



PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN

OCTOBER 2020



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

City Council:

- Tim Elinski, Mayor
- Michael Mathews, Vice Mayor
- Tosca Henry, Council Member
- Doug Hulse, Council Member
- Ruben Jauregui, Council Member
- Jackie Nairn, Council Member
- Debbie Wilden, Council Member

Parks and Recreation Commission:

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- Doug Hulse, Commissioner
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Special thanks to the many Cottonwood residents and local area stakeholders who shared their valuable input and time through the community questionnaire and participation in community meetings to contribute to the City of Cottonwood Parks & Recreation Master Plan.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Image Source: Norris Design

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

APPROACH

The City of Cottonwood Parks and Recreation Master Plan results from a series of objective evaluation tools and community outreach processes. The combination of these approaches results in a plan built on community ideas, informed by land use policies, relevant trends, demographic analysis, operations, capital, and budgetary priorities. Various components of the plan approach include:

- Relevant Plan Review: A comprehensive assessment of local and regional plans adopted by the City of Cottonwood, Yavapai County, and other regional governing bodies.
- Community and Stakeholder Engagement: Outreach efforts to gain feedback from community members and local organizations affiliated with parks and recreation.
- Inventory and Analysis: Review of the community, existing parks and recreation facilities and programming, and determination of potential improvements.
- Level of Service Analysis: Evaluation of the level of service being provided to the community compared with local, regional, and national trends. Identify potential gaps in existing facilities and programming.
- Recommendations: Identification of goals and recommendations for future park and recreation facilities, programming, services, partnerships, and awareness.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Public involvement was vital to the Master Plan process. While the process was unique and different due to restrictions on gathering and interpersonal interaction, engagement with key stakeholders, community members, and City staff resulted in a plan that reflects the goals and priorities of the community and has identified a direction to move forward. The planning process included various methods to gain feedback, understand the context of the community, and identify the needs and priorities for parks, trails, and open spaces. This process included:

- Development of a dedicated Parks and Recreation Master Plan website (cottonwoodparkmasterplan.com), designed to inform the public and provide a means of communication with the project team
- Community Questionnaire, professionally administered by Corona Insights
- A series of virtual community open house sessions with City staff, stakeholder groups, and Cottonwood citizens
- Parks and Recreation Commission virtual meeting
- 14 meetings held with Town staff and stakeholders
- Detailed on-site inventory and analysis site visit
- Total contacts: 373

AREAS OF FOCUS

The following areas of focus resulted from a combination of community input received through both virtual open houses, stakeholder engagement, community questionnaire results, additional feedback received from citizens, and City feedback. These areas of focus guide the overall recommendations, both on a system and individual park level.

- 1. Transition to Stability**
- 2. Connection**
- 3. Reinvestment**
- 4. Riverpark and Trail System**

SYSTEM RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations apply to the park system as a whole:

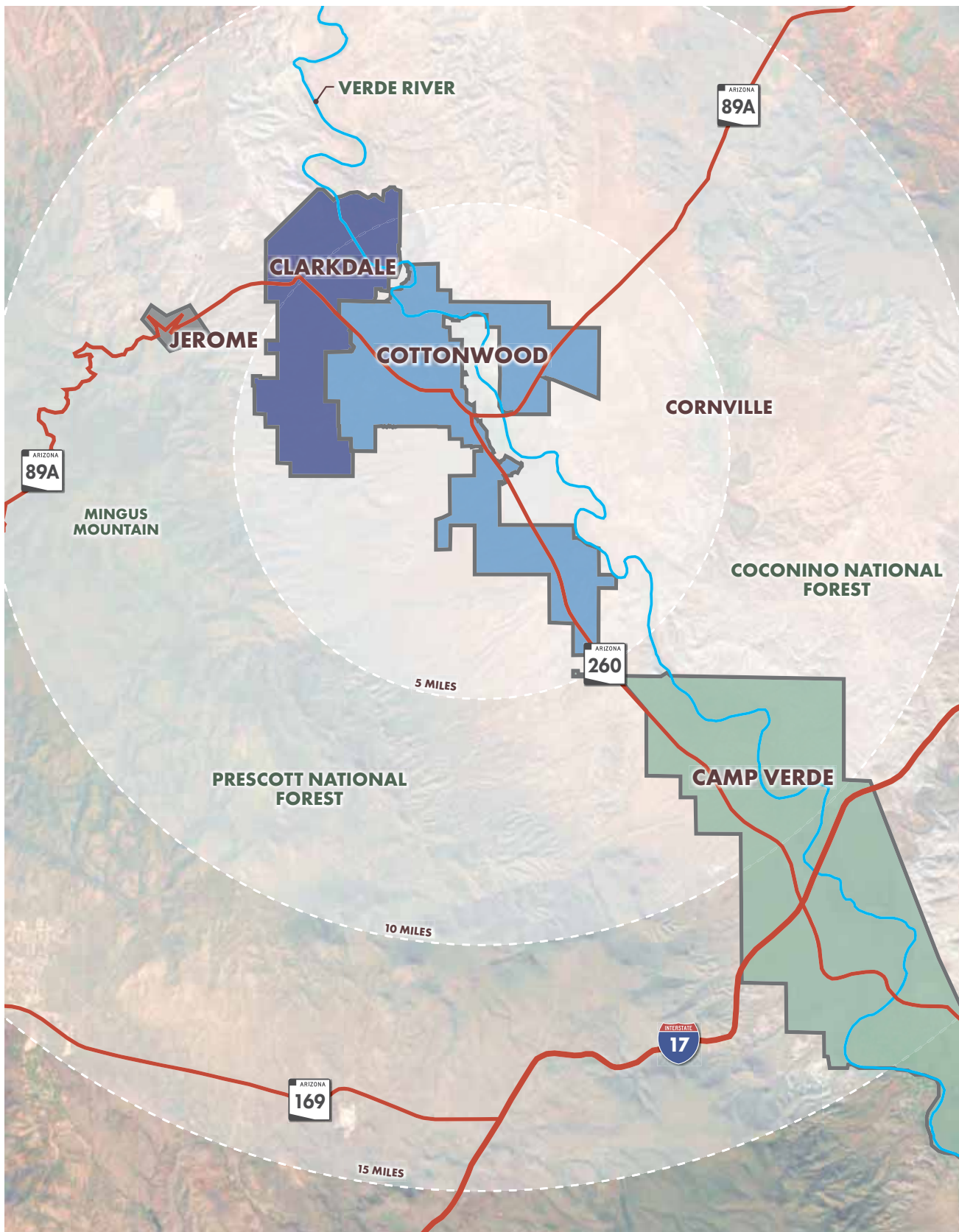
1. **Reinvest in Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities**
2. **Provide Additional Amenities at Each Park**
3. **Continue to Improve Connectivity and Passive Recreation by Expanding Trails Network**
4. **Preserve the Natural Beauty and Scenic Views at Parks and Recreation Facilities**
5. **Diversify Recreation Programming to Include More Age Groups**
6. **Increase Verde River Recreation Opportunities and Access Points**
7. **Provide More Water Recreation Opportunities for Youth**
8. **Identify and Plan for Future Park Space**

TOP PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

The highest priority recommendations were determined from public outreach results and City feedback.

#	PARK	POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT	COST	PRIORITY
1	Riverfront Park	Develop the Riverwalk, an earthen trail with seating nodes and environmental signage along the Verde River.	\$\$	Short Term
2	Riverfront Park	Convert spray irrigation from potable to reclaimed water. Up to 300,000 gpd of reclaimed water is available from the Wastewater Treatment Plant.	\$\$\$	Short Term
	Cottonwood Kids Park	Update irrigation system, including adding a booster pump if needed.	\$\$	
3	Citywide	Install two new Gateway Signs.	\$\$	Short Term
4	Bill Bowden Memorial Park	Add a large play area with permanent structure.	\$\$\$	Short Term
5	Bill Bowden Memorial Park	Reorganize site furnishings and provide hardscape connections from parking to benches and equipment.	\$	Short Term
6	Riverfront Park	Install riparian vegetation, enhanced tree planting in the flood zone (possibly a volunteer event).	\$\$	Short Term
7	Garrison Park	Make improvements to the play area: expand the play area, add shade canopy and seat walls.	\$\$	Short Term
8	Old Town Activity Park	Add shade trees and benches along the event lawn.	\$	Short Term
9	Cottonwood Kids Park	Add entry gates and signage at the ramada and restroom building from the parking area.	\$\$	Short Term
10	Citywide	Continue to develop a regional multiuse trail network. Collaborate with regional agencies and adjacent jurisdictions on future trail extensions.	\$\$\$	Long Term

INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

The City of Cottonwood is located in central Arizona along the “Wild and Scenic” Verde River, approximately sixteen miles southwest of the tourist destination of Sedona and 130 miles north of the state capital, Phoenix. Cottonwood is a rare find, a smaller community of just over twelve thousand residents which enjoys the benefits of a semi-arid temperate, mostly sunny climate and numerous adjacent natural resources – including the Verde River, the Prescott National Forest, the Coconino National Forest, and Dead Horse Ranch State Park. Cottonwood’s early history is rich with Native American culture, agricultural roots, and copper smelting to process ore from the nearby town of Jerome. Cottonwood first incorporated as a town in 1960, and the population size has grown over thirty percent (30%) since 2000, even more significantly than nearby communities of Sedona, Clarkdale, and Camp Verde.

In 2020, the City of Cottonwood began the process of developing their first Parks and Recreation Master Plan. To balance growth and growing community needs while providing a high level of service for citizens, the City identified a need for a strategic master plan to guide future park growth and development. This document will establish an achievable vision for the City over the next ten years, to provide a roadmap to manage and enhance existing parks while planning for future parks and recreational amenities throughout the community. This plan has been informed by community input, a comprehensive inventory and analysis of existing parks facilities, and future land use plans and policies.

The master plan process was facilitated during the global COVID-19 pandemic. The community, stakeholders and staff adapted to this new challenge and changing variables. The master plan recognizes the immediate impact the pandemic is having on the City and the parks and recreation system while establishing an attainable vision for the City’s future.

PURPOSE

Parks and recreation are essential to any community. In the City of Cottonwood, established parks, recreation facilities, and trails provide a place for community events, informal gathering spaces for families to utilize playgrounds and various amenities, bicycle and pedestrian connections, and reflect cultural heritage and values inherent to the community. Parks and recreation enhance the quality of life, increase economic value, provide environmental and habitat benefits, and support health and wellness.

The purpose of this document is to evaluate the City of Cottonwood’s existing assets and operations to inform the future needs of the community. The master plan will serve as a tool for decision-makers to prioritize resources for existing and future parks and recreation facilities, programs, and sustainable operations and maintenance. To summarize, the Master Plan will:

- Understand the level of service being provided to the community
- Identify the goals and priorities of residents and community leaders to determine the future planning for parks, trails, and recreation facilities and programs
- Evaluate available resources and how to invest most strategically
- Support economic development and public health and wellness
- Develop a prioritized action plan to assist the City with data driven decisions

APPROACH

The City of Cottonwood Parks and Recreation Master Plan results from a series of objective evaluation tools and community outreach processes. The combination of these approaches results in a plan built on community ideas, informed by land use policies, relevant trends, demographic analysis, operations, capital, and budgetary priorities. Various components of the plan approach include:

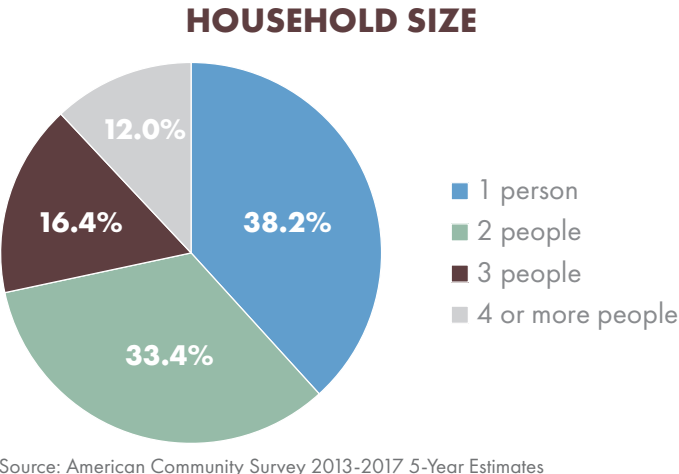
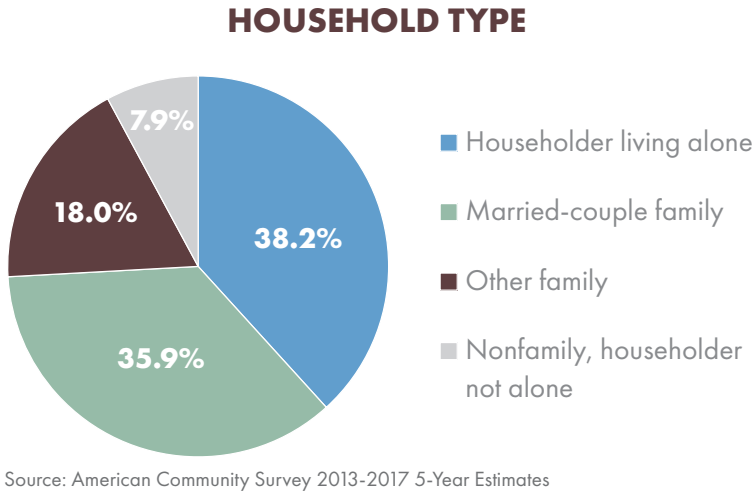
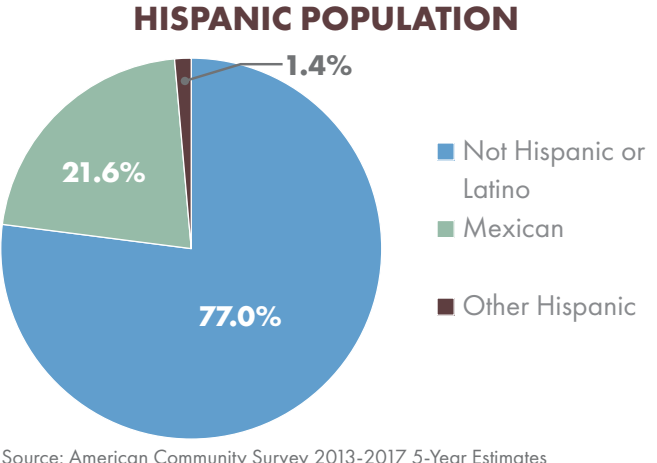
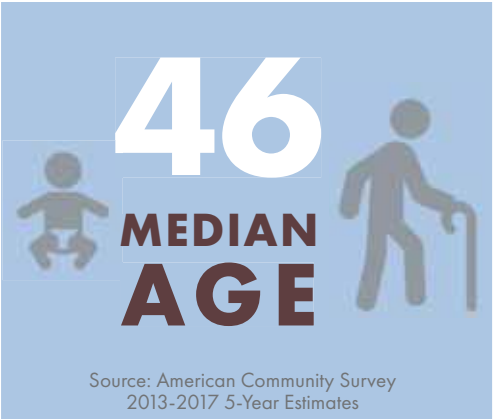
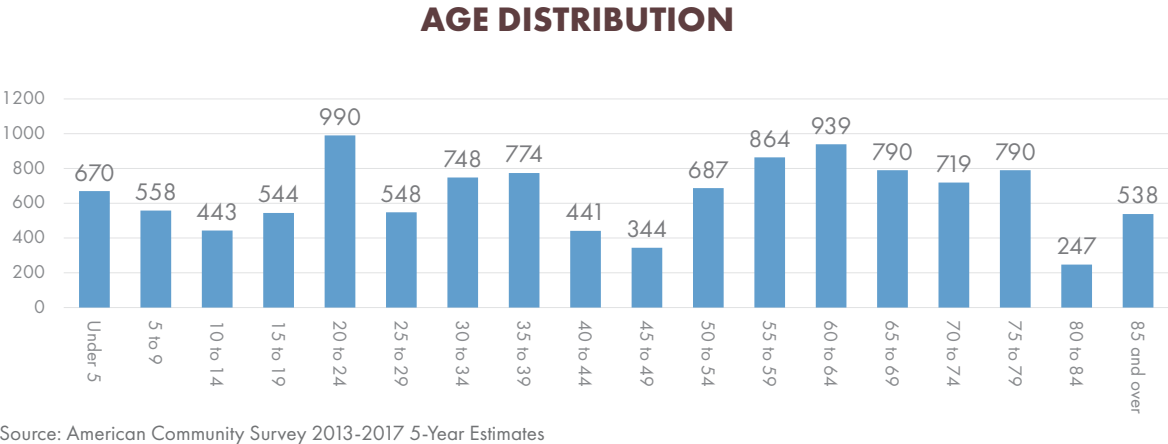
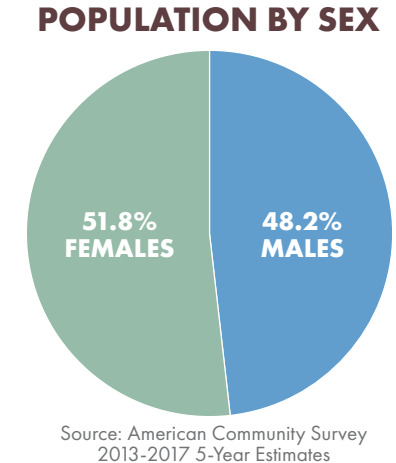
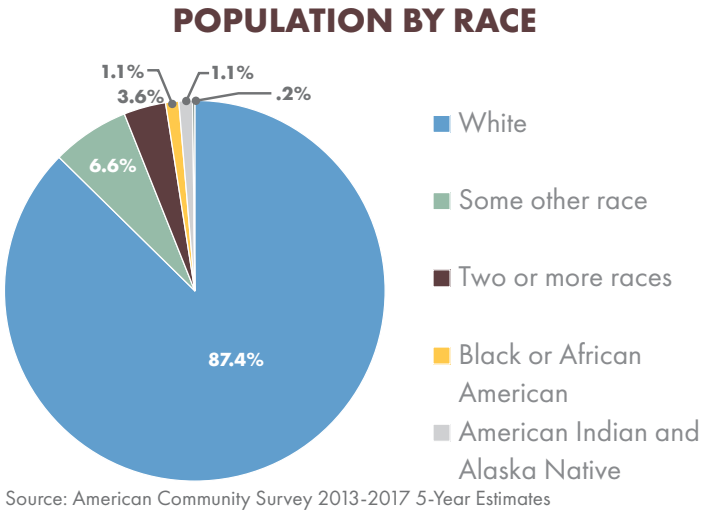
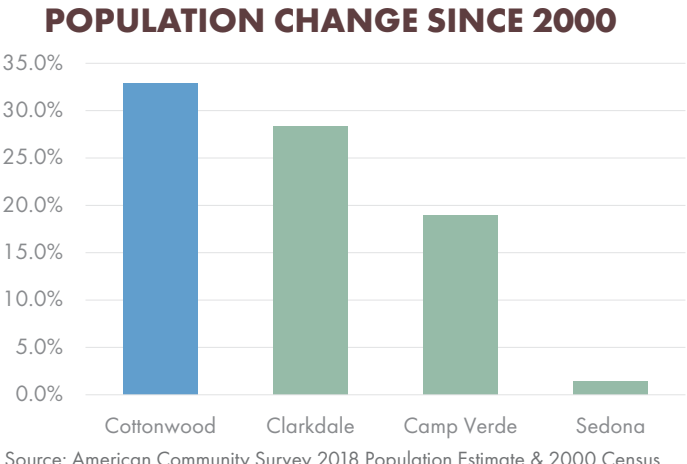
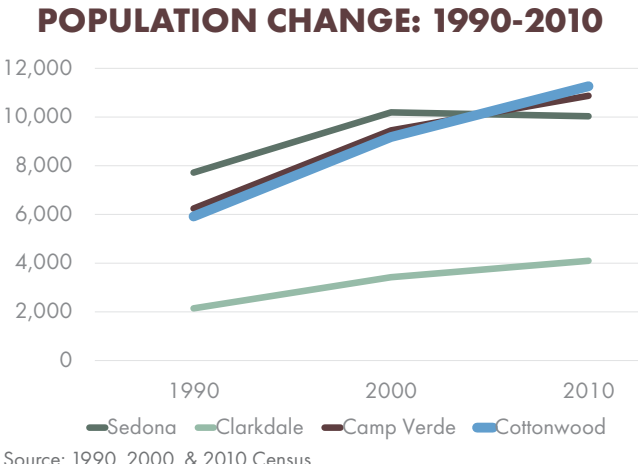
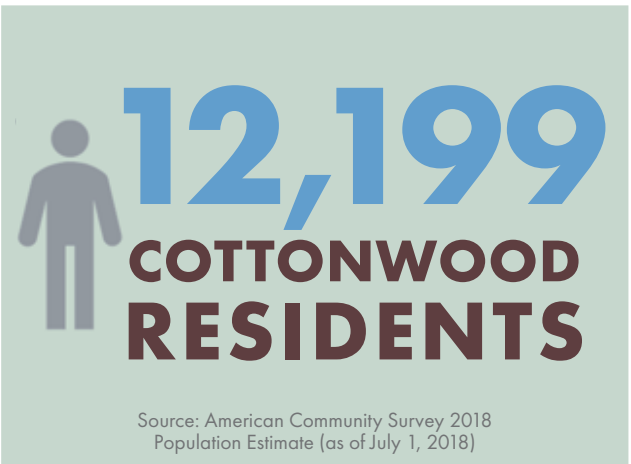
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COMMUNITY PROFILE

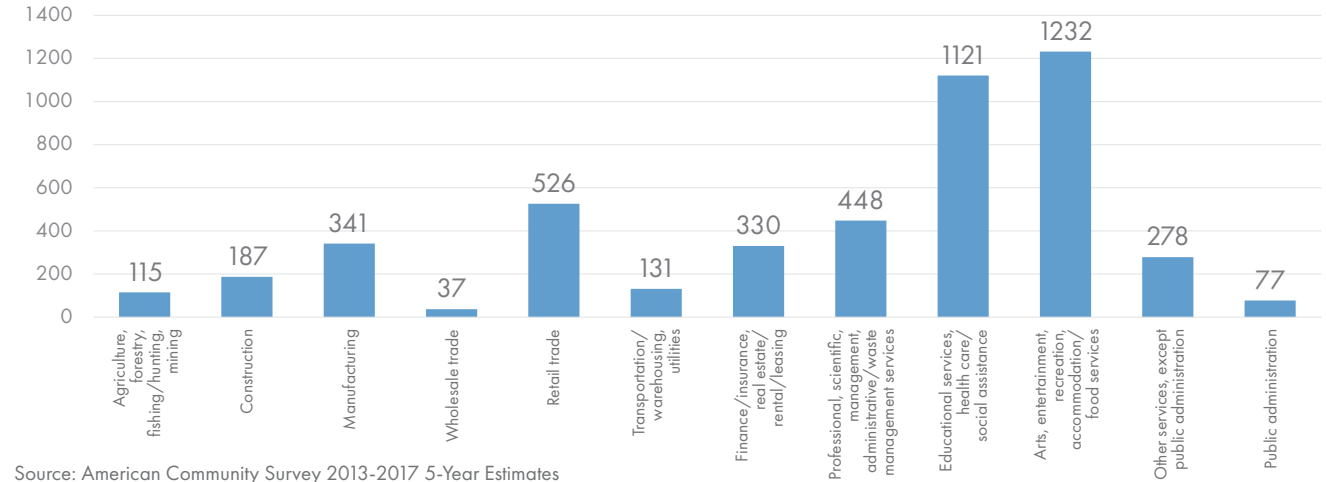
The City of Cottonwood has grown substantially in the past three decades, faster than its adjacent Verde Valley cities of Sedona, Clarkdale, and Camp Verde. To better understand Cottonwood and its residents, early in the master planning inventory and analysis process, key demographics, climate data, and tourism information were compiled from the following sources:

- American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2013-2018)
- United States Census Bureau
- Cottonwood Chamber of Commerce
- Cottonwood Visitor Center
- Köppen-Geiger Climate Map (2017)

A graphic summarization of the Community Profile is on the following pages.



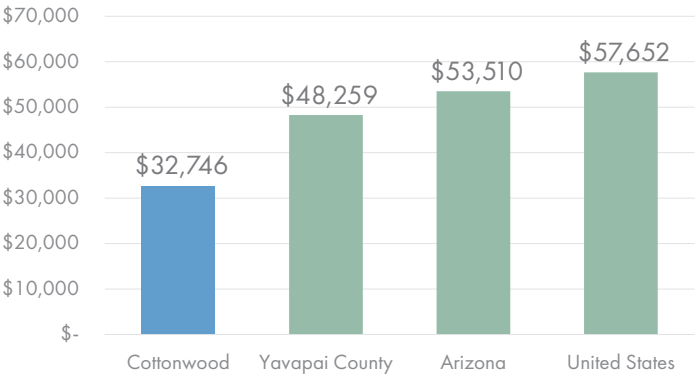
WORKERS BY INDUSTRY



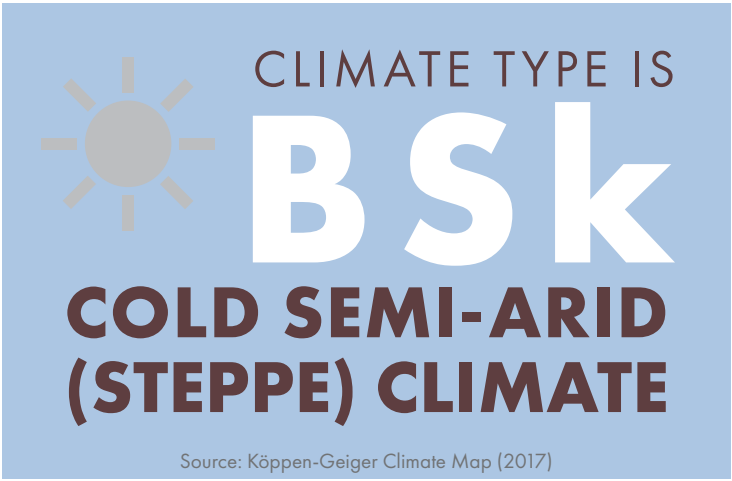
Source: American Community Survey 2013-2017 5-Year Estimates



MEDIAN INCOME COMPARISON

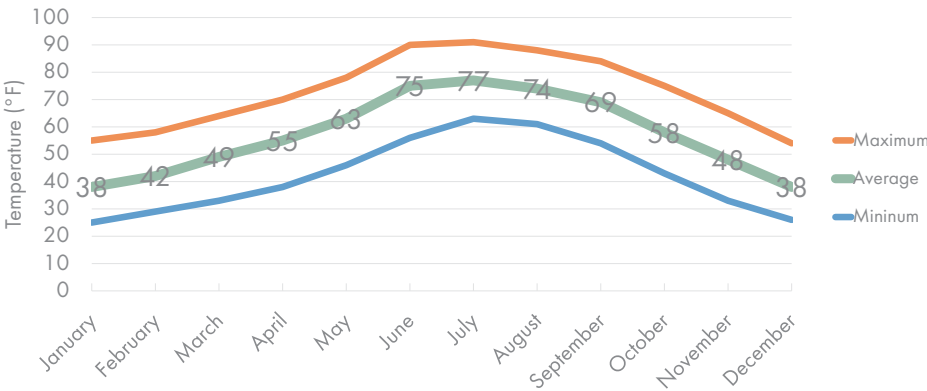


Source: American Community Survey 2013-2017 5-Year Estimates



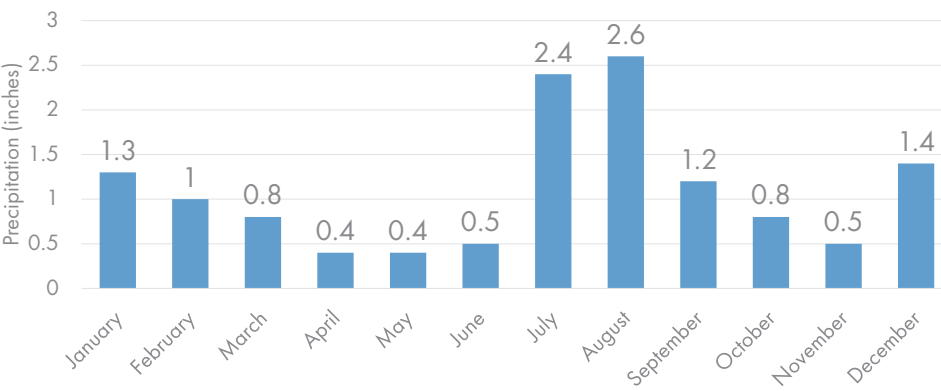
Source: Köppen-Geiger Climate Map (2017)

AVERAGE MONTHLY TEMPERATURES



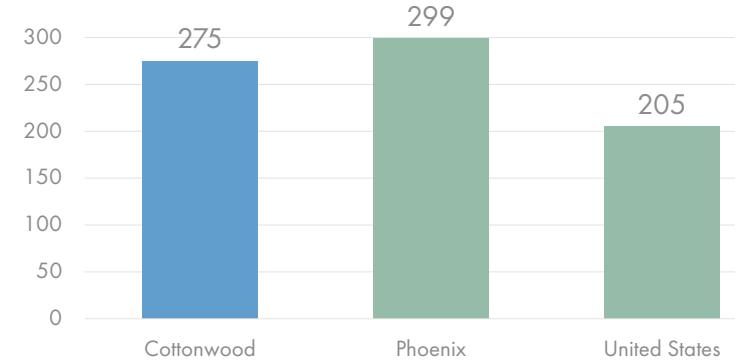
Source: visitcottonwoodaz.org

AVERAGE MONTHLY PRECIPITATION



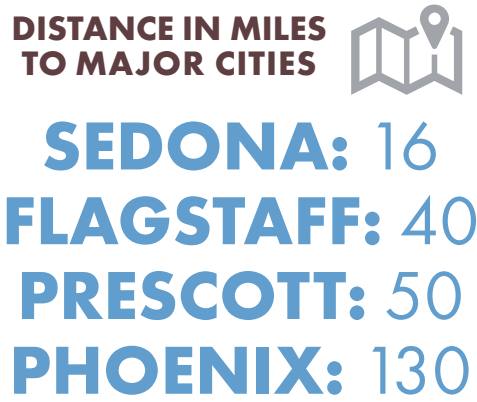
Source: visitcottonwoodaz.org

SUNNY DAYS PER YEAR



Source: bestplaces.net

DISTANCE IN MILES TO MAJOR CITIES



Source: Cottonwood Chamber of Commerce



Source: Cottonwood Chamber of Commerce

GOVERNOR'S TOURISM AWARD (2012)
&
LONELY PLANET'S TOP 10 PLACES TO VISIT (2013)



AWARDED TO **OLD TOWN COTTONWOOD**



Source: visitcottonwoodaz.org

RELEVANT PLAN REVIEW



Image Source: tripadvisor.com

RELEVANT PLAN REVIEW

Previous planning efforts by the City of Cottonwood and adjacent regional authorities have establish a strong framework which supports the development and regulation of parks and recreation systems, both on a local and regional scale. This section highlights key aspects of these documents as they have helped inform this planning process.

COTTONWOOD GENERAL PLAN 2025

Most recently updated in 2014, the City of Cottonwood's *General Plan* provides a comprehensive guide for future growth and development decisions for the next decade or more. The *General Plan* includes policy guidance for topics including land use, circulation, open space and parks, growth areas, environmental planning, water resources, development costs, housing, historic preservation, and economic development.

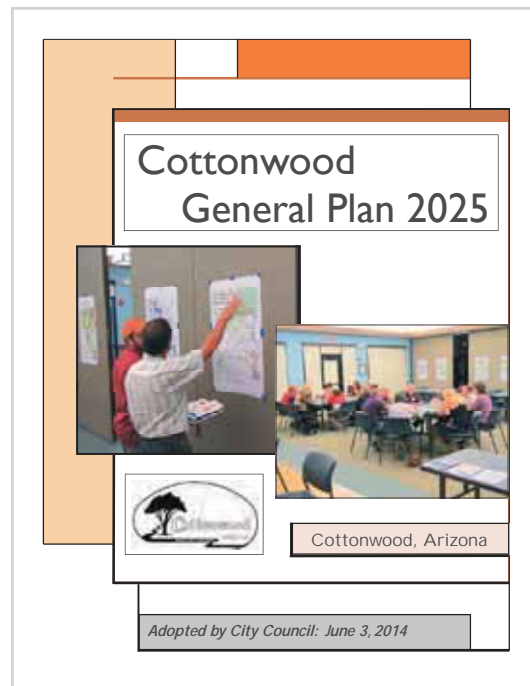
Vision and Values

While there is a section dedicated specifically to open space and parks, many plan sections relate directly or indirectly to parks and recreation policy or goals. Two general guiding principles, identified in the Vision and Values component, indicate the City's dedication to their existing natural resources: "Sustainability and Stewardship" and "Support Healthy Natural Environment." Throughout the visioning process, the public identified the Verde Valley's primary recreational treasure as the Verde River, expressing interest in new access trails to the river and expanded year-round recreational opportunities for all age groups.

Land Use

Section F. Planning Sub-Areas of the Land Use component breaks up the City into manageable study areas, many of which address area-specific parks and recreation recommendations. Prominent examples are listed below:

- Old Town & Parks:
 - "Preserve mature landscaping and trees in this area"
 - "Support use of Del Monte Wash for a trail network for recreational purposes"
 - "Continue support for civic events in the area"
 - "Provide improved pathway connections for walking and bicycling from central Old Town area to surrounding neighborhoods"
- Main and Mingus:
 - "Consider bicycle and pedestrian improvements"
 - "Explore options for small park development in the neighborhood"
 - "Access easements should also be obtained where possible along the Silver Springs Wash and Railroad Wash to preserve an open natural corridor and enable access to the Verde River"
- Clemenceau:
 - "Pursue opportunities to use Del Monte Wash for open space and passive recreational uses, including trails and walking paths, with access from adjacent developments and neighborhoods"
- Airport and West Side Communities:
 - "Protect natural wash areas as open space networks and integrate trails adjacent to the wash corridors. Work with adjacent public land agencies to coordinate trail access"
- Verde Village/Palisades:
 - "Consider possible easements to establish a trail along Silver Springs Wash west of 6th Street"



J. Local Food Systems, a subsection of 3. Land Use, addresses the existing community garden at Riverfront Park and lists other possible outlets for local food systems, all of which relate directly or indirectly to existing parks facilities and programmatic needs. The Land Use component concludes with the following relevant goals and objectives:

- Objective 3-6. F: Use community development block grants and other grant resources to improve housing, streets, sidewalks and parks in the older neighborhoods.
- Objective 3-7. A: Pursue the establishment and expansion of parks and open space in Cottonwood neighborhoods to enhance social interaction and create a sense of place.
- Objective 3-7. C: Protect steep slope hillsides, natural washes and scenic view opportunities through appropriate design standards and site development regulations, including through implementation of the Hillside Development Ordinance adopted in January 2013.
- Objective 3-9. E: Provide support and resources for the Cottonwood Community Garden and provide opportunities for expanding or establishing new community gardens and school garden projects.
- Objective 3-9. H: Continue support for the Cottonwood farmers market summer series, including consideration of new and expanded facilities for the program.

Circulation

Many goals and corresponding objectives in the Circulation element relate to bicycle and pedestrian routes. Both topics are more specifically explored in more recent planning documents, the *Cottonwood Riverfront Trails and Recreation Master Plan* and the *Cottonwood Bicycle Plan*.

Open Space and Parks

An entire element of the plan is dedicated to Open Space and Parks, focused on identifying opportunities for open space preservation and development of recreation in and around the City. Besides providing a detailed inventory of existing natural resources, parks and recreation facilities and programs, and trails and open space access points, the section also lists specific goals and objectives. All seven goals and related objectives are relevant to the current master planning efforts, but some specific objectives are listed below for reference:

- Objective 5-3. B: Consider neighborhood park acquisition and development as part of the Capital Improvement Program, as well as through other sources of funding.
- Objective 5-3. C: Ensure new master planned communities, planned area developments and residential subdivisions provide land for neighborhood park sites as part of the rezoning and subdivision process.
- Objective 5-3. E: Support volunteer programs that provide opportunities for citizens to assist with various parks and recreation activities. Such programs should include leadership training, established standards and recognition programs.
- Objective 5-4. A: Establish a tiered system of regional, city-wide and neighborhood types of park facilities throughout the city to meet the needs of people with different interests and skill levels.
- Objective 5-4. B: Identify potential locations for neighborhood park sites as part of a city-wide neighborhood revitalization program. Include various types of facilities, such as playgrounds, picnic areas and seating areas in neighborhood parks.
- Objective 5-6. A: Work with private developers to incorporate trails and open space networks within new planned developments and subdivisions.

Economic Development

Parks and recreation are an economic development driver for the City. Hiking, biking, river activities, sports and community events are key to tourism in the Verde Valley. The master plan recognizes the need to promote awareness for the area, as identified in Economic Development Goal 12-11, “Brand and promote Cottonwood as a tourism destination and gateway to other attractions in the Verde Valley”. This relates the importance of parks and recreation systems to the greater tourism goals for the City and Valley. Specific relevant objectives include:

- Objective 12-11. E: Support development of a regional system of high-quality river access points and multi-use hiking, biking and equestrian trails.

- Objective 12-11. G: Work with Arizona State Parks to promote recreational opportunities at Dead Horse Ranch State Park, including through cooperative marketing programs with other area attractions and activities.
- Objective 12-11. H: Promote Cottonwood as a destination and base for the full range of regional outdoor recreation opportunities, including boating, fishing, bird watching, hiking, climbing, hang gliding, sky diving, ballooning, etc.

2019-2020 COTTONWOOD STRATEGIC PLAN

The *2019-2020 Cottonwood Strategic Plan* is a concise document outlining specific objectives for City officials, organized by strategic initiatives, topics, and objectives, with corresponding progress statuses, due dates, and responsible departments. The following objectives relate directly to parks and recreation policy:

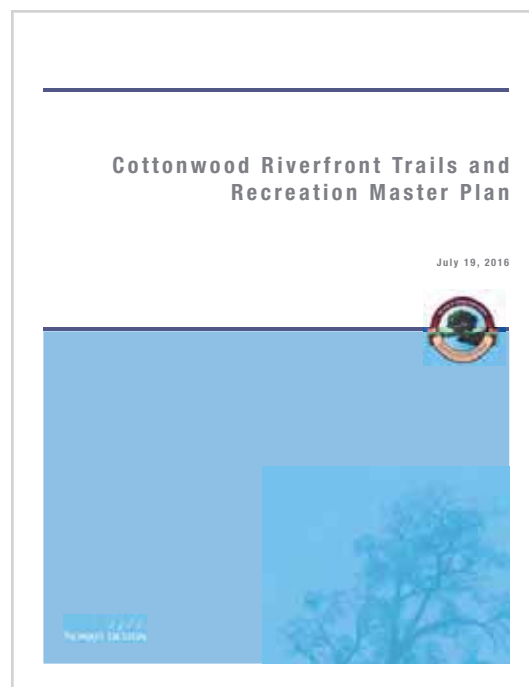
- A(2)(a): Develop/maintain outdoor recreation in a manner that promotes economic growth.
- A(3)(a)(i): Assist Parks & Recreation with assessing bike lane strategies and review of necessary/needed wayfinding signage
- B(1)(b): Develop plan to expand reclaimed and potable water infrastructure throughout Cottonwood
 - Many objectives listed relate directly to water usage efficiency related to parks irrigation, especially converting irrigation to reclaimed water.
- B(4)(a): Create access and signage to the Verde River
- C(1): Evaluate Use of our Community Parks
 - The subsequent eight objectives relate to park events, alternative funding options, and supporting a parks master plan – all relevant to current master planning efforts.
- C(3)(a): Develop promotional plans for Arts and Entertainment District, Trails Master Plan, Parks Master Plan, Riverfront Wastewater Plant, and Cottonwood Community Club House
- D(1)(b): Continue to develop a regional transit system to include bikes, trails and sidewalks
 - A few objectives listed relate to bike safety, trail easements, and regional trails collaboration with Clarkdale/ Yavapai County.

COTTONWOOD RIVERFRONT TRAILS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

The *Trails and Recreation Master Plan* was completed in 2016, serving as a guide for a regional trail system in Cottonwood which ties in directly with the City's recreational system. Public outreach was an important component for the *Trails and Recreation Master Plan*, identifying citizen desire for natural or wilderness trails over all other types. As is still likely the case three years later, connecting to the natural environment is important to residents.

Aside from providing final trail system proposal graphics, maps, and signage concepts, the plan also identifies specific prioritized recommendations, the following which relate directly to current master planning efforts:

- #1: Secure funding for trails development.
 - Specifically, the plan suggests utilizing Community Development Block Grants for trail development in areas of low to moderate household income, a strategy which carries over to parks improvements.
- #5: Develop a comprehensive and City-wide Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
 - The goal is to maximize integration between parks and trails.



Many remaining strategies are specifically related to desired trail connections throughout Cottonwood, including connections to the Verde River, important community assets, and even regional connections.

PRESCOTT NATIONAL FOREST VERDE TRAILS AND ACCESS PLAN

The *Verde Trails and Access Plan* is primarily an environmental assessment prepared for and by the Prescott National Forest in anticipation of nonmotorized trail improvements in the Verde Valley. Of the project areas identified, the City of Cottonwood is adjacent to the West Mingus Avenue Area. It should be noted that a large southern portion of City limits, mostly along State Route 260, overlaps with the Prescott National Forest and is considered public land. While very little of the document relates directly to parks and recreation planning within Cottonwood, this document serves as a useful reference for future trail planning efforts, particularly those which tie into the Cottonwood trail system.

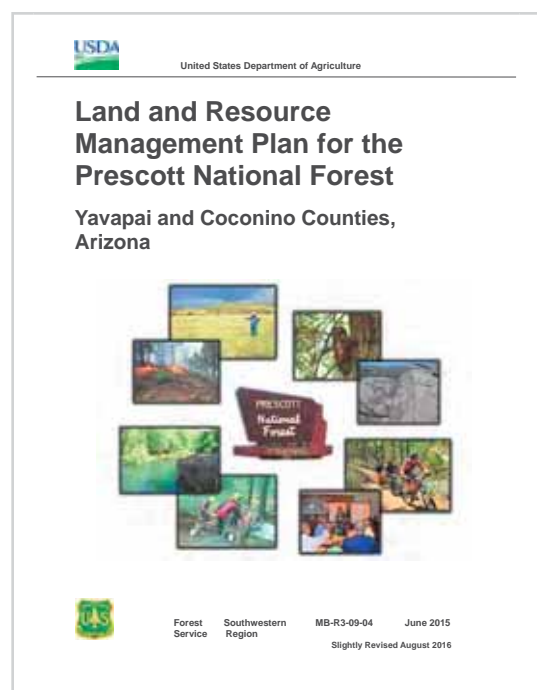
PRESCOTT NATIONAL FOREST LAND & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The *Prescott National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan* is primarily intended to guide responsible land management for the Prescott National Forest based on current information, balancing recreational needs and stewardship while protecting available natural resources. As identified in the plan, Cottonwood is located in the Verde Valley Management Area, with a southern portion of the city (along State Route 260) overlapping with the Prescott National Forest. Community visions for the Verde Valley area are noted in the plan, focusing on individual community cultural identities, nonmotorized multiuse trail connectivity, open space and mountain view preservation, and a harmonized relationship between recreationists and nature.

The plan focuses primarily on desired conditions and the necessary objectives to reach or retain those conditions – for example, maintaining air quality, reducing prevalence of native plant species, etc. While these conditions do not relate directly to the City of Cottonwood's parks, it is important for the City's natural resource and open space management policies to be in alignment with the adjacent National Forest lands.

The plan identifies several additional objectives relating to regional recreational opportunities, which impact programming considerations within the City of Cottonwood:

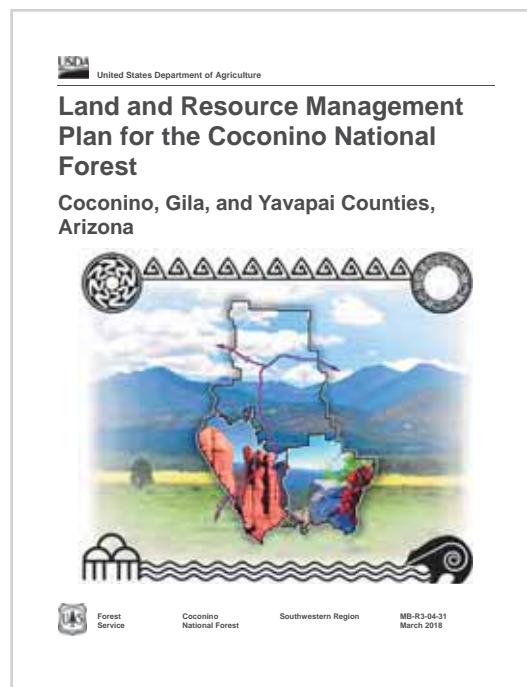
- Objective 7: Add one to two developed recreation areas during the ten years following plan approval.
- Objective 8: Create up to four designated dispersed camping areas during the ten years following plan approval.
- Objective 13: Work with partners to maintain and enhance recreational fishing opportunities in two lake/pond sites during the ten years following plan approval.
- Objective 29: Act on up to ten opportunities, as presented and feasible, to acquire lands within and around the Prescott National Forest to retain open space values during the ten years following plan approval.



COCONINO NATIONAL FOREST LAND & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The *Coconino National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan* is primarily intended to guide responsible land management for the Coconino National Forest based on current information, balancing recreational needs and stewardship while protecting available natural resources. As identified in the plan, Cottonwood is located in the Red Rock Ranger District and in the Verde Valley Management Area. Eastern portions of city limits overlap with the Coconino National Forest.

The plan focuses primarily on desired conditions and the necessary objectives to reach or retain those conditions – for example, maintaining air quality, reducing prevalence of native plant species, etc. While these conditions do not relate directly to the City of Cottonwood's parks, it is important for the City's natural resource and open space management policies to be in alignment with the adjacent National Forest lands. Desired conditions related specifically to recreation are listed in the plan, centered on quality of life enhancement for residents and tourists through a broad range of recreational opportunities and access to natural but protected places, balancing environmental stewardship with user needs. In addition, the plan identifies several objectives relating to regional recreational opportunities, including the proposed approval of at least four sites for recreation events and larger group gatherings within ten years of plan approval.



OTHER ACTIVE REGIONAL PLANNING EFFORTS

Regional agencies are currently working on the *Verde River Connections (A Comprehensive & Strategic Recreation Action Plan for Yavapai County and the Verde Front)* and the *Verde Recreation Plan 2020*. At this time, these plans are in development and should be consulted when a draft is available to evaluate opportunities to for partnering.

COTTONWOOD BICYCLE PLAN

In response to city-wide bicycling demand, identified in part by the *General Plan* public engagement process, the City developed the *Cottonwood Bicycle Plan* to encourage bicycling by guiding related policy, programs, and infrastructure. Particularly noteworthy is the plan's identification of meeting needs of both enthusiastic riders – those who will ride regardless of the current network – and interested but concerned riders – those who require low-stress conditions.

Several achievable goals and objectives are identified in the plan which relate directly to current parks and recreation master planning efforts:

- Objective ENG-5: "Integration with public transit" – particularly by providing appropriate bicycle parking at stops near parks and recreation facilities.
- Objective ENG-7: "Increase bicycle parking near major destinations" – including parks and recreation facilities
- Objective EDU-2: "Support bicycling education for adults" – which could easily coincide with parks and recreation programming
- Objective ENC-2: "Develop programs that encourage new riders through targeted outreach" – which could coincide with parks and recreation programming, including potential safety classes, etc.


COTTONWOOD MUNICIPAL CODE


Various elements of the Cottonwood Municipal Code govern parks and open space planning and set forth applicable requirements. Chapter 12.12 of the Municipal Code references the 1993 Parks and Recreation Code for the City (including later amendments), which defines specific rules of usage and reservation fees for City parks and recreation facilities.

Section 407 of the Zoning Ordinance sets forth landscaping requirements for development within Cottonwood, outlining open space and landscape areas required for street frontage, property lines, parking lots, and building areas. The section also identifies acceptable and prohibited plant species, ensuring prevalence of lower water use and native plants in new development. For PAD submittals (Section 424 of the Zoning Ordinance), open space shall not be less than thirty percent (30%) of the acreage of residential and mixed-use development parcels and not less than ten percent (10%) of the acreage of commercial or industrial parcels. Other zoning districts do not require a specific percentage or land area be set aside as natural or developed open space, only that landscaping requirements must be followed.

The Subdivision Ordinance requires, as part of the Appendix: Neighborhood Design Policies, that subdivision design should consider an appropriate amount of public land or open space as specified in the General Plan and per guidelines established by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).

PLANNING PROCESS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT





City of Cottonwood Parks and Recreation Master Plan

The City of Cottonwood is currently undergoing a master plan to guide the future of your parks and recreation system. Cottonwood currently enjoys a variety of city parks, facilities and natural recreation areas. The City has contracted with Matrix Design to develop the parks and recreation master plan. With your knowledge and insight, we aspire to develop a parks and recreation master plan that will serve the City well for years to come.

Please use the contact form below to get engaged with the master planning process!

What is a Master Plan's Purpose?

- Guide decision-making
- Provide insight into changing community needs and perceptions
- Understand level of service being provided to the community
- Establish suitable inventory and how to mold strategically invest
- Develop a prioritized action plan that is City Council approved

Contact Us:

For more information on upcoming meetings and project updates, please contact us!

Name *

First Name Last Name

Email *


Subject *

Message *


Submit

July 16, 2020 Virtual Open House 2

[View the Presentation](#)




June 4, 2020 Virtual Open House 1



Community Questionnaire

Findings coming soon.



View the Parks & Rec Master Plan Overview

[Master Plan Overview](#)

PLANNING PROCESS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Public involvement was an important component of the Master Plan process. While the process was unique and different due to restrictions on gathering and interpersonal interaction, engagement with key stakeholders, community members, and City staff resulted in a plan that reflects the goals and priorities of the community and has identified a direction to move forward. The planning process included various methods to gain feedback, understand the context of the community, and identify the needs and priorities for parks, trails, and open spaces. This process included:

- Development of a dedicated Parks and Recreation Master Plan website (cottonwoodparkmasterplan.com), designed to inform the public and provide a means of communication with the project team
- Community Questionnaire, professionally administered by Corona Insights
- A series of virtual community open house sessions with City staff, stakeholder groups, and Cottonwood citizens
- Parks and Recreation Commission virtual meeting
- 14 meetings held with Town staff and stakeholders
- Detailed on-site inventory and analysis site visit
- Total contacts: 373

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

A stakeholder meeting was held with representatives from various organizations within Cottonwood and the greater Verde Valley area on May 27, 2020 at 10:30 am via Zoom video conference. These organizations currently provide services and programs that support the continued development of parks and recreation facilities and programs within the City of Cottonwood. Throughout this process, these stakeholders provided important contributions to the Master Plan process. Following is a list of key topics or takeaways from the stakeholder discussion:

- The importance of connectivity and access, particularly through the 10-Minute Walk campaign, or providing a park or recreation asset within a 10-minute walk of every Cottonwood resident
- Access to a park or recreational facility is not only dependent on distance, but also existing sidewalks
- The prevalence of health-related or recreational programs offered by other agencies, including the school system or various hiking opportunities in the Verde Valley
- The importance of signage and wayfinding improvements on trails and parks and recreation facilities
- The need for consistent messaging between parks and recreation organizations/agencies who share similar goals
- The master plan inventory and analysis process should include a sub-category of private (but public access) amenities to tell a more comprehensive story of existing recreational opportunities
- The need for more fields and activity-based amenities at various park locations
- Improving access to the Verde River is a priority
- Improving existing trails and developing “priority trails” should come first, with an ultimate goal of a fully interconnected trail system in the future

All stakeholders were invited to attend the virtual community open houses in June and July.

City of Cottonwood

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN
PLAN MAESTRO DE PARQUES Y RECREACIÓN



STAKEHOLDER MEETING
REUNION DE PARTES INTERESADAS

May 27, 2020 | 10:30 AM
27 de mayo de 2020 | 10:30 AM

Zoom Meeting:
<https://zoom.us/j/97071160940>

Phone: (253)215-8782
Meeting ID: 970 7116 0940



The City of Cottonwood is developing our first Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and we need your help!

The Master Plan will focus on how to improve our parks and will identify opportunities for future growth. Your voice is an important component of the process. Please join us to learn more about the master planning process and provide your input.

¡La Ciudad de Cottonwood está desarrollando nuestro primer Plan Maestro de Parques y Recreación, y necesitamos su ayuda!

El plan maestro se centrará en cómo mejorar nuestros parques e identificará oportunidades para el crecimiento futuro. Su voz es un componente importante del proceso. Únase a nosotros para conocer el proyecto y dar su opinión.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Visit us at: Cottonwoodparkmasterplan.com
Or email us at: cottonwoodparkmasterplan@norris-design.com

PARA MÁS INFORMACIÓN:
Visítanos en: Cottonwoodparkmasterplan.com
O envíenos un correo electrónico a: cottonwoodparkmasterplan@norris-design.com

Friends of the Verde River

A key stakeholder involved in the parks and recreation master planning process was the Friends of the Verde River ("Friends"). According to the Friends website (<https://verderiver.org/>), the organization formed in 2007 when a group of long-time river activists became an affiliate of the Arizona State Parks Foundation. By December 2011, Friends obtained 501(c)3 status and became independent of the Arizona State Parks Foundation, hiring its first employees in 2012. Friends merged with two partner organizations (Verde River Basin Partnership and Verde River Valley Nature Organization) in 2017, bringing in new resources and strengths to the organization. Friends' mission is to work "collaboratively for a healthy, flowing Verde River system." Their approach focuses on habitat restoration, sustaining river flows, sustainable river recreation, and building supportive communities, resulting in a combination of hands-on projects and sound conservation-based policy solutions. They continue to engage the community through outreach and volunteering efforts.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Virtual Community Open House #1

The first community open house was held in a virtual format via Zoom video conference on June 4, 2020 at 4 pm. Cottonwood residents and stakeholders were invited by the City project team via various advertising methods. Attendees from the City's project team and the consultant team led an interactive discussion following a presentation by Norris Design summarizing the master plan process and progress to date. Citizens were invited to participate in a question and answer session and were encouraged to submit written comments and questions via the Zoom chat function. Over a dozen citizens provided feedback on important parks and recreation topics, including:

- Current and proposed facilities at Riverfront Park, including sports fields, dog park, and hockey rink
- Growing sports leagues and facility needs
- The growing interest in pickleball and facility needs
- Interest in the expansion of the trail network
- Preservation of Cottonwood's natural parks beauty

Following the discussion, all citizens were invited to attend the second community open house in July and to share the invite with others. Citizens were also encouraged to contact the City directly (Rudy Rodriguez as the point of contact) or the project team via the project website at any time with further questions or comments.

Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan was scheduled for discussion on the June 23, 2020 City of Cottonwood Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting, held at 5 pm. The project consultant team was present via Zoom video conference and provided a brief progress update on the plan, sharing highlights from the first open house and the Community Questionnaire preliminary results.

Discussion with the Commission centered around inventory and analysis of both public (City-owned) and private (publicly accessible and not publicly accessible) parks and recreation facilities and how each type impacts the plan. The agenda item concluded with an invitation to all Commissioners to attend the upcoming July open house.

Virtual Community Open House #2

The second community open house was held in a virtual format via Zoom video conference on July 16, 2020 at 4 pm. Cottonwood residents and stakeholders were invited by the City project team via various advertising methods.

City of Cottonwood

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN
PLAN MAESTRO DE PARQUES Y RECREACIÓN

VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE
CASA ABIERTA VIRTUAL

June 4, 2020 | 4PM-7PM
4 de junio de 2020 | 4PM-7PM

Zoom Meeting:
<https://zoom.us/j/91908854025>

Phone: (649)900-4833
Meeting ID: 919 0885 4025

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Like the first community open house, the City's project team and the consultant team led an interactive discussion following a presentation by Norris Design summarizing the master plan process and progress to date. The presentation included a detailed summary of the Community Questionnaire results and preliminary parks and recreation system recommendations from the consultant team. Following the presentation, attendees were invited to participate in a question and answer session and were encouraged to submit written comments and questions via the Zoom chat function. Comments and questions centered on:

- Community questionnaire methodology
- Internal and external trail connections and amenities
- Friends of the Verde River and the group's role in promoting river corridor trails and amenities
- Existing signage inventory and the need for consistent community signage

Following the discussion, citizens were encouraged to continue to provide feedback to the City directly (Rudy Rodriguez as the point of contact) or the project team via the project website.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 19, 2020

Contact: Rudy Rodriguez, City of Cottonwood Parks and Recreation Director, 928-340-2710



CITY OF COTTONWOOD SEEKS VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE PARTICIPANTS FOR PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

Cottonwood, Arizona — The City of Cottonwood Parks and Recreation Department invites interested participants to share their input to guide the future of your parks and recreation system. Public input will be used by the City to develop a Master Plan for its parks, recreation, open space and trail facilities. A Virtual Open House meeting will take place on July 16th starting at 4:00pm. The Virtual Open House will be hosted on Zoom (<https://zoom.us/j/97749674855>) and available by phone: (408)638-0968, Meeting ID: 977 4967 4855.

Participants needed include residents, partner agency/organization representatives, business community representatives, and users of facilities and services. The participants will be asked to measure the extent to which Cottonwood's parks, recreation facilities, open space, trails, programs, and services meet the needs of the community. Participants will also be asked to measure the community's perception of needs for future facilities, amenities, services, and programs.

Cottonwood Parks and Recreation Master Plan updates are available on the City's master plan website at: cottonwoodparkmasterplan.com.

Norris Design, the independent consulting firm assisting with the master plan, will conduct the open houses. For more information, contact Brian Sagor, Norris Design, at 602.254.9600 or cottonwoodparkmasterplan@norris-design.com.

COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

The key findings of the community and stakeholder engagement are summarized below in the following categories:

- Strengths of the parks and recreation system
- Weaknesses of the parks and recreation system
- Needs and/or opportunities for the parks and recreation system

Strengths

Following is a list of parks and recreation system assets or strengths:

- Both Riverfront Park and the Cottonwood Recreation Center offer a wide variety of well-utilized amenities.
- Many facilities not owned by the City offer critical recreational opportunities to residents, including Dead Horse Ranch State Park and the walking path at Verde Valley Medical Center.
- The natural beauty of Cottonwood's parks should be preserved.

Weaknesses

Following is a list of parks and recreation system weaknesses:

- Not all residents have walkable or bikeable access to an existing park or recreational facility.
- Many parks lack activity-based amenities (e.g. playgrounds or basketball courts).
- The existing trail system is not well connected.

Needs and/or Opportunities

Following is a list of parks and recreation system needs or opportunities:

- Access to the Verde River is limited with the City of Cottonwood and should be improved.
- More sports fields are desired to support the area's sports leagues.
- More activity-based amenities could be added to various parks to improve their level of service to residents.
- Additional signage and wayfinding is needed for residents and visitors alike.
- Access to parks via better sidewalks or a more fully connected trail system is desired.

COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE



CITY OF COTTONWOOD PARKS AND REC MASTER PLAN



The City of Cottonwood is currently undertaking a master plan to guide the future of your parks and recreation system. Cottonwood currently enjoys a variety of city parks, facilities and natural recreation areas. With your knowledge and insight, we aspire to develop a parks and recreation master plan that will serve the City well for years to come.

A master plan's purpose:

- Guide decision-making
- Provide insight into changing community needs and perspectives
- Understand level of service being provided to the community
- Evaluate available resources and how to most strategically invest
- Develop a prioritized action plan that is City Council approved

Please get engaged with the master planning process!

TAKE THE COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE!

SurveyGizmo.com/s3/5519235/Cottonwood-Parks-and-Recreation

For more information visit us at: CottonwoodParkMasterPlan.com

COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE

A web-based “Needs Assessment” community questionnaire, administered by Corona Insights and promoted to Cottonwood residents by the project team, was available from April 28 through June 7, 2020. This questionnaire was designed to survey users regarding their current usage of parks and recreation facilities, identify unmet needs, identify existing assets, and help determine funding priorities. 322 useable responses were collected, and sixty-eight percent (68%) were from Cottonwood residents. The community questionnaire summary prepared by Corona Insights is included on the following pages.

One-page Summary

CORONA INSIGHTS

Methodology

- > All questionnaires were completed online between April 28 and June 7
- > 322 useable surveys were collected, 68% from Cottonwood residents.
- > Respondents tended to be older, female, homeowners, well educated, and white.
- > Results represent those who took the survey, who were likely more engaged with park and recreation issues. Results may not reflect the broad population of Cottonwood area residents.
- > The full methodology is described in the [Appendix](#)

Findings

Strong support or desire for...

- > Preserving scenic views
- > Preserving land for wildlife and environment
- > Preserving river corridors
- > Nature parks and open space with trails
- > Enjoying the outdoors
- > Getting exercise and improving health
- > Better maintenance
- > Improving or restoring what already exists

Unmet need exists for...

- > River recreation
- > Nature areas and open space
- > Trails (dirt and paved)
- > Swimming and water opportunities for youth

Implications

- > Prioritize nature areas and open space, including maintaining current areas and building new trails.
- > Improve river recreation opportunities, including river access points.
- > Protect land for wildlife and scenic values.
- > Prioritize maintaining or restoring existing features.
- > Prioritize trails, both dirt and paved.
- > Meet unmet needs of youth, especially, a water play area for kids (e.g., splashpad).
- > Promote how parks and recreation allow people to get outside, improve their health, have fun, and spend time with their friends and family.
- > Keep people feeling safe when recreating.

Cottonwood Parks and Rec Survey

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Visitation, Use, and Attendance

CORONA INSIGHTS

What parks and facilities are used more than others? What city events are attended more than others?

Parks

Most visited

- > Riverfront (86%)
- > Garrison (55%)
- > Old Town Activity (39%)

Least visited

- > Lion's Club (12%)
- > Bill Bowden Memorial (5%)
- > Orchards (5%)

Facilities

Most used

- > Cottonwood Rec. Center (81%)
- > Municipal Outdoor Pool (34%)

Least used

- > Community Club House (17%)
- > Cottonwood Youth Center (8%)
 - Note that 15% of respondents with children in the home had used the Youth Center.

Events

Most attended

- > Old Town Music & the Market (49%)
- > Walkin' on Main (48%)
- > Thunder Valley Rally (35%)

Least attended

- > New Years Eve Celebration (5%)
- > Daddy Daughter Date Night (3%)
- > We Are Cottonwood & City Hall Selfie Day (2%)

Cottonwood Parks and Rec Survey

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ADULTS: Activities, Unmet Needs, and Amenities

CORONA INSIGHTS

What are the most desired activities? What are the greatest unmet needs? What are the most important amenities?

Activities

Most desired

- > Visit a nature area with trails (72%)
- > River recreation (64%)
- > Hike/run on dirt trails (63%)

Least desired

- > Skateboard at skatepark (7%)
- > Softball (7%)
- > Volleyball (6%)
- > Roller hockey on outdoor rink (3%)

Unmet Needs

Most unmet needs

- > River recreation (52%)
- > Visit a nature area with trails (51%)
- > Hike/run on dirt trails (49%)
- > Hike/run on paved trails (47%)

Amenities

Most important

- > Nature area with trails (45%)
- > City events or festivals (26%)
- > River access points (25%)
- > Dirt trails (25%)

Cottonwood Parks and Rec Survey

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Experiences, Management Actions, Priorities

CORONA INSIGHTS

What are the most desired experiences? What are the most supported management actions? What are the funding priorities?

Experiences

Most desired

- > Enjoying the outdoors (80%)
- > Exercise and health (79%)
- > Feeling safe (62%)
- > Having fun (61%)
- > Time w/ friends & family (59%)

Least desired

- > Meeting other people (28%)
- > Being alone (27%)
- > Learning something new (26%)

Management Actions

Most strongly supported

- > Preserve scenic views (78%)
- > Preserve land for wildlife and environment (76%)
- > Preserve river corridors (76%)

Most not supported

- > Build more bike lanes (17%)
- > Ensure all residents live within walking distance of park (17%)
- > Acquire more land for trails (14%)

Priorities

Average funded (out of \$100)

- > Better maintain parks, trails, and buildings (\$28)
- > Improve or restore parks, trails, and buildings (\$28)
- > Build new trails (\$21)
- > Build new parks (\$14)
- > New buildings for indoor rec. (\$9)

Cottonwood Parks and Rec Survey

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YOUTH: Activities, Unmet Needs, and Amenities

CORONA INSIGHTS

What are the most desired activities? What are the greatest unmet needs? What are the most important amenities?

Activities

Most desired

- > River recreation (69%)
- > Swim in outdoor pool (63%)
- > Swim in indoor pool (63%)
- > Water play area (53%)
- > Outdoor playgrounds (48%)

Least desired

- > Tennis (10%)
- > Pickleball (3%)
- > Roller hockey outdoor rink (3%)

Unmet Needs

Most unmet needs

- > River recreation (56%)
- > Water play area (51%)
 - 34% of respondents said this is currently not meeting needs at all.
- > Swim in outdoor pool (51%)
- > Swim in indoor pool (44%)
- > Outdoor playground (41%)
- > Nature playground (40%)

Amenities

Most important

- > Outdoor water play areas for kids (35%)
- > Outdoor pool (26%)
- > Nature parks and open space areas with trails (23%)
- > Outdoor playgrounds (20%)
- > River access points (16%)

Cottonwood Parks and Rec Survey

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Respondent Demographic Snapshot

CORONA INSIGHTS

Residence	
Year-round resident	65%
Part-time resident	3%
Not a Cottonwood resident	32%

Years Living In Cottonwood	
10 or fewer	32%
More than 10	34%
Non-resident	34%

Non-resident Locations	
Near Cottonwood, but outside city limits	12%
Clarkdale	29%
Cornville	21%
Camp Verde	2%
Village of Oak Creek	0%
Sedona	6%
Unincorporated area of Yavapai County	26%
Other	4%

Gender	
Male	33%
Female	66%

Age	
18 to 59	50%
60 or older	50%

Household Size	
1 or 2 people	67%
3 or more	33%

Home Owner or Renter	
Owner	82%
Renter	15%
Other situation	3%

Education	
Some high school, no diploma or GED	1%
High school diploma or GED	4%
Some college, no college degree	24%
Associate degree	16%
Bachelor's degree	28%
Graduate or professional degree	28%

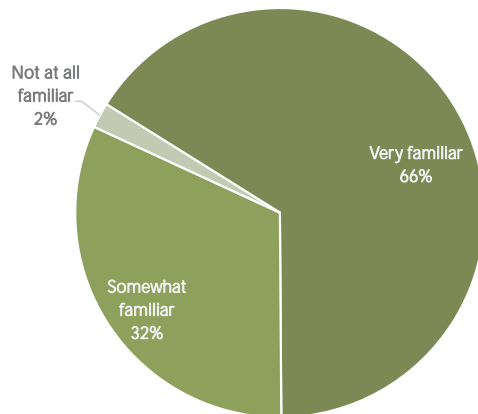
Race or Ethnicity	
American Indian or Alaskan Native or Native American	1%
Asian	1%
Black or African American	1%
Hispanic, Latino/Latina, or Spanish origin (regardless of race)	6%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0%
White or Caucasian	93%
Some other race or ethnicity	3%

Cottonwood Parks and Rec Survey

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Familiarity with Parks (Q4)

CORONA INSIGHTS



Segments that tended to have more familiarity with parks:

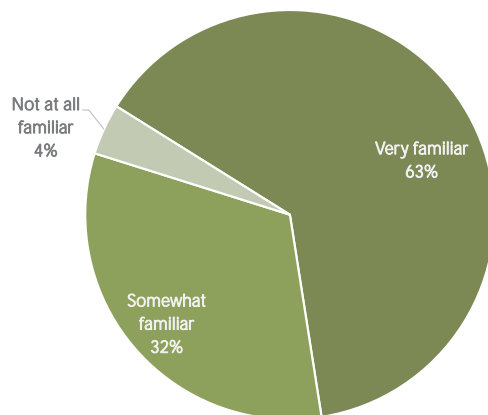
- > Cottonwood resident for 10+ years
- > Child(ren) living in the home
- > Younger adults (younger than 59)
- > Living with two or more other people

Q4: How familiar are you with Cottonwood's parks?

Cottonwood Parks and Rec Survey | 12 |

Familiarity with Facilities (Q5)

CORONA INSIGHTS



Segments that tended to have more familiarity with facilities:

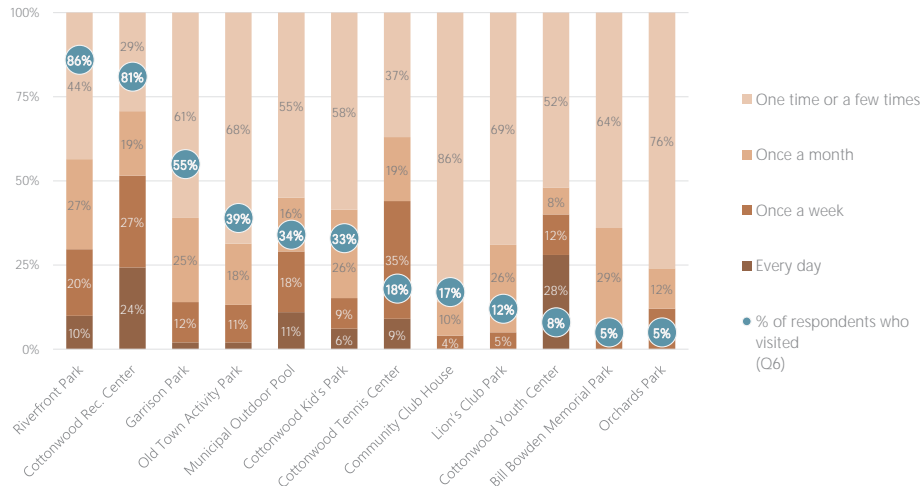
- > Living outside of Cottonwood
- > Cottonwood resident for 10+ years
- > Child(ren) living in the home
- > Living with two or more other people

Q5: How familiar are you with Cottonwood's recreation buildings, rental facilities, pools, and recreation courts?

Cottonwood Parks and Rec Survey | 13 |

Park and Facility Use (Q6 & Q7)

CORONA INSIGHTS



> Riverfront Park and the Cottonwood Recreation Center were visited by the highest proportion of respondents.

> Although relatively few respondents visited the Cottonwood Tennis Center or Youth Center, visitation was relatively frequent (i.e., every day or once a week).

Q6: Please CHECK ALL the following city parks or facilities that you have used or visited in Cottonwood in the past 12 months. If none, choose "None of the above."

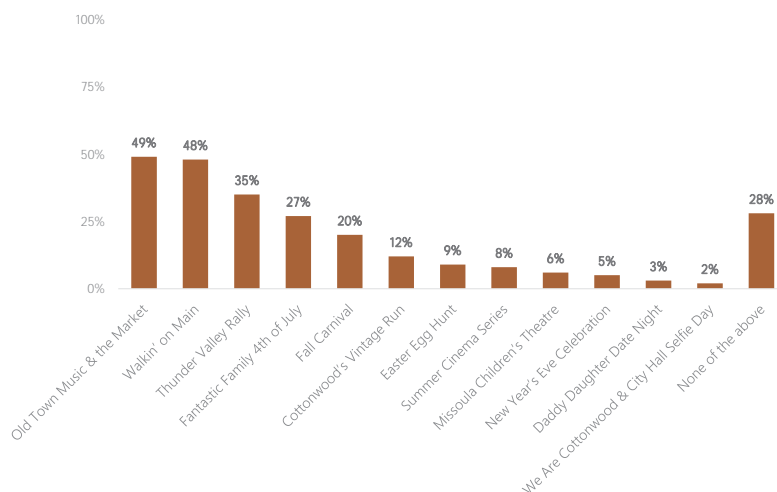
Q7: In the past 12 months, about how often have you used or visited each of the following?

Cottonwood Parks and Rec Survey

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Event Attendance (Q8)

CORONA INSIGHTS



Respondents with children were more likely than others to attend...

- > Fantastic Family 4th of July
- > Cottonwood's Vintage Run
- > Easter Egg Hunt
- > Thunder Valley Rally
- > Fall Carnival
- > Daddy Daughter Date Night
- > Old Town Music & the Market

Respondents without children were more likely than others to attend "Walkin' on Main"

Q8: Please CHECK ALL the following city events that you have attended in Cottonwood in the past 12 months. If none, choose "None of the above."

Cottonwood Parks and Rec Survey

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Needs Assessment Analysis

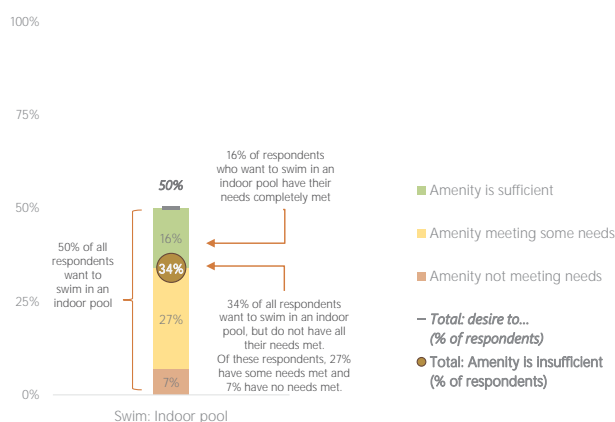
A needs assessment identifies the gap between a current and ideal situation. This needs assessment analysis merges responses from question 9 and question 10.

In the example graph to the right, the number on top of the bar represents the percentage of respondents who desire to participate in the activity (e.g., swimming) at the facility or amenity (e.g., indoor pool). You can see that half of respondents want to swim in an indoor pool.

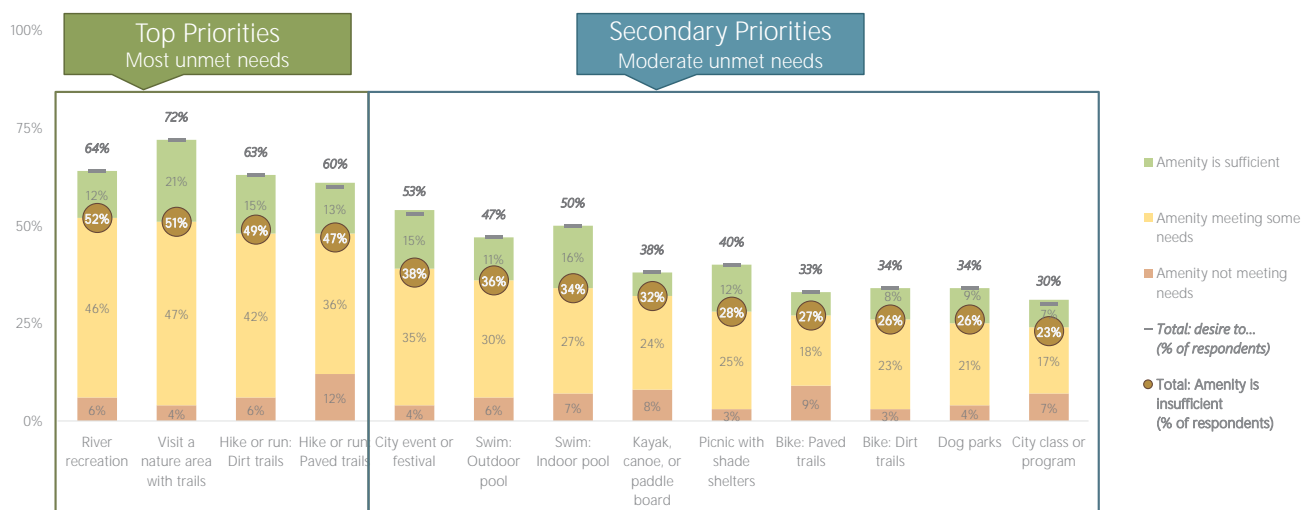
The number in the circle represents the percentage of respondents whose needs are not fully met by current facilities or amenities. This number represents the gap of unmet needs. The gap can be conceptualized as the sum of the unmet need (i.e., the orange bar plus the yellow bar). For example, $7\% + 27\% = 34\%$. Or, the gap can be conceptualized as the total desire (i.e., top number) minus the needs that are currently completely met (i.e., green bar). For example, $50\% - 16\% = 34\%$.

Regardless of how it is conceptualized, this approach allows for direct comparison of the amount of unmet need for each activity and amenity combination. Graphs on the following slides are ordered by amount of unmet need, from most to least.

Analysis Example



Adults: Desired Activities with Amenity Needs (1 of 2)

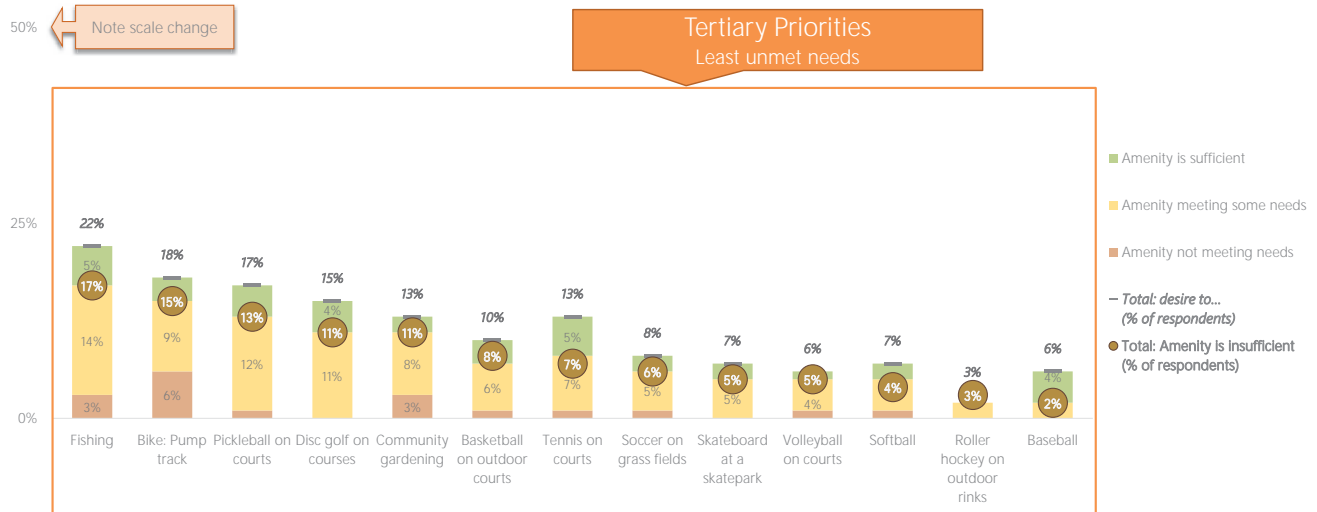


Q9: Please select up to ten activities that you most want to do in Cottonwood.

Q10: To what extent are the following amenities and programs currently meeting your recreation needs in Cottonwood?

Adults: Desired Activities with Amenity Needs (2 of 2)

CORONA INSIGHTS



Q9: Please select up to ten activities that you most want to do in Cottonwood.

Q10: To what extent are the following amenities and programs currently meeting your recreation needs in Cottonwood?

Cottonwood Parks and Rec Survey | 18 |

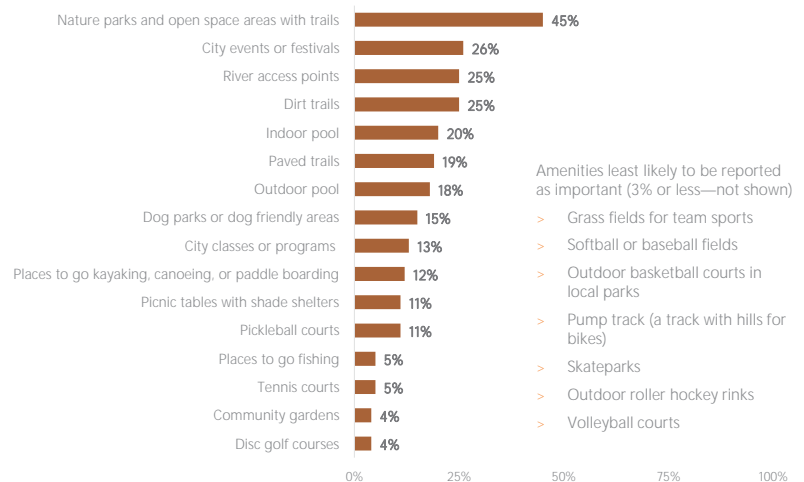
Adults: Most Important Amenities (Q11)

CORONA INSIGHTS

Nature parks with trails were clearly an important amenity for many respondents.

City events or festivals, river access points, and dirt trails were a "top-three" choice for about one-quarter of respondents.

2% of respondents marked "None of the above"

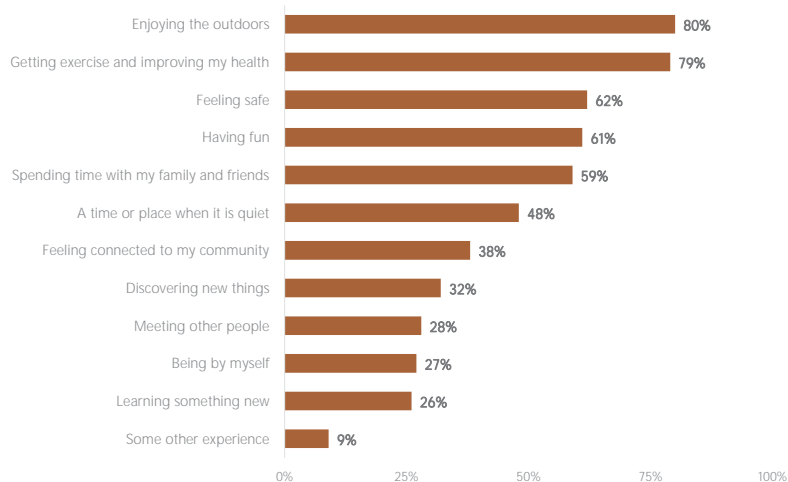


Q11: Which amenities and programs below are the three most important to you? Check up to three.

Cottonwood Parks and Rec Survey | 19 |

Desired Experiences (Q12)

CORONA INSIGHTS



- > Enjoying the outdoors and getting exercise were clearly the top two desired experiences.
- > Safety, having fun, and spending time with others were also commonly desired.
- > "Other" desired experiences included spending time with or exercising their dog

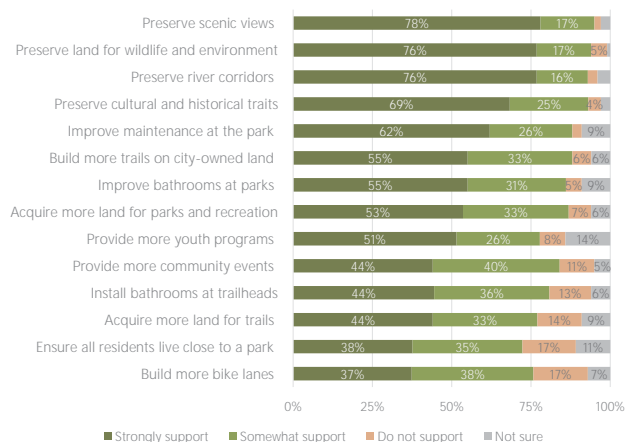
Q12: Please CHECK ALL the experiences that you strongly desire when visiting Cottonwood's parks and facilities. If none are strongly desired, check "None of the above."

Cottonwood Parks and Rec Survey | 20 |

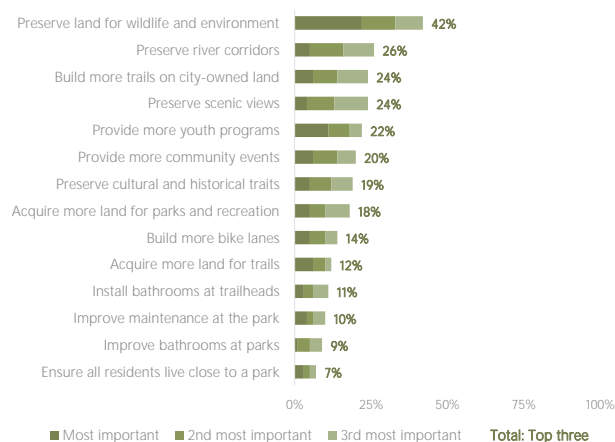
Support for Actions (Q13 & Q14)

CORONA INSIGHTS

Support for Actions (Q13)



Actions Ranked (Q14)



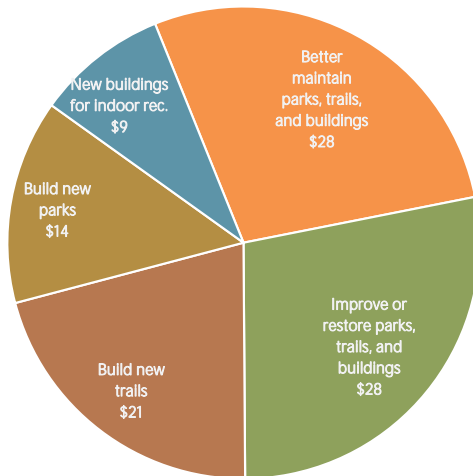
Q13: For each of the following actions, please mark if you do not support, somewhat support, or strongly support the City of Cottonwood taking the action. You can also mark "Not sure."

Q14: Which actions below are the three most important to you?

Cottonwood Parks and Rec Survey | 21 |

Funding Priorities (Average of Q15)

CORONA INSIGHTS



Segments showing disproportionately more support

Better maintain parks, trails, and buildings

- > Cottonwood resident for 10+ years
- > Males
- > Residents with less education

Improve or restore parks, trails, and buildings

- > Residents who are very familiar with parks

Build new trails

- > Cottonwood resident for less than 10 years
- > Residents with more education

Build new parks

- > Have children in home
- > Three or more people in home
- > Younger residents

New building for indoor recreation

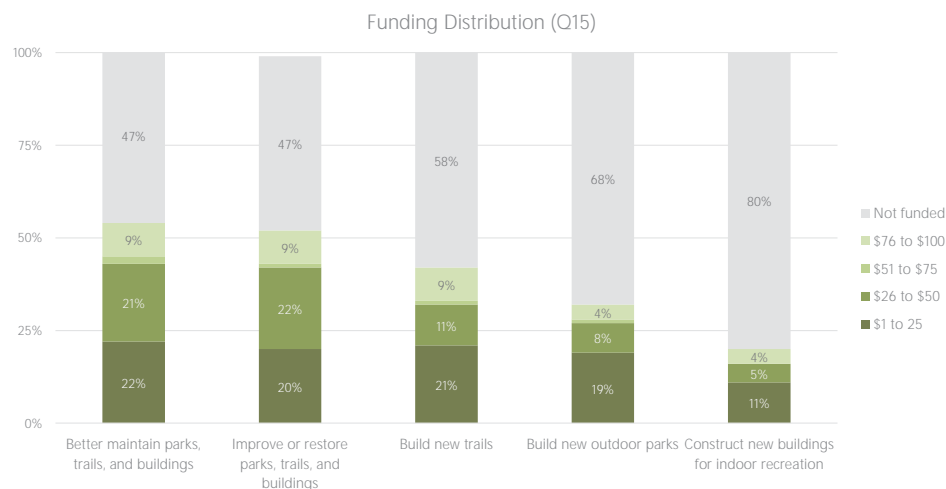
- > None

Q15: If you had \$100 that you could give to support parks and recreation in Cottonwood, how much would you give for the following needs? You can give all of the money to one need, or you can give smaller amounts to several needs?

Cottonwood Parks and Rec Survey | 22 |

Funding Distribution (Q15)

CORONA INSIGHTS

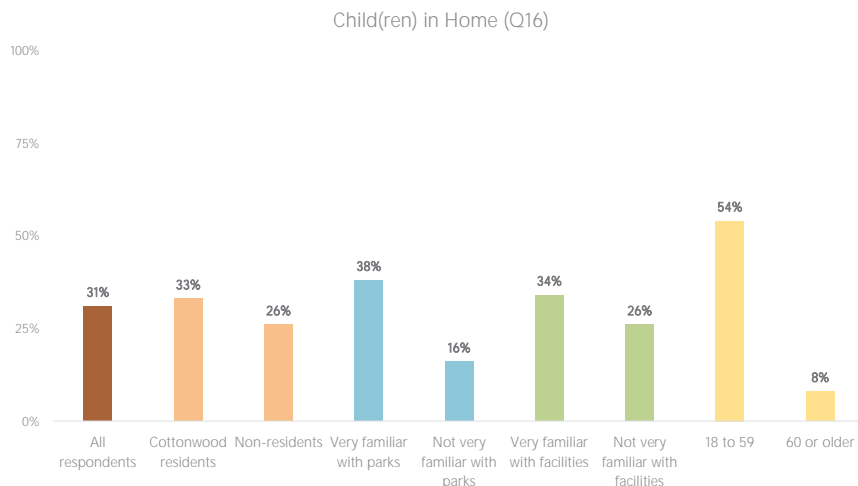


Q15: If you had \$100 that you could give to support parks and recreation in Cottonwood, how much would you give for the following needs? You can give all of the money to one need, or you can give smaller amounts to several needs?

Cottonwood Parks and Rec Survey | 23 |

Youth Household Demographics

CORONA INSIGHTS



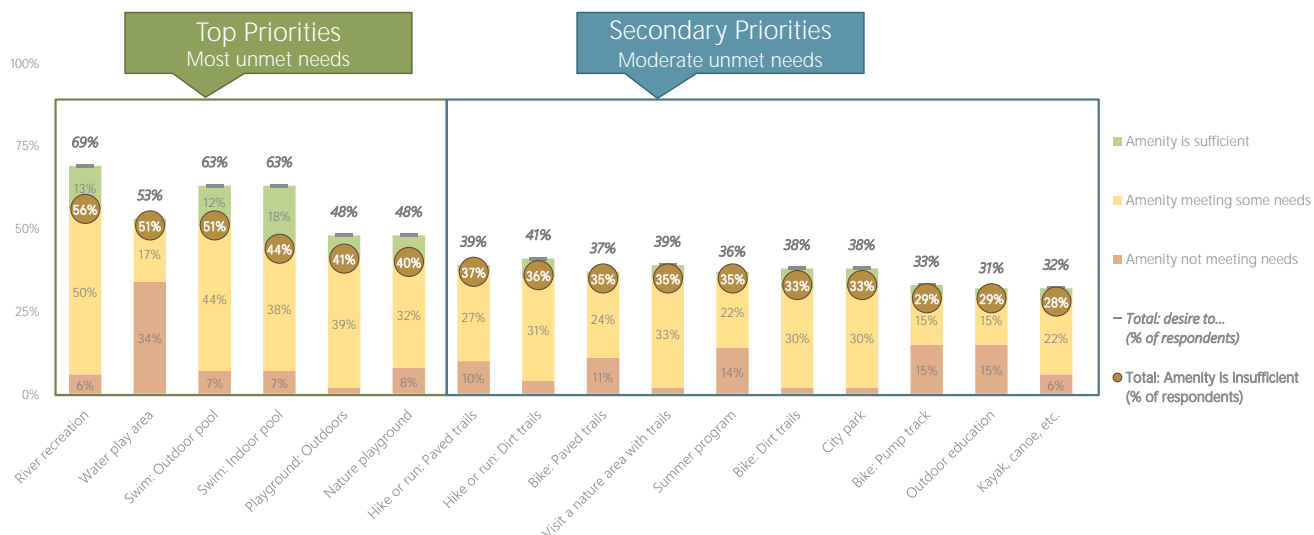
- > About one-third of respondents had at least one child (younger than 18) living in their home. Most of these respondents are likely the child's parents, but they could be other relatives.
- > Eight percent of respondents with children in the home were age 60 or older, and they could be parents or grandparents.
- > Respondents with children at home were more likely to be familiar with parks and familiar with facilities. They were also more likely to be Cottonwood residents.

Q16: How many people younger than 18 currently live in your home?

Cottonwood Parks and Rec Survey | 25 |

Youth: Desired Activities with Amenity Needs (1 of 2)

CORONA INSIGHTS



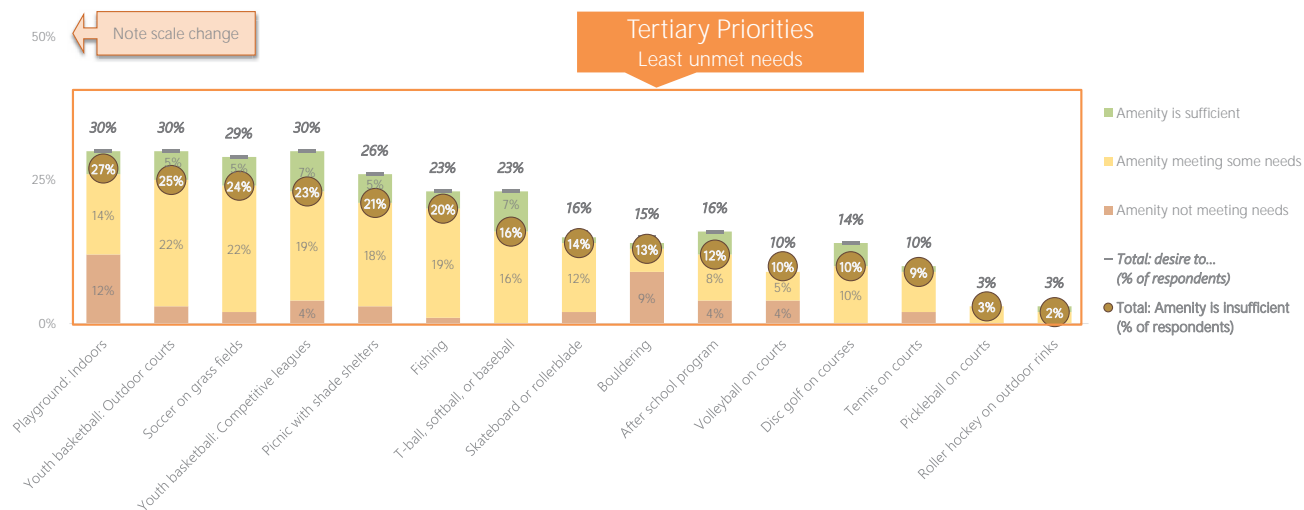
Q18: Please select up to ten activities that you most want the youth (age 0 to 17) living in your home to do.

Q19: To what extent are the following amenities and programs in Cottonwood meeting the recreation needs of the youth (age 0 – 17) living in your home?

Cottonwood Parks and Rec Survey | 26 |

Youth: Desired Activities with Amenity Needs (2 of 2)

CORONA INSIGHTS



Q18: Please select up to ten activities that you most want the youth (age 0 to 17) living in your home to do.

Q19: To what extent are the following amenities and programs in Cottonwood meeting the recreation needs of the youth (age 0 – 17) living in your home?

Cottonwood Parks and Rec Survey | 27 |

Youth: Most Important Amenities (Q20)

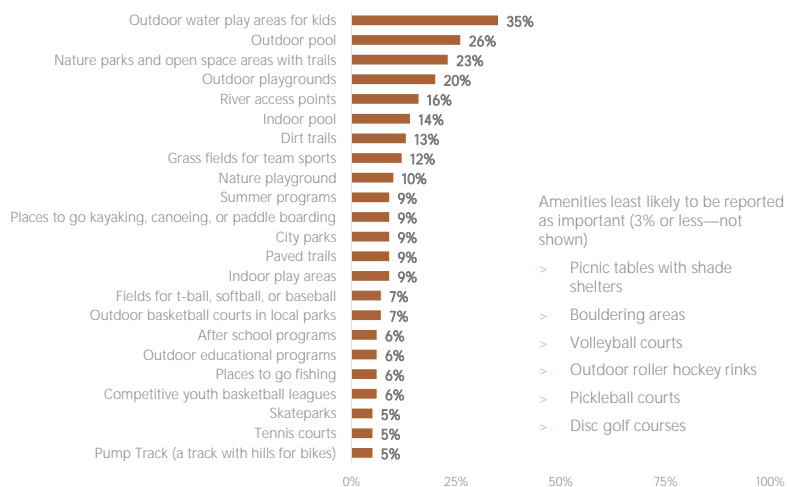
CORONA INSIGHTS

Respondents with youth living in their home were asked to select the their three most important amenities.

Six of the top seven most important amenities were related to water (e.g., splash pads, pools, etc.) or trails.

Outdoor water play areas for kids was the most common "important" amenity among the most parents.

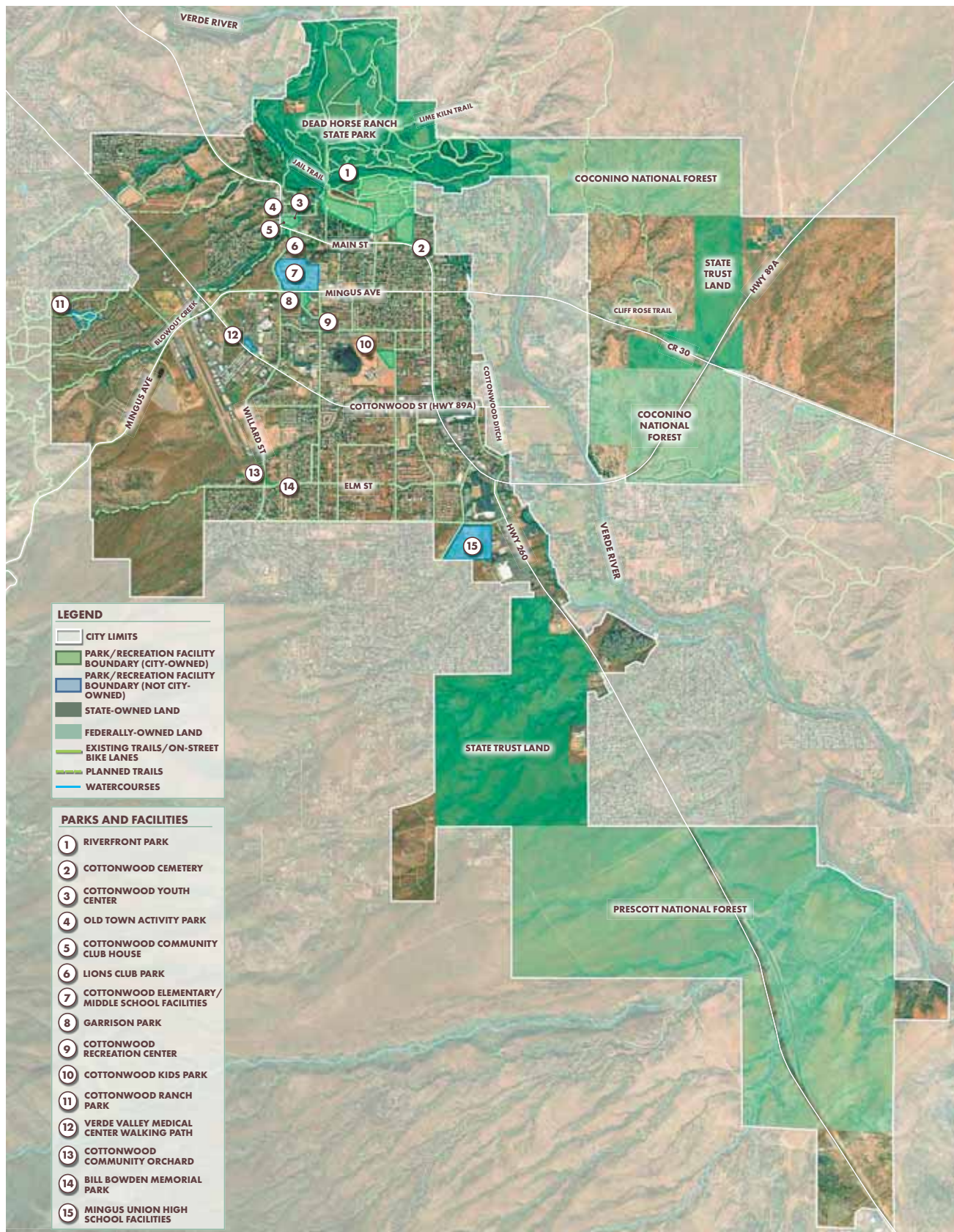
Only 2% of respondents marked "None of the above."



Q20: Which amenities and programs below are the three most important for people living in your home who are younger than 18? Check up to three.

Cottonwood Parks and Rec Survey | 28 |

ANALYSIS OF EXISTING PARK & TRAIL FACILITIES



ANALYSIS OF EXISTING PARK & TRAIL FACILITIES

CITY-WIDE PARKS AND RECREATION INVENTORY

Prior to beginning analysis of the existing parks and recreation system, a city-wide inventory map was created identifying the boundaries of each City-owned park, recreation facility and each publicly available private park and recreation facility. State Parks, State Trust Land, National Parks, and the Verde River were also identified for context. Both the existing and proposed trails networks are shown to highlight connectivity between all recreational assets.





LIST OF ASSETS

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 SOFTBALL COMPLEX | 7 GRASS FOR FIELD GAMES |
| 2 SHADE RAMADAS | 8 PLAY EQUIPMENT |
| 3 DISK GOLF COURSE | 9 SKATE PARK |
| 4 HOCKEY RINK | 10 VOLLEYBALL COURTS |
| 5 BARBEQUES | 11 COMMUNITY GARDEN |
| 6 PICNIC TABLES | 12 DOG PARK |



Old Town Activity Park

Old Town Activity Park is at the heart of Old Town Cottonwood, an old-fashioned main street shopping district with charming shops, galleries, and cafes. Visitors enjoy Old Town Music and the Market, live music, and celebrate holiday events on the main grassy field. The park shares a space with the Cottonwood Community Club House and the Cottonwood Youth Center which all host activities on the main lawn. Community members also utilize after school programs and summer day-camp activities at varying times of the year. The two basketball courts adjacent to the Club House receive significant use.



Cottonwood Community Club House

The Club House is located just west of Old Town Activity Park along Main Street. Originally constructed in 1939 as a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project, the building was used for community events for decades to follow. Because the building has not been significantly altered on the outside since 1940, it was individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Club House was recently renovated into an affordable event center which can host up to 150 guests.

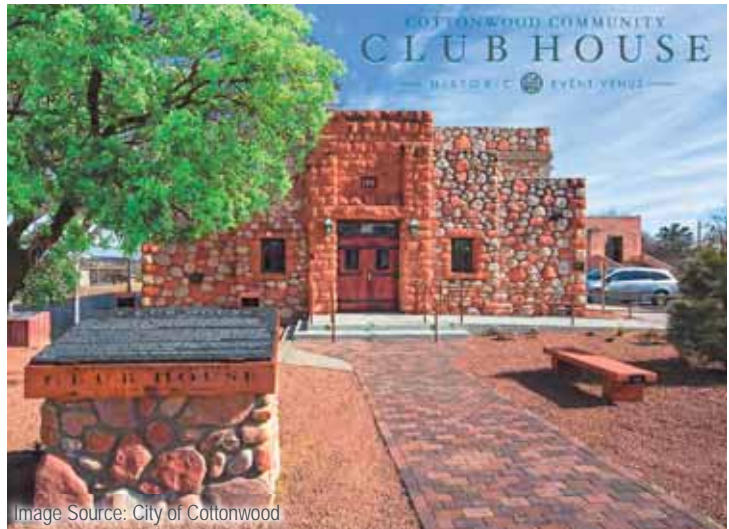


Image Source: City of Cottonwood

Cottonwood Youth Center

Also located adjacent to Old Town Activity Park along Pima Street, the Cottonwood Youth Center (CYC) is used by the Parks and Recreation Department for youth programs. The facility is used for after school programs, summer day camps, and holiday day camps for children in first through eighth grades. The Parks and Recreation Department shares usage of the building with Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, and the Cottonwood-Oak Creek School District.



Image Source: Google Earth



Image Source: oldtownmusicandthemarket.org

Lions Club Park

This “pocket park” is adjacent to the Old Town Activity Park, sitting in the southwest corner of Main Street and Willard Street. This park provides a verdant, shady space for passive recreation and houses a bus stop along Willard Street though it lacks benches immediately around the bus stop. Along the west edge of the park is a minor swale system with a wall and railing to protect people from entering the waterway, which bridges under Main Street, north towards Old Town Activity Park.





Image Source: Google Earth



Image Source: Norris Design



Image Source: Norris Design

Garrison Park

Garrison Park is located just north of Cottonwood Public Library and the Cottonwood Recreation Center along Mingus Avenue and Brian Mickelsen Parkway. This shaded space holds a playground, a small, paved path system and many large shade trees. Grass and numerous picnic areas make this park appealing for both passive and active recreation. Verde Valley Military Service Park serves as a sculptural memorial garden, open to the public.

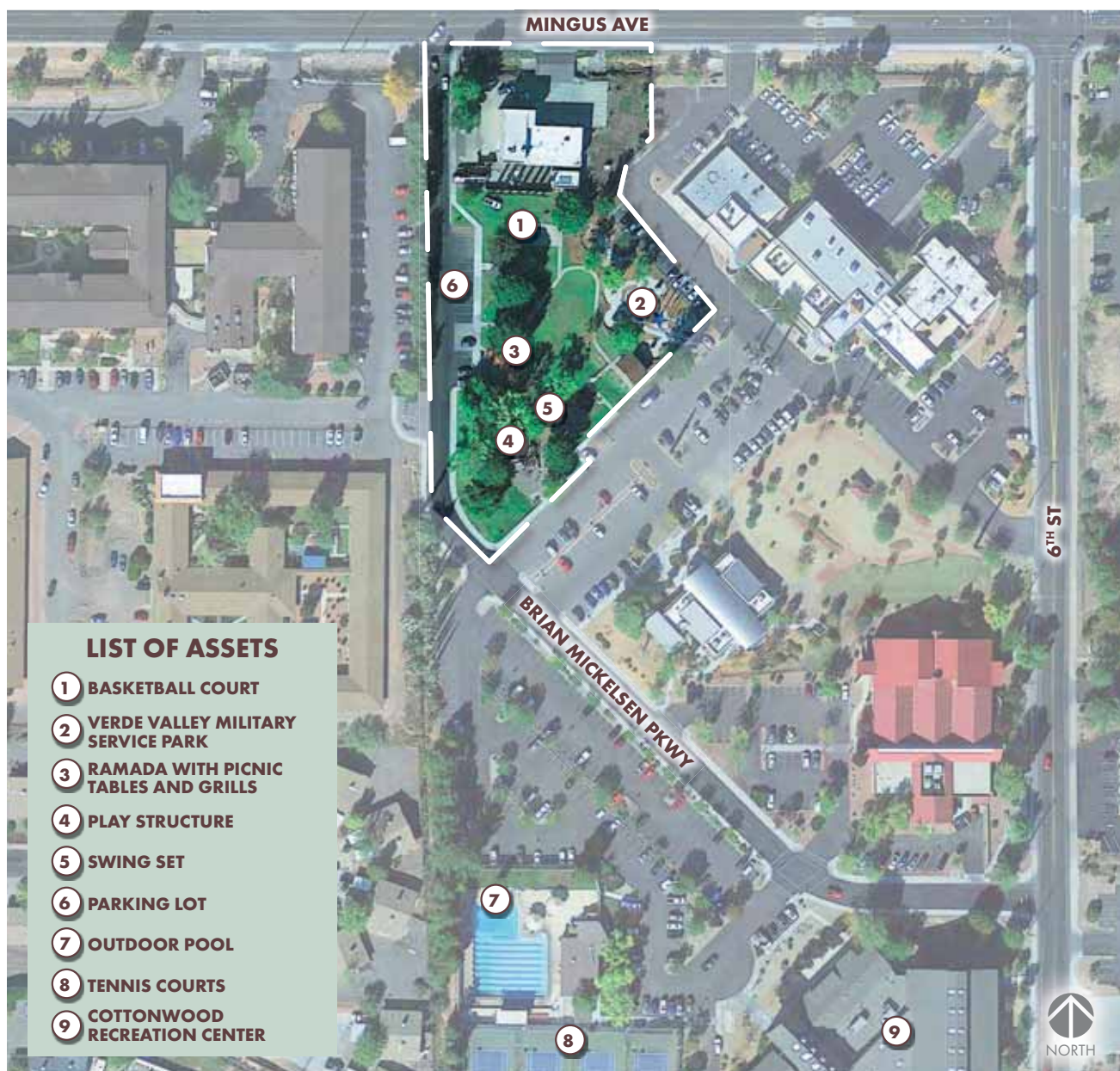




Image Source: Google Earth



Image Source: Norris Design

Cottonwood Recreation Center

Cottonwood Recreation Center is located just south of Garrison Park and Cottonwood Public Library along Brian Mickelsen Parkway and 6th Street. This year-round center provides recreation activities, gathering space, classes, and childcare services for members using the facility. The main building features a wide variety of amenities including a gymnasium, indoor leisure pool, community events hall, climbing wall, exercise/dance studio, locker rooms, various weights and cardio training areas, game room, and party rooms. Adjacent outdoor parks and recreation amenities include a pool (Cottonwood Aquatics Center) and a pickleball and tennis court facility.

Cottonwood Aquatics Center

The Aquatics Center includes an outdoor recreational and competitive lap pool, diving well, score board, and elevated event deck just west of the Recreation Center. The pool is open from Memorial Day through Labor Day. The Center hosts recreational and adult lap swimming, swim lessons, and high school swim team practice and meets. During the summer, the Cottonwood Clippers swim team is a primary user.

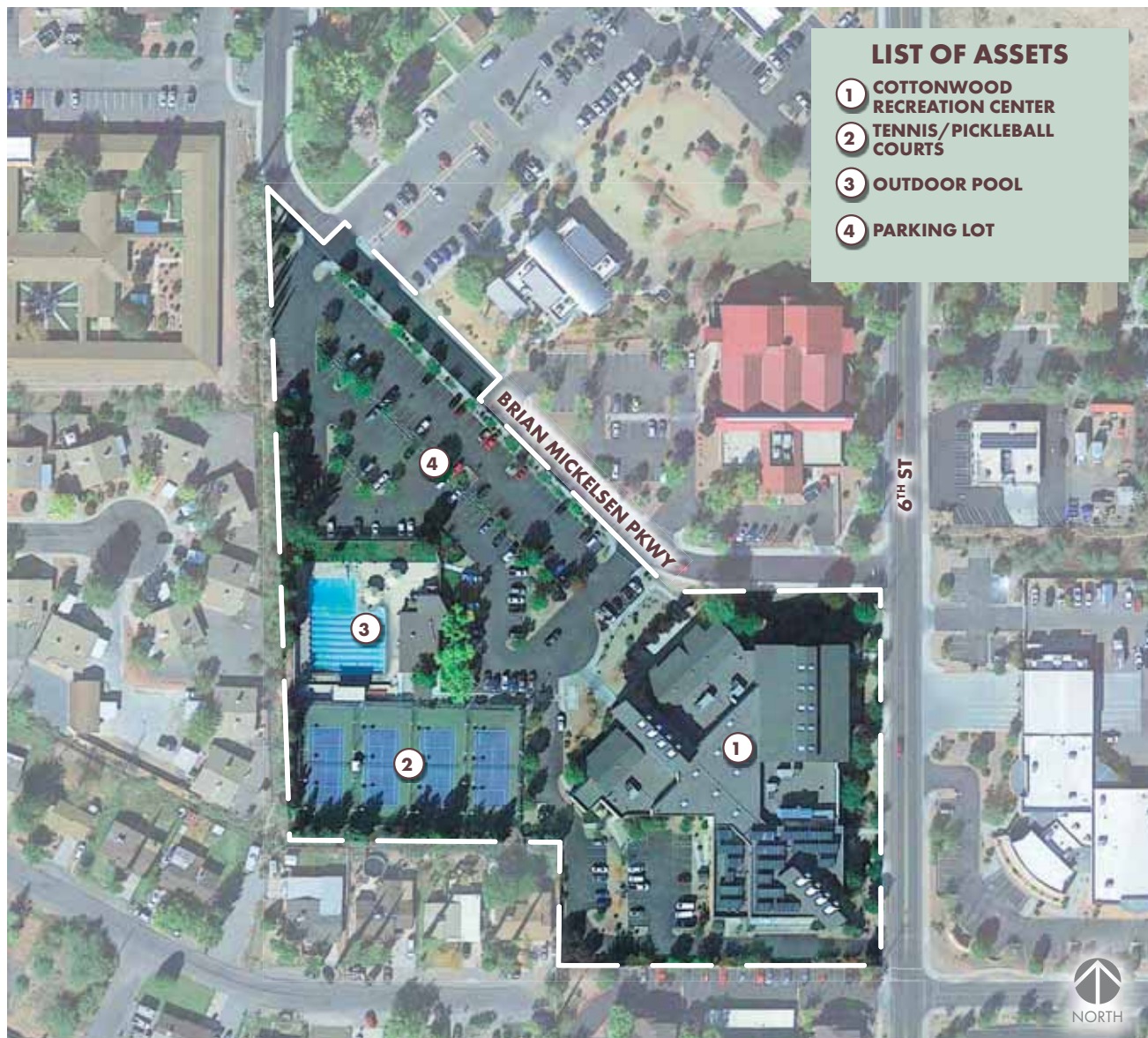




Image Source: City of Cottonwood



Image Source: City of Cottonwood



Image Source: Norris Design

Cottonwood Kids Park

Just east of the Verde Valley Fairgrounds is Cottonwood Kids Park, a grassy field lined with trees along 12th Street. This space includes two unlined multipurpose fields, two shade structures with picnic benches, and a permanent restroom facility. Park signage at the entrance appears to be older and in need of updating. Holiday and community events are often held here with views of the mountains to west being an optimal feature of the park.





Image Source: Norris Design



Image Source: Norris Design



Image Source: Google Earth

Cottonwood Community Orchard

The Cottonwood Community Orchard is a small public space located northeast of the Willard Street and Mesquite Drive intersection. The park site contains informational signage, updated fencing, and a recently planted orchard. The first donated tree was planted in 2011 with the anticipation of planting up to fifteen orchard trees. With an intention to use reclaimed water for irrigation on fruiting trees, this site provides an example of productive land use within a small space. The site affords public access to healthy food, teaches local members about the utilization of integrative plants, and provides opportunities for interaction between community residents.





Image Source: Norris Design



Image Source: Norris Design

Bill Bowden Memorial Park

Bill Bowden Memorial Park is a small space located south of the Cottonwood Airport, along Mesquite Drive. The primary amenity of this public park is a gathering space defined by a pair of picnic tables and shade ramada, accessible via a concrete path. The space is ideal for picnics or small gatherings, surrounded by native vegetation and panoramic views. The proximity of Bill Bowden Memorial Park to the Cottonwood Community Orchard affords future opportunities for simultaneous events during the harvesting of orchard trees.





Image Source: Norris Design



Image Source: Norris Design

Cottonwood Cemetery

Cottonwood Cemetery began in 1892, when Alexander and Melissa Strahan donated land from their homestead to local School District #6 to be used for a public graveyard and public school purposes. In 1953, the Cemetery Committee dedicated a portion of the cemetery to be used as the Veteran's plot, available only to all honorably discharged US veterans. In 1973, the Town (now City) of Cottonwood took over ownership and maintenance of the cemetery.



Image Source: Norris Design



TRAILS SYSTEM

As shown in the city-wide parks and recreation inventory map, Cottonwood has an extensive trails network planned to connect residents from all parts of the city to various recreational assets. Many planned trails will follow existing roadways or washes, including the Blowout Trail which will follow Blowout Creek and connect Old Town to Mingus Mountain. Most existing trails are located in northern Cottonwood, in and around Riverfront Park and Dead Horse Ranch State Park, including the well-utilized Jail Trail. The Cliffrose Trail loop in the eastern part of the city (located on County-owned land) is also well utilized, and there is a planned connection tying the Cliffrose Trail north to the Lime Kiln Trail and Dead Horse Ranch State Park trails.

ALTERNATIVE PARKS AND RECREATION PROVIDERS

In addition to City-owned parks and recreation facilities, many private facilities provide recreational opportunities for all Cottonwood residents. Cottonwood Ranch Park, located on the western edge of Cottonwood, is maintained by the adjacent residential subdivision but provides recreational amenities to all residents due to an existing agreement with the City. Additional alternative providers include the Verde Valley Medical Center walking path and various recreational amenities at Cottonwood's public schools, the Cottonwood-Oak Creek School District and Mingus Union High School District. Shared use agreements and/or intergovernmental agreements are often outdated or do not exist between the City and alternative providers.

Private facilities designed only to serve small groups of residents (e.g. multi-family residential complex pool or private daycare playground) were not considered in the alternative providers inventory and analysis.

Additional alternative providers include Arizona State Parks (Dead Horse Ranch State Park, located in northern Cottonwood) and the United States Forest Service (Prescott National Forest and Coconino National Forest, located partially within and adjacent to Cottonwood).

VERDE RIVER ANALYSIS

One of the most important assets to Cottonwood is the Verde River, one of Arizona's only two "Wild and Scenic Rivers." A major tributary to the Salt River, the Verde River flows south along the eastern side of town, connecting the communities of Clarkdale, Cottonwood, and Camp Verde by a recreational water route. According to the Friends of the Verde River, twelve major river access points (RAPs) span from Clarkdale to Camp Verde, with some additional "difficult put-ins" located along the way.

Numerous kayak rental services in and around Cottonwood offer river tours – mostly kayaking or tubing adventures – although all identified formal tour routes span stretches of the Verde River immediately north of Cottonwood or just south of Cottonwood. These tours are generally classified as "Class 1" or "Class 2," with few areas of mini-rapids but otherwise appropriate for kayakers of all skill levels. The lack of organized kayaking or tubing adventures between Tuzigoot RAP and Skidmore Lane RAP does not necessarily imply that this river section goes unused by Cottonwood residents.

Based on available data, most formal river activities begin in March and end in October, with some limited activities in February and November. Citizens and visitors can check monthly average river water temperatures at the Tuzigoot RAP, available online at Verde River Institute's website. Generally, river temperature ranges from 40 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit, staying mostly above 50 degrees during more heavily used months.

Other conditions aside from water temperature and available tours impact river usage. Per the Town of Clarkdale, between February and April (spring months during run-off), the Verde River experiences higher than usual flows and can be potentially dangerous to kayakers and other users, regardless of experience level. Boating is not recommended when water flow is above 300 cubic feet per second (CFS), but it is also difficult when flows are less than 50 CFS. Low flows are common during early summer months, limiting which sections of river are boatable – usually segments closer to Camp Verde and Clarkdale, as well as the stretch between 89A Bridge and Bignotti Beach in Cottonwood. Overall, autumn through spring months provide the best boating flows, but users must watch for adverse conditions, especially flooding during snowmelt or following heavy rain events.



Verde River flows can vary widely during any year or season. Low flows (<100cfs) are typical, and boating is challenging if flows are <50cfs. Local ditches affect flows in different sections from Tuzigoot to Clear Creek. During the early summer months, the section between Clear Creek and Beasley Flat, Lower Tapco to Tuzigoot section (two short portages), and 89A Bridge to Bignotti Beach section (hazard above Skidmore) may be the only boatable segments in this guide. Autumn through spring months provide the best boating flows. Floods can occur during spring snowmelt, after rain-on-snow events or following summer storms. Do not paddle during flood events.

VerdeRiverGreenway.Org

Check real-time flow at:

<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/az/nwis>

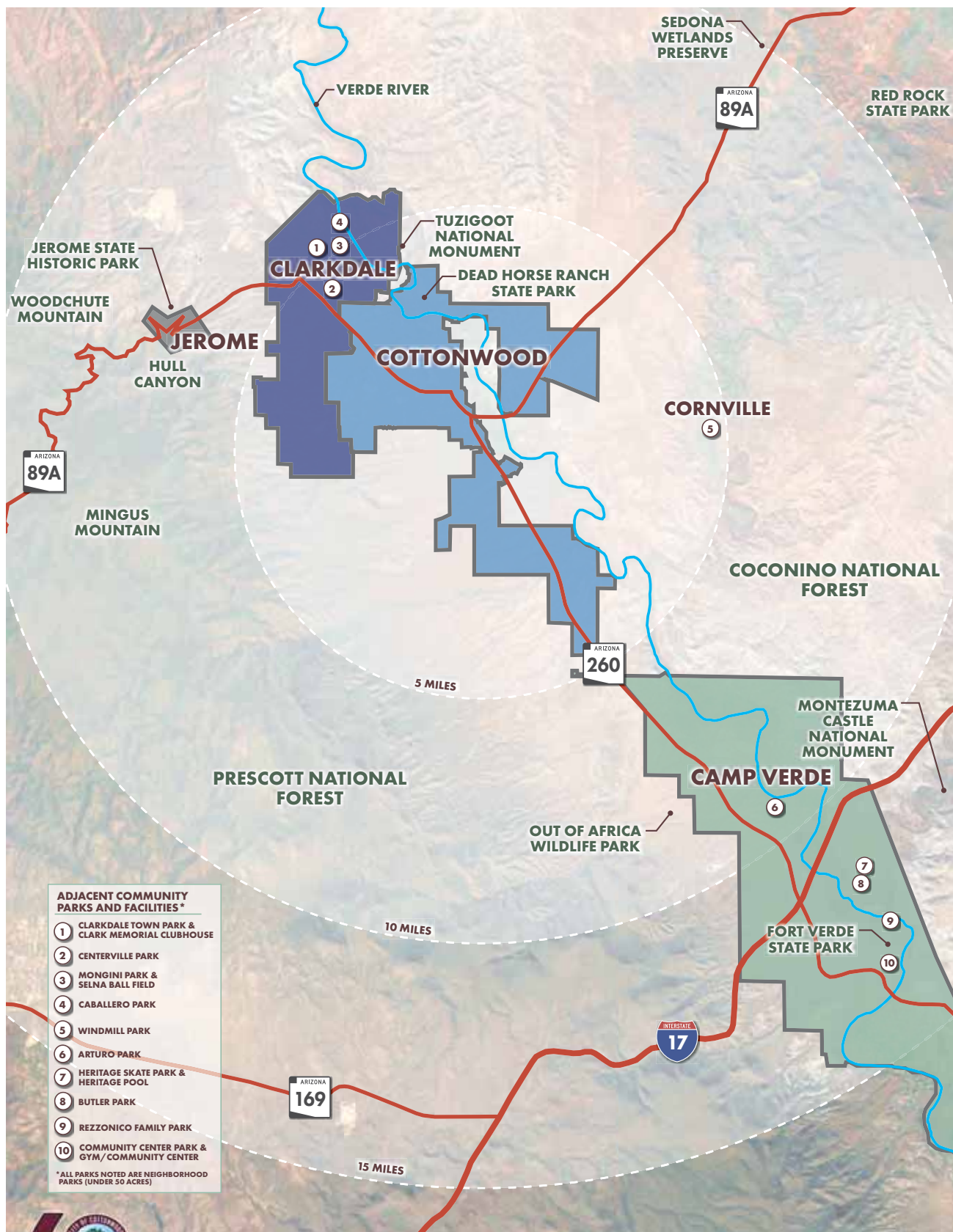
River mile	RAP (River Access Point)	Miles to next RAP	Approx. time (hrs) Low	Approx. time (hrs) High
45.0	Lower TAPCO	3.3	2.5	2.0
48.3	Tuzigoot	3.2	4.5	3.0
51.5	Dead Horse SP	3.3	4.5	3.0
54.8	89A Bridge	4.0	4.5	3.25
58.8	Skidmore	.4	1.0	.5
59.2	Prairie Lane	.5	1.0	.5
59.7	Black Canyon	.8	1.5	.75
60.5	Bignotti Beach	13.5	16	12
74	Black Bridge	2.2	3.5	2.5
76.2	White Bridge	5.5	3.5	2.5
81.7	Clear Creek	4.5	3.0	2.0
86.2	Beasley Flat	see Paddler Guide		

VERDE VALLEY FAIRGROUNDS

Located just southwest of Cottonwood Kids Park and accessing from 12th Street, the Verde Valley Fairgrounds promotes youth development by hosting educational and entertaining events related to FFA (Future Farmers of America), 4-H, and youth groups. The facilities are available year-round for the community for both public and private usage. Following is a list of facilities or programs offered at the Fairgrounds:

- Multiple buildings for event rentals
- RV camping sites (rented in conjunction with the City's annual Thunder Valley Rally)
- Arenas (full-size and practice)
- Annual free Fall Festival
- "aRT is," a program of creative classes offered on third Thursdays of each month

LEVEL OF SERVICE ANALYSIS



LEVEL OF SERVICE ANALYSIS: REGIONAL CONTEXT



NORRIS DESIGN
Planning | Landscapes | Architecture | Interiors

LEVEL OF SERVICE ANALYSIS

REGIONAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

The regional context inventory analyzes Cottonwood in relationship to the surrounding communities of Clarkdale, Jerome, Cornville, and Camp Verde. The following facilities were identified and mapped in each of these communities. It was determined that, aside from state or federal park land, each adjacent community's parks primarily serve its own community, as most existing parks and facilities are neighborhood-level and have a small service radius.

State and Federal Parks

Located in northern Cottonwood, Dead Horse Ranch State Park is year-round local and regional asset comprised of over 400 acres. The park offers a variety of facilities and activities, including:

- Dead Horse Ranch Ranger Station (visitor center/gift shop)
- Over 100 camp sites
- Eight one-room rental log cabins
- Day use areas, various ramadas, and playground
- Shared-use trails and horseback riding
- Wildlife viewing and fishing

Cottonwood is uniquely positioned between two national forest areas, the Prescott National Forest and the Coconino National Forest. The Prescott National Forest is over 1.2 million acres in size with over 450 miles of trails. At nearly 1.9 million acres in size, Coconino National Forest is one of the most diverse National Forests in the country, per the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service. This large inventory of adjacent preserved open space provides natural beauty, trails, camping, and various passive recreation opportunities to Cottonwood residents.

Other state or federal parks and recreational assets in the regional area include Jerome State Historic Park near Jerome, the Tuzigoot National Monument near Clarkdale, Fort Verde State Park in Camp Verde, and Montezuma Castle National Monument near Camp Verde.

Pocket Parks

A pocket park or mini park is designed primarily to attract residents living within a quarter mile of the park. The park is generally a walk-to type park, meaning no parking facilities for automobiles are normally found. Mini parks' service levels are 0.25 to 0.5 acres per thousand residents and the service area radius is typically 0.25 mile. Lions Club Park, Bill Bowden Memorial Park, and Cottonwood Community Orchard are all considered pocket parks.

- Average Size: 0.25 to 0.5 acres (target size, 3 acres)
- General Concept: Playgrounds for children; benches, tables for adults
- General Purpose: Passive use, serves immediate neighborhood, no parking
- Programs: Unorganized activities

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are typically between five and twenty acres in size and primarily serve areas within one-half mile, roughly a ten-minute walking distance from the park. Neighborhood parks may have more limited assets, often either passive or active recreational elements, or a small combination of the two. These parks are great gathering spaces for smaller groups and families. Typical facilities include:

- Playing fields
- Playgrounds
- Shelters
- Walking paths

Due to size and scope of activities, parking facilities are necessary for neighborhood parks. The standard for parking is a minimum of seven spaces for the first ten acres, plus one additional space for each additional acre. This may vary based upon the park's activities, program appeal, sports facilities, or special features such as a swimming pool. Old Town Activity Park, Garrison Park, and Cottonwood Kids Park are considered neighborhood parks.

- Average Size: 5 to 20 acres
- General Concept: Active and passive recreation amenities
- General Purpose: Intense active recreation for daytime use within one-half-mile radius
- Programs: League practice and play; open space play; not recommended for festivals or large-scale events on a regular basis

Community Parks

Community parks are commonly between twenty and seventy-five acres in size and serve a group of neighborhoods. They have a service radius of 1.5 miles. Community parks contain both passive and active recreation and one or more destination amenities, such as ballfields, playgrounds, and splash pads. These parks generally have a mixture of primary and support assets to serve individuals and large groups. There are no community parks identified in Cottonwood or any adjacent communities.

- Average Size: 20 to 75 acres
- General Concept: Combine passive and active activities into one locale and retain passive areas for non-organized recreation ("one-stop shop" for users)
- General Purpose: Provide a full range of recreational activities for the entire population
- Programs: Active sports and multi-generational activities and passive areas with nature viewing, lake activities and walking

Regional Parks

Regional parks are the largest type of park provided by local municipalities. They vary between fifty and two hundred fifty acres in size and contain a wide variety of active and passive amenities. They serve large areas of a city or multiple smaller communities. The service radius for this type of facility is based upon drive time and is typically within an hour's drive of most users. Regional parks provide multiple destination amenities such as sports complexes, aquatic facilities, amphitheater/event center skate parks and splash pads. There are no regional parks identified in any adjacent communities, but Cottonwood's Riverfront Park is large enough and diverse enough in amenities to be considered a regional park.

Sports Complexes

Sports complexes are facilities containing four or more lighted, competition-level sports fields or twelve or more lighted courts. They are typically dedicated to a single sport, i.e. soccer. Sports complexes can be stand-alone parks or part of a larger regional or community park. They have a service radius of 2.5 miles. There are no identified sports complexes in any adjacent communities, although Camp Verde is in the process of developing a sports complex and rodeo arena. Cottonwood's Riverfront Park has an existing sports complex, which is projected to expand as part of the 2019 master plan concept. The three tennis and twelve pickleball courts next to the Recreation Center are all lighted and also qualify as a sports complex.

Community Centers

A community center is any building that offers programming such as classes and activities to residents. These include senior centers, recreation centers, art centers, or neighborhood centers. Community centers have a service radius of 2.5 miles. Camp Verde has a community center, but its service area does not reach Cottonwood. Cottonwood Recreation Center is also considered a community center which serves the City of Cottonwood's residents and non-residents in the Valley. An additional community center within Cottonwood is the Verde Valley Senior Center.

Aquatic Facilities

Aquatic facilities are recreational or therapeutic swimming pools. Splash pads may be associated with an aquatic facility. Aquatic facilities are found in community centers or larger parks. These facilities have a service radius of 2.5 miles. Camp Verde has an aquatic facility, but its service area does not reach Cottonwood. Cottonwood Recreation Center has an indoor pool and adjacent outdoor aquatic facility (Cottonwood Aquatics Center) to serve Cottonwood residents.



LEVEL OF SERVICE ANALYSIS

The (National Recreation and Parks Association) NRPA Park Metrics is the most comprehensive benchmark data source available to parks and recreation professionals to guide effective planning and resource management. The NRPA Metrics works by categorizing data for participating agencies. Agencies can then access this data and determine appropriate benchmark communities based on various factors such as population size, operating budget, number of parks, and any number of other factors.

The metrics presented for a typical park and recreation agency represent median data and are not necessarily the guidelines that all agencies should follow, including Cottonwood. Communities are diverse and often have varying parks and recreation needs; therefore, it is best to select appropriate benchmark communities for comparison rather than relying on overall averages.

NRPA Park Metrics

According to the 2020 National Recreation and Parks (NRPA) Agency Performance Review, the typical park and recreation agency:

- Has 9.9 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents
- Has 8.1 full-time equivalents (FTEs) on staff for every 10,000 residents
- Has annual operating expenses of \$81.19 on a per capita basis
- Has 2,281 residents per park

According to the 2019 National Recreation and Parks (NRPA) Agency Park Metrics for jurisdictions in the Southwest with a population of 10,000-20,000 residents, the typical park and recreation agency:

- Has 12 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents
- Has 19 full-time equivalents (FTEs) on staff for every 10,000 residents
- Has annual operating expenses of \$152.00 on a per capita basis
- Has 1,226 residents per park

By comparison, Cottonwood:

- Has 9.3 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents
- Has 10.3 full-time equivalents (FTEs) on staff for every 10,000 residents (includes Parks & Building Maintenance employees)
- Has annual operating expenses of \$184.19 on a per capita basis (FY2021 Estimate: \$147.89)
- Has 1,525 residents per park

CITY OF COTTONWOOD FACILITIES SUMMARY		
Centers	Recreation Center (CRC)	1
	Community Event Center (Club House)	1
	Youth Center	1
	<i>Total</i>	<i>3</i>
Fields	Lighted Ballfields (Riverfront Park)	8
	Multipurpose Fields (Riverfront Park)	1
	Soccer Fields (Cottonwood Kids Park)	2
	<i>Total</i>	<i>11</i>
Courts	Outdoor Basketball Courts (Garrison & Old Town Parks)	3
	Indoor Basketball Courts (CRC) (Note: full-size court may be split into 2 smaller courts)	1
	Tennis Courts	3
	Outdoor Pickleball Courts	12
	Indoor Pickleball Courts (CRC)	4
	<i>Total</i>	<i>23</i>
Aquatics	Outdoor Pools	1
	Indoor Pools (CRC)	1
	<i>Total</i>	<i>2</i>
Other	Playgrounds (Riverfront & Garrison Parks)	2
	Dog Parks (Riverfront Park)	1
	Community Gardens (Riverfront Park)	1
	Skate Parks (Riverfront Park)	1
	Hockey Rinks (Riverfront Park)	1
	<i>Total</i>	<i>6</i>



Financial Resources

The City of Cottonwood's operating budget for the Parks and Recreation Department and Recreation Center has remained relatively stable between FY 2018 and FY 2020. As part of the operations and maintenance of the parks and recreation system, the Parks and Building Maintenance Department establishes a portion of their budget for their ongoing services including the custodial contract for the Recreation Center. The FY2021 budget reflects a significant reduction of approximately 13% in response to impacts of COVID-19. To maintain the current level of service and meet the growing needs of the community, the budget will necessitate increases in the future. The following table highlights the budget trends for the City.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021
Overall City Budget (Core Revenue Sources)	\$44,713,915	\$49,961,580	\$45,692,635
Parks & Recreation Department	\$992,605	\$910,630	\$739,495
Recreation Center	\$1,381,680	\$1,336,265	\$1,209,580
Parks & Building Maintenance Department	\$461,495	\$443,080	\$535,040

Benchmark Communities

For the City of Cottonwood's benchmarking comparison, the following communities have been selected:

- Sahuarita, Arizona
- Bay City, Texas
- Lakeway, Texas

These communities were selected based on available data from NRPA, comparable total annual operating expenditures, and other characteristics similar to Cottonwood, such as location in Arizona or nearby state, climate, population, land area, and/or recreational or open space assets.

The most recently available data for the benchmarking communities was from 2019, so Cottonwood data was selected from FY 2019 (revised, not initially adopted) to provide the most accurate comparison. If the corresponding 2019 data was not available, FY 2020 data was provided instead.

Following is a chart comparing Cottonwood to the three selected communities:

	Cottonwood (City of) Parks & Recreation	Town of Sahuarita	Bay City (City of) Parks and Recreation	Lakeway (City of) Parks and Recreation
Agency's total annual operating expenditures	\$2,374,285	\$1,905,141	\$1,218,786	\$2,646,873
Square mileage of incorporated jurisdiction	16.7	31.5	9.0	10.2
Population of jurisdiction	12,199	29,318	18,000	15,673
Operating expenditures per capita	\$195	\$65	\$68	\$169
Operating expenditures per acre of parkland	\$20,993	\$16,860	\$4,063	\$34,456
Acres of parks per 1,000 residents	9.27	3.85	16.67	4.90

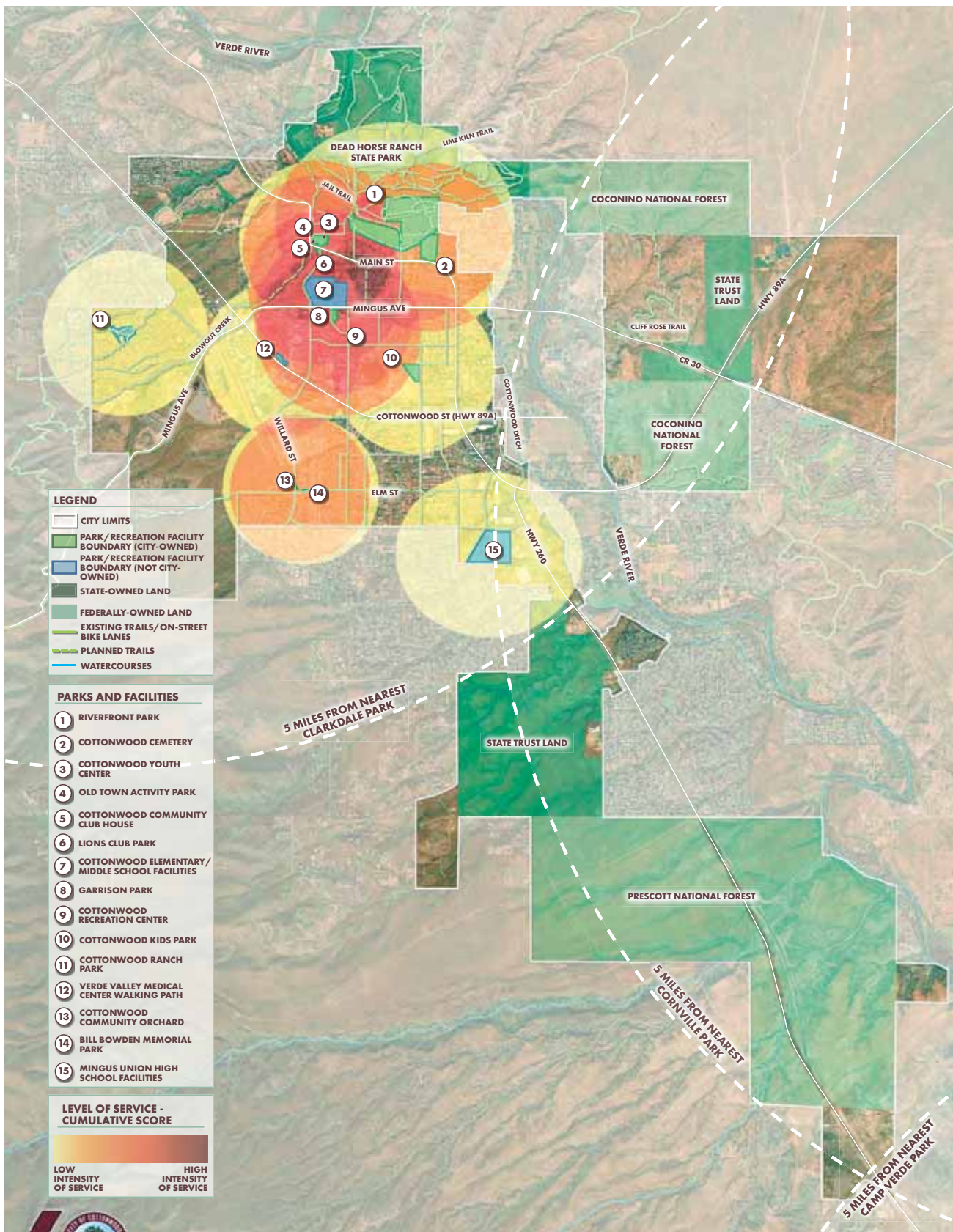
	Cottonwood (City of) Parks & Recreation	Town of Sahuarita	Bay City (City of) Parks and Recreation	Lakeway (City of) Parks and Recreation
Number of residents per park	1,525	4,188	692	3,134
Number of acres per park	14.14	16.14	11.54	15.36
Ratio of fee programs to all programs	63.0%	98.0%	66.7%	78.2%
Percentage of agency's total operating expenditures from the following sources:				
a. General fund tax support	72.7%	89.0%	90.0%	77.0%
b. Dedicated levies		2.0%		
c. Earned/generated revenue	27.3%	9.0%	1.0%	23.0%
d. Sponsorships			2.0%	
e. Grants			7.0%	
f. Other (describe)				Trust reimbursement
Total number of full-time equivalent employees (FTEs)	12.5	14.8	23	25.7
Number of individual parks or non-park sites the department/agency maintains and/or has management responsibility over:				
a. Total number of parks	8	7	26	5
b. Total park acres	113.1	113	300	76.82
c. Total number of non-park sites	1		15	10
d. Total acres of non-park sites	7.3		5	160.92
Total number of parks + non-park sites (a+c)	9		41	15
Total acres of parks + non-park sites (b+d)	120.4	113	305	237.74
Total number of trail miles managed or maintained by the agency	21.2		2	21.5
Number of buildings and the square footage of the buildings operated by the agency:				
a. Number of operated buildings	8	2	12	4
b. Square footage of operated buildings	71,400	5,400	3,200	24,895

	Cottonwood (City of) Parks & Recreation	Town of Sahuarita	Bay City (City of) Parks and Recreation	Lakeway (City of) Parks and Recreation
Number of programs the agency offers annually and the number of people (i.e., contacts) served by these programs:				
a. Total number of programs offered	51	101	15	478
b. Number of fee based programs	34	99	10	374
c. Total program contacts (estimate)	8,630	1,579	12,000	7,170
Number of contacts (e.g. participants, users) of the agency's parks and facilities per year:				
a. Total building facility contacts	238,916		2,000	89,398
b. Total park facility contacts			96,000	25,498
c. Total facilities and parks contacts	238,916	0	98,000	114,896

Level of Service: 10-Minute Walk

According to the NRPA 2021-2023 Strategic Plan, more than thirty percent (30%) of the population in U.S. cities lacks access to a park within a 10-minute walk. Gaps may exist due to a multitude of reasons, including lack of funding, development outpacing local government action, and historical discriminatory practices. Individual health and wellness are fundamentally tied to social determinants – meaning not every person is born into circumstances that favor access to healthy recreational resources. Parks and recreation professionals strive to bridge these gaps as local partners and public health agents.

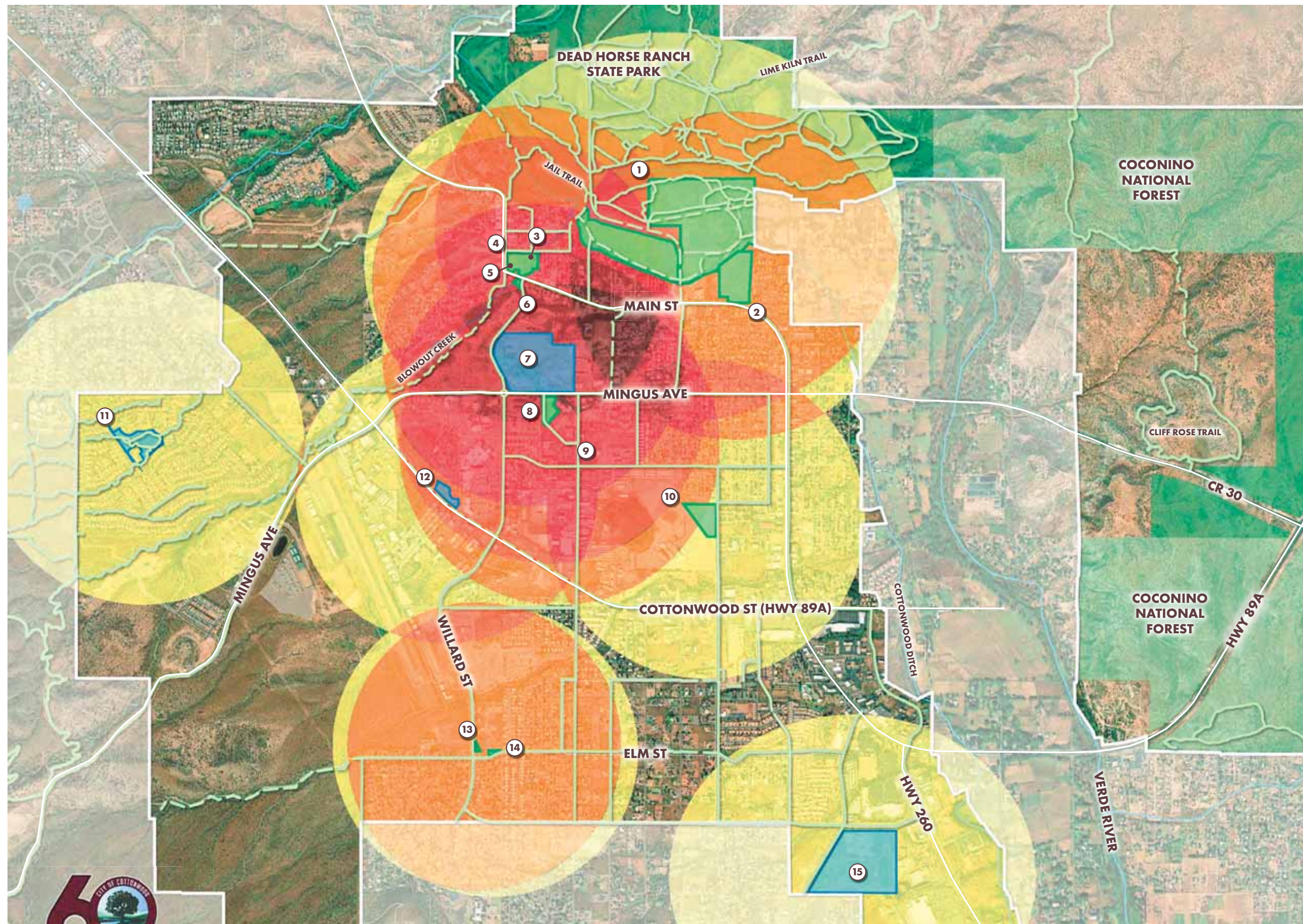
According to the Trust for Public Land, forty percent (40%) of Cottonwood residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park, which is fifteen percent (15%) below the national average of fifty-five percent (55%). The following graphics analyze the level of service provided by parks and recreation facilities based on mapping a 10-minute walk from each park or recreation facility. Lighter yellows indicate an area of the city with a lower level of service (fewer parks and recreation facilities within a 10-minute walk) while darker reds indicate a higher level of service (various parks and recreation facilities within a 10-minute walk). These graphics are based on proximity and do not consider the actual walkability to and from parks via sidewalks, trails, etc. The first set of graphics highlights the level of service provided by all parks and recreation facilities, while the following graphics focus on specific amenities including fields, open turf, and playgrounds. Not all parks provide the same amenities, so the level of service provided to residents adjacent to different parks may be dramatically different.



LEVEL OF SERVICE: 10 MINUTE WALK TO ALL PARKS & FACILITIES



NORRIS DESIGN
Planning | Landscape Architecture | Interiors



LEGEND

- CITY LIMITS
- PARK/RECREATION FACILITY BOUNDARY (CITY-OWNED)
- PARK/RECREATION FACILITY BOUNDARY (NOT CITY-OWNED)
- STATE-OWNED LAND
- FEDERALLY-OWNED LAND
- EXISTING TRAILS/ON-STREET BIKE LANES
- PLANNED TRAILS
- WATERCOURSES

PARKS AND FACILITIES

- 1 RIVERFRONT PARK
- 2 COTTONWOOD CEMETERY
- 3 COTTONWOOD YOUTH CENTER
- 4 OLD TOWN ACTIVITY PARK
- 5 COTTONWOOD COMMUNITY CLUB HOUSE
- 6 LIONS CLUB PARK
- 7 COTTONWOOD ELEMENTARY/ MIDDLE SCHOOL FACILITIES
- 8 GARRISON PARK
- 9 COTTONWOOD RECREATION CENTER
- 10 COTTONWOOD KIDS PARK
- 11 COTTONWOOD RANCH PARK
- 12 VERDE VALLEY MEDICAL CENTER WALKING PATH
- 13 COTTONWOOD COMMUNITY ORCHARD
- 14 BILL BOWDEN MEMORIAL PARK
- 15 MINGUS UNION HIGH SCHOOL FACILITIES

LEVEL OF SERVICE - CUMULATIVE SCORE

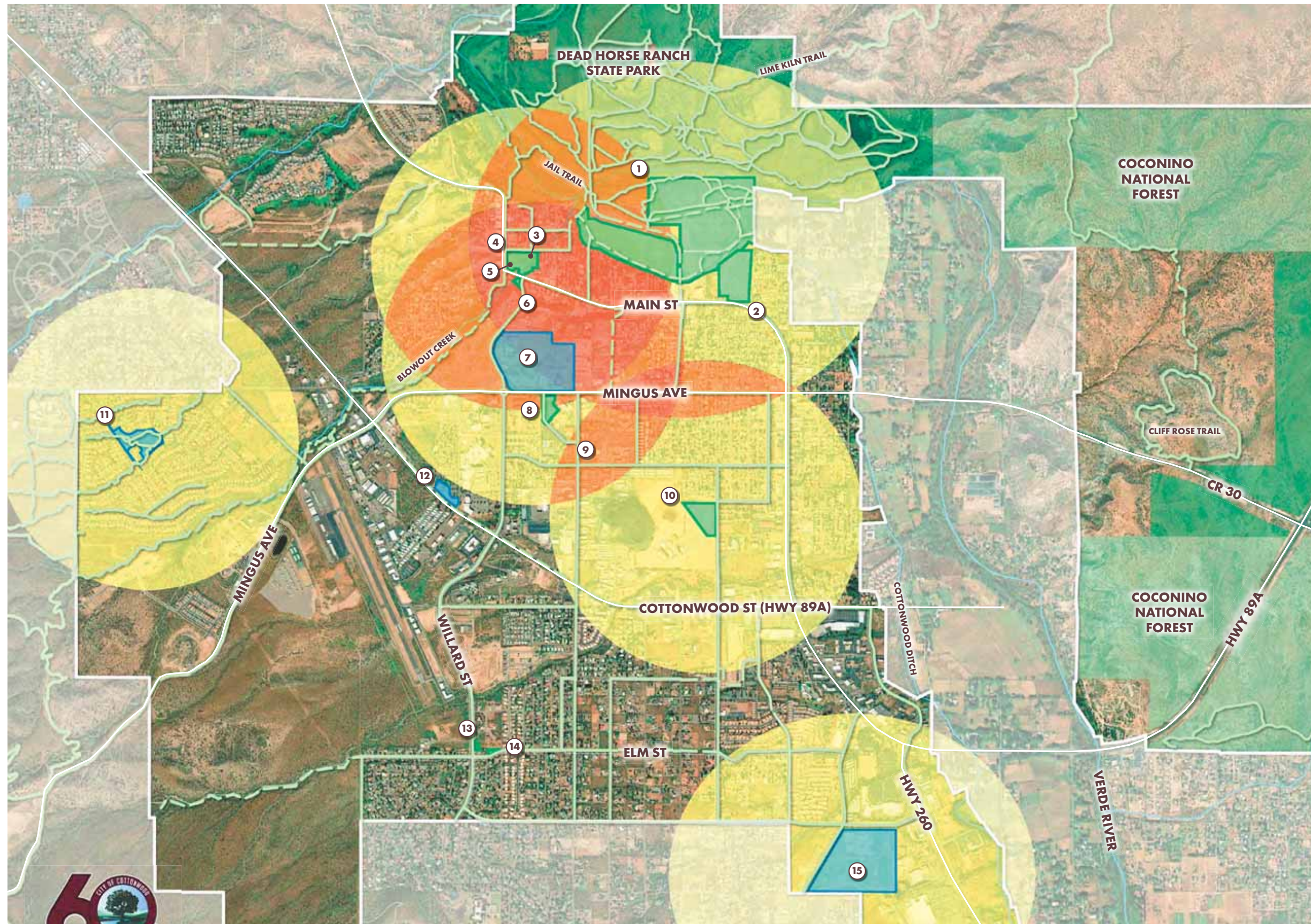
LOW INTENSITY OF SERVICE

HIGH INTENSITY OF SERVICE



LEVEL OF SERVICE: 10 MINUTE WALK TO ALL PARKS & FACILITIES





LEGEND

- CITY LIMITS
- PARK/RECREATION FACILITY BOUNDARY (CITY-OWNED)
- PARK/RECREATION FACILITY BOUNDARY (NOT CITY-OWNED)
- STATE-OWNED LAND
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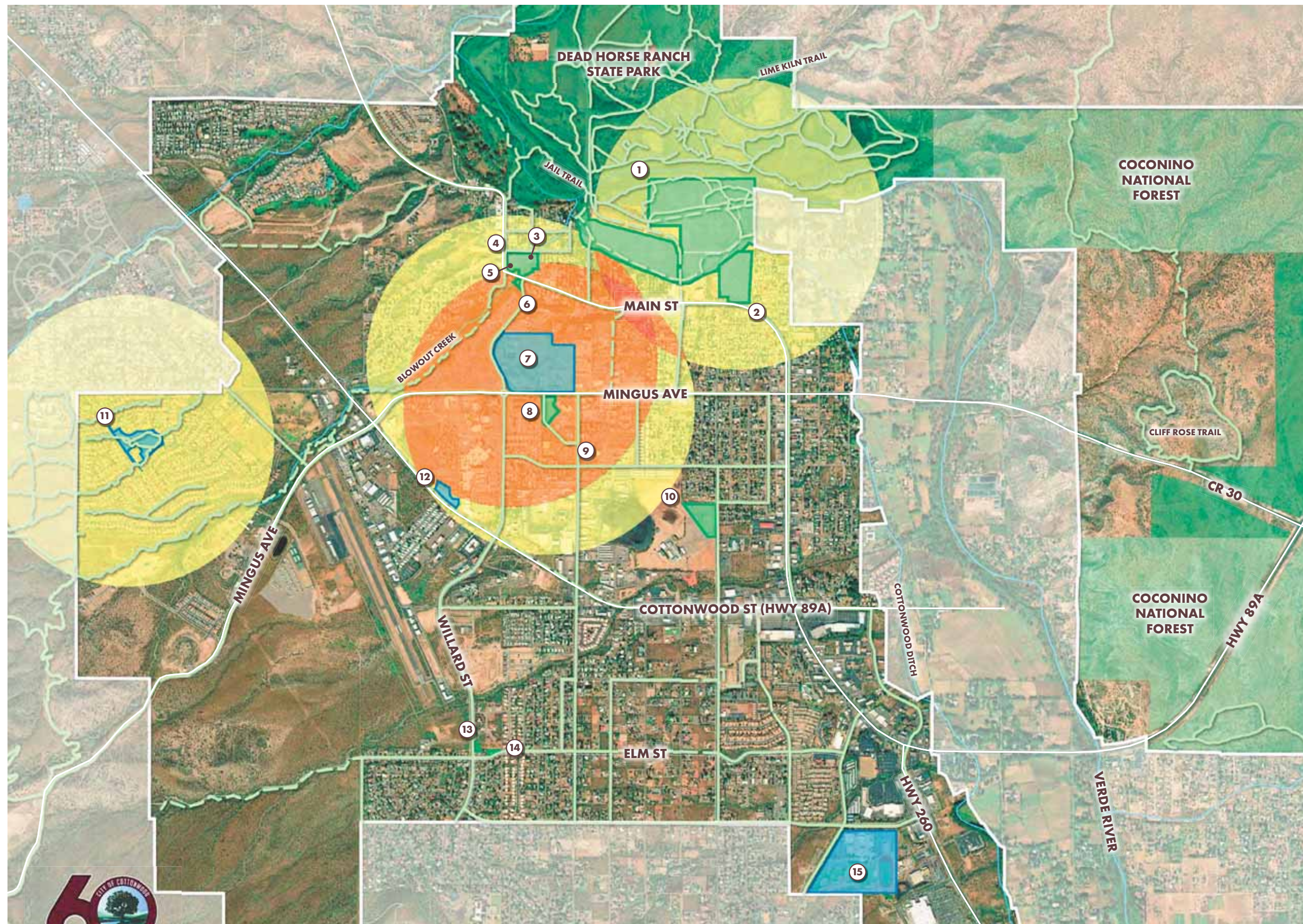
LOW INTENSITY OF SERVICE

HIGH INTENSITY OF SERVICE



LEVEL OF SERVICE: 10 MINUTE WALK TO FIELDS & OPEN TURF





LEGEND

- CITY LIMITS
- PARK/RECREATION FACILITY BOUNDARY (CITY-OWNED)
- PARK/RECREATION FACILITY BOUNDARY (NOT CITY-OWNED)
- STATE-OWNED LAND
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LEVEL OF SERVICE - CUMULATIVE SCORE

LOW INTENSITY OF SERVICE HIGH INTENSITY OF SERVICE



LEVEL OF SERVICE: 10 MINUTE WALK TO PLAYGROUNDS



TRENDS ANALYSIS

Public Health and the Impact of COVID-19

Considering the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and other national challenges, parks and recreation systems are proving, more than ever, to be essential services that should be accessible to all citizens. May's NRPA Park Pulse poll revealed that five in six U.S. adults said that exercising at their local park is essential to maintaining their mental and physical health. Sports that require no direct physical contact with others, such as racquet sports, are expected to rise in popularity due to social distancing challenges. Increased food insecurity from the pandemic has also highlighted the need for accessible, locally grown produce and livestock, both privately or in the form of community gardens.

The uncertainty of 2020 led to budget cuts into 2021 for more than fifty percent (50%) of parks agencies – meaning adaptability and innovation is crucial for these agencies to continue to thrive. The following trends were identified in a national survey, "Next" Practices for a COVID-19 World:

- In-person offerings and virtual programming will coexist.
- People will view access to parks/outdoors as a right, not a luxury.
- Basic personal hygiene and public sanitation requirements will increase by significant levels.
- Our understanding of truly essential workers will change.
- Permanent office spaces will shrink as work from home and remote working will become an expectation, not a perk.
- Customer experiences will be more faceless and/or touchless.
- Esports will continue to grow exponentially with virtual versions of major sports.

Additional parks and recreation changes are expected because of the global pandemic:

Common areas and gathering spaces will be designed to accommodate physical distancing.

- HVAC and air handling systems will be designed to reduce viral loads.
- Privacy may be reduced, with the increase of temperature checks, greater visual surveillance, and contact tracing.
- In-person older adult programs may be impacted more seriously for longer due to the population's vulnerability.
- Parks and recreation budgets may take years – perhaps a decade or more – to fully recover, which may result in hiring more part-time or contractual staff.
- Parks and recreation providers will continue to provide safe childcare and expanded food access services, especially for vulnerable children.
- Parks and recreation investments in low-income and/or minority communities will occur to help combat systemic inequality.

Outdoor Programming for All

All citizens deserve quality outdoor programming that meets their recreational needs, and future legislation is considering the importance of outdoor spaces. The Outdoors for All Act (H.R. 4512) was introduced in 2019 as a bipartisan bill designed "to establish an outdoor recreation legacy partnership grant program under which [the Department of the] Interior may award grants to states, certain political subdivisions of a state, special purpose districts, or certain Indian tribes for projects to (1) acquire land and water for parks and other outdoor recreation purposes, and (2) develop new or renovate existing outdoor recreation facilities." Priority would be given to projects that:

- Create or significantly enhance access to park and recreational opportunities in an urban neighborhood or community
- Engage and empower underserved communities and youth
- Provide opportunities for youth employment or job training
- Establish or expand public-private partnerships
- Take advantage of coordination among various levels of government

H.R. 4512 is still under review by applicable House of Representatives Committees and Subcommittees.

Esports

Esports, a form of sport competition using video games, has grown to more than a half-billion dollar per-year industry worldwide with an enormous global audience. Although Esports are essentially sedentary recreational activities – often the opposite of what parks and recreation is trying to promote – they have the potential for revenue generation and facility utilization. Once social distancing challenges have been mitigated, parks and recreation agencies have the unique opportunity to sponsor Esports tournaments, provide gaming rooms, and offer coaching programs to engage this audience. Collaboration with parks and recreation agencies can help promote health and physical wellness within the Esports audience, perhaps combining digital gaming events with more physical, heart-healthy activities.

Technology

According to NRPA (Top Trends in Parks and Recreation 2020 and 2019), video camera surveillances in parks and facilities is rapidly growing due to improving technology and increased affordability from mass production. Additional monitoring systems are also on the rise, including beacon counters which detect a person's presence through his or her cellphone signal, allowing parks and recreation agencies to remotely monitor and track park usage. Recreational and commercial (e.g. food delivery) drones are slowly gaining acceptance. Agencies are skeptical of potential disruptions caused by drones but are enticed by the idea of using drones for inventory, inspections, and search and rescue operations. Drone usage is expected to increase slightly but not nearly at the rate of video surveillance or monitoring system usage.

Facility Trends

Small-sided soccer – soccer with fewer players on each side (e.g. typically three or five) – and Futsal – indoor soccer played on a much smaller court with smaller team sizes – are both very fast-paced and often used in traditional soccer coaching tactics. Because both small-sided soccer and futsal involve smaller teams, each player touches the ball significantly more and builds stronger decision-making and ball-handling skills. This can be particularly beneficial in training youth soccer players to play better on larger fields. Because soccer is the largest sports program in Cottonwood, it may be beneficial to consider providing spaces for these smaller types of soccer play.



Pickleball continues to rise in popularity. According to the Sports & Fitness Industry Association's (SFIA) 2019 Pickleball Participant Report, pickleball currently has 3.3 million players in the United States, or approximately 1.1 percent of the population. The USA Pickleball Association reports that over 1,300 new locations were added to its Places to Play Database in 2019. Communities around the country are converting underutilized tennis courts to pickleball – Cottonwood included.

Dog parks remain one of the fastest growing park types in the country. According to the Trust for Public Land, dog park development has increased by forty percent (40%) since 2009. A 2018 survey by the NRPA found that ninety-one percent (91%) of Americans believe dog parks are beneficial to their communities. Dog parks come with challenges, including socialization dangers between dogs and barking nuisances to surrounding areas. Cottonwood has created separate play enclosures for small and large dogs, which can increase dog park safety for dogs and owners alike.

Bike parks (also called pump tracks) involve a series of rollers, banked turns, and other features designed to be ridden by mountain bike or BMX users, and they are relatively inexpensive to construct. Most modern pump tracks (within the last ten to fifteen years) are accessible to users of widely varying skill levels and ages. Paved (tarmac) pump tracks are gaining popularity, as they require less maintenance and are accessible to more users – skaters, in-liners, and scooter riders. The potential addition of a pump track was identified in the Riverfront Park Master Plan in 2019.

FACILITY ANALYSIS

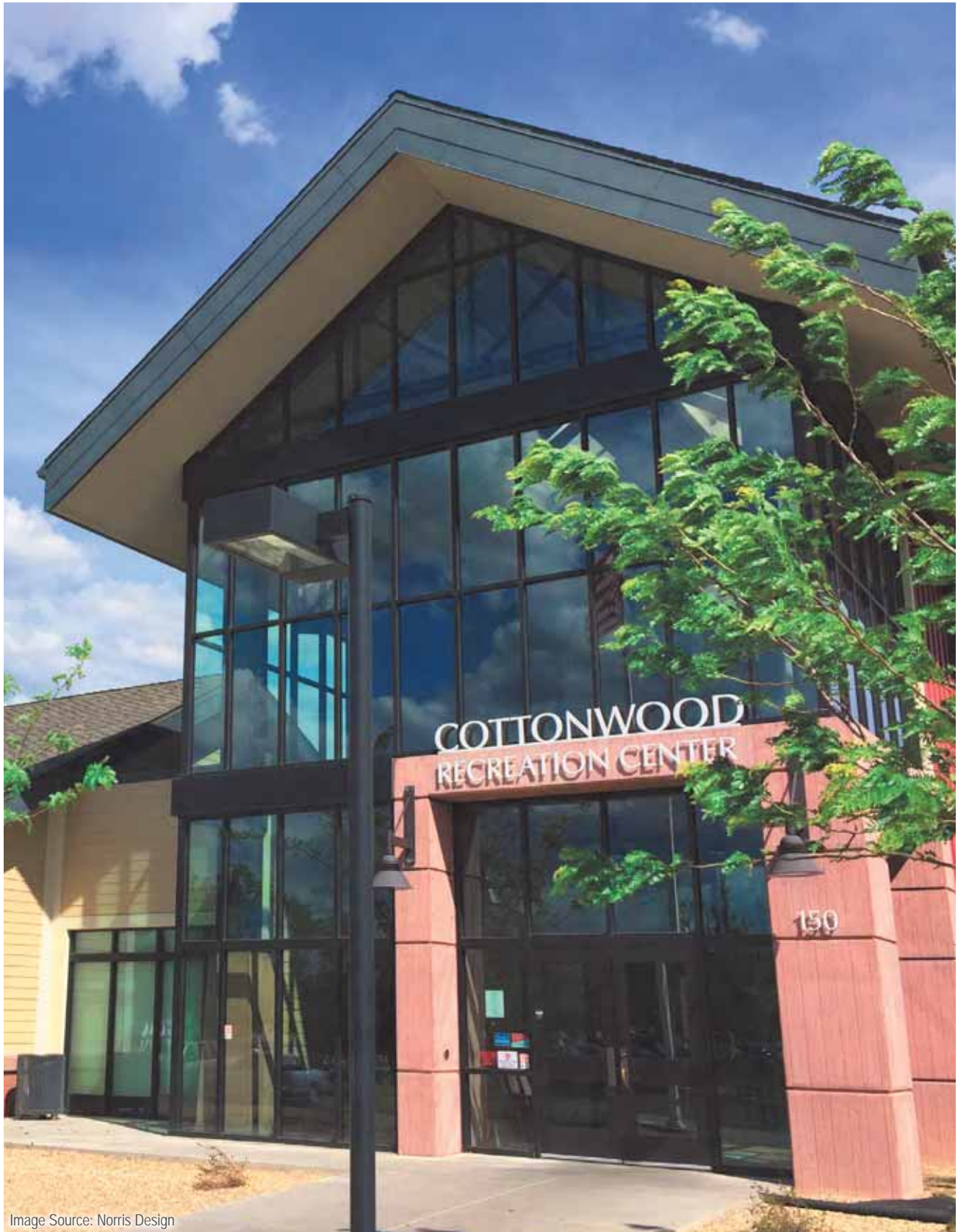


Image Source: Norris Design

FACILITY ANALYSIS

CURRENT RECREATION FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS ASSESSMENT

The following is a general assessment of current recreation facilities as well as recreation programs and services that are provided by the City of Cottonwood Parks & Recreation Department.

Recreation Facilities

For a community with a population of just over 12,000, there are a significant number of recreation amenities that support recreation programs and services. These facilities also serve residents outside of Cottonwood due to their large service radius and the lack of comparable facilities in adjacent jurisdictions. Each of the major recreation facilities is assessed below.

Cottonwood Recreation Center – The Center is now 10 years old and is a full-service recreation center that serves not only residents of Cottonwood but also the Verde Valley. The Center features: fitness/strength training area, exercise dance studio, indoor leisure pool, community events hall, gymnasium, game room, babysitting room, and a climbing wall.

- The Center is in reasonably good physical condition but is starting to show its age.
- The Center averages 4,000 members and 700 to 800 daily visits. Nearly sixty percent (60%) of users are non-residents.
- The Center is heavily utilized by seniors but there are lower rates of use by adults and families.
- The primary reason for most people using the Center is fitness. The pool and community events hall are not used to their full potential. The community events hall is used for rentals on a regular basis. Lap Swim and Group Exercise classes are in high demand, sometimes necessitating reservation systems and/or fee schedules.
- There is a minimum level of full-time staff for the Center with a strong reliance on part-time staff for many functions.
- The financial cost recovery level for the Center is currently at sixty percent (60%) but the goal is seventy-five percent (75%).
- Maintenance of the facility is the responsibility of Public Works with up to two full-time staff assigned to the Center and additional part-time staff and supervision as needed.
- The Center has a comparably low fee schedule for the amenities that are present and the market that the facility is in.

Cottonwood Aquatics Center – Located on the same site as the Recreation Center, the Aquatics Center is an outdoor 8 lane by 25-meter pool with an L that has a one-meter diving board. The pool is operated seasonally from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Usage is extended through the fall to accommodate the Mingus Union High School swim team.

- The Aquatics Center is in good physical condition as it was renovated in 2010, but with the overall age of the facility, there will likely need to be another renovation of the pool tank and bathhouse in the next five years. The Center could benefit by having more shade available as well.
- The facility is primarily utilized for swim lessons (500 per season) and by swim teams. During the summer, the Cottonwood Clippers swim team is a primary user of the pool, as well as recreation and lap swimmers.
- The season is extended from September through November so the Mingus Union High School swim team can use the pool. They pay \$9,500 annually for this pool time.
- The pool does not have a strong appeal to recreational swimmers other than the day care centers that use the pool during the week. This is due in large part to the conventional nature of this amenity.
- The center averages 200-300 users on weekdays but only 100 on the weekends. The pool is not being utilized to its full potential as a result.
- The Aquatics Center's operating budget is separate from the Recreation Center's budget. The use of the Aquatics Center is one of the benefits given to Recreation Center annual pass holders.

Cottonwood Youth Center – This is an older building that is next to Old Town Activity Park and is utilized for youth programs.

- The building is not in good condition and no longer meets fire code requirements. It was also not designed to serve youth activities. As a result, the facility is not very functional for its use and limits the number of youths that can be served. This building ultimately needs to be replaced in the next few years.
- The park, and athletic field in particular, is used as an outdoor amenity for the center and its programs.
- The primary use is for the after-school program and summer day camp along with holiday camps.
- Transportation to the Center is provided by Parks & Recreation Department and the Cottonwood-Oak Creek School District for the after-school program.

Cottonwood Community Club House – This historic structure is located in Old Town and was built in 1939 as a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project. It has been recently been fully renovated and now serves as an event center.

- The primary uses for the building is weddings, corporate and community events.
- The facility has very affordable rates for use.
- Although the Club House is part of the Parks & Recreation Department's facilities, it is branded and marketed as an independent City amenity.

Recreation Programs

With the significant number of parks and recreation facilities that are available in Cottonwood, the Parks and Recreation Department provides a wide range of recreation programs and services. In addition to serving the Cottonwood community, many residents of the Verde Valley also take advantage of these services.

The following is a basic list of the recreation programs that have been offered by the City through the Parks & Recreation Department since 2018. This information was provided by Department staff and is organized by categories commonly found in parks and recreation agencies nationally.

Area	Focus	Programs Offered
Sports	Youth	Basketball, Volleyball, Pickleball Partnerships with: AYSO Soccer, Mean Machine Football, Little League Baseball/Softball
	Adult	Softball, Volleyball, Pickleball, Dink for Pink Pickleball Tournament, Cornhole Mash Tournament, Cottonwood Classic Disc Golf Tournament
Fitness / Wellness	Youth	Hula Class
	Adult	Group fitness classes in person and online (Yoga, Zumba, Silver Sneakers, Spin Class, HIIT, Pilates, Stick Fit) personal training, orientation.
Cultural Arts	Youth	Hula Class, Old Town Music & the Market, Missoula Musical Theatre, Art Activities (Youth Center)
	Adult	Walkin' on Main, Hula Class, Old Town Music & the Market
Education	Youth	After school programs, Summer Camp, School holiday camps, Reading program at local Humane Society, Kid's at Hope Conference
	Adult	Looking Good Cottonwood
Aquatics	Youth	Learn to swim programming, one on one lessons, parties, Swim Team, Lifeguard Training Class, Recreational Swim, Dive-In Movie, Fire & Water Safety Class, Special Olympics Swim Meet
	Adult	Water aerobics classes (H2O Force, Silver Sneakers, Hydro Fit), Indoor and Outdoor Lap Swimming, Recreational Swim, Lifeguard training class, Dive-In Movie, Special Olympics Swim Meet

Special Needs	Youth	Special Olympics Swim Meet
	Adult	Special Olympics Swim Meet
Special Events		Toys for Tots, Thunder Valley Rally, Walkin' on Main, 4th of July, Loven Family Run, Cottonwood Vintage Run, Verde Valley Rally Bike Race, Easter Eggstravaganza, Mayor's ride, Pictures with Easter Bunny, Old Town Music & Market, Movie at the Park, Dive-In Movies, Daddy Daughter Date Night, Fall Carnival, Haunted House, Safe Street, City of Cottonwood Christmas Parade, Pictures with Santa
Outdoor Recreation	Youth	Canoeing, Hiking, School Bike Rodeo, Fire & Water Safety Class
	Adult	Ride of Silence
Seniors		Silver Sneakers Exercise Classes, Looking Good Cottonwood
Teens		Cottonwood Youth Advisory Commission, Teen Night held at the Cottonwood Recreation Center and Aquatics Center, Haunted House, League of Cities and Towns
General	Youth	Angel Tree, Christmas Tree Decorating Youth Advisory Commission, Goosechase Scavenger Hunt Challenge
	Adult	Virtual Run Challenge, Goosechase Scavenger Hunt Challenge
Self-Directed	Youth	Recreation Center Game Room, Indoor Basketball, Indoor Scavenger Hunt Bingo
	Adult	Outdoor Tennis and Pickleball, Indoor Pickleball and Basketball, Indoor and Outdoor Lap Swimming, Recreational Swim, Fitness Bingo

Program Area Definitions

These are general definitions of the programs that are typically found in each of these categories on a national basis.

- *Sports* – Team and individual sports including camps, clinics, and tournaments. Also includes adventure/non-traditional sports.
- *Fitness/Wellness* – Group fitness classes, personal training, education, and nutrition.
- *Cultural Arts* – Performing arts classes, visual arts classes, music/video production and arts events.
- *Education* – Before and after school programs, summer/school break camps, and preschool, language programs, tutoring, science (STEM) classes, computer, and financial planning.
- *Aquatics* – Learn to swim classes, aqua exercise classes, competitive swimming/diving, SCUBA, and other programs (synchro, water polo, etc.).
- *Special Needs* – Programs for people with physical, cognitive, and developmental disabilities. Also, inclusion programs.
- *Special Events* – City-wide special events that are conducted throughout the year. Note that the City is trending toward conducting smaller events for ease of management and staffing.
- *Outdoor Recreation* – Environmental education, hiking, camping, kayaking, and other activities.
- *Seniors* – Programs and services that are dedicated to serving the needs of seniors. This can include all of the activity areas noted above plus social service functions.
- *Teens* – Programs and services that are focused on serving the needs of teens. This can include all of the activity areas noted above (except seniors).
- *General* – Includes programs and services that do not fit into the other program categories.
- *Self-Directed* – This includes the opportunities for individuals to recreate on their own. This can include activities such as open gym, use of fitness space, tennis, pickleball, and lap/recreational swimming. Although not an organized program, time and space must be allocated for this purpose.

Recreation Programs and Services Summary

- Recreation programs focus on the following areas:
 - Youth sports
 - Adult sports
 - Aquatics
 - Education- youth after-school and summer camps
 - Fitness
 - Special events
- Program areas where there are fewer offerings:
 - Youth fitness
 - Cultural arts
 - Outdoor recreation
 - Seniors
 - Special needs
- There are strong opportunities for self-directed activities especially in fitness and aquatics.
- In addition to the Parks and Recreation Department, some recreation programming is also supplied by the library and some youth programs by the Mingus Union School District. Library programs include:
 - Open Mic
 - Music in the Stacks
 - Youth Storytime
 - Story Walk
 - Gardening
 - Comic Expo
 - Teen Sign Language
- There are youth sports organizations in the city that provide the following sports.
 - Little League baseball
 - Soccer
 - Football
- Most of the programming is offered by part-time Parks and Recreation Department staff, with very little being provided by contract instructors.
- The Department lacks a formal recreation program plan to guide long-term programming decisions and areas of focus.
- Despite the number of recreation amenities available, there is only an average level of programming being offered. This is due in part to the limited staff available for organizing and leading recreation activities.
- The Parks and Recreation Department has few performance measures and record keeping regarding recreation programs and services.
- In the past the Department has produced a three-time-a-year Leisure Times recreation program catalog and other program specific (aquatics) information booklets.

General Operations

The management and operations of the Cottonwood Parks & Recreation Department as well as the parks and facilities that are present, has an impact on service delivery and programs. The following are comments regarding general operations.

- The Parks and Recreation Department has a small full-time staff (7) for the wide range of facilities that are operated and for the breadth of programs that are provided. There is a strong reliance on part-time staff as a result.
- Parks and facility maintenance are the responsibility of the Public Works Department. There is a separate Parks Division within the Department with their own budget. On-going maintenance and custodial costs are charged back to Parks and Recreation. Custodial services are contracted out.
- With a number of aging facilities, the cost of operating and maintaining these assets will continue to increase. It should also be anticipated that the overall level of maintenance will need to be increased as well.
- Despite the fact that the City's parks and facilities are reasonably well maintained, they do not have actual maintenance plans in place.
- There have been City budget limitations in the last several years that has impacted operations and programming in Parks and Recreation. This has also put pressure on the need to generate more revenue. Currently there are some general costs recovery guidelines for certain facilities and programs, but the Department would benefit from a comprehensive fee policy. The fees for the rental of recreation facilities such as the Recreation Center, Community Club House, and Aquatics Center have been simplified over the last couple years with the elimination of non-resident rates and a standard pricing model that is well below the market value for these facilities. Rentals do allow alcohol if there is a permit.
- The Parks and Recreation Department has two basic operating budgets, one for general programs and services and a separate budget for the Recreation Center. There are limited budget tracking mechanisms in place.
- There are up to date and accurate job descriptions for all fulltime and part-time positions in the Department.
- Parks and Recreation has basic staffing and operations policies in place that are backed up by operations manuals for the Recreation Center. However there needs to be updates to many of these documents and these should be part of a comprehensive operations plan for all facilities, programs, and staff.
- Organizations that utilize City parks and recreation facilities do not always have signed use agreements in place and there is not a comprehensive IGA with the school district. The Department is in the process of obtaining or updating all necessary use agreements.
- While there are a variety of marketing efforts in place (especially for the Community Club House and recreation programs), there is not a comprehensive yearly, marketing plan in place.

AREAS OF FOCUS & RECOMMENDATIONS

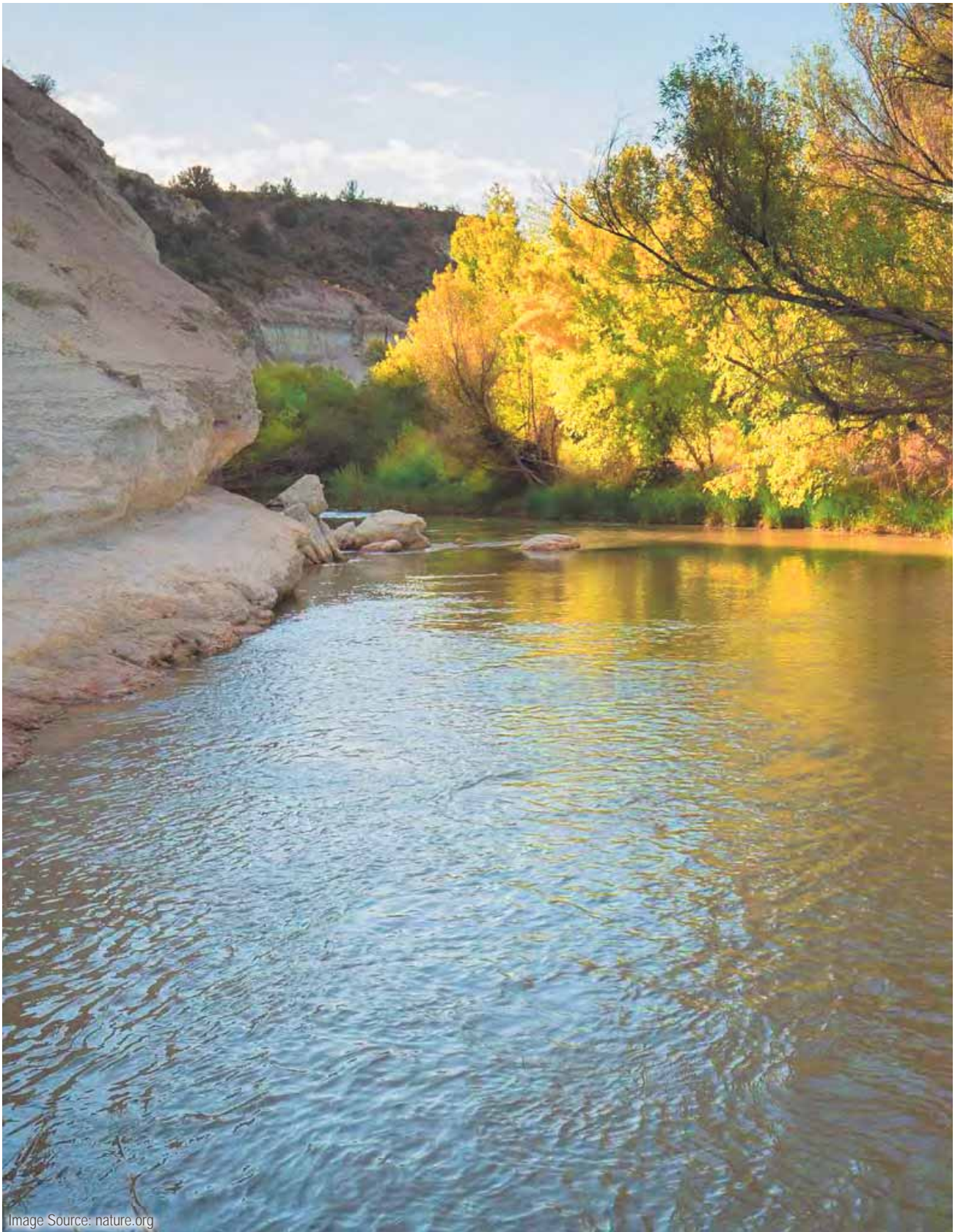


Image Source: nature.org

AREAS OF FOCUS & RECOMMENDATIONS

AREAS OF FOCUS

The following areas of focus resulted from a combination of community input received through both virtual open houses, stakeholder engagement, community questionnaire results, additional feedback received from citizens, and City feedback. These areas of focus guide the overall recommendations, both on a system and individual park level.

Transition to Stability

The first half of 2020 has been transformational for communities all around the country, Cottonwood included, but the City will recover. The City, especially the Parks and Recreation team, will need to focus priorities to reopen existing facilities, balance operational needs, and ultimately stabilize the existing parks and recreation system. Timing is difficult to discern given current uncertainties, but the coming months will center on transitioning to stability above all other priorities.

Connection

This next area of focus aligns with public health – both physical and mental aspects – and the need for reengagement with the community, especially during this unprecedented time. The City does well connecting with community members through social media, advertising, and program guides. These existing community connections must continue to be leveraged and strengthened. The status of parks and recreation facilities and future expectations – as best as they can be predicted – must be communicated. Connection may involve finding opportunities to leverage parks in creative new ways, such as hosting typically indoor events outdoors or supporting local businesses. This area of focus also includes working with peer organizations like the hospital on bolstering public health and wellness initiatives.

Reinvestment

A common theme amongst community feedback received was the idea of focusing investment into existing parks and recreation facilities and programs. Reinvestment recommendations center on continuing to meet known resident needs and suggestions involving low resource usage and those requiring more capital investment. This area of focus will include recommendations that can be implemented in both the short term and long term.

Riverpark and Trail System

The Cottonwood Riverfront Trails and Recreation Master Plan outlines a wide network of planned trail connections throughout the city. This area of focus aims to strategically target trail connections with the most impact and to expand river access, building a stronger network that draws community members and visitors alike. This presents an opportunity to build a unique system linking the river and washes to enhance access to the parks system.

SYSTEM RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations apply to the park system as a whole; recommendations specific to individual park facilities are discussed in the Park and Facility Recommendations sections.

1. Reinvest in Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities

Residents enjoy a great deal of existing facilities offered by the City (e.g. recently converted pickleball facilities at the Recreation Center and the dog park at Riverfront Park). Municipal resources are limited, especially during this transition time, so allocating funds toward maintaining or improving well-used facilities provides much needed stability to the existing system.

2. Provide Additional Amenities at Each Park

Following the focus of reinvestment, this recommendation aims to make the most of the City's existing facilities. The addition of amenities such as play structures, benches, shade canopies, or even a new water feature can significantly enhance a park visitor's experience. Currently, only two park facilities provide playgrounds – Garrison Park and Riverfront Park. Public input expressed desire for play structures. Installation of play equipment at Cottonwood Kids Park and Bill Bowden Memorial Park complies with specific goals listed in the City's 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan.

3. Continue to Improve Connectivity and Passive Recreation by Expanding Trails Network

Residents desire walking and hiking trails, particularly in natural areas. Currently, most of Cottonwood's trails are in Riverfront Park and Dead Horse Ranch State Park, but numerous trails are planned throughout the City to connect various facilities. Construction of the trail network will provide better connectivity to parks and recreation facilities and other natural, scenic areas along the river or washes.

4. Preserve the Natural Beauty and Scenic Views at Parks and Recreation Facilities

In both the Community Questionnaire and Virtual Open Houses, citizens expressed that, while parks and recreation improvements are desired, preserving the natural beauty of Cottonwood's existing facilities should be prioritized. Preserving mature trees and views at Riverfront Park was specifically referenced, but this principle can apply to the City's other parks. Cottonwood should continue to serve as a regional destination for a wide range of natural outdoor recreation opportunities.



Image Source: alltrails.com

5. Diversify Recreation Programming to Include More Age Groups

Cottonwood's Parks and Recreation Department offers a multitude of programs through the Recreation Center, Youth Center, and other parks and facilities. Many events are geared toward youth specifically or all ages. Programming for other age groups (e.g. young parents, retirement-age individuals, etc.) may increase overall parks and recreation usership. Partnering with outside organizations to offer diverse programming can be more cost-effective than providing everything in-house.

6. Increase Verde River Recreation Opportunities and Access Points

The Verde River is an underutilized natural asset, and residents desire more river recreation opportunities and public access. Within Cottonwood city limits, residents can access the Verde River only at Dead Horse Ranch State Park or Riverfront Park. Providing additional river access points may involve prioritizing annexation of river-adjacent properties.

7. Provide More Water Recreation Opportunities for Youth

One of the most unmet needs related to youth recreation identified in the Community Questionnaire is the lack of water play areas for children. Installing at least one type of outdoor water park (e.g. splash pad) would help fulfill this currently unmet need. Reinvestment improvements to the City's existing indoor and outdoor pool facilities have been identified in the City's 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan and may help increase functionality of the existing water recreation facilities.

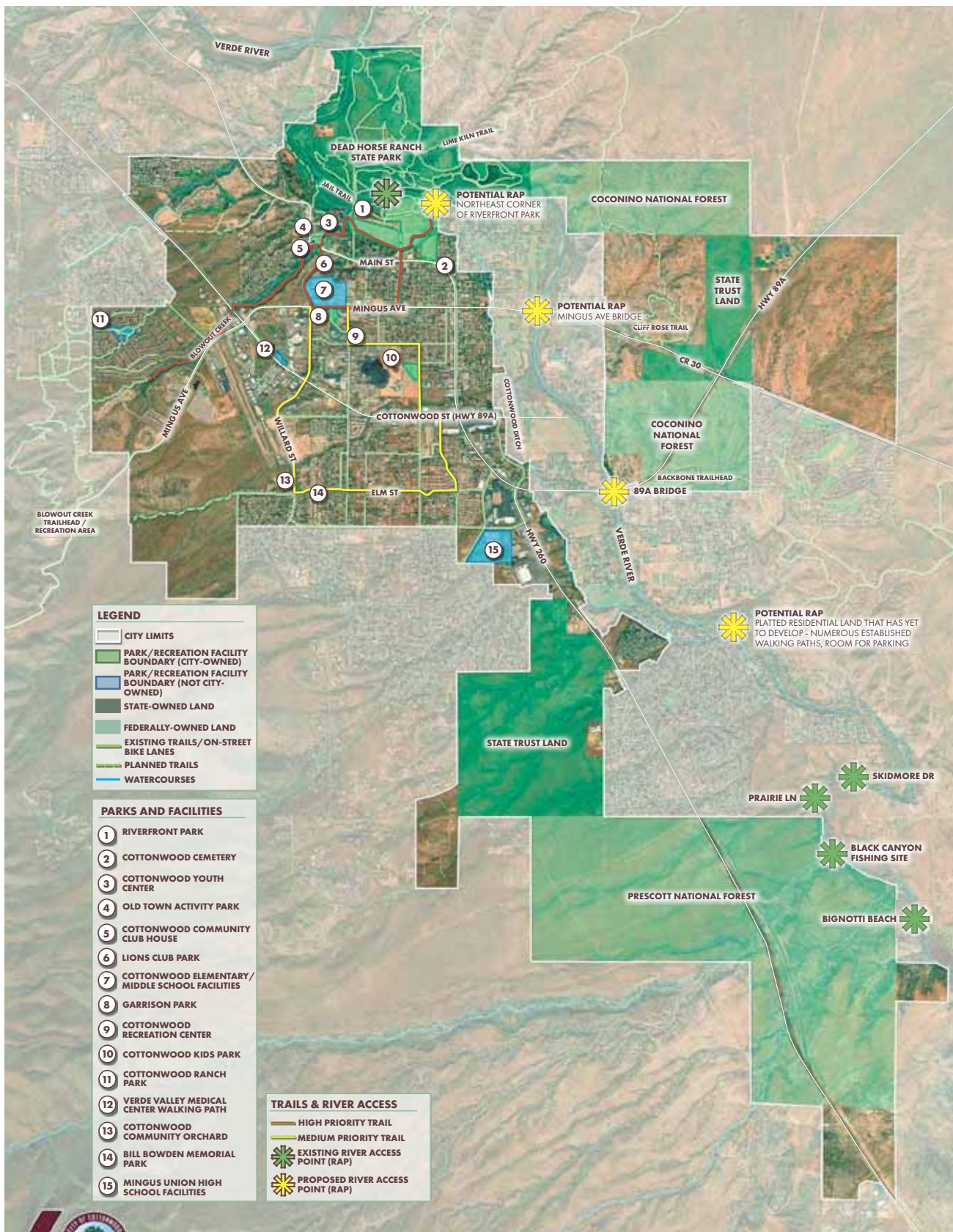


8. Identify and Plan for Future Park Space

Continue to strategically evaluate future acquisition of park space to accommodate the future needs of the community. Park space may include land for park areas, trail corridors and open space. This may include encouraging (or mandating through code) new master planned communities, planned area developments, and residential subdivisions to provide land for neighborhood park sites, trails, and open space networks. Additional City-maintained or co-managed park space may be possible around the municipal airport, along the planned Del Monte Wash Trail, or multiple areas adjacent to the Verde River.

The following exhibit identifies opportunities for potential priority improvements including the extension of the trail network and river access.

- High-priority loop trails are identified in red and include the planned Del Monte Wash Trail (shown along Blowout Creek on the exhibit) and a route connecting Riverfront Park, Old Town Activity Park, the Cottonwood-Oak Creek Schools, and Garrison Park.
- Medium-priority loop trails are identified in yellow and include the extension of the Jail Trail north through Dead Horse Ranch State Park and connecting to Clarkdale and a larger route connecting the Cottonwood-Oak Creek Schools, Cottonwood Community Orchard, Bill Bowden Memorial Park, Cottonwood Kids Park, the Recreation Center, Library, and various residential areas.
- Verde River access points are identified on the map in two colors:
 - Green indicates an existing access point.
 - Yellow indicates a proposed access point, with a brief explanation of the location.



PRIORITY TRAILS & RIVER ACCESS POINTS



NORRIS DESIGN
Planning | Landscape Architecture | Interiors

OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

ORGANIZATIONAL AND STAFFING			
#	POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT	COST	PRIORITY
1	Formally start a volunteer program (supervised/coordinated by staff) using an application process and guidelines per the draft handbook to augment staff for some services in the Department.	N/A	In Progress
2	Continue to update job descriptions for full-time and part-time staff to adequately reflect the actual duties of each position.	N/A	Short Term
3	Continue to update basic staff policies and procedures and maintain a current and comprehensive staff manual for the Department based on general staffing guidelines of the City.	N/A	Short Term
BUDGET			
#	POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT	COST	PRIORITY
1	Deferred maintenance items for facilities need to be prioritized on a five and ten-year plan for funding and ultimate completion. The list should be updated and reprioritized on a yearly basis. Required capital expenditures to keep facilities in top operating condition will need to increase over the next ten years.	N/A	In Progress
2	Within the two general budget accounts, establish sub-budgets for major facilities (beyond the Recreation Center) as well as major program areas. This will develop key cost centers for the Department. Possible sub-budgets include: a. Aquatics Center b. Youth Services c. Special Events d. Sports e. Outdoor Recreation	N/A	Short Term
3	Link program expenditures with revenues to determine individual cost recovery numbers.	N/A	Short Term
4	Recreation is a discretionary use of an individual's time and money. Dedicate adequate budget and staff commitment to marketing and promotions on an annual basis.	N/A	Short Term
5	Monitor operational budgets on at least a monthly basis with any possible deviations or modifications noted at that time.	N/A	Short Term
6	Develop a fee policy document that outlines how fees are established for facility use, programs, and services, as well as facility rentals. The fee policy should outline how program rates are established to ensure strong cost recovery within the market realities of the area. The policy should recognize the value of renting various parks and recreation amenities and have fees that vary by the type and size of the facility, day of the week and time of day.	N/A	Short Term
7	Within the fee policy, determine a standardized revenue payback to City for contract programs.	N/A	Short Term

8	Complete an annual report for all aspects of the Department's operation, summarizing yearly financial statistics and utilization rates and comparisons with previous years.	N/A	Short Term
9	Explore contracting for some basic park maintenance services (beyond custodial services). This could include mowing, chemical application, tree trimming, etc.	N/A	Long Term
10	As minimum wage continues to increase, part-time and full-time pay rates will require increases. Increase budgets for staffing in the future.	N/A	Long Term
OTHER			
#	POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT	COST	PRIORITY
1	Establish formal agreements with all organizations that utilize City fields or other recreation facilities.	N/A	In Progress
2	Develop a formal IGA with the Mingus Union School District that covers facilities utilized by each agency.	N/A	In Progress
3	Develop a basic but formal marketing plan for the Department with the City's marketing staff. Plan will identify specific marketing tasks and tools, assign staff responsibility, identify funding requirements, and provide a mechanism for measuring overall success. Specific goals of the plan include: a. Increasing utilization of the Recreation Center b. Increasing utilization of the outdoor pool c. Growing program registration numbers d. Growing the number of facility rentals, especially at the Community Club House e. Expanding the market for facilities and programs to the Verde Valley f. Enhancing the City website to better promote facilities, programs, and services	N/A	Short Term
4	Continue to update operations and management policies and procedures. Prioritize updating policies and procedures regarding safety and security of parks, facilities, and programs. Develop a comprehensive emergency action plan for the Department as a whole and for individual facilities (CRC currently has a plan).	N/A	Short Term
5	Develop overall maintenance standards for parks, trails, and facilities. Develop a maintenance management plan for each large park and all facilities including specific maintenance functions, frequency, method(s) for delivery, required resources, and tracking of work and budget. Address preventative maintenance in each plan.	N/A	Short Term
6	Update the asset inventory within all City parks and recreation facilities every year.	N/A	Short Term
7	Develop a plan to expand reclaimed and potable water infrastructure, particularly related to efficient parks irrigation systems.	N/A	Short Term
8	Consider the establishment of lifecycle cost estimates for all major capital assets in the Department.	N/A	Short Term
9	Formal park/facility inspections should be completed on a weekly basis.	N/A	Short Term

10	Following development of maintenance management plan(s), allocate actual time and resources to validate the planning numbers that were established. This could take several years until enough real-world numbers are available to adjust the existing standards. From this, determine specific benchmark standards (cost per acre, per square foot, etc.) . Utilizing the existing maintenance management software system, track the time and materials spent by maintenance staff at each major park, trail, or facility to establish true costs for these amenities.	N/A	Long Term
11	Staff schedules, maintenance plans, tracking of inventories, facility inspections, and actual maintenance time and materials records need to be fully automated with the ability to make entries from the field on tablets or other hand-held devices .	N/A	Long Term

PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

COTTONWOOD KIDS PARK				
#	POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT	COST	PRIORITY	TOP PRIORITIES
1	Add entry gates and signage at the ramada and restroom building from the parking area.	\$\$	Short Term	#9
2	Update irrigation system, including adding a booster pump if needed.	\$\$	Short Term	#2
3	Improve lighting for night-time usage.	\$\$\$	Short Term	
4	Explore partnership opportunities with Verde Valley Fairgrounds.	N/A	Short Term	
5	Install play equipment near the restroom and ramada.	\$\$\$	Short Term	
6	Add entry gates to access additional parking along the north edge of the park.	\$\$	Long Term	
GARRISON PARK				
#	POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT	COST	PRIORITY	TOP PRIORITIES
1	Update surfacing at swings to improve access and overall level of service. Install shared Expression Swing.	\$\$	Complete	
2	Make improvements to the play area: expand the play area, add shade canopy and seat walls.	\$\$	Short Term	#7
3	Add additional power outlets to the ramada for events.	\$	Short Term	
4	Continue sidewalk connection through the park (currently ends near the play area, southwest portion of the site).	\$	Short Term	
5	Improve the lawn condition which may require irrigation improvements.	\$	Short Term	
OLD TOWN ACTIVITY PARK				
#	POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT	COST	PRIORITY	TOP PRIORITIES
1	Add shade trees and benches along the event lawn.	\$	Short Term	#8
2	Create signage at intersections to attract tourism.	\$	Short Term	
3	Add additional power outlets to the ramada for events.	\$	Short Term	

4	Update fencing around the event lawn (possibly decorative fencing).	\$\$	Short Term	
5	Create a stronger connection between the Cottonwood Youth Center and lawn.	\$	Short Term	
6	Add lighting for the farmers market and other events.	\$\$	Short Term	
7	Add parking to the northeast and move additional parking to the south.	\$\$\$	Long Term	
8	Consider modifying shape of the event lawn to increase flexibility for events and active recreation.	\$\$	Long Term	
LIONS CLUB PARK				
#	POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT	COST	PRIORITY	TOP PRIORITIES
1	Add concrete pads for picnic tables.	\$	Short Term	
2	Add lighting for safe night-time usage.	\$\$	Short Term	
3	Add sidewalk along fence line, connecting picnic tables.	\$\$	Short Term	
4	Create a natural children's play equipment/feature, nestled away from the road.	\$\$	Long Term	
5	Integrate central sculptural element to attract people to the site.	\$	Long Term	
COTTONWOOD COMMUNITY ORCHARD				
#	POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT	COST	PRIORITY	TOP PRIORITIES
1	Create an entry arch element to align with the monumentation and community placemaking.	\$\$	Short Term	
2	Add bicycle parking as the primary form of site access.	\$	Short Term	
3	Add decomposed granite pathway around existing fruit trees and plant more trees.	\$\$	Short Term	
4	Add benches throughout site, along proposed pathway.	\$	Short Term	
5	Continue updated fencing around the entire site.	\$	Short Term	
6	Integrate pollinator-friendly shrub bed for an interpretive opportunity.	\$	Short Term	
7	Adjust existing fence to create 24-foot space for vehicular access and parking along Willard Street.	\$\$	Long Term	
8	Position bicycle parking and entry arch element accordingly.	\$	Long Term	
BILL BOWDEN MEMORIAL PARK				
#	POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT	COST	PRIORITY	TOP PRIORITIES
1	Add a large play area with permanent structure.	\$\$\$	Short Term	#4
2	Reorganize site furnishings and provide hardscape connections from parking to benches and equipment.	\$	Short Term	#5
3	Incorporate park signage for placemaking.	\$\$	Short Term	
4	Adjust fence line to add angled parking along Mesquite Drive.	\$\$	Long Term	

COTTONWOOD CEMETERY				
#	POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT	COST	PRIORITY	TOP PRIORITIES
1	Update irrigation system from potable to reclaimed water.	\$\$	Long Term	
RIVERFRONT PARK				
#	POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT	COST	PRIORITY	TOP PRIORITIES
1	Develop the Riverwalk, an earthen trail with seating nodes and environmental signage along the Verde River.	\$\$	Short Term	#1
2	Convert spray irrigation from potable to reclaimed water. Up to 300,000 gpd of reclaimed water is available from the Wastewater Treatment Plant.	\$\$\$	Short Term	#2
3	Install riparian vegetation, enhanced tree planting in the flood zone (possibly a volunteer event).	\$\$	Short Term	#6
4	Develop new river access point in northeast corner of park.	\$\$\$	Long Term	
CITYWIDE / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES				
#	POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT	COST	PRIORITY	TOP PRIORITIES
1	Install two (2) new Gateway Signs.	\$\$	Short Term	#3
2	Replace three (3) existing Gateway Signs with a consistent design.	\$\$	Short Term	
3	Provide six (6) Wayfinding Signs throughout the city.	\$\$	Long Term	
4	Provide six (6) Wayfinding Signs throughout the city.	\$\$	Long Term	
5	Continue to develop a regional multiuse trail network. Collaborate with regional agencies and adjacent jurisdictions on future trail extensions.	\$\$\$	Long Term	#10

FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL			
#	POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT	COST	PRIORITY
1	Develop basic priorities of use for each facility, including priorities for each space in the Recreation Center. Determine programs and services to support these spaces and the role of rentals.	N/A	Short Term
2	Develop an operations manual for the Recreation Center, Aquatics Center, Youth Center, and Community Club House.	N/A	Short Term
3	Regain some use of school gyms in the future, to alleviate pressure on Recreation Center gym for youth and adult sports.	N/A	Long Term
COTTONWOOD RECREATION CENTER			
#	POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT	COST	PRIORITY
1	Establish replacement schedule where approximately twenty-five percent (25%) of all cardio equipment is replaced every year.	\$\$	In Progress
2	Increase usage of Community Events Hall for programing and rentals, or alter the function of the Events Hall.	N/A	In Progress

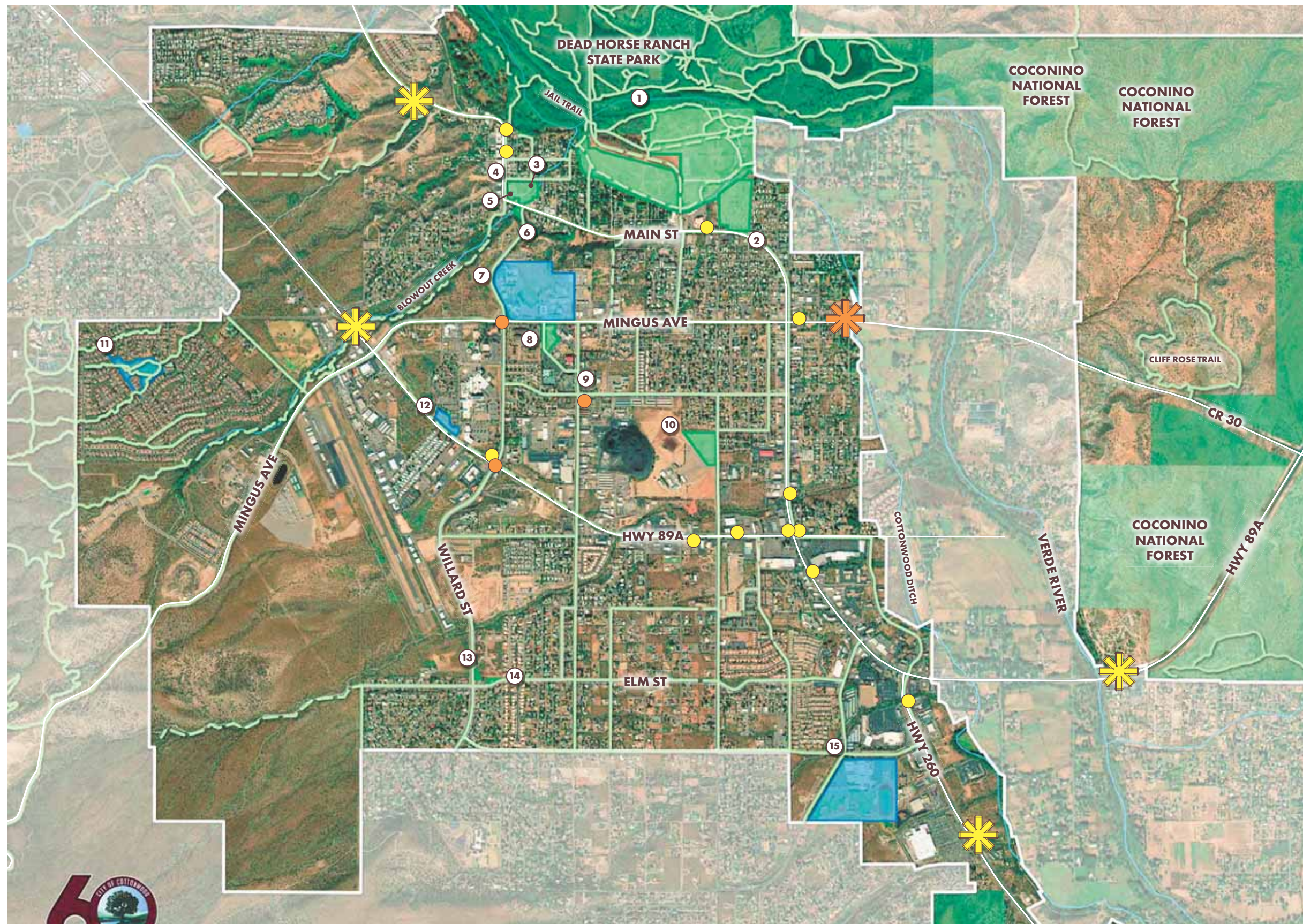
3	To alleviate issues with hard water (which stains the pool bottom around the inlets and impacts pumps and piping), add a water conditioning system on the raw water lines that enter the Recreation Center and the Aquatics Center.	\$\$\$	Short Term
4	Replace the inoperable solar system with a system that is more conducive to the building and climate, or eliminate system altogether.	\$\$\$	Short Term
5	Review admission and use fees every two years, implementing small increases to keep pace with operational and maintenance cost increases.	N/A	Short Term
6	Increase the maintenance of the Recreation Center and commit to capital replacement of key building systems over the next five to ten years.	\$\$\$	Long Term
7	Replace strength equipment every ten years.	\$\$	Long Term
8	Investigate opportunities to increase handicapped parking to eliminate shortage when other facilities on the civic campus are being utilized.	\$\$	Long Term
COTTONWOOD AQUATICS CENTER			
#	POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT	COST	PRIORITY
1	Due to the overall age of the Aquatics Center, plan for the renovation or outright replacement of the pool tank and bathhouse in the next five years.	\$\$\$	Short Term
2	Consider providing large inflatables to increase the appeal of the pool to recreational swimmers.	\$	Short Term
3	If admission to the Aquatics Center is no longer a direct benefit to Recreation Center pass holders, they should at minimum receive a discount pass that could be added to their Recreation Center pass.	N/A	Short Term
4	Add shade structures to the facility.	\$\$\$	Long Term
COTTONWOOD YOUTH CENTER			
#	POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT	COST	PRIORITY
1	Consider moving Youth Center functions to the Recreation Center's Community Events Hall, given its relatively low usage and the availability of the Community Club House for events.	N/A	Short Term
2	Replace facility which does not meet fire code requirements and is not a functional youth center. New facility should have increased capacity, a layout that is conducive to youth programming, and the ability to obtain licensing.	\$\$\$	Long Term
3	Consider locating a new Youth Center on the same campus as the Recreation and Aquatics Center with access to Garrison Park for outdoor activities.	\$\$\$	Long Term
COTTONWOOD COMMUNITY CLUB HOUSE			
#	POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT	COST	PRIORITY
1	Significant facility improvements are not needed now due to recent renovation, but to maintain strong appeal for rentals, ensure the facility is maintained at a high level.	\$	Short Term
2	Promote facility to Cottonwood residents, the Verde Valley, and even the Phoenix market, to ensure facility is utilized to its full potential and generates significant revenue.	N/A	Short Term

3	Monitor utilization by community non-profits (currently allowed four free uses annually, but priority goes to paid or City-sponsored events). Consider limiting non-profit usage on weekends to maximize use by other higher fee users.	N/A	Short Term
4	Current rental rates charged are significantly below market value given the image/look of the facility. Increase weekend rates and establish prime-time pricing. Consider higher rates for events involving alcohol.	N/A	Short Term
OTHER FACILITY NEEDS			
#	POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT	COST	PRIORITY
1	Develop additional rectangular sports fields to support soccer, football, and other sports organizations in the community.	\$\$\$	Short Term
2	Install bike racks at strategic destinations throughout the City, including transit stops, parks, and recreation facilities.	\$	Short Term
3	Consider conversion of the in-line hockey rink to a futsal court.	\$\$	Long Term
4	Consider inclusion of public art and designed park amenities that reflect the character of the community.	\$\$	Long Term

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

PROGRAMMING			
#	POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT	COST	PRIORITY
1	Develop a basic program plan that includes the general direction of recreation programming for the next five plus years. Priorities for general programming to include: a. Fitness/Wellness b. Youth – After-School, Summer Camps c. Sports – Youth and Adult d. Outdoor Recreation – Connecting to the Verde River e. Special Events – Greater emphasis on local based events	N/A	Short Term
2	As an outgrowth of the COVID-19 crisis, consider offering some select programs and services virtually, requiring a fee for service, similar to in-person classes.	\$	Short Term
3	Ensure programming responds to the demographics of Cottonwood and the Verde Valley and that all age groups are adequately covered.	\$	Short Term
4	Attempt to grow programming by adding more contract-based activities where gross revenues are divided with a minimum of thirty percent (30%) going back to the City while the contractor receives seventy percent (70%). All revenues for contract-based classes should be collected by the City and distributed back to the contractor.	N/A	Short Term
5	Continue to coordinate recreation programs with the library. Define specific roles and responsibilities.	N/A	Short Term
6	Limit the number of large events offered annually, and offer more smaller local events to ensure that staff time is not taken away from facility operations and other on-going programming.	\$	Short Term

7	Parks and Recreation does not have to be the actual provider of all recreation programs and services. Ensure the Department functions as a “clearinghouse” for recreation programs and services provided by others - including promotion of their activities, coordinating of some programs, and permitting of facilities.	N/A	Short Term
8	Continue partnerships with other organizations and entities to develop and expand recreation programs. Require memorandums of understanding or contracts to formalize partnership relationships, clearly identifying specific roles and expectations and limits to facility scheduling, fees, and operations.	N/A	Short Term
9	Resume production of a two to three times-a-year program guide (Leisure Times) to promote program offerings. This could be in the form of a digital only document, perhaps shared via social media.	N/A	Short Term
10	Track program trends on a regional and national basis to ensure that program offerings are current and reflect the opportunities that are available.	N/A	Short Term
11	Implement more program performance metrics in the Department. Update metrics on a seasonal basis with comparisons to prior years. Include: a. Rates of fill for programs and activities (capacity vs. actual numbers) b. Participation numbers and comparisons to past years/seasons c. Rate of program cancellations (should be between 10% and 20%) d. Financial performance including cost per participant e. Evaluations from participants f. Annual report for recreation programs and services that utilizes the same format and reporting methods for all program areas	N/A	Short Term
12	Consider expanding bicycle programs, including education that encourages new ridership.	\$	Long Term
13	Develop a cooperative marketing program with other area attractions and activities, including Arizona State Parks (Dead Horse Ranch State Park).	\$	Long Term
14	Work to increase the overall level of programming. With limited funding, develop new programs incrementally, taking small steps that do not require significant staff or budgetary resources.	\$	Long Term



LEGEND

- CITY LIMITS
- PARK/RECREATION FACILITY BOUNDARY (CITY-OWNED)
- PARK/RECREATION FACILITY BOUNDARY (NOT CITY-OWNED)
- STATE-OWNED LAND
- FEDERALLY-OWNED LAND
- EXISTING TRAILS/ON-STREET BIKE LANES
- PLANNED TRAILS
- WATERCOURSES

PARKS AND FACILITIES

- 1 RIVERFRONT PARK
- 2 COTTONWOOD CEMETERY
- 3 COTTONWOOD YOUTH CENTER
- 4 OLD TOWN ACTIVITY PARK
- 5 COTTONWOOD COMMUNITY CLUB HOUSE
- 6 LIONS CLUB PARK
- 7 COTTONWOOD ELEMENTARY/ MIDDLE SCHOOL FACILITIES
- 8 GARRISON PARK
- 9 COTTONWOOD RECREATION CENTER
- 10 COTTONWOOD KIDS PARK
- 11 COTTONWOOD RANCH PARK
- 12 VERDE VALLEY MEDICAL CENTER WALKING PATH
- 13 COTTONWOOD COMMUNITY ORCHARD
- 14 BILL BOWDEN MEMORIAL PARK
- 15 MINGUS UNION HIGH SCHOOL FACILITIES

WAYFINDING SIGNAGE

- EXISTING GATEWAY SIGN
- EXISTING WAYFINDING SIGNAGE
- PROPOSED GATEWAY SIGN
- PROPOSED WAYFINDING SIGNAGE

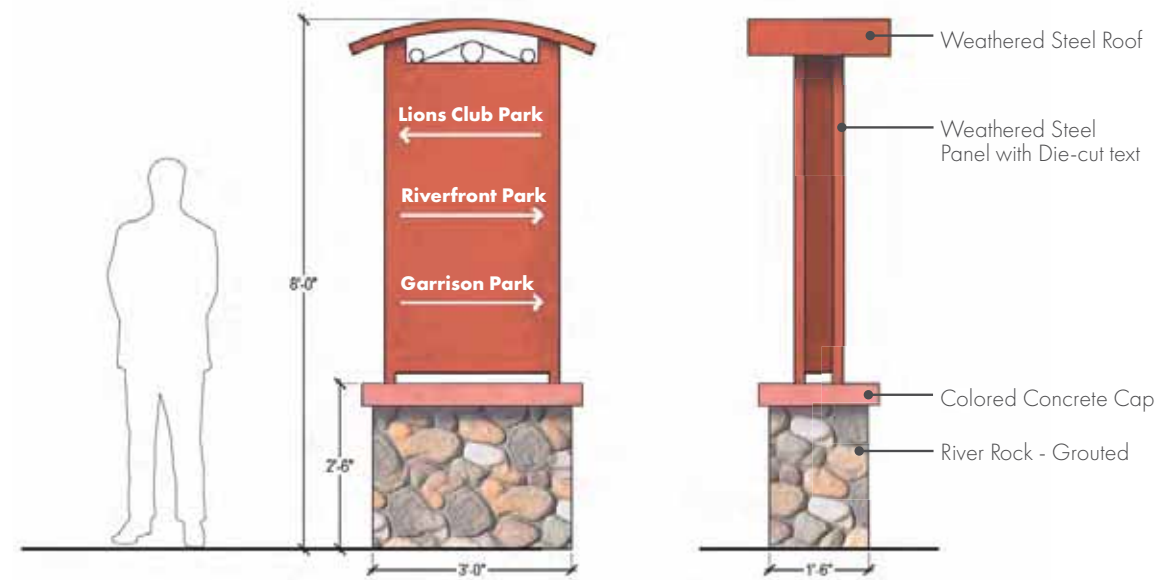


SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

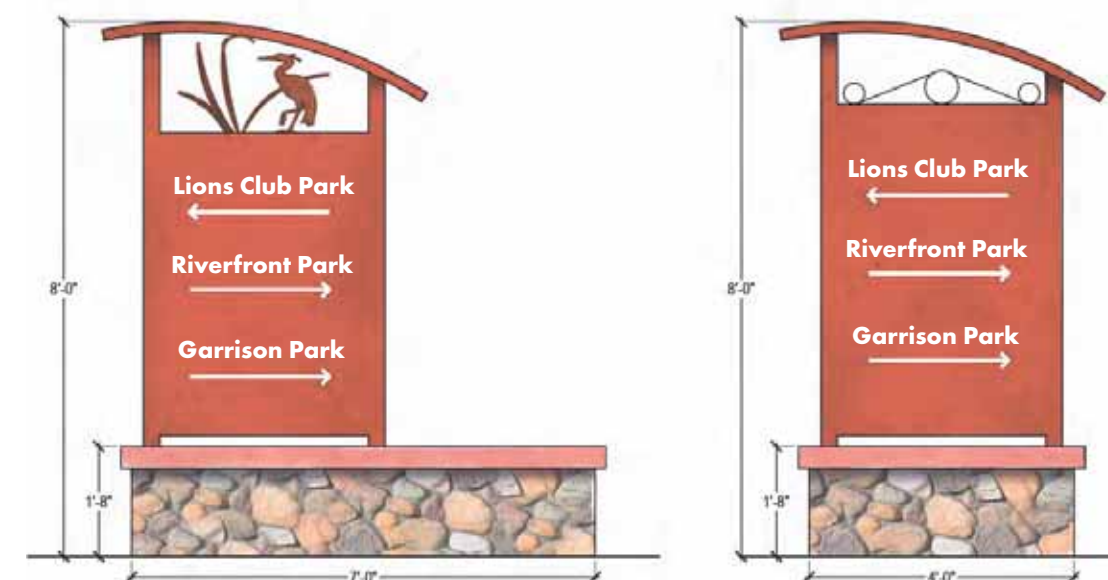


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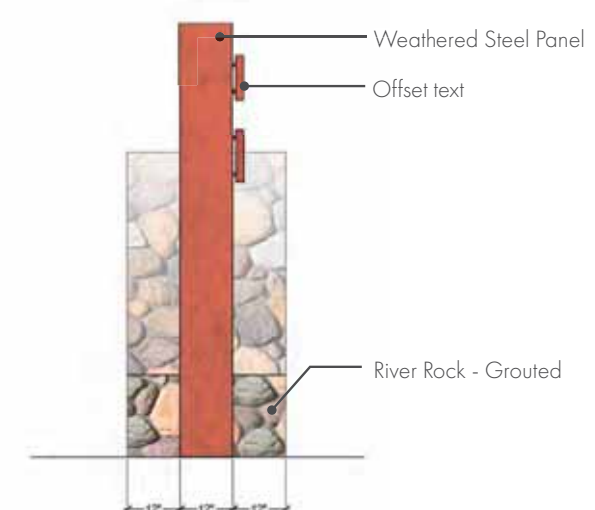
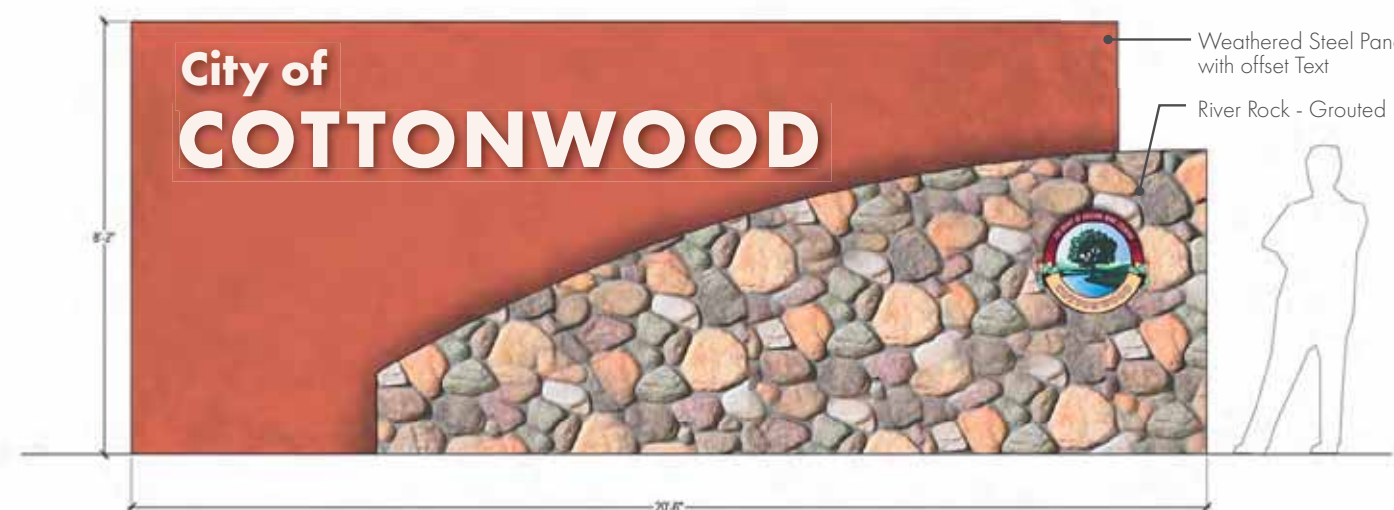


CONCEPT 1



CONCEPT 2a

CONCEPT 2b



SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING CONCEPTS

SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING PLAN

A strong wayfinding signage concept and implementation will not only support the parks system, it will have spillover benefits to retail, restaurants, and other attractions. Research shows about half of the out-of-town visitors to Cottonwood are tourists who drive to town. These visitors arriving by car may not be familiar with the City's layout and will benefit from additional wayfinding signage. Further, if they are more at ease while driving to parks or attractions, they are more likely to stop and shop at retail or restaurants.

The site plan exhibit that follows shows a mapped location for all existing and proposed wayfinding signs and all existing and proposed gateway signs. The city already has a number of gateway monuments and wayfinding signage design types in place. However, the location, scale, and legibility of these signs are inconsistent.

Gateway signs are generally found at the perimeter of a city, associated with the city limits, and serve the purpose of welcoming and greeting city entrants. They have the added benefit of helping people feel in place, as well as expressing some of the dominant design language of the city. The City currently has several existing gateway signs but could benefit from additional signage. After the proposed new gateway sign is built, the existing gateway signs may be replaced with the newer and consistent gateway sign design.



Wayfinding signs are smaller in scale and are geared towards a slower moving, more information seeking audience. Generally, the design speed of wayfinding signage is thirty miles per hour. The signage design is smaller and intended to be used in areas within the city where multiple attractions, parks, or trail heads are nearby. The wayfinding signage concepts shown herein have room on the sign panel for three to four attractions to be identified.

The signage concepts express a material palette that is important to Cottonwood and therefore meaningful to include on the signs. First, the base of river rock is a very obvious nod to the Verde River, and the city's relationship with the river and riverbed, as well as history of using the local materials in building construction. Further, use of colored concrete and weathered steel show an organic, colorful approach to distributing information. Finally, the water fowl and reed silhouette in Concept 2a is also a very clear demonstration of the benefits of having a perennial river run through your city.

While not graphically described, these signs would benefit from nighttime illumination. Lighting can be broadcast upon the sign face, or perhaps they are internally illuminated. Lighting these signs will speed up the process of wayfinding for visitors, as they see these signs in multiple time contexts.

RESOURCE & FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

Parks and recreation providers frequently face challenges with project funding. According to the NRPA 2021-2023 Strategic Plan, these departments “are often the first to have their budgets cut and are, typically, the last to have them recovered.” The climate of uncertainty following COVID-19 has already resulted in parks and recreation budget cuts across the country, and Cottonwood is no exception for the upcoming fiscal year. Budgetary growth may not be an immediate possibility.

However, numerous resources exist outside of the municipal budget to assist in parks and recreation projects, both related to maintenance and new investment. According to the Arizona 2018-2022 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, nearly twenty-five percent (25%) of recreation providers receive federal funding, twenty percent (20%) receive funding from donations, and over ten percent (10%) receive funding from grants. In addition, eighty-eight percent (88%) seek alternative funding opportunities outside their own budgets. Creative partnerships and inter-agency collaboration are key to accomplishing parks and recreation goals with a limited budget. Typically, most parks and recreation providers partner with federal agencies for co-management, funding and grants, and resource monitoring. Similarly, most providers partner with state agencies for funding and grants. Other state and federal collaboration opportunities exist – volunteering, training, educational workshops, data sharing, etc.

In terms of funding resources, over \$4 million is available annually to Arizona communities, resource managers, and agencies to preserve and enhance natural open space and recreational resources. Specifically, Arizona State Parks and Trails administers the following programs:

- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) – eligible activities include park development and land acquisition related to recreation or open space/wetland preservation (<https://www.lwcfcoalition.com/>).
- Growing Smarter State Trust Land Acquisition Grant Program – typically supports projects that conserve open space in or near urban areas experiencing high growth.
- Recreational Trails Program (RTP) – federal funds allocated to each state to develop and maintain trails, trail-related facilities, and related education (https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/).

Arizona Game & Fish administers the Heritage Fund Grants, which supports conservation efforts (e.g. protecting endangered species), educating students and the general public about wildlife and the outdoors, and creating new outdoor recreation opportunities (<https://www.azgfd.com/Wildlife/HeritageFund/grantapply>).

Following are additional resources (not limited to grants or direct funding) that may assist Cottonwood in reaching its parks and recreation goals:

- The Outdoor Foundation – brands and businesses create “giving campaigns” that increase outdoor recreation and community engagement (<http://www.outdoorfoundation.org/philanthropy.about.html>).
- Cabela’s Outdoor Fund – focuses on supporting resources for hunters, anglers, campers, and recreational shooters (<http://www.cabelas.com/category/Outdoor-Fund/112097880.uts>).
- Greenfields Outdoor Fitness: School Incentive Program – municipalities can partner with schools for joint use on school property and apply for matching grants for fitness equipment (<https://gfoutdoorfitness.com/sip/>).
- Senior Corps RSVP Competition – one of the largest senior volunteer programs in the nation, engaging Americans over the age of 55 in volunteer service that meets national and community needs (<https://www.nationalservice.gov/rsvpcompetition>).
- Waste Management Charitable Giving – supports environmental preservation, education, and natural resource enhancement (<https://www.wm.com/about/community/charitable-giving.jsp>).
- The Fruit Tree Planting Foundation Grant Program – strategically donates orchards, training, and aftercare where harvests will best serve communities, including public schools, parks, community gardens, etc. (<https://www.ftpf.org/>).
- Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program – funding from USDA to assist rural communities (no more than 20,000 in population) develop essential community services (<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program>).