABELLA PARK AND LINDA KISSACK BALL FIELD**

<i>Classification:</i>	Community Park
<i>Acres:</i>	40
<i>Status:</i>	Partially developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Restroom bldg., 2-5 tot play equip., swings, lighted basketball court, lighted & fenced horseshoe pits with bleachers, 2-3 picnic tables on concrete pads. Mature trees throughout. Security lighting. Linda Kissack ballfield is located adjacent to park. Has one softball field with backstop.
<i>Conditions</i>	Play equipment and surfacing appear recently replaced. Restroom bldg. appears new as does parking lot. Turf area needs improvement. Kissack field is well maintained.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	Military tanks and equipment are on display at entrance of park.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Install a restroom for Linda Kissack ball field

**AREA 1**

## MOUNTAIN MESA PARK

<i>Classification:</i>	Neighborhood Park
<i>Acres:</i>	5.2
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Picnic tables with BBQ, basketball full court, 2-5 yr old tot lot with swings, baseball field.
<i>Conditions</i>	The turf is well maintained, and there are several mature trees.
<i>Observations/ Comments:</i>	There is an unused area where another tot lot used to be. The outfield fence is low against the residential backyards. The basketball nets are missing. The existing tot lot includes sand and rubberized surfacing.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Routine maintenance



### AREA 1





**RANDBURG PARK**

<i>Classification:</i>	Special Facility
<i>Acres:</i>	0.2
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Shade shelter with picnic tables, BBQ, restroom building
<i>Conditions</i>	The picnic area is clean and fits into surroundings.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	The park is located behind the Desert Museum. Two young trees are located in the park. Museum exhibits have been placed in the park, including two large boulders with holes the size of thumbs, in them. The historical plaque was placed in 1964.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Routine maintenance.



**AREA 1**

## RIVERSIDE PARK

<i>Classification:</i>	Neighborhood Park
<i>Acres:</i>	5
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Basketball full court, 2-5 tot lot, 5-12 yr old swings, picnic tables and BBQ, restroom building, fishing and amphitheater. Outdoor metal swings and monkey bars on site.
<i>Conditions</i>	Good condition
<i>Observations/ Comments:</i>	This is a very scenic linear park along the Kern River. Many of the benches are made of solid wood. Cottonwood trees are blowing much cotton at this time of year. The full basketball court is a little short of regulation size. There are no barriers to the river from the park.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Remove outdated play equipment. Regular routine maintenance.



### AREA 1



**SCODIE PARK**

<i>Classification:</i>	Neighborhood Park
<i>Acres:</i>	4
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Baseball field, restroom building, shade shelter, picnic tables and BBQ, basketball half court, tot lot and equipment storage building.
<i>Conditions</i>	Mature trees and turf present, with some brown patches. Shade shelter is very dated. Water is ponding on the basketball court and the net is missing. The tot lot is in good condition with both sand and rubberized surface. The restroom building is very simple. The ball field consists of dirt and lacks bases.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	Could use sprucing up. Pretty sparse.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Needs refurbishment and renovation

**AREA 1**

### WOFFORD HEIGHTS PARK

<i>Classification:</i>	Neighborhood Park
<i>Acres:</i>	7
<i>Status:</i>	Minimally Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Picnic tables and BBQ, 2-5 yr old tot lot, equipment shed, 40 sq ft multipurpose concrete slab (formerly used for basketball), deep pit BBQ, portable restroom.
<i>Conditions</i>	The park is comprised of turf with mature, trees providing shade throughout. A basketball post and backboard are present, but no net. The building likely used to function as a restroom but has fallen into disrepair, and may now be used to store equipment. Open space makes up 4.5 acres of the park.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	Poorly maintained. Looks almost abandoned but play equipment is fairly new.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Needs refurbishment and renovation.



### AREA 1



**INYOKERN SENIOR CENTER AND PARK**

<i>Classification:</i>	Building
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Building has 2 meeting rooms and library and pool room. Full kitchen and restrooms.
	Outdoor facilities include restroom building, shade shelter with picnic tables and BBQ, 1 lighted basketball court, 2-5 tot lot, and 5-12 swings, and security lighting.
<i>Conditions:</i>	Building is in good condition. Furnishings are up to date and the landscaping is attractive except for outdated swings on sandlot.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	Programs include food distribution for seniors. Other activities include card games and sewing. The Desert Senior Club is open 8am to 4:30pm. The seniors we met appeared happy at the Center.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Replace outdated swings and surfacing.

**AREA 1**

### KERN RIVER VALLEY VETERANS/SENIOR CENTER

<i>Classification:</i>	Building
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	4 meeting rooms with 1 smaller room, 2 kitchens, and 4 restrooms. The meeting rooms are dividable. The rooms include 2 veterans' halls and 2 community rooms.
<i>Conditions</i>	Kept in very good condition. Attractive landscaping around a flagpole with a plaque dedicated in 2004.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	Stucco building with wood wing. Many programs are run from this location. The parking lot behind the building is also used as a helicopter pad.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Routine maintenance



#### AREA 1



**ED OAKLEY MEMORIAL HALL & PARK**

<i>Classification:</i>	Building & Mini Park
<i>Acres:</i>	1.7
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Building, 2-5 tot lot, deep pit BBQ, basketball court, and fenced area behind building.
<i>Conditions</i>	Tot lot in good condition
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	Area is nondescript, no landscaping or shade.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Provide shade and landscaping.

**AREA 1**

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AREA 1





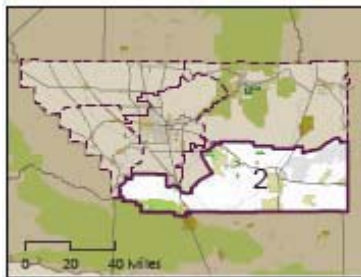
**RAND COMMUNITY BUILDING (JOHANNESBURG)**

<i>Classification:</i>	Building
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Community building includes a seating area and large room with a divider, and kitchenette. Two shade shelters with picnic tables and BBQ are located outside.
<i>Conditions</i>	Condition is rustic and bare, minimally furnished.
<i>Observations/ Comments:</i>	The site furnishings are located on concrete slab. Two portable restrooms with wood slat screening are available on the premises. The area looks stark and uninviting. The landscaping around the building is minimal.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Routine maintenance of signs, picnic areas and resurface roads. Upgrade restrooms.

**AREA 1**

**Area 2- South Kern County (Frazier Park to Boron)**

This southern portion of the county stretches from Ventura County to the west, San Bernardino County to the east, and Los Angeles County along of its southern edge. The western half of this area encompasses Frazier Park mountain communities and Tehachapi, while the eastern half is occupied by desert communities such as Mojave, California City, Rosamond, North Edwards and Boron. It is served by one regional park, six local/neighborhood parks, and seven public buildings. Altogether this section of the park system encompasses 560 acres of park land.



**AREA 2- SOUTH KERN COUNTY (FRAZIER PARK TO BORON)**

**Regional Parks**

NAME	SIZE	LOCATION
<i>Tehachapi Mountain Park</i>	490	<i>Tehachapi</i>

**Local/Neighborhood Parks**

<i>Boron Park</i>	10	<i>Boron</i>
<i>Frazier Mountain Park</i>	27	<i>Frazier Park</i>
<i>Mojave East Park</i>	8	<i>Mojave</i>
<i>Mojave West Ball Park</i>	10	<i>Mojave</i>
<i>North Edwards Park</i>	5	<i>North Edwards</i>
<i>Rosamond Park</i>	10	<i>Rosamond</i>

**Public Buildings**

NAME	LOCATION	CAPACITY
<i>Boron Recreation Bldg</i>	<i>Boron</i>	268
<i>Frazier Park Recreation Bldg.</i>	<i>Frazier Park</i>	373
<i>Hummel Hall</i>	<i>Rosamond</i>	400
<i>Mojave Recreation Bldg.</i>	<i>Mojave</i>	155
<i>Mojave Veterans and Seniors Bldg.</i>	<i>Mojave</i>	495
<i>Rosamond Recreation Bldg.</i>	<i>Rosamond</i>	219
<i>Tehachapi Veterans Memorial Bldg.</i>	<i>Tehachapi</i>	255



# Kern County Parks Master Plan

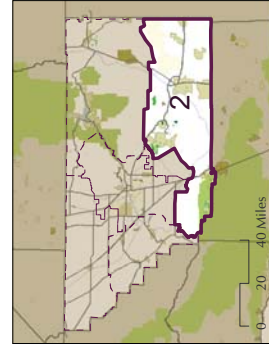
Kern County, California

## Kern County Facilities

- County Facility
- County Building
- Regional Park

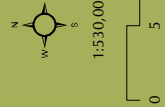
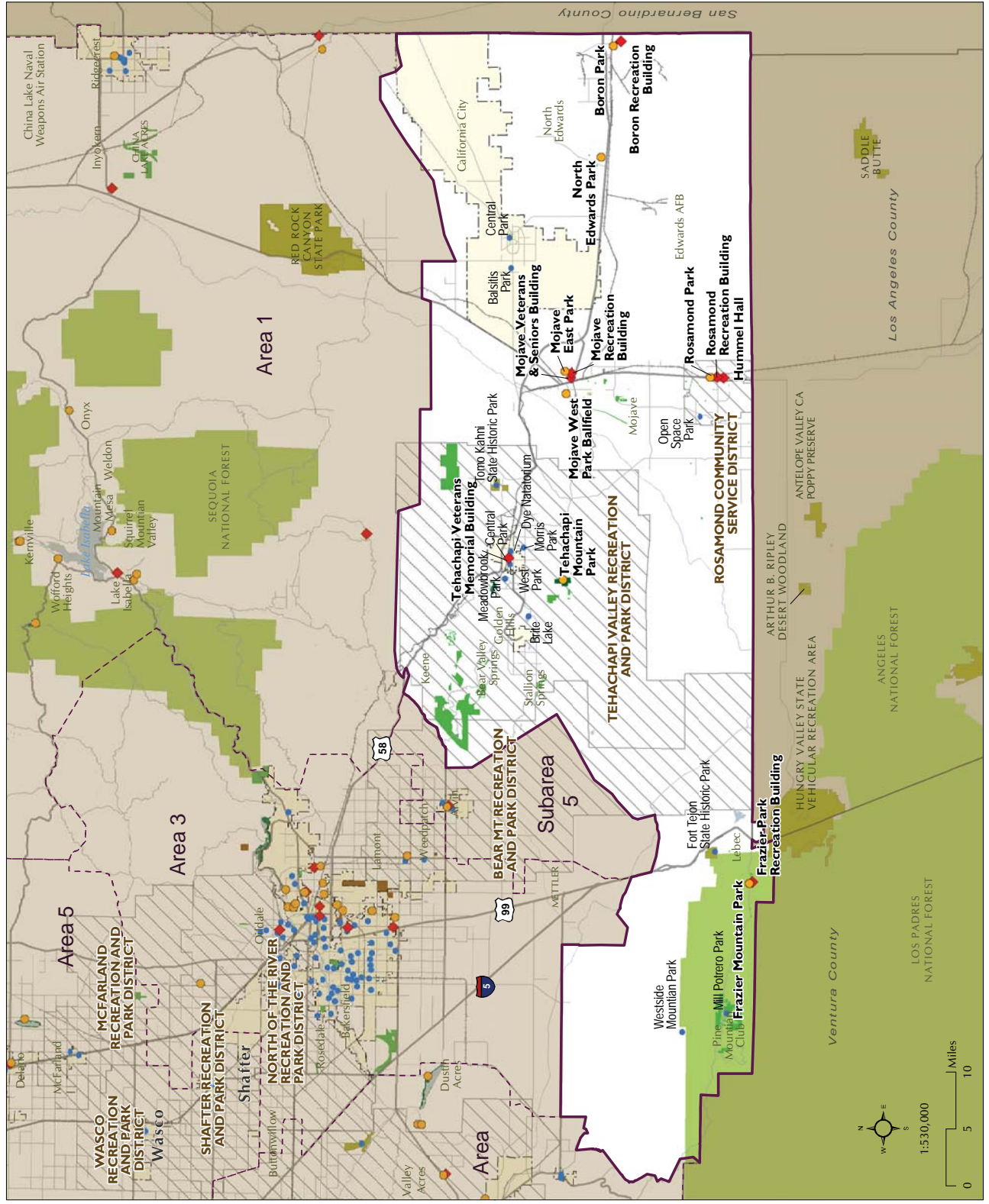
## Other Jurisdiction Facilities

- City or Park District Facility
- Park, Open Space & Greenway
- Publicly Owned Facility
- State Park
- National Forest
- Park Districts
- Subject Area
- Other Subject Area
- City Limits
- Other County
- Interstate/Highway
- Major Road
- Railroad
- Water Feature



## Area 2: South Kern County

March 2009 | Data Sources:  
Kern County GIS, Calif. Spatial  
Data Library, and ESRI USA 2006





**TEHACHAPI MOUNTAIN PARK**

<i>Classification:</i>	Regional Park with campground
<i>Acres:</i>	490
<i>Status:</i>	Partially developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	A typical individual campsite includes picnic table, water source, and BBQ. Site also includes lighting, group campsite, youth camp, underground BBQ pit area, pit toilets.
<i>Conditions</i>	Good condition.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	Campsites are well spaced apart, creating privacy, yet maintaining a feeling of safety. The natural beauty of the large trees at 6,000 ft elevation, is awe inspiring. An extensive system of trails, as well as nature trails, is available for hiking. Toilet buildings look new. County in the process of removing unhealthy trees.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Foot bridges and picnic tables need upgrading. Water system needs upgrading to replace the springs as the water source.

**AREA 2**

**BORON PARK & RECREATION BLDG.**

<i>Classification:</i>	Community Park
<i>Acres:</i>	10
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	2 ballfields with dugouts and bleachers, concession stand, announcing stand, concrete multipurpose pad, 13 horseshoe pits with bleachers, basketball court, 2 shade shelters, picnic tables and BBQ, 2-5 tot lot, 5-12 play equipment (swings), restroom building, golf driving range, tennis backboard with lights, recreation building.
<i>Conditions</i>	fair to good
<i>Observations/ Comments:</i>	Multipurpose concrete pad used as a stage during festivals. Park was well used during visit.
<i>Building</i>	Recreation building was not open during visit. The outside condition of the building is fair.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Routine maintenance. More aggressive attention to turf areas plagued with squirrel burrows. Repair cracks in concrete pads of stage area.



**AREA 2**



**FRAZIER MOUNTAIN PARK**

<i>Classification:</i>	Community Park
<i>Acres:</i>	27
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Pond, recreation building, restroom building, tetherball pole, ceremonial stone circle, war memorial, 2-5 yr old and 5-12 yr old play equipment, lighted basketball court, 2 ball fields (one with bleachers and dugouts), covered picnic area, skate park, horseshoe pits
<i>Conditions</i>	Overall condition of park is very good. The roof of the main building (recreation building) needs some repair. The turf on the ball fields needs some repair.
<i>Observations/ Comments:</i>	The oaks gracing this park give it a majestic feel. People were using the pond to fish. The skate park has movable components. There is some outdated play equipment still on site.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Repair roof on rec building. Number of meeting rooms inadequate.

**AREA 2**

## MOJAVE EAST PARK

<i>Classification:</i>	Neighborhood Park and Recreation Bldg. (See page 31 for Veterans/ Senior Bldg.)
<i>Acres:</i>	8
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Little League baseball diamond with lights and bleachers, concession stand, tennis backboard with lights, horseshoe pit, shuffleboard court, group picnic shelter, picnic tables on concrete slabs, restroom bldg, 2-5 play area, 5-12 play area, 2 lighted basketball courts.
<i>Conditions</i>	Recreation bldg has a small meeting room with kitchenette, an office and restrooms.
<i>Observations/ Comments:</i>	Overall, park is in good condition. The roof of the restroom looks worn. Play equipment is in good shape.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Mature trees are present. The park is adjacent to a high school. Parts of the park need some attention.



### AREA 2



**MOJAVE WEST PARK  
BALLFIELD**

<i>Classification:</i>	Park with open space
<i>Acres:</i>	10
<i>Status:</i>	Partially developed, partially left in open space
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	1 baseball field with bleachers, parking, open space.
<i>Conditions</i>	fair
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	Field is also used for softball. Outfield turf looks somewhat dry. Ball field is way off the beaten track. No other amenities nearby
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Add some seating and picnic facilities.

**AREA 2**



### NORTH EDWARDS PARK

<i>Classification:</i>	Neighborhood Park
<i>Acres:</i>	5
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Softball field with players' benches and bleachers, picnic tables and BBQ, restroom building, 2-5 tot lot and swings, sand area with spring riders (2-5 yr old play equipment), enclosed by chain link fence.
<i>Conditions</i>	Park is in good condition and neatly maintained.
<i>Observations/ Comments:</i>	The softball field is void of turf except for some weeds.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Re surface the softball field and maintenance on a routine basis



### AREA 2



## ROSAMOND PARK

<i>Classification:</i>	Community Park
<i>Acres:</i>	10
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Recreation Center w/ meeting rooms; 2-5 tot lot and 5-12 play area with swings, 2 lighted full basketball courts, 2 baseball fields (1 lighted, with bleachers, dugouts and scoreboard), 2 restroom buildings
<i>Conditions</i>	Mature trees that provide shade. Park is showing a little age with some bare spots in turf, and dated site furnishings such as the picnic tables. There is a crack in the concrete of the basketball court. Overall, the park is a pleasing amenity. Ball fields are very well kept.
<i>Observations/ Comments:</i>	Park is adjacent to an elementary school.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Reseed some areas of the turf. Update the picnic tables. Remove outdoor play equipment and install new swings with fall zone surfacing. Upgrade the restrooms.

## AREA 2

## HUMMEL HALL

<i>Classification:</i>	Senior Center
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	2 meeting rooms with portable wall, 2 kitchens, restrooms, vending machine. Capacity is 101 people.
<i>Conditions</i>	Good condition
<i>Observations/ Comments:</i>	Lunch program for seniors serving at least 40 people. Bingo is played in facility.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	See Chapter 6 for recommendations regarding County-owned buildings.



### AREA 2



**MOJAVE VETERANS AND SENIORS BUILDING**

<i>Classification:</i>	Veterans and Seniors Building
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Three meeting rooms, kitchen, restrooms.
<i>Conditions</i>	
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	The meeting rooms seat 300+, 100+ and 40 people, respectively.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	See Chapter 6 for recommendations regarding County-owned buildings.

**AREA 2**

**ROSAMOND RECREATION BUILDING**

**OUTER PREMISES OF PARK**

<i>Classification:</i>	Recreation buildings
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Open room, kitchen, 2 restrooms. Used for weddings and various social functions. Space is leased to veterans and Girl Scouts.
<i>Conditions</i>	The building is in fair condition and the grounds are well maintained.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	Building and grounds are showing their age.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Building needs some refurbishment and modernization. See Chapter 6 for recommendations regarding County-owned buildings.



**AREA 2**



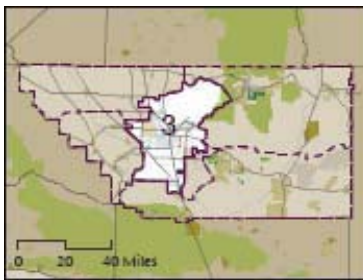
**TEHACHAPI VETERANS MEMORIAL BUILDING**

<i>Classification:</i>	Veterans building
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Meeting room and rest-rooms.
<i>Conditions</i>	Well kept building and grounds.
<i>Observations/ Comments:</i>	The building is Legion Post 221, and houses the Department of Motor Vehicles, the public health office, and the Women, Infants and Children program. The building inspector is located next door.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	See Chapter 6 for recommendations regarding County-owned buildings.

**AREA 2**

### Area 3- Greater Bakersfield

Located in the southern portion of the San Joaquin Valley, this is the most heavily populated area in Kern County. It features an extensive part of the Kern County park system, including two regional parks, 13 local/neighborhood parks (not including a 14th park that remains undeveloped), two golf courses, and seven public buildings. One of the regional parks, Kern River County Park, is actually several parks in one, including Hart Memorial Park, which is considered by many to be the heart of the County park system. Altogether this section of the County park system encompasses 1718 acres of park land.

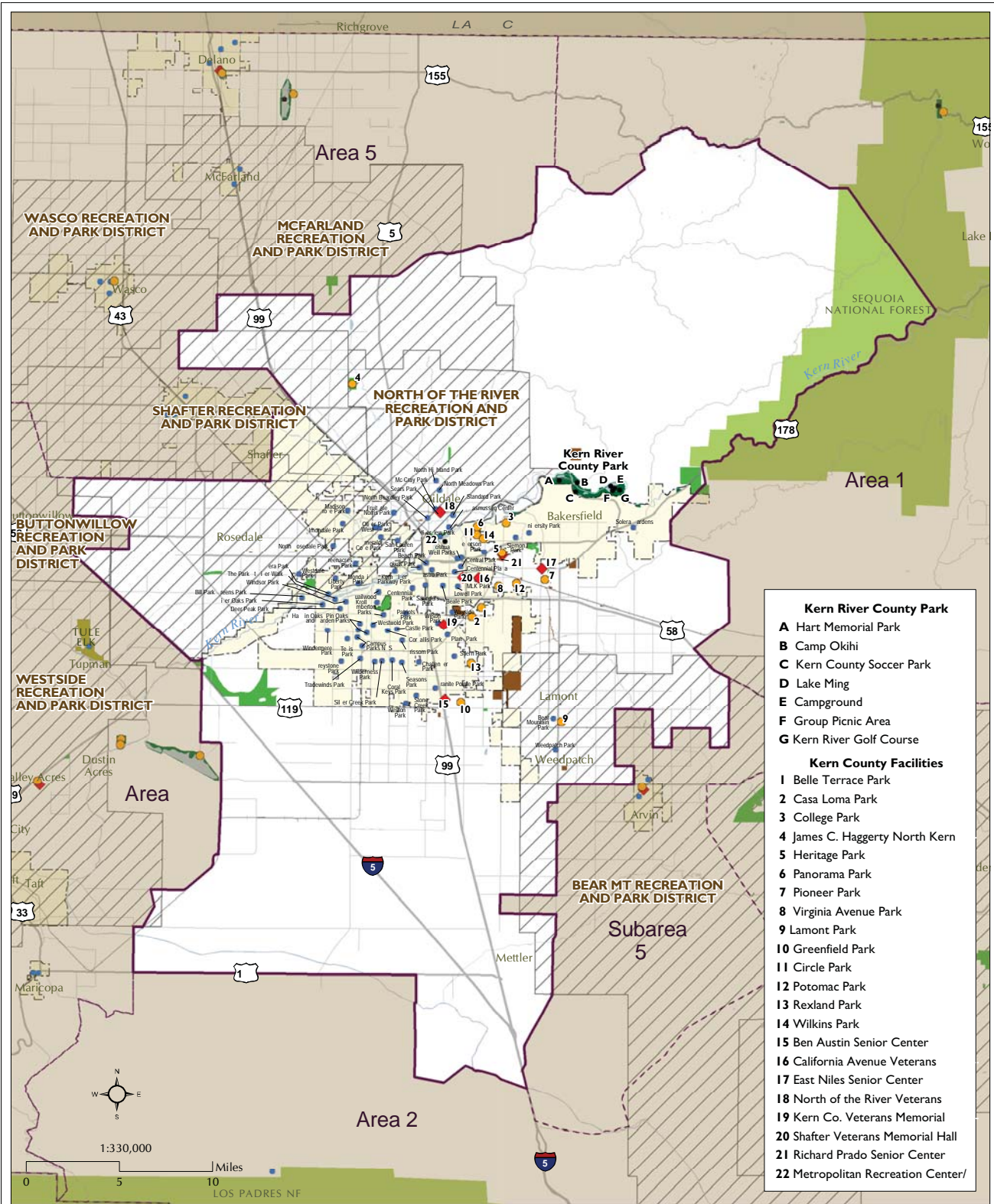


### AREA 3- GREATER BAKERSFIELD

Regional Parks		
NAME	ACRES	LOCATION
Kern River County Park	1445	Bakersfield
Camp Okihi	15	Bakersfield
Hart Memorial Park	370	Bakersfield
Kern River Campground & Park	28	Bakersfield
Kern River Group Picnic Area	10	Bakersfield
Lake Ming	205	Bakersfield
Kern River Golf Course		Bakersfield
Metropolitan Rec. Center/Stramler Park	107	Bakersfield

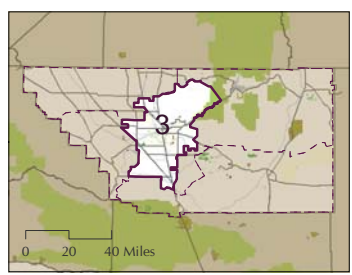
Local/Neighborhood Parks		
Belle Terrace Park	19.8	Bakersfield
Casa Loma Park	9	Bakersfield
Circle Park	.1	Bakersfield
College Park	17	Bakersfield
Greenfield Park	5	Greenfield
Heritage Park	18	Bakersfield
Kern Delta Park (undeveloped)	11.75	Bakersfield
Lamont Park	8	Lamont
Panorama Park	24	Bakersfield
Pioneer Park	14	Bakersfield
Potomac Park	5	Bakersfield
Rexland Acres	4	Bakersfield
Victoria Araujo Park	3	Bakersfield
Virginia Avenue Park	9.5	Bakersfield
Wilkins Park	2.6	Bakersfield
James C. Haggerty North Kern Golf Course		Shafter

Public Buildings		
NAME	LOCATION	CAPACITY
Ben Austin Senior Center	Bakersfield	279
California Avenue Veterans Memorial Bldg.	Bakersfield	320
East Bakersfield Veterans Building/Senior Center	E. Bakersfield	575
East Niles Senior Center	Bakersfield	300
Kern County Veterans Memorial Bldg.	So. Bakersfield	625
North of the River Veterans Memorial Bldg.	Oildale	966
Shafter Veterans Memorial Hall	Bakersfield	845



- Kern River County Park**
- A Hart Memorial Park
  - B Camp Okihi
  - C Kern County Soccer Park
  - D Lake Ming
  - E Campground
  - F Group Picnic Area
  - G Kern River Golf Course
- Kern County Facilities**
- 1 Belle Terrace Park
  - 2 Casa Loma Park
  - 3 College Park
  - 4 James C. Haggerty North Kern
  - 5 Heritage Park
  - 6 Panorama Park
  - 7 Pioneer Park
  - 8 Virginia Avenue Park
  - 9 Lamont Park
  - 10 Greenfield Park
  - 11 Circle Park
  - 12 Potomac Park
  - 13 Rexland Park
  - 14 Wilkins Park
  - 15 Ben Austin Senior Center
  - 16 California Avenue Veterans
  - 17 East Niles Senior Center
  - 18 North of the River Veterans
  - 19 Kern Co. Veterans Memorial
  - 20 Shafter Veterans Memorial Hall
  - 21 Richard Prado Senior Center
  - 22 Metropolitan Recreation Center/

**Kern County Parks Master Plan**  
Kern County, California



- Kern County Facilities**
- Regional Park
  - County Facility
  - County Building
- Other Jurisdiction Facilities**
- Kern River County Park Facilities
  - City or Park District Facility
  - Park, Open Space & Greenway
  - Publicly Owned Facility
  - State Park
  - National Forest
  - Park Districts
  - Subject Area
  - Other Subject Area
  - City Limits
  - Other County
  - Interstate/Highway
  - Major Road
  - Railroad
  - Water Feature

**Area 3: Greater Bakersfield**

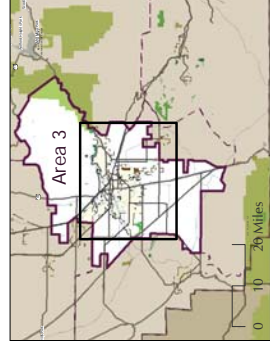


**Kern County Facilities**

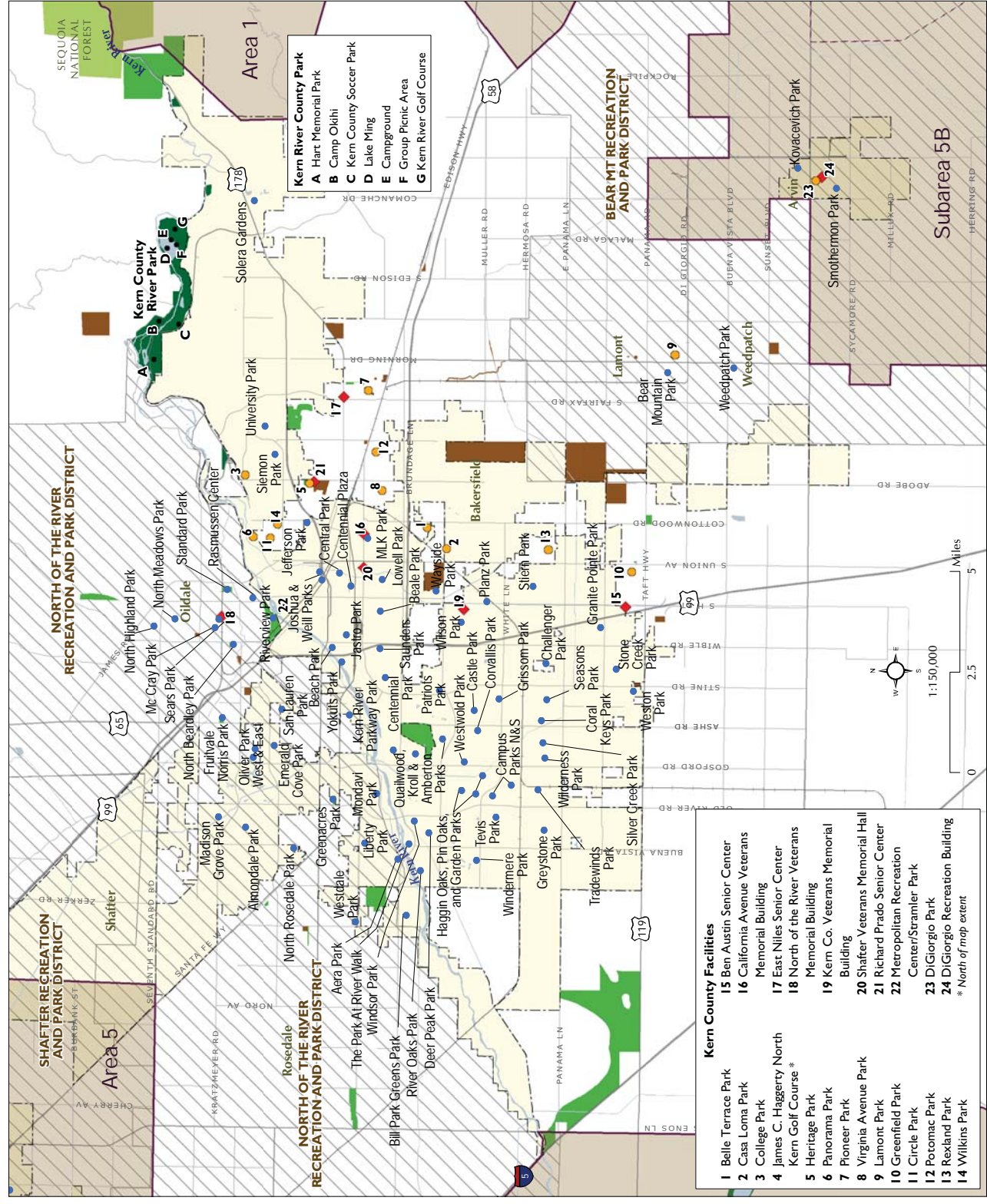
- County Facility
- ◆ County Building
- Regional Park

**Other Jurisdiction Facilities**

- Kern River County Park Facilities
- City or Park District Facility
- Park, Open Space & Greenway
- Publicly Owned Facility
- State Park
- National Forest
- Park Districts
- Subject Area
- Other Subject Area
- City Limits
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**City of Bakersfield**



- Kern River County Park**
- A Hart Memorial Park
  - B Camp Okhii
  - C Kern County Soccer Park
  - D Lake Ming
  - E Campground
  - F Group Picnic Area
  - G Kern River Golf Course

- Kern County Facilities**
- 1 Belle Terrace Park
  - 2 Casa Loma Park
  - 3 College Park
  - 4 James C. Haggerty North
  - 5 Kern Golf Course \*
  - 6 Panorama Park
  - 7 Pioneer Park
  - 8 Virginia Avenue Park
  - 9 Lamont Park
  - 10 Greenfield Park
  - 11 Circle Park
  - 12 Potomac Park
  - 13 Rexland Park
  - 14 Wilkins Park
  - 15 Ben Austin Senior Center
  - 16 California Avenue Veterans Memorial Building
  - 17 East Niles Senior Center
  - 18 North of the River Veterans Memorial Building
  - 19 Kern Co. Veterans Memorial Building
  - 20 Shafter Veterans Memorial Hall
  - 21 Richard Prado Senior Center
  - 22 Metropolitan Recreation Center/Stranler Park
  - 23 DiGiorgio Park
  - 24 DiGiorgio Recreation Building
- \* North of map extent



**KERN RIVER COUNTY PARK (KRCP)**

<i>Classification:</i>	Retreat location/Camping area (rentable)
<i>Acres:</i>	1445
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Group picnic area, 2 group camping areas, (100 people ea.) meeting room with kitchen, river-view platform with firepit, BBQs, groundskeeper residence, restroom building
<i>Conditions</i>	The meeting room and kitchen are dated. The grounds are well kept.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	The area is used by Boy Scouts and others, and weddings are held here. The County needs assistance to determine how to advertise use of the space.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Most restrooms need replacement. Play equipment for 5-12 yr.-olds need to be installed. (See individual park sites for other recommendations)

**AREA 3**

### CAMP OKIHI (KRCP)

<i>Classification:</i>	Retreat location/Camping area (rentable)
<i>Acres:</i>	15
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Group picnic area, 2 group camping areas, (100 people ea.) meeting room with kitchen, river-view platform with firepit, BBQs, groundskeeper residence, restroom building
<i>Conditions</i>	The meeting room and kitchen are dated. The grounds are well kept.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	The area is used by Boy Scouts and others, and weddings are held here. The County needs assistance to determine how to advertise use of the space.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Upgrade meeting/kitchen facilities



### AREA 3



**HART MEMORIAL PARK (KRCP)**

<i>Classification:</i>	Regional park
<i>Acres:</i>	370
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Group picnic area with stage and cooking area, individual picnic tables with BBQ, play equipment for 5-12 yr olds, 2-5 yr olds tot lot, restroom buildings, equestrian trails, bike trails, ranger station, lake with fishing, boating and swimming and boat rentals, ball backstop, archery range.
<i>Conditions</i>	The play equipment (swings) are dated.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	The snack bar is dated. The entry monument is lacking a sign to identify the park. This is the oldest park in Bakersfield. Some amenities have been updated and others not.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	The county needs to do a thorough evaluation of the park and make upgrades as needed. First replace outdated play equipment. Take steps to maintain historic elements of the park.

**AREA 3**

### KERN RIVER CAMPGROUND (KRCP) AND DAY USE AREA

<i>Classification:</i>	Community Park and Campground
<i>Acres:</i>	28
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Campsites with picnic tables and BBQs, 2 + restroom buildings, showers, portable toilets, 2-5 yr olds tot lot
<i>Conditions</i>	Natural setting with many trees and RV spaces along riverbank. Well maintained.
<i>Observations/ Comments:</i>	The scenic campsites are located along the Kern River. Mature trees provide shade. The turf is in good condition.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Routine maintenance. Picnic area has outdated swings and play equipment that needs to be replaced.



### AREA 3



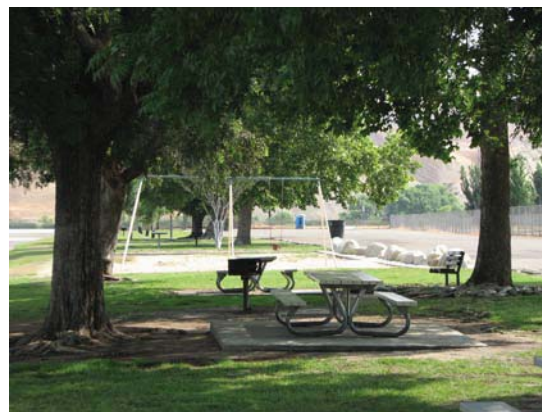
**KERN RIVER GROUP PICNIC AREA (KRCP)**

<i>Classification:</i>	Community Park
<i>Acres:</i>	10
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Picnic tables (open air), 1 covered picnic area, deep BBQ pits, 2 restroom buildings, 2 concession buildings, covered stage, ball field backstop, 6 horseshoe pits, 2 half basketball courts (lighted), storage shed with garages
<i>Conditions</i>	The play equipment (slide and swings) are dated. Basketball courts are missing backboards and nets.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	Poles that can be used with a volleyball net are available. The group picnic area includes security lighting. Area is designed for large scale gatherings and can accommodate food service and concessions.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Outdated swings and slides should be replaced with soft fall surface. Upgrade restroom facility.

**AREA 3**

### LAKE MING (KRCP)

<i>Classification:</i>	Regional Park
<i>Acres:</i>	205
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Boat ramps, picnic area, play equipment (swings), 2-5 yr old tot lot equipment, restroom building
<i>Conditions</i>	The play equipment (swings) are dated.
<i>Observations/ Comments:</i>	Lake is used by water skiers and others. Minimal amenities. Line banks of lake, trees, restrooms, picnic tables and play equipment.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Replace outdated swings and play equipment and soft fall surfacing. Shade structure in marina should be developed as a possible revenue-generating facility.



### AREA 3



**KERN RIVER GOLF COURSE (KRCP)**

<i>Classification:</i>	Golf Course
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	18-holes, driving range, putting green.
<i>Conditions</i>	The turf appears to be in very good condition and the grounds are well landscaped and kept.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	A pro shop and coffee shop are located in the building. A caretaker house is also found on the grounds.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	None

**AREA 3**



## METROPOLITAN RECREATION CENTER

### STRAMLER PARK AND SAM LYNN BALLPARK

<i>Classification:</i>	Regional park
<i>Acres:</i>	107
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Sam Lynn Ball Park, Junior Baseball Association Complex, 2 regulation softball diamonds with lights, bleachers, concession stand, batting cages, group picnic area, arena/open space, tot lot, department maintenance shop area, BMX track, museum, restrooms
<i>Conditions</i>	Sam Lynn Ball Park restroom needs maintenance and clean up. Extensive grounds are well maintained.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	Batting cages are leased out. Arena/open space is used for Scottish Games and other events. Ball Park is leased to private vendor.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Refurbish restrooms and concession buildings.



## AREA 3



**BELLE TERRACE PARK**

<i>Classification:</i>	Neighborhood park
<i>Acres:</i>	19.8
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	2 softball fields with bleachers and dugouts, restroom building. Adjacent Rick McHale soccer field consists of regulation lighted soccer field.
<i>Conditions</i>	The chain link fence to the soccer field is cut. The turf area is worn, and there is some lack of drainage by the goal.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	The soccer field is located in what looks like a detention basin, and is not handicap accessible. There is a ground squirrel population that has burrows throughout the park
<i>Recommendations:</i>	In order to maintain turf, county needs to deal with ground squirrels

**AREA 3**

### CASA LOMA PARK

<i>Classification:</i>	Neighborhood park
<i>Acres:</i>	9
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Picnic shelter, 2-5 yr old tot lot, lighted softball field with dugout and bleachers, restroom building, concession/storage building, lighted basketball court, open turf area for soccer
<i>Conditions</i>	The concession/storage building needs paint. Squirrel burrows throughout turf.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	Turf area may be too small for regulation soccer game, with trees impeding the playing field.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Deal with squirrel problem before upgrading sports fields.



### AREA 3



**CIRCLE PARK**

<i>Classification:</i>	Greenspace
<i>Acres:</i>	0.1
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities:</i>	None
<i>Conditions:</i>	Good
<i>Observations/ Comments:</i>	Greenspace in middle of street roundabout
<i>Recommendations:</i>	None

**AREA 3**

### COLLEGE PARK

<i>Classification:</i>	Neighborhood park
<i>Acres:</i>	17
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities:</i>	Open space, picnic tables, restroom building
<i>Conditions:</i>	Turf in the center of the park is worn. Graffiti present.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	Turf and trees make up the park. The turf in the center is likely worn from informal soccer or other pick up games.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Add some amenities to attract families with children and add interesting features. Step up maintenance to discourage graffiti.



### AREA 3



### GREENFIELD PARK

<i>Classification:</i>	Neighborhood park
<i>Acres:</i>	5
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Shade shelter with picnic table, lighted basketball court, newish 2-5 yr old tot lot, 5-12 yr old play equipment (swings), baseball field, storage building, restroom building
<i>Conditions</i>	Some graffiti sprayed in many places. Basketball backboards and posts in prime condition. Turf is worn on the ball field. Shade shelter is dated. Evidence of ground squirrels.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	Parking lot needs to be resurfaced.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Replace or renovate outdated swings. Upgrade graffiti removal. Replace picnic shelter and restroom.

### AREA 3

## HERITAGE PARK

<i>Classification:</i>	Neighborhood park
<i>Acres:</i>	18
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Shade shelter and picnic tables and BBQ, full basketball court and volleyball court (lighted), soccer field with goals, turf soccer field shared with ball backstop, rest-room building, Day Care facility
<i>Conditions</i>	Some graffiti on the play structures.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	Terrain is undulating. It is located across street from E. Bakersfield Senior Center.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Routine maintenance.



### AREA 3



**LAMONT PARK**

<i>Classification:</i>	Neighborhood Park
<i>Acres:</i>	8
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	2 lighted basketball courts, lighted Little League ball field with bleachers, dugouts, and concession building, restroom building, 2-5 yr old tot lot, 5-12 yr old play equipment.
<i>Conditions</i>	The 5-12 yr old play equipment (swings) are in disrepair. One hoop is missing from the basketball court. The turf on the baseball field is unlevel and has holes.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	The concession building is boarded up. The park is on the same premises as the Library and the Human Services Building. There are some areas of water pooling on site.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	The park needs to be refurbished. There is evidence that the park needs to be maintained and patrolled more heavily.

**AREA 3**



## PANORAMA PARK

<i>Classification:</i>	Community park/linear
<i>Acres:</i>	32
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Trail with wooden rail fence and drinking fountains
<i>Conditions</i>	Young planting in good condition. New asphalt path.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	Use of solar power. Community groups helped establish and maintain the park. Panorama Park is situated on a bluff above the Kern River, and overlooks Oildale and other parts of Bakersfield.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Routine maintenance



### AREA 3



**PIONEER PARK**

<i>Classification:</i>	Community park
<i>Acres:</i>	14
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities:</i>	Fenced in multipurpose field with backstop and goals, 2-5 yr old tot lot, bathroom buildings, soft-ball field with bleachers, 2 lighted basketball courts, picnic tables and BBQ.
<i>Conditions:</i>	Fairly new park but showing signs of wear. Worn turf on multipurpose field. Graffiti on restroom and slides. New looking tot lot.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	Park shows evidence of graffiti and vandalism also turf has animal burrows throughout.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Step up maintenance to discourage graffiti. Take steps to solve vermin infestation.

**AREA 3**

### POTOMAC PARK

<i>Classification:</i>	Neighborhood Park
<i>Acres:</i>	5
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Multi-purpose sports field w/backstop and soccer goals, group picnic shelter, BBQ, 2-5 yr. old tot lot, swings, restroom, lighted basketball court, on street parking
<i>Conditions</i>	fair to good
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	facilities are rentable and reservable
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Maintain and upgrade on a regular basis



### AREA 3



**REXLAND ACRES PARK**

<i>Classification:</i>	Neighborhood park
<i>Acres:</i>	4.44
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Recreation bldg., basketball court (lighted), restroom, tot lot (2-5 yrs.), picnic tables, BBQs, parking lot
<i>Conditions</i>	fair
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	Facilities rentable and reservable. Adjacent to school.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Park needs refurbishment and updating

**AREA 3**

## VIRGINIA AVENUE PARK

<i>Classification:</i>	Neighborhood park
<i>Acres</i>	9.5
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	1 regulation size soccer field, 1 smaller soccer field, picnic tables with BBQ, 2 lighted basketball courts, 2-5 yr old tot lot, 5-12 yr old play equipment (swings), baseball field, restroom building
<i>Conditions</i>	Turf is in good condition. Some swings are missing, and equipment is dated. Basketball nets are torn. Park showing signs of age.
<i>Observations/ Comments:</i>	Larger soccer field can be divided into practice fields.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Refurbish play equipment. Step up maintenance of grounds and buildings and graffiti removal.



### AREA 3



**WILKINS PARK**

<i>Classification:</i>	Neighborhood park
<i>Acres</i>	2.6
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Turf and trees
<i>Conditions</i>	Entire park consists of turf with drainage ditch running length of the park.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	Passive area only. Turf is sloped throughout.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Provide seating only

**AREA 3**

### JAMES C. HAGGERTY NORTH KERN GOLF COURSE

<i>Classification:</i>	Golf course
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Two putting greens, pro shop with cafe, driving range and teaching area, residence and main-tenance building, cart garage
<i>Conditions</i>	Building looks dated and landscaping is sparse. Golf course turf is in good condition, though a little dry in areas.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	Located in remote area of Kern County near two cor-rectional facilities. Vendor is responsible for keeping attendance records.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	None



### AREA 3



**BEN AUSTIN SENIOR CENTER- GREENFIELD**

<i>Classification:</i>	Building
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities:</i>	Dining room and kitchen, "living room" with piano, recreation room with pool tables, offices, restrooms, horse shoe pits and benches outside.
<i>Conditions:</i>	Neat and clean appearance, inside and outside.
<i>Observations/ Comments:</i>	The building is used for bingo, exercise class, senior meals, as a cooling center, and for wedding receptions and Quinciñeras.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Routine maintenance
<i>Note: Bldg. is located at the undeveloped Kern Delta Park site. Future development is planned.</i>	

**AREA 3**



### CALIFORNIA AVENUE VETERANS MEMORIAL BUILDING

<i>Classification:</i>	Building
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Brick and concrete building
<i>Conditions</i>	Neat-looking appearance from the outside
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	Facility is adjacent to Martin Luther King, Jr Senior Center (City of Bakersfield)
<i>Recommendations:</i>	None



### AREA 3



**EAST BAKERSFIELD VETERANS BUILDING/SENIOR CENTER**

<i>Classification:</i>	Building
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Large meeting room with adjacent kitchen, Medium sized room with adjacent kitchen and library, classroom/ meeting room, men and women’s restrooms. Outside structure includes accessible ramp.
<i>Conditions</i>	Good condition, with people using the facility
<i>Observations/ Comments:</i>	Rotary and other service organizations use the building. Lunches for seniors are served.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	See Chapter 6 recommendations.

**AREA 3**

### EAST NILES SENIOR CENTER

<i>Classification:</i>	Building
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities:</i>	Dining room, living room, games room (with pool tables, card playing and library), restrooms, kitchen.
<i>Conditions:</i>	Clean and well kept, and being used by seniors.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	Entertainment such as piano playing is offered. Facility used to play bingo and distribute meals. Situated on a bus route.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Routine maintenance.



### AREA 3



**KERN COUNTY VETERANS  
MEMORIAL BUILDING-  
SOUTH BAKERSFIELD**



<i>Classification:</i>	Building
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Two meeting rooms (one with kitchen), 1 meeting hall, 1 large kitchen, storage room, outdoor deep pit BBQ
<i>Conditions</i>	The building has a pleasing design with indoor and outdoor spaces, and is well maintained.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	The building is adjacent to a library, and is on a bus route. The space is used by AA, NA, OA, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts. Activities done here include square dancing, ballroom dancing, weddings and funerals.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Routine maintenance



**AREA 3**

### NORTH OF THE RIVER VETERANS MEMORIAL BUILDING

<i>Classification:</i>	Building
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Unknown
<i>Conditions</i>	Good condition from the outside
<i>Observations/ Comments:</i>	Grounds include a deep pit BBQ. Mature trees present on property. Across from NOR District park.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Routine maintenance



### AREA 3



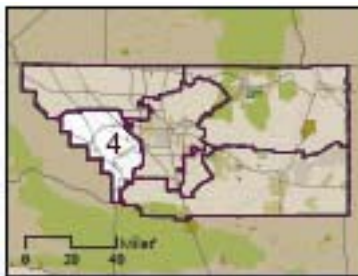
**SHAFTER VETERANS MEMORIAL HALL**

<i>Classification:</i>	Building
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities:</i>	Brick one-story building with 1 large meeting room with stage, 1 smaller meeting room, kitchen, restrooms. Outside area with turf, deep pit BBQ, and 1 covered picnic table.
<i>Conditions:</i>	Building in good condition and has been retrofitted to be handicap accessible.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	Building is used for voting, and is Home of America Legion. Nicely kept and neat looking.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Routine maintenance

**AREA 3**

### Area 4 – West Kern County

This western part of the county, which lies on the border of San Luis Obispo County, is a major oil production region. It included the valley communities of Buttonwillow, Maricopa and Taft among others. This area is served by one regional park, seven local/neighborhood parks, one golf course, and four public buildings. However, two of these public buildings are scheduled for demolition. Altogether this section of the park system encompasses 1655 acres of County park land. With the exception of the regional park and the nearby golf course, all of the local parks owned and operated by the County are located within the jurisdictional territory of the Westside Recreation and Park District.

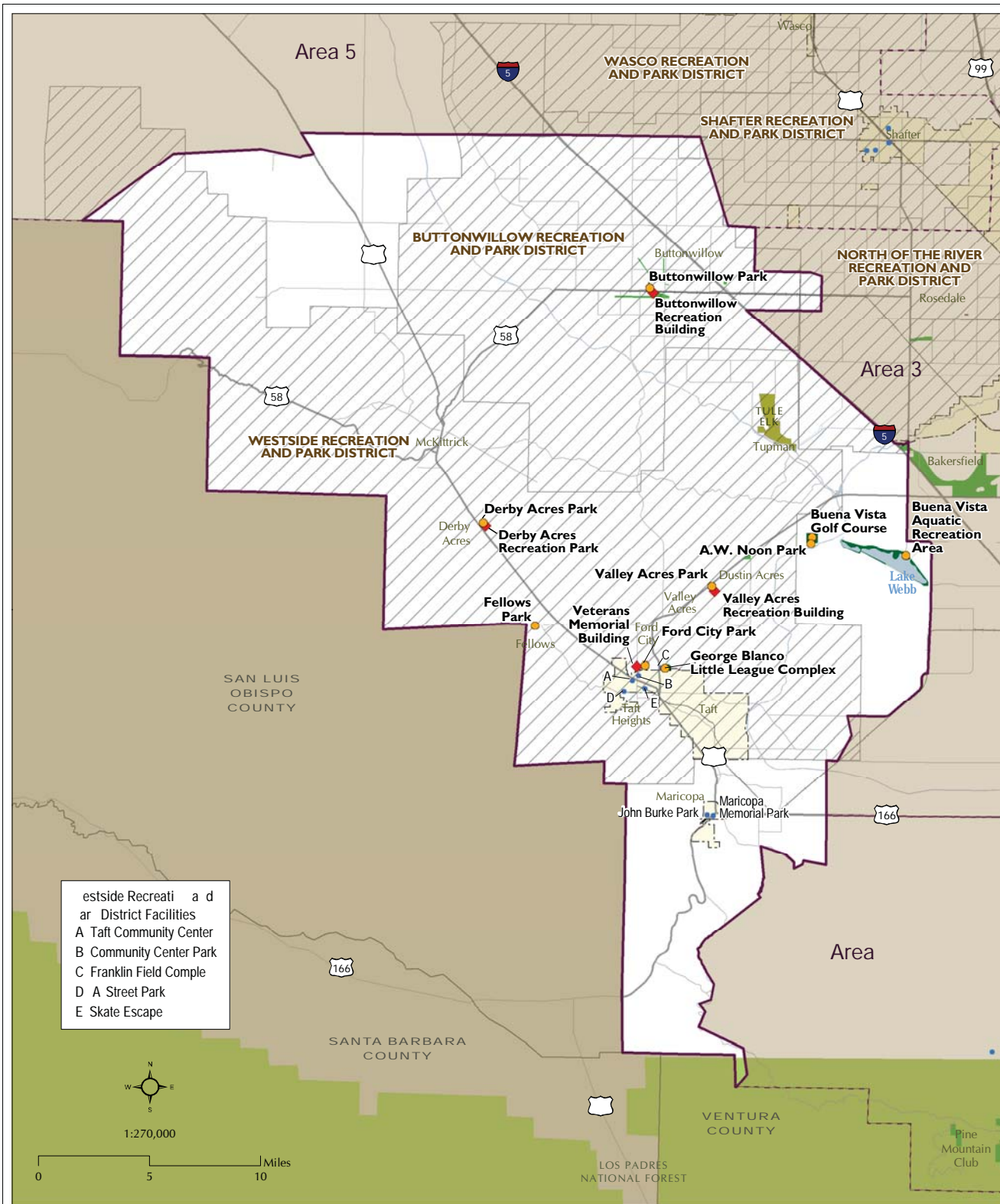


#### AREA 4 – WEST KERN COUNTY

Regional Parks		
NAME	ACRES	LOCATION
<i>Buena Vista Aquatic Recreation Area</i>	1585	<i>Greater Bakersfield</i>

Local/Neighborhood Parks		
<i>George Blanco Little League Complex</i>	6	<i>Taft</i>
<i>Buttonwillow Park</i>	20	<i>Buttonwillow</i>
<i>Derby Acres Park</i>	3.8	<i>Derby Acres</i>
<i>Fellows Park</i>	8	<i>Fellows</i>
<i>Ford City Park</i>	4.1	<i>Ford City</i>
<i>A.W. Noon Park</i>	12	<i>Dustin Acres</i>
<i>Valley Acres Park</i>	2	<i>Valley Acres</i>
<i>Buena Vista Golf Course</i>		<i>Taft</i>

Public Buildings		
NAME	LOCATION	CAPACITY
<i>Buttonwillow Recreation Bldg.</i>	<i>Buttonwillow</i>	114
<i>Veterans Memorial Bldg.</i>	<i>Taft</i>	575



Westside Recreation and Park District Facilities

- A Taft Community Center
- B Community Center Park
- C Franklin Field Complex
- D A Street Park
- E Skate Escape

**Kern County Parks Master Plan**  
Kern County, California

<b>Kern County Facilities</b>	Regional Park	County Facility	County Building
<b>Other Jurisdiction Facilities</b>	National Forest	Other County	
City or Park District Facility	Park Districts	Interstate/Highway	
Park, Open Space & Greenway	Subject Area	Major Road	
Publicly Owned Facility	Other Subject Area	Railroad	
State Park	City Limits	Water Feature	





**BUENA VISTA AQUATIC RECREATION AREA**

<i>Classification:</i>	Regional Recreation area
<i>Acres:</i>	1585
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	2 lakes, 2 Sand Volleyball courts, horseshoe pits, 2-5 yr old tot lots, restroom buildings, concession building, picnic area with 2 shelters, boat ramp, fuel station.
<i>Conditions</i>	The parking lots, tot lots, and picnic shelters are in good condition.
<i>Observations/ Comments:</i>	A large number of trees shade the parking lots. Some play equipment (though not the tot lots) is dated. The store does not look occupied. A firing range is located across from the lakes. The facility is expansive and capable of holding thousands of visitors at one time. A portion of the park continues to be developed along the lake edge to the west.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Renovate and replace outdated slides and swings. Continue to maintain campgrounds and picnic areas on a routine bases.

**AREA 4**

## GEORGE BLANCO LITTLE LEAGUE COMPLEX

<i>Classification:</i>	Regional Baseball Complex
<i>Acres:</i>	6
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	2 lighted baseball fields with bleachers and dugouts. Two fields have bullpens. Scorekeepers building/concession stand, restroom building.
<i>Conditions</i>	The park looks modern and well kept. The turf is in good condition.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	The park is newly built and landscaped. One field is regulation size.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Maintain on regular basis.



### AREA 4



### BUTTONWILLOW PARK

<i>Classification:</i>	Community park
<i>Acres:</i>	36
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	2 soccer fields, lighted basketball court, 4 horseshoe pits, 2-5 yr old tot lot, 3 shade shelters (2 small, 1 large) with picnic tables and food preparation station, 2 tennis courts, restroom buildings, Little League baseball complex with bleachers, dugouts, scorekeeper building, and bull pen, maintenance yard, and recreation building.
<i>Conditions</i>	The soccer field is in disrepair with paint peeling from the goals, and a pitted turf and weeds field. The park shows wear.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	The maintenance yard is not cleaned up. Overall, the park offers many recreation opportunities, and is functional, but lacks curb appeal.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Consider upgrading soccer field. Chain link fencing around ball field needs maintenance. Turf areas need refurbishment.

*Note: A large portion of the park is being transferred to the local recreation district. A new community building and various amenities are planned.*

## AREA 4

### DERBY ACRES PARK

<i>Classification:</i>	Neighborhood park
<i>Acres:</i>	3.8
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Shade shelter with picnic tables and BBQ, 4 horseshoe pits, basketball court, play equipment, ball backstop, recreation building
<i>Conditions</i>	The play equipment is dated, and includes metal swings, teeter totter and slide. The turf has worn away on the ball field. The paint is peeling on the recreation building.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	There is turf in this park in the shady areas only.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Remove or replace metal swings, slide and teeter totter. Install safe fall zone surfacing. Area near play equipment could use some beautification and shade. Recreation building looks in disrepair (scheduled for demolition).



### AREA 4



**FELLOWS PARK**

**(COUNTY LEASES LAND FROM CHEVRON)**

<i>Classification:</i>	Neighborhood park
<i>Acres:</i>	8
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Ball field with bleachers, basketball court, play equipment, shade shelter with food preparation area and tables, 2 horse-shoe pits, picnic tables and restroom building
<i>Conditions</i>	The ball field is sand only, no turf. The bleachers and the play equipment are dated.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	There is some shade in this park, but little turf, and the turf has some holes in it. The park is well used it appears. Play areas is outdated and not accessible.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Replace all play equipment and play area surface. Make ADA accessible. Picnic shelter roof should be repaired or replaced. BBQ's missing from picnic area. Large hole at base of trees near Basketball court.

**AREA 4**

**FORD CITY PARK**

<i>Classification:</i>	Neighborhood park
<i>Acres:</i>	4.1
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Picnic tables on concrete pad, 2-5 yr old tot lot and other play equipment, fenced horseshoe pits, storage shed, restroom building.
<i>Conditions</i>	The play equipment (swings, slide and jungle gym) are dated. The storage shed looks worn.
<i>Observations/ Comments:</i>	There are security lights throughout the park. No sidewalks run through the park.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Replace swings, metal slide, monkey bars and jungle gym. Make surface fall zone safe and ADA accessible.



**AREA 4**



**A.W. NOON PARK (DUSTIN ACRES)**

<i>Classification:</i>	Neighborhood Park
<i>Acres:</i>	12
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Picnic shelter, 2-5 yr old tot lot, restroom building
<i>Conditions</i>	The turf and site furnishings are in good condition.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	The park includes mature palm trees, and forms the entrance to the Buena Vista Golf Course. The park has nice curb appeal, including the entry sign.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Routine maintenance and upgrade restrooms.



AREA 4

### VALLEY ACRES PARK

<i>Classification:</i>	Neighborhood park
<i>Acres:</i>	2
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Picnic shelter, (2) half basketball courts, 2-5 yr old tot lot, 5-12 yr old play equipment, tether ball court, recreation building
<i>Conditions</i>	The 5-12 yr old play equipment (swings) is dated. The recreation building is in fair to poor condition. The basketball nets are torn, and the tether ball is missing.
<i>Observations/ Comments:</i>	Unidentified building on the property in poor condition. Scheduled for demolition
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Replace outdated swings and fall zone surfacing.



### AREA 4





**BUENA VISTA GOLF COURSE**

<i>Classification:</i>	Golf Course
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities:</i>	18-hole course, pro shop and café, cart garage
<i>Conditions:</i>	The building and top of course are in good condition.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	The cart garage is made of corrugated metal. A sea of green in an agricultural zone. Beautifully kept.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	None

**AREA 4**

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AREA 4



**TAFT VETERANS MEMORIAL BUILDING**

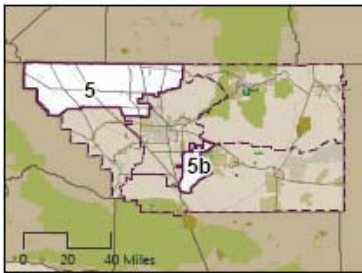
<i>Classification:</i>	Building
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities:</i>	Brick and stucco building. Lighted basketball court, multipurpose concrete pad.
<i>Conditions:</i>	The building appears to be in good condition but the landscaping is minimal and stark.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	The concrete pad may be used for roller hockey games. The property includes lots of open space with no trees or green area. An open platform, not surrounded by railing, fulfills no clear purpose.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Needs new landscaping and softscape around building with shade.

**AREA 4**

### Area 5 – Valley North of Bakersfield and South of Bakersfield

This area encompasses agricultural lands and urban communities that lie to the northwest of Bakersfield, as well as communities to the southeast of Bakersfield. Although separated by the urban population of Area 3- Greater Bakersfield, these two halves are similar demographically and economically. The larger northern half is served by one regional park, three local parks and two public buildings. One of these local parks and a public building are expected to be transferred to the control of the City of Delano. The southern half of this area is served by one local park and one public building. Altogether this section of the park system encompasses 506 acres of County park land.

AREA 5 – VALLEY NORTH OF BAKERSFIELD AND SOUTH OF BAKERSFIELD		
<b>Regional Parks</b>		
NAME	ACRES	LOCATION
Lake Wollomes	445	Delano
<b>Local/Neighborhood Parks</b>		
Delano Memorial Park	32	Delano
Lost Hills Park	7	Lost Hills
<b>Public Buildings</b>		
NAME	LOCATION	CAPACITY
Lost Hills Recreation Bldg.	Lost Hills	139
<b>Local/Neighborhood Parks</b>		
DiGiorgio Park	16	Arvin
<b>Public Buildings</b>		
NAME	LOCATION	CAPACITY
DiGiorgio Recreation Bldg.	Arvin	135

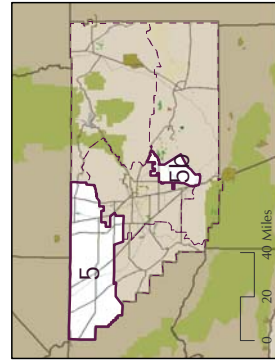


**Kern County Facilities**

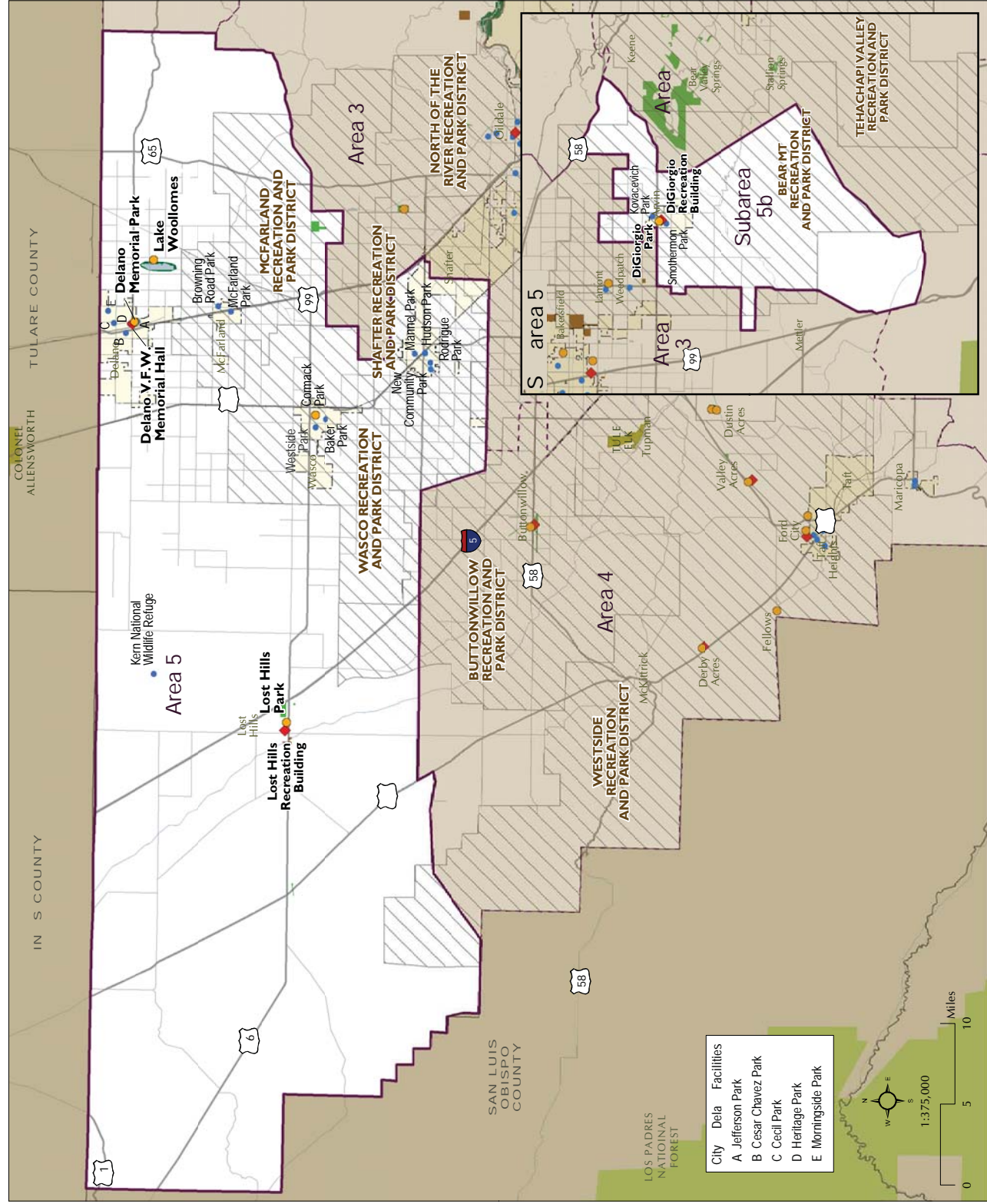
- County Facility
- County Building
- Regional Park

**Other Jurisdiction Facilities**

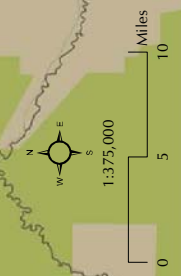
- City or Park District Facility
- Park, Open Space & Greenway
- Publicly Owned Facility
- State Park
- National Forest
- Park Districts
- Subject Area
- Other Subject Area
- City Limits
- Other County
- Interstate/Highway
- Major Road
- Railroad
- Water Feature



**Area 5 & Subarea 5b:  
Valley North and Valley  
South of Bakersfield**



- City Dela Facilities**
- A Jefferson Park
  - B Cesar Chavez Park
  - C Cecil Park
  - D Heritage Park
  - E Morningside Park





### LAKE WOOLLOMES

<i>Classification:</i>	Regional park
<i>Acres:</i>	445
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Boat launch, caretaker residence, basketball court, 2-5 yr old tot lot, restroom buildings, 2 swing sets, fenced group picnic shelter
<i>Conditions</i>	Good curb appeal, especially the entry sign
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	Amenities look updated and well kept.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Replace restrooms and resurface roads.

### AREA 5

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AREA 5



**DELANO MEMORIAL PARK**

<i>Classification:</i>	Community park
<i>Acres:</i>	32
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Lighted baseball stadium with bleachers, concession stand and brick dugouts. Softball field, t-ball field (all dirt with backstop), (2) 2-5 yr old tot lots, 5-12 yr old play equipment (incl. swings on sand), group picnic shelters, raised platform/stage, arena with bleachers, large metal storage building, concession buildings, large, lighted restroom.
<i>Conditions</i>	Group picnic shelter is dated. Some play equipment is unique (caterpillar). Mixture of new and old bleachers in the arena.
<i>Observations/Comments:</i>	If the County intends to retain this park, it should be considered for refurbishment and redesign. It has much potential for event use and revenue generation.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Older swings need fall zone surfacing beneath. Dirt area surrounded by bleachers not clear what this area is for.

**AREA 5**

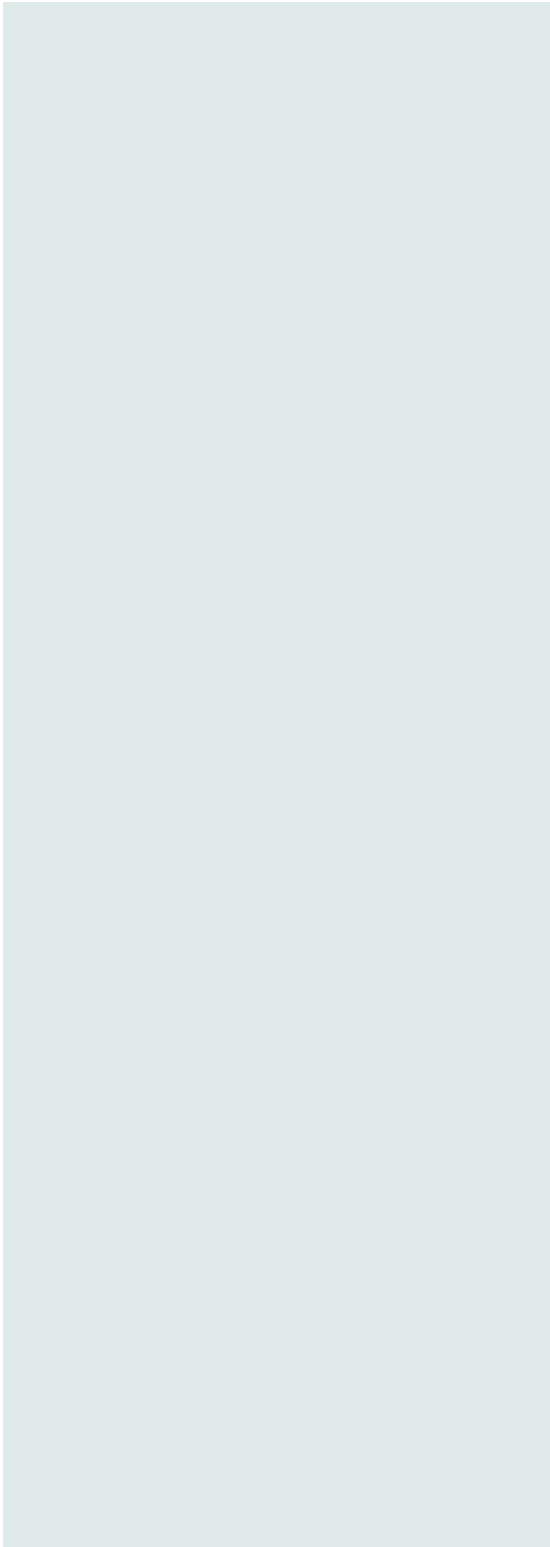


## LOST HILLS PARK

<i>Classification:</i>	Neighborhood park
<i>Acres:</i>	7
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	Picnic tables and deep pit BBQ, shade shelter, restroom building, multipurpose field, 2-5 yr old tot lot, recreation building, concrete pads (10'x10' and 15'x 20') presumably for picnic tables but no tables
<i>Conditions</i>	The building looks unused, and has peeling paint on the façade. The shade shelter is dated. Some of the landscaping is new.
<i>Observations/ Comments:</i>	Some mature pine trees provide shade. Ginkgo trees have been planted on the edge of the multipurpose field. The concrete pads are empty. Ground squirrels present
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Field area needs leveling and new turf. Building should be refurbished. Replace outdoor restroom.



### AREA 5



AREA 5

## DI GIORGIO PARK AND RECREATION BUILDING

<i>Classification:</i>	Community Park
<i>Acres:</i>	16
<i>Status:</i>	Developed
<i>Existing Facilities</i>	2 lighted basketball courts, large picnic area with covered and uncovered tables, restroom building, 2-5 yr old tot lot, ball field with bleachers, dugouts, 2 –story scorekeepers building, recreation building, aquatic area.
<i>Conditions</i>	Ball field turf needs repair. Rest of park is in good condition.
<i>Observations/ Comments:</i>	The aquatics facility is in mid refurbishment. There was some trash in the tot lot.
<i>Recommendations:</i>	Resilient surface at tot lot needs maintenance. Squirrel burrows a problem. Resurface parking lot.



### SUB-AREA 5B

### 3.3 - KERN COUNTY CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

The Kern County Parks and Recreation Master Plan was developed after completion of the Kern County Capital Improvement Plan, completed in 2008.

The inventory of existing County park facilities included in both of these two planning documents are in agreement with just a few minor exceptions. The differences are due primarily to the following two factors:

- Changes in the park inventory that have taken place since completion of the CIP.
- The existing parks inventory in the Parks Master Plan includes both leased and County owned park land, while the CIP includes only County owned parkland. For purposes of the Master Plan, the total park acreage made available through the County park system, regardless of whether or not it is owned or leased by the County, was a critical factor in the analysis used to develop the Plan.

In effect, the small differences between these two inventories simply reflect the fact they were developed at different times and with slightly different criteria for defining county park land. As a result, the 2008 Kern County CIP indicates there are a total of 4843.90 acres of County park land in the inventory while the Parks Master Land has identified a total of 4702 acres. The table below is a complete

inventory of all the County park facilities, which also documents the specific inventory differences in these two planning documents. This table is modeled after a similar list appearing in the CIP.

### 3.4 PARKS AND FACILITIES PROVIDED BY OTHERS

As previously described in Chapter II, there are within Kern County other public agencies at the local level providing both parks and recreation services. This includes the following seven cities:

- Arvin
- Bakersfield
- California City
- Delano
- Maricopa
- Ridgecrest
- Shafter

as well as eight independent park districts and a community services districts:

- Techachapi Valley Recreation and Parks District
- North of the River Recreation and Park District
- Buttonwillow Recreation and Park District
- Westside Recreation and Park District
- McFarland Recreation and Park District
- Shafter Recreation and Park District
- Wasco Recreation and Park District
- Bear Mountain Recreation and Park District

- Rosamond Community Services District

The populations served by these agencies rely less heavily on the County for providing local recreation needs.

### 3.5 RECREATION PROGRAMS

#### Introduction

The County of Kern Parks and Recreation Department has for many years devoted its resources exclusively to the operation and maintenance of its regional parks and to the local parks that it maintains in unincorporated areas of the County. The Department has not been directly involved in the delivery of recreation programs since the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978. However, recreation programming is available to County residents through other more local public organizations. In Kern County, recreation programming has been primarily the responsibility of city park and recreation departments and the recreation and park districts that exist in many areas of the County. Although many of these city park departments and park districts will utilize their own local parks and facilities to provide recreation programming, they may also rely on County park facilities and so work in partnership with the County Parks Department for this purpose.

There are also a wide variety of private non-profit organizations throughout the County, such as the YMCA

and local sports leagues, providing recreation programming. Many may have their own sports facilities or on a fee-basis have access to County parks and facilities.

As a result of this diverse network of local public and private non-profit organizations in Kern County, there is a large menu of sport and recreation programs for residents to choose from. Given the considerable geographic area encompassed by Kern County, however, the extent of sports and recreation programming available locally to residents does vary depending upon the community in which they live.

Not surprisingly, when compared to all other parts of the County, there is a far greater variety of recreational programs and services offered in and around the Bakersfield metropolitan area. Even in other less populated County communities, residents can still find a wide spectrum of recreational services provided through their local city recreation and parks department or parks and recreation district. It is in these outlying communities, however, especially in unincorporated territories, where programming gaps, if any, are more likely to exist.

What follows is an inventory of recreation programs available in each of the five geographic sub-areas of Kern County. A table for each subarea

TABLE 3 -1 - KERN COUNTY PARKS EXISTING INVENTORY – CIP AND PARKS MASTER PLAN		
Community Parks	CIP acres	Parks Master Plan acres
A.W. Noon	12.00	12.00
Belle Terrace	19.30	19.30
Boron	10.00	10.00
Buttonwillow	36.00	36.00
Casa Loma	9.00	9.00
Ed Oakley Park <sup>a</sup>		1.70
Frazier Mountain	27.00	27.00
Greenfield	5.00	5.00
Victoria Araujo Park	3.00	3.00
Heritage	18.00	18.00
Inyokern	3.00	3.00
Kern Delta Park <sup>b</sup>		11.75
Kernville Circle	1.00	1.00
Lake Isabella	40.00	40.00
Lost Hills	7.00	7.00
Mojave East	8.00	8.00
Mojave West	10.00	10.00
Mountain Mesa	5.20	5.20
North Edwards	5.00	5.00
Pioneer	14.00	14.00
Potomac	5.00	5.00
Randsburg	0.20	0.20
Rexland Acres	4.00	4.00
Riverside	5.00	5.00
Rosamond	10.00	10.00
Scodie	4.00	4.00
Virginia Avenue	9.50	9.50
Wilkins	2.60	2.60
Wofford Heights	7.00	7.00
<b>Total - Community Parks</b>	<b>279.80</b>	<b>293.25</b>
Regional Parks		
Camp Condor <sup>c</sup>	160.00	0.00
Kernville Fish Hatchery	14.00	0.00
Buena Vista Aquatic Rec. Area	1,585.00	1,585.00
Greenhorn Mt.	110.00	110.00
LeRoy Jackson	100.00	100.00
Kern River County Park Total	1,445.00	1,445.00
Lake Woollomes	445.00	445.00
Metro Rec. Center	107.00	107.00
Tehachapi Mt.	490.00	490.00
Lake Isabella Rec Area	-	-
<b>Total - Regional Parks</b>	<b>4,456.00</b>	<b>4282</b>
Community Parks Within City or Special District		
Blanco Little League <sup>d</sup>		6.00
Circle Park (Bakersfield) <sup>e</sup>	0.10	0.10
College	17.00	17.00
Cormack Park (Wasco) <sup>f</sup>	6.00	<del>6.00</del>
Delano Memorial	32.00	32.00
Derby Acres <sup>g</sup>		3.80
DiGiorgio	16.00	16.00
Fellows <sup>h</sup>		8.00
Ford City	4.10	4.10
Lamont	8.00	8.00
Panorama	24.00	24.00
Valley Acres	2.00	2.00
Westpark <sup>i</sup>	5.00	<del>5.00</del>
<b>Subtotal, Community Parks Within City or Special District</b>	<b>108.10</b>	<b>127</b>
Subtotal - Community Parks	279.80	293.25
Subtotal – Community Parks within city or park district	108.10	127
<b>Total – Local Parks</b>	<b>387.90</b>	<b>420.25</b>
<b>Total – Regional Parks</b>	<b>4,456.00</b>	<b>4282</b>
<b>Total Park Acreage</b>	<b>4,843.90</b>	<b>4702.25</b>

<sup>a</sup>Ed Oakley Memorial Building located within a small park that includes recreational facilities

<sup>b</sup>A new park developed after completion of CIP

<sup>c</sup>Owned by Kern County but operated as a Westside RPD facility (not Kern County Parks) under a long term lease. Facility is still with USFS; land exchange has not yet take place

<sup>d</sup>Facility acreage was not included in the CIP because it is leased, not owned, by the Parks Department

<sup>e</sup>Currently listed as a Kern County park site

<sup>f</sup>Park site has been transferred to the Wasco Park District

<sup>g</sup>Facility acreage was not included in the CIP because it is leased, not owned, by the Parks Department

<sup>h</sup>Facility acreage was not included in the CIP because it is leased, not owned, by the Parks Department

<sup>i</sup>Ownership transferred to Rosamond CSD

catalogs the types of recreation programs and services that are offered in key communities in each subarea. This includes both incorporated cities and some census designated areas. This table inventory shows where recreation programs are being offered, and the types of programs available in these communities, and by their absence also indicates where there may be an insufficient number of readily available recreation programs. This is most likely the case in unincorporated areas of the County such as Frazier Park, Glennville, Lake Isabella, and Lost Hills that do not have a local city parks department or an active recreation and park district to deliver these programs.

Accompanying each table is a list of the primary organizations that are known to be providing recreation programs and services in that subarea. For each organization it also identifies many of the specific programs that are offered, including programs targeting different subgroups of the population such as youth, adults or seniors.

Even in those communities where there are many different recreation programs and services offered to residents, it is not known whether the capacity of these programs is sufficient to meet the local demand for these services. There may be funding or other constraints in effect that place a limit on the number of residents who can utilize these recreation programs.

### Recreation Programs in Area 1 - Northeast Kern County

Area 1 – Community Recreation Programs	Before/After School Programs	Fairs & Festivals	Environmental Education	Team Sports				Summer Day Camp	Performing Arts	Senior Programs	Sports Lessons	Field Trips	Fitness Classes	Dance	Arts and Crafts	Swimming/Aquatics	
				Baseball/Softball	Basketball	Football	Soccer										
	Lake Isabella/Kern River Valley		■		■		■	■			■				■		
	Ridgecrest		■		■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■				

Findings from upcoming community workshops, focus groups and other outreach instruments may help to address that question.

This inventory is derived from organizational information provided by Kern County Parks and Recreation Department and other information obtained from the Internet. This programs database may grow in subsequent phases of the project as additional information is generated. In areas where there now appear to be an insufficient number of recreation programs or even a lack of such programs, additional recreation programs and the organizations providing them may be identified.

### 3.6 PROGRAM PROVIDERS

#### Area 1 – Northeast Kern County

##### Lake Isabella/Kern River Valley

- Kern Valley Soccer – Region 294
- Kern River Valley Little League

- Kern River Valley Youth Center
- Kern River Valley Youth Football League
- Lake Isabella Horseshoe Club
- Kern River Archers

**Ridgecrest**

- High Desert Horseshoe Pitching Club
- The City of Ridgecrest Parks and Recreation Department

**Adult Programs**

- Adult Fast Pitch Softball
- Coed and Men’s League Slow Pitch Softball
- ZUMBA - Dance Fitness Class
- Stroller Strides Fitness for Moms
- Martial Arts
- Aerobics
- Senior Services – Recreational Activities

**Youth Programs**

- Horseback Riding Lessons/Camps
- Tennis
- Basketball

- Martial Arts
- Indian Wells Valley Youth Baseball
- Indian Wells Valley Youth Football
- Over-The-Hill Track Club
- Ridgecrest Scorpions Soccer Club – Boys and Girls Teams

**Area 2 – Southeast Kern County**

**Boron**

- Boron Horseshoe Pitching Club

**California City/Mojave Area**

- American Youth Soccer Organization Region 789
- California City Parks and Recreation Department
- California City Yankees (Baseball Team)
- Basketball Clinic
- Pee Wee Soccer
- California City Adult Softball
- California City Youth Football League
- California City Tiny Tee Ball Team

**Frazier Park**

- America Youth Soccer Organization Region 382
- Frazier Mountain Little League

**Rosamond**

- American Youth Soccer Organization Region 827
- Rosamond Community Services District – Parks and Recreation Division
- Tennis
- Dance (Line Dancing)
- Arts and Crafts
- Yoga
- Dog Obedience
- Youth Acting

**Recreation Programs in Area 2 - Southeast Kern County**

Area 2 – Community Recreation Programs	Before/After School Programs	Fairs & Festivals	Environmental Education							Team Sports																	
			Baseball/Softball	Basketball	Football	Soccer	Special: Horseshoe Pitching Team	Summer Day Camp	Performing Arts	Senior Programs	Sports Lessons	Field Trips	Fitness Classes	Dance	Arts and Crafts	Swimming/Aquatics											
Boron								■																			
California City/Mojave				■	■	■	■								■												
Rosamond	■			■	■	■	■		■	■					■					■					■	■	
Tehachapi	■	■		■	■		■		■		■	■			■											■	
Frazier Park		■		■			■																				



**Recreation Programs in Area 3 - Greater Bakersfield Area**

- Scuba Diving Certification
- Co-ed Basketball Tournament
- Rosamond Walkers
- Rosamond Community Services Foundation
- Kids Kamp
- Acting Class
- Start Smart Baseball
- Start Smart Basketball
- Start Smart Sports Development
- Youth Water Volley Ball
- Lifeguard Training
- Basketball League
- Golf Programs
- Special Olympics
- Swim Lessons
- Underwater Hockey
- Rosamond Little League
- Rosamond Youth Football

**Techachapi**

- Tehachapi American Youth Soccer Organization Region 479
- Tehachapi Valley Recreation and Park District
- Barracudas – Recreation Swim Team
- Youth Basketball League
- Tehachapi Little League
- Benz-Soccer/Football

**Area 3 – Greater Bakersfield**

**City of Bakersfield, Oildale, Rosedale**

- Boys & Girls Club of Bakersfield
- After School Programs
- Arts and Crafts Classes
- Computer Classes
- Dance Classes

Area 3– Community Recreation Programs	Before/After School Programs	Fairs & Festivals	Environmental Education				Team Sports				Summer Day Camp	Performing Arts	Senior Programs	Sports Lessons	Field Trips	Fitness Classes	Dance	Arts and Crafts	Swimming/Aquatics	Pre-School
			Baseball/Softball	Basketball	Football	Soccer														
Greater Bakersfield	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

- Health and Nutrition
- Organized Sports
- Teen Programs
- City of Bakersfield Parks & Recreation Department

**Adult Programs**

- Aquatics Classes and Fitness
- Arts and Leisure Programs
- Dance Classes
- Fitness Classes (Aerobics, Boot Camp, Cardio, Tai Chi, Yoga)
- Martial Arts
- Softball League
- Sports Lessons
- Disc Golf
- Golf
- Tennis

**Youth Programs**

- Adaptive Sports (ADA)
- After School Program
- Aquatics –Youth (fitness classes, water polo, swim team)
- Dance Classes
- Day Camps (during school breaks)

- Fitness Classes
- Sports – Classes and Clinics
- Basketball
- Golf
- Pee Wee Sports
- Soccer
- Tennis
- Teen Center
- Youth Academy

**Other Programs**

- Community Garden
- Special Events
- North of the River Recreation & Park District

**Adult Programs**

- Dance Classes
- Team Sports – Baseball, Basketball, Indoor Soccer, Volleyball

**All Ages**

- Aquatics Classes
- Arts, Leisure , Special Interest Classes
- Performing Arts
- Special Events
- Sports Recreation Classes – Golf, Martial Arts, Rock Climbing, Tennis

**Senior Programs**

- Dance Classes
- Fitness Classes
- Team Sports – Baseball

**Youth Programs**

- Cheerleading
- Dance Classes
- Team Sports – Baseball, Basketball, Football, Soccer, Volleyball
- Tots Sport Classes

**Other**

- Day Care
- Pre-School
- YMCA of Kern County
- Adult Classes
- Summer & Vacation Camps
- Teens
- Youth Sports Programs – Basketball, Cheerleading, Flag Football, Indoor Soccer, Soccer, Volleyball

**Other Recreation Program Providers**

- 4-H Clubs of Kern County
- Aqua Aces Swim Team
- American Kids Sports Center
- American Youth Soccer Organization Region 359
- Aqua Aces Swim Club Inc
- Aquatic Club of Bakersfield
- Audobon Society
- Bakersfield Alliance Soccer Club
- Bakersfield Rifle Club
- Bakersfield Swim Club
- Bakersfield Track Club (BTC)
- Bakersfield Bobby Socks
- Bakersfield Braves Baseball Club
- Bakersfield Brigade Youth Soccer Club Inc
- Bakersfield Girls Soccer League
- Bakersfield Gunners Soccer Club
- Bakersfield Gymnastics Company
- Bakersfield Heat AAU Girls Basketball Club
- Bakersfield Jack Frost Youth Football Foundation
- Bakersfield Black Knights Football Club
- Bakersfield Judo Club

- Bakersfield Gunners Soccer Club
- Bakersfield Organization for Women’s Soccer
- Bakersfield Police Activities League
- Bakersfield Racquet Club (BRC)
- Bakersfield Rebels Girls Fastpitch Softball
- Bakersfield Regional Ballet
- Bakersfield Select Volleyball Club
- Bakersfield Southwest Baseball (Pony League)
- Bakersfield Track Club
- Bakersfield Yellow Jackets Athletics
- Disc Golf at Hart Park
- Girl Scouts- Joshua Tree Council, Bakersfield
- Golden Empire Youth Football
- Junior Baseball Association
- Kern Community Tennis Association
- Kern County Gun Club
- Kern County Rugby Club
- Kern County Soccer Foundation
- Kern River Volleyball Club (VBC)
- Kern Wheelmen
- M.A.R.E Riding Center
- Northwest Little League
- Sierra Club
- So. Sierra Council Boy Scouts of America, Bakersfield
- Southern Sierra Fat Tire Association (SSFTA)
- Southwest Little League

**Lamont**

- Bear Mountain Recreation and Park District

**Area 4 – West Kern County**

**Buttonwillow**

- Buttonwillow Babe Ruth Baseball
- Buttonwillow Little League
- Buttonwillow Recreation and Park District
- Basketball
- Swimming
- Volleyball
- Sumer Recreational Program

**Taft**

- Kern County Gun Club
- Youth Program
- West Side Recreation and Park District
- Operates Camp Condor

**Recreation Programs in Area 4 - West Kern County**

Area 4 – Community Recreation Programs	Before/After School Programs	Fairs & Festivals	Environmental Education				Team Sports				Summer Day Camp	Performing Arts	Senior Programs	Sports Lessons	Field Trips	Fitness Classes	Dance	Arts and Crafts	Swimming/Aquatics	Pre-School
			Baseball/Softball	Basketball	Football	Soccer														
Buttonwillow		■	■	■		■	■												■	
Taft/ McKittrick/ Maricopa		■		■	■		■			■	■	■	■				■		■	■

**Adult Services**

- Arts and Crafts
- Community Theater
- Dance Classes
- Fitness Classes
- Game Nights
- Nutrition Programs (including Meals on Wheels)
- Sport Tournament

**Adult and Senior Services**

- Babe Ruth Baseball
- Basketball
- Cheerleading
- Dance Classes
- Gymnastics
- Indoor Sports Clinic
- Hunting Safety
- Karate
- Pre-School
- Ponytail Softball

- Track
- Volleyball

**Other**

- Special Events
- West Side Little League

**Area 5 – North West Kern County and South of Bakersfield**

**City of Delano**

**Lost Hills**

**City of McFarland**

- McFarland Recreation and Park District

**City of Shafter**

- Police Athletic League
- After School Program
- Baseball
- Basketball
- Boxing
- Volleyball
- Shafter Recreation and Park District
- Adult Soccer
- Adult Softball
- Aquatics Program
- Youth Basketball
- Youth Baseball and Softball
- Youth Soccer

**Wasco**

- Wasco Little League
- Wasco Recreation and Park District

**Adult Programs**

- Aerobics
- Co-ed Softball
- Men’s Softball

**Youth Programs**

- Basketball
- Girls Softball

**Recreation Programs in Area5 & Subarea 5B - Northwest Kern County and South of Bakersfield**

Area 5 – Community Recreation Programs	Before/After School Programs	Fairs & Festivals	Environmental Education				Team Sports				Summer Day Camp	Performing Arts	Senior Programs	Sports Lessons	Field Trips	Fitness Classes	Dance	Arts and Crafts	Swimming/Aquatics	Pre-School	
			Baseball/Softball	Basketball	Football	Soccer															
	Arvin			■																	
	Delano																				
Lost Hills																					
McFarland																					
Shafter	■		■	■		■													■		
Wasco			■		■	■							■		■						

- Instructional Baseball
- Soccer
- Swimming Lessons
- T-Ball
- Volleyball
- Wasco Youth Football

**Subarea5 B – South of Bakersfield**

**City of Arvin**

- Arvin Little League
- Bear Mountain Recreation and Park District
- City of Arvin

**3.7 COMPARABLE COUNTY PROGRAMS**

Although the County of Kern Parks and Recreation Department does not currently provide any recreation programs, when compared with other nearby county park systems this may not be an entirely unique situation. For four of the five County park systems used as a benchmark for Kern County parks, this conclusion is based on information from a survey conducted by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) which assessed trends in parks and recreation services in local governments. Information from the fifth County park system derived from its annual budget for 2008-09 also supports this finding.

Two of these five county park systems did not offer any recreation programming. The other three offered a limited number of recreation programs;

**Table 3-2: Program Offerings of Benchmarked County Park Systems**

COUNTY PARK SYSTEM	PROGRAMS PROVIDED
<i>Fresno County Parks and Recreation Department</i>	None
<i>Madera County Resource Management Agency</i>	None
<i>Riverside County Regional Park and Open Space District</i>	Cultural Festivals and Community Events, Environmental Education, Summer Day Camp
<i>San Bernardino County Regional Parks Department</i>	Cultural Festivals and Community Events, Environmental Education, Summer Day Camp
<i>Tulare County RMA Parks and Recreation Branch</i>	Environmental Education, Summer Day Camp

typically cultural festivals and community events, environmental education/nature programs, and summer day camps. None of the five offered the type or variety of recreation programming typically offered by more local city parks department or special park districts.

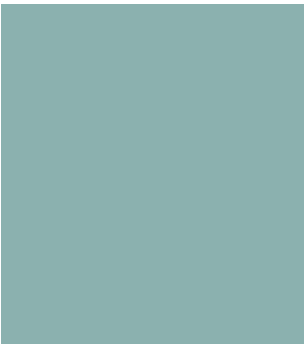
Other results from the ICMA survey do show, however, that a significant number of county park systems do provide recreation programs. Results obtained from 31 counties in Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Oregon and Washington, as summarized in Table 3-3, show the most common program service areas offered by county recreation providers.

**Table 3-3: Percentage of ICMA Counties Providing Program Areas**

SERVICE	% PROVIDING THIS SERVICE
<i>Fairs and Festivals</i>	58%
<i>Environmental Education</i>	55%
<i>Team Sports</i>	32%
<i>Summer Day Camp</i>	29%
<i>Performing Arts</i>	29%
<i>Senior Programs</i>	29%
<i>ADA Services</i>	29%
<i>Sports Lessons</i>	23%
<i>Field Trips</i>	23%
<i>Other</i>	19%
<i>Fitness</i>	16%
<i>Dance</i>	16%
<i>Before/After School Programs</i>	13%
<i>Extended Before/After School</i>	13%




CHAPTER FOUR



4

park, facility and program needs



*THE KERN COUNTY PARKS AND  
RECREATION DEPARTMENT DEVELOPS  
AND MAINTAINS A SAFE, ACCESSIBLE,  
HIGH QUALITY REGIONAL SYSTEM OF  
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, LANDSCAPES, AND  
RECREATIONAL FACILITIES TO SUPPORT  
AND ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE  
FOR OUR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.*

**KERN COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION  
DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT**

# park, facility and program needs

THE PURPOSE OF THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT is to identify future needs for parks and recreation facilities based on the community's vision for the park and recreation system. Interpreting this vision for Kern County Parks and Recreation Department involved multiple tasks. For example, existing documents—including the Kern County General Plan, Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan, Kern County Strategic Plan, Kern County Capital Improvement Plan (2008), and the Kern Regional Blueprint—were reviewed to identify past and current directions for parks planning. A preliminary set of issues and proposed remedies were considered by key staff and by the Parks and Recreation Commission, who provided comments regarding the strengths, weaknesses, and future opportunities and challenges facing the Kern County Parks and Recreation Department. Finally, the vision was refined through the public involvement process, where community feedback was synthe-

sized and distilled to identify residents' demands and preferences for recreation services.

In this context, the Needs Assessment examined the role that the Department of Parks and Recreation should play in the development, operation, and management of the park system and what park and recreation facilities should be provided in the future. In turn, this vision provided a foundation for the development of the Parks and Recreation Master plan.



*Top: Children playing in Inyokern Park*

*Left: Lamont Park play area*



Top: Gathering at workshop in Mojave.

Middle: Breakout groups at work in Frazier Park.

Bottom: Input from Tehachapi Focus Group summarized on a wall graphic.



photo courtesy of Mojave Desert News



This chapter reviews the key pieces in the Needs Assessment analysis. Specifically, this chapter:

- Summarizes the public involvement process and key findings that led to the development of a vision and goals for the community;
- Reviews the potential directions for the park system;

### 4.1 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT RESULTS

To develop a strong foundation for the Park and Recreation Master Plan, MIG solicited feedback from a broad spectrum of County residents regarding their needs, preferences, attitudes, and visions for parks and recreation services. A variety of activities were conducted throughout the planning process to ensure there were opportunities available to all who had an interest in providing input and to ensure participation from a represen-

tative cross section of the community, including various age groups and diverse special interests. Public and staff comments are documented and summarized in this chapter. The key findings from these activities provided a foundation for the recommendations presented in the chapters that follow.

#### Public Involvement Activities

The development of this Master Plan involved significant feedback from County residents. This feedback was obtained through a variety of formats:

- **Stakeholder Contacts:** Early in the master planning process, MIG staff interviewed key stakeholders identified by Parks and Recreation staff, including Kern County Supervisors, Parks and Recreation Commissioners, and community leaders throughout the County. These interviews provided an early



opportunity in the planning process to identify key issues, priorities and perceived park and recreation needs that helped inform and guide subsequent public outreach.

- **Telephone Survey:** The purpose of the survey was to obtain statistically valid, countywide input on a variety of issues related to the Master Plan. The survey was conducted by Research Network, Inc. during a six-week period in late Fall 2008. The county was divided into five areas to assure a uniform distribution of calls based on demographic data. These same five areas were employed for determining where Focus Groups and Workshops would be held.
- **Web Questionnaire:** The recreation questionnaire obtained citizen input on recreation patterns, needs, and priorities. Two separate questionnaires were developed: one for adults ages 18 or older and one for youth ages 10 to 18. Both were offered in English and Spanish and both questionnaires were administered online through the Kern County website, from June 2008 to March 2009.
- **Self Administered Questionnaire:** Based on the web questionnaire, a 4-page, 11 question survey was distributed to the public through the Parks and Recreation Department at public events and county facilities. It too was directed to an adult and youth audience and was in both English and Spanish.
- **Focus Groups:** Invited partici-

pants from key stakeholder groups in each of the five county areas (devised for the telephone survey) to offer their perspectives concerning the issues and priorities of parks and recreation services in the County and the particular needs of their communities. A total of 10 Focus Groups were held, two in each area of the county.

- **Community Visioning Workshops:** Two rounds of community workshops were planned: five during January and February and four during April and May. The first round was designed to gather input on park usage, facility preference, condition concerns and needs of users. The purpose of the second round was to report MIG's findings to the community and receive feedback about those findings.

## 4.2 PUBLIC OUTREACH SUMMARIES

What follows are brief snapshots of what the team heard from participants of each of the outreach tools. The impressions and opinions given provided the team with a basis from which to report Key Findings used to influence recommendations contained in this plan.

### Stakeholder Contacts and Interviews

Stakeholders were asked to respond to the same 11 questions, however, were not limited in their responses. These comments reflect the overall

collective opinions of the stakeholders:

- County parks seen as a valuable asset but under funded and with out-of-date, poorly maintained infrastructure.
- Not enough parks to meet recreational needs of residents, as the County has not kept pace with the growing population. No new County parks built in decades.
- Some expressed the view that once the County can begin to expand the park system it should build many more neighborhood parks rather than a few large regional parks.
- Interconnectivity, as well as accessibility, viewed as a core feature of the new, expanded park system.

*Mojave East Park*



- There were two distinct and opposite opinions as to whether the County should be a direct provider of recreational programs and services.
- Inadequate park funding is seen as the key fundamental issue but many different solutions proposed.
- Developing a stable, sustainable funding stream to reduce over dependence on the General Fund seen as critical.
- Again there were two distinct and opposite opinions as to whether the County should institute or increase fees to private groups for use of community/recreation facilities.

### Telephone Survey

The telephone survey questions were designed to explore the perception of the users and non-users of recreation facilities throughout the county: The questions were directed at:

- How and why people use recreation facilities and programs;
- Where do they go for recreation activities;
- What is their impression of the overall system;
- What are the most desired improvements;
- How frequently do they use facilities; and

- Would they be willing to bear additional cost to use facilities.

**How and why people use facilities and programs**

- Physical fitness, health and well being was cited most frequently as the primary benefit people they seek from recreation, followed next by opportunities to gather and socialize. Self-improvement or career development was the third most popular reason.
- Corroborating this finding, the most frequent use of facilities was for the purpose of walking/jogging/running for recreation or fitness (76%). Passive use of open grass/lawn areas in parks or recreation facilities followed closely behind with (65%) and picnicking (58%).
- Outdoor uses formed the bulk of the rest of responses, not surprising since Kern County has so many outdoor resources:
  1. bicycling on paved surfaces for recreation or fitness (46%),
  2. camping, trailer/RV camping in developed sites with toilet and table facilities (45%),
  3. fishing in fresh water (41%),
  4. trail hiking (35%),
  5. bicycling on unpaved surfaces for recreation or fitness (30%),
  6. use of play equipment, tot lots (29%),
  7. off road vehicle use including four-wheel drive, motorcycles, ATVs, or dune buggies (27%)



- Organized sports activities formed the lowest percentage of interest

**Where do they go for recreation activities**

- Hart Memorial Park, Buena Vista Aquatic Recreation Area, Lake Isabella, and Leroy Jackson Regional Park were the most frequently used facilities. And 79% of users travel by car to reach their recreation destination. Most would travel 4.9 to 6.5 miles to a recreation facility.
- A fairly low percentage of recreation respondents used indoor facilities, but of the facilities mentioned were: Kerr McGee Community Center (9%), Greenacres Community Center (7%), Delano VFW Memorial Hall (6%), Rasmussen Center (4%), Silver Creek Community Center (4%), and School facilities (4%).

THE MOST FREQUENT USE OF FACILITIES WAS FOR THE PURPOSE OF WALKING/JOGGING/RUNNING FOR RECREATION OR FITNESS



### What is their impression of the overall system

- The County got high marks from residents for the state of recreation facilities. Seventy-nine percent of residents said they were very or somewhat satisfied with the parks in the county.
- Very or somewhat satisfied was the way 87% of respondents described how well the parks were maintained.
- Dissatisfaction with the parks centered overwhelmingly on the state of the restroom facilities. Typical comments included:
  - *“bathroom facilities are dirty/littered”*
  - *“bathroom facilities lacking supplies”*
- Concerns about safety and security were the next highest priority for users. These concerns fell mainly into two categories:
  - *Perceived danger from undesirable people in the park and*
  - *Unsafe or unpleasant conditions of the grounds and equipment*

### What are the most desired improvements needed

- The largest percentage of responses to the question about new facilities or programs stated that no new facilities or programs were needed.
- The next largest response to the question of new facilities yielded the following by percentage.

- *Water Parks (8%),*
- *Bike Paths (5%),*
- *Walk/Jog Paths (4%),*
- *Swimming Pool for Recreation or Lessons (4%),*
- *Soccer Fields (3%),*
- *Playgrounds/Tot Lots (3%),*
- *Teen and Youth Club Facilities and Programs (3%),*
- *Skate/Skating Facilities (3%),*
- *Picnic/Group Facilities (3%), and*
- *ATV/Off Road/Motocross Facilities (3%).*
- As to the question of programs the responses listed the following needs:
  - *Youth Programs (8%),*
  - *Dance Instruction or Classes (5%),*
  - *Senior Programs (5%),*
  - *Arts or Crafts Instruction or Lessons (4%),*
  - *Aerobics, Spinning, or Fitness Instruction or Classes (3%),*
  - *Martial Arts (3%),*
  - *Swimming Lessons (3%), and*
  - *Cooking Instruction or Classes (3%).*

### How frequently they use facilities

- Frequent users of outdoor facilities outnumbered those of indoor facilities (32% vs 15%)
- Moderate users of outdoor facilities formed the greatest percentage with 42% as opposed to 24% of indoor.
- Light and non users of outdoor facilities provided the smallest percentage at 25%, but 61% of

households make little use of indoor facilities. This could be due to lack of facilities nearby.

- Some reasons for non use of facilities:
  - *“No Time” for use of parks and recreation facilities.*
  - *“Physical Limitations” and*
  - *“Do Not Need to Use/Not of Interest”*

**Would they be willing to bear additional cost to support facilities**

- Respondents were virtually tied (44% vs. 45%) as to whether they preferred a household tax or a user fee to pay for recreation costs. Five percent thought that the county should bear all the cost for recreation facilities and activities.
- However 74% of households would be willing to take on a \$15 increase in taxes; 64% would take on a \$25 increase; and 41% would go as high as \$35 annually to cover funding costs for recreation.

**Web and Self Administered Questionnaires**

One of the first tools developed to gather information about residents of Kern County was the self administered and web-based questionnaire. The list of 23 questions were designed to capture demographic information, recreation preferences, availability of recreation facilities, perceptions about County facilities, gaps in service, and willingness to bear some cost for

maintaining existing facilities.

The questionnaires were directed at both youth and adults in English and Spanish. Over 1,000 residents participated in the self administered and web-based survey. The majority of these participants completed the English language version of the surveys: adult - 659 (62%) and youth – 362 (32%). Another 55 individuals completed the Spanish-language version of the questionnaire –adult - 44 (4%) and youth – 11 (1%).

Results from these questions were also sorted into the five county areas used for the telephone survey. In this regard over 40% of the questionnaires submitted came from Area 3, encompassing the Bakersfield metropolitan area, the largest population center in the county. The remaining areas were also well represented among those who submitted questionnaires, with the exception of Area 4 which includes Taft and other communities in the southwestern section of the county.

Unlike the telephone survey, results from the questionnaires are not representative of the population as a whole. Instead, information collected through this outreach instrument constitute the views of a self-selected

74% OF HOUSEHOLDS  
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HIGH AS \$35 ANNUALLY  
TO COVER FUNDING COSTS  
FOR RECREATION.

**Question #23 Responses**

**Activities Most Frequently Participated In (Adults\*)**

**In order of frequency reported**

1. Walking for Pleasure
2. Computers (personal)
3. Nature Walks
4. Bicycling for Pleasure
5. Fairs and Festivals
6. Fairs and Festivals
7. Concerts (attend)
8. Gardening
9. Dog Walking
10. Exercising/Aerobics

**Question #24 Responses**

**Activities Would Most Want to Participate In (Adults\*)**

**In order of priority**

1. Bicycling for Pleasure
2. Nature Walks
3. Horseback Riding
4. Walking for Pleasure
5. Hiking/Backpacking
6. Concerts (attend)
7. Dog Walking
8. Swimming (pool)
9. Camping (RV)
10. Arts and Crafts

*\*Per English language version; too few Spanish language respondents responded to this question to compile a separate list.*

group of individuals, who were pre-disposed based on their interest in the park system to complete and submit a questionnaire. Highlights from the questionnaires are presented in the tables that follow.

The vast majority of those who submitted a questionnaire considered parks and recreation services important or very important to the quality of life in Kern County. This was equally true for both the English (97.4%) and Spanish versions (97.6%) of the questionnaire.

From the perspective of how best to improve the park system, the existing park system rather than new parks was of greatest interest to most participants. In order of frequency cited, desired improvements to the park system focused first, on the need to upgrade existing parks (23%); second, to maintain existing parks (17%); and third, to provide recreation programs and activities (15%). In terms of overall popularity, expanding the park system by acquiring new land, building new parks and building major new facilities constituted a second tier of options. This distinction was even truer for the Spanish language participants, although they placed an even greater

degree of emphasis on the provision of recreation programs.

This emphasis on the need to improve existing parks and facilities is further reflected in the degree to which participants indicated their satisfaction with the current level of maintenance. The overwhelming majority in both the English and Spanish language versions of the questionnaires were at best neutral about or unsatisfied with maintenance. Only 30% in the English language and 19% in the Spanish language version expressed satisfaction with the maintenance of existing parks and recreation facilities.

Although there were similar patterns between both English language and Spanish language questionnaire respondents, there were some differences. Although the opportunity to enjoy nature and outdoors was cited most frequently by both groups as the primary benefit of parks and recreation services, in follow-up questions the English language participants tended to be more consistent in this regard. In contrast, Spanish language participants placed a greater emphasis on sports activities and facilities, rather than trails and natural areas,

ADULT QUESTIONNAIRE HIGHLIGHTS		
QUESTION	ENGLISH LANGUAGE VERSION - HIGHEST RESPONSE (659)	SPANISH LANGUAGE VERSION - HIGHEST RESPONSE (44)
How important are parks, recreation services and open space to Kern County's quality of life?	Important or Very Important – 97%%	Important/Very Important - 97%
Which... benefits of parks, recreation services and open space are most important to you?	Provide opportunities to enjoy nature and outdoors – 32%	Provide opportunities to enjoy nature and outdoors - 27%
If you seldom use or do not use the parks in Kern County, what are your reasons?	Lack of facilities - 24%	Feel unsafe – 44%
How can the park system be improved?	Upgrade existing parks – 23%	Upgrade existing parks – 29%
What type of park is most needed in Kern County?	Trails – 23% Natural Areas – 19%	Large multi-use parks that serve the whole community – 35% A park consisting of sports fields – 33%
How would you rate the importance of natural open space?	Very Important – 69%	Very Important – 97%
What type of trails/pathways should have the highest priority?	Paved trails for walking, biking, etc. – 23% Nature Trails – 22%	Exercise trails – 41% Paved trails for walking, biking, etc. – 34%
If you currently do not use pathways or trails in Kern County, what are your reasons?	Too far away, not conveniently located – 29% Lack of trails and connections – 27%	Feel unsafe – 34% Lack of trails and connections – 23%
Is a multi-purpose indoor recreation center needed in Kern County?	Yes – 58% No, or No Opinion – 42%	Yes – 88% No, or No Opinion – 12%
What type of indoor recreation space most needed?	Multi-use gymnasium – 19% Indoor swimming pool – 19% Space for teen activities – 19% Outdoor/environmental (hiking, nature programs) – 70%	Multi-use gymnasium – 38% Aerobics/exercise classrooms – 25%
What type of recreation or sports programs should be offered to youth?	Aquatics – 53%	Job-related activities – 53% Sports – 53%
Which groups are underserved by current recreation services?	High school youth – 19% Middle school youth – 14%	Pre-Schoolers – 16% Seniors – 15%
How would you rate your overall satisfaction with the level of park, open space and facility maintenance in Kern County?	Neutral – 40% Satisfied – 30% Unsatisfied – 29%	Neutral – 46% Unsatisfied – 30% Satisfied – 19%
Would you support a tax measure to maintain and improve existing parks and trails, acquire more parks and natural areas, or develop more trails, parks, and recreation facilities?	Yes – 88% No – 12%	Yes – 93% No – 7%
If yes, how much would you be willing to support?	\$15 annually – 86% \$25 annually – 59.5%	\$15 annually – 59% \$25 annually – 25%
What are the outdoor recreation facilities you would most like to see added in Kern County to meet the needs of the members of your household?	Walking/Jogging Paths – 28% Bike Paths/Trails – 27%	Playgrounds/Tot Lots – 25% Bandshell/Concert Stage – 14%
What are the indoor recreation facilities you would most like to see added in Kern County to meet the needs of the members of your household?	Community Center – 17% Teen and Youth Club Facilities – 12%	Community Center – 24% Fitness Center – 21%
What are the programs, classes or activities your household would most like to see in Kern County to meet the needs of the members of your household?	Camps for school age children – 8% Arts or crafts instruction – 7%	Aerobics, spinning, or fitness instructions – 20% Before or after school day care – 18%



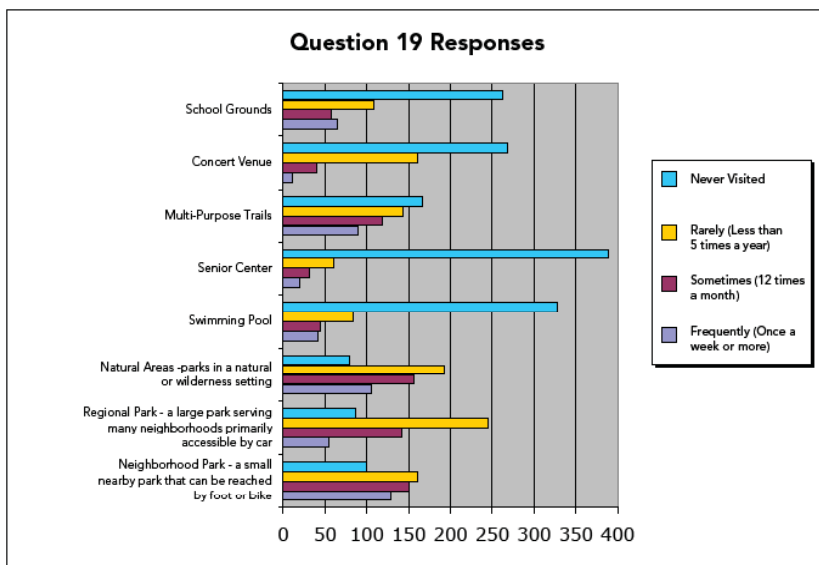
which were preferred by English language participants.

The only other major difference between the two groups related to reasons cited for not using parks. English language participants most frequently cited the lack of facilities, while those

(86%) were willing to pay \$15 per year compared to the Spanish language ones (59%).

It is important to note that similarities across all five areas in Kern County were greater than the differences. However, there were some minor variations. For instance, a need for more trails and natural areas were cited most frequently in all areas, but Area One in the northeast corner of the county placed an even greater emphasis on large multi-use parks. Another interesting difference; again while all areas identified multi-use gymnasiums and space for teens as an important priority, both areas in the eastern half of the county placed an ever greater priority on the need for an indoor swimming pool. Still, despite the vast geographic scope of Kern County, the views of those who completed the questionnaires were very similar across these varied communities.

Most of those who completed the youth questionnaire placed an emphasis on active recreation in the form of extreme sports/outdoor adventures and playing sports, as well as the types of facilities that would support those activities, such as skate parks, swimming pools and off road bike



who completed the Spanish version were more concerned about feeling unsafe in the parks.

A very high degree of support for a tax measure to maintain and improve the park system was expressed by approximately 90% of the participants (88% -English, 93% - Spanish). However, a significantly higher percentage of the English language participants

parks. Opportunities to meet friends and socialize whether in parks or in teen and youth club facilities were also popular options, as well as just engaging informal drop-in activities.

Despite this expressed interest in outdoor and social activities, however, the use of personal computers was cited as the activity in which most are engaged in on a regular basis, followed not too far behind by video games.

### Focus Groups

A total of 10 focus groups were held between February 6 and March 5,

2009 in Bakersfield (4), Delano, Frazier Park, Lake Isabella, Ridgecrest, Taft, and Tehachapi. The invitees represented various special interest groups such as: local and special park districts, business and development professionals, youth and adult sports organizations, recreation service providers and members of local community organizations.

Participants were guided through several discussions designed to inform the master plan team and County staff about issues closely affecting their communities and organizations. The



YOUTH QUESTIONNAIRE HIGHLIGHTS		
QUESTION	ENGLISH LANGUAGE VERSION - HIGHEST RESPONSE (362)	SPANISH LANGUAGE VERSION - HIGHEST RESPONSE (11)
How do you usually get to parks or recreation activities?	Walk - 41% Ride with someone else - 23%	Bike - 36% Walk - 27%
Which benefits of parks, recreation services and open space do you think will be most popular with youth in Kern County?	Entertainment businesses (movie theater, etc.) - 21% River access for swimming, etc. - 18% Teen center - 15%	Teen center - 38% Special events and festivals, trails and paved pathways, indoor recreation centers, and entertainment businesses - all tied at 18%
Which sports facilities do you think will be most popular with youth in Kern County?	Skate park - 24% Swimming pool - 21%	Swimming pools - 38% Outdoor basketball courts - 38%
Which types of recreation activities are most popular with youth in Kern County?	Extreme sports/outdoor adventures - 20% Drop-in activities (gym, game room, computers) - 19%	Extreme sports/outdoor adventures - 50% Arts (performing, visual, cultural) - 33%
What are the primary reasons you use parks in Kern County?	Play sports - 25% Meet friends/socialize - 20%	Picnic and general leisure activities - 43% Walk or bike for exercise - 43%
What are the outdoor recreation facilities you would most like to see in Kern County?	Skateboard park - 14% BMX/Dirt Bike/Off Road Park - 12%	Bandshell/Outdoor Concert stage - 50% Soccer Fields - 50%
What are the indoor recreation facilities you would most like to see in Kern County?	Teen and youth club facilities and programs - 18% Ice Skating Rink - 14%	Community center - 66%
What programs, classes or activities you would you most like to see in Kern County?	Cooking instructions or classes - 12% Arts or crafts instructions or classes - 10%	Educational workshops or classes - 50% Music instruction or classes - 50%

**Question #12 Responses**

Activities Most Frequently Participated In (Youths)  
In order of frequency reported English-language respondents (only\*)

1. Computers (personal)
2. Basketball
3. Video Games
4. Games (board, electronic)
5. Movies (theater)
6. Jogging/Running
7. Swimming (pool)
8. Arts and crafts
9. Football
10. Baseball

*\*Too few Spanish language respondents answered this question*

**Question #13 Responses**

Activities Would Most Want to Participate In (Youths)  
In order of priority English-language respondents \*

1. Dancing
2. Bowling
3. Concerts
4. Ice Skating
5. Movies
6. Paint Ball
7. Horseback Riding
8. Skateboarding
9. Basketball
10. Camping

*\*Too few Spanish language respondents answered this question*

focus group agenda and questions are located in the Appendix.

The following observations made during these discussions reflect key county-wide issues identified by participants.

- New park development has not kept pace with population growth.
- Development impact fees are insufficient and parks are underfunded.
- The public has limited or no access to recreational facilities owned by schools.
- More cooperation and coordination is needed between the County, special park districts, local park agencies and schools.
- Kern County needs to promote awareness of its valuable and unique cultural and historical resources.
- The restrooms in most of the parks are poorly maintained or need replacement.
- Off road vehicle use is increasing in areas where they are damaging valuable resources. More appropriate OHV user areas need to be established and managed.
- Safety and security in parks needs to be addressed in all areas.
- Because of extreme temperatures in various parts of the county, there is a need for year-round, indoor, multi-functional facilities.
- There is a need for water/spray

park facilities in all parts of the county.

- There is increased demand for biking and walking paths and hiking trails and equestrian trails, as well as connections to regional trails such as the Pacific Crest Trail that run through Kern County.
- There is a lack of sports fields of all kinds throughout the county.
- Most areas are seeking special recreation facilities such as, BMX bikes, skate parks, dog parks, outdoor cultural/event venues.

The discussions concluded with the participants being asked to define the role the County should play in resolving these issues. The following suggestions were offered:

- Increase cooperation and coordination between all jurisdictions with park and recreation responsibilities
  - *Establish a Kern Council of Governments for Parks and Recreation*
  - *County focuses on specialized regional parks*
  - *Cities focus on local community parks*
- Partnerships established with local communities and private sector to improve existing parks and build new ones.
  - *Construction costs reduced by relying on volunteer time and labor*
  - *County provides equipment and resources*

- *Private sector provides in-kind services*
- Joint use opportunities pursued with local school districts to expand recreational opportunities throughout Kern County
  - *“Work With Us” should be a theme of the Master Plan*
- The County plays the key role in convening all the other agencies and players in the park/recreation system
  - *Bring everybody to the table*
  - *Communication is the key*
- To improve our parks, we need to build a local constituency that will support our parks and support creation of a locally funded park organization.
  - *Park District*
  - *Community Service District*
  - *Maintenance District*
- Local communities and community organizations receive guidance from the County
  - *Obtaining grants*
  - *Meeting insurance requirements*
- Kern County Soccer Park cited as a model example of public/private cooperation

### Community Visioning Workshops

Attendance at the Visioning Workshops was open to the public. The workshop dates, times and locations were advertised on the Kern County website and in each area’s local media outlet. In addition, emails were sent to Kern County staff in each of the areas

and to a database of organizations and recreation users, as well as local governmental officials. Workshops were held in each of the five areas of the county: Lake Isabella, Mojave, Frazier Park, Lost Hills and Bakersfield.

The purpose of the workshops was to yield data that was both general to the County and to be specific to each area in which the workshops were held. Though much of the information received was specific, there were many commonalities among the issues that all the workshops shared. They are summarized below.

The format of the workshops was highly structured in order to maintain consistency of input and take advantage of the 1-1/2 hour time frame. Participants were asked to vote for their favorite park facility, programs and amenities by placing dots on three graphic boards on display in the room. Next, they listened to and watched a short slide presentation explaining the Master Planning process and goals, and then they were asked to break into small discussion groups of five or six per table. The breakout groups went through a three-stage process.

- Determine the things that worked well in the County parks system:

#### TOP PRIORITIES OF NEEDS DISTILLED FROM ALL WORKSHOPS:

- Partnering with schools for joint use of facilities
- Multi-use fields and sports fields for practice and competition
- Improved security
- Preserve natural environment of parks and trails for both educational and recreational purposes and as a wildlife corridor
- Cooperation between all governmental agencies responsible for trail development
- Acquire land for parks even if they cannot be developed at this time.
- Indoor multi use facilities



- *Things they liked*
- *Parks they visited*
- *Sites that met their recreation needs*
- Report on what didn't work well or that needed improvement
  - *Amenities lacking in the community*
  - *Problems with individual parks*
  - *Facilities that were missing or more were needed*
- Suggest solutions to remedy the stated problems and set priorities

The break out group sessions ended with each table's leader reporting their results to the entire room while the MIG facilitator recorded the results. It was the goal to graphically on a large wall-mounted piece of paper when possible.

#### Things That Worked

- Local Community Festivals/Social Events – Community-building activities

- Flexible open space in parks
- Kern's great natural resources
- Local volunteer groups adopting park facilities/amenities
- Local sports organizations caring for each of their facilities, i.e., AYSO, Little League, Football leagues, etc.
- Senior programs
- Availability of the variety of activities and attractions in Kern: mountains, water, desert, snow play, forests, archeology, river rafting, native American sites, star gazing, birding, camping, equestrian, etc.
- Partnerships between the County and local agencies to make improvements, such as adding new lights to sports fields in Mojave and Boron, and providing equipment to a skate park in Frazier Park

#### Things That Didn't Work

- Lack of restrooms
- Lack of irrigation in parks – poor turf condition

*Leroy Jackson Park*



- Lack of shade structures and shade in general
- ADA incompliance; disabled unable to use sites
- Lack of dog waste pick up facilities
- Lack of signage: directional and informational
- Lack of parking in and near parks
- Shortage of teen facilities and activities
- Lack of all types of team sports fields: baseball, soccer, football and softball
- Lack of indoor and gym facilities
- Lack of park space; lots of competition for existing facilities
- Lack of police presence in parks; increased vandalism; loss of safety
- Lack of trails of all kinds: walking, hiking, equestrian, biking.
  - So kids do not have to rely on parents to drive them to the park

**Desired Improvements to Parks in All Areas:**

- Maintain and improve existing parks
- Focus on youth activities and amenities (especially ages 5 to 14 and 15 to 18)
  - Recreation programs in the parks
  - Teen led programs to mentor younger kids
  - Kids spending more time outdoors
  - Bus transports kids to park
- Larger number of small parks accessible on foot
  - Lighted sports fields for soccer, softball and baseball
  - Indoor gym with snack bar and restrooms
  - Indoor swimming pool under gym floor
  - A central gathering place/central park with amphitheater
- Pool or spray park—to cope with high temperature summer days
- Walking path with exercise stations
- Trails exclusively for non-motorized activities
- Plenty of clean restrooms in all the parks
- Shade structures – places to sit and get out of the sun
- Shaded open space
- Nice landscaping with low water requirements
- Lighting in all parks (night-sky friendly)
- Multi-Generational Community/ Child Care Center –Multi-Use Facility
- Band stand or amphitheater
- Improved restrooms
- Trail system
- Walking track
- Access to school facilities, especially during summer months



*Sulfur water fountain.  
(courtesy Beale Kern County Library)*



### Workshop Key Findings

Besides the results listed above, many participants noted the following benefits and observations from their involvement in these focus group discussions:

- They came away learning something new from the other participants and were happy to have shared their information.
- They were willing to take some responsibility for caring for their local facilities
- They were eager to learn how they could partner with the County and other local entities to achieve their recreational goals.

### Top Priorities of Needs Distilled from All Workshops:

The items below represent the final most important priorities arrived at by each of the workshop breakout groups. They are not arranged in any priority since all were of equal importance to the group members.

- Partnering with schools for joint use of facilities should be pursued to expand the scope and range of park and recreational facilities
- There is a critical need for more multi-use fields and sports fields for practice and competition
- Improved security in all the parks is essential
- Preserve the natural environment

of parks and trails for both educational and recreational purposes and as a wildlife corridor

- Cooperation between all governmental agencies responsible for trail development is essential for the improvement and development of a countywide trail system
- Acquire land for parks even if they cannot be developed at this time.
- Indoor multi use facilities are needed in many communities

### Suggestions for Achieving the Goals/Priorities

The participants realized that the responsibility for addressing these challenges and opportunities did not all rest with the County. They put forward some of the following suggestions to make their goals reachable.

- “Cooperation between all agencies (County and local) will be needed to improve existing parks”
- “Public volunteers are available and should be pursued as a key resource to upgrade existing parks”
  - *Citizen recreation committees can be set up to adopt local park and trails*
- Local fundraising to help finance local park improvements”
  - *Establish a non-profit charitable organization to support the County park system, e.g. Friends of Kern County Parks.*
- “Control of local parks now

maintained by the County could be established by creating local community-based organizations like park districts and/or recreation councils”

- *Park District would be responsible for development and implementation of recreation programs*
- “Explore different financing methods for new parks and facilities”
  - *Parcel tax*
  - *Public utility service area (with a portion for recreation programs)*
  - *Contract with other park agencies*
- “Joint use of schools facilities with local community”
- “Kern County should coordinate with park agencies to meet and work together”
  - *Expand the Kern County Parks website*
  - *Share ideas among the various park agencies on best practices*
  - *Grants assistance from Kern County*
- “Link communities by providing transportation to other facilities and activities”
- “Use County to provide advice and available resources (equipment)”

### Community Visioning Workshops II

A second round of four community workshops attended by twenty two individuals was held in May 2009.

The purpose of these workshops was to review ideas and perspectives expressed in the initial round of workshops held earlier in 2009, and to present key goals and recommendations derived from that input. In each of these subsequent meetings, participants were asked to indicate the degree to which they believed the proposed recommendation addressed issues that were important to them. Participants ranked their agreement on scale from 1 to 10, with 1 as “strongly disagree,” 5 as “neutral”, and 10 as “strongly agree.” The following table summarizes each group’s general responses to nine key recommendations, as well as an overall average response across all workshops:

Of the 19 participants who responded, over 85% indicated their willingness to support a tax measure to carry out these park improvement recommendations. When asked to state the level of funding support they would be willing to provide:

- Eight of the 19 indicated they would be able to support a \$50 annual tax,
- Five would support more than \$50 annually,
- Five would support \$25 annually,
- One would support \$15 annually.





KEY RECOMMENDATION	DEGREE OF AGREEMENT 1- Strongly Disagree 5- Neutral 10- Strongly Agree
#1- Improve and maintain existing parks as first priority	8.5
#2 –Build new parks in under served areas of the County	5.8
#3 – Provide a range of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities (e.g. multi-service community centers, multi-use sports fields)	7.4
#4 – Expand trails and pathways throughout the County	7.3
#5 – Ensure safety and security in all parks	8.1
#6 – Local parks transferred to cities and independent park districts so Kern County can focus on regional parks	7.8
#7 – Create a regional park authority and local independent park districts	7.8
#8 – Develop dedicated funding source with creation of landscape and lighting districts	8.0
#9 - Coordinate with all other park agencies	8.0

### 4.3 KEY FINDINGS

Although the community outreach process relied on a variety of different methods to gather input from Kern County residents, many of the same issues and needs tended to emerge from these various discussions and survey instruments. These key findings are categorized here to provide an overall profile of what was learned through this process.

#### Existing Condition of the Park System

Most expressed appreciation for the extensive park system that is available to County residents. They also voiced concern about what was generally characterized as the poor current

condition of those parks and recreation facilities. This was especially true of those who proactively chose to participate in the Master Plan outreach process by completing an on-line questionnaire, or attending a focus group or community workshop. Respondents to the telephone survey, who were more representative of the public at large, expressed more satisfaction with the maintenance of the parks.

Those who expressed their dissatisfaction with the existing condition of the park system attributed it to what they perceived as insufficient resources available to maintain parks and facilities. Years of deferred maintenance had impacted the system and what they saw as neglect was now more increasingly visible than ever. This observation was especially true for older residents who had known the parks in their youth when the park system was still in its prime.

Among all participants in the outreach process there was almost universal dissatisfaction with state of restrooms and the need for additional restroom facilities. In addition, they expressed concerns about whether their local parks provided a safe and secure environment for themselves or

their families. Indications of vandalism or the poor condition of existing park grounds and facilities tended to reinforce that fear. Given their concerns about the conditions of the parks, it was not surprising that a desire to upgrade and improve maintenance of existing parks and recreation facilities emerged as a top priority.

### **Lack of Parks and Facilities in Some Communities**

While many had voiced concerns about the existing parks, there were others who observed that there were simply no longer enough parks to serve residents. Those most familiar with the park system noted that no new parks had been built by the County in many years, even though they knew the population in their area had been growing. Others, especially those from newer communities, reported their initial surprise, when they had realized there were no parks located near where they lived. This perspective was reinforced by telephone survey respondents who reported a need for more facilities as the primary reason for their dissatisfaction with the park system. Similarly, a lack of facilities was cited by those who completed a questionnaire as the primary reason they were not using the park system. This was

especially true among respondents to the on-line questionnaire living in the Greater Bakersfield area, the part of Kern County which has experienced the most growth over the past few decades.

### **Needs of Youth Not Being Met**

The need for more parks and recreation facilities, as well as recreation programs, was especially troublesome when it came to serving the needs of youth and the teen population. In focus groups and community workshops, the perception that there were too few facilities and programs for youths and teens was a recurring theme. Some long time residents observed that when they had been growing up as kids in Kern County, there seemed to be much more available in the way of facilities and programs, but that no longer seemed to be true.

Some wanted to see more in the way of teen centers and programs. Others felt that the supply of available sports fields and facilities was being increasingly outstripped by the demand from those in organized team sports as well as those who simply wanted more informal play areas. Some communities relied heavily on local school sports fields to meet this need, but that solution was not always available to the extent needed. When given the op-



portunity to voice their opinion, skate parks emerged as the most popular outdoor facility among youth, while a teen and youth club with programs and facilities was cited as the most popular indoor facility.

### Factors Contributing to Current Park System Difficulties

In the early stakeholder interviews, but also in the focus groups and community workshops that came later, most pointed to the lack of sufficient resources as the primary reason for the failure to adequately maintain existing parks or to build new ones. This was a long-standing problem, which was only growing more severe over time. Some noted that an opportunity to forge a stronger link between new housing developments and new park infrastructure had been missed, which could have alleviated some of the present day difficulties. In focus groups and community workshops, some believed there was an opportunity to make better use of limited park resources through greater cooperation at the local level between the County, local park agencies, and schools.

### Types of Park Amenities and Recreation Facilities Desired by the Public

The reasons people cited for using parks and the perceived benefits for doing so, shaped the types of facilities they would like to see in the park system. Among those who completed the on-line questionnaire, the opportunity to enjoy nature and the outdoors was a primary benefit. Not surprisingly they wanted to see improvements made to trail systems and opportunities to access natural areas expanded. Youth cited the benefits of meeting friends and socializing as a primary benefit, so a teen or community center was a popular facility. Respondents to the telephone survey cited physical fitness, health and well-being, followed by opportunities to gather and socialize as primary benefits they sought from recreation. They were most interested in seeing water parks, as well as more bike and walking paths in the park system.

Expanding the trail system was also a recurring theme among participants in the focus groups and community workshops. They also expressed a desire to see more up-to-date recreational facilities, especially multi-use community centers that could serve the recreational and social needs of

all generations but especially local youth. A desire to see more sports fields and facilities that could accommodate a variety of different sports over the course of a year was also voiced in most every community. Also, as in the surveys and questionnaires, the need for water/splash parks and skate parks was frequently cited. They also cited a need for other park amenities, including more shaded areas, improved lighting, and better park signage. Referring back to earlier observations, a desire to see more recreation programs that cater to the educational, recreational, social needs of local youth was frequently cited, along with a place or places in which such programs could occur.

### Organizing to Improve the Park System

Participants in the focus groups and community workshops also had an opportunity to offer ideas on how to go about the process of improving the park system. Given the history of insufficient park resources at the County level, some were skeptical about what might change in the future. For this reason, there was often a desire expressed at the local level to play a larger role in shaping their local parks, although they were not always sure



...MOST POINTED TO THE LACK OF SUFFICIENT RESOURCES AS THE PRIMARY REASON FOR THE FAILURE TO ADEQUATELY MAINTAIN EXISTING PARKS OR TO BUILD NEW ONES.

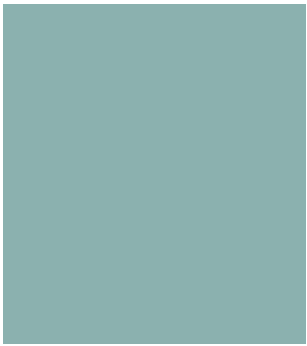
how this might be achieved. Some had experienced success working in partnership with the County Parks Department on specific projects such as improving a local ball field or putting in a skate park and wondered if this practice could be the foundation for more long-standing organized activity in their community. Others felt these partnerships should be extended to the local school district, and hoped the County could help facilitate such arrangements. Given the need for additional park resources, there was also a willingness on the part of a small majority, voiced in the survey and questionnaires, to pay an additional amount each year (\$15 or \$25 annually) in taxes or fees to help improve the park system

**Conclusion**

The analysis contained in this chapter is a general profile of the recreation needs, desires and priorities that emerged through the community outreach and planning process. This overview along with more specific needs assessment details lays out an overall vision of improvements that need to be made to the existing park system and the type of park and recreation opportunities that should be available to residents of Kern County in the future. These findings have helped to guide and shape the recommendations that form the basis of this Master Plan.

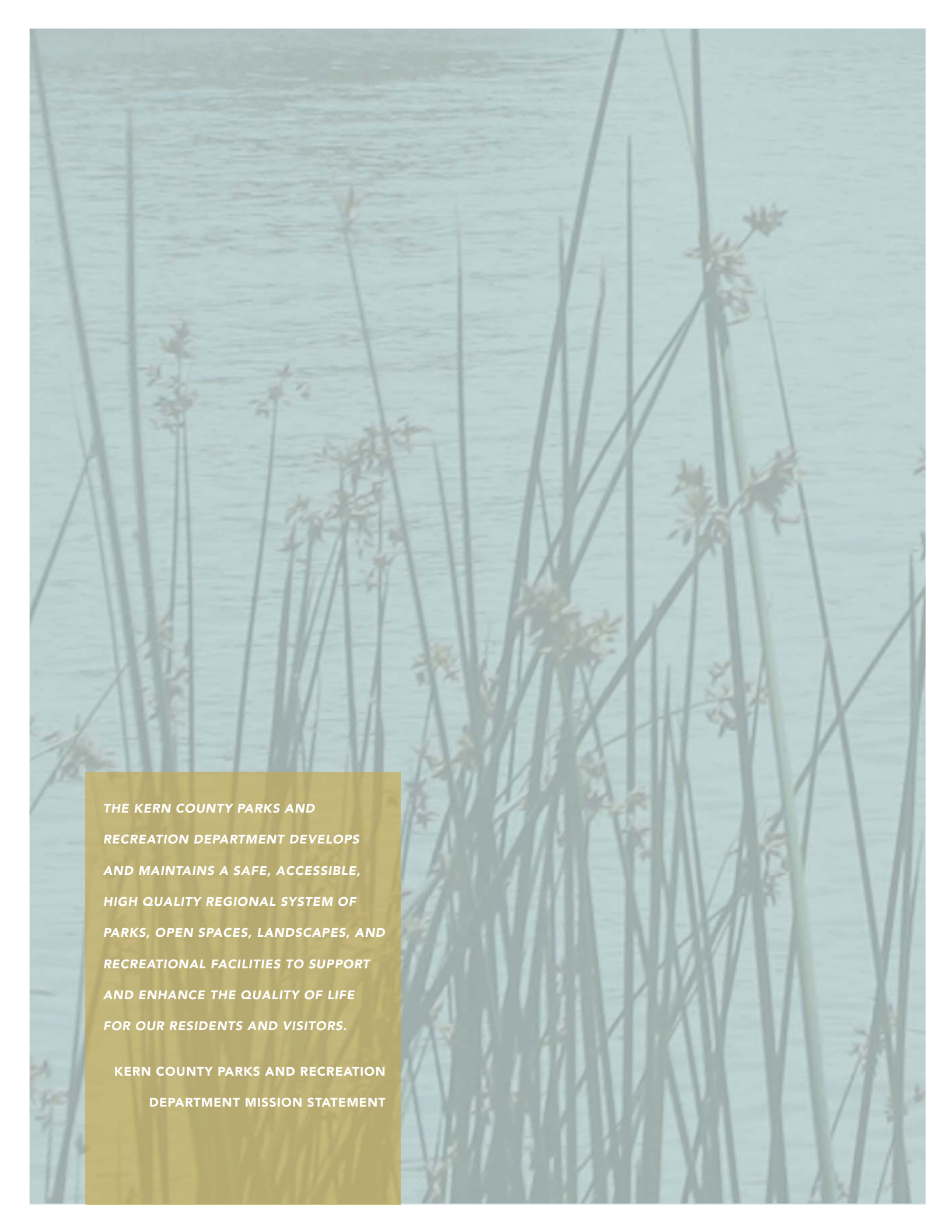


CHAPTER FIVE



5

# policies, goals and actions



*THE KERN COUNTY PARKS AND  
RECREATION DEPARTMENT DEVELOPS  
AND MAINTAINS A SAFE, ACCESSIBLE,  
HIGH QUALITY REGIONAL SYSTEM OF  
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, LANDSCAPES, AND  
RECREATIONAL FACILITIES TO SUPPORT  
AND ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE  
FOR OUR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.*

**KERN COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION  
DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT**

# policies, goals and actions

THIS CHAPTER OUTLINES POLICIES and goals that together create a management framework for the enhancement of the Kern County parks and recreation system. It also describes the recommended actions for carrying out these policies and achieving these goals. These policies, goals and actions are based on the community needs assessment and the level of service analyses for parks, facilities, programs, and maintenance. Recommended actions are organized and categorized in terms of two overarching policy statements and a set of 12 goals.

Where a recommended action helps to accomplish more than one policy or goal, it has been repeated to emphasize the interactive, and multiple outcomes it helps to achieve. Some of these goals and actions reflect current policies and practices of the Kern County Parks and Recreation Department, as well as findings identified through the community needs assessment

process. These have been included not only to provide a complete set of goals and recommended actions, but also to emphasize their continuing importance.

## 5.1 POLICY I - GOALS AND ACTIONS

**POLICY I** – Develop and maintain a countywide system of regional parks, natural open spaces and recreational facilities which together provide opportunities for both active and passive recreation, serving the wide ranging recreational





*Top: Typical picnic shelter at Buena Vista Aquatic Recreation Area*

*Middle: Typical slide in need of replacement*

*Bottom: Frazier Park ballfield*



and social needs of the diverse, varied communities of Kern County.

**GOAL 1 - Rehabilitate, renovate and modernize existing parks and recreational facilities in the Kern County park system.**

- a. Ensure all current County parks provide an adequate range and supply of active recreation facilities before undertaking the development of new County parks.
- b. Develop a long range replacement plan, with schedule, for parks and facilities.
- c. Renovate and replace all restrooms not consistent with park standards
- d. Remove and replace all play equipment and other recreational facilities not consistent with park standards
- e. Repurpose various existing recreational facilities to better meet existing and future community recreational needs and to develop revenue generating capacity.
- f. Maximize operational efficiency to provide the greatest public benefit for the resources expended when

park improvements are made

- g. Conduct maintenance consistent with the established standards and level of service requirements
  - Ensure all current and new County parks meet park maintenance standards.
  - Implement and fund maintenance frequency protocols that maximize the life of park and recreation assets
  - Invest in preventative maintenance and upgrades for parks and facilities to maximize long-term benefits

**GOAL 2 - Provide a minimum standard of 5 acres of park land per 1,000 residents. This standard would apply to regional parks serving the entire County, as well as local parks in unincorporated areas of the County not served by a local park district.**

- a. Develop new parks in underserved areas of Kern County consistent with park standards.
- b. Provide geographically accessible regional parks in strategic locations throughout Kern County.
- c. Strategically consider opportuni-

ties to land-bank sites for local and regional parks in priority locations that meet the needs of under served population clusters in unincorporated areas of Kern County.

- d. Provide park design and maintenance standards for developers to encourage provision of turn-key parks in lieu of fees.
- e. Work closely with developers to identify park and trail needs, required acreage and facility standards
- f. Co-locate parks and recreation facilities with schools, libraries, and other public facilities where possible to effectively and efficiently provide service.
- g. Utilize park design techniques to ensure the compatibility of all nearby uses and facilities in all new and renovated existing parks.

**GOAL 3 - Provide access to various types of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities with the capacity to support increased recreation programming and provide year-round recreation opportunities for all County residents**

- a. Develop multi-use sports complexes in strategic locations throughout the County that can support softball, soccer and other team sports.
- b. Develop multi-service community centers in strategic locations throughout Kern County to serve as focal points for the delivery of recreation programs and community services, including services to youth and seniors.



*Above: One of many campgrounds at Buena Vista Aquatic Recreation Area*

- c. Co-locate community centers and libraries, or other public infrastructure, wherever possible.
- d. Add water features such as splash play areas to encourage gathering and daytime use, especially during hot weather months
- e. Maintain open play areas in County parks that can be used for informal sports and team play; allow the use of these areas without prior reservation.
- f. Create partnerships for facility development, programming and operations.
- g. Provide unique, innovative, state-of-the-art, signature facilities to draw users from throughout the region and establish an identity/brand for Kern County Parks.
  - *Prioritize new facility development, based on criteria such*

**POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

**POLICY I** - Provide a quality park and open space system that supports opportunities for active and passive recreation to meet the wide ranging recreational and social needs of the diverse, varied communities of Kern County

**POLICY II** - Maximize resources and expand opportunities for the County-wide parks and recreation system by reforming the financial support structure for the park system, enhancing organizational capabilities, and pro-actively engaging other organizations and the community at large through partnerships and other cooperative arrangements.

## TWELVE GOALS

**GOAL 1** - Rehabilitate, renovate and modernize existing parks and recreational facilities in the Kern County park system.

**GOAL 2** - Provide a minimum standard of 5 acres of park land per 1,000 residents. This standard would apply to regional parks serving the entire County, as well as local parks in unincorporated areas of the County not served by a local park district.

**GOAL 3** - Provide access to various types of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities with the capacity to support increased recreation programming and provide year-round recreation opportunities for all County residents

**GOAL 4** - Expand trail connections and pathways throughout Kern County

**GOAL 5** - Ensure that all Kern County parks and recreation facilities maintain a high level of safety and security for visitors and employees.

**GOAL 6** - Incorporate natural areas and unique ecological and archeological features into the park and open space system to protect threatened species, conserve significant natural and cultural resources and retain critical habitat areas that are unique to Kern County.

*as a facility's regional draw, revenue-generating capacity, innovation or uniqueness of services, and ability to increase programming options within identified core program areas.*

- *Determine the feasibility of jointly funded and managed specialized facilities.*
- *Encourage private development and operation of new facility types, such as extreme sports centers, water recreation facilities, etc.*

### **GOAL 4 - Expand trail connections and pathways throughout Kern County**

- a. Develop a Kern County Trails Master Plan to guide the development of a regional system of off-street trails and corridors that link parks, open spaces, significant environmental features, public facilities and areas of interest.
  - *Enhance the existing trail network to develop an off-road multi-purpose trail system connecting all major parks and open space areas to schools, public facilities and key destinations.*
  - *Link the Kern County trail system with other local and regional trail systems, neighboring counties, and nearby jurisdictions.*
  - *Draw upon and incorporate existing trails plans, including those in the Kern County General Plan such as the Kern River*
- b. Provide diverse trail opportunities, including both hard and soft-surfaced trails, looped trail systems, and trails with a variety of lengths and access points.
- c. Provide trails especially suited for non-motorized uses, including walking/hiking, biking and equestrian use.
- d. Provide adequate facilities and trail support services including interpretive and directional signage, seating, drinking fountains, restrooms, parking and other loading areas, viewpoints and overlooks.
- e. Coordinate with other park agencies, cities, local communities, trail organizations and providers to support trail development in Kern County.

*Plan Element and Kern River Trails Specific Plan.*

- *Ensure a comprehensive planning process by seeking the active participation of all local cities, park districts, as well as state and federal agencies; including the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management; in the development of the Trails Master Plan.*
- *Work with other County jurisdictions/organizations to develop a Regional Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV) Park to serve both Kern County residents and visitors in a strategic location that will protect environmentally sensitive areas from OHV activities.*

*Plan Element and Kern River Trails Specific Plan.*

- f. Increase public awareness of the trail system by providing trail maps and other related information.
  - g. Work closely with developers to identify park and trail needs, required acreage and facility standards
  - h. Provide guidelines and standards for developers to encourage the development of internal pathways and trails within developments and identify, where possible, opportunities to connect with established trails and pathways.
  - i. Involve community members and representatives from pedestrian, bicycling and equestrian organizations in trail planning activities.
- *Protect renovated and refurbished parks by installing new park amenities and recreation facilities resistant to graffiti and other forms of vandalism*
  - *Work with the Kern County Sheriff's Office and Kern County Park Rangers to review and refine park and landscaping designs to deter crime through environmental design*
  - *Implement a graffiti removal program*
- b. Add lighting to parks and trails to increase safety and extend evening hours of park usage
  - c. Develop or designate perimeter trails with mileage markers around parks to encourage regular use by the community
  - d. Install surveillance cameras to support user safety and law enforcement goals
  - e. Ensure there are a sufficient number of Park Rangers and Security Officers and other Park staff trained in safety and security procedures to maintain a safe and secure park environment for the public.

**GOAL 5 - Ensure that all Kern County parks and recreation facilities maintain a high level of safety and security for visitors and employees.**

- a. Consider innovative programs and the use of park design to increase park safety, security and visibility.
  - *Design and develop all park improvements and new parks with security concerns in mind.*



**TWELVE GOALS**

**GOAL 7** - Achieve sustainable long-term financial viability for the Kern County park system to satisfy operational needs, capital requirements and desired recreation services.

**GOAL 8** - Re-define the organizational structure of the Kern County park system to improve coordination with other park agencies, park and recreation districts and private providers to ensure that the parks and recreation needs of all Kern County residents are being met.

**GOAL 9** - Continue to support the development and delivery of recreation programs and services provided by other park agencies, non-profit groups, and community organizations in Kern County.

**GOAL 10** - Engage Kern County residents in the planning, stewardship, and programming of park and recreation resources, and provide effective community outreach and marketing to increase public awareness and support of recreation services.

**GOAL 11** - Design and manage County parks and recreation facilities to support families, provide youth with healthy and safe recreational activities, and to encourage community-building.

**GOAL 12** - Develop, train, and support a professional parks department staff who effectively serve the community in the realization of the goals and objectives of this Plan.

DEVELOP AN ADOPT A  
PARK PROGRAM AND OTHER  
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT  
EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE  
COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO TAKE  
OWNERSHIP OF THEIR PARKS...

- *Ensure Park Rangers, Security Officers and other Park staff are a visible presence in every County regional park throughout the day, on weekends and evenings.*
  - *Enforce all park rules and regulations, including bans on alcohol consumption.*
- f. Develop an Adopt a Park program and other community involvement efforts to encourage community members to take ownership of their park(s) and report safety and security incidents to Park Rangers, Security Officers and other law enforcement officers.
- *Involve local residents, including young people, in the design of new and improved parks so as to provide recreation facilities requested by the community which will be respected by the majority of park users.*

**threatened species, conserve significant natural and cultural resources and retain critical habitat areas that are unique to Kern County.**

- a. Conserve or partner to protect significant environmental and archeological features that reflect Kern County’s natural and cultural heritage.
- b. Increase open space areas and greenway corridors to provide alternatives to the built environment and buffers between communities.
- c. Identify and conserve wildlife habitat including wildlife corridors, nesting sites and foraging areas within natural areas and open spaces.
- d. Ensure that the trail systems support natural area conservation and responds to environmental conditions and conservation priorities while providing public access where feasible.
- e. Incorporate interpretative signage and viewpoints of local natural and cultural resources throughout the park system.

**GOAL 6 - Incorporate natural areas and unique ecological and archeological features into the park and open space system to protect**

*Boaters on Lake Evans with island in background*



- f. Develop a natural area management strategy to ensure that resources are maintained and conserved. The management strategy should address issues such as invasive weed removal, restoration projects, limited access areas, etc.
- g. Coordinate with agencies County-wide to conserve and provide public access to environmentally sensitive areas and sites that are especially unique to Kern County.
- h. Integrate park and open space management plans with watershed planning and other resource management programs in Kern County.
  - *Use natural areas within Kern County parks for multiple purposes including managing stormwater and protecting habitat.*
- i. Support non-profit and agency partners in efforts to acquire conservation and open space areas.
  - *Proactively work with partner agencies and conservation organizations to secure funding from grants and other sources to acquire and preserve quality natural and cultural resource areas.*

## 5.2 POLICY II GOALS AND ACTIONS

**POLICY II** - Maximize resources and expand opportunities for the County-wide parks and recreation system by reforming the financial support structure for the park system, enhancing organizational capabilities, and proac-



tively engaging other organizations and the community at large through partnerships and other cooperative arrangements.

### **GOAL 7 - Achieve sustainable long-term financial viability for the Kern County park system to satisfy operational needs, capital requirements and desired recreation services.**

- a. Use effective and innovative funding methods to build, maintain, operate, and promote the parks and recreation system.
- b. Identify and develop a dedicated funding source(s) for the County park system.
- c. Maintain diverse funding for the acquisition and development of park land, recreation facilities, and

SERVE AS A REGIONAL RECREATION COORDINATOR, FORGING PARTNERSHIPS AND FOSTERING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COUNTYWIDE COLLABORATION AMONG ALL MAJOR RECREATION PROVIDERS IN THE PROVISION OF PARKS, FACILITIES, PROGRAMS, AND SERVICES.

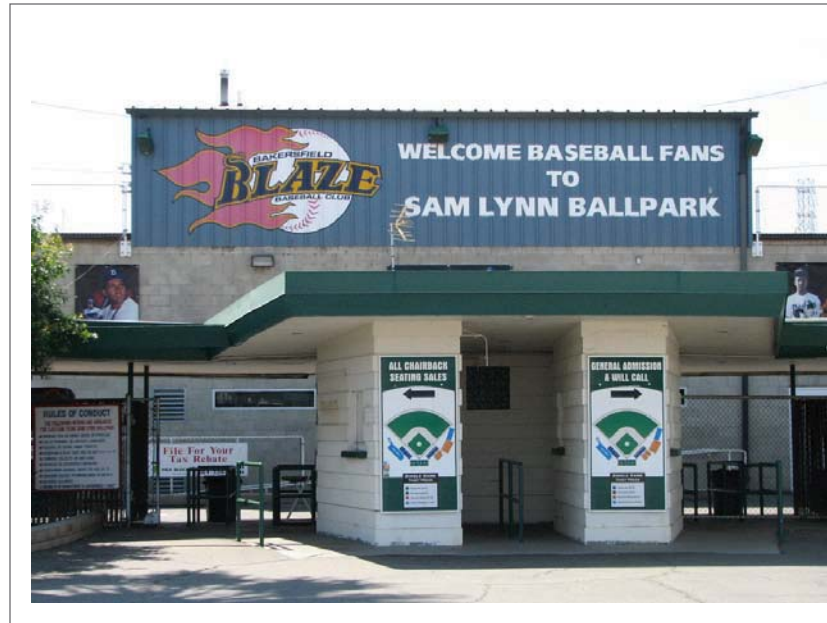
- trails to meet community recreation needs.
- d. Actively seek innovative funding methods to retain financial flexibility, match user benefits and interests, and increase facility services.
- e. Seek additional revenue generating activities, grant programs and other fund raising activities.
- f. Consider the use of park impact fees and if implemented periodically evaluate those fees to ensure that rates are sufficient to meet increased recreation needs caused by development
- g. Evaluate fees received from the rental of the County's parks and recreational facilities, including community/recreation buildings, so as to minimally cover the cost of operating and managing those facilities.
- h. Explore partnerships with other public and private agencies including cities, special park districts, school districts, state, federal, other public and private agencies, and for-profit concessionaires where feasible and desirable.
- i. Provide sufficient operations funding to support County residents' desired level of service.
- j. Encourage entrepreneurial activities that provide appropriate park and recreation services and facilities that can generate revenue.
- k. Explore alternate service provision models that may enhance efficient and effective operations.

**GOAL 8 –Re-define the organizational structure of the Kern County park system to improve coordination with other park agencies, park and recreation districts and private providers to ensure that the parks and recreation needs of all Kern County residents are being met.**

- a. Develop a new organizational structure that will emphasize the primary role and responsibility of Kern County as the provider of regional parks and recreation facilities.
  - Establish a countywide independent park district as a regional park authority.
  - Serve as a regional recreation coordinator, forging partnerships and fostering opportunities for countywide collaboration among all major recreation providers in the provision of parks, facilities, programs, and services.
  - Create a comprehensive, balanced park and recreational system that integrates Kern County Parks Department parks and facilities with resources available from the other jurisdictions, organizations, and public and private agencies to meet the goals set forth in this plan.
  - Cooperate with the cities, school districts, and other public and private agencies to avoid duplication, improve facility quality and availability, reduce costs, and represent local resident interests through

*joint planning and development efforts.*

- Provide technical assistance or facilitate in the formation of local park and recreation service areas or park and recreation service districts where needed to ensure all County residents have access to local parks and recreational services.
- b. Transfer community and neighborhood parks, and neighborhood-oriented community/recreation buildings, currently managed and operated by Kern County to local control when feasible.
- Local cities and park and recreation districts should assume management and control of County-owned community and neighborhood parks located within their jurisdictions.
  - New park and recreation districts or other local park entities established in unincorporated areas of the County should have the capability to assume management and control of County-owned community and neighborhood parks and recreation facilities located within their newly formed jurisdictions.
- c. Cooperate with other public and private agencies, as well as with private landowners, to conserve land and resources necessary to provide high quality, convenient park and recreation facilities before the most suitable sites are lost to development.



- d. Continue to serve as a provider of recreation facilities to support programming and recreation opportunities provided by public and private groups in the community.
- e. Provide guidance to newly formed park service areas or park and recreation service districts in the development of parks, facilities, programs, and funding strategies, including grant writing and the formalization of partnership agreements.
- f. Where appropriate and economically feasible, assist local park districts in the conservation, development and operation of parks and recreational facilities of interest to the regional population.
- g. Where appropriate, initiate or participate in the joint planning and provision of programs with other



WORK WITH OTHER LOCAL PARK AGENCIES AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS TO DEVELOP A PROGRAMMING STRATEGY FOR PROVIDING SERVICES TO UNDERSERVED RESIDENTS IN UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF THE COUNTY.

public and private agencies to meet County recreation needs.

- h. Cooperate with school districts to expand the scope of parks and recreation services available to residents.
  - Conduct a comprehensive inventory of school recreation areas that could be made available for public use through joint use agreements.
  - Partner with local school districts to provide increased public access to fields and courts for formal and informal play.
  - Develop new sports and playing fields in cooperation with school districts.
  - Establish joint use agreements with school districts and other agencies that identify roles and responsibilities and provide standards for operations and maintenance, scheduling and capital improvements.

**GOAL 9 – Continue to support the development and delivery of recreation programs and services provided by other park agencies, non-profit groups, and community organizations in Kern County.**

- a. Continue to support countywide sports, recreation programs, and special events through the provision of recreation and community facilities.
  - Kern County is not a direct provider of recreation programs and services but provides facilities and other as-

sistance that supports the delivery of recreation programs by other park and community organizations.

- b. Work with nonprofit organizations and other providers to meet recreation program needs at desired locations throughout the County.
  - Work with other local park agencies and non-profit organizations to develop a programming strategy for providing services to underserved residents in unincorporated areas of the County.
- c. Seek community input on recreation program preferences and interests.
- d. Provide fun and safe gathering places in County parks and recreation facilities for teens.
  - Allocate spaces that are dedicated to teen recreation and uses.
  - Develop employment opportunities for teens at facilities that serve youth.

**GOAL 10 - Engage Kern County residents in the planning, stewardship, and programming of park and recreation resources, and provide effective community outreach and marketing to increase public awareness and support of recreation services.**

- a. Increase name recognition and establish an identity/brand for Kern County Parks and Recreation Department.
- b. Promote Kern County as a recre-

ation destination, using a variety of public relations and marketing techniques.

- c. Enhance customer service by making information and registration more accessible to the community.
- d. Target frequent park users and special interest groups through a multi-media campaign in order to raise awareness of parks and recreation opportunities throughout the County.
- e. Consider partnership opportunities for advertising parks, programs, and services County-wide to promote Kern County to a wider group of potential park and facility visitors.
- f. Promote volunteerism to enhance community ownership and stewardship of parks, recreation programs, and services. In particular, encourage citizen involvement and participation in maintaining, improving, and restoring parks and natural areas.
  - *Expand opportunities for volunteers to participate in activities that support Kern County's parks and recreation facilities.*
  - *Identify opportunities for volunteers to support Parks Department activities.*
  - *Develop a recruitment and retention program for volunteers*
  - *Provide training and supervision to volunteers.*
  - *Assist in the formation of a non-profit organization (Friends of Kern County Parks) to help coordinate and support*



*volunteer and fundraising activities on behalf of parks and recreation programs throughout Kern County at both the regional and local level.*

*One of many peacocks inhabiting Hart Memorial Park*

- g. Provide opportunities for public input in park planning and design decisions.
- h. Balance the perspectives of nearby neighbors with community preferences, regional needs, staff knowledge, and County regulations to create effective plans and designs for parks, facilities, and programs.
- i. Periodically review local park and recreation preferences, needs, and trends
- j. Develop new and updated standards for signage, graphics, and other materials that are used to identify and promote parks and recreation programs.

Batting cages at Metro Park



- k. Conduct periodic needs assessments, community surveys, public opinion polls, and research through other methods to determine community needs for parks and recreation facilities.
  - Provide opportunities for residents to provide input on proposed parks and facilities, amenities and improvements.
- l. Provide information at each park that will help users meet their fitness goals, such as mileage markers and/or how many laps around a perimeter trail equal a mile.
- m. Work with local businesses and partner organizations to host regular community events and activities.
  - Provide facilities for outdoor concerts, community festivals and other public gatherings.

**GOAL 11 – Design and manage County parks and recreation facilities to support families, provide youth with healthy and safe recreational activities, and to encourage community-building.**

- a. Improve existing parks and develop new parks to serve as central gathering places for the communities in which they are located.
  - Provide amenities such as benches, picnic areas, and other features that encourage community gathering and extended park usage.
  - Install benches facing tot lots and playgrounds to provide a space for supervised play and inter-generational recreation.
  - Maintain open play areas for informal use without prior reservation.

- b. Provide tools to help community organizations host their own events in County parks and recreation facilities.
  - Develop a community guide that includes information on topics such as reserving park facilities, securing permits, safety, insurance requirements, publicity opportunities and other related topics.
  - Support residents from ethnic communities in organizing events that celebrate and share the different cultures of Kern County.
- c. Encourage the integration of parks and trails into overall community design, planning and development decisions.
  - Develop trails and pathways that connect parks to schools and neighborhoods so youth can safely travel to and from recreation activities by walking, bicycling, skateboarding, etc.

**GOAL 12 - Develop, train, and support a professional parks department staff who effectively serves the community in the realization of the goals and objectives of this Plan.**

- a. Ensure Kern County Parks Department staff has the resources, tools and training needed to effectively perform their jobs.
- b. Employ a diverse, well trained work force that is motivated to achieve

Department and County-wide goals.

- c. Encourage teamwork through communications, creativity, positive image, risk taking, sharing of resources, and cooperation toward common goals.
- d. Foster staff development and training by encouraging participation in professional organizations, educational classes, and training seminars.
- e. Provide mentorship opportunities and emphasize ongoing performance evaluations for all staff members to improve staff performance.
- f. Target new hiring and skill development to meet identified needs for specialized and technical services.

### 5.3 PARK STANDARDS

A well-rounded county-wide park system is composed of different types or classification of parks, each serving a different function and providing a distinct type of recreational opportunity for the service area. Currently, the Kern County Parks and Recreation Department manages a countywide system of both small parks serving local communities and large regional parks that serve the entire County population. These County local and regional parks are located not only in unincorporated areas of the County, but also in incorporated cities and



*Cows graze throughout the rural hills and mountains of Kern County.*

within recreation park districts. The park classification system described earlier in Chapter III, reflects the need to serve these divergent circumstances, consists of five park types divided into two broad categories: local facilities and regional facilities.

#### Local Facilities

- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks

#### Regional Facilities

- Regional Parks
- Regional Recreation Areas
- Special Use Facilities

### 5.4 PARK STANDARDS AND LEVEL OF SERVICE

The level of service (LOS) is a ratio of park land to the population expressed in terms of acres per 1,000 residents

**TABLE 5-1 RECOMMENDED PARK STANDARDS**

COMPONENT	USE	SERVICE AREA	DESIR- ABLE SIZE	ACRES/1,000 PEOPLE	DESIRABLE SITE CHARACTERISTICS
Neighborhood Parks	Areas for informal, active and pas- sive recreational activities such as fields and courts, playground equip- ment, paths and picnic areas, May include amenities such as restrooms and drinking fountains.	One-mile radius of residential areas zoned single-fam- ily residential and higher	6-10 acres	5	Located to maximize service area for surround- ing neighborhood. May be jointly developed with school districts.
Community Parks	Areas for active and organized recreational activities such as sports fields and courts, fixed recreational equipment, recreation facilities, walking paths or trails, swimming pools, water features and areas for picnicking and socializing.	Two-mile radius of residential areas zoned single-fam- ily residential and higher	10 acres or more	5	May be jointly developed with school districts. Where a community park also serves as the neighborhood par for the service area, amenities provided in neighbor- hood parks, such as playground equipment, will be provided
Regional Parks	Areas of natural or aesthetic quality for outdoor recreation such as pic- nicking, boating, fishing, swimming, camping, and trail uses. May include areas to conserve or support signifi- cant environmental features. Devel- opment is primarily the responsibil- ity of County park departments, and not local park agencies.	Countywide	200 acres or more	5	Variable as each is de- signed to provide access to unique or significant ecological, cultural or his- torical features or unique recreational facilities that attract visitors from throughout the County and beyond.
Regional Recre- ation Areas	A more complex, geographically sprawling area encompassing a wide range and variety of natural and recreational resources, some- times jointly managed and operated by several public agencies and private operators.	Countywide	1000 acres or more	Variable	
Special Use Facilities	Areas for specialized or single-pur- pose activities such as soccer, soft- ball, and other sports, or innovative state of the art multiuse recreational complexes. May include facilities to support spectator viewing and tournament play.	Countywide	Variable	Variable	May be jointly developed with other agencies and organizations. Potential revenue generating source.

The County's General Plan currently sets the park acreage standard at 2.5 acres per 1,000 residents. This standard encompasses both local and regional facilities. The Bakersfield Metropolitan General Plan states that "local parks are to be established at a minimum rate of 2.5 usable acres per 1,000 population, with "usable" defined as essentially flat land suitable for facilities and activity areas.<sup>1</sup> It also states as a goal, that Kern County and other park agencies in the planning area "provide four acres of park and recreation space for each 1,000 persons (based on the most recent census) for general regional recreation opportunity as a minimum standard."<sup>2,3</sup>

To ensure that an adequate amount of recreation facilities are available for all County residents in the future, an overall level of service standard of 5.0 acres per 1,000 residents is now recommended. This higher standard is needed to compensate for the current and growing deficiency in local park acreage.

<sup>1</sup>Bakersfield Metropolitan General Plan: Park Element, page XI-2.

<sup>2</sup>Bakersfield Metropolitan General Plan: Park Park Element, page XI-4

<sup>3</sup>Park and recreational space is defined as mini-parks, neighborhood parks, community park and regional parks.

The existing 2.5 acres per 1,000 standard has been in place since at least 1990 and remains unchanged despite the gradual transformation of people and places that have occurred in Kern County since that time. Given park deficiencies that have only grown during this period, it is a standard that has proven to be an inadequate tool for helping the County park system keep pace with these changes. Among the developments that have been reshaping Kern County, the size of the population has increased, which includes many young families new to Kern County that have higher expectations for the provision of park and recreation services. This increased demand for more parks and recreation services was repeatedly voiced in the community workshops, focus groups and outreach tools used to inform the development of this Plan. In addition, this demand for more parks and other open space will only increase in coming years as greater emphasis is placed on the development of denser more compact residential developments. Where families have fewer and smaller private yards, there will be a growing need for access to more public spaces, including parks, trails

<b>TABLE 5-2 – CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE/ COUNTYWIDE</b>		
<b>PARK TYPE</b>	<b>PARK INVENTORY IN ACRES</b>	<b>CURRENT LOS RATIO (ACRES PER 1000 RESIDENTS)</b>
<b>Area/Population Served – Countywide/779,100 residents</b>		
All County Parks	4,702	6.04
Regional Parks	4282	5.50
Local County Parks	420	0.54
<b>Area/Population Served - Unincorporated County areas not part of an independent park district/176,196 residents*</b>		
Local County Parks outside park districts and cities	293	1.66
<i>*Derived from population estimates provided by KernCOG Traffic Model; see footnote #1</i>		

and other open areas. Although 2.5 acres per thousand might have been a sufficient standard between 1950 and 1970, an era of large lot, single family homes, it will prove woefully inadequate as smaller, more compact multi-family developments increasingly become the norm.

In the 1980s and 90s, a commonly accepted standard in most communities was 10 acres of parks per 1,000 persons. This was viewed as a minimum standard as established by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). Since that time the NRPA has shifted away from specifying a specific ratio, placing greater emphasis on community self-direction based on what residents have determined

for themselves is a sufficient number of acres for park lands. Unfortunately the 2.5 acres per 1,000 standard acts as a ceiling on new park development as it obscures the full extent to which there is a gap between what parklands are available and what the community really needs. In recognition of this problem, the City of Madera recently increased their park standard to 5 acres per 1,000. Other local park districts in Kern County recognize the insufficiency of the present standard, but are constrained in their capacity to increase their LOS standard as long as Kern County, the single most dominant provider of parks, remains wedded to the 2.5 acres per 1,000 standard.

The current, actual LOS in Kern County varies depending on park type and geographic context. By some measures, the County appears to be meeting its current and recommended standards, and in others cases it is not. For instance, given a 2008 estimated countywide population of 779,100<sup>4</sup> residents and a total

<sup>4</sup> Kern COG Traffic Model is the population data source used for calculating level of service, rather than the 2009 population estimates provided by the California Dept. of Finance, that were referenced in Chapter 1. The Kern COG data was more applicable as it is organized by traffic analysis zones which provide a comprehensive picture of population distribution patterns throughout Kern County not only incorporated communities, but also in unincorporated one which were the focus of this analysis.

park inventory of 4,702.25 acres, the Kern County Parks and Recreation Department provides over 6 acres of parkland per 1,000 County residents. This is largely due to the inventory of regional park acreage, constituting over 90% of all County parkland acreage. By itself, the LOS for regional parks is currently 5.50 acres per thousand residents, which already exceeds the recommended LOS.

In contrast, Kern County does not appear to be meeting the recommended LOS for local parks. As the total acreage for local parks (both neighborhood and community parks) is only 420.25 acres, the level of service for local parks on a countywide basis is only 0.54 acres per thousand residents. By itself, however, this initial LOS figure is misleading. First, it does not take into account the numerous neighborhood and community parks also being provided by local park agencies and special recreation and park districts that operate throughout Kern County. If this were done, then the actual LOS for local parks would be significantly higher, even on a countywide basis. Second, the more relevant LOS for neighborhood and community parks is determined in relation to the specific, local popu-

lation these parks are intended to serve, which is not countywide. Third, it is recommended that the Parks Department transfer ownership and responsibility for local parks currently located within cities and independent park districts to these other jurisdictions. If this recommendation is carried out, then it is expected that the Parks Department will be responsible for providing local park facilities only to residents living in unincorporated

**TABLE 5-3 - CURRENT L.O.S. BY COMMUNITY**

AREA 1		
Greater Lake Isabella – 17,509 residents (2009)	62 acres	3.54 acres per 1,000
Greater Ridgecrest – 13,360 residents	5 acres	.37 acres per 1,000
Greater Ridgecrest – 13,360 residents	30 acres (including Leroy Jackson)	2.25 acres per 1,000
AREA 2		
Greater Frazier Park – 9,815 residents	27 acres	2.75 acres per 1,000
Greater California City/Mojave – 9987 residents	33 acres	3.30 acres per 1,000
Greater Rosamond – 8448 residents	10 acres	1.18 acres per 1,000
AREA 3 – GREATER BAKERSFIELD		
Metro Southwest -8095 residents	0 acres	0 acres per 1,000
Metro Southeast – 38,122 residents	38 acres	1 acre per 1000
Metro Northeast – 55,832 residents	64 acres	1.15 acres per 1,000
Metro –North of the River – 1410 residents	0 acres	0 acres per 1,000
Metro Bakersfield - 95,364	102 acres	1.07 acres per 1,000
AREA 5		
Greater Wasco – 3481 residents	7 acres	2 acres per 1,000

*NOTE: Area 4- Taft/Maricopa not included as 90% of area is served by Westside Recreation and Park District, there are no local County parks located outside park district boundaries, and the population level in this unincorporated/non-park district area is very low.*



TABLE 5-4 PROPOSED PARK LEVEL OF SERVICE AND STANDARDS					
ALL OF KERN COUNTY – INCORPORATED AND UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES					
Park Type	Number of acres	Existing LOS	Proposed Standard	Additional Park Acres Needed	
				Current Population (2008) – 779,100	2030 Projected Population – 1,292,000
Regional Parks	4282	5.56	5.0	None needed	1725 additional acres
UNINCORPORATED AREAS OUTSIDE OF INDEPENDENT PARK DISTRICTS					
Park Type	Number of acres	Existing LOS	Proposed Standard	176,196 <sup>5</sup> residents (2009)	240,000 residents (2030)
Local Parks	293	1.66	5.0	588 additional acres	907 additional acres
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4575*</b>			<b>588 acres</b>	<b>2632 acres</b>

*\*This total figure does not include acreage of local parks within cities or independent park districts*

TABLE 5-5: RECOMMENDED NUMBER OF NEW LOCAL PARKS		
PARK SIZE	NUMBER OF PARKS	TOTAL PARK ACREAGE
40-acre park	8	320 acres
20-acre park	15	300 acres
10-acre park	31	290 acres
<b>Total</b>	<b>52 local parks</b>	<b>910 acres</b>

TABLE 5-6: RECOMMENDED NUMBER OF NEW REGIONAL PARKS		
PARK SIZE	NUMBER OF PARKS	TOTAL PARK ACREAGE
100 acre park	11	1100 acres
200-acre park	4	800 acres
<b>Total</b>	<b>15 Regional Parks</b>	<b>1800 acres</b>

rated areas outside independent park districts, which in 2009 is estimated to include 176,196 residents.<sup>5</sup> There are currently 293.25 acres of local parks provided by Kern County in these unincorporated areas. The balance of 127 acres of local parks is located within cities or independent park district as summarized in Table 5-7. As a result, the more meaningful current LOS for local parks, given the 293.25 acres of County local parks provided in these unincorporated areas, is 1.66 acres per thousand residents. Although still below the current General Plan standard of 2.5 acres per thousand residents for local parks and the recommended standard of 5.0 acres per thousand, this is far better than the LOS applied to the entire County population.

Still, given the tremendous geographic scale of Kern County, the current LOS of 1.66 acres for local parks can still mask highs and lows that exist in different areas of the county, as illustrated in Table 5-2. The current LOS in some unincorporated communities located outside independent park districts, such as those in the Kern River Valley /Greater Isabella (3.54 acres/1000), Greater California City/

<sup>5</sup>This amount is a subset of the overall estimated population in 2008 of 294,400 residents living in unincorporated communities of Kern County

Mojave (3.30 acres/1000) or Frazier Park (2.75 acres/1000) are significantly higher in comparison with the rest of the County. Of course, this measure does not take into account the low density character of many of these outlying communities requiring some residents to travel longer distances to reach a “local” park than those who live in more compact, urban neighborhoods. Even so this is a valuable yardstick, especially when comparing the level of service in different communities. In some unincorporated communities, located in fast growing areas in or near the Bakersfield metropolitan area, the current LOS of 1.07 acres is significantly below both the current and recommended standards. An additional 136 acres of new local parks will be required in these unincorporated communities near Bakersfield just to bring them in line with the current General Plan LOS of 2.5 acres per, 178 acres to achieve 3.0 acres per thousand residents, and 375 acres to achieve the recommended 5.0 acres per thousand residents standard.

### 5.5 IMPACT OF POPULATION GROWTH ON LEVEL OF SERVICE

Population growth in Kern County will require additional park lands to main-

tain the current LOS and much more to achieve the recommend standard of 5.0 acres per 1,000 for local parks.

779,100 residents – total population (2009)  
422,300 projected new development  
 1,201,400 in 2030

176,196 unincorporated (2009)  
 63,804 new development  
 240,000 in 2030

Although the current LOS for regional parks is very close to the recommended standard, given the projected 2030 population of 1,201,400, the County will need to add substantial park acreage to maintain its current LOS for regional parks, or 1725 acres by 2030.

Unlike the regional parks, local parks in the Kern County system must deal with both the current deficit relative to the existing population as well as the impact of anticipated population growth over the next two decades. If the population in the unincorporated areas of Kern County not served by a park district were to remain unchanged:

- an additional 147 acres would be needed to achieve the current 2.5 acres per thousand standard,
- 235 acres to achieve 3 acres per thousand standard and
- 588 acres to achieve the recommended 5 acre per thousand standard.

**TABLE 5.7**

**KERN COUNTY LOCAL PARKS LOCATED WITHIN CITY OR SPECIAL DISTRICTS - 127 ACRES**

- Blanco Little League
- College Park
- Delano Memorial Park
- Derby Acres Park
- DiGiorgio Park
- Fellows Park
- Ford City Park
- Lamont Park
- Panorama Park
- Rosamond Park
- Valley Acres

**KERN COUNTY LOCAL PARKS LOCATED IN UNINCORPORATED ISLANDS AND/OR ADJACENT TO THE CITY OF BAKERSFIELD\***

- Belle Terrace Park
- Case Loma Park
- Circle Park
- Heritage Park
- Kern Delta Park
- Rexland Acres Park
- Virginia Avenue Park
- Wilkins Park

*\*To maintain consistency with the Kern County CIP, this table does not yet reflect upcoming transfers of County parks to other jurisdictions that are currently in process or are planned for the near future.*

<p><b>779,100 residents – total population (2009)</b></p> <p><b>+</b></p> <p><b>422,300 projected new development</b></p> <p><b>=</b></p> <p><b>1,201,400 in 2030</b></p> <p><b>176,196 unincorporated (2009)</b></p> <p><b>+</b></p> <p><b>63,804 new development</b></p> <p><b>=</b></p> <p><b>240,000 in 2030</b></p>
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As the population expands in coming years, the need for local parks in these unincorporated communities will grow even further. As the population grows:

- Another 105 acres of new parks will be needed just to maintain the current LOS of 1.66 acres per 1,000 residents in unincorporated areas of the County outside of independent park districts
- To go beyond the current LOS for local parks and achieve a standard of 3.0 acres per thousand residents, then 427 acres of new local parks will be required.
- The recommended standard of 5 acres per 1,000 residents will require 907 acres of new local parks.

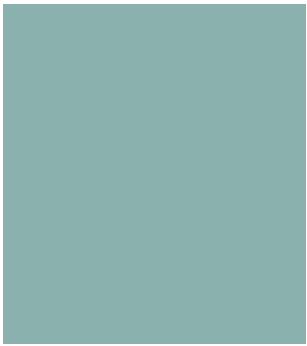
To achieve this additional amount of new park acreage a substantial number of new local parks will be required over the next 20 years. A mix of 40-acre, 20-acre and 10-acre parks would reach this goal as presented in Table 5-5.

As documented above, the County will also need additional new regional parks and/or would have to expand the size of its existing regional parks to generate the additional 1725 acres required to keep up with projected population growth. Again, the actual number of new regional parks required to achieve this goal will depend on the size of the parks. One possible scenario involves a mix of 100-acre and 200-acre parks.

Although the amount of new park acreage appears to be high, this is a consequence of there being no new County parks being built for decades during what was an extended period of growth. The expected growth in population over the next two decades will further compound the deficiency. Even if the rate of population growth is slower than anticipated due to the recent economic downturn, the bulk of the park land deficiency will remain and should still be remedied.



CHAPTER SIX



6

# implementation and capital improvement plan

The background of the page is a photograph of tall, slender reeds or grasses growing in a body of water. The reeds are in the foreground, slightly out of focus, and their long, thin stalks rise vertically. The water is a calm, light blue-grey color, reflecting the sky. The overall mood is serene and natural.

*THE KERN COUNTY PARKS AND  
RECREATION DEPARTMENT DEVELOPS  
AND MAINTAINS A SAFE, ACCESSIBLE,  
HIGH QUALITY REGIONAL SYSTEM OF  
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, LANDSCAPES, AND  
RECREATIONAL FACILITIES TO SUPPORT  
AND ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE  
FOR OUR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.*

**KERN COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION  
DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT**

# implementation and capital improvement plan

## 6.1 OBSERVATIONS

KERN IS A COUNTY RICH IN natural and human resources. Together these assets have provided the foundation for the development of an extensive County park system well-loved by residents and visitors alike, resulting in near constant use. However, the level of financial resources that has been applied to the operation and maintenance of the park system does not match this intense usage. Unable to provide the parks with the financial support they require to meet the growing recreational needs among residents, the facilities continue to degrade directly through wear and tear and benignly through the County's inability to upgrade its assets as new trends and technologies develop. So the cost to the County to remedy these deficiencies increases year by year.

Implementing a capital improvement program designed to help the County of Kern catch up on

deferred maintenance and eventually reach a level of control over its parks, facilities and resources is essential. The CIP can provide a systematic approach for the improvement of existing parks and facilities, as well as the development of new parks, that is both cost effective and efficient. Critical factors to consider when identifying and prioritizing projects to effectively address current and future recreational needs in Kern County include:

- The County's underground infrastructure is aged, and documentation or mapping of it is scarce, missing or doesn't exist.
- The size of the County makes it difficult for staff to monitor and maintain facilities at an acceptable level using current standards, technology and procedures.
- The revenue and fee structure for the Department of Parks and Recreation is outdated and doesn't provide the funding necessary to meet the basic needs to maintain its assets and equipment.



*Campsite marker in Tehachapi Mountain Park*



- The Central Valley of California and particularly Kern County have been severely affected by the current housing and economic downturn and will likely need five to ten years to recover. However, growth potential is strong for the future and the County must prepare.
- The County is steward to some of the greatest natural resources in the country including wildlife, land and water. It bears responsibility along with the Bureau of Land Management, California State Parks and the U.S. Forest Service in guarding and protecting these resources for everyone to appreciate.

A capital improvement plan is considered major and non-routine and is recognized as new construction, or improvements and upgrades to existing parks and facilities. It should be viewed as a working document that will be revised annually to reflect changes in the community, and to ensure that individual projects continue to meet County and Department goals and initiatives.

### Process

In determining the recommendations contained in this Chapter, the Master Plan Team sought input from the public through interviews of staff and stakeholders, questionnaires, telephone surveys, focus groups and public workshops. In addition, the

team conducted on the ground assessments of all County facilities. The outcome of that process is documented in the Needs Assessment chapter of this document.

Some consistent issues emerged from this process throughout the County:

- The public held its parks in high esteem.
- They wanted the County to concentrate on maintaining and improving the parks it already owned and operated rather than build new parks.
- Safety and security within the parks and for park users was of the utmost priority.
- They supported the concept of the County partnering with other entities to help meet the goals and needs of local communities.
- They saw the role of the County evolving and developing as a facilitator and conduit to unite various agencies and organizations to share the responsibilities of recreation providers.
- They looked to the County as a source of information, communication and resources to enable local communities to meet their specific needs and goals.

### Overall Recreation Needs

It was clear from the public meetings that each of the five areas visited had needs specific to that population and

geography. However, some common themes were voiced throughout all areas of the County.

- Requests for trails, trails, and more trails was heard loud and clear, whether for running, hiking, biking or equestrian
- Shortage or total lack of playing fields was a common complaint
- Lack of facilities and programs to hold the interest of youth and teens was voiced
- Shortage or absence of aquatic facilities was a major theme
- Lack of indoor facilities to house year-round multi-generational activities was voiced as a growing need.
- Lack of play equipment for 5-12-year-olds in most all the County parks. Currently, the Parks and Recreation Department is systematically removing outdated tot play equipment and in some cases replacing it with new. However, limited resources are slowing down the process of installing new play equipment for older children.

### Recurring Condition Concerns

- Years of deferred maintenance has taken its toll on parks and built facilities. The County Parks and Recreation Department is struggling to catch up on maintenance and repairs, while County resources are further stretched.
- Complaints about poor restroom condition or lack of restroom facilities were universally voiced.



*Above: Ground squirrel typical of those burrowing into turf and ball fields throughout Kern County.*

- Though most wildlife throughout the County is to be observed and admired, County assets are under constant attack by ground squirrels, gophers and rabbits within the parks. These animals burrow under open turf and ball fields often creating deep holes where people, young and old, walk, run and play. They damage wiring and irrigation lines which cost the County thousands of dollars each year to repair.
- Parking, traffic and circulation issues were of major concern to residents as well as staff. These issues played a lesser or greater role depending on the area, size and age of the facility.
- Universal access needs to be addressed throughout County facilities as improvements occur.



### Special Area Needs

The variety of recreation experiences provided in Kern County is unique: camping in mountain forests and snow play, river rafting and fishing, water sports and camping at several lakes, bike riding and hiking in the desert, and riding horses along the Kern River in Bakersfield.

The residents of each of these regions had needs specific to their climate and geography

- Parking and traffic control (Frazier Park)
- Dedicated snow play facilities (Frazier Park)
- Indoor facilities (Frazier Park & Mojave)
- Additional campsites (Bakersfield)
- Abuse of trails, habitat and roads by OHV recreation (Tehachapi & Mojave)

### Organizational Systems and Standards

It is in the interest of Kern County to embrace modern electronic organizational tools and technologies to more efficiently and effectively undertake the management of its valuable assets. With new systems in place, management and staff will have a picture of current statistics and conditions, be able to plan more effectively for fu-

ture needs and share that information with other departments and agencies.

## 6.2 RECOMMENDED CAPITAL PROJECTS - OVERVIEW

The primary recommendation for Kern County is to rehabilitate, renovate and modernize existing parks and recreation facilities, as explained in the previous chapter. This is true for both its network of regional parks and the many local, neighborhood parks it provides in unincorporated communities throughout Kern County. Improvements to regional parks, such as Hart Memorial Park and the rest of the Kern River County Park, are essential. These are the crown jewels of the park system. Also, as recommended in the previous chapter, regional parks should become the primary focus of Kern County, as control of local parks is gradually transitioned to local park agencies and independent park districts.

At the same time, it is critically important to rehabilitate local parks as these assets must be restored to a satisfactory condition before they can be considered transition worthy. In addition, local parks in unincorporated areas outside independent park districts will likely remain a County

responsibility for many years before local park organizations in these communities are present and ready to assume that role and responsibility.

### Improvements to Existing Regional Facilities

A site specific master plan for each regional park in the Kern County system is required. Each park specific plan will evaluate the overall condition of each site, including existing structures, facilities, park grounds and all other assets. The goal of each regional park specific plan will be two-fold: chart a path forward for restoring the park to its original pristine condition, while also identifying opportunities to redesign and repurpose specific areas to better meet current and future recreational needs of County residents.

Each park specific master plan will provide an opportunity to assess and possibly redesign the current layout of each park, to expand recreational opportunities, to make maintenance more efficient, and re-think the overall purpose of each regional park and its role within the larger park system. The Kern River County Park will require special attention given both its historic significance to the Kern County community and its proximity to the region's largest population center. The park specific master plan for this



*Waterwheel building in Hart Memorial Park*

major regional recreation area will need to address all six existing components, as well as undeveloped sites, that lie along the banks of the Kern River. One of these six components, Hart Memorial Park, will still require special attention, as it presents an opportunity to restore the vision of the park's original founder as an oasis and playground for the residents of Kern County.

The park specific master plans for other regional parks will need to recognize the unique value and contribution of each facility. For instance, some regional parks by virtue of their location, natural features and related offerings, draw visitors from not only all parts of Kern County but from Los

MOST OF THE 23 VETERANS, SENIORS, COMMUNITY AND RECREATION BUILDINGS OWNED AND MAINTAINED BY THE COUNTY ARE BETWEEN 40 TO 60 YEARS OLD.

Angeles and beyond. This is most true for Buena Vista Aquatic Recreation Area, Greenhorn Mountain Park, and Tehachapi Mountain Park. Upgrades to these regional recreation facilities should consider opportunities to expand camping and other recreational facilities to accommodate a larger number of visitors and generate additional revenue that can be used to enhance operational and capital funds.

Other regional parks in the County system have been equipped more to serve active and passive recreational needs of residents in their respective parts of Kern County, rather than draw visitors from more distant communities. Regional parks in this category – Lake Woollomes, Leroy Jackson Park, and Metropolitan Recreation Center/Stramler Park – have a continuing, important role to play in the overall regional park system, which can be clarified with the development of park specific master plans.

### Local Park Recommendations

In addition to these key regional projects, capital improvements recommended in this Master Plan include many projects that meet needs across a wide variety of service areas at the

local, community level. Conditions in many of these local parks have deteriorated due to years of deferred maintenance. Many of the projects required to address this problem are summarized in Table 6.3 in the final section of this chapter.

In many of the outlying communities of Kern County, the total acreage and number of local parks appear sufficient to serve the existing population. There is still a significant gap, however, in the type and quality of recreational facilities offered within these local, community-oriented parks. As a result, efforts to improve these parks should extend beyond the rehabilitation and restoration of current facilities and park grounds, but incorporate significant upgrades in the type and nature of recreational facilities made available to each community. The following is a capsule summary of the new facilities needed in these communities:

#### Kern River Valley/Lake Isabella

- Multi-Use Sports Fields/Facilities
- Community/Recreation Center (all day)
- Splash Park
- Skate Park

**Frazier Park**

- Indoor Multi-Use Community Center, including:
  - Recreation Area/Gym
  - Multi-Generational Program Center
  - Sports fields for both practice and competition
- Pedestrian Walkway/Jogging Track
- Snow Play Facility

**Mojave**

- Multi-Generational Community/Child Care Center
- Swimming Pool –Attached or Within Community Center
- Shaded Areas
- Band Stand
- Play Areas for Children

**Lost Hills**

- Outdoor Sports Fields (soccer/football)
- Skate Park
- Volleyball Courts (for practice and tournament)
- Basketball Courts

**New Local Parks**

Although improving existing regional and local parks is the first priority, Kern County will eventually have to address the need for new local parks in those parts of the County that are currently underserved. These are primarily those unincorporated areas that have experienced significant new develop-

ment over the past several years in and near the metropolitan Bakersfield area and other high growth communities. The current Kern County CIP identifies a few of these new park and recreation facility requirements:

- Metro Bakersfield: 12-acre park near Weedpatch Highway and Redbank Road
- Rosamond: 12-acre park near 100th Street West and Rosamond Boulevard
- Lebec: 12-acre Park
- Glenville: 5-acre Park
- Kernville: Community Building

Given the current population of 176,196 residents in unincorporated areas not served by a park district and a recommended LOS of 5 acres per 1,000 residents, Kern County will need 588 acres of new local park acreage just to eliminate the current deficit. This translates into approximately 29 new local parks.<sup>1</sup> As already described in the preceding chapter, given the projected population increase to 240,000 over the next 20 years in these unincorporated communities, Kern County will need to develop approximately another 23 new local parks on top of the 29 required to address the current deficit. In effect, 52 new parks will be needed in total both

<sup>1</sup>Five 40-acre parks, fifteen 20-acre parks, and nine 10-acre parks.

to eliminate the current deficit and avoid falling behind as the population grows over the next 20 years. The need for new regional parks is not urgent at this time, although there will be a need for additional regional park acreage as the county-wide population of Kern County grows over the next two decades.

To help achieve and then maintain this standard, new subdivision developments within Kern County should be required to meet these local community park needs. Development projects should construct new parks and dedicate them to the County fully developed. This method of park development is noted as “turn-key” and is in lieu of taking fees, while ensuring that parks will be completed as the subdivision is built out.

Accepting turn-key parks from a developer does not mean the County

should receive a park that is less than the desired standard for park construction. The Department should develop a formal park design standards manual to inform the development process, and staff should have final approval of all proposed plans prior to construction. The County should also have final approval during the construction process. Table 6-1 outlines design standards Kern County can utilize to develop a framework for the manual.

The Department is encouraged to work with developers in planning and building parks for turn-key development. During the planning stage, the Department should consider the services that will be required and the standard of maintenance the park will need. The developer providing the park should meet all the requirements outlined by the County including but



not limited to irrigation systems, play equipment, park amenities, and landscaping and plant materials. Upon receiving the completed park the Department is responsible for maintaining the facility; therefore the park should meet appropriate standards to ensure the sustainability of the park and enjoyment by visitors.

**Buildings and Built Facilities:**

Most of the 23 veterans, seniors, community and recreation buildings owned and maintained by the County are between 40 to 60 years old. All of them are in various degrees of use. All of them are in various degrees of condition. And all of them have one thing in common: Though roofs have been repaired or replaced and rooms and exteriors have been painted, basic infrastructure, that is, HVAC equipment, ceiling and floor materials, plumbing, electrical wiring, lighting and ADA access, has not been improved or upgraded since these buildings were first built.

The County provides staff and maintenance for these facilities which are used largely by non-profit organizations for \$25 per year. Although this amount is insufficient to recover ongoing maintenance and operational costs, the County recognizes that these buildings serve an invaluable

**TABLE 6-1: GENERAL DESIGN STANDARDS FOR TURN-KEY PARKS**

REQUIREMENT	STANDARD
Acceptance	Project approval requires that project credits, environmental review, and regulatory specifications are accepted.
Design Approval	Park design meets current needs and desires of the community; approved by County (at 35%, 75%, &100%) with staff signature block on final plans.
Play Equipment	Play equipment manufacturer provided; County approves type, style, placement, and color.
Park Amenities	Park amenity standards provided; County approves benches, tables, trash cans, drinking fountains, and shade structures.
Irrigation System	Irrigation system standards provided; County approves manufacturer, type, design, and system controls.
Plant Materials	Plant material recommended; meets County guidelines and maintenance standards
Sport & Fitness Features	Sport and fitness features clearly defined; manufacturer, features type, style
Construction	Construction inspection and approval by County; grading, installation, concrete, ADA, equipment, warranty period

role for the communities in which they are located. By providing an essential venue in which community service organizations can provide needed services, these public buildings make an immeasurable contribution to the quality of life of many County residents. Meanwhile, these facilities still continue to constitute a significant drain on County financial resources.

In an effort to resolve this dilemma, the County has in the past considered increasing or amending the use of rental fees for these buildings. Due to County Code and in some cases

**TABLE 6-2**

**DESIGN FEATURES NOT ELIGIBLE FOR PARK CREDIT**

Consider limiting or disallowing park credit for community or subdivision design features which do not provide recreational functions. (It is the policy of the City of Bakersfield to limit credit for certain design features.)

Design features not eligible to receive park credit may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Planning area edges.
- Landscaped community or subdivision entries or medians.
- Meandering streams, fountains or other water features
- Paseos, greenbelts, trails, walkways, setbacks and other similar features that are used for transportation and are not destinations in and of themselves.
- Streetscapes
- Slopes greater than 3:1
- Easements
- Sites with an average gradient of more than 5% (rough grade).
- Sites with drainage structures (box channels, swales, etc.) designed for less than a 10-year storm event.

the circumstances in which these buildings were acquired, there are constraints on the capacity of the County to implement a fee increase. Even if the County were free to raise these fees, it is unlikely to do so as some will argue that higher fees will discourage many community service organizations from using these facilities, in effect negating the very reason why these buildings exist to serve County residents.

To mitigate the financial losses being incurred, it is essential the County explore more efficient and effective ways of managing this resource, so these public buildings can continue in the future to serve the local communities in which they are located. Given geographic proximity to these buildings, local jurisdictions or other organizations may be in a better position to maintain them at a lower cost than the County. First, as several of these facilities are situated within local community parks located within cities or independent park districts, there is the potential to transfer ownership and control of these parks, including these public buildings, to these other jurisdictions. This recommendation, as it applies to these local parks, is discussed in more detail in Chapter

VII of this Plan. Second, even where a transfer of ownership is not feasible, the County should investigate who else can maintain these facilities on their behalf. If that is the case, contractual arrangements with local city park departments, park districts or other organizations should be established for that purpose.

Due to the underlying infrastructure problems inherent in most of these public buildings, however, the County will still need a long term strategy to resolve these difficulties and protect these assets for the future. Such a plan will likely include a variety of options, including acquiring the financial resources needed to rehabilitate and renovate these buildings, identifying possible alternative sites that could serve as replacement facilities, and where feasible constructing new facilities. In some instances, due to the years of neglect, the cost of new facilities may prove less than the rehabilitation of the existing structures.

Even where it is determined that a public building cannot be cost-effectively rehabilitated, a strategy for retiring the building can be implemented to address the needs of current users of that facility. An overall strategy is outlined here:

- Undertake a study to determine costs to operate and maintain each building owned, operated and maintained by the County. Include in the study the number of people served by each building and the cost per capita laid out for each user. Then determine the percentage of resources each community receives through operating that building.
- Determine an acceptable and agreed upon per capita expenditure for each resident and allocate resources throughout the County in an equitable fashion.
- Based on the number of people who use each building, determine whether in each local area another facility owned by a local organization, agency or city might be adequate to accommodate those uses. On a case by case basis, work to create a joint use agreement with the users and the local facility to transfer the use to the local building thus allowing the County to close down its facility.
- When no other facility exists to house the uses currently taking place in the County’s facility, the County should aggressively seek to negotiate the transfer of its building to the local entity. If this is not possible, the County should seek opportunities for joint use with existing facilities such as schools, libraries, fire stations, non-profit organizations, such as the Elks, Lions, Boys & Girls Clubs, etc. These joint use agreements might include
  - offering to expand existing buildings to accommodate higher usage
  - share joint development of new facilities, e.g., library, school, police and fire stations, Boys & Girls Clubs
  - donating land for new development of recreation facilities by private developers or commercial operators of recreational facilities
- Once building uses have been relocated to other facilities, the County can consider several options to retire the buildings, including: demolition, sales, donation, renovation, or other options.

**6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS BY CATEGORY**

The recommendations that follow are both broad and detailed in nature.

They cover short- and long-range goals and may be a restatement of recommendations found in other sections of this document where they may have a different context or application.

Recommendations that incur capital costs will be addressed in Chapter VIII – *funding options and recommendations*. Cost associated with normal maintenance will be given a priority according to the availability of funds to complete each project.

These recommendations have been grouped into categories that repre-

**TABLE 6.3  
REMOVE OUTDATED PLAY EQUIPMENT**

- Boron Park
- Buena Vista Aquatic Recreation Area
- College Park
- Delano Memorial Park
- Derby Acres Park
- Di Georgio Park
- Ford City Park
- Frazier Park
- Greenfield Park
- Hart Memorial Park
- Inyokern Park
- Kern River Group Picnic Area
- Kern River Park & Campground
- Lake Ming
- Lamont Park
- No. Edwards Park
- Riverside Park
- Rosamond
- Valley Acres Park



**TABLE 6.4**  
**RENOVATE OR REPLACE**  
**RESTROOM BUILDINGS**

- Belle Terrace Park
- Boron Park
- Buttonwillow Park
- Casa Loma Park
- Di Georgio Park
- Ford City Park
- Greenfield Park
- Inyokern Park
- Kern River Group Picnic Area
- Kern River Park & Campground
- Lake Wollomes
- Leroy Jackson Park
- Lost Hills Park
- Mojave East Park
- No. Edwards Park
- Sam Lynn Ballpark
- Virginia Avenue Park
- Wofford Heights

sent the broad topics voiced by the residents who participated in the various community outreach efforts conducted in the five areas of the County:

- Improve Existing Parks.
- Build New Parks and Facilities Where Needed.
- Increase, Improve and Protect Trails Throughout the County.
- Improve Safety and Security in Parks.
- Continue Stewardship of the Natural and Cultural Resources in Kern County.
- Create Financial Sustainability for Parks.
- Provide Support for Local Recreational Programs.
- Promote Public Awareness and Support.
- Encourage Building Community Partnerships.
- Provide County Staff with the Materials, Education and Technology They Need to Do Their Jobs Effectively.

**Improve Existing Parks**

- Address the list of recommendations in Table 6.3 to 6.6.
- Develop a Site Master Plan for Kern River County Park, including Hart Memorial Park, to evaluate current and future use, upgrade roads and trails, examine plantings, preserve historical elements,

control of feral cat population, current and future irrigation needs, possible repurposing and redesign of some areas of the park, drainage issues, improvement of park entrance, opportunities for revenue, and preservation of park ecosystem and wildlife.

- Develop Site Master Plans for all other regional parks in the Kern County park system.
- Install play areas and equipment for 5-12 year-olds in County parks where there is already 2-5 tot play equipment and there is sufficient space for equipment and fall zones.
- Remove all outdated play equipment that does not meet current ASTM standards and CPSC standards, and as funds become available replace with equipment that is current with recreation trends appropriate for each age group.
- Update outdated group and family picnic shelters with reservable/rentable shelters as needed.
- Evaluate all existing parks on a regular basis and identify those sites that require a new site master plan, site enhancements, renovation and/or improvements.
- Seek a solution to the feral cat situation in Hart Memorial Park. Create a public campaign designed to discourage dumping of cats and establish relocation and/or adoption of cats. Create partnerships with organizations sharing same interest.

### Build New Parks and Facilities Where Needed

- Mandate that all new residential development within the unincorporated County area include park land dedication of at least 5 acres per 1000 residents.
- Ensure that new parks be developed according to the design criteria set by the County.
- Require proposed park locations to be reviewed by County Parks and Recreation Department and the Planning Commission prior to Board of Supervisors action on acquisition, dedication or acceptance of parkland, open space and trails.
  - Identify community / subdivision design features that are ineligible for park credit.
- Mandate that all parks completed by developers be maintained by the developer for a period of one year, at which point they will turn ownership of the park to the County of Kern, pending approval by the County of the park's condition.
- Consider requiring that any land identified for possible parkland possess the following attributes:
  - Land acquisition for park purposes must be of minimum size to serve the purpose it is intended to serve, i.e. if a neighborhood needs sports fields, the park size should be large enough to accommodate the fields without sacrificing area for standard neighborhood park amenities.
  - Parcels should preferably be vacant



*Above: Kern County Soccer Park*

and undeveloped, although re-development or reconstruction opportunities should be considered as well.

- Avoid land that requires extensive hazardous material clean up. However, land that has already been cleaned up may be highly desirable for recreation and park uses.
- Increase, Improve and Protect Trails throughout the County
- Improve walkways, paths and trails in existing parks to accommodate circulation and accessibility.
- Look for opportunities to link local trails to regional trail systems.
- Give priority to developing a county-wide Trails Master Plan. The purpose of a Trails Master Plan would be to promote awareness of existing trails, set trail standards, map trails, formalize and name ex-

#### TABLE 6.5

#### CONSIDER DEVELOPMENT OF UNUSED PARK ACREAGE

- Buena Vista Aquatic Recreation Area
- College Park
- Greenhorn Mountain Park
- Kern Delta Park
- Kern River County Park
- Lake Isabella Park
- Leroy Jackson Park
- Onyx Park
- Techachapi Mountain Park
- Mojave West Park

SEEK A SOLUTION TO THE FERAL CAT SITUATION WHICH HAS DISRUPTED THE NATURAL ECOLOGY OF HART MEMORIAL PARK.

isting trails, identify connections to regional and national trail systems, establish directional, interpretive and informational signage to encourage visitors to Kern County to use its trail system, encourage developers to build new trails and promote protection of existing trails. Such a Trails Master Plan would build upon and incorporate existing trail plans, such as those derived from the Kern River Plan Element of the General Plan, as well as other existing trails and plans for new trails at the local and regional level, and even those trails that traverse Kern County at the interstate level, the Pacific Crest Trail.

**Improve Safety and Security in Parks**

- Identify parks that have ongoing security, vandalism and graffiti issues and increase patrols and ranger visibility in the area.
- Post signs that prohibit illicit behavior in the parks.

**Continue Stewardship of the Natural and Cultural Resources in Kern County.**

- Where new planting is required, look for opportunities to establish native plants and plant families that require little or no water once established.
- Undertake a County-wide review of park irrigation systems and make modifications to upgrade equipment and infrastructure for efficient water usage and to meet new

California state water requirements and regulations.

- Seek a solution to the feral cat situation which has disrupted the natural ecology of Hart Memorial Park.
- Pursue opportunities to support local organizations dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of significant archeological sites, including "rock art" (petroglyphs) and other artifacts that have been discovered in Kern County.

**Create Financial Sustainability for Parks**

- Update outdated group and family picnic shelters with reservable/rentable shelters as needed.
- Seek opportunities to build in revenue generation when renovating parks or building new facilities.
- Where new planting is required, look for opportunities to establish native plants and plant families that require little or no water once established.
- Encourage the development of private and commercial recreation facilities under leases or concession agreements where such facilities are consistent with planned development and offer expanded recreation opportunities to the public.
  - When developing recreation facilities, the design could include opportunities to generate revenue from admission, asset management, user fees and possibly parking.

- Recommend, when appropriate, fee schedules for programs and uses that cover costs, including an appropriate percentage of fees to cover overhead should be considered.
- Prior to development, seek to identify staffing requirements and operational and maintenance costs of recreation facilities to adequately plan for future budget considerations.
- Facility Needs Ratio Policies: Annually review, during the County's budget process, the recreation facility needs presented in this Master Plan in order to ensure the County is meeting the current and future recreational demands of its residents.
  - As part of the annual budget process, explore all available opportunities to meet or reduce the deficit of Recreation and Park facilities as shown in this Master Plan.
  - As new facilities come on line, update the inventory of recreation facilities presented in this Master Plan.
- Pursue implementation of an Asset Management Program allowing for the generation of supplemental revenue to offset the cost of maintaining and operating the park system.
- Provide Support for Local Recreational Programs
- Explore opportunities to lease land, provide conduit financing or develop joint use agreements

with private operators of recreation facilities such as Batting Cages, Sports Field Complexes, Dance Studios, Fitness/Health Centers, Community Theatres, and Gymsnasiums.

### Promote Public Awareness and Support

- As time and resources permit continue to conduct meaningful, highly visible, community volunteer recognition programs that allow the Board of Supervisors the opportunity to express their appreciation for citizen volunteer efforts.
- Consider attempting to capitalize on obtaining volunteers from organizations that require community service projects from members. Volunteers could be recruited from Scouts working on high honors as well as from high school students needing community service hours to graduate or go to college.
- Try to communicate with and solicit feedback regularly from the community.
- Continue the enhancement of the County website as a useful tool to promote participation in recreation and community service programs that are offered throughout local communities.
- Seek out and encourage the provision of volunteer assistance from civic organizations, special interest groups, and individuals to provide program leadership or facility development to augment recreation opportunities.

### Encourage Building Community Partnerships

- As time and resources permits, pursue review of the existing joint use agreements with school districts to improve and expand the County's ability to provide more recreation facilities for residents.
  - Approach issues with the school districts that would expand an agreement to include reciprocal no-fee use policies and possible development of recreation facilities on school properties. The facilities could be used by schools during the day and County or community programs after school and evenings. These facilities could include sport courts, lighted ball fields, gymnasiums, theatres, and swimming pools.
- Encourage County and school district staff to meet at least quarterly to discuss maintenance and operations issues. Meeting minutes should be typed up and distributed to all participants to allow for quick identification of any possible misunderstandings. The minutes should also identify issues and items requiring further follow up.
- Explore opportunities to work with local and/or State Park and Recreation agencies to develop multi-purpose fields on county regional facilities to satisfy some of the demands for sports fields
- Approach the County Library Department regarding possible joint interests expressed in the County's

Strategic Plan that could allow for development of new projects to meet the needs of both entities.

- Look for ways to continue to allow opportunities for corporations, local businesses and private donors to make tax deductible donations for major Capital Projects.
- Coordinate the location, planning, and functional uses of all recreation and park facilities with affected local governmental entities and where feasible, promote joint acquisition and/or development to assure effective coverage of all needs.
- Develop a consistent system for determining credit for private parks and recreation expenditures.
  - Follow the guidelines and standards contained in County Code for determining what credit shall be given to developers for private parks and recreation expenditures made to improve public parks within their proposed developments.

### Provide County Staff with the Materials, Education and Technology They Need to Do Their Jobs Effectively.

- Develop a Park Review Standards Manual that sets criteria for observing and recording the condition of park amenities and equipment on a stated schedule.
- Monitor and review all play equipment on a regular basis as prescribed in the Park Review Standards Manual and replace as need.

- Establish a system to monitor all park trees and schedule prudent removal, replacement and pruning or treatment as needed to insure the health of the trees.
- Undertake a County-wide review of park irrigation systems and make modifications to upgrade equipment and infrastructure for efficient water usage and to meet new California state water requirements and regulations.
- Educate maintenance staff about the specialized needs and care of native plants.
- Strongly consider the establishment of a county-wide GIS system to inventory and maintain all parks' elements: trees, furnishings, such as benches, tables, trash cans, BBQs, etc., buildings, play equipment, backstops, goals, etc. Once established, the data could be used to monitor condition, age, scheduled maintenance, use of resources, etc.

### Parks Master Plan Projects Prioritization Criteria

All projects discussed within this Master Plan assist in meeting Plan goals and recommendations. However, given the County's limited financial resources, most of these projects cannot be implemented in the immediate future. Once additional funding is obtained, however, the County will need a set of criteria to help prioritize and rank future projects. By applying



*Interesting, but outdated play equipment*

these criteria, the Kern County Parks and Recreation Department can make decisions about which projects should move forward first in alignment with the goals and priorities put forth in this Master Plan.

- **Consistent with Master Plan:** Implementation strategies must be consistent with the goals and policies outlined in the Master Plan.
- **Restores, preserves or enhances assets:** The County should strive to ensure that it protects its past investment in the park system by restoring, preserving and enhancing existing park and recreational facilities. Facility upgrades and renovations have a higher importance when compared to other developments, at least in the first five years of this Plan.
- **Expands recreation opportunities:** Projects that provide more opportunities for people to become involved in recreational opportunities, such as those that can satisfy unmet needs in developed areas of the County, should be emphasized.

- **Leverage available resources:** In order to conserve and maximize available resources, implementation strategies should provide for efficient use of public funds in a way that provides maximum benefit with limited resources. Turn-key park development and projects that have the potential to be funded through grants, donations, or partner contributions should receive higher priority than projects without other funding opportunities.
- **Provides the “biggest bang for the buck:”** Projects where the cost/benefit ratio is favorable should have a high priority. In other words, projects that are less costly but serve a broader population are desired.
- **Ensures equitable distribution:** Priority consideration should be

given to ensure that improvement projects are distributed equitably throughout all unincorporated areas where the County is the primary or sole provider of parks and recreation facilities.

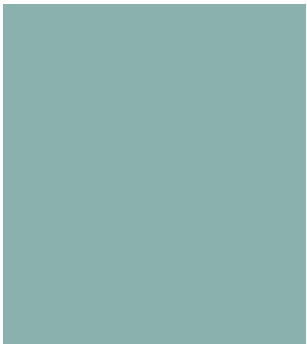
- **Encourages entrepreneurial and revenue-generating opportunities:** Projects that will enable the County to generate additional revenue either on its own or in partnership with private organizations, while expanding the scope and variety of recreational opportunities for residents, should be encouraged.
- **Improves maintenance efficiency:** Projects that improve maintenance efficiency or that will reduce life-cycle costs should be given priority.

*Guard shack at entrance to one of Kern River County Park's campgrounds*





CHAPTER SEVEN



organizational reform of county  
park system





*THE KERN COUNTY PARKS AND  
RECREATION DEPARTMENT DEVELOPS  
AND MAINTAINS A SAFE, ACCESSIBLE,  
HIGH QUALITY REGIONAL SYSTEM OF  
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, LANDSCAPES, AND  
RECREATIONAL FACILITIES TO SUPPORT  
AND ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE  
FOR OUR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.*

**KERN COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION  
DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT**

# organizational reform of county park system

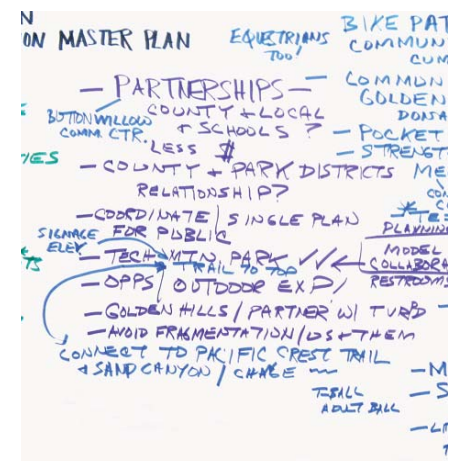
IMPLEMENTING THE MANY recommendations outlined in this Master Plan to achieve the vision of an improved countywide park system will be a major undertaking. It will be even more of a challenge to carry out this plan if the same organizational and financial tools that contributed to the problems now plaguing the park system are relied upon unchanged as the primary means for bringing about these needed park improvements.

First and foremost both local and regional parks require a specific, dedicated funding source for maintenance and operations. Second, this will require a new institutional framework for the delivery of parks and recreation services in Kern County; one that can facilitate the establishment of a sustainable revenue base, while also ensuring those services are provided efficiently and cost-effectively. The following makes the case for why such organizational changes are needed to maintain a quality park system,

and that such changes will depend on both inter-agency cooperation as well as partnerships with the local communities in which these parks are located.

## 7.1 CHANGES IN THE INSTITUTIONAL AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT FOR PARKS AND RECREATION

The Kern County Parks and Recreation Department was established in 1952 to create, manage and operate an expansive system of regional and local parks for a



Top: Portion of wall graphic from Focus Group in Tehachapi  
Below: Study groups during workshop in Lake Isabella



county in land area that is the third largest in California. The Department now manages an extensive system of seven regional parks, 41 local/neighborhood parks, a regional recreation area and 26 public buildings. The park system managed by Kern County is complemented by an equally extensive system of 48 parks managed at the local level by seven municipal park departments and nine independent park districts. Together, this countywide park system of county and locally managed parks now serves the park and recreation needs of over 809,000 residents living in the widely diverse urban and small rural communities scattered across 8,703 square miles of desert, mountain and valley landscapes.

County and the local park agencies and independent districts represents a significant priceless legacy inherited by the current generation, but one that has become increasingly difficult to sustain both operationally and fiscally. This is especially true for the County park system. Over the past several decades as public finance and organizational realities in California changed dramatically at all levels of government, the basic financial and organizational structure underpinning the Kern County park system remained largely unchanged. In the post-Proposition 13 and Education Revenue Augmentation Fund (ERAF) climate, it has been increasingly difficult for counties across California to fully control their major fiscal resources. The impact has been particularly severe for park systems that, like Kern

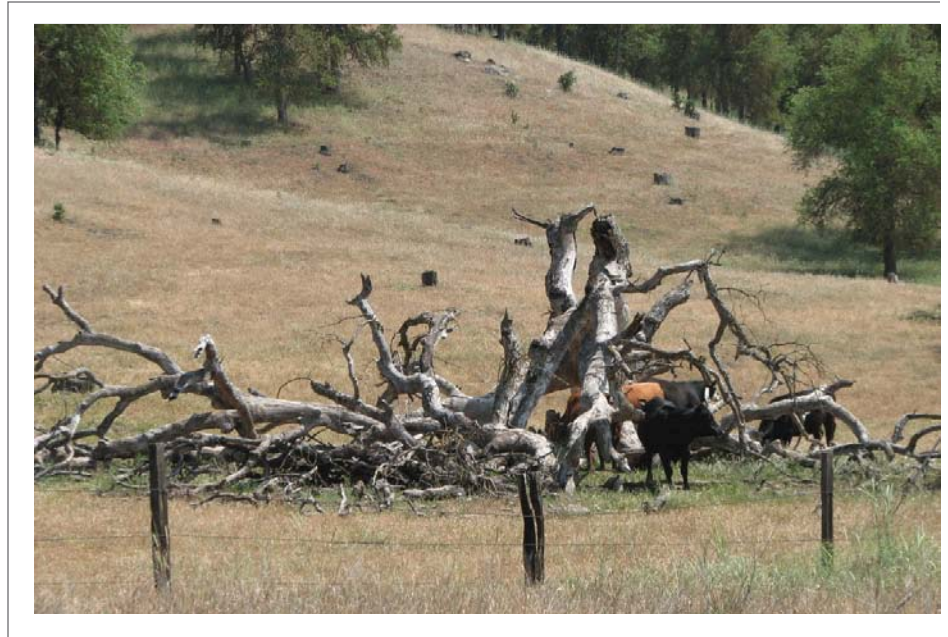
*Layers of planting at Panorama Park*



County's rely primarily on the county General Fund to support both capital and operational needs. Despite their popularity with the public, parks and recreation programs cannot compete effectively for increasingly scarce public resources when other vital county obligations in areas of public safety, health and human services are also in need.

The physical and programmatic consequences stemming from this shift in public revenue streams have worked their way gradually but relentlessly throughout the County park system.

Over time the effects of this persistent erosion have become increasingly visible to park visitors, but especially older residents who can recall what parks like Hart Memorial Park were like when they were young. One of the first casualties of this competition for increasingly scarce resources occurred when the County Parks Department was forced by the new fiscal realities to abandon its recreation programs. Over the years, despite the herculean efforts of an increasingly strained County park staff, the basic infrastructure of both its regional and local/neighborhood parks has gradually declined, as described elsewhere in this document. Moreover, no new County parks have been developed since the 1980s, even though many



new communities in need of parks have emerged in unincorporated areas of the County that have experienced significant growth, especially in the Bakersfield metropolitan area. This failure to provide new parks has occurred in spite of measures in the General Plan that were established to help finance the development of new parks by requiring, "developers of new residential subdivisions...to dedicate land and/or pay fees in lieu of dedication for the acquisition and development of recreational facilities which directly serve the needs of the subdivision<sup>1</sup>." In addition, as stated in the General Plan, it has been the policy of the County to "seek to

<sup>1</sup>Kern County General Plan – Land Use, Open Space, and Conservation Element, page 24."

*Kern County is a mixture of varying terrains, climates and needs.*

ONE OF THE FIRST CASUALTIES OF THIS COMPETITION FOR INCREASINGLY SCARCE RESOURCES OCCURRED WHEN THE COUNTY PARKS DEPARTMENT WAS FORCED BY THE NEW FISCAL REALITIES TO ABANDON ITS RECREATION PROGRAMS.

**COUNTY PARKS LOCATED IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS**

**KERN COUNTY LOCAL PARKS LOCATED WITHIN CITY OR SPECIAL DISTRICTS - 156 ACRES**

- Blanco Little League
- College Park
- Delano Memorial Park
- Derby Acres Park
- DiGiorgio Park
- Fellows Park
- Ford City Park
- Heritage Park
- Kern Delta Park
- Lamont Park
- Panorama Park
- Rosamond Park
- Valley Acres

**KERN COUNTY LOCAL PARKS LOCATED IN UNINCORPORATED ISLANDS AND/OR ADJACENT TO THE CITY OF BAKERSFIELD\***

- Belle Terrace Park
- Case Loma Park
- Circle Park
- Rexland Acres Park
- Virginia Avenue Park
- Wilkins Park

*\*To maintain consistency with the Kern County CIP, this table does not yet reflect upcoming transfers of County parks to other jurisdictions that are currently in process or are planned for the near future.*

provide recreational facilities where deficiencies have been identified,” but given limited financial resources for new park development, it has not been able to do so.

**7.2 THE NEED FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION**

During the same period, however, constraints in public finance have spawned innovative financial and organizational solutions elsewhere in California at both the county and city level. Many of these solutions are predicated on the reality that no single public or private organization is equipped by itself to fulfill its mandate, but must work in partnership with other agencies in both the public and private sectors to adequately meet its commitments. Some of these lessons may be applicable to Kern County, especially as they dovetail with observations made by many County residents during the Master Plan community outreach process.

**Community Desire for Change**

During the planning process, a clear and persistent theme of discussion among community members, Department staff, and staff from local park agencies was the need for the many agencies in Kern County to work

together to achieve key results. This desire for increased cooperation and coordination between all jurisdictions in Kern County with park and recreation responsibilities was expressed in many different ways, but was based on the shared sense that the current system of overlapping roles and responsibilities was not the best way to utilize scarce public resources.

A related parallel theme also emerged among community members, especially those residing in unincorporated parts of the county not within any independent park district. Residents in these outlying small communities expressed a desire to achieve a greater degree of control over their local parks, recognizing that the County was doing all it could and in the gap seeing both a need and an opportunity to do more. In these communities there is already a strong tradition of volunteerism and a history of informal partnerships with the County Parks and Recreation Department. These joint arrangements between local volunteer groups and the County Parks Department have successfully led to needed improvements in local parks that the community not only desired but played an active direct role in making happen.

Given these successful community “barn-raising” experiences, there is a growing sense that more could be done locally, but not knowing how to organize themselves or how to fund such local efforts.

### Adapting to Changing Conditions and New Opportunities

Taken together two themes suggests there is a strong desire to maximize resources for parks and recreation not only through greater cooperation and coordination between all park agencies at the County and local level, but also between the County Parks and Recreation Department and the local communities it serves. As a result, there is an opportunity for the County government and its Parks Department to rethink and reorganize its role in the delivery of parks and recreation services and by doing so be able to more effectively address some of the key problems it has long faced.

In this regard, it is interesting to note that the 1990 Recreation Element, which was superseded in the 2004 General Plan Update, stated the County should work with local agencies to turn over management and control of local parks and park facilities, especially where these facilities are located within the jurisdictions of

local park agencies or independent park districts. (See table on facing page for a list of local County parks located in other jurisdictions.)<sup>2</sup> It stated that this transfer of responsibility should occur “upon a park’s annexation into a special district or incorporated city.” This shift in the control of local parks from the County Parks Department to local entities, “avoids expenditures of County general fund monies for the benefit of people living within an incorporated city”. Where these transfers have taken place, it has enabled the County to more effectively focus its limited resources on regional parks and the delivery of local parks in unincorporated areas of the county that lie outside any independent park district. The current General Plan more broadly emphasizes the principle that the County should “provide recreation opportunities for all citizens while avoiding duplication between jurisdictions.”<sup>3</sup>

Avoiding this duplication between jurisdictions by shifting in control to

<sup>2</sup>“The maintenance of local parks should be transferred from the County to the cities and special districts in which they are located. Local parks should be transferred to the appropriate entity which provides recreational services upon a park’s annexation into a special district or incorporated city. The transference of such facilities avoids expenditure of County general fund monies for the benefit of people living within an incorporated city.” - 1990 Recreation Element, page.21.

<sup>3</sup>Kern County General Plan – Land Use, Open Space, and Conservation Element: Public Facilities and Services: Goal #8, page 19.

*Play equipment in DiGeorgio Park showing need for maintenance and repair*



local park agencies has only partially occurred and as a result the County remains saddled with too many local parks and park buildings it can no longer afford to adequately support. This is largely due to limitations in current institutional arrangement for delivery of park services and fiscal constraints at both the County and local level. Although the County can no longer afford to adequately maintain, much less rehabilitate, these facilities neither can the local city park departments and park districts in which these parks are located, so they have understandably been reluctant to accept these assets from the County.

### **7.3 REGIONAL PARKS AND RECREATION AUTHORITY**

To more effectively address this and a host of other related issues, it is a primary recommendation of this plan that the County in cooperation with other local park agencies pursue the creation of a new regional park and recreation authority. This new institutional framework for the delivery of park and recreation services in Kern County would create a path forward for resolving what previously had seemed to be insurmountable problems. One of the potential benefits would be the establishment of

a dedicated funding source for parks and recreation services, providing the resources needed to improve existing parks and build new ones, without having to compete for those funds from other vital County obligations.

Achieving the recommendations described in Chapters V and VI will be a major undertaking for any parks and recreation provider, but especially so in Kern County given its extensive geographic area, with so many widely different communities scattered across it, and the severe financial difficulties it now faces because of the recent economic downturn. As the jurisdiction responsible for the area as a whole, however, the County government is in a position to take on a more focused and effective role in providing park and recreation services across the county. The current organizational and financial model no longer fits contemporary realities, has not done so for some time, and needs to be reformed if the park system itself is to be successfully enhanced for the benefit of Kern County residents.

There are several ways that this entity could be created and empowered to make key improvements to the park and recreation systems

### Form

There are a variety of organizational and legal forms that this new authority could assume. For the long term, the best form to suit the needs of Kern County is the independent park district. An independent park district is a special district with its own board of directors (typically made up of five members). In some cases, board members are elected from the area served by the district, but in others enabling legislation has required that the county supervisors govern the districts ex officio. This board sets policy and provides guidance for agency staff.

Examples of other countywide independent park districts established in California with voter approval are:

- Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District
- Marin County Open Space District
- Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District
- Riverside County Regional Park and Open Space District

### Funding

A park district can secure funding for capital and operations in a variety of ways. A park district has taxation and bonding authority, subject to voter approval, and can create

benefit assessment districts, such as a landscape and lighting district. This funding mechanism permits public agency to assess housing units or land parcels for a variety of services. The assessment revenues can be used for park land acquisition, development and/or maintenance. The agency can choose to use the revenue generated on a pay-as-you-go basis or can sell bonds in order to receive a lump sum amount. The bonds are then paid back from the annual revenues generated from the assessment.

Establishment of a district requires a simple majority vote of property owners based on a weighted ballot. Once approved, the benefit assessment district would continue for as long as the services and facilities are provided, although the assessment can later be repealed or reduced by popular vote.

Examples of the funding base for other countywide independent park districts include:

- The Los Angeles County Regional and Open Space District was approved by voters in 1992 as part of Proposition A, which also authorized an annual assessment on 2.25 million parcels of real property in the County. It funded \$540 million for the acquisition, restoration or rehabilitation of parks and recreation facilities throughout the County. Another \$319 million



was approved by County voters in 1996, including funds for maintenance and servicing of facilities.

- In 1991, the Riverside County Regional Park and Open Space Department became the Riverside County Park and Open Space District. One of the primary reasons for the creation of the district was to help stabilize funding through the establishment of a benefit assessment. A property tax allocation, along with user fees and charges, provides the primary funding base for the District.
- Although Orange County Parks is now a department within Orange County government, it was originally established as a Special District receiving a dedicated property tax allocation. Even after the County dissolved the former District in 1988, Orange County Parks (then called Harbors, Beaches and Parks) retained its dedicated property tax allocation.

Park districts can also contract with agencies to provide park and recreation services. One challenge to adding dedicated park and recreation funding will be the perception of double charging for park services. Many Kern County residents, those living in cities or existing local park districts, will already be paying additional property taxes or fees for local parks within their communities. Regional funding will need to be clearly differentiated from local funding

## Responsibilities

The new regional park and recreation authority should take on all regional-scale projects within Kern County. Control of existing regional parks, including those now owned by the County government, should be turned over to the regional authority. The regional authority could contract with the Kern County Parks Department for ongoing operations and maintenance of park services, either on an interim or permanent basis. If the former option, then eventually the Kern County Parks Department, its staff and all its functions, would transition to the new authority.

The regional authority would be specifically responsible for the following:

- Improvements to existing regional facilities
- Development of new regional parks
- Regional trail development
- Assistance in local park improvements, including some consulting and some financing
- Open space acquisition in key areas to protect key natural and cultural resources in Kern County
- Supporting recreation programming delivered by local public and private providers.
- Serving as a regional facilitator, advocate and resource for parks and recreation services

#### **7.4 CONCURRENT NEED FOR LOCAL CONTROL OF PARKS**

At the same time there is a need for greater regional cooperation among all park and recreation providers in Kern County, there is also an expressed desire for more community oversight of park and recreation services at the local level. This is especially true in some small communities located in unincorporated areas of the county not within the jurisdiction of an independent park district. These unincorporated communities have been entirely dependent on the County for their local parks. Given that County park resources have been stretched for some time maintaining an extensive but antiquated park infrastructure, these local communities have borne the brunt of many of the shortfalls that have occurred.

To address these problems, many of these local communities have worked informally as volunteers with the County Parks Department to make needed improvements to their local parks on a case-by-case basis. Now, however, these same local leaders and community groups are beginning to look for other more long-term ways to organize themselves to support their local parks.

Just as there are a variety of organizational and legal forms for a regional park authority, the same is true for more locally-based, sub-regional park and recreation organizations.

The eight existing independent park districts in Kern County constitute a long-standing model that could be replicated again in areas like Frazier Park and other mountain communities, the Kern River Valley and Mojave. Other organizational possibilities include a county service area, community service district (such as the one now in Rosamond) and a public utility district among other legal forms outlined in the California Code. A school district or other existing public authorities can also jointly establish a local community system for providing recreation services and parks. Also, just as the regional park authority will require the concurrent establishment of a benefit assessment district to ensure the financial viability of the authority, the same or similar financing mechanism will be needed for the local park districts.

The development of a regional park authority may address many of the deficiencies that now concern these local communities, eliminating the need for more locally-based park districts. However, these new local park

AS THE AGENCY WITH THE  
BROADEST COVERAGE IN  
KERN COUNTY, THE COUNTY  
GOVERNMENT HAS A UNIQUE  
ROLE TO PLAY IN FACILITATING  
THE DEVELOPMENT OF A  
REGIONAL PARK AUTHORITY.

districts could also work in partnership with a regional park authority, especially in the rehabilitation of local parks as a prelude for shifting control of these local parks from the regional park authority to new local independent park districts. The success of such transitions would in the future enable the regional park authority to focus its resources entirely on the operation and maintenance of regional parks, while also still being able to offer technical assistance and consultative guidance to local park systems as needed.

### 7.5 ESTABLISHING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

There are already many different park and recreation providers in Kern County, including not only the Kern County Parks and Recreation Department, but also the seven municipal park departments, eight independent park districts, and a community services district providing park and recreation services. All of them should play a role in shaping the proposed regional park authority, which must be designed to complement rather than overlap the roles and responsibilities of other park agencies. As the new park authority will focus specifically on the regional park system, rather than local parks and facilities, then the

division of roles and responsibilities should be relatively simple to establish.

The following describes a general outline for the regional park authority and its relationship to other park and recreation providers, both existing and potentially new park organizations that may form at the local level. Planning for this new regional park authority will necessarily be a cooperative, collective effort. The details of the specific institutional arrangement best suited to the conditions and characteristics of Kern County can not be fully described at this time but will only emerge from such an open collaborative process. Such a process, however, will set the stage for the continued regional cooperation among all park agencies that is both desired by residents and essential to maximize the utilization of park and recreation resources throughout the county.

#### Kern County Government

As the agency with the broadest coverage in Kern County, the county government has a unique role to play in facilitating the development of a regional park authority. This Parks Master Plan describes a process to enhance park and recreation services to all residents in the County. The

key to implementing the long-term recommendations will be the formation of a regional park authority or park district. Kern County government should initiate the process for forming the district, and implement key projects to build support for regional parks and services, but once in place the new park authority should assume the leadership role in regional park and recreation services.

Following the creation of the regional authority, the government of Kern County should still plan for local parks in its jurisdiction, i.e. unincorporated areas not within the jurisdiction of existing local park districts. These parks could be developed using funds from Quimby Act collections and impact fees specific to the plan area. The maintenance and operation of these parks could be funded within the local area using county service areas, landscape and lighting districts, or other local funding mechanisms. Operations and maintenance of these park sites can be either contracted to a private party, new independent park districts at the local level if approved by voters in those areas, or to the regional park authority.

### Regional Parks Authority

A new regional parks authority should be formed to develop, operate and

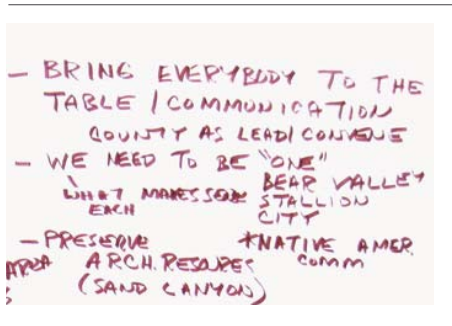


*Kern County facilities provide available space to serve needs for seniors across the county.*

maintain all regional park and recreation facilities and services within Kern County. This new organizational entity could retain its own executive director and professional staff as has been done by the Riverside County Regional Park and Open Space District, in which case it would supersede the existing Kern County Parks and Recreation Department. Alternatively, the Board of Supervisors for Kern County could choose to contract with or delegate managerial and operational functions to the Parks Department as has been done in Los Angeles County and Napa County.

As the Parks Department now does, the new authority will also continue to assume maintenance and operational responsibilities for parks outside of

Excerpt from Tehachapi focus group input



incorporated areas that are not now served by an independent park district or other park agency at the local level. It is recommended, however, that where feasible new park districts at the local level be formed, which could eventually assume these local park responsibilities, enabling the regional park authority to focus primarily on the development and management of regional parks and facilities.

The regional parks authority should also take on the responsibility of assisting local community groups and organizations as to how to improve their local parks. The regional authority would not be the park planner on the local level, but would have connections to landscape architects, planners and other professional services that could provide the required assistance. Additionally, a small capital funding source could be included in the regional funding package to assist in local park projects, including contributing matching monies for grants and otherwise reinvesting in the local parks.

A second service that the regional authority could provide is circulating information about potential park funding sources. The regional authority's staff would be an important

resource for connecting local projects to the funding necessary to complete them. This would include knowledge of grant programs, local funding sources and places to inquire about donated and in-kind services. The staff would also help communities establish and update local funding mechanisms that pay for maintenance and improvements to neighborhood- and community-level facilities.

The regional park authority could provide assistance to those local community groups who have expressed a strong interest in establishing greater control over their local parks. Such assistance in identifying the most appropriate organizational form (e.g. community service district, independent park district, etc.) and outlining the public process required to establish such special districts.

Finally, the staff of the Kern County's regional park authority should also participate in and coordinate planning efforts that span across jurisdictional boundaries. This will help to create a truly regional park and recreation system, with pieces developed by local agencies integrated into the larger system, and then connected by recreational trails.

### City Government and Independent Park Districts – Existing

The seven existing city park agencies, the eight independent park districts and the Rosamond Community Services District (along with any future park districts at the local level) would continue to be responsible for park planning and the funding of maintenance and park development for local parks within their boundaries. Each agency should also be a part of the preliminary cooperative efforts leading up to the creation of the regional park district. The support of these groups will be critical to the success of a new funding source for regional facilities.

In the future, the regional authority may also be able to offer contract maintenance and administrative services to the other park agencies in Kern County. This will allow these agencies to benefit from specialized park maintenance knowledge and the regional authority to gain efficiencies of scale.

### Independent Park Districts – New

New local park entities could be established in those communities where there appears to be a desire to assume control of local parks now managed and operated by the

County. In unincorporated communities like Frazier Park, the Kern River Valley and Mojave, strong interest in doing so has been expressed. Coalitions of local community leaders and organizations, with the assistance of the County Parks Department (or the new regional park authority), could work together to identify the most appropriate organizational mechanism for the delivery of services at the local level. Such a coalition might initially take the shape of a volunteer organization charged with the task of building support for the concept while working toward the formation of a community service district, county service area, independent park district or other local entity that can provide and finance the park services.

### Other Agencies and Community Groups

There are a number of key partners that will also have important roles to play in establishing a region-wide park system. These include the school districts, organized sports groups and community service groups. These are described below.

### School Districts

Partnerships with the school districts across the County will be the key to providing indoor recreation space,

THE REGIONAL PARK AUTHORITY, AS WELL AS LOCAL PARK AGENCIES, SHOULD LOOK FOR ALL POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTNER WITH SCHOOLS TO CO-LOCATE FACILITIES THAT CAN BE SHARED WITH WIDER COMMUNITY USES.

sports fields and other shared large-scale recreation facilities. School district leadership will need to establish the policies necessary to clearly identify any limitations on sharing facilities to meet security and scheduling needs. The regional park authority, as well as local park agencies, should look for all possible opportunities to partner with schools to co-locate facilities that can be shared with wider community uses.

### Organized Sports Groups

Organizations that sponsor sports in Kern County will continue to be essential to the community, as they provide youth and adult sport programs. The regional authority should not compete with community organizations in managing organized sports. The operation of sport leagues and youth sport activities should continue to be the responsibility of existing and new sport organizations. However, this is not to say that over time, sport organizations may wish to partner with the regional parks authority to expand sports programs and develop new facilities.

Organized sports groups can also play an important role in distributing information and emphasizing the

benefits of a regional collaborative approach to providing park and recreation facilities and services. Sports groups have large established networks of recreation advocates who, if they see the benefits of the plan, can be enthusiastic supporters.

### Community Service Groups

Several parks in Kern County have benefited extensively from the assistance of community groups, such as service clubs, community foundations and other nonprofit organizations. This type of community ownership of parks should not be overlooked as a source of support. In rural communities service groups have been the primary park advocates and have developed and maintained existing facilities. Such groups can also be the core component of local efforts to build on past partnerships with the County to facilitate the creation of local park district or other entities to manage local parks as described above.

## 7.6 BUILDING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

A regional parks authority will be a new concept to most Kern County residents. In order to gain the public support that will be needed for the successful creation of a park district,

as well as the subsequent funding for regional park facilities, voters will need to be informed about the benefits of the proposed management and development concept.

Initially, Kern County government should take on the leadership role of building the public support needed for the immediate priority of improving existing park and recreation facilities and in the longer term to develop new ones. Results from both the telephone survey and on-line questionnaires show that a significant majority of Kern County residents would be willing to pay an additional tax or fee to improve their County parks, an important component necessary to ensure the viability of a regional park authority. As a first step, a regional park authority formation committee (RPAFC) should be formed to develop a campaign strategy, educate the public and present the program to the public.

### Informing Voters

It is a challenge to create a new governmental agency and pass a funding measure. A common feature of successful funding measures is a well-coordinated public information campaign that discovers what voters in Kern County want and effectively

communicates the benefits of the proposal to them. This campaign will need leadership within governments and among community members. This support can be built up among the participants in recreation programs and other active community groups that utilize County parks and recreation facilities. The campaign will have the best chance of success with high-quality professional assistance to craft the messages, test voter opinions and campaign materials. This effort would likely involve detailed polling of the population to tailor the messages, building on the needs identified in this planning process..

### Partner Agency Support

During the Parks Master Plan process, the County government called together representatives from the various providers of park and recreation facilities and services to discuss the needs of County residents and the path toward meeting those needs. The official support of the other park agencies within the new regional park authority will be very important to satisfy the community's desire that their resources be used as effectively as possible. However, the boundaries of the proposed park district can be drawn to include the entire county, or



to exclude any portion of the area. If any one agency is not interested in being part of the regional parks authority, the boundary of the district could be drawn to remove that particular area.

The proposal for a new regional park authority could also be presented as core element of a broader comprehensive package of parks and recreation measures that would include complementary proposals for new local park districts in the unincorporated areas of Kern County. This would likely strengthen support for the regional park authority by presenting voters with a clearer and more complete vision of how the county-wide park system would function in the future at both the regional and local level.

### **Key Implementable Projects**

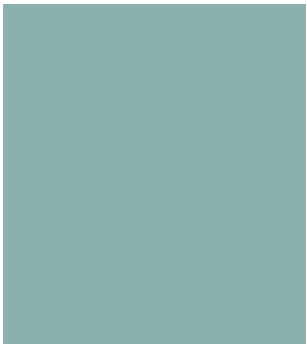
A final critical element of gaining the voter support necessary for the creation of a park and recreation district and its funding is proceeding toward a new model of regional cooperation.

Assembling the right package of capital projects for the initial work plan of the new regional authority will be a crucial first step. Given input received from the public during the community outreach phase of this project, the major priority should be the rehabilitation of existing parks, such as Hart Memorial Park. These and other projects must meet regional needs, provide economic benefits to the region as a whole, and build excitement and ownership in the community. The projects should focus on providing benefits throughout the County.

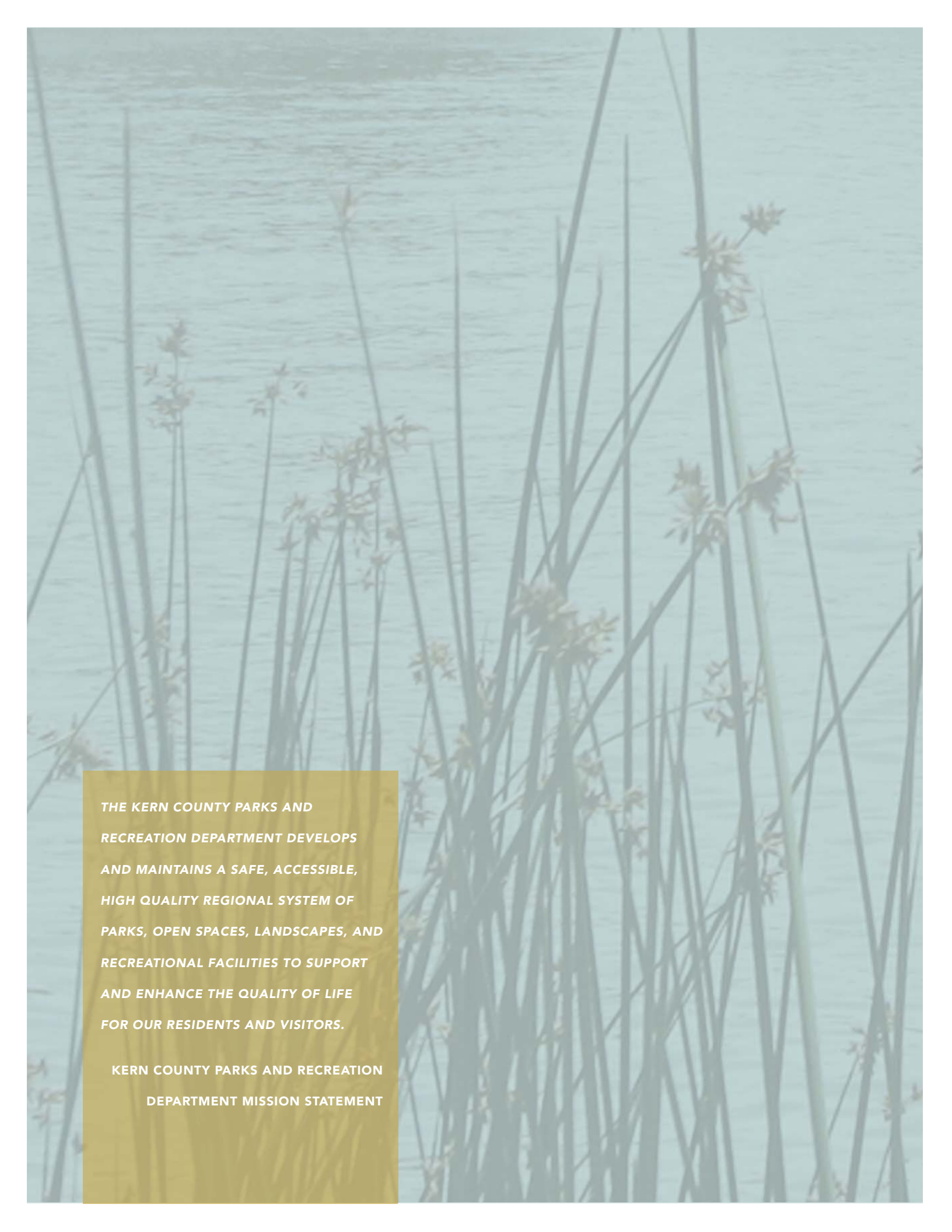
In addition to the ability to fund construction of these projects, the community has indicated that a key measure of success will be the financial resources to maintain the facilities once they are built. Additionally, investing in a small number of key local projects, including reinvestments in existing local facilities will help to demonstrate the possibilities of an enhanced and improved parks and recreation system to the entire community.



CHAPTER EIGHT



funding options and  
recommendations



*THE KERN COUNTY PARKS AND  
RECREATION DEPARTMENT DEVELOPS  
AND MAINTAINS A SAFE, ACCESSIBLE,  
HIGH QUALITY REGIONAL SYSTEM OF  
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, LANDSCAPES, AND  
RECREATIONAL FACILITIES TO SUPPORT  
AND ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE  
FOR OUR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.*

KERN COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION  
DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

# funding options and recommendations

THE KERN COUNTY PARKS and Recreation Department needs to provide park facilities that are well distributed throughout the County and that provide an engaging variety of recreational opportunities. The Department also needs to adequately operate and maintain its facilities in order to maximize their use and enjoyment by the citizens of Kern County. This chapter focuses on funding sources, both existing and proposed, for current and future planned park and recreation facilities. Additionally, this chapter presents the most current identified park and recreation facility projects and the estimated costs of those projects. Probable funding shortfalls are identified and additional potential funding sources are suggested.

## 8.1 RELATION TO THE KERN COUNTY CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This chapter presents planning level cost estimates and funding recommendations for park and recre-

ation projects suggested earlier in this document. The County has a recently adopted a capital improvement plan (CIP) that includes several parks facilities projects. The CIP is a preliminary indication of the County’s plans for new facilities. As a working document, it is being reviewed and revised on a regular basis, as the County’s needs change. It is not intended to be inclusive of all projects needed to serve the county in the future, rather, it is a ‘snapshot’ of the County’s perceived needs at the time it was created. Therefore, the planned projects listed in the CIP are included on a conceptual basis and are subject to change.

*A pick up game of softball in Arvin.*



**Table 1: Parks and Recreation Department Budgeted Revenues**

Funding Source	FY 2004-05 Actual	FY 2005-06 Actual	FY 2006-07 Actual	FY 2007-08 Estimate	FY 2007-08 Budget	FY 2008-09 CAO Recommended
<i>Revenues</i>						
General Fund Cost	\$ 9,890,232	\$ 9,707,622	\$ 11,197,294	\$ 12,230,006	\$ 11,983,260	\$ 11,172,158
Fines and Forfeitures	12,690	7,671	12,712	15,000	13,500	15,000
Use of Money/Property	288,148	332,887	330,679	188,000	245,500	183,000
Intergovernmental	125,385	24,297	113,000	165,000	10,000	-
Charges for Services	2,092,452	2,062,609	2,230,795	2,251,757	2,336,522	2,201,149
Miscellaneous	33,933	12,775	16,823	10,121	8,100	32,121
Other Financing Sources	4,244	381	-	9,000	500	9,000
Tehachapi Mt Forest Park Fund	-	-	-	-	-	142,750
Litter Clean Up	6,300	3,645	-	-	-	4,000
Off Hwy Motor Vehicle License	-	16,500	-	-	-	165,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 12,453,384</b>	<b>\$ 12,168,387</b>	<b>\$ 13,901,303</b>	<b>\$ 14,868,884</b>	<b>\$ 14,597,382</b>	<b>\$ 13,924,178</b>

Source: County of Kern Recommended Budget - FY 2008-2009; County of Kern Recommended Budget - FY 2006-2007.

The recommended projects in this Master Plan can be seen as an idealized roadmap to guide future facility needs. Park needs have been calculated with updated assumptions compared to the CIP. Parks projects recommended here represent an ideal level of service. Future CIP updates must be informed by the policy decisions that will need to be made regarding the level of service that the County will provide. The parks development impact fee study, a separate effort currently in progress, will also need to be informed by the recommendations made here.

chapter sets the stage for the funding discussion by presenting the existing financial situation within the context of the County’s overall budget. The first section also details the Department’s existing funding sources.

The Kern County Parks and Recreation Department receives funding for maintenance and operations from a variety of funding sources, including the general fund, charges for services, use of money/property and other financing sources. This chapter provides a description of major funding sources including a description of historical revenue. The analysis of the existing revenue sources is based on Kern County’s Recommended Budget for fiscal years 2006-07 and 2008-09, financial reports, and County policies and procedures documents.

The County uses a variety of revenue sources for parks and recreation oper-

**Table 2: Qumby Revenue**

Fiscal Year	Amount
1998-1999	\$ -
1999-2000	24,464
2000-2001	(7,755)
2001-2002	44,800
2002-2003	-
2003-2004	-
2004-2005	102,381
2005-2006	174,860
2006-2007	219,402
2007-2008	248,681
2008-2009	-

Source: Kern County Parks and Recreation Department.

## 8.2 EXISTING FUNDING SOURCES

County resources for park facilities and recreation programs are limited. The Department must compete with many other County departments for funding. The first section of this

**Table 3: Parks and Recreation Department Budgeted Expenditures**

Expenditures by Funding Source	FY 2004-05 Actual	FY 2005-06 Actual	FY 2006-07 Actual	FY 2007-08 Estimate	FY 2007-08 Budget	FY 2008-09 CAO Recommended
<i>Appropriations</i>						
Salaries and Benefits	\$ 8,300,148	\$ 8,042,832	\$ 9,166,170	\$ 9,993,957	\$ 10,009,482	\$ 10,042,600
Services and Supplies	3,472,762	3,365,814	3,885,206	4,225,883	3,909,400	3,754,578
Other Charges	175,529	169,161	163,894	123,449	126,000	122,000
Fixed Assets	504,945	590,580	686,033	525,695	554,000	30,000
Subtotal	\$ 12,453,384	\$ 12,168,387	\$ 13,901,303	\$ 14,868,984	\$ 14,598,882	\$ 13,949,178
Less Expenditure Reimbursement	-	-	-	(100)	(1,500)	(25,000)
Total Expenditures	\$ 12,453,384	\$ 12,168,387	\$ 13,901,303	\$ 14,868,884	\$ 14,597,382	\$ 13,924,178

Source: County of Kern Recommended Budget - FY 2008-2009; County of Kern Recommended Budget - FY 2006-2007.

ations, maintenance and capital costs. Table 1 shows all existing revenue for funding for parks and recreation services from FY 2005 to FY 2009 (projected). The two largest funding sources for parks and recreation are:

- General Fund** –The General Fund supports essential county services such as sheriff and fire protection, street maintenance, libraries, and parks and recreational facilities maintenance and development. General Fund revenue comes from sources such as property tax, sales tax, franchise fees, and service fees. Over the previous five fiscal years, the General Fund provided for approximately 80 percent of funding for the Parks and Recreation Department. The allocation to the Parks and Recreation Department is not fixed, and is adjusted annually to meet need.
- Charges for Services** – Fees received from the use of the County’s parks and recreational facilities. Over the previous five fiscal years, service charges provided for approximately 15 to 17 percent of funding for the Parks and Recreation Department. In the FY2008-09 CAO Recommended Budget the Department is budgeted to receive \$2.2 million in charges for services revenue. In comparison to other historical data from other California counties, the revenue from charges for service is low.

Other sources in FY 2009 include fines and forfeitures, use of money

**Table 4: Parks and Recreation Department Employees**

Employee Classification	FY 2004-05 Actual	FY 2005-06 Actual	FY 2006-07 Actual	FY 2007-08 Estimate	FY 2007-08 Budget	FY 2008-09 CAO Recommended
<i>Authorized Positions</i>						
Full Time	139	133	134	139	141	139
Part Time	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total Authorized Positions	140	134	135	140	142	140
<i>Funded Positions</i>						
Full Time	120	127	134	139	141	122
Part Time	1	1	1	1	1	1
	121	128	135	140	142	123

Source: County of Kern Recommended Budget - FY 2008-2009; County of Kern Recommended Budget - FY 2006-2007.

and property, miscellaneous revenue, revenue from the Tehachapi Mountain Park Forest Fund, and revenue from litter cleanup activities.

In addition to the aforementioned general revenues, the County has a land dedication or in lieu fee requirement in place in the unincorporated areas of the County based on the Quimby Act. The Quimby Act requires dedication of parkland, or payment of a fee in lieu of dedication, and does not require construction of park improvements. The Quimby ordinances in Kern County require parkland dedication at a standard of 2.5 acres per thousand residents. Funds collected through the Quimby ordinance can be used for purchasing land to create neighborhood and community parks.

The Quimby Act only applies to land subdivisions. A county cannot apply the Quimby Act to development on land subdivided prior to adoption of a

THE APPROACH WAS INTER-DISCIPLINARY AND COLLABORATIVE: A TRUE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE CONSULTANT TEAM, CITY AND DOWNTOWN DOWNTOWN KERN PARTNERSHIP STAFF, STAKEHOLDERS AND THE PUBLIC.

**Table 5: Community Park Rehabilitation Costs**

Park Category	Inventory	Rehabilitation Cost - Per Acre	Total Rehabilitation Cost
<i>Community Parks</i>			
A.W. Noon	12.00 acres	\$ 90,000	\$ 1,080,000
Belle Terrace	19.30 acres	90,000	1,737,000
Boron	10.00 acres	90,000	900,000
Buttonwillow	36.00 acres	90,000	3,240,000
Casa Loma	9.00 acres	90,000	810,000
Ed Oakley Park (See Memorial Hall)	1.70 acres	90,000	153,000
Frazier Mountain	27.00 acres	90,000	2,430,000
Greenfield	5.00 acres	90,000	450,000
Health Center Park	3.00 acres	90,000	270,000
Heritage	18.00 acres	90,000	1,620,000
Inyokern	3.00 acres	90,000	270,000
Kern Delta Park	11.75 acres	90,000	1,057,500
Kernville Circle	1.00 acres	90,000	90,000
Lake Isabella	40.00 acres	90,000	3,600,000
Lost Hills	7.00 acres	90,000	630,000
Mojave East	8.00 acres	90,000	720,000
Mojave West	10.00 acres	90,000	900,000
Mountain Mesa	5.20 acres	90,000	468,000
North Edwards	5.00 acres	90,000	450,000
Pioneer	14.00 acres	90,000	1,260,000
Potomac	5.00 acres	90,000	450,000
Randsburg	0.20 acres	90,000	18,000
Rexland Acres	4.00 acres	90,000	360,000
Riverside	5.00 acres	90,000	450,000
Rosamond	10.00 acres	90,000	900,000
Scodie	4.00 acres	90,000	360,000
Virginia Avenue	9.50 acres	90,000	855,000
Wilkins	2.60 acres	90,000	234,000
Wofford Heights <sup>1</sup>	7.00 acres	90,000	630,000
Subtotal - Community Parks	293.25 acres		\$ 26,392,500
<i>Parks in Cities or Special districts<sup>2</sup></i>			
Blanco Little League <sup>3</sup>	6.00 acres	90,000	\$ 540,000
Circle Park	0.10 acres	90,000	9,000
College	17.00 acres	90,000	1,530,000
Cormack Park	6.00 acres	90,000	540,000
Delano Memorial	32.00 acres	90,000	2,880,000
Derby Acres <sup>3</sup>	3.80 acres	90,000	342,000
DiGiorgio	16.00 acres	90,000	1,440,000
Fellows <sup>3</sup>	8.00 acres	90,000	720,000
Ford City <sup>3</sup>	4.10 acres	90,000	369,000
Lamont	8.00 acres	90,000	720,000
Panorama	24.00 acres	90,000	2,160,000
Valley Acres	2.00 acres	90,000	180,000
Subtotal - Parks in Cities / Special Districts	127.00		\$ 11,430,000
Total - All Community Parks	420.25		\$ 37,822,500

<sup>1</sup>The Wofford Heights park is presently leased from the Department of Forestry. The Parks Department is in the process of acquiring this park through a land exchange agreement. The Parks Department will give up 50 acres of Greenhorn Mountain Regional Park through this agreement. This size of Greenhorn Mountain Regional Park has been reduced accordingly in Table 5.

<sup>2</sup>Parks in cities or special districts are not included when calculating the local community park standard.

<sup>3</sup> Facility is leased by the Kern County Parks and Recreation Department.

Source: Kern County Parks and Recreation Department; MIG; Willdan Financial Services.

Quimby ordinance, such as development on infill lots. The Quimby Act also would not apply to residential development on future approved projects on single parcels, such as many types of multi-family development. Allowable uses of in-lieu fee revenue include land acquisition, park improvements including recreation facilities, and rehabilitation of existing park and recreation facilities. However, the fee is calculated to fund acquisition of the same amount of land that would have been dedicated. The fee does not include the cost of park improvements because the land dedication requirement does not include improvements.

Historical Quimby Act revenue is displayed in Table 2. To date, Quimby revenue has been under collected. The under-collection of revenue is due to details specific to the County's Quimby ordinance. Per the ordinance, the amount of the fee in lieu of land dedication is based on dedicating 2.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, using "fair market value as of the time prior to approval of the proposed land division" as the cost basis for the dedication. The use of market value as of the time prior to

approval of the land division unintentionally builds a structural deficit into the Quimby program because land values are significantly lower prior to subdivision. When the County goes to purchase land for parks from Quimby revenue, the land that it wishes to purchase is of a greater value than the Quimby fee revenue. Consequently, the County cannot afford to purchase enough land to maintain a 2.5 acre standard to serve the development paying the fee.

### 8.3 EXPENDITURES

The Parks and Recreation Department expenditures fund the capital facilities and maintenance and operations costs of a regional and community park system. Community parks are typically less than 100 acres in size and serve the surrounding community. Regional parks are typically greater than 100 acres in size and attract users from the greater County region. For the purposes of this analysis, local parks and park standards refer to the community parks that serve residents in the unincorporated areas not served by a local parks district. In addition to parkland, the department is responsible for operating veterans' halls, senior centers, and other community buildings.

**Table 6: Regional Park Rehabilitation Costs**

	Total Acres	Rehabilitation Cost per Acre	Total Rehab Cost
<i>Regional Parks<sup>1</sup></i>			
Buena Vista Aquatic Rec. Area	1,585	\$ 45,000	\$ 71,325,000
Greenhorn Mountain	110	45,000	4,950,000
LeRoy Jackson	100	45,000	4,500,000
Kern River County Park	1,445	45,000	65,025,000
Lake Woollomes	445	45,000	20,025,000
Metro Rec. Center/Stramler Park	107	45,000	4,815,000
Tehachapi Mountain	490	45,000	22,050,000
<b>Total - Regional Parks</b>	<b>4,282</b>		<b>\$ 192,690,000</b>

<sup>1</sup> The Parks Department is in the process of acquiring the Wofford Heights park park through a land exchange agreement from the Department of Forestry. The Parks Department will give up 50 acres of Greenhorn Mountain Regional Park through this agreement. This size of Greenhorn Mountain Regional Park has been reduced accordingly in this inventory.

Sources: County of Kern Parks and Recreation Department; Willdan Financial Services.

**Table 7: Existing Local Parkland Deficiencies and Planned Acreage: 5.0 Acre Standard**

	Amount	Unit
<i>Current (2009)</i>		
Existing Local Community Park Acres	293	Acres
Population - 2009 <sup>1</sup>	176,200	Residents
Existing Level of Service	1.66	Acres per 1,000 residents
Recommended Local Park Standard	5.00	Acres per 1,000 residents
Population - 2009 <sup>1</sup>	176,200	Residents
Parks Needed to Serve Existing Population at 5.0 Acre standard	881	Acres
Existing Local Park Deficiency	588	Acres
<i>Future (2030)</i>		
Recommended Park Standard	5.00	Acres per 1,000 residents
Population - 2030 <sup>1</sup>	240,000	Residents
Total Park Acres at 5.0 Acre Standard - 2030	1,200	Acres
Total Additional Parkland Needed	907	Acres
Local Parkland Needed to Serve Growth	319	Acres

<sup>1</sup> Estimates of existing population and growth in the unincorporated areas of Kern County not served by an independent parks district generated by MIG using growth projections by traffic analysis zones provided by Kern COG.

Sources: MIG; Willdan Financial Services.

The breakdown of existing expenditures providing these services is shown in Table 3. Over the previous five fiscal years, Salaries and Benefits make up the majority of expenditures, ranging from 67 percent of



total expenditures in FY 2004-05 to 72 percent in FY 2008-09. The second highest expenditure category is Services and Supplies.

Table 4 shows Parks and Recreation Department staffing for the previous five fiscal years. Authorized positions have ranged from 134 to 145 posi-

tions. Funded positions have ranged from 121 to 142 positions. To adjust for current fiscal constraints the department is considering holding 17 positions vacant and unfunded during FY 2008-09.

To date, the department has ensured that expenditures are programmed to match available revenue. With the current economic downturn, revenues are projected to decrease. In the FY2008-09 budget request, overall park revenue and expenditures declined by approximately two percent, despite increases in service population. Depending on the length and severity of the economic downturn, the Parks Department can expect further reductions in revenue and consequently level of service, unless other funding sources can be identified.

**Table 8: Existing Local Parkland Deficiencies and Planned Acreage: 3.0 Acre Standard**

	Amount	Unit
<i>Current (2009)</i>		
Existing Local Community Park Acres	293	Acres
Population - 2009 <sup>1</sup>	176,200	Residents
Existing Level of Service	1.66	Acres per 1,000 residents
Recommended Local Park Standard	3.00	Acres per 1,000 residents
Population - 2009 <sup>1</sup>	176,200	Residents
Parks Needed to Serve Existing Population at 3.0 Acre standard	529	Acres
Existing Local Park Deficiency	235	Acres
<i>Future (2030)</i>		
Recommended Park Standard	3.00	Acres per 1,000 residents
Population - 2030 <sup>1</sup>	240,000	Residents
Total Park Acres at 3.0 Acre Standard - 2030	720	Acres
Total Additional Parkland Needed	427	Acres
Local Parkland Needed to Serve Growth	191	Acres

<sup>1</sup> Estimates of existing population and growth in the unincorporated areas of Kern County not served by an independent parks district generated by MIG based on growth projections by traffic analysis zones provided by Kern COG.

Sources: MIG; Willdan Financial Services.

**Table 9: New Park Cost Estimate - 5.0 Acre Local Park Standard**

Recommended	Number of Parks	Acres per Park	Total New Park Acres	Cost	
				Cost per Acre <sup>1</sup>	Total Cost
<i>Community Parks</i>					
Community Park	8	40	320	\$ 314,000	\$ 100,480,000
Community Park	15	20	300	314,000	94,200,000
Community Park	29	10	290	314,000	91,060,000
Subtotal			910		\$ 285,740,000
<i>Regional Parks</i>					
Regional Parks	4	200	800	\$ 136,000	\$ 108,800,000
Regional Parks	10	100	1,000	136,000	136,000,000
Subtotal			1,800		\$ 244,800,000
Total - New Parks			2,710		\$ 530,540,000

<sup>1</sup> Development cost per acre based on MIG estimates for developing 64 acres of parkland at Ming Park. Includes land costs per acre based on average value of the County's existing park acreage. Land costs are estimated at \$188,000 per acre for local community parkland, and at \$10,000 per acre for regional parkland.

Sources: MIG; Willdan Financial Services.

## 8.4 PROPOSED CAPITAL PROJECTS

Based on the analysis in the preceding chapters of this document, many capital projects have been proposed, both to remedy existing deficiencies and rehabilitate existing parks, and to provide new facilities to serve growth. In general, the costs can be conceptualized into two major categories: rehabilitation and new facilities.

### Rehabilitation Projects

Many of the existing parks in Kern County are in various stages of dilapidation. Table 5 shows rehabilitation costs for local serving community parks. Rehabilitation costs are estimated at \$90,000 per acre based on MIG’s experience with planning for rehabilitating parkland. This figure serves as a reasonable estimate for a range of improvements that are typically needed at the existing parks in Kern County. In total, approximately \$38 million is needed to rehabilitate the existing community parks in Kern County.

Table 6 shows an estimate of rehabilitation costs for regional park facilities. Regional parks are less intensely developed than local parks and therefore do not require as much rehabilitation as the local parks. For the purposes of developing a planning level estimate for regional rehabilitation costs, it is estimated that the cost of rehabilitating regional parkland is half the cost of rehabilitating community parkland. An estimate of \$45,000 per acre of regional parkland is used in Table 5 for approximating regional parkland rehabilitation costs. Approximately \$193 million dollars will be required to rehabilitate the exist-

**Table 10: New Park Cost Estimate - 3.0 Acre Local Park Standard**

Recommended	Number of Parks	Acres per Park	Total New Park Acres	Development Cost per Acre <sup>1</sup>	Total Cost
<i>Community Parks</i>					
Community Park	4	40	160	\$ 314,000	\$ 50,240,000
Community Park	8	20	160	314,000	50,240,000
Community Park	10	10	100	314,000	31,400,000
Subtotal			420		\$ 131,880,000
<i>Regional Parks</i>					
Regional Parks	4	200	800	\$ 136,000	\$ 108,800,000
Regional Parks	10	100	1,000	136,000	136,000,000
Subtotal			1,800		\$ 244,800,000
Total - New Parks			2,220		\$ 376,680,000

<sup>1</sup> Development cost per acre based on MIG estimates for developing 64 acres of parkland at Ming Park.  
<sup>2</sup> Land costs per acre based on average value of the County's existing park acreage.

Sources: MIG; Willdan Financial Services.

**Table 11: Special Use Facilities Recommendations**

Facility Type	Unit Cost	Quantity	Total Cost
Multi-Use Sports Fields/Facilities	\$ 350,000	6	\$ 2,100,000
Splash Park	320,000	6	1,920,000
Skate Park	950,000	6	5,700,000
Indoor Multi-Use Community Center <sup>1</sup>	4,500,000	6	27,000,000
Pedestrian Walkway/Jogging Track (1-mile)	210,000	6	1,260,000
Outdoor Performance Venue (Small Scale)	50,000	6	300,000
BMX Tracks	950,000	2	1,900,000
Snow Play Facility (Frazier Park)	950,000	1	950,000
Total			\$ 41,130,000

<sup>1</sup> Includes: Recreation area/gym, multigenerational center, teen center, senior center and a childcare center.

Source: MIG.

ing 4,282 acres of regional parkland in Kern County.

### New Facilities

New parkland recommendations are informed by parkland standards, which are expressed as developed park acres per 1,000 residents. Table 7 presents the calculation of current and future local community parkland standards and acreage, should the County decide to implement a five acre per thousand residents local parkland standard. The local community park-

land standard is calculated relative to the population in unincorporated areas not served by park districts.

Table 8 presents the calculation of current and future local parkland standards and acreage, should the County decide to implement a three acre per thousand residents local community parkland standard.

Based on the parkland needed to

standard of five acres of local parkland per thousand residents in the areas of Kern County not served by an independent parks district. Development costs per acre are based on an estimate to build a new park facility (Ming Regional Park) in Kern County per MIG. Land costs per acre for community parkland represent the average value per acre of existing community parkland in Kern County, and are consistent with figures from the County's ongoing development impact fee study. Land costs per acre for regional parkland represent the average value per acre of being used in the ongoing development impact fee study for bulk land purchases in the County.

Currently, 293 park acres exist to serve unincorporated residents that do not live in independent park districts. At this standard, 907 acres of new local community parks will be required by the planning horizon of 2030 (rounded to 910 acres of need in Table 9). In addition to local parks, 1,800 acres of new regional parks are being recommended to maintain the existing five acre standard of regional parkland. The total estimated cost for these new park facilities is approximately \$531 million dollars.

**Table 12: Total Parks Facilities Costs through 2030**

Category	Total Cost
<i><u>5 Acre Local Park Standard</u></i>	
Rehab - Community Parks	\$ 37,822,500
Rehab - Regional Parks	192,690,000
New Parks	530,540,000
Special Facilities	41,130,000
Total	\$ 802,182,500
<i><u>3 Acre Local Park Standard</u></i>	
Rehab - Community Parks	\$ 37,822,500
Rehab - Regional Parks	192,690,000
New Parks	376,680,000
Special Facilities	41,130,000
Total	\$ 648,322,500

Sources: Tables 5, 6, 9, 10 and 11; Willdan Financial Services.

achieve either a standard of five or three acres per thousand residents identified in Tables 7 and 8 new facilities are recommended, including local parks, regional parks and specialized park facilities. An estimate of parkland needs is shown in Table 9. The analysis in Table 9 assumes a

Due to the high cost of implementing a local park standard of five acre per thousand residents, this study also estimates the costs of new facilities should the County wish to implement a three acres per thousand residents local park standard. Table 10 also shows new park costs, but at a standard of three acres of local parks per thousand residents. The regional parkland standard remains at five acres per thousand. Under this scenario, the estimated cost for new park facilities is \$377 million.

In addition to parkland with standard park improvements, special use facilities are also being recommended. Table 11 shows an estimate of planned special use facilities costs.

Table 12 sums all of the facilities costs from Tables 9 through 11 to determine the total cost of planned facilities through 2030. Table 12 shows two scenarios. The first scenario uses the analysis from Table 9 to calculate local parks costs at a five acres per thousand residents standard. The second scenario uses the analysis from Table 10 to calculate local parks costs at a three acres per thousand residents standard. Depending on the local acreage standard, total costs range from approximately \$648

<b>Table 13: Maintenance Costs - 5.0 Acre Standard</b>			
	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Annual Maintenance Cost per Acre</b>	<b>Total Annual Maintenance Cost</b>
Planned Community Parkland	910	\$ 900	\$ 819,000
Planned Regional Parkland	1,800	450	810,000
Annual Maintenance Costs for New Parkland			\$ 1,629,000

Sources: MIG; Willdan Financial Services.

<b>Table 14: Maintenance Costs - 3.0 Acre Standard</b>			
	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Annual Maintenance Cost per Acre</b>	<b>Total Annual Maintenance Cost</b>
Planned Community Parkland	420	\$ 900	\$ 378,000
Planned Regional Parkland	1,800	450	810,000
Annual Maintenance Costs for New Parkland			\$ 1,188,000

Sources: MIG; Willdan Financial Services.

million to approximately \$802 million through the planning horizon of 2030.

### 8.5 ESTIMATED OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE COSTS

In addition to capital expenditures, the addition of park land and recreation facilities will also increase annual park operations and maintenance costs. These costs are typically funded by the General Fund. Based on a recent cost estimate as provided to MIG by a landscape contractor for general park maintenance it is estimated that the new parks will require approximately \$900 per acre per year in annual maintenance costs. Since

**Table 15: Estimated Impact Fee Revenue**

	Acres	Development		Total Cost
		Cost Per Acre		
Local Park Acres Needed to Serve Growth	319	\$ 314,000	\$	100,166,000
Regional Parks Acres Needed To Serve Growth	1,800	136,000		<u>244,800,000</u>
Costs / Projected Impact Fee Revenue <sup>1</sup>			\$	344,966,000
Existing Deficiency	588	\$ 314,000	\$	184,553,500

Note: This is a PRELIMINARY estimate and SUBJECT TO CHANGE. An impact fee nexus study is currently in process. To charge impact fees at the maximum justified fee level, the existing deficiency must be funded with through a funding source other than impact fees, or new development will have paid too high a fee.

<sup>1</sup> Assumes that parkland acquisition and development costs are fully funded through impact fees.

Sources: MIG; Tables 7 and 9; Willdan Financial Services.

**Table 16: Estimated Impact Fee Revenue**

	Acres	Development		Total Cost
		Cost Per Acre		
Local Park Acres Needed to Serve Growth	191	\$ 314,000	\$	59,974,000
Regional Parks Acres Needed To Serve Growth	1,800	136,000		<u>244,800,000</u>
Costs / Projected Impact Fee Revenue <sup>1</sup>			\$	304,774,000
Existing Deficiency	235	\$ 314,000	\$	73,899,900

Note: This is a PRELIMINARY estimate and SUBJECT TO CHANGE. An impact fee nexus study is currently in process. To charge impact fees at the maximum justified fee level, the existing deficiency must be funded with through a funding source other than impact fees, or new development will have paid too high a fee.

<sup>1</sup> Assumes that parkland acquisition and development costs are fully funded through impact fees.

Sources: MIG; Tables 8 and 10; Willdan Financial Services.

regional parks are developed less intensely than community parks, annual maintenance costs for regional parks are estimated at half of the community park estimate. The costs for maintaining the proposed new park facilities would equate to between 8.5% and 11.7% of the FY2008-09 recommended budget, depending on the parkland standard provided.

Tables 13 and 14 detail the additional annual maintenance costs that will be incurred by the planning horizon with the addition of new local parks at a

five and three acres per thousand residents standards, respectively.

## 8.6 POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL REVENUE SOURCES - CAPITAL

While there are several potential additional revenue sources for funding capital needs, each source must be approved by either the ruling body or the voters. The biggest hurdle for implementation of these revenue sources is the approval by the community to exact funding from itself to fund park facilities. The revenue sources examined below are shown in order of probability of approval. (Those listed sooner are more likely to be approved.) The degree to which the community and its representation is willing to consider imposing additional revenue sources will dictate the level of park facilities that are financially feasible.

Of the following funding sources for capital needs, only in lieu and development impact fees are restricted to funding new facilities, or the capacity expansion of existing facilities. Revenue from a voter approved bond measure, sales tax or a parcel tax could be spent of new facilities, or the rehabilitation of existing facilities.

### In Lieu and Development Impact Fees

The County is currently conducting a nexus study in order to implement development impact fees. Impact fees are imposed on new development only. As part of that process, fees for parks and recreation facilities are being developed. In-lieu park dedication fees and impact fees are one-time fees paid by development at the time of building permit issuance to provide facilities for new development. These fees can provide a significant source of revenue for capital projects, with two main constraints:

- The capital facilities must benefit new development; facilities that do not benefit new development cannot be funded with impact fees; and
- Park in-lieu dedication and impact fee revenue is dependent on the development market. As such, revenue generation can be highly variable from year to year.

An example of potential impact fee revenue is estimated below. All impact fee estimates shown below are preliminary and are subject to change. It must be noted that the draft impact fee document recently submitted to the County for review calculates the park impact fees based on different standards than those presented here. Impact fee revenue estimates in

**Table 17: County of Kern Assessed Value (in 1,000s)**

Fiscal Year	Secured	Unsecured	Unitary	Exempt	Total Taxable Assessed Value
2004-05	\$ 45,389,639	\$ 2,065,833	\$ 1,686,769	\$ (722,479)	\$ 48,419,762
2005-06	53,029,946	2,196,607	1,614,145	(731,138)	56,109,560
2006-07	65,301,400	2,443,549	1,709,410	(722,336)	68,732,023
2007-08	75,364,238	2,691,326	1,601,891	(733,495)	78,923,960

Source: County of Kern Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2008.

this chapter reflect fees calculated at policy standards recommended earlier in this document, and are significantly higher than either currently exist or are currently proposed in the recent impact fee study.

Tables 15 and 16 estimate park impact fee revenue for five and three acre per thousand residents standards, respectively. Tables 15 and 16 also identify the cost of the existing deficiencies, should parkland for existing residents be brought up to the same standards. Impact fee revenue estimates assume total parks costs to accommodate new development are fully charged through impact fees. Hence they are also equal to the cost of facilities to serve growth at the adopted standard. However both standards shown of five acres per thousand residents and three acres per thousand residents are higher than the County's current level of service of 1.66 acres of local parks per resident. Should the County decide to implement a

standard higher than the current level of service, then it must fund the existing deficiency with funding other than impact fee revenue.

**Table 18: Revenue & Debt Capacity of Potential Tax Increase**

Potential Rate Increase	Annual Tax (Med. Home Value) <sup>1</sup>	Annual Revenue For Debt Service <sup>2</sup>	Project Proceeds from Bond
\$10 / \$100,000 AV	\$ 13	\$ 7,892,000	\$ 108,637,000
\$15 / \$100,000 AV	19	11,839,000	162,956,000
\$20 / \$100,000 AV	25	15,785,000	217,275,000
Real Property Assessed Value (2007/08):		\$ 78,923,960,000	
Interest Rate:	6%		
Period (years):	30		

<sup>1</sup> Assumes average home value of \$125,000.  
<sup>2</sup> Bond proceeds net of issuance costs and reserve fund.

Source: Kern County Tax Rates and Assesd Valuations, 2008-2009; Willdan Financial Services.

The fee revenue estimates presented here represent potential revenue if fees are implemented at an ideal level of service. Policy decisions made by the Board of Supervisors will affect the level of service provided by the parks department. In total, the Department could potentially generate \$345 million in impact fee revenue through 2030 for new park facilities to serve new development, if it implements a five acre per thousand residents local parkland standard. It would need to fund \$184 million in deficiencies with non-fee funding sources to bring existing development up to the same parkland standards.

If the Department implements a three acre per thousand residents standard, it could potentially generate \$305 million in impact fee revenue through 2030 for new park facilities to serve new development. While fee revenue would be lessened, fewer deficiencies would need to be funded than under the five acre standard, and the amount to be funded by non-fee funding sources would be lowered to \$74 million.

In addition to funding the existing deficiencies, there are other considerations to make when implementing an impact fee program. If charged at five acre standard, the fees estimated in Table 15 could exceed \$10,000 per single family dwelling unit. As such, implementing fees at this level may not be considered to be feasible. The exact level of the fees will not be known until the separate fee analysis process is complete.

**Voter Approved Bond Measure**

Another potential revenue source to fund parks projects is a voter approved bond measure. A bond is issued based on increasing the property tax rate on real property assessed value. Table 17 shows the total taxable assessed value of real property in Kern County from 2004-05 to 2007-08.

As part of this Master Planning effort, MIG retained Research Network, Ltd to conduct a telephone survey of residents in Kern County. Some of the questions asked dealt with how residents felt parks should be funded in the County. Approximately 65 percent of those surveyed were willing to support an annual property tax increase of \$25 to fund park facilities or recreation programs in Kern County. Approximately 74 percent of those surveyed were willing to support an annual property tax increase of \$15.

Table 18 shows an estimate of the revenue that a general obligation bond issue could potentially generate. The analysis assumes an interest rate of six percent and a 30-year bond issue. Although the current tax rate in Kern County varies depending on local assessments, special taxes and school bonds, it is assumed to range from just over 1.0 percent to approximately 1.3 percent. The table shows revenue generated by three scenarios that would add to the existing tax rate by a relatively small amount (0.010, 0.015, and 0.020 percent, respectively). Table 18 also shows what the increase would translate into in terms of an annual increase on the property tax bill of a home worth \$125,000, the

**Table 19: Cost Recovery**

	FY 2006-07	FY 2007-08	FY 2008-09
<b><i>Kern County</i></b>			
Total Parks and Recreation Expenditures	\$ 13,901,303	\$ 14,868,884	\$ 13,924,178
Charges for Services Revenue	<u>2,230,795</u>	<u>2,251,757</u>	<u>2,201,149</u>
Cost Recovery Percentage	16%	15%	16%
<b><i>Fresno County</i></b>			
Total Parks and Recreation Appropriations	\$ 3,478,174	\$ 3,693,309	\$ 4,164,677
Charges for Services Revenue	<u>774,888</u>	<u>864,390</u>	<u>851,354</u>
Cost Recovery Percentage	22%	23%	20%
<b><i>San Bernardino County - Regional Parks</i></b>			
Total Parks and Recreation Appropriations	\$ 8,398,716	\$ 10,453,757	\$ 10,026,441
Charges for Services Revenue	<u>5,329,435</u>	<u>5,822,648</u>	<u>5,874,617</u>
Cost Recovery Percentage	63%	56%	59%
<b><i>San Joaquin County - Parks &amp; Recreation</i></b>			
Total Parks and Recreation Appropriations	\$ 4,600,156	\$ 5,288,916	\$ 5,670,032
Charges for Services Revenue	<u>1,232,602</u>	<u>1,179,065</u>	<u>1,257,272</u>
Cost Recovery Percentage	27%	22%	22%

Sources: Kern County; Fresno County; San Bernardino County; San Joaquin County; Willdan Financial Services.

median home price in Kern County. Despite current market conditions we do not assume any decrease in assessed value. Conversely, no increase in assessed value is assumed going forward.

While a general obligation bond could provide a substantial amount of funding up front for the Parks Department’s capital needs, there are certain limiting factors that may influence the feasibility of such a bond. The County may be considering issuing a bond for other capital project needs. The political acceptability of issuing a bond



for Parks Department (or any other department's) projects may decrease in the short term as the housing market worsens. Also, 'voter fatigue' may cause voters to decline issuing a bond.

### Parcel Tax

Parcel taxes are a type of excise tax on the use of property. A great advantage of a parcel tax is its flexible use of revenues. Widely used throughout the state, these taxes are adopted as a special tax dedicated to specific purposes. All special taxes require two-thirds voter approval. Thus, the greatest challenge for this funding source is gaining voter approval.

Parcel taxes are usually levied as a flat amount per parcel with variances by major land use category. The parcel tax must not be correlated with assessed value to avoid being considered a property tax subject to the constraints of Proposition 13. The parcel tax on a specific property need not be correlated with the benefit received by that property from the expenditure of tax revenues.

The same telephone survey referenced in the previous section also polled residents on their preference between household tax (i.e. parcel

tax) and a user fee (i.e. increased cost for services) in Kern County. Per Research Network Ltd:

*"Four of every ten households polled (45%) stated they prefer a Household Tax. A comparable share of respondents (44%) stated they prefer a User Fee. An additional 6% of respondents volunteered they would like to see a combination of both of the tested alternatives while 5% of those polled stated they "don't want to pay anything" or "the County should pay for it from existing taxes."*

Unfortunately, the data from the poll does not suggest that the two thirds threshold for implementing a parcel tax can be met. As such, potential parcel tax revenues are excluded from this analysis.

### Sales Tax

An increase in sales tax could generate revenue for the Parks and Recreation Department. However, a state-wide sales tax increase has recently been implemented so it is assumed that the political acceptability of approving an increase in the sales tax rate is very low. As such, an estimate

of potential sales tax revenue is not included in this analysis.

### **8.7 POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL REVENUE SOURCES – MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS**

As with the previous section, funding alternatives are presented in order of estimated ease of approval. Revenue from any of the following funding sources can be spent on maintenance and operations for either existing or new park facilities.

#### **Potential Increase in Recreation Program Cost Recovery**

The largest funding source for Department costs, aside from the general fund contribution is charges for services. This typically includes fees for the use of facilities, recreation program fees, fishing and boating permits and other user-related charges. In FY2008-09, the Department anticipates that it will receive approximately \$2.2 million in revenue from charges for services. When compared to the Department’s total annual expenditures, this figure has accounted for between 15 and 16 percent of total costs since FY2006-07. Table 19 details recent cost recovery history in Kern County, and compares Kern County’s historical cost recovery to that of other counties. Among the counties surveyed Kern County recov-

ers the lowest percentage of its costs through charges for services.

Cost recovery for certain recreation programs could potentially be increased without negatively impacting recreational activity participation. Modest increases in Kern County’s cost recovery rate would both bring Kern County in line with its neighbors, and increase revenue for maintenance and operations. Increased cost recovery where feasible and appropriate would provide additional funding for operations and maintenance or capital projects. Funding would increase by about \$140,000 annually for every one percent increase in the cost recovery rate. The Parks Department should conduct a user fee study to set fees at a level that recovers costs at a higher rate.

Some user fees have been held artificially low as a policy decision to provide affordable recreational facilities (senior centers, community centers) to the community. This chapter is not recommending that all user fees be raised. Rather, the recommendation is that user fees, where appropriate, be raised to recover more costs.

#### **Benefit Assessment Districts**

Benefit assessment districts allow for the imposition of annual benefit

*Examples of buildings in need of renovation, repair or replacement*



assessments on property owners commensurate with the annual costs of an identified special benefit to that property. There are a number of different types of benefit assessment districts authorized by California State law. Some are limited to provision of public facilities (often using debt financing secured by a lien on property within the district) and some allow funding of operations and maintenance. Lighting and Landscaping Districts (L&Ls) are an example of one commonly used benefit assessment district that can be used for maintenance. L&Ls can finance the costs associated with landscaping and lighting public areas, including acquiring land for parks and the installation and maintenance of landscaping and recreation facilities. Benefit assessment districts have certain requirements that limit, but not eliminate, their applicability to the Kern County Parks Master Plan:

- Benefit assessments can only fund facilities or services that provide a special benefit to a distinct group of property owners. Special benefits must be in addition to any general benefits accruing to all properties in a jurisdiction. An increase in property value alone does not qualify as a special benefit.
- Property owners must approve a benefit assessment by majority

vote.<sup>1</sup> This constraint means that assessments are easier to impose on new development projects (which tend to have a limited number of land owners) as a condition of approval, rather than more broadly on all property owners.

- Property owners can repeal an existing benefit assessment using an initiative process unless the assessment is funding repayment of debt.

Benefit assessments are often imposed as a condition of approval for development projects, similar to land dedication requirements and development impact fees. The key difference is that benefit assessments allow for an ongoing revenue stream and therefore make them more suitable to fund ongoing costs. Unlike one-time fees paid by the developer, the funding burden falls on future property owners.

### **Selected Divestment of Community Buildings**

The Department owns and operates 26 community buildings. Community groups can reserve space in a community building for as little as \$25 annually. Some of the buildings are in various stages of dilapidation. The annual maintenance costs for some of the buildings exceed the revenue

<sup>1</sup> The vote is based on acreage weighted by the amount of the assessment.

from user charges for use of the buildings. While the County operates these facilities at a loss, it is important to note that the benefits to the community may outweigh the negative financial situation.

Several of these community buildings are located within cities and local parks districts. It is recommended that the County transfer ownership and maintenance responsibilities to the cities and park districts in which the buildings are located. The County would realize savings in maintenance costs, and the community buildings could still be used by the community. The cities and park districts would then be able to provide efficient maintenance for those facilities and the County would be relieved of maintenance responsibilities.

To prioritize which community buildings should be transferred, maximizing County, city, and park district efficiency, while serving community needs, the Department should conduct a performance audit of its community building inventory. Until a performance audit is conducted, estimates of revenue from transfers, if any, and cost savings due to efficiencies in maintenance responsibilities cannot be determined.

### **Public-Private Partnerships**

Public-private partnerships are contractual agreements between public agencies and private sector entities that provide the prospect for greater opportunities for the general public and greater benefits to the private sector partner by combining and leveraging the resources and risks of each through cooperation and consolidation of their respective resources. One typical public-private partnership situation is when a public agency constructs a facility (typically a sports complex) then leases that facility to a private entity in exchange for a share of revenue generated by the facility. The benefits to this situation are that the needs of the community are met, while the agency does not have to maintain the facility.

An example of a public-private partnership is the Big League Dreams sports complex in Manteca, San Joaquin County. Per the City Manager, the complex attracted 400,000 attendees in 2008, and paid the City \$372,000 in that year for use of the facility, which amounts to \$53,000 more revenue than projected. While the revenue estimates are encouraging, it must be noted that the City is still paying debt service on bonds used to finance the facility. The facility cost

**Table 20: Capital Facilities Funding Gap: 5.0 Acre Standard**

Source	Amount
Impact Fee Revenue <sup>1</sup>	\$ 344,966,000
Bond Measure <sup>2</sup>	<u>217,275,000</u>
Total New Revenue Sources	\$ 562,241,000
Total Needs	\$ 802,182,500
Deficit	\$ (239,941,500)

Note: Assumes provision of community parkland at standard of 5.0 acres per 1,000 residents.

<sup>1</sup> Impact fee revenue included here is a PRLIMINARY ESTIMATE and will only be realized if fees are adopted at the maximum justified level at standard of 5.0 acres per 1,000 residents. The County is currently conducting an impact fee nexus analysis, the results of which many vary from figures estimated here.

<sup>2</sup> Bond measure assumes an increase of 0.020% to the property tax rate.

Sources: Tables 12, 15 and 18; Willdan Financial Services.

**Table 21: Capital Facilities Funding Gap: 3.0 Acre Standard**

Source	Amount
Impact Fee Revenue <sup>1</sup>	\$ 304,774,000
Bond Measure <sup>2</sup>	<u>217,275,000</u>
Total New Revenue Sources	\$ 522,049,000
Total Needs	\$ 648,322,500
Deficit	\$ (126,273,500)

Note: Assumes provision of community parkland at standard of 3.0 acres per 1,000 residents.

<sup>1</sup> Impact fee revenue included here is a PRLIMINARY ESTIMATE and will only be realized if fees are adopted at the maximum justified level at standard of 3.0 acres per 1,000 residents. The County is currently conducting an impact fee nexus analysis, the results of which many vary from figures estimated here.

<sup>2</sup> Bond measure assumes an increase of 0.020% to the property tax rate.

Sources: Tables 12, 16 and 18; Willdan Financial Services.

approximately \$7 million more than a city owned and operated project.

Another example of a potential public-private partnership is an off-highway vehicle (OHV) park. Per state law, OHVs can only be ridden on designated public trails or on private land with the land owner’s approval. A privately run OHV park could potentially accommodate the demand for OHV facilities, and attract OHV

tourism to Kern County, while discouraging unlawful riding on lands, both public and private, not designated for OHV use .

While public private partnerships are worth consideration, estimates of costs, savings and revenue are unique to the nature of each situation, and are therefore excluded from this analysis.

## 8.8 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The plan recommends that the County provide significant additional recreational facilities within the 20 year planning horizon. Depending on the parkland acreage standard implemented, the Department could incur between \$648 and \$802 million in new facilities costs through the planning horizon. Maintaining those new facilities will cost between \$1.2 and \$1.6 million annually. Some of the needed new facilities can be associated with growth; however the County does not currently have a development impact fee in place. The following recommendations for funding the proposed improvements are divided into two categories: one time facility costs and ongoing maintenance and operations costs.

### Recommendations for Funding Facility Costs:

- Implement development impact fees at as high a level as possible
- Seek approval for voter approved bond measure
- Prioritize projects, and defer low-priority projects

Tables 20 and 21 detail the funding gap created between the potential funding sources and the costs of the recommended facilities, at a five acre per thousand residents local park standard and at a three acre per thousand residents local park standard, respectively. Quimby revenue is not included because the establishment of an impact fee at a standard higher than the current Quimby standard would generate more revenue than Quimby fee revenue. Consequently, impact fee revenue is included, and Quimby revenue is excluded. Divestment of underperforming assets (e.g. transfer of some facilities to independent park districts or cities in which they are located) could not be reasonably estimated, so revenue from that

source is excluded from these tables. Additionally, any potential benefits from public-private partnerships cannot be estimated, so they are also excluded from this analysis. Based on reasonably anticipated funding sources, approximately \$240 million worth of projects under the five acre per thousand residents scenario, or \$126 million worth of projects under the three acres per thousand acre scenario must be deferred until after the planning horizon.

### Recommendations for Funding Increased Maintenance and Operations Costs:

- Increase user charges to achieve a higher services cost recovery rate through a user fee study
- Implement benefit assessment districts in areas of new growth for funding local park maintenance
- Transfer ownership of selected community buildings to cities and local park districts, to realize efficiencies in maintenance costs
- Pursue public-private partnerships