



lancaster

Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Cultural Master Plan



imagine, create, explore

from the director

LANCASTER PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & CULTURAL MASTER PLAN

We face both exciting challenges and opportunities for the future of parks, open space, recreation and cultural programs in the City of Lancaster. The community demographics are changing as we continue to transition from our rural roots to one of the fastest growing cities in the State of California. This plan will serve as a “footprint” to guide the community in effectively addressing vital issues that will contribute to enhanced quality of life now and in the future.

The Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Cultural Master Plan reflects strong participation from the residents in the research and policy development process that will help us plan for the development of the smallest neighborhood parks to the larger regional facilities that serve as economic drivers for the entire community. In addition, it will provide programs that promote opportunities for all of us to lead active, healthier lives.

Our research was developed through community immersion days, a telephone survey, benchmarking with other communities, focus groups, the expertise of the Project Management Team and the guidance of the Community Advisory Committee. The City Council and staff express our sincere appreciation to all citizens of Lancaster who contributed time and valuable input to the plan. The ongoing support of the Lancaster City Council and City Manager’s Office was invaluable to the success of this process and its end result.

The adopted policies, generated through public input, will help steer Lancaster for the next 10-15 years and secure the continuance of quality parks, recreation and cultural programs for our residents, young and old.

Let’s get started.

*Lyle W. Norton, Director
Parks, Recreation and Arts Department*



acknowledgments

LANCASTER PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & CULTURAL MASTER PLAN

city council members

Mayor Henry W. Hearn
Vice Mayor Andy Visokey
Council Member Jim Jeffra
Council Member Ed Sileo
Council Member Ronald D. Smith

city manager

Robert S. LaSala

project management team

Lyle W. Norton	Mary Tanner
Janice Smith	Mike Rosa
Dan Miller	Dave Ledbetter
Kari Tapia	Laurie Butts
Michael Campbell	Carlyle Workman
Bob Greene	Ronda Perez

lanaster department of parks, recreation and arts staff

focus group participants & interviewees

community advisory committee

Randy Barnicki	John Hultsman
Wayne Berry	Michael Lemos
Jamaal Brown	Amy Melich
Donna Carrell	Ben Meyer
Bettye Davis	Barry Munz
Mary Faux	John Perry
Mitch Frevert	Ramon Ramirez
Jill Furtado	Jorge Sincuir
Cindy Garza	Rachael Thompson
Peggy Gocke	Mario Ware
Gretchen Gutierrez	Richard Wood
Trevor Hibbert	

consultant team

MIG, INC.

Carolyn Verheyen, Principal-in-Charge
Joan Chaplick, Project Manager
Nancy Kaiser, Park Finance Specialist
Beth Altshuler, Project Associate
Lauren Schmitt, ASLA, AICP
Heather Kaplinger, GIS Specialist

GODBE RESEARCH

Jaime L. Barrah

imagine, create, explore

table of contents

LANCASTER PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & CULTURAL MASTER PLAN

introduction	i	4: policies, recommendations & actions	77
1: vision, values & goals	1	Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Cultural Policies	77
Vision	1	Park Standards	88
Values	2	5: operations & maintenance	93
Goals	3	Core & Non-Core Functions	95
2: existing conditions	5	Factors Affecting Maintenance	97
Community Profile	6	Levels of Service	102
Parks, Recreation & Arts Department	12	6: capital improvement plan	109
Existing Park Land & Facilities	15	New Development	110
Existing Recreation & Arts Programs	20	Project Development	112
Strengths & Opportunities	28	7: financial plan	115
3: community needs	31	Park & Facility Maintenance	117
Key Themes	31	Capital Development	119
Methods	34	Funding	120
The People of Lancaster	37	Recommendations	124
Parklands & Open Space	38	appendices under separate cover:	
Related Issues & Concerns	44	A: Levels of Service	
Cultural & Recreation Facilities	51	B: Facilities Inventory	
Cultural & Recreation Programs	62	C: Community Needs	
Summary	76		

about this plan

INTRODUCTION

The Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Cultural Master Plan was developed through a collaboration between staff, elected and agency officials and community members. The plan represents the first master plan developed for the Lancaster Department of Parks, Recreation and Arts.

plan purpose

The plan has three major purposes:

- Present a long-term vision and goals for the Department and the community for the next 20 to 25 years;
- Describe current and future needs, interests and community preferences for parks, recreation, arts programs and facilities; and
- Develop a process and priorities for managing the Department's commitments so that new requests and initiatives are considered in light of existing commitments.



▲ *California Poppy Festival*

how the plan was developed

The Plan was developed through the active participation of staff, community advisors, residents and elected officials through their participation in meetings, interviews, in-person and telephone surveys, and focus groups. More than 2,000 community members provided opinions and input that was used to develop this plan. The Project Management Team, composed of staff from the Parks, Recreation and Arts Department, representatives from the Planning, Public Works, and Redevelopment Departments, and MIG staff, met regularly. The resulting master plan reflects current priorities and interests and provides the Department with flexibility to be responsive to the changing needs of this growing community.

A Community Advisory Committee (CAC) composed of approximately 25 individuals representing organized groups and the general public played a significant role in

developing the vision and goals for the plan. Using trend analyses, data derived from the community outreach activities, and research on standards from comparable communities, the Project Management Team worked with the CAC to develop the resultant plan and priorities. The group also reviewed several sources of information to identify strategic issues and objectives. The plan was presented to the Planning Commission and City Council prior to its review and approval.

relationship to other planning activities

During the development of this plan, the City of Lancaster was in the process of updating its General Plan and developing a specific plan for the downtown business district. The master plan was developed in close coordination with these efforts. A key staffperson from the planning department was an active participant in the development of the master plan and also reviewed the document for completeness and consistency with the General Plan update. All three planning efforts provided an opportunity for Lancaster residents to comment on the critical role that parks, recreation, and arts play in their community's quality of life. Residents also shared their expectations that the Department will be an important player in economic development activities in the downtown and throughout the city.

implementation

This plan will serve as a framework for future decision making, priority setting and budgeting. The vision and goals described in the plan are intended to describe a desired future for the community while providing the Department the flexibility it needs to achieve the goals. The Director will develop an annual report to review implementation progress. The report will provide an overall assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation, and identify opportunities to improve the linkage between long-term planning and execution.

planning definitions

The plan uses a number of key terms:

Vision: The desired future state of the organization; the vision of success the organization strives to achieve.

Mission: A description of why an organization exists—the key programs and services the organization provides.

Values: The norms and qualities organizational members value.

Goals: The broad areas for improvement aligned to match the programs and services provided by the Department.

Policies: Guiding principles for the course of action the Department will follow to achieve the goals of the plan.

Actions: The specific approaches that may be used to implement policy and achieve the Department's goals.

chapter one

VISION, VALUES & GOALS

vision for the future

Lancaster is:

- *A city whose residents actively use parks, recreation and arts facilities to maintain a high level of fitness and well-being*
- *A location for premier sports and recreation facilities that accommodate children, youth, seniors and families*
- *A thriving cultural and artistic center, with a downtown arts district that features space for art and musical performance, beautified streets and gathering spaces*
- *A city where pathways and trails link neighborhoods with parklands, facilities, schools and other community destinations*
- *A steward of its natural and historic resources*
- *A city known as a great place to live, play and stay*

The Lancaster Performing Arts Center serves a vital role in the community ▶



values

- EXCELLENCE:** The Department maintains a standard of excellence in its facilities and programs
- ACCESSIBILITY:** Programs and facilities are physically and economically accessible to all community members
- RESPONSIVENESS:** The Department involves the public and is responsive to the needs and interests of Lancaster's changing population
- SAFETY:** Community members feel safe and welcome, and are able to enjoy our parks and facilities
- SERVICE:** Staff members are results-oriented and draw on their creativity, skill and passion to respond to opportunities and address challenges

goals

The Department of Parks, Recreation and Arts will:

- Provide safe, clean and well-maintained facilities that meet the diverse needs of a growing community
- Create and enhance a positive community image and increase livability
- Support and encourage residents in pursuing healthy, active lifestyles
- Celebrate and honor Lancaster's heritage and history
- Be a key contributor to downtown revitalization and economic development activities
- Encourage community building and provide organized and informal, neighborhood-based opportunities



◀ *Father and daughter play in fall leaves at Rawley Duntley Park*



▲ *Students explore science at the LMAG*

goals (continued)

- Support the community's ability to participate in the arts as both audience members and artists
- Sustain and enhance the City's superior quality arts and athletic facilities
- Encourage the integration of parks and trails into overall community design, planning and development decisions
- Develop partnerships with schools, and public and private organizations to leverage resources and expand opportunities

chapter two EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Existing Conditions chapter of this master plan:

- defines the City of Lancaster’s planning area;
- describes the existing geographic, social, and economic contexts within it;
- identifies existing park, recreation, and arts resources, both public and private; and
- evaluates the condition of existing City of Lancaster park, recreation, and arts facilities.

FIGURE 2-1: REGIONAL CONTEXT MAP





▲ *Alkali Mariposa Lily*

community profile

PLANNING CONTEXT

The City of Lancaster, 94 square miles in area, is located in the heart of the Antelope Valley in the northeastern section of Los Angeles County. With 135,225 residents, it is the ninth largest city in Los Angeles County and the second largest desert city in California. Edwards Air Force Base is located to the northeast of the city in neighboring Kern County. Lancaster is approximately nine miles from the City of Palmdale and 75 miles from downtown Los Angeles (see Figure 2-1).

The planning area for the Lancaster Parks, Recreation and Arts Master Plan includes the land contained within Lancaster's city limits. However, residents from Quartz Hill and other unincorporated communities have participated in the process since they are active users of Lancaster's recreation and arts facilities and parks. The approximate

boundaries of the sphere of influence are Avenue A to the north, 120th Street East, 110th Street West and between Avenue L and Avenue N to the south.

GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

Antelope Valley

Lancaster sits within the vast, relatively flat Antelope Valley. The San Gabriel Mountains lie to the south, separating the valley from the greater Los Angeles Area, and the Tehachapi Mountains lie to the north. The valley is often characterized as "high desert" due to its range of elevation from 2,270 to 3,050 feet. Due to the geography of the valley, wind and flooding are potential hazards. The separation from the coast affects the valley's climate and rainfall. Annual rainfall in the valley is five to nine inches and temperatures can vary from freezing on winter nights to high daytime temperatures of over 100 degrees in the summer months. The valley does experience some snowfall, 3.4 inches annually, during the first part of the year.¹ Weather conditions have a significant effect on recreation usage and facility needs. During the summer and winter months, indoor facilities such as gymnasiums may be more desirable for recreation activities such as basketball and volleyball.

Dominant vegetation in the valley includes Joshua trees, creosote bush,

¹Western Regional Climate Center

rabbitbush, and juniper.² Rare plant species can also be found in natural areas, including Lancaster milk-vetch, Parry's spineflower, and the alkali mariposa lily.³

City of Lancaster

Lancaster's elevation is 2,500 feet. City residents enjoy approximately 225 clear days a year.⁴ The city has an annual rainfall of 7.82 inches, slightly more than other parts of the valley. There are two seasonal streams that run through the city during the rainy season, Amargosa Creek in the west and Little Rock Wash in the east.

KEY DEMOGRAPHIC FINDINGS

Demographic characteristics can influence recreational interests and levels of participation. Factors such as age and income can significantly affect an individual's ability to pursue and participate in recreational activities. To a lesser extent, employment, education, and ethnicity also play a role. The demographic information for the City of Lancaster was derived from the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census, the California State Department of Finance Demographic Research Unit, the Greater Antelope Valley Economic

² *Up Above: The Geography of Suburban Sprawl in Southern California's Antelope Valley* by Matthew Jalbert

³ California Natural Diversity Database

⁴ USA Cities Online

Alliance, and the 2005 American Community Survey. This data is consistent with the data being used for the General Plan update.



▲ *Family relaxing at Hull Park*

Population Growth

Population growth primarily occurs through three means: 1) annexation, 2) in-migration, and 3) infill. All three sources are particularly critical in identifying new demand for park, recreation, and arts services. While no annexation activities are planned, it is possible that during the time frame of the Master Plan Lancaster could annex some currently unincorporated lands.

Lancaster's population has steadily increased for the past 25 years; between 1990 and 2005, the population increased by approximately 38 percent. According to the American Community Survey, Lancaster's estimated population for 2005 was

TABLE 2-1: POPULATION PROJECTIONS

	2010	2020	2030
Lancaster	168,032	215,468	259,696
Los Angeles County	10.46 million	10.89 million	11.24 million
California	39.25 million	43.85 million	48.11 million

TABLE 2-2: PERCENT OF POPULATION BY AGE

AGE GROUP	% OF 1990 POPULATION	% OF 2000 POPULATION	% OF 2005 POPULATION
Under 9 years	18.3%	17.5%	18%
10–19 years	14.3%	17.8%	19.8%
20–34 years	29.4%	20.2%	19.6%
35–54 years	22.8%	29.1%	25.5%
55–64 years	6.4%	6.6%	9.4%
65–84 years	7.3%	7.6%	6.5%
85 years and over	0.7%	1%	1.2%

Source: U.S. Census 1990 and 2000; American Community Survey 2005

135,225. The city is projected to continue to experience high growth rates and reach a total population of 259,696 by the year 2030, which is almost double the estimated 2005 population. Lancaster’s projected growth rate is higher than those of both Los Angeles County and California (see Table 2-1). In 2005, Lancaster was ranked 40th out of the 478 California cities based on total population.

These growth patterns will impact park development, the amount of land avail-

able for and needed to maintain the current level of service, and Lancaster’s ability to be responsive to the needs of its growing and diverse population.

Age

Over the past 35 years, more than 50 percent of the total population has been under the age of 35, though there have been some slight shifts within age groups over time. Table 2-2 shows a more detailed breakdown of the total population by age.

The median age of city residents continues to be fairly young compared to other communities. In 2005, the median age of city residents was 30.1 years, which is a slight drop from 2000 when the median age was 31 years. The median age in the U.S. in 2005 was 36.4 years. The low median age reflects the large number of children and youth in Lancaster, which could potentially impact future park, recreation, and arts programs and facilities. The median age also varies across race and ethnic groups. Hispanic/Latino, African American, and multi-racial individuals tend to be younger, while Caucasian/White and Asian American individuals tend to be slightly older (see Table 2-3).

Ethnicity

An analysis of ethnicity can be important from a recreation participation standpoint. Different ethnic groups may have specific interests in and preferences for certain recreation and arts activities, some of which may not currently be available in the community.

Lancaster has been experiencing a shift in ethnic diversity over the past 25 years. The Caucasian/White population continues to be the majority; however, it declined from 73.2 percent to 40.9 percent between 1990 and 2005. The African American and Hispanic/Latino populations grew during this time period. The Hispanic/Latino popula-

TABLE 2-3: MEDIAN AGE BY RACE AND ETHNICITY

RACE OR ETHNICITY	MEDIAN AGE (YEARS)
Two or More Races	17
Hispanic or Latino	23
Other (some other race only)	24
Pacific Islander	N/A
Black or African American	27
Native American	31
Asian	35
White	35

Source: U.S. Census 2000

tion continues to represent the second largest ethnic population in the city. Relatively small changes have occurred in the Asian American and Native American populations (see Table 2-4).

Households and Income

Household growth throughout the Valley is on the rise. There were 41,001 occupied households in Lancaster in 2004, with an average size of 3.076 persons. Approximately two thirds of the households were owner-occupied, while the remaining third were rented.

The estimated average family size in Lancaster for 2005 was 3.78 persons, higher than the estimated U.S. number of 3.18 persons. These high averages demonstrate that Lancaster continues to be a family-oriented community.

In 2000, Lancaster's median household income was \$41,999 and the

TABLE 2-4: RACE AND ETHNICITY OF COMMUNITY

RACE/ETHNICITY	% OF 1990 POPULATION	% OF 2000 POPULATION	% OF 2005 POPULATION
Caucasian/White*	73.2%	52.4%	40.9%
Black or African American*	7.2%	15.6%	19.5%
Asian American or Pacific Islander*	3.5%	3.9%	2.9%
Hispanic or Latino	15.1 %	24.1%	32%
Native American*	0.8%	0.6%	0.5%
Two or more races*	N/A	3.0%	3.5%
Other*	0.2%	0.4%	0.4%

*Race alone

Source: U.S. Census 1990, 2000 and American Community Survey 2005

TABLE 2-5: 2000 POVERTY RATE

	TOTAL	LANCASTER	CALIFORNIA	U.S.
Families below poverty level	3,847	13.8%	10.6%	9.2%
Individuals below poverty level	18,239	16.4%	14.2%	12.4%

Source: U.S. Census 2000

median family income was \$44,681, less than the state and national median incomes.⁵ Demographics Now estimates Lancaster’s 2005 average household income to be \$48,329 and the Greater Antelope Valley Economic Alliance estimates the 2005 average family income to be \$61,298. Although there is not one definitive income estimate for 2005, these numbers show that the average income is increasing, especially among families.

In 2000, almost 14 percent of Lancaster’s families were living below the poverty line, a rate higher than that

⁵U.S. Census 2000

of California or of the country overall (Table 2-5). The Department should keep these families in mind when setting fee structures and scholarships.

Education

Education level can influence recreation and arts participation. Lower education levels are generally associated with lower income levels, which means families may have less income available for non-essentials, including fee-based recreation and arts programs and higher-cost activities such as golf.

The educational attainment of residents within Lancaster remained fairly steady between 2000 and 2005, with some increases in the number of high school and college graduates. Over half of residents have some college or a college degree, although this percentage remains slightly lower than Los Angeles County and statewide averages. Local education opportunities in Lancaster expanded this past year with the opening of the Lancaster University Center, part of the California State University system.

Employment

In 2004, Lancaster had an unemployment rate of 5.6 percent for a workforce of 49,550. The city is expected to experience a 14.5 percent increase in employment between 2000 and 2010. After 2010, Lancaster is projected

to continue to experience a steady employment growth of approximately five percent per five-year period.

In a recent survey conducted by the City, Lancaster residents ranked job creation as “very important.” With the rapid growth of the population, the community recognizes the importance of creating jobs closer to home to support a high quality of life and the benefit of additional wealth.⁶

Transportation and Travel

Most Lancaster residents travel by car, though some public transportation options are available for local and regional travel, including local bus service and the Metrolink commuter rail.

In 2000, about half the working population in the region commuted outside of the Antelope Valley, with most workers 16 and over traveling to work by car, truck or van. Of those workers driving cars, nearly three quarters drove alone, while approximately one in five carpooled. Less than 6 percent of the workers traveled by public transit, motorcycle, bicycle or walking. More than half of the workers in the area traveled 19 minutes or less to work and 27 percent traveled 45 minutes or more. The average travel time was 31.6 minutes each way. Lancaster’s growing commuter culture must be considered

⁶Lancaster Redevelopment Agency *Update* newsletter, Winter 2005–06

TABLE 2-6: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF ADULTS OVER 25

	LANCASTER	LA COUNTY	CALIFORNIA
Less than 9 th Grade	8.0%	14.0%	11.5%
9 th to 12 th Grade	10.9%	11.1%	11.7%
High School Graduate	29.4%	18.8%	20.1%
Some College, No Degree	28.4%	21.8%	22.9%
Associate Degree	9.4%	6.2%	7.1%
Bachelor Degree	10.3%	16.1%	17.1%
Graduate/Professional Degree	3.7%	9.5%	10.6%
	100%	100%	100%

Source:: American Community Survey 2005

when planning programs for working adults and latch-key children, especially during the work week and when school is not in session.

LAND USE AND PLANNED GROWTH

Currently, Lancaster covers 60,160 acres, or 94 square miles. The size of the city poses some challenges for parks and recreational planning. For example, while Lancaster has concentrated on developing large-scale, high-quality recreational facilities, residents increasingly desire more recreational opportunities closer to home to reduce the time they spend driving during their leisure hours.

Currently, 73.2 percent of the land in Lancaster is undeveloped. However, most of this vacant land is already zoned and purchased by developers for residential, commercial, and industrial uses. Only 218.3 acres, or 0.4 percent, of vacant land in Lancaster is zoned for parks and open space. Residents have

TABLE 2-7: LAND USE SURVEY

GENERAL PLAN LAND USE DESIGNATION	PERCENT OF VACANT LAND	PERCENT OF DEVELOPED LAND	TOTAL PERCENT OF LAND	ZONING
Residential	52.58%	17.69%	70.27%	NU, UR, MR1, MR2
Commercial	1.71%	1.98%	3.69%	C, CPD, CBD, RC, OP
Industrial	18.03%	3.83%	21.86%	LI, HI
Public Facilities	0.86%	3.32%	4.18%	O
Parks and Open Space	0.40%	0.92%	1.31%	O

Note: All numbers exclude roads measurements.

Land in Lancaster (acres)	60,160
Roads (acres)	5,087
Land in Lancaster minus roads (acres)	55,073

long enjoyed the views provided by the undeveloped acreage and used many of these spaces informally for off-road cycling by youth or for off-leash dog walking. As more and more of these lands are developed, residents will increasingly rely on the Department to meet their expectations regarding open space-related recreation opportunities.

parks, recreation & arts department

DEPARTMENT PURPOSE

The Lancaster Department of Parks, Recreation and Arts is responsible for park development, park maintenance, recreation services, and cultural arts programs. The Department

is organized into five divisions: Administration, Parks, Recreation and Visual Arts, Performing Arts, and the Film Office Liaison. Lancaster is unusual among California cities in that in addition to parks and recreation programs, the Department is the leading provider of cultural arts opportunities, primarily through the city’s award-winning performing arts center.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Administration

The Administration Division directs and supports other divisions and sections within the Department in matters of budgeting, personnel, program development, service delivery, training, clerical, and other related areas.

Administration also supervises the Capital Improvement Program and works with the development community to secure parkland in newly developing areas. The Administration Division includes the director and assistant director of Parks, Recreation and Arts and secretarial support.

Parks

This division provides for the physical care of all parks and City-owned facilities, including: grounds maintenance; irrigation system installation/maintenance; equipment maintenance; chemical control programs; turf maintenance; energy management; horticultural programs; tree planting, trimming and spraying; facilities repair; and set up for spe-

cial events and meetings. The Parks Superintendent directs these efforts.

In addition to city parks, the Parks Division also maintains City-owned facilities such as Lancaster City Hall, Lancaster Performing Arts Center, Lancaster Museum/Art Gallery, Western Hotel, seven downtown area parking lots, four park-and-ride sites, Annex/Record Center, and Metrolink Train Station. The Parks Superintendent manages this division, with two Park Supervisors coordinating the work of the maintenance and grounds keeping teams, which include 41 permanent personnel and additional seasonal staff as needed. To supplement their capacity to maintain city parks, staff also supervise Los Angeles County Court-referred community service workers.



◀ *Orchestra rehearsal at Lancaster National Soccer Center*

*We create
community
through people,
parks and
programs.*

Lancaster Department of
Parks, Recreation and Arts

Recreation and Visual Arts

The Recreation and Visual Arts Division provides a wide variety of recreation programs, services, and special events for residents of all ages in the City of Lancaster. The Recreation and Visual Arts Division has four supervisors, a special events manager, and a general manager for the Lancaster National Soccer Center, each reporting to the Administration division head. Below are brief explanations of the roles of the special events manager and each supervisor:

- **Special Events:** Manage major community events such as the Poppy Festival and Celebrate Downtown Lancaster.
- **Athletics:** Program youth and adult sports such as basketball and softball. Manage the batting cages. Market facilities to secure regional and national softball tournaments.
- **Aquatics:** Coordinate classes, competitive teams and open swim times.
- **Recreation Enrichment:** Organize after-school programs and the community clean-up and enhancement program.
- **Recreation:** Manage the community recreation, contract and special classes at the activity centers and parks.

This division also coordinates the Department's program registration system and park facility rentals.

The Lancaster Museum/Art Gallery (LMAG) is also under this division.

Performing Arts

The Performing Arts Division programs and operates the Lancaster Performing Arts Center (LPAC) and provides related activities. The LPAC serves as a presenter of local, regional, national, and international performers and provides rentable space for individuals and groups. The range of performance types at LPAC include: Broadway, contemporary, family, country, classical, dance, big band, pop, jazz, and holiday programming. LPAC staff also participate in the Lancaster Old Town Site programs. In addition, the Performing Arts division provides educational programming consisting of tours, special events, outreach, master classes, workshops, and school field trips.

Film Office

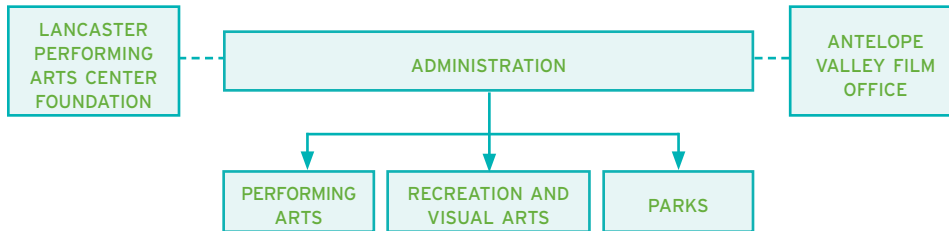
The Antelope Valley Film Office represents Lancaster to the film, television, and video industries statewide. Specific services include marketing, scouting locations, permitting, technical services, and support.

DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS

Staffing

The Parks, Recreation and Arts Department employs 63 full-time and 213 part-time employees. An addi-

FIGURE 2-3: OVERVIEW OF DIVISIONS



tional 33 part-time employees are hired seasonally to help with maintenance and programs. The Department also receives support from community volunteers who teach classes and staff special events and performances at the LPAC. In 2005, 147 people volunteered for the Parks, Recreation and Arts Department.

Budget

In fiscal year 2006–07, the Parks, Recreation and Arts Department operating budget was \$12,423,765, representing 19 percent of the City’s general

fund budget. This number included capital upgrades, staff salaries, maintenance, and program costs. The CIP for Parks projects was \$8,880,850.

existing park land & facilities

Lancaster has a diverse and well-maintained system of local parks and specialized facilities, including a facility spotlighting the unique natural values of the desert woodland. Lancaster’s park facilities exhibit the Department’s commitment to investing in state-of-the-art special facilities, and maintain-



◀ *Casual basketball game at Skytower Park*



▲ *Local artists' work is displayed at the LMAG*

ing turf, landscaping and surfaces to a high standard system wide. The City has a large number of tournament-quality sports fields both in neighborhood parks and special use facilities. Special facilities, such as the Lancaster National Soccer Center, Clear Channel Stadium, and the Big 8 Softball Complex, are maintained to a standard of excellence required for regional and national competitions. Local parks are well maintained, provide basic amenities, and present potential opportunities for additional elements.

PARK LAND INVENTORY

City Facilities

Table 2-8 details each City of Lancaster park site by type, including the acreage of each. Appendix A contains a more detailed inventory of each park. Map

2-1 depicts the locations of Lancaster's existing and known future park facilities, while Map 2-2 illustrates city zoning.

The Department of Parks, Recreation and Arts has a total of 19 facilities, three of which are currently scheduled for construction (James C. Gilley Park, Whit Carter Park, and Lancaster Youth Baseball/Softball Complex). The Department also owns additional land that will be developed as funds become available.

Other Parks

Lancaster residents enjoy two Los Angeles County Parks: Apollo County Park in Lancaster and George Lane County Park in Quartz Hill. Additionally, there are four California State Parks located within 20 miles or less of the City: Arthur B. Ripley Desert Woodland and the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve to the west and Saddleback Butte and the Antelope Valley Indian Museum to the east.⁷

FACILITIES INVENTORY

Park Amenities

Park amenities such as picnic areas and children's play areas can influence a park's usability and function. There are a total of 170 picnic tables in 13 city parks. Eight of these loca-

⁷California Department of State Parks

tions have barbecue grills and five have shelters. Currently the picnic areas do not require reservations although residents can reserve shelters ahead of time for large gatherings. Many parks have space for additional picnic tables and shelters to protect users from the extreme heat and wind.

Twelve parks have children's play areas. The play areas are well maintained and have fairly traditional features. Given the increasing availability of creative play structures, the Department may consider more creative structures, possibly with water features, in the future.

Sports Fields

The Department takes excellent care of their sports fields and courts through preventative maintenance. Most notable is the Lancaster National Soccer Center (LNSC), which has 34 tournament-quality fields in one location. Residents enjoy the convenience of having a centralized location for all soccer-related activities.

Also of note is the tournament-quality Big 8 Softball Complex and batting cages, which are fully integrated into Lancaster City Park.

Aquatics

Lancaster has two swimming pools as part of their parks system. The Eastside Pool at Deputy Pierre W. Bain Park is indoors and operates

year round. The outdoor pool at Jane Reynolds Park (Webber Pool) is only open during the summer.

Trails

The Department is working with the City's Public Works and Planning Departments to create a trails system in Lancaster. Two parks have trails: Amargosa Creek Linear Park and the Prime Desert Woodland Preserve. Additionally there are some multi-use trails, however these trails do not function as a cohesive system as they lack connectivity and do not lead to any specific destinations. The Lancaster General Plan calls for the adoption and implementation of a master plan for trails in the city.

➤ *California Poppy Festival*



TABLE 2-8: EXISTING CITY PARKS

PARK NAME	COUNT	TOTAL FACILITY ACREAGE	DEVELOPED ACREAGE	FUTURE DEVELOPMENT
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS				
El Dorado Park	1	9.50	9.50	0.00
Jane Reynolds Park/Webber Pool	1	6.90	6.90	0.00
Mariposa Park	1	7.50	7.50	0.00
Skytower Park	1	13.30	13.30	0.00
Hull Park	1	8.70	8.70	0.00
<i>Neighborhood Park Subtotal</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>45.90</i>	<i>45.90</i>	<i>0.00</i>
COMMUNITY PARKS				
Deputy Pierre W. Bain Park/Eastside Pool	1	15.00	15.00	0.00
James C. Gilley Park (<i>under construction</i>)	1	12.20	0.00	12.20
Lancaster City Park (Big 8 Softball Complex)	1	65.60	65.60	0.00
Rawley Duntley Park	1	19.00	12.00	7.00
Tierra Bonita Park	1	27.00	27.00	0.00
Whit Carter Park (<i>under construction</i>)	1	62.00	20.00	42.00
<i>Community Park Subtotal</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>200.80</i>	<i>139.60</i>	<i>61.20</i>
LINEAR PARKS				
Amargosa Creek Linear Park	1	5.58	1.95	3.36
<i>Linear Park Subtotal</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>5.58</i>	<i>1.95</i>	<i>3.36</i>
OPEN SPACE				
Prime Desert Woodland Preserve	1	102.00	54.00	48.00
<i>Open Space Subtotal</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>102.00</i>	<i>54.00</i>	<i>48.00</i>
SPECIAL USE: SPORTS				
Clear Channel Stadium	1	17.00	17.00	0.00
Lancaster National Soccer Center	1	157.00	130.00	27.00
Youth Baseball/Softball Complex (<i>under construction</i>)	1	37.00	15.00	22.00
SPECIAL USE: ARTS				
Lancaster Museum Art Gallery	1	0.20	0.20	0.00
Lancaster Performing Arts Center	1	0.96	0.96	0.00
Western Hotel	1	0.19	0.19	0.00
<i>Special Use Subtotal (Arts & Sports)</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>212.35</i>	<i>163.35</i>	<i>49.00</i>
EXISTING TOTAL	19	566.63	404.80	161.56

Indoor Facilities

The Department has a variety of indoor spaces inventoried in Table 2-9. They include a mix of small, local activity centers located in parks and special use facilities dedicated to cultural arts, athletics and environmental education. The Department has a total of 138,819 square feet of indoor space available in the following categories (see Table 2-8 for a more detailed facility summary).

Activity Centers

Six parks contain an activity center where the Department hosts various recreation classes, preschool and after school programs. The Department acknowledges that it has limited, flexible indoor space, which impacts its ability to meet program demands throughout the City. Through public involvement activities to date, residents have expressed a desire, to drive less than ten or fifteen minutes from their homes to participate in programs. This is especially true on weekdays for residents who may have already completed a significant commute.

Prime Desert Woodland Elyze Clifford Interpretive Center

The Elyze Clifford Interpretive Center houses a permanent nature exhibit and is open to individuals and school groups for tours and nature talks. In line with the Interpretive Center's mission of environmental protection and education, the center itself serves



▲ *Students walk through Tierra Bonita Park after school*

as an example of a sustainable structure through its hay bale construction and a pervious parking area. The trails throughout the preserve are created from decomposed granite held in place with soil stabilizer.

Gymnasiums

Through a joint-use agreement, the Department and Lancaster School District built gymnasiums at four middle schools in the city. The Department uses the gymnasiums during non-school hours for public programs. Collectively they provide over 30,000 square feet of space.

Cultural Arts Facilities

The Department owns and operates three cultural arts venues that include:

- **Lancaster Performing Arts Center (LPAC):** The performing arts center

hosts a wide variety of performances from local, regional, national, and international talent, and offers its facilities for rent. The space is comprised of the LPAC main theatre, a 758-to-794-seat state-of-the-art theater, and the Eliopoulos Family Theatre (EFT), a flexible black box space with a 110-seat capacity.

- **Lancaster Museum/Art Gallery:** This complex features work of historical and general interest and showcases local, national and international artists. The museum has a permanent Prehistoric Wonders dinosaur collection on display. Special programs include exhibit lectures and summer outdoor silent movies.
- **Western Hotel Museum:** Housed in the oldest building in downtown Lancaster, the Western Hotel Museum offers a permanent collection highlighting local City history. The collection, including photographs and artifacts, is exhibited throughout the historic hotel rooms.

Other Arts Facilities

These additional cultural arts facilities expand upon the City-run facilities:

- Antelope Valley College Black Box Theatre
- Antelope Valley Indian Museum
- Antelope Valley Arts College Gallery
- Cedar Centre Art Gallery

existing recreation & arts programs

The Department offers a wide range of programs for residents of all ages, from sports teams to dance classes and festivals to art exhibits.

ATHLETICS

Soccer

The Lancaster National Soccer Center's (LNSC) 34 tournament-quality soccer fields draw more than 25,000 players each year for tournaments, which has major economic benefits for the Department and City. In 2005, an additional 3,325 residents used the LNSC through the youth soccer league, the men's soccer league, school soccer teams, and the Kidz Love Soccer classes.

Other Team Sports

Similar to the LNSC, the Big 8 Softball Complex (housed at Lancaster City Park) is a destination for regional softball tournaments. In 2005, the complex drew 22,800 visitors or 912 teams to Lancaster. That same year, 453 local teams or 6,342 participants, played in the City's softball league.

In 2005, approximately 70 teams or 560 participants played in the adult basketball leagues and 333 participants or 40 teams played in the youth basketball leagues.

MAP 2-1

MAP 2-1

MAP 2-2

MAP 2-2

Aquatics

Lancaster's two public swimming pools offer classes and programs for all ages. Both pools have designated public and lap swim times throughout the week and private and group classes ranging from beginner to advanced swim technique, lifeguard training, water aerobics and the Oasis Swim Team. Eastside Pool also has times designated for senior swim therapy.

In 2005, approximately 72,177 patrons visited Eastside Pool, an indoor facility that is open year round, and 6,626 visited Webber Pool, an outdoor pool open during the summer, for a combined total of 78,803 patrons. Of this total, 1,740 people participated in lessons at Eastside Pool and another 407 took lessons at Webber Pool located at Jane Reynolds Park.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

The Prime Desert Woodland Preserve has an interpretive center where groups and individuals can learn about native flora and fauna in the Antelope Valley through full moon walks, bird watching programs, and nature talks. Because of its programs, the center is a popular destination for school groups. During 2005, 12,000 people used the Prime Desert Woodland's walking trails, 2,500 people visited the Interpretive Center, 1,500 people attended the Nature Adventure Talks and 1,300 students visited through a school tour. An

additional 250 people visited the center through private group tours.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

The Department offers a variety of community programs, many of which address the needs of children whose parents commute. The grant-funded, City-run CARES after-school program serves 6,500 children per year and the Enrichment Centers serve 1,200 children per year. In addition, 850 children participate in the summer day camp. The Department also offers preschool classes, "Mommy, Daddy and Me" groups, and one-day adult classes.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Lancaster is home to several annual festivals and fairs that highlight local talent, celebrate Lancaster's culture, and provide residents a chance to interact with the community. In 2005, 87,540 people attended a special event in Lancaster (see Table 2-10).

Lancaster residents also enjoy special events hosted by other agencies and local providers such as the Antelope Valley Independent Film Festival, Antelope Valley International Heritage Picnic (co-sponsored by the cities of Lancaster and Palmdale) and the Antelope Valley Fair and Alfalfa Festival.

ARTS

Lancaster's Department of Parks, Recreation and Arts offers over 300



▲ *Lancaster National Soccer Center has 34 soccer fields*

classes per year, with approximately one-third focusing on arts and cultural enrichment through courses in music, dance and the visual arts. Residents of all ages enjoy the opportunity to participate in classes that offer artistic, educational and creative growth. In addition to classes, summer camps are available for children and youth. The programming provided by the Department allows residents to participate in the arts and develop a deeper appreciation and skill level. Classes offered include:

- Dance: Modern Latin, Hip Hop, Middle Eastern, Belly Dance, Social Dance, Ballet and Tap and Ballet Jazz Combo
- Performing Arts: Tiny Tots Acting Troupe, Kids Performance Workshop, Advance Performance Workshop and Playwriting

- Music: Community Orchestra and Kindermusic
- Visual Arts: Scrapbooking, Photography, Crochet and Knitting, Swedish Afghan Weaving, Pysanky-Ukrainian Decorated Eggs, Sewing and Ceramics

The breadth and depth of programming offered by the Lancaster Performing Arts Center (LPAC) is unique in comparison to other communities. The LPAC brings in a wide variety of performers and is a strong supporter of local performing arts and dance groups through shared facilities use.

Lancaster is one of the few communities that operates its own museum and art gallery. As with the LPAC, the Lancaster Museum/Art Gallery supports local artists and groups by curating shows and providing gallery space.

REGISTRATION/RENTALS

The Recreation Division of the Department handles class registration and facility rentals. The Department recently launched an online class registration website. Residents can also register for classes via phone, fax, mail and in person. Between March 2005 and February 2006, 70 patrons rented indoor City facilities for community meetings and private social events.

TABLE 2-9: INDOOR FACILITY INVENTORY

FACILITY NAME	TOTAL FACILITY SQ FT
ACTIVITY CENTERS	
El Dorado Park	1,170
Jane Reynolds Park	4,490
Mariposa Park	2,100
Skytower Park	1,200
Lancaster City Park (Big 8 Softball Complex)	10,959
<i>Activity Centers Subtotal</i>	<i>19,919</i>
SPECIAL USE AREAS: ARTS	
Lancaster Performing Arts Center	45,500
Lancaster Museum Art Gallery	8,861
Western Hotel	8,388
<i>Special Use Arts Subtotal</i>	<i>62,749</i>
SPECIAL USE AREAS: SPORTS	
Lancaster National Soccer Complex Eastside	5,904
Lancaster National Soccer Complex Westside	3,485
<i>Special Use Sports Subtotal</i>	<i>9,389</i>
OTHER INDOOR CITY FACILITIES	
Prime Desert Woodland Interpretive Center	2,861
Eastside Pool	17,000
<i>Other Facilities Subtotal</i>	<i>19,861</i>
GYMNASIUMS (Joint Use with Lancaster School District)	
New Vista Middle School	7,000
Piute Middle School	7,950
Park View Middle School	7,950
Amargosa Middle School	7,500
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>30,400</i>
TOTAL	142,318



▲ Lancaster Museum/Art Gallery



▲ *“Mommy, Daddy and Me” class at Skytower Park*

strengths & opportunities

The Department of Parks, Recreation and Arts has many strengths that provide a solid foundation for future planning efforts. Like all growing cities, Lancaster also faces a few challenges, which can create opportunities for future planning decisions and directions.

STRENGTHS

- Lancaster’s parks are all well-maintained to a high standard. The regional/special facilities such as the Lancaster National Soccer Center (LNSC) are meticulously maintained, which is notable, given the heavy, year-round usage. Across all facilities, maintenance staff are proactive in their efforts, placing an emphasis on preventive maintenance to minimize the need for large

full-scale repairs or facilities replacement. Older buildings and elements are also in very good condition.

- Lancaster’s special use facilities such as the LPAC, LNSC, Big 8 Softball Complex, and Clear Channel Stadium are superior to what is available in most communities in the state and draw users from outside the city. Lancaster demonstrated vision when it built these facilities and their ongoing maintenance is a high priority.
- Lancaster is also unique in offering the Lancaster Museum/Art Gallery and Western Hotel as City-funded visual arts venues. In comparison, Lancaster is one of the few cities to have its own visual arts gallery. Similar to the LPAC, the Museum/Art Gallery is a place for both City-sponsored shows and a venue for local arts groups and artists to showcase their work.
- The Lancaster Prime Desert Woodland Preserve is a unique, environmental facility that is already a great asset and will become more so as the city continues to grow and less private, undeveloped open space is available. This is the only park site oriented to more passive uses, and the educational opportunities are outstanding.

TABLE 2-10: SPECIAL EVENT PARTICIPATION

EVENT	# OF PARTICIPANTS
Poppy Festival	50,000
Downtown Celebration (three events)	18,000
Fourth of July	10,000
Easter Egg Hunt	5,000
Bark at the Park	5,000
Breakfast With Santa	500
Aerospace Walk of Honor	500
MLK Day Celebration	500
Annual Heritage Picnic	500
Metrolink Santa Train	500
Youth in Government/ Youth Commission	40
TOTAL	90,540

- Lancaster offers a good range of cultural arts classes, encouraging residents of all ages to be engaged in the arts through hands-on experience. These offerings complement the City’s performing arts events by stimulating creativity in both participants and viewers.
- The *Outlook* magazine is a high-quality publication that provides information on classes, and highlights City-supported arts facilities and programs and information of community interest.
- The Department offers a number of well-attended festivals and citywide events that serve as a destination for residents to enjoy cultural arts as well as additional

specialty offerings. The popularity and quality of these events demonstrates Lancaster’s ability to be the lead organizer and provide activities that appeal to the community.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Local parks need additional amenities and recreation facilities to reach their full potential. Many parks have sports fields, courts and play areas. Additional features could include: small picnic shelters (non-reservable serving 10 to 20 people); water play areas; more creative playgrounds; skate features; off-leash dog facilities; looped walking paths; additional benches and seating areas with shade structures.

The Elyze Clifford Interpretive Center at the Prime Desert Woodland Preserve plays a key role in environmental education in Lancaster



- Lancaster has great program space for organized sports and cultural arts (performances and exhibitions), but does not have much flexible program space for participatory programs such as fitness classes, yoga, dance (ballet, tap, and hip-hop), and studio arts (pottery, painting, and sculpture).
- Lancaster’s growing and diversifying population will influence the need for a greater number and variety of programs. City staff will need to communicate with newer residents to learn about their programming interests and preferences.
- Lancaster’s growing family population, increasing number of commuting parents, and reduced school funding for youth enrichment activities puts increasing responsibility on the Department to meet the after-school needs of youth and teens.
- Increased traffic and growing commute times may limit residents’ willingness to drive to current facilities, regardless of the quality of programming. The City will need to explore ways to provide programs and services in multiple locations, while managing the accompanying increased staffing and maintenance costs.
- Because of the diminishing privately-owned, undeveloped open space, there is a need for the Department to preserve open space and create multi-use trails for walking, bicycling and dog walking. The trails should connect parks and other destinations.

chapter three COMMUNITY NEEDS

The Community Needs Assessment pulls together information from the community outreach process, research on emerging recreation trends, standards research, and the analysis of the existing conditions in Chapter Two. This data will be used as a basis for examining how Lancaster's current parklands, recreation and arts facilities meet the needs of the community.

The Community Needs Assessment represents the voice of the community, and it, along with the existing conditions analysis, drives the recommendations presented later in the plan. More than 2,000 residents provided comment and feedback on the development of this plan. The results of the outreach methodologies are summarized in Tables 3-1, 3-2, and 3-3.

This chapter highlights key themes from the outreach process, then details the methods used in the needs assessment, reviews key demographics about Lancaster, and provides a comprehensive assessment of the Department's parks, facilities, and programs.

key themes

The Department employed a wide variety of community outreach methods throughout the greater part of 2006 and documented the expressed needs and desires of more than 2,000 residents. Data collection methods included a community outreach process, research on emerging recreation trends, and inventories and standards research. The result is that community voices, from all across Lancaster and of all ages, coalesced around several key themes.

A CHANGING POPULATION

The community needs presented in this chapter must be viewed against the backdrop of the people that make up Lancaster. Like many cities in California, Lancaster is growing and is experiencing shifts in the ages and ethnic makeup of its residents. Trends suggest that Lancaster will continue to experience rapid population growth, become more diverse and continue to be a family-oriented community. Growth in Lancaster's total population and family population will likely impact the need for parklands and close to home recreation opportunities.

CONNECTIONS TO PEOPLE & PLACES

Community members spoke frequently of the desire to connect more to their neighbors and neighborhoods, and they believe the Department can help them do this. Residents often stressed building community through local parks, trails, and neighborhood-based programs. Residents also stressed the need for specialized activities and programs that reflect different neighborhoods' cultures and interests and provide opportunities for families to recreate together.

Residents frequently cited the potential to increase connections between schools, neighborhoods and key destinations. There was a high level of interest in multi-use trails and pathways that provide fitness opportunities and help meet the community's need for additional pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian trails.

▼ *CAC members discuss elements of the plan*



INFORMAL & UNSTRUCTURED ACTIVITIES

The Department has been very successful in developing large-scale, “destination” sports parks and facilities that meet the City’s needs for organized recreation. Residents are now vocalizing a preference for smaller, flexible, close-to-home facilities that include walking paths and informal play areas.

Current cultural arts facilities are also highly valued in the community and appear to be at capacity. Residents suggested adding smaller, more informal and flexible spaces that could be used for outdoor performances or instruction. These programs would be designed to serve neighborhood interests and expand the Department’s abilities to serve more residents, especially youth.

MAINTENANCE OF EXISTING FACILITIES

The Department’s maintenance standards are valued and recognized by the community, as expressed by the community’s high level of satisfaction with park and facilities maintenance and the condition of fields and courts. Community respondents stressed the importance of continuing the level of maintenance while upgrading existing parks.

AGE-SPECIFIC PROGRAMMING

Community members of all ages consistently voiced the need to develop more opportunities for Lancaster’s chil-

dren and teens. Examples of needs for youth included indoor facilities such as a teen center or place for teens to “hang out”, neighborhood performing arts spaces for youth, and enhanced cultural arts programs, all which need to be affordable, high-quality, and varied.

While youth needs were clearly a priority, serving the adult population was also stressed. Approximately 45 percent of city residents are between the ages of 20 and 54, indicating a fairly large audience base for adult-oriented programs and courses. While participants in the Senior Focus Group indicated a high level of satisfaction with existing programs and activities offered at the County-run Antelope Valley Senior Center, it is also clear that as the senior population increases, additional programs and facilities of similar quality will be needed.

INTER-GENERATIONAL PROGRAMMING

While distinct age groups have specific programming needs, Lancaster has a significant number of families who want to be able to recreate together. Teens and seniors called out the need for inter-generational activities specifically. Local events and festivals were identified as the most popular way to meet this need. These special events provide a safe, low-cost opportunity for families to recreate together and to experience programs and entertainment

that are representative of Lancaster’s growing diversity.

CULTURAL ARTS

Cultural arts facilities and programs were consistently cited as the “treasures” of Lancaster. Participation and interest in cultural arts programming is very high and the Department’s efforts to bring students to the Lancaster Performing Arts Center (LPAC) has helped to further stimulate interest. The usage of the LPAC is unusually high compared to other benchmarked communities and reflects the wide mix of free and low-cost programs that attract students and families. The LPAC also appears to be at capacity for many popular youth programs and residents would like to see additional arts programming for children and youth at a variety of locations.

LPAC programs have also helped to stimulate a broader interest in the arts that includes, along with performances and hands-on learning classes, a growing desire for public art. The General Plan visioning activities call out the designation of the Cedar Avenue Arts District that features specific arts facilities and a streetscape energized by public sculpture, performances and special events.

PARTNERSHIPS

Residents acknowledge that it is unrealistic to expect the Department

to be solely responsible for meeting the needs of their growing community. Community outreach participants, especially members of the Educational Partners Focus Group, were supportive of partnership arrangements and joint-use agreements that would expand parklands and increase facilities for parks, recreation and cultural arts programming.

methods

A variety of tools and reference materials were used to conduct the analysis for the community needs assessment. These materials include findings from the following sources:

- **Community Outreach Process:** Surveys, interviews, focus groups, community advisory committee meetings, and workshops
- **Research on Emerging Recreation Trends:** Analysis of current parks and recreation studies
- **Inventories and Standards Research:** Analysis of levels of service in Lancaster and comparable communities

The methods employed are described in the following section.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROCESS

An extensive community outreach process involving more than 2,000 residents was conducted to identify com-

munity perceptions and needs concerning Lancaster's parks, recreation and cultural arts programs and facilities.

Poppy Festival Survey: More than 540 adults participated in survey activities during the two-day 2006 Poppy Festival. Participants could respond in either English or Spanish and were asked to identify where they “live, work and play”; rank the importance of Department functions, indicate how the Department should allocate its resources, and rank the importance of current and potential future arts programs. Forty-five teens participated in a digital interview process to “voice” their needs and opinions on programs and facilities. More than 400 children drew pictures that depicted “fun activities, facilities and play areas” they would like to see at local parks.

Community Phone Survey: A statistically valid phone survey was conducted with 602 residents to collect data on levels of satisfaction, participation and use of facilities, identify facility and program needs, and test support for potential future projects. The survey was available in both English and Spanish.

Community Advisory Committee Meetings: Four meetings with the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) were held to share results of the planning process and gather additional feedback on the current state of the

Department, community needs and potential opportunities. The CAC included approximately 20 individuals who represented parks, organized sports groups, the arts community, the development community, high school age youth, trails, and open space.

Interviews with Council Members and Department Heads: City Council members and Department heads were interviewed to gather additional opinions and insight on community needs and issues and to identify potential opportunities.

Focus Groups: A total of five focus groups were held. Four focus groups were held with specific user groups of the Department's facilities and programs. These included youth; trails and open space; cultural arts users; and seniors. A fifth focus group was conducted with representatives from area education providers to explore the potential for joint-use and partnership agreements. In all, 66 community members participated in these focus groups. Participants were asked to share what types of activities and facilities they would like to see in the future and were asked to share feedback on safety, communication, barriers to participation, and potential partnership opportunities.

Lancaster General Plan Update Community Visioning Workshops: To support development of the



▲ *Playing frisbee at Tierra Bonita Park*

General Plan update, four community-visioning workshops were held during August 2006 to invite community residents to share comments and insight to help shape the future of Lancaster. During the workshops, participants shared their opinions and visions for parks, greenbelts, recreation, trails, open space, neighborhoods, arts, activities, and community space. Many were enthusiastic about the connection between such amenities and the opportunity to promote active living in Lancaster. Another high priority identified during the workshops was to promote civic pride and a sense of community through citywide events.

EMERGING RECREATION TRENDS

Research on recreation trends and benefits was referenced to examine what may affect service level needs. One pri-

mary source was the California Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP). CORP is the statewide master plan developed for California's parks, outdoor recreation and open space. Three elements of the plan were reviewed to help inform this community needs assessment: Public Opinions and Attitudes on Outdoor Recreation in California 2002, Parks and Recreation Trends in California, 2005, and The Health and Social Benefits of Recreation. Another key source was the National Sporting Goods Association 2005 Sports Participation Survey (NSGA).

INVENTORIES & STANDARDS RESEARCH

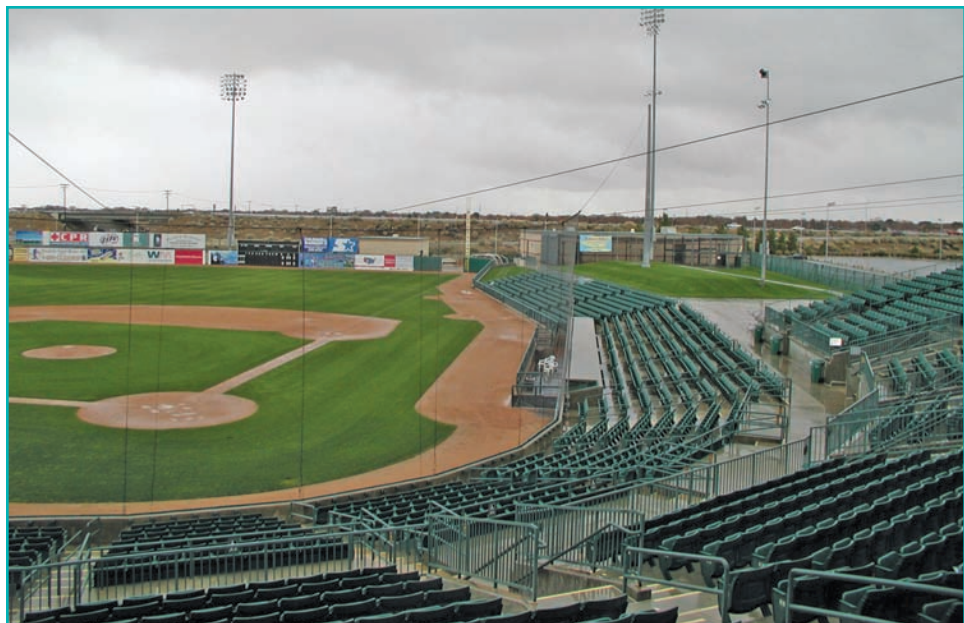
Research was conducted to identify what parks, recreation and cultural arts facilities are currently provided by the Department and by comparable

“benchmark” communities. To support this understanding, four documents and reports were developed to inform the Master Plan development process. These four are: Parkland, Open Space and Facility Inventory and Evaluation; Park Standards Research; Cultural Arts Inventory and Analysis; and Cultural Arts Standards Research. For a detailed description of each, see Appendix A.

the people of lancaster

Based on the demographic projections for Lancaster, these key population trends will likely impact future parks, recreation and arts programs and facilities needs:

- Between 2000 and 2010, Lancaster is projected to increase by 40.7 percent, or 48,616 residents. After 2010, Lancaster will grow by



*Clear Channel Stadium
in Lancaster, home of the
Lancaster JetHawks* ▶

approximately 22,000 residents every 5 years. The city's projected growth rate is higher than rates for both Los Angeles County and California.

- In 1990, non-white citizens represented approximately 26.8 percent of the population, compared to representing 54 percent of the population in 2004. During this time period, African American and Hispanic/Latino residents have experienced the highest growth in population.
- Approximately 40 percent of Lancaster's population in 2005 was under the age of 19.
- Adult residents between the ages of 20 and 54 represented approximately 45 percent of the total population.
- The average family size in Lancaster in 2000 was 3.78 persons, compared to the national average of 3.18 persons.
- In 2005, approximately 46.4 percent of working adults traveled 20 minutes or more to work. Of these workers, 22.8 percent traveled one hour or more to work.

Current standards require Lancaster to provide 5 acres of parkland for every additional 1,000 residents. The related increase in the number of families in the city suggests these new parklands be developed to include more youth and family-oriented facilities and amenities in parks, while an

increasingly diverse population suggests that recreation programs will need to appeal to a broader range of interests.

Lancaster covers almost 94 square miles and most of its parks were developed at a time when a person could easily drive across town in a relatively short period of time. As the population increases and traffic becomes more congested, residents who have already commuted to and from work will be less likely to drive across town for a recreation program after work. The Department will continue to be challenged to determine the best location and schedule for weekday evening programs, especially for adults. In addition, parents who have long commutes are more likely to rely on school and City-run programs to provide after-school care and enrichment opportunities for their children. Residents continue to voice requests for neighborhood facilities and informal recreation activities.

The Needs Assessment draws from the level of service information outlined in Chapter Two and Appendix A, and calls out community needs and trends and identifies emerging opportunities for the following three areas of service: A) Parklands and Open Space; B) Recreation and Cultural Arts Facilities; and, C) Recreation and Cultural Arts Programs. The emerging opportunities form the basis for the policies, recommendations and actions that appear later in this document.



▲ *Free senior and adult exercise class at Lancaster City Park*



Sisters playing at Tierra Bonita Park ▶

parklands & open space

Lancaster’s parklands are highly used and valued by most residents. Community phone survey results indicate that nearly three-quarters (74.5 percent) of all respondents visited or used “parks or playgrounds” within a 12 month time period. Survey data indicates residents enjoy the variety of active recreation opportunities available at these developed parks.

Lancaster’s current level of service standard for parkland and open space is 5.0 acres per 1,000 residents. The actual current level of service for all parklands and open space is 3.39 acres per 1,000 residents based on 2005 population statistics. Lancaster originally had a goal of 3 acres per 1,000 and set the higher standard of 5 acres per 1,000 in 2003. This master plan identifies the actions the Department will take to extend its resources to meet this standard in the coming years as the city population continues to grow.

Using the new park classification system outlined in Chapter Two, the Department operates five types of parks:

- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks
- Linear Parks
- Conservation/Open Space
- Special Use Areas, including Special Use Sports & Special Use Arts

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Neighborhood parks typically serve a specific neighborhood and are accessible by walking or bicycling. These parks are 2 to 10 acres in size, support both active and passive recreation activities and tend to include courts, playground equipment, pathways, picnic areas and in some cases, restrooms. Neighborhood parks can provide a social and recreational focus for local residents and play an important role in building community.

Community Needs and Trends

- When asked to rank the most important functions of the Department during the Poppy Festival survey, approximately 42 percent of the participants indicated “having a neighborhood park that is walking distance from my home.” This choice ranked second out of five possible options. (Participants were allowed to make two choices.)
- Residents participating in the visioning workshops shared visions for Lancaster that included neighborhoods with pocket parks, neighborhoods focused on schools and parks, and developing “many smaller community parks.”
- Visioning Workshop participants also suggested creating more parks in conjunction with new housing developments, potentially through development requirements.

The desire for more neighborhood parks is likely attributed to the rapid growth patterns in Lancaster and the increased desire for a sense of community. The Health and Safety Benefits of Recreation Report, an element of the California Outdoor Recreation Planning Program, reports that parks and recreation opportunities support a strong sense of community and local parks can increase neighborhood safety, stewardship, and support a more active community.

Emerging Opportunities

- Neighborhood parks should be developed in conjunction with new housing developments to serve the immediate needs of local residents. The Department should establish specific standards and guidelines for development and maintenance to ensure these developer-provided parks meet the Department’s standards for quality and long-term operation and maintenance.
- Increased partnerships and joint development of parks with schools would greatly increase the use of parks during the day for physical education programs. Indoor facilities could provide space for age-appropriate after school programs and activities and address the needs of youth who are unable to participate due to a lack of transportation. Co-locating schools with Department-run parks and

facilities could help overcome this current barrier to participation.

COMMUNITY PARKS

Community parks currently vary in size from 12.2 to 65.6 acres, tend to serve the needs of multiple neighborhoods and are typically accessed by car. Community parks provide space for large-scale recreation activities and usually include sports field and courts, fixed recreational equipment, recreation facilities, restroom facilities, walking paths or trails, and areas for picnicking and socializing.

Community Needs and Trends

- Residents shared through the community outreach process that they enjoy having “destination” recreational opportunities and activities often focused on family entertainment. Larger community parks provide space and capacity for the Department to meet this growing need.
- Community parks can also serve double duty as a neighborhood park for nearby residents by including playground equipment, pathways, picnic areas and informal play areas for unreserved use.
- When asked to identify “where they live, work and play” the majority of participants indicated they “play” at Lancaster City Park and Rawley Duntley Park, two community parks. They also identified Apollo

Park, a County run-facility that is consistent in size and features with Lancaster’s community parks.

- Though residents are interested in additional smaller neighborhood parks, the placement of strategically located community parks would continue to allow residents to access fields and courts that support more active recreation and are not available in neighborhood parks.

Emerging Opportunities

- Developing nontraditional amenities and facilities such as outdoor theatres or music stages in community parks could allow the Department to provide more programming that would serve a larger audience. This could result in more community events, which was identified as one of the highest priorities for the community.
- The Department can meet a frequently expressed interest in health and fitness programs by providing perimeter trails in parks with mileage markers. The addition of lighting can address safety concerns and increase trail usage.

LINEAR PARKS

Linear parks include developed, landscaped areas and lands that follow established corridors.

Amargosa Creek Linear Pathway is the Department’s only linear park and cov-

ers 5.58 acres (1.95 acres are developed and 3.63 acres are undeveloped). Note that trails are not included in the landscaping and amenities associated with linear parks.

Community Needs and Trends

- When asked to rank the most important functions of the Department during the Poppy Festival Survey, the highest-ranking choice was “providing trails for walking, running, horseback riding and bicycling.”
- General Plan Visioning Workshops revealed that this interest includes developing a network of trails as well as greenbelts that connect to specific destinations, such as local schools and/or parks, to create a more walkable city.

Emerging Opportunities

- The Department could develop additional linear parks in conjunction with a trails system that could be incorporated into current and future housing developments; be linked to parks, schools, and key destinations to increase connectivity within the city; support transportation needs; and, provide additional space for informal passive and active recreation.
- The Department should consider providing amenities and facilities within a trails network that would encourage residents to engage in



▲ *California Poppy Festival in Lancaster City Park*

healthy living behaviors such as par-courses, interpretive displays, and enough distance to allow for half-day long bike rides or hikes.

- Given the size of the city, barriers to connectivity caused by major thoroughfares make it unrealistic to suggest a fully connected citywide system of trails. Despite existing barriers, the Department should seek to identify opportunities to increase connectivity within and between neighborhoods and to key destinations where possible.

CONSERVATION/OPEN SPACE

The main purpose of conservation and open space areas is to protect and maintain natural spaces and resources. Access is often limited and recreation activities are fairly passive in nature. The Department currently operates

Spiral slide at
Tierra Bonita
Park



the Prime Desert Woodland Preserve and Interpretive Center which provides educational opportunities for more than 1,300 school children each year.

Community Needs and Trends

- Phone survey respondents indicated a fair level of satisfaction with the current “amount of open space.” Out of sixteen options, satisfaction with open space ranked number five and received a mean score of 1.22 on a scale of -2 (very dissatisfied) to 2 (very satisfied). Phone survey results revealed a very high level of interest in “maintaining open space” as well, suggesting that residents are aware of the value of open space preservation.
- Participants in the General Plan visioning workshops expressed the

need to preserve more open space and the natural desert landscape. Participants remarked on the need to preserve the “natural environment in the face of rapid growth” and commented that the desert is “a fast disappearing treasure.”

- With the high rate of population growth and associated residential development, residents will likely lose access to undeveloped open space in the near future unless areas are acquired and preserved by the Department or private groups. Population growth within California is projected to limit the amount of open space available, particularly in Southern California and more specifically for Los Angeles County.

Emerging Opportunities

- The Department will need to acquire land for open space now so sites can be incorporated into future development projects. Also, as private development continues, large parcels of open space may be more difficult to obtain. The current availability of undeveloped land and open space provides numerous opportunities to increase public open spaces and preserves.
- As these properties are developed, the Department will need to address informal uses such as off-leash dog-walking that were previously accommodated on these lands within the existing framework of parks.

- When acquiring or dedicating additional open spaces, the Department should consider how to balance conservation with access to recreational opportunities and amenities. Nature-oriented recreation areas are very popular among Californians.
- Potential amenity improvements to promote usage could include providing additional benches to allow visitors to rest and observe the natural environment, installing additional interpretive and way-finding signs, and connecting the Prime Desert Woodland Preserve to local community parks.
- The Department could consider how to incorporate educational opportunities for children, youth and adults into future open space sites and preserves through signage, special programs and partnerships with local schools.

SPECIAL USE AREAS

Special use areas are defined as having a specialized or single recreational use, such as designated sports fields or cultural arts facilities. The service area for these facilities is dependent more on the specific use of the area as opposed to the geographic location. The City's special use sports areas include the Clear Channel Stadium, the Lancaster National Soccer Center (LNSC), the Big 8 Softball Fields at Lancaster City Park, and the proposed Youth Baseball/Softball Complex and

represent the largest amount of total parkland within the city.

Lancaster's special use arts areas include the Lancaster Performing Arts Center (LPAC), Lancaster Museum/Art Gallery, and the Western Hotel. The facilities are located within six blocks of each other and near a proposed future community park. The importance and use of these areas will likely increase as Downtown Lancaster is redeveloped to emphasize the proposed Cedar Avenue Arts District.

Community Needs and Trends

In comparison to other benchmark communities reviewed, Lancaster residents are well served with special use areas such as soccer fields and high-quality arts facilities like the LPAC. Residents expressed few additional needs for special use areas, other than maintaining the high level of service already provided. Community phone survey respondents indicated a high level of participation in the LPAC, soccer fields and youth baseball fields. Residents participating in organized sports are well served with the high number of available soccer and baseball/softball fields and community members did not prioritize providing more sports facilities during the community outreach process. Community need is greater for informal sports and multi-use fields that are located

throughout the city and more accessible to all residents. Similarly, participation in cultural arts activities is very high and residents are looking for additional cultural arts programs and experiences that are smaller in scope and neighborhood-based.

related issues & concerns

SERVICE AREAS

Maps 3-1 and 3-2 depict the service areas for neighborhood and community parks in the city. Compared to other California communities, Lancaster covers a much larger geographic expanse and many of the parks were planned and developed at a time when Lancaster had less population and traffic. While in other communities, a typical service area might be one quarter mile to one half mile for a neighborhood park and one mile for a community park, the length of most city blocks and the size and scale of Lancaster make it impractical to suggest a service area of less than a mile for a neighborhood park and two miles for a community park.

JOINT USE & PARTNERSHIPS

Community opinion from many sources encouraged the City to seek partnership opportunities with other agencies, especially public and private schools. Participants in the Educational Partners Focus Group indicated they

would be highly receptive to potential joint development and usage of school and recreation areas to meet the needs of their students and the general public. School administrators noted that programmed use of schools during after school and evening hours can help to reduce vandalism. The planning analysis shown in Map 3-3 shows how Lancaster would be served by these potential school-park partnerships.

SAFETY

Throughout the community outreach process, participants expressed concerns about the level of safety in parks. Safety issues can be both real and perceived based on an individual's level of comfort and association with a particular park or facility. Based on the level of expressed concern, safety issues are addressed here in addition to the review of parks and open space categories.

Community Needs and Trends

- All methods of community input including the phone survey, Community Advisory Committee, focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and Poppy Festival outreach identified a strong need for an improved sense of safety and security in parks. When indicating reasons for non-use of parks and recreation facilities during the phone survey, a small group of respondents selected “feel unsafe.” Respondents were also least satis-

MAP 3-1

MAP 3-1

MAP 3-2

MAP 3-2

MAP 3-3

MAP 3-3

fied with the “sense of safety and security” for Department-sponsored park and recreation programs and services. Increasing safety is one of the highest priorities for the Department and elected officials.

- Other safety concerns shared by participants throughout the community outreach effort included perceptions around negative or deviant behavior among park users, presence of potential criminal activity, loose dogs, and feeling unsafe in the parks after dark.

Emerging Opportunities

- Efforts to increase safety in parks should focus on improvements that support increased usage of the parks to achieve Department goals. For example, the addition of lighted walking paths can extend the operating hours of the park and provide informal fitness opportunities.
- The Department should continue to incorporate technology such as surveillance cameras that support law enforcement goals and provide an increased sense of safety.
- The Department should continue to work with law enforcement to review park designs and landscaping features so that design features help to deter crime. The Department should also continue its efforts to collaborate with the local law enforcement agency. Implementation of the park ranger

program will also increase the sense of safety and security within parks.

- Similarly, increased usage of current and newly proposed neighborhood parks by residents can contribute to their increased sense of safety. Facilities that support regular or daily usage such as dog walking areas, walking paths, and playgrounds can ensure a consistent and positive presence in the parks.

cultural & recreation facilities

Community phone survey results indicated that usage of parks, recreation and cultural arts facilities among residents is relatively high with 75 percent of respondents reporting that they visited one or more parks, recreation or arts facilities within the past year. In addition, approximately 54 percent of the respondents indicated that a member of their household had also visited a park, recreation or arts facility within the past year. Of phone survey respondents who use these facilities, approximately one-third use them on a weekly basis, one-third use them on a monthly basis, one-third use them a few times a year.

The Department currently operates a variety of parks, recreation, and arts facilities. Department facilities that are reviewed here include:

- Park Amenities
- Sports Fields and Courts

- Aquatic Facilities
- Trails
- Indoor Facilities
- Cultural Arts Facilities

PARK AMENITIES

Park amenities can include restrooms, picnic areas, shaded benches, and gathering spaces. Residents are more inclined to use parks that include amenities more often and for longer periods of time. This can also encourage recreation and social opportunities and make parks more safe and appealing.

Community Needs and Trends

- Phone survey respondents would like to see more group picnic areas and playgrounds. Survey respondents who expressed dissatisfaction with the Department, indicated an especially strong desire for these community facilities.
- Phone survey respondents are not satisfied with the “availability of restrooms” in parks. Community Advisory Committee members commented that the Department needs to keep restrooms open for longer hours and improve restroom cleanliness. Lancaster residents’ response to this question paralleled other communities throughout the state; restrooms are the amenity that consistently draws the most comment and negative feedback in any community.

- Senior Focus Group participants noted a lack of pay phones in the parks, which they felt limited the ability to call for help if they felt unsafe during their visit. Seniors are less likely to own a cell phone compared to other users.
- As noted in the Park and Recreation Trends in California 2005 Report, younger park and recreation users are likely to seek recreation opportunities that involve daylong excursions. These longer recreation adventures are better supported by the availability of park amenities that generate interest in and prepare youth for these excursions.
- The report also reviewed the preference within some ethnic groups to choose recreation opportunities that are centered on social gatherings and offer the opportunity to prepare meals, which again, are supported through a variety of park amenities that allow for longer visits (e.g., grills, group picnic areas, and restrooms).

Emerging Opportunities

- The addition of more amenities may encourage community members to spend more time in the parks, helping to address safety issues currently affecting the parks.
- Participants in the Senior Focus Group identified one of their favorite activities as “taking their

grandchildren to local parks,” which the Department can support by installing benches that face tot lots/playgrounds to provide a space for supervised play. These amenities can support inter-generational activities in parks.

SPORTS FIELDS & COURTS

Sports fields and courts (tennis and basketball) serve a variety of purposes in a community, from organized league sports to informal recreational play. Lancaster’s soccer fields and softball fields are heavily programmed with league play providing limited opportunities for informal use. This may coincide with special use recreation.

Community Needs and Trends

In general, community members expressed a good deal of satisfaction with the number and maintenance of sports fields and courts currently provided. For example, phone survey respondents were very positive about the “condition of fields and courts” when asked to identify their level of satisfaction with Department programs and services. When asked to indicate what they would like to see more or less of, phone survey respondents ranked “tennis courts,” “softball/baseball fields,” and “soccer fields” last out of seventeen potential options. Only 22 percent of Poppy Festival survey participants indicated that “provid-



ing more sports facilities” should be one of the functions most important to the Department. Out of six possible options, this priority ranked last, likely because the Department already provides residents with numerous, high quality sports fields.

To place Lancaster’s need for more fields and courts (and of what type) into context, the 2005 National Sporting Goods Association Sports Participation Survey assessed the participation level of individuals aged seven and older for 41 recreation activities. Based on responses, basketball ranked as twelfth (12th), baseball ranked as nineteenth (19th), soccer ranked as twentieth (20th), softball ranked as twenty-first (21st), volleyball ranked as twenty-third (23rd), and tennis ranked as twenty-sixth (26th).

▲ *The LPAC provides the Lancaster community with high-quality performance space*



▲ *Trees provide shade and greenery outside the Lancaster Museum Art Gallery*

The community outreach process did reveal the following needs regarding sports facilities:

- Approximately 26 percent of the respondents to the phone survey indicated they had used a soccer field or youth baseball field during the past year and 21 percent indicated they had used an adult softball field. As many of the current sports fields are heavily programmed with league and team sports, this may affect use by residents, particularly youth, who want to use sports fields for non-competitive sports, such as casual “pick-up” games.

- Youth participants in the visioning workshops supported this community desire for more opportunities for informal sports games by requesting “more parks that offer fields.”
- Only 16 percent of phone survey respondents indicated they had used a tennis court, which was the lowest scoring facility based on use within the past year. Trends in tennis indicated that for a tennis facility to be viable and attract users, a site should provide at least four courts.

Emerging Opportunities

- Partnering with local educational providers, such as Antelope Valley College (AVC) and local school districts, could potentially increase community access to fields and address issues around under utilized fields and courts. If these partnerships were pursued, it would be important to inventory when fields and courts are currently used and clearly communicate open use times to community residents to avoid scheduling conflicts.

AQUATICS FACILITIES

Pools can support a number of activities, including lap swimming, swimming lessons, water polo, water aerobics, and general community use. The size, depth, and features of pools will determine the intended users and programs. Lancaster has two pools: Webber Pool, an outdoor pool that

operates during the summer, and Eastside Pool, which is indoors and operates year-round. The pools are open to the public at specified times and support a range of aquatic programs. Approximately 22 percent of phone survey respondents indicated that they had used a swimming pool within the past year.

Community Needs and Trends

- When asked to indicate which facilities they would like to see more or less of, phone survey respondents ranked “swimming pools” fifth out of seventeen options. On a three-point scale of -1 (less), 0 (adequate), and +1 (more), “swimming pools” received a mean score of 0.66.
- When suggesting new activities and facilities during the Youth Focus Group, participants requested swimming/water polo, which could increase the demand for additional pool facilities. Teens interviewed at the Poppy Festival indicated the desire for more indoor swimming pools.
- Participants in the Senior Focus Group identified swimming as one of their favorite activities.
- Swimming ranked as the number two sport on the 2005 National Sporting Goods Association Sports Participation Survey. It is also identified as one of the most popular

activities for youth in the 2002 California Outdoor Recreation Plan. Lancaster residents echoed these national and statewide findings.

Emerging Opportunities

- The Department could potentially partner with other entities that manage aquatic facilities such as Antelope Valley College (AVC). During the Educational Partners Focus Group, a representative indicated their desire for more seniors, youth, and AVC students to use their pool.

TRAILS

Trails support connections to local parks and destinations, as well as support healthy lifestyles through designated space for walking, running/jogging and bicycling. Pedestrian trails, which tend to be a minimum of 4 to 6 feet wide, are typically soft-surfaced to support walking, running and hiking. Multi-use trails, which tend to be a minimum of 8 to 10 feet wide, are typically paved to support bicycling, running or in-line skating. Although Lancaster does not have a formal trail system, there are a number of existing trails located in local parks and throughout the city.

Current trails in the city can be separated into two categories: park trails and multi-use trails. In addition, some multi-use trails are located within the central part of the city, but they do not

function as a cohesive system. Eight parks include walking paths.

Community Needs and Trends

- Approximately 25 percent of the respondents to the phone survey indicated that they had used a trail within the past year. The low usage of trails, in relation to usage of other facilities, may reflect the current lack of a formal trail system.
 - Community members including Project Management Team members and participants in the Trails and Open Space Focus Group, Educational Partners Focus Group, the Youth Visioning Workshop, and the city's visioning workshops noted the current lack of trails and expressed an interest in creating a citywide trails system to enhance trail connectivity, support more walkable/bikeable neighborhoods, and meet recreation and transportation needs.
 - Poppy Festival participants noted the most important function of the Department was "providing trails for walking, running, horseback riding, and bicycling". A small percent of the youth interviewed at the Poppy Festival also expressed a desire for bike lanes and running trails.
 - Poppy Festival participants also suggested that residents would like to have a safer, healthier, and more beautiful way to travel around town to help reduce the amount of time they spend traveling by car.
- Participants at the Trails and Open Space and Youth Focus Groups expressed concerns about safety and use of current trails by users such as bicyclists without helmets. There were also concerns associated with fast automobile traffic along side trails. Participants mentioned the need for additional information, through outreach or posted signage, to communicate proper use on and around the trails.
 - Trails and Open Space Focus Group participants remarked on the need to maintain the trails and keep them free from trash and litter.
 - For both the 2005 National Sporting Goods Association Sports Participation Survey and the Park and Recreation Trends in California 2005 report, "exercise walking" or "walking for fun/fitness" was indicated as the most popular sport/outdoor recreation activity. Among Californians, "trail hiking" ranked fourth out of the six most popular outdoor recreation activities. Trail systems are needed to support these popular activities.
 - Linear parks linked to housing developments could address the community's desire for walkable and bikeable neighborhoods and could

attract new homeowners. Because they provide limited space for active recreational opportunities, these parks would not replace the need for additional neighborhood parks.

Emerging Opportunities

- The Department should consider working closely with the City to develop a trails system master plan as directed under the General Plan. This effort would require a high level of interdepartmental coordination and collaboration with neighboring city and county officials to maximize inter-jurisdictional connectivity. A trails system master plan would comprehensively address acquisition and design issues related to developing trails in parks, schools and open space areas. Local bicycle, walking, and equestrian groups could be included in the development of the trail system master plan.
- The Department could help develop an education campaign (to include markers and signage on trails) that would address safety concerns by targeting audiences, both users and non-users, around the issues of bicycle and trail use safety, right of way, and trail etiquette.
- The Department could develop a specifically designed trail system or track for dirt biking. Currently, undeveloped land provides space

for unorganized, off-road/dirt biking activities.

- The Department could support a “safe routes to school” program in conjunction with new trails systems.
- See also: “Emerging Opportunities” under “Linear Parks” in the Parks and Open Space section.



INDOOR FACILITIES

The Department provides an array of indoor facilities that can be used for recreation and arts programming. For the purposes of the master planning process, the facilities have been grouped into the following categories: activity centers, the Prime Desert Woodland Interpretive Center, gym-

▲ *A father and child explore swimming*

nasiums, and cultural arts facilities. Cultural arts facilities are addressed separately due to their significant role in the community.



Eastside Pool is open all year ▶

Activity centers can provide a facility for a number of recreational activities, as well as important social space for the community and specific age groups. The focal population served will typically determine programming at each activity center. To maximize space and use options, flexible space design, such as divider walls, is highly valued.

Interpretive centers typically offer opportunities to explore science and nature, have hands-on experiences, and hear presentations. These destination centers can enhance classroom learning for children and provide youth and adults with continued educational opportunities. They can also be a draw for local tourists.

Gymnasiums can support a wide range of activities for a variety of users based on the facility's size and amenities. Basketball, volleyball, dodge ball, aerobic classes and community events are just a few of the activities that can be held in gymnasiums.

Six parks within Lancaster include activity centers. Activity center programming tends to focus on recreation classes, preschool and after school programs. The availability of space within these activity centers greatly determines the type and level of programming the Department can offer. The Department is already aware that they currently lack flexible indoor space.

The Prime Desert Woodland Interpretive Center is located at the Prime Desert Woodland Preserve and maintains a permanent nature exhibit. School tours are very popular and the community is encouraged to attend nature talks at the center.

The Department is able to offer programs at four gymnasiums located on middle school campuses based on a joint-use agreement with the Lancaster School District. The agreement allows the Department to program activities and classes during non-school hours.

Community Needs and Trends

- Respondents to the phone survey ranked the need for more “recre-

ation and community centers” as seventh out of seventeen potential options. On a three-point scale of -1 (less), 0 (adequate), and 1 (more), “recreation and community centers” received a mean score of 0.64.

- Results from the phone survey show that those who were most dissatisfied with the Department wanted more community facilities and programs, which included “recreation and community centers.”
- One of the most requested facilities during the Poppy Festival and Youth Focus Group was a teen center. Teens suggested a variety of ideas for programming, including musical performances, a lounge area, homework room, Internet accessible computers and café/juice bar. Youth were adamant that the center not be located in a park or have the appearance or features typically associated with a City-run recreation center.
- The desire for a spot for youth was also heard during the Youth Visioning Workshop. Participants noted there were not enough places for teens, and expressed a desire for “a place for teens to hang out” and “somewhere teens can be; a place to call their own.”
- Regarding potential new programs for the Department to offer, Youth Focus Group and Poppy Festival



▲ *Prime Desert Woodland Interpretive Center*

participants favored “anything indoors,” possibly due to windy afternoons and high summer temperatures. Suggestions were wide ranging from an indoor rock-climbing wall to flexible space that could be used for a variety of classes, from mock trials to creative writing.

- Participants in the Senior Focus Group suggested a need for more centers to serve the growing senior population, though the current Antelope Valley Senior Center offers a high level of programming and activities.
- The Health and Social Benefits Recreation report, an element of the California Outdoor Recreation Planning Program, recognizes the ability for recreation to support seniors, specifically through socialization opportunities that can be supported through

community centers (or a specific senior center).

- Participants in the Visioning Workshops suggested the use of neighborhood schools as community centers.

Emerging Opportunities

- A collaborative effort of the Department, the City, local schools, and the Youth Commission could develop an indoor facility designed and programmed solely for teens and youth.
- The Department should continue to explore shared facility use with schools that would offer mutual benefits. This could be explored on a pilot basis and offer additional space for classroom-based programming. A first step in this process could include an inventory of when facilities are used to determine the feasibility of the Department to program during non-use periods.

CULTURAL ARTS FACILITIES

Providing facilities for the visual and performing arts ensures access to cultural experiences for all members of the community. These spaces can offer both experiential and social opportunities, increase cultural diversity and understanding, and challenge residents to expand their perception of the world. Spaces are typically devoted to a specific type of cultural art as facil-

ity needs differ between galleries and performance centers. Through innovative design and flexible space, multiple forms of art can converge, such as a flexible performance/classroom space located in a gallery or displaying visual arts in the waiting area of a performance center. For maximum usage, all facilities should be able to change as needed to increase usability and access to various cultural arts groups.

Lancaster is one of the few cities in California to provide and program arts facilities of this scale. The Lancaster Performing Arts Center (LPAC) is in many ways the focus and driving force of Lancaster's cultural arts scene. The Department coordinates three cultural arts facilities located in downtown Lancaster: Lancaster Performing Arts Center (LPAC), Lancaster Museum/ Art Galley (LMAG) and the Western Hotel Museum.

Community Needs and Trends

The Lancaster community is well served by and highly satisfied with their cultural arts facilities. Participants in the Cultural Arts Focus Group described LPAC as the "jewel of Lancaster." More than 42 percent of phone survey respondents indicated that someone in their family had visited LPAC in the previous year, and 21.9 percent indicated they had visited LMAG. Approximately 30 percent of

City residents who attended the Poppy Festival indicated that dance and musical performances were most important. Senior Focus Group participants spoke favorably of the quality of the LMAG and the Western Hotel Museum.

While Lancaster residents highly value the LPAC and other facilities, the following needs were also expressed:

- Approximately 30 percent of Poppy Festival participants expressed that increasing performance and instructional arts programs was one of the most important functions of the Department.
- Though the Project Management Team reported a general perception in the community that Lancaster’s arts and cultural scene is limited, there are opportunities to expand in the vicinity of the LPAC. Visioning workshop participants also indicated a vision of including “more performing arts enhancements.” This is consistent with suggestions received during Lancaster’s downtown planning effort to potentially develop the downtown as an “arts district.”
- When discussing how to develop Lancaster as a “destination spot,” Project Management Team members suggested the development of a larger concert venue or outdoor theater as well as the potential for a children’s museum. This was



similar to a suggestion during the Educational Partners Focus Group to place community stages (temporary or permanent) within parks and provide utility connections for sound equipment and lighting.

▲ *Young tennis players pick up tips*

- Some Senior Focus Group participants noted their access to the LPAC was limited due to the cost of some tickets and transportation limitations, especially for evening performances.
- Cultural Arts Focus Group participants expressed a desire for more mid-sized performance space for use by local groups and kids’ performances.

- Several community members discussed the need for additional space at LPAC or elsewhere to provide for storage, classrooms and a permanent exhibition.

Emerging Opportunities

- The Department could develop a multi-use facility (exhibition, performance and classroom) designed for use by different cultural arts groups.
- Emphasis for potential partnerships could focus on supporting more local, neighborhood spaces that are highly accessible to smaller performing arts groups. In addition, public agency buildings and local businesses could potentially provide additional visual arts space through a Department or community-run visual arts program.
- The Antelope Valley College Black Box Theatre could serve as a potential venue to offer more performance space to local dance and theatre groups.
- Outdoor theaters and other venues could be added to the Department’s community parks, with program support provided by local non-profit arts organizations.

cultural & recreation programs

While about 75 percent of residents surveyed have visited Lancaster parks

for informal use or league play, it is less likely they participated in a City-sponsored recreation program. Residents value the programs being offered and report strong feelings on the quality of programming. More than 40 percent of the Poppy Festival Survey participants choose “providing recreation programs and activities” as a priority for the Department’s allocation of resources. This ranked second out of six possible options (participants could make two selections) and fell only two votes short of the number one choice, “upgrading existing parks,” indicating a strong priority for recreation programs and activities among residents. A complete list of community needs appears in Appendix C.

However, the results of the community phone survey indicated that this same enthusiasm does not match participation. Phone survey results indicate that less than a quarter (22.6 percent) of all households in the City participated in an “arts, recreation, senior or sports” program within the past year. This percentage is low when compared to other benchmark communities.

Community Needs and Trends

Currently, the Department solicits course offerings from those interested in becoming a class instructor. The instructor determines the class size and fee. The Department handles reg-

istration and promotes classes through its quarterly brochure *Outlook* that is mailed to residents and businesses in the City. Discussions with the Project Management Team indicate the Department's cancellation rate for programs averages 40 percent. While some cancellations were at the request of the instructor, the majority were due to low registration. Programs such as scrapbooking or Ukrainian egg decorating were proven to not be as popular as originally thought. A restorative yoga class for seniors was cancelled, possibly due to time and location. Other fitness oriented classes were successful, with only a few cancellations occurring where multiple sections were offered but one section was undersubscribed, possibly due to time or location.

Given the changing and increasingly diverse population and broad geographic reach, the Department will continue to be challenged to determine the mix of programs that results in higher participation rates. Considering the Department's limited space and the general needs identified through the Community Outreach efforts, the Department may want to provide more specific guidance or establish criteria for the types of programs for which they are seeking instructors. This can help to target Department recruitment and program outreach efforts towards age-



specific programs and interest areas that have been identified as needing service.

▲ *Members of the Youth Focus Group display their work*

The Department currently operates a variety of parks, recreation and cultural arts programs. Department programs that are reviewed here include:

- Athletics
- Aquatics
- Community Programs
- Special Events
- Cultural Arts
- Education Enrichment

Additionally, there was a great deal of community feedback gathered relating to the following areas, which are also discussed here:

- Youth Program Needs
- Marketing and Outreach Efforts



▲ *Dance partners in a Lancaster dance class*

ATHLETICS PROGRAMS

Athletic programs can range from organized team sports to individual health and fitness courses. These programs and courses provide opportunities for children and youth to improve important motor functions such as hand/eye coordination, learn social skills through team activities, develop self-esteem, and incorporate fitness as a regular part of their lifestyle. Programs also help adults maintain their fitness level, encourage socialization, and support relaxation.

During the spring and summer of 2006, the Department ran approximately 90 health, fitness and martial arts courses, which served over 500 residents. In addition, approximately 3,325 residents participated in a variety of leagues and school programs at the Lancaster National Soccer Center (LNSC) and approximately 6,342

residents participated in the City's softball league.

Community Needs and Trends

- When asked to rank five potential future priorities for the Department, phone survey respondents ranked “providing health/fitness programs” as the highest priority.
- A number of youth interviewed at the Poppy Festival and in the Youth Focus Group suggested that the Department set aside time and space for non-competitive sports games. There are limited opportunities for active youth who do not participate in organized team sports.
- Participants in the Educational Partners Focus Group recognized the ability of partnerships between the Department and local schools to support health and fitness for children, youth and adults by offering after school recreation programs such as yoga and creating opportunities for informal non-competitive games.

Emerging Opportunities

- The Department could explore securing school facilities and other public or private institutional space for non-competitive athletics. The Department could support this space by organizing annual athletic events open to all ages and abilities.

- There are approximately twenty-six fitness centers and gymnasiums and nine exercise and physical fitness programs located throughout the City. These private fitness providers cover a broad geographic range and usually have the ability to offer more flexible scheduling. The Department may want to consider increased open use times for facilities, such as gymnasiums, that would allow more access for residents and potentially increase participation.

AQUATICS PROGRAMS

Aquatic programs provide opportunities for recreation, physical fitness and swim instruction.

The Department's two aquatics facilities offer both programmed swim lessons and open swim times. Both pools offer open swim times for the public, seniors, or lap swimming. A small fee is charged for use of the pools. During 2005, the two pools combined served approximately 78,803 users.

Community Needs and Trends

- Residents have indicated an interest in additional aquatics facilities. The high rate of participation at both local pools demonstrates the current level of interest in facilities and programs.

Emerging Opportunities

- To maximize usage and financial feasibility, the Department could explore potential aquatics facilities that meet health and fitness needs and include special features such as a children's splash, wave pool and other features.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

In addition to recreation and cultural arts programs, special interest courses and programs often focus on skill development and enrichment. Programs may also serve specific community needs in offering low-cost enrichment and childcare services. These programs and courses provide a cost effective alternative to more expensive private providers.

The Department offers a number of community programs and courses that focus on general community interest as well as specific needs, including preschool and after school programs. During the spring and summer 2006 sessions, approximately 80 preschool, youth enrichment, and special interest courses were offered and attended by over 900 residents. Department run enrichment centers served approximately 1,200 children and the joint CARES program served approximately 6,500 children.

Community Needs and Trends

- Phone survey respondents indicated that they were generally

“somewhat satisfied” with programs for adults, suggesting the ability to explore additional topics and course formats to increase both satisfaction and participation.

- Adults, both parents and working adults, may be more likely to enroll in one-time special interest courses that cover unique topics because of the minimal time commitment. High enrollment numbers in the spring 2006 “Identity Theft” and “Business Building Blocks” courses suggest that there may be an unmet demand in the community.
- Growth in the City population and the number of families living in the area will potentially increase the need for additional pre-school and after school programs. The average family size in Lancaster is 3.78, compared to the average US family size of 3.18, demonstrating a high number of children within the community. The potentially lengthy commute patterns for many parents increases the need for after school recreation and educational opportunities to provide safe, supervised activities for children and teens.
- Youth Focus Group participants suggested that the Department recruit youth to help develop and staff new courses and programs.
- Participants in the Educational Partners Focus Group noted the

decline in both arts and “life skills” courses offered at local schools.

Emerging Opportunities

- Adults who do not have children may want to participate in courses that are geared towards adults only. These courses could include interest-based enrichment courses as well as recreation and socialization opportunities. Nearby communities offer special interest courses for adults on topics including interior decorating, music, eco-tours, wine and cooking.
- The Department could fill the gap in life skills courses by offering additional courses on topics such as cooking. Youth Focus Group participants noted an interest in learning to cook different types of ethnic foods, but expressed little or no interest in the nutritional aspects of a cooking course.
- Expanding Department programs offered at school locations after school and during the early evening may help to address barriers often associated with commute patterns and a lack of transportation for children and youth. In addition, more systematic and coordinated efforts between the Department and school staff could further support this partnership.
- The Department could also potentially look at testing a partnership with the Antelope Valley College

to offer “introductory” one-day courses that would introduce residents to a subject that they could explore further more in-depth at the College. The Educational Partners Focus Group also mentioned the potential to partner with the Antelope Valley Union High School District to support the expansion of one-day special interest courses for adults.

- Additional partnerships to increase the number of special interest courses, such as the Business Building Blocks course taught in conjunction with the City Redevelopment Agency, could increase the Department’s ability to teach one-day seminar style enrichment courses geared towards adults.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Community festivals or special events offer opportunities for the community to come together in celebration of the City’s history and traditions, to socialize and build a greater sense of community. In addition, special events can provide families with a place to enjoy a variety of activities and entertainment within the same venue. Special events can also be a catalyst for stimulating a specific location or launching a new activity such as a community arts program.

During 2006, the Department offered eleven special events that drew over

87,000 participants. Special events ranged from community oriented events, such as the Downtown Celebration, Aerospace Walk of Honor, and the Annual Heritage Picnic, to age-specific events, such as Breakfast with Santa and the Youth in Government/Youth Commission. These events are popular, affordable, and serve a wide range of ages and interests. While events are very staff intensive for the Department, residents and city officials acknowledge the Department’s expertise in organizing these activities and appreciate the high quality of the events. Residents of all ages are eager for more events to be offered.

Community Needs and Trends

- Poppy Festival Survey participants ranked “festivals—downtown or in my neighborhood” as their preferred potential arts programs, second out of five possible options. This option was only ten votes short of tying with the number one choice of “youth arts programs.” (Participants could make two selections).
- Phone survey respondents ranked “festivals (street fairs/farmers’ markets)” as a program that they would like to see more of. This option ranked third out of seventeen possible options, indicating a high level of interest.

- Poppy Festival Survey youth participants indicated potential interest in participating in live music concerts in the park and teen dances.
- During the Youth and general community Visioning Workshops, participants were asked to envision Lancaster as the perfect city and identify the activities they would like to see or experience. Responses included “community gatherings,” “extra curricular [activities and] sports,” “youth events, family events” and “family entertainment, teen entertainment,” more “recreational activities for families” and “different kinds of activities and events.”
- Senior and Youth Focus Group participants reported that they enjoy festivals because they are low-cost and provide opportunities and flexibility for multiple generations to recreate together. They also provide an opportunity for the Department to present specialized programs, such as a festival celebrating a specific ethnic heritage or unique local resource.
- Youth Focus Group participants reported that they enjoy the current community events and festivals held in the City, mainly due to the entertainment and opportunities for socialization. Youth participants emphasized that events are an activity they can

attend with their family. They also encouraged hosting smaller teen focused festivals especially during the cooler spring and fall months.

Emerging Opportunities:

- The demand on the Department to host additional events is likely to increase and require additional staff resources. The Department will need to seek ways to leverage its resources while helping to maintain the quality residents have grown to enjoy and expect.
- The Department could leverage its time by creating a guide to help neighbors or youth (with adult supervision) host their own block party or neighborhood events. The guide might include advice on how to reserve nearby park facilities, secure permits and street closures for community gatherings, safety, publicity, and other related topics of interest. In general, community events can provide opportunities to come together and develop an understanding and appreciation for various cultures and ethnicities.
- The Department currently partners with the City of Palmdale to host the Antelope Valley Heritage Festival. There may be additional opportunities for the two cities to partner to create a regional event that meets the needs and interests

of both communities and draws tourists from outside the area.

- The redevelopment of the downtown area offers potential partnerships with local businesses and organizations to bring in more large- and small-scale events to the downtown area. The downtown celebration events (three events in all during 2006) ranked second in overall participation by residents for special events, indicating a high level of success and interest.

CULTURAL ARTS PROGRAMS

Many communities offer cultural arts programs to allow local residents to grow and develop their skills and understanding of a variety of art forms. Lancaster's strong performing and visual arts programs introduce residents to a wide range of programs and can serve to stimulate interest. These programs encourage skills development in the creative arts, and support educational development of children and youth. The need for city-run cultural arts programs is particularly important in light of reduced school funding. Cultural arts programs also provide continued learning opportunities and experiences for adults and older adults.

Current arts facilities appear to be at capacity and the Department will need to locate additional space for expanded programs. Implementation of the



VanGo! mobile arts program can help to expand offerings and work directly with local school campuses.

▲ *A child plays in one of Lancaster's tot lots*

Cultural Arts Focus Group participant comments and feedback from the General Plan Update Visioning activities indicate that the high level of arts programming has helped to generate enthusiasm in the community for public art. The Department's leadership is critical to establishing these programs. Most of the comparable benchmark communities have some form of cultural arts committee, council, or advisory panel to help the City



▲ *Lancaster youth participate in a soccer game*

departments with programming and activity decisions. The programs range from acquiring work from local artists, supporting local art competitions, and installing large scale works of art in buildings or public places.

Community Needs and Trends

Lancaster residents clearly value cultural arts programs. Approximately 32 percent of the participants in the Poppy Festival Survey indicated that one of the most important Department functions was “growing our performance and instructional arts programs (music, dance and visual arts).” When asked to identify the most important potential arts programs, approximately

30 percent of Poppy Festival Survey participants indicated “dance and music performances.”

Other specific needs mentioned include the following:

- Residents expressed a strong interest in programs for youth. Phone survey respondents ranked “arts programs for children/teens” as the most needed program from the Department. Poppy Festival participants ranked “youth arts activities (includes hands-on and performance-based activities)” as the most important potential arts program that could be offered by the Department. Community Advisory Committee members also identified the current lack of arts programs for youth.
- Youth interviewed at the Poppy Festival also expressed a desire for more youth arts programs including hip-hop, photography, and painting courses.
- During the Educational Partners Focus Group, participants requested help from the Department to supplement arts programming since the schools did not have the capacity or funding to meet this need.
- Cultural Arts Focus Group participants discussed the need for enhanced public art and suggested that residents be introduced to

public arts activities on a small-scale or temporary basis before a more robust, citywide program is introduced.

Emerging Opportunities

- There appears to be interest in starting a Youth in the Arts Advisory Council (or similar group based on learnings from benchmark communities) to develop a community arts action plan.
- It is assumed that the Department will continue to contract with private cultural arts providers to offer additional courses. Shared facilities use through these course partnerships helps the Department maximize limited space and offer residents a wider range of course options.

EDUCATIONAL ENRICHMENT

The Department offers children, youth, and adults a number of opportunities to enhance their understanding of the natural world and cultural arts. Educational enrichment programs include:

- **VanGo! Mobile Arts Program:** The VanGo! mobile arts program brings Department-sponsored arts activities directly to local school campuses. This effort supports the link between the creative arts and education. Future program possibilities could also include a jointly-run mural program.

- **Prime Desert Woodland Interpretive Center:** The Interpretive Center located on the Prime Desert Woodland Preserve is an excellent example of linking environmental education to a hands-on, physical experience. By offering school tour programs, the classroom can virtually “come alive” within the natural environment. This program served 1,300 students in 2005. In addition, the public is able to develop a deeper understanding of the natural and unique desert environment through nature talks, bird watching programs and full moon walks. Approximately 1,750 individuals attended Nature Adventure Talks and participated in private group tours.
- **Arts for Youth Program:** Sponsored by the Lancaster Performing Arts Center Foundation, the Arts for Youth program encourages the participation of children and youth in performing arts in a number of ways. The program includes: School Bus-in Performances and free/discounted tickets for children and youth attending LPAC performances. During 2005, 825 students participated in school and community outreach programs and 40 students participated in the Summer Theatre Program. These student performers helped attract a significant

number of family members and friends to their performances.

Community Needs and Trends

Currently, residents are well served by the Department's Education Enrichment programs. Challenges will arise, however, as Lancaster continues to develop. Participation levels at the Interpretive Center may increase and natural, open spaces may decrease. The Preserve will become an increasingly important place for residents to maintain a connection to the qualities of the desert landscape, particularly as development changes that landscape. Such centers are important as experiences in the natural environment typically increase continued interest in environmental issues. Also, the popularity of the Arts for Youth Summer Theatre Program is evident due to the increased number of youth auditioning to participate. Due to facilities and resource constraints, the program may not be able to expand to fully meet this growing need.

Emerging Opportunities

- The development of additional flexible spaces could allow for the expansion of the high-demand Arts for Youth Summer Theater Program. This could be accomplished through partnering with other public and private organizations.

YOUTH PROGRAM NEEDS

The Department currently offers a number of programs targeted specifically for youth, such as the numerous youth sports teams, individual courses, Arts for Youth, Teen Court and Youth Commission. Even with this current level of programming, the need for additional youth programming was echoed throughout the community outreach efforts. Research has also long demonstrated the importance of outdoor recreation and other community activities in the lives of youth. Participation in recreation activities helps build self-esteem and confidence, fosters the development of communication and interpersonal skills, and can increase commitment to educational pursuits.

In addition, recreation activities can help deter crime and deviant behavior by channeling energy and attention to more constructive pursuits. Finally, youth who are active are likely to stay active and experience more of the benefits associated with recreation activities. Studies have indicated that youth who use recreation centers are 75 percent more likely to participate in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Community Needs and Trends

In addition to the youth programming needs discussed earlier in this

chapter, the following needs were also identified:

- The number of youth between the ages of 10 to 19 years old has increased by approximately 5.5 percent between 1990 and 2005, indicating an even greater need for youth programming.
- Youth respondents to the phone survey were also less satisfied than adults with the “hours of operation,” “arts programs and opportunities,” and “cleanliness of facilities,” suggesting a strong desire for more programming and activities targeted specifically for youth.
- Youth Focus Group participants mentioned challenges to accessing recreation opportunities due to a lack of transportation.
- Focus group participants also identified the need to develop programming that helps teens feel safe and secure, yet retains their level of independence.
- Community Advisory Committee members mentioned the high rate of obesity within the City. The need for parks and recreation opportunities to support healthy lives for children was also mentioned in a 2001 study for the Department of Health and Human Services.

Emerging Opportunities

- The Department could provide additional programs on school



▲ *A woman practices yoga*

grounds to help overcome transportation barriers.

- The Department could work with local youth to develop a center programmed specifically for youth gatherings. The Department will need to ensure the center is considered a safe place by both youth and their parents. To ensure participation, however, the Department’s official presence could be minimized and the staff could be teenagers or more youth-oriented. Rather than being located in a park, the center could be in an accessible commercial area, increasing flexibility and transportation options.

MARKETING & OUTREACH EFFORTS

Department sponsored and coordinated programs and activities will help new and current resi-

dents become more active in community life, in keeping with the Department's mission.

This first master plan has helped to provide a baseline of data about the department. Continued outreach in the future will only further refine the Department's programming efforts.

Currently, the Department mails a copy of *Outlook*, the Department's quarterly course guide, to residents and businesses. Information about the Department's programs and services can also be found on the City's website. The Department serves a wide variety of audiences and each of these focal populations and interest groups may seek information at different locations and through different media. For example, Youth Focus Group members commented they had limited awareness of City offerings, while noting their families had received a copy of *Outlook* by mail. They shared that they were unlikely to use *Outlook* as an information source and were more likely to respond to information from non-departmental sources such as an events listing compiled by individuals or an independent group. Senior Focus Group participants had varying levels of technology skills and access to the Internet and most were more likely to gather information at the local senior center or through a personal reference.

By developing a better understanding of how and where these populations search for and receive information, the Department can make more strategic marketing and outreach efforts.

Community Needs and Trends

- The Project Management Team commented that lack of participation in some programs may be due to a lack of awareness. The Community Advisory Committee also suggested the need to increase the publicity of arts programs as well as increase general awareness about upcoming events. Participants in the Cultural Arts Focus Groups also mentioned the need for additional communication and marketing materials.
- Phone survey respondents reported they were only somewhat satisfied with the current level of "availability of information about facilities and services." On a scale of 1 (somewhat satisfied) to 2 (very satisfied), "availability of information about facilities and services" received a mean score of 1.01.
- Youth also mentioned the desire to enroll in some courses already offered by the Department, such as yoga and hip-hop dance classes. When asked if they had seen the *Outlook* magazine, youth shared that it comes to their house, but only four out of the fifteen participants indicated that they had used

the magazine to locate program information. This example demonstrates a potential disconnect between current marketing efforts and this population group.

Emerging Opportunities

The Public Opinions and attitudes on Outdoor Recreation in California 2002 report notes that the majority of Californians prefer to receive information about parks and recreation through friends and family, the Internet and brochures. Additional suggestions on how to enhance marketing and outreach efforts to current and future residents came from Department staff, focus group participants, and surveys and are detailed here:

- The Department could provide marketing information in popular locations within the community such as local shopping areas.
- There could be an “arts directory” to highlight local artists, performance groups, and cultural arts venues. This information could be linked to the Department’s website and be available in hard copy.
- The Department could also look at increasing “cross-marketing” by looking at programs offered by other partners or providers.
- The Department will need to focus on new residents. For example, according to the 2005



American Community Survey, approximately 20 percent of the population over the age of five speaks Spanish, which would indicate a growing interest, if not need, for bilingual or monolingual courses, as well as marketing materials, in Spanish. As Lancaster grows, additional efforts may need to be made to target specific communities to increase awareness and build participation.

▲ *Cross country meet at Lancaster City Park*

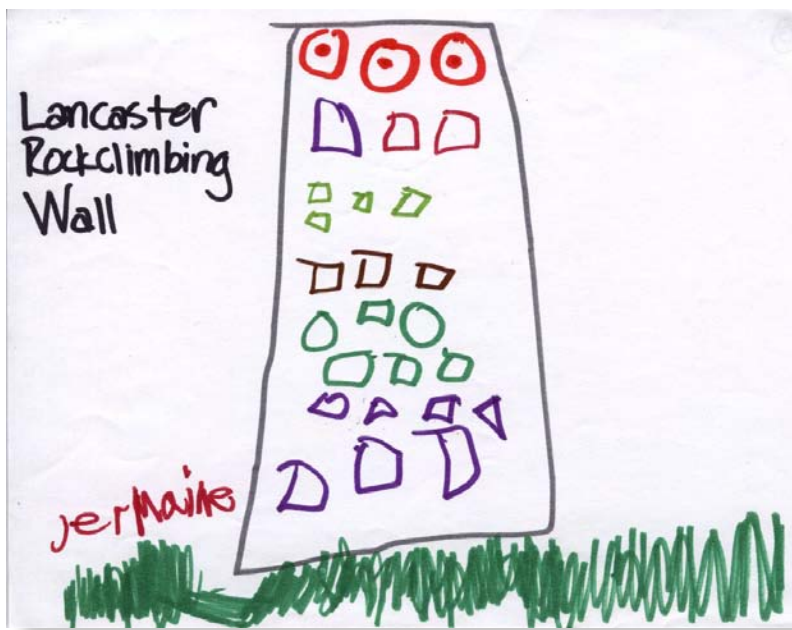
- The Department could include a “pop-up” evaluation on its website to allow for continual data collection and to keep abreast of emerging recreation trends. An automatic e-mail notification feature could alert participants to program offerings in their area of interest.

- The Department could explore more Internet-based and/or email-based communication, including the use of social networking websites such as MySpace.com to reach more youth. The Department could also distribute flyers at local schools to advertise programs, particularly for upcoming local teen events. A teen information hotline modeled after similar efforts in other communities could help keep teens informed of recreational events, sports, and activities within Lancaster.

summary

More than 2,000 Lancaster residents participated in focus groups, surveys, workshops and other community meetings. Analysis of this extensive community feedback provides a strong,

▼ *A Lancaster youth illustrates his vision of future parks*



clear direction for Lancaster. Residents have highlighted many strengths of the current parks and programs, and have indicated several areas for opportunity and growth. They are pleased with the quality of maintenance of their parks and facilities and proud of their cultural arts center and signature sports facilities.

Lancaster residents also believe that parks, recreation and arts can help build community, enhance physical connectivity across the City, and increase opportunities for informal activities that will support health and fitness. At the same time, residents make clear that there is a stark need for enhanced offerings, especially arts programming for children and youth, and a pressing need to accommodate the growing population with more parks and community programs.

The primary messages of the needs assessment—building community; increasing access to small, neighborhood-based services; increasing connectivity; serving our youth; and being a model of creativity in how we communicate services to the public—are further discussed in the following chapters, which lay out specific policies, recommendations and action items.

chapter four

POLICIES, RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTIONS

This chapter describes the policies and recommended actions for enhancing the City of Lancaster’s parks, recreation, and arts resources and achieving the goals of this plan. These actions and policies are based on the community needs assessment and the level of service analyses for parks, facilities, programs, and maintenance. The policies and recommended actions and policies are organized by Department goals. Not all policies require specific actions, and those suggested were identified through the community involvement and needs assessment process. By implementing these

actions and policies, the City will achieve its vision and mission.

Where a recommended action helps to accomplish more than one policy, it has been repeated to emphasize the multiple policies and goals it helps to achieve. Some of these policies and actions also reflect current policies and practices of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Arts. These have been included in this chapter not only to provide a complete set of policies and recommended actions, but also to emphasize the importance of continuing these policies and practices.

parks, recreation, open space & cultural policies

GOAL 1: PROVIDE SAFE, CLEAN AND WELL-MAINTAINED FACILITIES THAT MEET THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF A GROWING COMMUNITY

Policy 1.1: Develop parks consistent with the park standards described in this plan in Table 4-1.

Policy 1.2 Pursuant to the Lancaster General Plan, a standard of five (5) acres of parkland per 1,000 residents shall be applied to all development projects.

1.2.1. Include acreage dedicated to public park use accomplished through long-term joint use agreements with school districts and other agency partners when calculating City standards.

- Policy 1.3** Provide park design and maintenance standards for developers to encourage provision of turn-key parks in lieu of fees.
- Policy 1.4** Develop new neighborhood parks adjacent to or jointly with new schools where possible.
- Policy 1.5** Develop neighborhood parks to include open areas that can be used for informal sports and team play; these areas will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Policy 1.6** Where a community park also serves as the neighborhood park for a designated service area, provide amenities consistent with those provided within a neighborhood park.
- Policy 1.7** Encourage the use of irregular, surplus parcels as open space and community gathering spaces.
 - 1.7.1 Acquire irregular, surplus parcels located in retail and commercial areas for use as open space, plazas and community gathering spaces.
 - 1.7.2 Evaluate maintenance and safety impacts and compatibility with surrounding uses before assuming responsibility for these areas.
- Policy 1.8** Conduct maintenance consistent with the established standards and level of service requirements described in this plan.
- Policy 1.9** Increase and enhance safety in all parks.
 - 1.9.1 Develop or designate perimeter trails with mileage markers around parks to encourage regular use by the community.
 - 1.9.2 Add lighting to perimeter trails to increase safety and extend evening hours of park usage.
 - 1.9.3 Work with the Sheriff's Department to review and refine park and landscaping designs to deter crime through environmental design.
 - 1.9.4 Install surveillance cameras to support user safety and law enforcement goals.

Policy 1.10 **Cooperate with other public agencies to ensure that the parks, recreation, and arts needs of Lancaster residents are met.**

Policy 1.11 **Support nonprofit and agency partner efforts to acquire conservation and open space areas.**

1.11.1 The City will proactively work with partner agencies and conservation organizations to secure funding from grants and other sources to acquire and preserve quality desert habitat.

Policy 1.12 **Provide designated areas for off-leash dog walking.**

1.12.1 Review existing neighborhood and community parks to identify opportunities for designated, off-leash dog-walking areas.

1.12.2 Continue enforcement of “leash law” policies.

GOAL 2: CREATE AND ENHANCE A POSITIVE COMMUNITY IMAGE AND INCREASE LIVABILITY

Policy 2.1 **Create a “brand” for programs and facilities provided by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Arts.**

2.1.1 Develop new and updated standards for signage, graphics, and other materials that are used to identify and promote parks, recreation, and arts facilities and programs.

Policy 2.2 **Conduct needs assessments, community surveys, public opinion polls, and research through other methods to determine community needs for parks, recreation and arts facilities.**

2.2.1 Provide opportunities for residents to provide input on proposed parks and facilities, amenities, and improvements.

2.2.2 Conduct activities on a neighborhood or community-wide basis, depending on the service area of the proposed park or facility.

Policy 2.3 **Continue to seek community input on recreation program preferences and interests.**

2.3.1 Establish regular survey activities to collect feedback from residents on program topics, schedule, and location preferences.

- 2.3.2 Develop standards and performance measures for programs that address program quality, instructor credentials, and class size.
- 2.3.3 Provide specific information regarding program needs, standards, location, and schedule when soliciting instructors for recreation and arts programs.
- 2.3.4 Work with nonprofit organizations and other providers to meet program needs at desired locations throughout the city.

Policy 2.4 Develop neighborhood-based programs and facilities that help neighbors connect with each other and build a sense of community.

- 2.4.1 Based on neighborhood input, provide amenities such as benches, picnic areas, and other features that encourage community gatherings and extended park usage.
- 2.4.2 Install benches facing tots lots and playgrounds to provide a space for supervised play and inter-generational recreation.
- 2.4.3 Maintain open play areas in neighborhood parks for informal use; allow the use of these areas without prior reservation.
- 2.4.4 Add water features such as fountains and splash play areas to encourage gathering and daytime use, especially during warm weather months.
- 2.4.5 Develop an informational “tool kit” that helps community members self-organize local events and activities. The tool kit may include information on how to host a neighborhood block party, organize fitness walks, and start a neighborhood watch or safety patrol.

Policy 2.5 Provide festivals and events that include activities that serve all ages.

- 2.5.1 Develop a strategic plan for special events, including citywide and neighborhood-based events, to ensure staff capacity and adequate resources.

GOAL 3: SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE RESIDENTS IN PURSUING HEALTHY, ACTIVE LIFESTYLES

Policy 3.1 Provide and facilitate programs that support community health and fitness.

- 3.1.1 Offer life skills programs on nutrition and cooking in collaboration with healthy living experts in the city.
- 3.1.2 Partner with health care agencies and community organizations to facilitate and provide health and fitness-oriented programs.
- 3.1.3 Provide healthy food and beverage choices at City-sponsored activities.
- 3.1.4 Establish ongoing farmers' market to promote nutrition.

Policy 3.2 Develop age-specific fitness-oriented programming.

- 3.2.1 Develop programs that encourage youth health and fitness while emphasizing activity and enjoyment.
- 3.2.2 Provide information at each park that will help users meet their fitness goals, such as mileage markers and/or how many laps around a perimeter trail equals a mile.
- 3.2.3 Help neighborhood groups organize regularly scheduled fitness walks to encourage community building and provide increased user safety.

Policy 3.3 Expand trail connections and pathways.

- 3.3.1 Develop or designate perimeter trails with mileage markers and lighting around parks to encourage regular use for fitness.
- 3.3.2 Complete trail connections between neighborhoods, schools, and employment areas to encourage walking or bicycling to school and work.
- 3.3.3 Where possible, encourage trail connections with other communities and to the Los Angeles County Regional Trail System.

GOAL 4: CELEBRATE AND HONOR LANCASTER'S HERITAGE AND HISTORY

Policy 4.1 Continue to host programs and special events that recognize the city's aerospace, film, and agricultural histories.

4.1.1 Maintain and enhance the established events that recognize the city's accomplishments in aviation, film, and agriculture.

Policy 4.2 Continue to support programs and host special events that recognize the city's unique natural resources.

4.2.1 Organize group outings for adults to nearby county and state parks and open space.

4.2.2 Expand community and youth education programs at the Prime Desert Woodland Preserve.

Policy 4.3 Continue to host programs and special events that recognize Lancaster's increasing cultural diversity.

4.3.1 Engage residents who are representative of Lancaster's cultural diversity in planning and selecting the theme and performers for citywide events.

4.3.2 Support residents from ethnic communities in organizing events that celebrate and share the different cultures thriving in Lancaster.

GOAL 5: BE A KEY CONTRIBUTOR TO DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Policy 5.1 Support citywide efforts to energize and activate the downtown area and attract residents and visitors.

5.1.1 Work with local businesses and partner organizations to host regular events and activities in the downtown area.

5.1.2 Encourage the development of public open space in the downtown area.

Policy 5.2 Support activities to help establish the proposed downtown Arts District.

5.2.1 Using LPAC and LMAG as anchors, link art programming, events, and activities to the supporting art facilities within the district.

Policy 5.3 **Ensure Department sports facilities continue to serve as venues for regional and national tournaments.**

5.3.1 Continue to provide the required high standard of maintenance for sports facilities to ensure their continued use for regional and national tournaments.

5.3.2 Continue to enhance and update these facilities to ensure their competitiveness as venues for regional and national tournaments.

Policy 5.4 **Participate in economic development activities.**

5.4.1 Be an active participant in meetings, conferences, and other events to enhance and expand the City's economic base.

5.4.2 Encourage entrepreneurial activities that provide appropriate services and park, recreation and arts facilities and generate revenue.

GOAL 6: ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY BUILDING AND PROVIDE BOTH ORGANIZED AND INFORMAL NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED OPPORTUNITIES

Policy 6.1 **Increase activities for youth and teens, especially those provided during after-school hours.**

6.1.1 Partner with schools to provide recreation programs on school grounds during after-school hours.

6.1.2 Develop trails and pathways that connect schools to neighborhoods so youth can safely travel to and from recreation activities by walking, bicycling, skateboarding, rollerblading, etc.

Policy 6.2 **Provide a fun, safe, gathering space for teens.**

6.2.1 Dedicate a space that is designed to attract and serve teens.

6.2.2 Develop employment opportunities for teens at facilities that serve youth.

Policy 6.3 **Design neighborhood and community parks to include open play areas that are available for informal play.**

6.3.1 Maintain open play areas for informal use on a first-come, first-served basis; avoid reserved usage by organized groups and teams so that areas remain available for unscheduled use.

Policy 6.4 Provide tools to help community members host their own block parties or neighborhood events.

6.4.1 Develop a community guide that includes information on topics such as: reserving park facilities, securing permits and street closures for a neighborhood block party, safety, publicity opportunities, and other related topics.

Policy 6.5 Expand opportunities for volunteers to participate in activities that support Lancaster’s parks, recreation and arts programs and facilities.

6.5.1 Identify opportunities for volunteers to support Department activities.

6.5.2 Develop a recruitment and retention program for volunteers.

6.5.3 Provide training and supervision to volunteers.

GOAL 7: SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY’S ABILITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ARTS AS BOTH AUDIENCE MEMBERS AND ARTISTS

Policy 7.1 Develop a public arts program to encourage art in public spaces.

7.1.1 Create an Arts Commission composed of City staff, representatives from local arts organizations, and community volunteers to oversee the public arts program.

7.1.2 Develop guidelines for use by the arts commission to evaluate potential arts projects. Potential criteria would address:

- Works that reflect Lancaster’s cultural diversity;
- Inclusion of materials of historical and cultural significance; and
- Support for emerging local artists.

7.1.3 Require representation on the arts commission that is reflective of Lancaster’s ethnic diversity, with members who have expertise in:

- Arts (dance, music, art, theater, and other modes of expression);
- Arts education and promotion;

- Economic development;
 - Public finance;
 - Planning and design; and
 - Neighborhood organizing.
- 7.1.4 Develop a public arts element to be included in all neighborhood-specific plans and other planning efforts.
- 7.1.5 Develop guidelines (voluntary or mandatory) to encourage large-scale private and public developments to contribute a small percentage (one to two percent) of project costs to a public arts fund or to directly fund on-site public art. Provide technical assistance to agencies and private developers in this effort.
- 7.1.6 Craft long-term strategies to develop regional arts leaders and patrons.
- 7.1.7 Develop guidelines for signage and other public amenities to help create an identity and foster a sense of place throughout the community.
- 7.1.8 Encourage arts innovation by coordinating design competitions for installations in public and private projects.
- 7.1.9 Encourage public agencies to use their space to showcase the work of local artists on a rotating basis.

Policy 7.2 Meet increased demand for arts instruction.

- 7.2.1 Identify flexible outdoor spaces in parks that can serve as performance spaces for theater, dance and music programs and exhibit space for visual artists.
- 7.2.2 Work with partner organizations to identify flexible indoor space to expand opportunities for arts instruction and performance.
- 7.2.3 Develop a multi-use facility in the vicinity of the Arts District that includes exhibition, performance, and classroom space.

GOAL 8: SUSTAIN AND ENHANCE THE CITY'S SUPERIOR QUALITY ARTS AND ATHLETIC FACILITIES

Policy 8.1 Maintain the current high standards to ensure use of City sports facilities for regional and national tournaments.

- 8.1.1 Continue to provide the highest standard of maintenance for sports facilities to ensure their continued use for national and regional tournaments.
- 8.1.2 Ensure that the City maintains a priority role in scheduling and programming these facilities.
- 8.1.3 Create opportunities for youth and adults not involved in established organizations to develop skills and participate in activities hosted at these facilities.
- 8.1.4 Work with other City departments to ensure that adequate facilities (e.g., hotels or restaurants) are developed to support tourism generated by regional and national tournaments.
- 8.1.5 Ensure that facility design continues to meet criteria and best practices necessary to host national and regional events.

Policy 8.2 Participate in the development of new specialized or single-use recreation facilities in partnership with other organizations.

- 8.2.1 Conduct a citywide inventory of fields and courts not provided by the Department that are available for public use.
- 8.2.2 Determine feasibility of jointly funded and managed specialized facilities.

Policy 8.3 Maintain the current high standard and variety of professional, community, and student programs provided at the LPAC and LMAG.

- 8.3.1 Continue to support the Arts For Youth School Daytime Performances program at LPAC.
- 8.3.2 Continue to provide opportunities for youth/school performance groups to perform at the LPAC.

- 8.3.3 Continue to offer a mix of diverse, high quality professional programs at the LPAC.
- 8.3.4 Expand programs that provide discounts and free attendance for low-income residents.
- 8.3.5 Continue to provide visual arts competition for students and community members.
- 8.3.6 Continue to engage volunteers in supporting these facilities.

GOAL 9: ENCOURAGE THE INTEGRATION OF PARKS AND TRAILS INTO OVERALL COMMUNITY DESIGN, PLANNING, AND DEVELOPMENT DECISIONS

Policy 9.1 Pursue the development of a trails network that would connect destinations throughout Lancaster, including local schools and parks, places of business, and transit stops.

- 9.1.1 Work closely with developers to identify park and trail needs, required acreage, and facility standards.
- 9.1.2 Provide guidelines and standards for developers to encourage the development of internal pathways and trails within developments and identify, where possible, opportunities to connect with established trails and pathways.
- 9.1.3 Provide amenities such as par courses, frisbee golf courses, interpretive signage, and benches to encourage broader use of linear parks and trails.
- 9.1.4 Work with City departments to adopt a citywide master plan of trails pursuant to the General Plan.
- 9.1.5 Where possible, plan and develop trail connections with other communities and to the Los Angeles County Regional Trail System.
- 9.1.6 Involve community members and representatives from pedestrian, bicycling and equestrian organizations in trails planning activities.

GOAL 10: DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS AND PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS TO LEVERAGE RESOURCES AND EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES

- Policy 10.1** Include lands dedicated for public park and recreation use by long-term written agreement (25 years or more) in calculating the acreage used to determine the City's adherence to the five acres per thousand standard.
- Policy 10.2** Cooperate with school districts to develop standards for neighborhood and community school parks that address recreation needs and ensure quality and innovation in design.
- 10.2.1 Conduct a comprehensive inventory of school recreation spaces that could be made available for public use through joint use agreements.
 - 10.2.2 Coordinate programs and activities at public school facilities to provide recreational opportunities for the public; public use may reduce vandalism at school sites.
 - 10.2.3 Partner with local education providers and school districts to provide increased public access to fields and courts for formal and informal play.
 - 10.2.4 Develop new sports and playing fields in cooperation with school districts.
 - 10.2.5 Establish joint use agreements with school districts and other agencies that identify roles and responsibilities and provide standards for operations and maintenance, scheduling, and capital improvements.

*Art exhibit at the
Lancaster Museum/
Art Gallery* ▶



park standards

A well-rounded city park system is composed of several different types or classifications of parks, each serving a different function and providing a distinct type of recreational opportunity for the service area.

Currently, the Department uses the classifications contained in the Lancaster Plan for the Living Environment (General Plan 1997), under Goal 10: Park Land. Since Lancaster is in the process of updating the General Plan, the Department's Master Plan presents a prime opportunity to revisit how the Department classifies their facilities to reflect the changing needs of the community.

Based on a review of other comparable cities' classifications, staff discussion, and community feedback, the following modified versions of the current General Plan definitions are proposed. (See Table 4-1.)

The recommended classification system consists of five park types:

- Neighborhood Parks,
- Community Parks,
- Linear Parks,
- Conservation Area/Open Space, and
- Special Use Areas, with sub-categories of Special Use Arts and Special Use Sports.

Suggested site acreage and service area radii have been omitted so that the definitions focus on describing each park type's function and purpose. Site acreage will be addressed in the Plan's design standards, and service area radii will be addressed in the needs assessment. The Project Management Team will further refine these definitions throughout the planning process.

Upon adoption, the Lancaster Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Cultural Master Plan will become the primary mechanism for implementing the long-term goals and objectives and levels of service required by the General Plan.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Neighborhood parks support active and passive recreation, and function as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. These parks may include sports fields and courts, children's playground equipment, walking paths and picnic areas. Restrooms should be provided when there are large picnic facilities, high levels of programmed activities or when the park is of a larger size. Amenities and facilities should support casual use, be designed at a scale for those living within the service area and accommodate a variety of age and user groups. The site should be easily accessible to the neighborhood population and geographically centered with safe walking and bicycle access.

TABLE 4-1: RECOMMENDED PARK STANDARDS

COMPONENT	USE	SERVICE AREA	DESIRABLE SIZE	ACRES/ 1,000 PEOPLE	DESIRABLE SITE CHARACTERISTICS
Neighborhood Parks	Areas for informal, active and passive recreational activities such as fields and courts, playground equipment, paths and picnic areas. May include amenities such as restrooms and drinking fountains.	One-mile radius of residential areas zoned single-family residential and higher	2–10 acres	5	May be jointly developed with school districts. Located to maximize service area for surrounding neighborhood.
Community Parks	Areas for active and organized recreational activities such as sports fields and courts, fixed recreational equipment, recreation facilities, restroom facilities, walking paths or trails, swimming pools, water features and areas for picnicking and socializing.	Two-mile radius of residential areas zoned single-family residential and higher	10 acres or more	5	May be jointly developed with school districts. Where a community park also serves as the neighborhood park for the service area, amenities provided in neighborhood parks, such as playground equipment, will be provided.
Linear Parks	Designed to support recreational travel and meet the needs of multiple users, including pedestrians and cyclists.	Sufficient width and length to accommodate intended uses; linear parks in areas zoned rural residential should be designed to include equestrians along with pedestrians and cyclists.	Variable	Variable	Should be encouraged where appropriate and developed and located in a manner that supports connectivity to neighborhoods, schools, community destinations, and other trail systems. Linear parks may include amenities such as interpretive signage and benches.
Conservation/ Open Space Areas	Areas for protection and conservation of natural resources and open space. Recreation is secondary.	Citywide	Sufficient size to protect the resource	5	Recreation activities should support natural resource and open space goals. Where appropriate, areas may include pedestrian and bicycle trails, benches, and amenities to support wildlife viewing.
Special Use Areas: Arts	Areas for specialized or single-purpose activities related to arts performance, instruction, display, and presentation.	Citywide	Variable	Variable	May be incorporated into existing and proposed public buildings (e.g., display space for visual arts). Areas may be jointly developed with other agencies and organizations.

TABLE 4-1: RECOMMENDED PARK STANDARDS (CONTINUED)

COMPONENT	USE	SERVICE AREA	DESIRABLE SIZE	ACRES/ 1,000 PEOPLE	DESIRABLE SITE CHARACTERISTICS
Special Use Areas: Sports	Areas for specialized or single-purpose activities such as soccer, softball, and other sports. May include facilities to support spectator viewing and tournament play.	Citywide	Variable	5	May be jointly developed with other agencies and organizations.
Special Use Areas: Plazas	Areas for informal and organized activities such as farmers' markets, community gardens, ceremonies, special events, and other activities.	Citywide, with an emphasis on retail and commercial areas	Variable	Variable	Includes irregularly sized parcels in business and commercial areas.
Regional Parks	Areas of natural or aesthetic quality for outdoor recreation such as picnicking, boating, fishing, swimming, camping, and trail uses. May include areas to conserve or support significant environmental features. Development is primarily the responsibility of County and State parks departments.	Antelope Valley	50 acres or more	Variable	May be operated and maintained through agency cost-sharing agreements with the City.

Neighborhood parks can be developed in conjunction with elementary schools when opportunities are available.

COMMUNITY PARKS

Community parks are larger in size and focus on serving the active and passive recreational needs of several neighborhoods. A community park may include sports fields and courts, athletic complexes, swimming pools, activity centers and gymnasiums, children's playground equipment, walking paths, natural areas, event space and picnic areas. Community parks support programmed activities and provide space for casual use. Community parks should have restrooms in at least one part of the park

site. The site should allow for organized group activities and offer other recreational opportunities too impactful or too large-scale for the neighborhood park level. The site should be easily accessible by motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists. Community parks may be developed in conjunction with a junior high or high school when opportunities are available.

LINEAR PARKS

Linear parks are developed, landscaped areas and other lands that follow corridors such as railroad rights-of-way, washes, power lines, boundaries between subdivisions, and other elongated features. Linear parks generally contain trails. When feasible, connectiv-

Tierra ▶
Bonita Park



ity to other trails should be emphasized. Active recreation elements may be incorporated into linear parks.

CONSERVATION/OPEN SPACE AREAS

Conservation/open space areas should protect and manage natural and cultural resources, with recreation as a secondary objective. The site should be a sufficient size to protect the resource, and the level of public access should be determined based on resource preservation needs. The site's size and desirable characteristics are dependent on the resource being protected, such as Joshua trees.

SPECIAL USE AREAS

The special use area classification applies to facilities for specialized or single-purpose recreation, arts or cultural activities such as the Lancaster Performing Arts Center, the Lancaster National Soccer

Center, Clear Channel Stadium or an urban plaza. The site service area, size and characteristics are dependent on their intended usage. This classification has two subcategories: special use arts and special use sports.

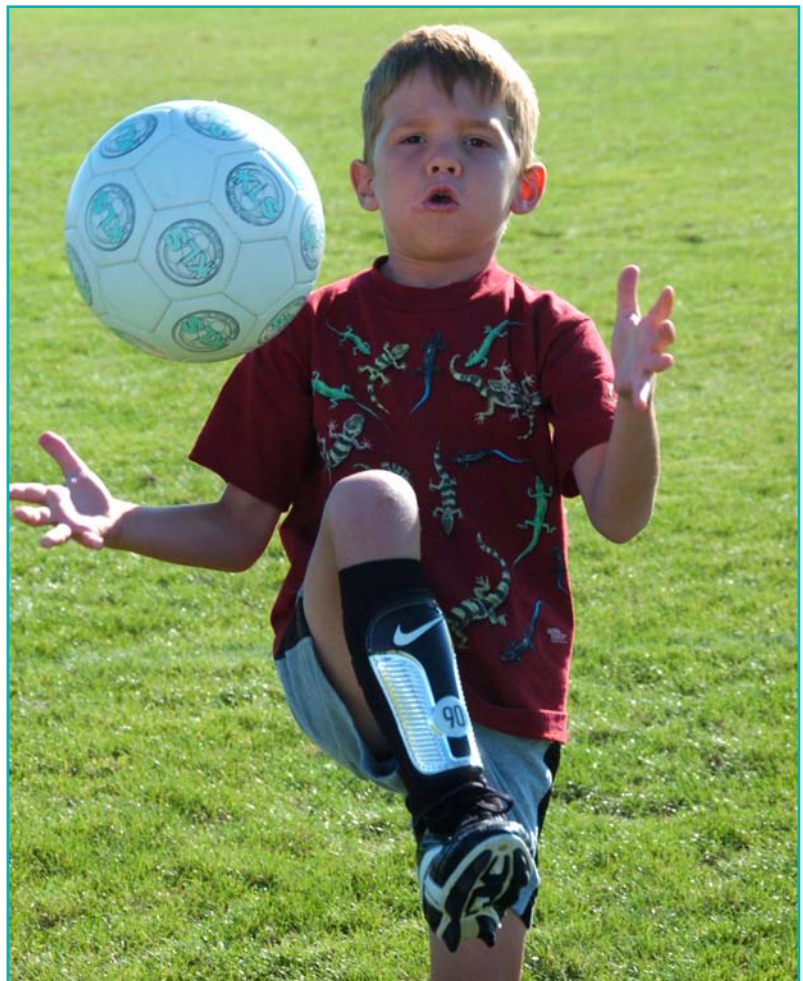
REGIONAL PARKS

The City's General Plan park classifications define a regional park as an area of 200 acres or more of natural or aesthetic quality used for outdoor recreation, such as picnicking, boating, fishing, swimming, camping, and trail uses. Regional parks may also include areas that preserve significant environmental features. Development is primarily the responsibility of county and state parks departments. This classification is desirable if the site is contiguous to or encompasses unique natural features. There are no regional parks located in the City of Lancaster.

chapter five OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

The residents of Lancaster enjoy a uniquely developed park system that includes nationally recognized facilities such as a state-of-the-art performing arts center, Clear Channel Stadium, Lancaster National Soccer Center, a desert woodland preserve, and a system of neighborhood and community parks with diverse features. The Department of Parks, Recreation and Arts is responsible for the physical care and maintenance of all parks and special facilities providing recreation programs and activities. The Department is also responsible for maintaining two downtown parking lots, park-and-ride sites, tree lighting on Lancaster Boulevard, the train station, and various other public spaces.

Within the Department, the Parks Division implements the maintenance duties necessary to meet the vision, mission, and values of the City of Lancaster. Under the general direction of the Parks Superintendent, two supervisors manage crews of lead workers, maintenance staff, and numerous seasonal employees. As a team, they keep parks in good working order: safe,



clean, and green. Parks maintenance staff also support citywide efforts such as special events, official meetings, and outdoor gatherings.

The Department's high maintenance standards are greatly valued by the

▲ *A young soccer player practices his moves to get ready for the game*



▲ *At pottery classes, residents can learn to create with clay*

community, as expressed by the high level of satisfaction with park and facilities maintenance. Parks contribute to the community's sense of place, and enhance residents' abilities to imagine, create and explore. The condition of sports fields meets high national standards, and the fields are greatly appreciated by residents and visitors alike. The maintenance practices applied to Lancaster's sports centers and complexes are directly linked and essential to Lancaster's success in securing regional, state, and national tournaments in softball, soccer, and baseball.

Larger parks, with neighborhood and community features concentrated in one location, are a key factor in the Department's ability to provide the high level of maintenance enjoyed by the community. The Department is able to efficiently approach the overall maintenance and operations at each location by completing multiple tasks in one visit. While Lancaster residents enjoy having destination parks and premier recreation and sports opportunities, community members have expressed a growing desire for more neighborhood parks within walking distance of home. Community mem-

bers also expressed interest in having more informal amenities within parks such as walking paths, small group picnic areas, informal play areas, and creative play structures.

Increasing the number of smaller parks in the future may impact the Department's ability to provide a high level of park maintenance with the practices used today. Maintaining smaller parks with more features may require additional resources such as increased personnel, more equipment, and additional vehicles. For example, one of the key factors in the delivery of park maintenance services is crew and employee safety. Staff are assigned to work on maintenance crews to support a safe working environment, so separating workers or developing individual work assignments to accomplish routine tasks weakens the current policy.

The community has consistently expressed its desire to keep Lancaster's parks safe and well maintained, so it will be important to continue to prioritize maintenance needs in the planning and development process for future parks and facilities. It will be equally important to continue the tradition of providing excellent maintenance in existing parks. The master planning process guides the Department in developing a foundation for providing maintenance services. This chapter will identify core



and non-core services provided by the department, factors to consider in the delivery of services, and the levels of service required for each of the park-land classification types of parks.

▲ *A shady welcome at Tierra Bonita*

core & non-core functions

Lancaster park maintenance staff provide a full range of services to ensure the high standard of maintenance residents currently experience. Using a blend of permanent and seasonal employees, the Parks Division is responsible for maintaining turf, from mowing to repairing the irrigation; inspecting play equipment; cleaning restrooms; picking-up litter; repairing equipment; and much more. Identifying core and non-core maintenance functions is one tool the Department can implement to aid in decision making and budgeting in the future.

Core functions are the park maintenance practices and tasks deemed vital to meeting the policies, goals, and objectives of the City. Therefore, core functions are readily acknowledged as a priority for implementation by the Department. Non-core functions still support the park system, but may happen infrequently, are not vital to daily operations, and do not need to be performed by staff. The City of Lancaster benefits from having a seasoned, highly skilled labor force and a large pool of seasonal workers to draw from in order to perform core and non-core functions.

As new parks are added, Lancaster will be able to continue providing a high quality of maintenance services by blending core and non-core functions with a flexible delivery system for the various workloads. To prepare for future maintenance operations, the Department should recognize the following elements of service provision:

CORE SERVICES

- **Turf Management:** A signature element for the Department, recognized at a national level. Technical skills required in technology, irrigation and water management, and horticulture.
- **Special Event Support Services:** Highly valued by the community. Expertise provided in pre-event

planning, implementation, and post-event evaluation.

- **Playground Safety Inspections:** Critical for public safety. Requires a high level of knowledge, certification, and daily evaluation.
- **Horticultural Practices:** Contribute to a deep sense of place in the community. Requires certifications and continued education in plant care, pesticide management and climate control issues.
- **Public Safety and Cleanliness:** Meet the highest priority for residents. Needs a large volume of resources to complete tasks such as litter pick up, trash removal, restroom cleaning, basic light gardening, and graffiti removal.

NON-CORE SERVICES

- **Tree Care and Arborist Services:** Tree pruning and maintenance.
- **Parking Lot Maintenance and Landscaping:** May also include street medians.
- **Capital Projects:** Major repairs and renovations, small capital improvement projects.
- **Building Services:** Plumbing, electrical, heating and air conditioning, security alarm, flooring, extinguisher inspection, windows, painting.
- **Secondary Pest Control:** Rodents and invasive species.

Non-core services are typically provided seasonally, a few times annually, or on an as-needed basis. The Department is better served by contracting with companies skilled in the specific task required, such as tree trimming or fence repair. However, contractual services may also provide an efficient mechanism for expanding core services.

As Lancaster begins to develop new neighborhood parks with amenities that invite informal gathering and play, the Department could engage the services of a mowing or landscaping company to mow and edge the turf. The City would still require the technical skills of the crew to provide top-notch turf management, but would release the mowing responsibilities. The Department would realize substantial savings by not having to purchase and maintain additional mowing equipment, and could re-allocate those savings to public safety and cleanliness in the new parks, while still having control over mowing frequency.

Prior to developing new parks, the park maintenance management team should systematically review the park design and proposed features and amenities for individual projects. They should also determine the core and non-core services needed to consistently provide a safe, clean and well-maintained facility. It is recommended that as staff identify the elements



needed to meet the core and non-core services, they be open in their analysis to a variety of mechanisms for delivering the service. The methods for achieving the goal should be flexible, and an efficient use of resources.

▲ *A player rushes to reach the base at a Lancaster ballgame*

Factors affecting maintenance

There are many factors that influence park maintenance decisions. For example, when Lancaster prepares for the Poppy Festival, there is a concentration of staff to prepare the site, and many other duties may

TABLE 5-1: EXISTING PARKS MAINTENANCE STANDARDS

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
PASSIVE TURF AREA	Grass height maintained according to species, variety and specific use. Mowed at least once a week or as special needs dictate. Reseeding or sodding as needed.
ATHLETIC TURF AREA	Grass height maintained according to species, variety and special use needs. Mow turf in accordance with City’s athletic turf program to maintain appropriate play-height.
WEED CONTROL	Applied quarterly as directed in the annual soils report. More frequent applications may be applied as needed. Apply appropriate frequencies to maintain control. Weed whip trees, fence lines, valve boxes and utility vaults.
BASEBALL MOUNDS	Prepare baseball mounds. Utilize industry standards for mound mix material (soils). Prepare mound after each use.
FERTILIZER	Fertilization as established by soil testing, consultant’s recommendations, and special needs. This program is for turf, planter beds and trees.
IRRIGATION	Electric automatic controllers are used to maximize efficiency and reduce wasting water. Irrigation controllers to be Rainbird Maxicom compatible.
LITTER CONTROL	Maximum of once per day, seven days per week or as needed. All containers will have the liners changed daily and containers cleaned as needed. Ground debris is collected daily or as needed.
PRUNING	All work to be accomplished during the winter months when stress on plant material is lowest. All work to be performed in accordance with accepted horticultural practices. This will pertain to all species of trees and shrubs.
DISEASE & INSECT CONTROL	The need for application will be triggered when the economical threshold is determined. The benefit must outweigh the perceived need for application damage. Application must be directed by a state licensed Pesticide Control Advisor.
LIGHTING	Walkway and security lighting is replaced immediately upon detection. Athletic lighting will be replaced when the level is determined to be hazardous.
PLAY EQUIPMENT	Daily inspection will determine the need for corrective action. Necessary repairs will be immediately performed upon discovery, or the apparatus will be secured until repairs are completed.
WALKING SURFACES	Sweeping, blowing or washing of such surfaces are completed prior to public use. To avoid accidents standing water is removed prior to public use. Walking surfaces, tennis courts, and basketball courts are inspected daily for potential hazardous conditions.
PARKING AREAS	Parking areas are inspected daily for potential hazardous conditions.
REPAIRS	Repairs to all elements of a facility should be done immediately upon discovery. When lack of resources prohibits immediate repairs, area will be secured and made safe for public entrance.
RESTROOMS	Daily inspection and cleaning of all facilities will be performed prior to allowing public access. Routine inspections throughout the day will insure the cleanliness for public use.
GRAFFITI	Upon discovery all items are removed within 24 hours. The best method for removal will be determined based upon the surface needing cleaning.
PLANT MATERIAL	Dead, diseased or substandard material is replaced within ten working days.
INSPECTION/POLICING GROUNDS	Daily inspection of entire facility is accomplished within the first hour of every shift. Assigned staff will survey the entire facility to determine if unscheduled events will take precedence over repetitively scheduled tasks.

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
BALL FIELDS	The daily preparation of the fields consists of watering, dragging and painting of foul lines as needed. In order to maintain a safe playing surface the dirt infield must be completely soaked prior to dragging. All holes to be filled, leveled and tamped.
SOFTBALL FIELDS	The daily preparation of the fields consists of watering, dragging and painting of foul lines as needed. Mowing and edging of the infield turf is performed daily. The pitcher's mound will be groomed and tamped daily. In order to maintain a safe playing surface the dirt infield must be completely soaked prior to dragging.
COURTS	All hard courts are surveyed daily for standing water and debris. Removal of such items must be accomplished prior to allowing public use.
SAND VOLLEYBALL COURT	Sand areas shall be inspected daily, raked and leveled weekly.
PICNIC AREAS	All tables and slabs shall be washed weekly. Trash containers and braziers shall be emptied and cleaned weekly.
SWIMMING POOLS	Vacuum the bottom of entire pool once per week (Webber Pool as needed in summer). Inspect for debris and hose off the pool decking and locker rooms twice per day. Sanitize locker rooms and showers after each swim session. Check rest rooms after each session for cleanliness and restock as needed. Check pool chemistry after each session, log results and make corrections as needed.
CARPETED FLOORS	All carpeted flooring shall be vacuumed daily at the conclusion of the business day. Shampoo and apply soil repellent twice per year or as traffic dictates.
TILE FLOORS	All tiled floor shall be wet mopped daily at the conclusion of the business day. After each event the floor shall be dust mopped and inspected for marks and debris. Floors shall be lightly waxed and buffed once per week or as traffic dictates. Floors shall be stripped, resealed and waxed twice per year.
PARKING LOTS	A daily inspection and removal of debris. All parking lots shall be swept once per month.
EMERGENCY GENERATORS	A daily visual inspection and weekly exercising of each unit. All records pertaining to run time, fuel consumption and repairs shall be maintained on site.
TRASH ENCLOSURE	Each enclosure shall be inspected and cleaned daily. All ground trash/debris shall be picked up and placed in container. Enclosures will be washed out once per week, or as needed.
IRRIGATION CONTROLLER	All controllers shall be exercised manually each week, or more often as necessary, and adjusted accordingly.
IRRIGATION SYSTEM INSPECTION/REPAIRS	Each irrigation station shall be manually operated weekly, or more often as necessary, and visually inspected for proper rotation and coverage. Necessary repairs shall be completed or mitigated within 24 hours to 48 hours.
SPECIAL PROJECTS	Trash containers, play equipment, room conversions etc.
SPECIAL EVENTS	Poppy Festival, Aerospace Walk of Honor, Celebrate Downtown Lancaster, Bark at the Park, etc. to meet event schedules.
EMERGENCY REPAIRS	When practical, take tree down, complete repairs, etc. within 24 hours.
MEDIA EVENTS	Special set-ups, transportation of supplies.



▲ *Lancaster's pools are popular on hot summer days*

not be accomplished until the event is completed. Also, organized sports groups are usually strong and vocal advocates for their activity and facility. Maintenance tasks and duties may be prioritized to meet the needs of these community groups. Also, a new park may initially require more maintenance time than a mature park to help establish plantings and turf. All of these factors affect park maintenance goals and policies. As such, it is not reasonable or practical to expect that every facility receives equal attention each day, week, and month.

Identifying and prioritizing these factors in advance can inform decision making, help create the foundation for developing standards, and serve as a valuable tool for scheduling staff, prioritizing assignments, and measuring performance.

- **Crew Safety and Security:** The highest ranking factor in meeting operations and maintenance goals and accomplishing tasks.
- **Park Use and Facility Scheduling:** Reservable facilities require oversight and management. Citywide special events and national events also have significant impacts.

- **Location:** Parks that share borders with homeowners may require extra attention, while parks serving as gateways (or prominently viewed from Highway 14 such as Lancaster City Park) represent the community image. Staff travel time to and from facilities must be factored into service delivery in a community the size of Lancaster.
- **Size of Park:** Small and large parks may have different needs based on design and use.
- **General Park Use:** Parks are unique in character and have varying levels of formal and informal use. For example, Hull Park is popular and enjoys high usage for informal use. This in turn has generated strong citizen interest and support. Changes in maintenance affect advocacy and citizen support.
- **Age of Park:** As the Lancaster park system ages, different levels of maintenance may be needed. Today's state-of-the-art park is tomorrow's mature park.
- **Vandalism:** The nature and impact of vandalism not only affects daily park schedules, but negatively impacts the image and perceptions of park use.
- **Equipment Availability:** Repairs and down time should be acknowledged and factored into decision making.
- **Partnerships, Neighborhood and Citizen Support:** In addition to organized sports groups, various neighborhood and advocacy groups can influence decisions while partnerships and agreements indicate preferences.

Incorporating factors that influence maintenance into a policy statement will be very valuable in sustaining safe, clean and well-maintained parks and public spaces throughout the community. The Department should adopt these factors and apply them to each park and facility within the system, con-



◀ *A young dancer demonstrates her skills*

tributing to the framework for operations and maintenance. Each factor should be prioritized; for example, new parks need more attention to vegetation sustainability and parks hosting national events may rank higher than those serving casual use. The order of priority may be different for each park. Encouraging staff to learn and understand factors will give them the tools they need to perform tasks efficiently and respond to customer service inquiries and questions. Staff may identify additional factors unique to Lancaster based on their experience.

levels of service

The level of maintenance applied to a park system, and individual parks, begins to take shape once the core functions and factors affecting maintenance are clearly identified. For example, a community park with citywide amenities and neighborhood serving features may require a greater level of maintenance than a preserve or open space natural area. Also, a facility with a use and partnership agreement outlining specific standards and tasks, such as Clear Channel Stadium, may require more frequent services.

Currently, Lancaster applies one comprehensive level of maintenance standards towards the existing park system. Table 5-1 describes the frequency of current park maintenance tasks for

features such as ball fields, turf, trees and plant material, special projects and more. There is no clear distinction between park classifications and commitments the City has to the operations of various facilities.

Based on the current park maintenance practices of the Department, existing facilities, and recognized new development needed during the next ten to fifteen years, five levels of service have been identified for consideration by the City. These different levels of service will inform budgeting decisions as new parks come on line, as well as aid in decision making towards efficient use of resources. The Department should adopt the following levels of maintenance services.

LEVEL 1: TOURNAMENT-QUALITY FACILITIES

Level 1 service is defined as state-of-the-art maintenance, meeting national standards. Frequency of individual tasks may be daily, sometimes two times each day. This level of service is required to ensure that Lancaster remains competitive with other cities to host regional and national sporting events and is directly related to the revenue generated by each activity.

LEVEL 2: COMMUNITY PARKS

Level 2 service is defined as a high level of service applied to parks with significant features, popular amenities, or



special uses. Usually, there are multiple activities happening at the same time and high visitation numbers. The frequency of individual tasks is regular with little variation. This level of service affects customer service and visitor expectations and speaks to community image and sense of place.

LEVEL 3: NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Level 3 service is defined as a moderate level of service applied to parks with more informal spaces and casual uses. The frequency of maintenance tasks may differ by individual park or facility. For example, turf mowing and edging do not need to be conducted with the precision that a state-of-the-art facility demands.

LEVEL 4: OPEN SPACE PRESERVES & NATURE TRAILS

Level 4 service is defined as a minimum level of service applied to maintenance of undeveloped park land, open space preserves and natural areas, and trails or spaces with minor improvements. Features and amenities are sparse, and the frequency of maintenance tasks may vary based upon use, events, or even access.

LEVEL 5: FACILITY & BUILDING SERVICES

Community centers, performing art venues, and other unique structures call for individual levels of maintenance. Signature facilities such as the Lancaster Performing Arts Center define the City's

▲ *The Clear Channel Stadium is one of Lancaster's strong professional-level assets*



▲ *Young Lancaster residents help envision the future of parks in the city*

reputation and character. These facilities will require a high level of maintenance services. The City should adopt policies that encourage creative approaches to meeting the core functions of facility maintenance. Additionally, the safety and security of the public's investment in these facilities should remain high.

The Department is encouraged to adopt these five levels of service and identify the frequency of each factor affecting park maintenance. Once the frequencies of tasks are identified, a cost estimate can be developed for delivering park maintenance services prior to each new park being built. A framework for creating a detailed resource and maintenance management plan for Lancaster is outlined in Tables 5-2, 5-3, 5-4, 5-5, and 5-6. These recommended maintenance

standards can be further developed into consistent practices with clear measurement for effectiveness. Lancaster residents recognize the high level of maintenance currently applied to the park system, and they fully expect to maintain this level well into the future. The City must make a strong commitment to providing adequate resources towards park maintenance.

As Lancaster grows and evolves as a community and expands its parks and recreation system in response to changing community needs, the cost of delivering services should be applied to future budgets, both in the capital planning stage and at the operations level. If community advocacy calls for a specified level of maintenance, there is a funding and resource level needed to deliver the services. Also, citywide initiatives and department policies may impact implementation of key maintenance plans.

The Department should annually review the factors affecting maintenance and revise the levels of service accordingly. Park and facility maintenance is most effective when staff are able to focus on the outcomes of a desired service level. This will ensure that community expectations are met and residents can enjoy the value and experiences these parks and facilities contribute to their overall quality of life, thereby strengthening civic pride and improving community image.

TABLE 5-2:

**RECOMMENDED MAINTENANCE STANDARDS
LEVEL I: TOURNAMENT-QUALITY FACILITIES**

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
TURF MANAGEMENT	Mowing is completed once each day during tournament season with the possibility of two times each day to meet national standards for championship games. Turf height may differ among fields and may be determined by type of sport or by agreement.
	Mowing is completed one to two times each week during the off season.
	Irrigation is checked daily for required water management functions, and repairs and adjustments are made immediately. Automated systems are required.
	Aeration/fertilization is performed a number of times each year to coincide with regional, state, and national commitments.
	Weed abatement is performed as needed so that turf is completely free of weeds and invasive species. Pest control is monitored weekly. All regulations and license requirements are met to keep turf free of rodents and insects at all times.
HARD SURFACE AREAS	Hard surface areas are cleared of debris and inspected for vandalism up to four times each day during tournament season and once each day during the off season.
	Pathways, parking areas, gathering spaces, and viewing stands are regularly inspected to maintain a clean, quality image for residents and visitors. A pristine facility directly impacts the success of tournaments and is an important factor in tournament evaluations and future use.
	Sports courts such as basketball and tennis are inspected up to four times each day if the facilities are used to support tournaments or are located in close proximity to tournament facilities.
FACILITY FEATURES	Baseball and softball fields receive preparation for tournament play and state and national game play as indicated in agreements for hosting such events. At all other times, fields are prepared daily for safe play. Infields are prepared with watering and dragging to achieve maximum safe conditions. Pitching mounds are prepared once each day and inspected after each use. Additional preparation may be required if more than two games are played in one day. Line marking may occur prior to every game.
	Picnic areas, sand courts, play equipment, and other facility features are inspected daily for safety and cleanliness. Damage is repaired immediately or secured until safe use is determined. These features are inspected up to four times each day if facilities are used to support tournaments.
CUSTODIAL (TRASH/RESTROOM)	Trash is picked up and emptied up to four times each day during tournament season. Restrooms are cleaned up to four times each day during tournament season. Trash and restrooms are cleaned daily during the off season. Trash enclosures and receptacles are cleaned and emptied daily during tournament play, which may require additional service.
TREE CARE & SHRUB MAINTENANCE	Tree pruning and maintenance take place quarterly. Needed repairs due to vandalism or weather take place immediately so there is no impact to tournaments and events.
	Weed abatement is performed as needed so that shrub and plant areas are completely free of weeds at all times.
COLOR SCHEMES & AMENITIES	Signage, lighting, tables and benches, trash cans, and structures are maintained at a high level of visual quality and presentation. Painting is updated and freshened annually while lighting is working at all times. Tables, benches, and trash cans are standard and represent quality branding images for Lancaster at all times. Structures and buildings receive annual maintenance and capital repairs prior to tournament season.

**TABLE 5-3: RECOMMENDED MAINTENANCE STANDARDS
LEVEL 2: COMMUNITY PARKS**

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
TURF MANAGEMENT	Mowing is completed one time each week and in some sport turf areas or high use areas two times each week.
	Mowing is completed once every ten days during the off season
	Irrigation is checked daily for required water management functions, and repairs and adjustments are made immediately. Automated systems are required.
	Aeration/fertilization is performed quarterly.
	Weed abatement is performed as needed so that turf is completely free of weeds and invasive species
HARD SURFACE AREAS	Pest control is monitored two times each month. All regulations and license requirements are met to keep turf generally free of rodents and insects.
	Hard surface areas are cleared of debris and inspected for vandalism once each day during peak seasonal use and every other day during the off season.
	Pathways, parking areas, gathering spaces, and viewing stands are regularly inspected to maintain a clean, quality image for residents. A clean facility free of litter and damages contributes to community image and facility support.
FACILITY FEATURES	Sports courts such as basketball and tennis are inspected daily.
	Baseball and softball fields receive preparation for safe play once each day. Infields are prepared with watering and dragging to achieve maximum safe conditions. Pitching mounds are prepared once each day. Line marking may occur after every two games.
Picnic areas, sand courts, play equipment and other facility features are inspected daily for safety and cleanliness. Damage is repaired immediately or secured until safe use is determined.	CUSTODIAL (TRASH/RESTROOM)
Trash is picked up once each day, two times each day during heavy use or special events. Restrooms are cleaned two times each day and three times each day during heavy use or special events. Trash and restrooms are cleaned daily during the off season. Trash enclosures and receptacles are checked daily and thoroughly cleaned weekly.	
TREE CARE & SHRUB MAINTENANCE	Tree pruning and maintenance take place quarterly. Needed repairs due to vandalism or weather take place immediately so there is no impact to tournaments and events.
	Weed abatement is performed as needed so that shrub and plant areas are generally free of weeds at all times.
COLOR SCHEMES & AMENITIES	Signage, lighting, tables and benches, trash cans, and structures are maintained at a high level of visual quality and presentation. Painting is updated and freshened annually while lighting is working at all times. Tables, benches, and trash cans are standard and represent quality branding images for Lancaster at all times. Structures such as group picnic pavilions, and buildings receive annual maintenance and capital repairs.

TABLE 5-4:**RECOMMENDED MAINTENANCE STANDARDS
LEVEL 3: NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS**

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
TURF MANAGEMENT	Mowing is completed one time every eight to ten days depending upon neighborhood use or activity scheduling.
	Mowing is completed once every twelve days during the off season.
	Irrigation is checked daily for required water management functions, and repairs and adjustments are made immediately. Automated systems are required.
	Aeration/fertilization is performed twice annually, or quarterly depending upon neighborhood use.
	Weed abatement is performed as needed so that turf is usually free of weeds and invasive species.
HARD SURFACE AREAS	Hard surface areas are cleared of debris and inspected for vandalism every other day during peak seasonal use and may be inspected one time each week during the off season.
	Pathways and gathering spaces are visually checked every other day and are inspected two times each week or less during the off season.
	Sports courts such as basketball and tennis are visually checked every other day and are inspected two times each week or less during the off season.
FACILITY FEATURES	Informal fields are visually checked daily during seasonal use and once each week during the off season. There is no formal use and no field preparation.
	Picnic areas, sand courts, play equipment, and other facility features are inspected daily for safety and cleanliness. Damage is repaired immediately or secured until safe use is determined.
CUSTODIAL (TRASH/RESTROOM)	Trash is picked up once each day. If restrooms are available to the public they are cleaned up to two times each day. Trash enclosures and receptacles are checked daily and thoroughly cleaned weekly.
TREE CARE & SHRUB MAINTENANCE	Tree pruning and maintenance take place quarterly. Needed repairs due to vandalism or weather shall take place immediately so there is no impact to tournaments and events.
	Weed abatement is performed as needed so that shrub and plant areas are usually free of weeds, although there may be weeds temporarily.
COLOR SCHEMES & AMENITIES	Signage, lighting, tables & benches, trash cans, and structures are maintained at a high level of visual quality and presentation. Painting is updated and freshened annually while lighting is working at all times. Tables, benches, and trash cans are standard and represent quality branding images for Lancaster at all times. Structures such as picnic shelters, information kiosks and recreation centers receive annual maintenance and capital repairs.

**TABLE 5-5: RECOMMENDED MAINTENANCE STANDARDS
LEVEL 4: OPEN SPACE PRESERVES & NATURE TRAILS**

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
TURF MANAGEMENT	Mowing is completed as needed to meet fire and safety requirements, or to provide adequate access and visitor use (for example, trail entrances and rest areas).
	Irrigation in recognized areas is checked weekly for required water management functions, and repairs and adjustments are made immediately. Automated systems are required.
	Aeration/fertilization is performed annually, or two times per year depending upon design or formal use areas.
	Weed abatement is performed as needed in recognized areas, but natural areas remain open.
HARD SURFACE AREAS	Hard surface areas are cleared of debris and inspected for vandalism every other day during peak seasonal use and are inspected one time each week during the off season.
	Pathways and gathering spaces are visually checked every other day and are inspected two times each week, less during the off season.
	Formal trails used for hiking and nature interpretation are inspected daily for safe access and visitor use.
FACILITY FEATURES	Picnic and resting areas will be inspected weekly for cleanliness and safety. Damage is repaired immediately or secured until safe use is determined.
CUSTODIAL (TRASH/RESTROOM)	Trash is picked up once each day. If restrooms are available to the public they are cleaned up to two times each day. Trash enclosures and receptacles are checked daily and thoroughly cleaned weekly.
TREE CARE & SHRUB MAINTENANCE	Tree pruning and maintenance take place quarterly. Needed repairs due to vandalism or weather shall take place immediately so there is no impact to tournaments and events.
	Weed abatement is performed as needed in recognized areas but left natural in open space areas.
COLOR SCHEMES & AMENITIES	Signage, lighting, tables & benches, trash cans, and structures are maintained at a high level of visual quality and presentation. Painting is updated and freshened annually while lighting is working at all times. Tables, benches, and trash cans are standard and represent quality branding images for Lancaster at all times. Structures such as picnic shelters, interpretive centers and information kiosks receive annual maintenance and capital repairs.

**TABLE 5-6: RECOMMENDED MAINTENANCE STANDARDS
LEVEL 5: FACILITY & BUILDING SERVICES**

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
FACILITY/BUILDING MAINTENANCE	Swimming pools, recreation centers, performing art venues, museums and special events require daily maintenance activities and tasks to maintain the capital structure, and provide exceptional visitor experiences. These facilities are signature elements and require dedicated maintenance crews independent from parks and street landscaping. Repairs and upgrades are included in annual CIP budgets, and replacement schedules must be included in citywide planning and funding efforts.

chapter six CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Implementing a capital development program to meet the changing needs of the Lancaster community is essential to reaching the Level of Service standards identified throughout the Needs Assessment phase of the master planning process. The adoption of a new park classification system is integral to balancing the development of new parks and upgrading existing facilities for the next five, ten and even twenty years. A systematic approach with clear guidelines for developing parks and facilities should be incorporated into the City's overall Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The development program should be reviewed each year to ensure that individual projects meet City and Department goals and initiatives.

In Fiscal Year 2006–2007, the City of Lancaster proposed a CIP that exceeded \$35 million dollars, and seventeen parks, recreation and arts projects represented 25% of the total amount budgeted. The City's commitment to develop parks and facilities reflects the increased value citizens have for parks, recreation and the arts

within the community. Currently, CIP projects are prioritized based on general information, public safety, environmental and financial considerations. The CIP also provides an organized approach to development for a six year period to effectively inform a five year planning cycle (the current budget year plus five years ahead).

A capital improvement is considered major and non-routine and is recognized as new construction and park development, or improvements and upgrades to existing parks and facilities. Lancaster encourages a "project-ready" approach to developing the CIP, whereby the project description and budget are clearly defined prior to allocating funds for construction. The CIP is also viewed as a working document



▲ *At the Poppy Festival, a Lancaster child displays her vision for future parks*

TABLE 6-1: PROJECT GUIDELINES & DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend turn-key park development in future subdivisions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfy unmet needs in the developed community or infill areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage joint use agreements and contractual commitments for new development, renovations, and facility upgrades
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote community partnerships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize requirements, timelines and deadlines from funding sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet safety standards for visitors, users, and workers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize green building or LEED certification opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet goals and values of City initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Economic Development ◦ Strong Neighborhoods Initiative ◦ Downtown Business District
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address recommendations of city planning efforts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Parks, trails and bikeways plans ◦ Redevelopment plans ◦ Lancaster General Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge capacity to complete the project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Planning and design ◦ Construction ◦ Warranty and maintenance period
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage entrepreneurial and revenue-generating opportunities for Lancaster
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue pay-as-you-go funding

and should be revised annually to reflect changes within the community, or even individual projects.

new development

Lancaster residents benefit from a legacy of park development that includes premier destination sporting, recreation and entertainment venues. The City is also well known for hosting nationally recognized events, and fostering partnerships that result in state-of-the-art facilities for everyone’s enjoyment. Department staff takes great pride in maintaining these amenities and developing quality services for residents and visitors alike.

During the needs assessment and community involvement phase of the master planning process, newer residents expressed a desire to develop more neighborhood parks closer to home. Citizens participating in the planning efforts emphasized the need to connect neighborhoods with pathways, as well as the importance of pedestrian access to local parks. Residents participating in the Visioning Workshops shared visions and ideas for growing Lancaster into a community with neighborhood parks, pathways, and green corridors to promote health and wellness and strengthening a sense of place.

New subdivision developments within Lancaster should be required to meet

these neighborhood park needs while maintaining the standard of five acres per 1,000 population citywide. Moreover, development projects should construct new parks and dedicate them to the City fully developed. This method of park development is noted as “turn-key” and is in lieu of taking fees, while ensuring that parks will be completed as the subdivision is built out.

Accepting turn-key parks from a developer does not mean the City should receive a park that is less than the desired standard for park construction. The Department should develop

a formal park design standards manual to inform the development process, and staff should have final approval of all proposed plans prior to construction. The City should also have final approvals during the construction process. Table 6-2 outlines the design standards Lancaster can utilize to develop a framework for a manual.

The Director of Parks, Recreation and Arts is encouraged to work with developers in planning and building parks for turn-key development. During the planning stage, the Department should consider core and non-core services

TABLE 6-2: GENERAL DESIGN STANDARDS FOR TURN-KEY PARKS

REQUIREMENT	STANDARD
ACCEPTANCE	Project approval requires that project credits, environmental review, and regulatory specifications are accepted.
DESIGN APPROVAL	Park design meets current needs and desires of the community; approved by City (at 35%, 75%, 100%) with staff signature block on final plans.
PLAY EQUIPMENT	Play equipment manufacturer provided; City approves type, style, placement, and color.
PARK AMENITIES	Park amenity standards provided; City approves benches, tables, trash cans, drinking fountains, and shade structures.
IRRIGATION SYSTEM	Irrigation system standards provided; City approves manufacturer, type, design, and system controls.
PLANT MATERIALS	Plant material recommended; meets City guidelines and maintenance standards
SPORT & FITNESS FEATURES	Sport and fitness features clearly defined; manufacturer, type, style
CONSTRUCTION	Construction inspection and approval by City; grading, installation, concrete, ADA, equipment, warranty period (twelve months)



▲ *Play structures at Deputy Pierre W. Bain Park*

that will be required and the standard of maintenance the park will need. The developer providing the park should meet all the requirements outlined by the City including but not limited to, irrigation systems, play equipment, park amenities, and landscaping and plant materials. Upon receiving the completed park the Department is responsible for maintaining the facility; therefore the park should meet appropriate standards to ensure the sustainability of the park and enjoyment by the visitor.

project development

The Lancaster City Council approves the final Capital Improvement Program during the budget approval process for each fiscal year. Projects included in the CIP are developed by each department with the aid of planning documents, funding tools, citizen input, City goals, and staff experience. The proposed Department projects are integrated into a citywide plan based on overall needs and available funding.

TABLE 6-3: PRIORITY RANKING OF CIP PROJECT CRITERIA

CRITERIA	PRIORITY LEVEL		
	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
TURN-KEY PARK DEVELOPMENT	X		
UNMET NEEDS OR INFILL		X	
JOINT USE AGREEMENTS & CONTRACTS		X	
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS		X	
FUNDING SOURCE REQUIREMENTS & TIMELINES	X		
SAFETY STANDARDS FOR VISITORS, USERS & WORKERS	X		
GREEN BUILDING/LEED CERTIFICATION		X	
CITY INITIATIVES	X		
CITY PLANNING DOCUMENTS		X	
CAPACITY TO COMPLETE PROJECT	X		
ENTREPRENEURIAL & REVENUE GENERATING		X	
PAY-AS-YOU-GO STATUS			X

In the City of Lancaster, the Engineering Division implements the CIP and has been striving to improve effectiveness, efficiency and responsiveness in all areas of planning, developing and managing projects. The staff within the Parks, Recreation and Arts Department has identified more than fifty park and facility projects that could be realized as a CIP project sometime during the next ten years. At this time, some projects are funded while many others lack funding and resources to be considered.

To aid the Department in prioritizing and ranking future projects, additional criteria should be considered to guide decision making. Parks, recreation and arts programs are integral to building a

quality community, from healthy living to economic vitality, and the criteria for project development and CIP plans should reflect the policies, goals and practices of the Department. Table 6-1 outlines broad goals and criteria for project review.

Table 6-3 proposes a more detailed approach towards ranking and prioritizing parks and facility development projects. Previously, project funding may have been identified on a project-by-project basis. In the future, however, the expenditure requirements could determine whether a project has a higher priority. Grant programs are a good example of this ranking exercise. State and federal grant funds

At a Lancaster performance, crowds watch by moonlight ▶



have clear, finite terms for completing a project and the monies are not released until all the terms are met and approved by grantors. The City is usually required to obligate and expend the funds within a specific timeframe; if unable to do so, the City may risk forfeiture of the funds and greatly reduce its competitiveness for future grant opportunities.

Also, long term contracts and agreements for facility operations affect the ranking of CIP projects. The Department's commitment to maintaining state-of-the-art facilities for national level sporting events may impact the five year planning time period. Facility upgrades and renovations may have a higher importance value when compared to other development. Also, the ability to continue

attracting nationally recognized events is directly related to the economic outlook of the city.

Given the steady increase in population during the last few years, and the expected high growth rates in the coming years, Lancaster should rate turn-key park development as one of the highest priorities within the Department CIP structure. Projects meeting safety standards for park visitors should also be rated high, while projects that meet a planning timeframe might be ranked in the medium range until additional criteria guidelines make it a higher priority. Table 6-3 outlines a ranking system for the proposed criteria in order to provide a mechanism for determining which projects to pursue during each five-year planning period.

chapter seven FINANCIAL PLAN

The City of Lancaster prides itself on providing high quality municipal services in all areas of public service, as well as successfully implementing redevelopment activities within the community. In Fiscal Year 2006–2007, the City accomplished all of its programs, services, and development activities with a total budget of just over \$200 million. The Parks, Recreation and Arts Department accounted for approximately 21 percent of the City’s total budget, including programs, services, and capital development of parks and facilities.

Lancaster utilizes the budget as a financial plan for departments and services, a policy document, an operations guide, and a public education tool. As a policy document, the budget reflects key principles and priorities set forth by the City Council. Parks, recreation, and the arts play a vital role in meeting goals of the City such as revitalizing neighborhoods and developing great parks and leisure time activities. As the population continues to grow, the City will need to balance its funding allocations in

order to accommodate the changing needs of the community.

The Lancaster Parks, Recreation and Arts Department receives wide-spread support to provide above average service delivery in the area of park and facility maintenance, recreation services, signature special events, cultural and performing arts, and park development. The Department also coordinates the Antelope Valley Film Office and national level sporting centers, and facilitates all capital improvement projects. Total expenditures have steadily increased each year during the last several years, and Lancaster currently dedicates more than \$11 million to manage all department activities in one fiscal year, while more than \$8 million is allocated to capital improvement projects.

Funding for operations comes primarily from the City’s General Fund. The gross operating cost of all department operations is \$87.78 per capita. Park maintenance accounts for over 40 percent of the total department budget, reflecting the high level of maintenance that is expected and

TABLE 7-1: OPERATING BUDGET BY DIVISION

DEPARTMENT DIVISION	FY 06-07 BUDGET	% OF DEPARTMENT BUDGET
Administration	\$753,515	6
Film Liaison	\$76,055	1
Parks	\$4,686,860	41
Recreation & Visual Arts	\$4,499,840	37
Performing Arts	\$1,854,510	15
TOTAL	\$11,870,780	100

valued by residents. Recreation, visual arts, and special events combined represent 37 percent of the total department budget, while the Lancaster Performing Arts Center requires 15 percent of the Department’s funds to operate successfully. Division budgets, along with percentages of the Department’s total budget, are presented in Table 7-1, while Table 7-2 highlights the cost per capita of the total operating budget.

Some department programs and activities recover their costs through revenue generating activities and programs. The Lancaster Performing Arts Center has a high recovery rate of its expenses through program and event fees, as well as rental fees from individuals and groups, and the total revenue recovery rate for the Performing Arts Division is 52 percent. Recreation programs, activities and services enjoy year-round participation from individuals and

families in Lancaster. The revenue recovery rate for the Recreation and Visual Arts Division is 42 percent. The net cost (total operating cost minus the revenue generated) of providing parks, recreation and arts services department-wide in Lancaster is \$67.98 per capita. When all department expenditures are factored into the recovery rate, the Department recovers 22.5 percent of its General Fund allocation.

It is important to note that the Department provides scholarship assistance and reduced fees to low-income families and individuals. Supporting the community in this manner fosters human development and health and wellness, and increases quality of life for all families in Lancaster. Each year the Department explores opportunities to increase the revenue rate of recovery, enhance partnerships, and coordinate new opportunities in order to maintain the high quality of parks

and programs while serving all residents. The City may want to consider the development of additional guidelines that encourage entrepreneurial activities and provide clear direction for recovering revenue.

park & facility maintenance

The Parks Division serves as the leader in shaping the image and impression of the Lancaster community. Staff provide well-maintained parks and community facilities, and are also responsible for the upkeep of City Hall and other public spaces such as the train station, downtown parking areas and park and ride lots. These highly visible areas, along with parks and facilities, are important illustrations of civic pride and community involvement. If they are not well-maintained and presented in a safe and positive manner, public support for new programs, services and opportunities may diminish.

Funding for park maintenance operations comes from the City's General Fund. In the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2006–2007, the Department estimated that it would need \$5 million to maintain the current level of service for maintaining parks, facilities, and other public spaces. More than half that amount is allocated towards salaries and benefits for permanent staff, as well

**TABLE 7-2:
TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET
(NOT INCLUDING CAPITAL)**

P & R BUDGET	\$11,870,780
COST PER CAPITA	\$87.78
REVENUE	\$2,677,376
REVENUE RECOVERY	22.5%
NET COST PER CAPITA	\$67.98

as the cost of utilizing temporary employees during the busy seasons. The remaining monies fund the services, supplies, and capital outlay required to provide maintenance services.

Lancaster's legacy of developing state-of-the-art community facilities of national prominence has set the course for providing high quality maintenance. As the community grows and the need for additional parks remains steady, the City will need to allocate nearly 50 percent of the total Department budget towards the park division. If General Fund monies aren't able to keep pace with the changing needs of park maintenance, the level of service maintenance standards will decline.

The Department should begin to employ a variety of management



▲ *Students line up outside the LPAC*

techniques to achieve the highest level of service in maintenance while balancing the different park needs of the community, as well as the maintenance needs of other public spaces. Cost-saving strategies should be explored using the guidelines set forth for core versus non-core services, factors affecting maintenance, and separate levels of service for different park sizes and types.

The City could also explore the development of dedicated funding for

maintenance outside of the general fund monies. These funds would be allocated to park and facility maintenance specifically, thereby freeing up General Fund monies for other valued services within Lancaster. It is common for cities within California to establish special assessment districts to provide funding for value-added landscaping and maintenance. The City of Lancaster has established lighting and landscape districts for specific purposes, and one alternative is to expand the districts to serve a citywide function.

Community partners such as youth sports organizations can also contribute towards quality park maintenance. By establishing more formal use agreements, the Department can outline different methodologies for groups to support maintenance practices. Youth little leagues and soccer organizations that require a high frequency of use for their activities can contribute funding towards maintenance to ensure the standards meet their needs. Facility users such as private dance teams can also contribute towards the upkeep and investment of facilities. This type of support should be in addition to the basic level of park and facility operations, such as a facility attendant opening and closing a building or park gate.

It is important to remember that the Lancaster Parks, Recreation and Arts

Department is the steward of public places, parks, and facilities. The community, as a whole, needs to protect the investment by providing the funding and resources necessary to maintain the high level of maintenance residents enjoy today.

capital development

Lancaster has enjoyed a robust economy during the last several years, enabling the Department to implement a variety of park and facility development projects. New construction and housing starts provided funding for new facilities, while existing parks and facilities received upgrades and significant repairs. In Fiscal Year 2006–2007, Parks, Recreation and Arts capital projects accounted for 25 percent of the total citywide Capital Improvement Program budget.

New construction and community growth however, does not maintain an upward direction indefinitely. Residential growth and housing starts typically slow every ten years for a short time, thereby reducing the funding dedicated to new parks and facilities. This slow down in new growth will affect the existing economy and may result in a loss of General Fund dollars available for capital projects. The Department should work closely with other City departments to monitor trends and

develop a comprehensive funding plan that includes other revenue sources to sustain development during economical downturns.

The current six-year CIP plan includes development of new neighborhood parks, improvements and additions to community parks, and replacements and upgrades to existing facilities. Some projects can be completed in one funding cycle, but many projects require multiple years of financing and implementation because they are complicated in structure or large in nature.

In order to provide safe, clean and well-maintained facilities that serve as the hub for neighborhoods and families, the Department should consider adding another CIP category for upgrading play equipment. Play structures are highly valued by children and adults alike. They should be maintained regularly by following national standards, but play structures should also be repaired to meet safety standards. Play equipment should also be upgraded and changed to meet industry standards, as well as remain attractive to users.

Currently, the Department incorporates small CIP replacement projects and equipment repair into the operating budget. Funding comes from the Capital Replacement Fund and Fiscal Year 2006–2007 identifies more than

TABLE 7-3: FUNDING CATEGORIES

DEVELOPMENT CATEGORY	COST PER ACRE
Acquisition & Development	100%
Planning & Design	+15%
Project Administration, Plan Check, Inspection	+24%
Construction Contingency	+20%

\$500,000 in projects. The Capital Replacement Fund is providing support in the amount of \$357,745. The Department should continue budgeting \$500,000 each year for small CIP replacement projects and seek alternative funding sources to augment the Capital Replacement Fund.

funding

Development costs for construction of new parks and facilities can vary depending on the types of facilities constructed, the location (slopes or level surfaces), off-site costs, and constraints on the project. Estimating costs for a renovation or upgrade of existing facilities may be somewhat easier, but can also vary. The City of Lancaster annually reviews industry information to obtain up-to-date costs for land acquisition and development. This data informs the budgeting process and results in more accurate projections. Recent park development projects indicate that the cost of acquiring and developing land for

parks is nearing \$500,000 per acre. Table 7-3 identifies the categories included in the total cost per acre for park development.

Table 7-4 identifies the park development projects highlighted in the existing citywide CIP program, as well as projects recognized by the community as important; such as safe and well maintained play areas and neighborhood park development. The cost estimates total \$43,529,000 in today's dollars. In Table 7-5, additional projects are noted in years 7 through 20. These projects enhance the planning process over the next several years and can be incorporated into the citywide CIP when the opportunities are available to begin development.

Financing the proposed improvements listed in Table 7-4 will come from a number of sources including developer impact fees for new development, grants, special assessments for parks and facilities, redevelopment opportunities, community donations, and the General Fund.

The Department of Parks, Recreation and Arts received funding from Propositions 12 and 40, recent state bond programs approved by the voters to develop parks and improve existing parks. As Lancaster develops new neighborhoods, new development should pay for park development in order to main-

TABLE 7-4: 6-YEAR DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURES†

PROJECT	COST
Carter Park Development	\$5,000,000
Lancaster Museum/Art Gallery Renovation	\$3,000,000
City Hall Improvements	\$575,000
Clear Channel Stadium Upgrades	\$400,000
Deputy Pierre W. Bain Park Improvements	\$175,000
El Dorado Park Upgrades	\$900,000
James C. Gilley Park Development	\$6,500,000
Lancaster City Park Upgrades	\$1,205,000
Lancaster Performing Arts Center Upgrades	\$500,000
Park Renovations/Deferred Maintenance @ \$200,000 per year	\$1,300,000
Prime Desert Woodland Preserve Trails	\$950,000
Skytower Park Play Equipment Upgrades	\$50,000
Tierra Bonita Park Improvements	\$3,200,000
Western Hotel	\$80,000
Westside Community Park/Aquatics Center (CP-2) Phase I	\$5,000,000
Westside Neighborhood Park (NP-3)	\$3,000,000
Youth Baseball/Softball Center	\$12,500,000
Endeavor School/Park	\$3,500,000
TOTAL	\$47,735,000

† costs estimated in 2007 dollars

tain existing park development standards. The City has explored the need for developer impact fees for public facilities, aquatic centers, and parkland acquisition and facilities improvement, and the City Council should consider updating the development ordinances that call for impact fees.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

Current and potential funding sources commonly used in California to finance park and facility development are further described below:

- **Operating General Fund:** The City’s primary source of operating revenue. This fund supports

TABLE 7-5: 7- TO 20-YEAR DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURES†

PROJECT	COST
NP-1, 18 acres	\$7,200,000
NP-2, 22 acres	\$8,000,000
NP-9, 20 acres	\$4,800,000
NP-10, 9 acres	\$3,600,000
CP-10, 20 acres	\$9,000,000
Citywide Playground Improvements @ \$150,00 per year	\$1,400,000
Park Renovations/Deferred Maintenance @ \$200,000 per year	\$2,800,000
Tierra Bonita Community Center	\$3,200,000
Westside Community Park/Aquatics Center (CP-2) Phase II	\$6,100,000
TOTAL	\$40,000,000

†costs estimated in 2007 dollars

the Capital Replacement Fund and could support the playground replacement program.

- **General Obligation Bonds:** While the City has no general obligation debt at this time, it is a potential financing mechanism.
- **Revenue Bonds:** A special type of municipal bond distinguished by its guarantee of repayment solely from revenues generated by a specified revenue generating entity.
- **Parcel Tax:** A rate per parcel approved by registered voters used for specific purposes. This is a dedicated revenue stream that must be approved by two thirds of the voters.

- **Community Facilities District:** An infrastructure development and maintenance funding mechanism approved by property owners (public property exempted), also known as Mello-Roos funding.
- **Landscape and Lighting Assessment District:** Assessment for capital development and landscape and maintenance, easy to understand. Benefits property owners, and those who pay vote. Ballots are weighted and a simple majority is needed for approval.
- **Donations:** Donations of labor, land, or cash are popular methods for accomplishing small projects. Individuals, service agencies, private organizations and corporations often contribute towards a specific community project.
- **Partnerships:** Joint use agreements and sponsorship opportunities are not just for other public agencies. The Department can enter into agreements with support groups, service organizations, parent groups, corporations and more. Public-private partnerships can leverage dollars and bring added resources to the community.
- **Develop a Nonprofit Foundation:** Tax exempt “friends” organizations offer new opportunities for infusing money into communities for facilities and programs. If Lancaster has an existing com-



munity foundation, consider asking them to serve as a fiscal agent/sponsor towards a specific park fund.

- **State Grant Programs:** In addition to State Park bond and grant programs, parks and recreation projects qualify for funding from programs and departments such as the Safe Drinking Water Bond Act, Waste Management, Historic Preservation, Boating and Waterways, Youth and Family, Health and Obesity, and Bicycle Commuting and Safety.

- **Federal Grant Programs:** Federal funding sources in areas such as economic development, commerce, housing and urban development can support parks and recreation efforts.
- **Private Foundation:** Resources such as the Grantsmanship Center, The Foundation Center, United States Tennis Association, and many others offer grant programs or assistance in seeking grants related to parks and recreation.

▲ *Fencers spar in one of Lancaster's parks*

Crowds gather for a function inside the LPAC ▶



recommendations

To ensure financial sustainability in the long term, the City should add new funding sources to its financing matrix for both park maintenance and recreation programming. Staff's demonstrated flexibility and responsiveness to community needs and interests can also be applied to expense and revenue goals for the Department. A dedicated revenue source for park maintenance will relieve the General Fund from its current one hundred percent funding obligation, while enabling the Department to maintain a high level of maintenance services.

The Department should strive for higher revenue recovery rates for

recreation programs and activities. By offering programs that are more responsive to community interests rather than to instructor proposals, the City is likely to increase revenues and reduce its program cancellation rate.

The development of new methods for measuring program results and the adoption of entrepreneurial business practices will also help support long-term financial sustainability. Implementing a multi-faceted revenue and expenditure plan will ensure that the Department is well positioned to continue providing a legacy for generations of Lancaster residents.

appendix a
LEVELS OF SERVICE

park standards & levels of service

The City’s General Plan sets the park acreage standard at 5 acres per 1,000 residents.

The current level of service is the ratio of the city parkland to the population expressed in terms of acres per 1,000 residents. This figure offers a means for comparison with other communities and can be used to help project future parkland needs.

The population figure used to calculate the ratios listed below is 134,032 residents (from the 2005 Census, American Community Survey). The acreage figures are based on Lancaster’s park inventory.

As illustrated in Table A-1, Lancaster is not meeting their standard of 5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, largely because of their fast growing population. As of August 2006, the City’s level of service is 3.39 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. In the telephone survey and other community outreach efforts to date, residents have expressed a desire for more parks that are closer to home. Through this master planning process the Department can decide if they want to set acreage and/or geographic standards for different park types to ensure the Department meets the need for more local parks.

recreation facilities levels of service

The current General Plan does not specify a standard for recreation facilities. Through

this process, the Project Management Team can determine if they want to set a geographic distribution or numerical standard for priority recreation facilities.

Residents are well served by superior soccer and softball fields. During the non-summer months, Lancaster residents only have access to Eastside Pool since Jane Reynolds Pool is only open during the summer.

parks standards research

APPROACH

The Project Management Team and MIG staff selected five cities that are similar to Lancaster and have strong park and recreation facilities and

TABLE A-1: PARK LAND LEVELS OF SERVICE

PARK LAND TYPE	CURRENT RATIO (ACRES PER 1,000 RESIDENTS)
Neighborhood Parks	0.34 Acres/1,000
Community Parks	1.03 Acres/1,000
Linear Parks	0.04 Acres/1,000
Open Space	0.71 Acres/1,000
Special Use Areas	1.29 Acres/1,000
Undeveloped Park Land	1.45 Acres/1,000
TOTAL	3.39 ACRES/1,000

TABLE A-2: RECREATION FACILITY LEVELS OF SERVICE

FACILITY	COUNT	LANCASTER EXISTING LEVEL OF SERVICE
Multi Use Fields	3	1/45,075
Baseball Fields	3	1/45,075
Softball Fields	17	1/7,954
Soccer Fields	36	1/3,756
Swimming Pools	2	1/67,613
Activity Centers	6	1/22,538

TABLE A-3: RECREATION FACILITY LEVELS OF SERVICE COMPARISON

FACILITY	EXISTING LOS RANGE FOR COMPARABLE AGENCIES			
	LOW		HIGH	
Multi-Use Fields	0/198,550	San Bernardino	1/6,606	Moreno Valley
Baseball Fields Softball Fields	1/15,296	Santa Clarita	1/2,584	Roseville
Soccer Fields	0/178,367	Moreno Valley	1/8,633	San Bernardino
Swimming Pools	1/59,456	Moreno Valley	1/21,032	Santa Clarita

programs. The five benchmark cities included: Moreno Valley, Palmdale, Roseville, San Bernardino and Santa Clarita. MIG interviewed staff from these five cities to collect information on their parks, programs, park classifications and acreage standards. MIG also inquired about “best practices” for meeting the needs of growing and changing populations in these communities.

After compiling inventories for each city, MIG calculated the overall average and level of service for the five cities and compared them to Lancaster’s current standard and levels of service.

The five communities had an average park standard of 5.4 acres per 1,000 people. All of the cities are finding it challenging to reach or maintain their park acreage standard due to rapidly growing populations and rising land and construction costs.

Table A-3 shows the level of service ranges found in the comparable communities for selected recreation facilities. Lancaster has a relatively low level of service for multi-use fields because the City developed

most of their fields for specific sports. In comparison, Moreno Valley has developed its park system to have flexible turf space through multi-use fields. Lancaster has an average level of service for baseball/softball fields in terms of quantity, however unlike other cities, most of Lancaster’s softball fields are lit and tournament quality. Lancaster is also superior in terms of soccer field quality and level of service, although if the Department decides to include geographic service areas in their soccer facility standards, only one part of the City would be well served. All of the comparable communities are better served by swimming pools than Lancaster.

KEY FINDINGS

Trends

This research revealed some overall trends among the five comparable agencies. Like Lancaster, many of these departments are responsible for more than parks and recreation. Some cities also oversee arts, special events and/or community services in their departments. A few cities have a parks and recreation commission that advises the City

Council. All five cities partner with non-profit youth sports leagues to administer the youth sports programs. Many of these cities have also built regional sports complexes to serve these sports leagues.

Funding

To manage rising construction costs, some cities have required developers to construct new parks for them using the city's park design guidelines. Three cities recently raised their development impact fees to keep up with rising costs. San Bernardino recently created facility-specific fees (e.g., Aquatic impact fee, open space fee, community facilities fee, etc.) to ensure funding for the additional specific facilities. All cities surveyed rely on grants to fund programs and facilities, while two cities have a nonprofit foundation partner to encourage more flexible fund-raising opportunities.

Safety

Like Lancaster, to increase safety, some cities have implemented a park ranger program or work very closely with the police department to regularly patrol parks. Santa Clarita designs parks with safety in mind by showing their preliminary designs to the Sheriff's Department, and by maximizing defensible space by building low walls and planting low greenery. San Bernardino has addressed park safety by increasing programs in their parks. They also installed security cameras, which are most effective when connected

to a good internet monitoring system. Palmdale requires a Department-issued ID for youth to use the skate parks.

Seniors

All cities offered a variety of senior activities and services such as support groups, classes, trips and food/nutrition programs. Three of the five cities had one or more dedicated senior centers. San Bernardino's Senior Companion Program matches up seniors in need with more active seniors who want to help them.

Teens/Youth

All of the surveyed cities are similar to Lancaster in that they are automobile-oriented and have limited transportation options for youth. Some cities address this by offering group field trips within and outside the department service area. Santa Clarita brings activities to local parks in their "Parkmobile" which has staff providing snacks, games and crafts at various parks around the City. Roseville has a "Student Union" drop-in after school center for middle school students and it also hosts a monthly party for seventh and eighth graders. Some cities offer job and babysitter training programs for older teens to help ready them to enter the workforce.

arts standards research

APPROACH

Five comparable benchmark communities were chosen to assess the level of cultural

arts service that is offered in other communities. The following characteristics were used to determine the comparable communities: number, size and quality of current arts facilities and programs, population growth and median household income. The cities of Burbank, Moreno Valley, Roseville, Santa Clarita and Torrance were selected as comparable communities.

Information was gathered from each of the communities under eight major categories: performing arts; visual arts; recreation classes; arts excursions or similar programming; festivals or community-wide events; public art programs; foundations and other program partners. The information presented is designed to give a broad overview and help assess trends and “best practices.” Some communities are more robust in one or more of the areas depending on the level of service offered by the particular city. All of the cities have a variety of local cultural arts providers, private and non-profit, as well as local arts associations that complement City-sponsored programs and help expand the range of cultural arts opportunities for local residents.

KEY FINDINGS

- Some communities have supported the growth of cultural arts programming and activities by providing grants and funding to local providers, and in some cases artists themselves, as well as forming partnerships to deliver specific programs.

- Almost all of the communities have an arts committee, council or advisory panel to guide cultural arts programming and activities, which often brings together City staff and local community members.
- All of the communities offer festivals or citywide events, though the range of programming varies.
- Many of the communities offer opportunities to take cultural arts excursions outside the city. As with festivals, the range of opportunities is based on the specific community.
- The level of community-run or community-sponsored performing and visual arts space varies.
- All communities offer a full range of city-sponsored cultural arts classes, which include visual arts, dance and music. Some communities offer additional “special interest” classes and cultural arts camps.
- Four of the five communities have developed some form of programming that encourages and supports the development and inclusion of public art within the community.
- Local private and nonprofit cultural arts providers complement programming and activities provided by the cities and strengthen the cultural arts scene. Some communities have strong foundations or nonprofit organizations that are dedicated to expanding the arts.

appendix b
FACILITIES INVENTORY

Deputy Pierre W. Bain Park/ Eastside Pool

SIZE

15.5 acres

EXISTING FACILITIES

- Signage
- Paved path
- Playground equipment
- Open turf area/multi-use field
- Site amenities (benches, etc.)
- 2 basketball courts
- 2 volleyball courts (sand)
- 1 softball field, lighted
- Indoor swimming pool with locker rooms
- Restrooms with small classroom (used for preschool)
- Parking



PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

None

DEFICIENCIES

- Picnic tables not accessible
- No accessible path throughout site

DESCRIPTION

Deputy Pierre W. Bain Park contains one of Lancaster's two public swimming pools. The Eastside Pool is an indoor pool, but has skylights and roll-up doors on two sides of the building that are open in summer. The lighted softball field is in excellent condition, and incorporates a cell tower into one of the field lights. The School District operates a very small preschool program in the classroom attached to the restroom building. The playground area is located nearby, and contains two new structures with wood fiber safety surfacing. The basketball courts are well located and appear to be popular. There are some planters near the volleyball and basketball courts that were garden beds. These are now empty. A Joshua tree that was on the site when the park was built remains. Staff reported that another had been preserved, but had died due to the addition of irrigation to the site.

OPPORTUNITIES

This park is located near a middle school and an elementary school. In addition, the site has capacity to accommodate more recreation amenities.

El Dorado Park

SIZE

10.5 acres

EXISTING FACILITIES

- Signage
- Paved path
- Playground equipment
- Open turf area
- Site amenities
- Small picnic pavilion
- 1 tennis court
- 1 softball field, lighted
- Recreation building with restrooms

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

None

DEFICIENCIES

- Playground equipment not accessible

DESCRIPTION

El Dorado Park was built in 1962, and was a former County park. It is a smaller park, but appears to be used by neighbors. The playground area is fairly large, and includes two play structures, swings, and a climber. Centrally located in the park, the playground area is convenient to the restrooms and a picnic area. The tennis court is in excellent condition, and was resurfaced in 2005. The picnic area located between the playground and the softball field has a decomposed granite surface. The softball field in the park is small, and not suitable for adult play. Little League uses this lighted field, which is next to a school field also used by the Little League. Two cell towers are incorporated into the field lighting. The recreation building is used for preschool classes.

OPPORTUNITIES

This park is located next to a school.



Hull Park

SIZE

8.7 acres

EXISTING FACILITIES

- Signage
- Paved path (1/3 mi. length) with lighting
- Open turf area
- Site amenities
- Restrooms
- Parking
- Off-leash dog area
- Playground
- Memorial tree grove

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

None

DEFICIENCIES

- Limited amenities.
- Room to add more in future phases.

DESCRIPTION

Hull Park was opened in 2005. Located across from a high school, the park is large and appears to be popular with dog walkers and exercise walkers because of the very nice perimeter paved pathway. The development at the park is good quality, but there are currently limited amenities. The park has been planted with trees, but they are all still young and will provide limited shade in summer.

OPPORTUNITIES

The large open turf area offers room to add more amenities to the site. The restroom and parking already here would support additional development at the site.



Lancaster City Park

SIZE

65 acres

EXISTING FACILITIES

- Signage
- Paved path
- Batting cages (10)
- Open turf area
- 2 basketball courts
- 1 volleyball court (paved)
- 2 volleyball courts (sand)
- 9 tennis courts
- 2 practice tennis courts
- Group picnic area
- Small group picnic areas

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

- Linear pathway
- Redesigned concession building

DEFICIENCIES

None

DESCRIPTION

Lancaster City Park is the site of the City's Poppy Festival and is heavily used for softball tournaments. This site has almost 40 acres of turf, and supports a permanent staff of eight and a seasonal staff of four. The Antelope Valley Transportation Authority main bus hub is located adjacent to the park and provides an overflow parking area. This park includes two cell towers. Highway 14 passes near one side of the park, and a Costco was built on another boundary of the site. A commercial development is planned across the street. The park has good tree cover throughout. The small picnic areas all have a concrete block wall on one side, which was the support for a cantilevered shade structure. The shade structures eventually rotted, and were not replaced because the trees within the park had matured and were providing adequate shade. The activity center recreation building contains meeting rooms, a multipurpose room, office space, and an open air terrace. The multipurpose room is used for exercise classes, events and private rentals, meetings, summer day camp, and youth basketball. The floor is not resilient, so the site is less than optimum for youth basketball.

OPPORTUNITIES

The maintenance yard is in a very visible location, and is surrounded by slatted chain fencing. There may be an opportunity to reconfigure the maintenance yard within the park.



- Maintenance yard
- Softball fields
- Site amenities (benches, etc.)
- Parking
- Concessions building with restrooms
- Playground equipment, including climbing “rocks”
- 8 softball fields—lighted, regulation, dugouts with shade and misters
- Larger recreation building with multipurpose room

Mariposa Park

SIZE

7.5 acres

EXISTING FACILITIES

- Signage
- Paved path
- Playground equipment, including swings
- Open turf area
- Site amenities (benches, etc.)
- Picnic shelter with grill
- Recreation building
- Exercise course



PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

None

DEFICIENCIES

- Lack of picnic tables

DESCRIPTION

A former County park built in 1962, Mariposa Park is adjacent to an elementary school. The City maintains the school grounds, including the sports field. The park has mature trees and a large playground area. The recreation building is not used much by the City, because there are other options available. The exercise course at this park is located around the perimeter of the school grounds, and is the only feature of its type in Lancaster. Staff reported that since Mariposa Park is adjacent to a large planned park site and may be needed for school uses, it may revert to the school in the future. For this reason, there are no improvements planned at this site.

OPPORTUNITIES

None noted

Prime Desert Woodland Preserve

SIZE

102 acres

EXISTING FACILITIES

- Signage
- Trail system
- Interpretive center
- Parking
- Pavilion

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

- Continued trail development

DEFICIENCIES

- Not many benches
- Limited wayfinding and interpretive signage

DESCRIPTION

Prime Desert Woodland is a desert preserve that protects the local desert environment, including many ancient Joshua trees and a drainage course. An interpretive center on the site includes restrooms, docents, and gathering space for school groups and other programs. Outdoors, the site has trails on over 40 acres, with additional trail development planned. Development at the site has been sustainable: haybale construction interpretive center, pervious parking area, pervious trail system. The trails are decomposed granite held in place with soil stabilizer. Wildlife and birds use the site. This park is located near Rawley-Duntley Park, the community college campus, and an elementary school.

OPPORTUNITIES

The City owns 6.5 acres of prime desert that connects Rawley-Duntley to the Prime Desert Woodland.



Rawley-Duntley Park

SIZE

19 acres

EXISTING FACILITIES

- Signage
- Turf area
- Playground equipment
- Paved basketball court
- 2 baseball fields, grass infields
- 3 picnic shelters
- Site amenities
- Restrooms
- Parking
- Climbing boulders

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

None

DEFICIENCIES

None noted

DESCRIPTION

Completed in 1982, Rawley-Duntley Park has a pleasant character, with a canopy of mature trees and a variety of park amenities. The park appears to be very popular, and staff reported that the three picnic shelters are very well used. This park is located across the street from the community college campus, where a major expansion of recreation facilities is planned.

OPPORTUNITIES

The City owns 6.5 acres of prime desert adjacent to this site, offering an opportunity to connect Rawley-Duntley to the Prime Desert Woodland.



Jane Reynolds Park/ Webber Pool

SIZE

6.9 acres

EXISTING FACILITIES

- Signage
- Playground equipment
- Paved courts (lighted)—
1 basketball, 1 volleyball, 1 tennis
- Softball field (lighted)
- Multi use field
- Outdoor pool with concession building
- Recreation building
- Horseshoe pits
- Picnic shelter
- Site amenities
- Restrooms
- Parking



PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

None

DEFICIENCIES

None noted

DESCRIPTION

Jane Reynolds Park has one of Lancaster's two public swimming pools. The pool building is only 2 years old, although the pool is much older. The park has mature trees throughout, which give it some character and provides shade in the summer. Some berming was created in the park in the past, which provide topographic interest, but obstructs views into the park even though the berms are fairly low. The playground area is large, and there appears to be room for more play features. The paved courts were resurfaced in 2005, and are in excellent condition. Staff reports that the paved volleyball court is rarely used. The picnic shelter is older, and is located away from the other park features, making it less welcoming than the shelters in some of the other Lancaster parks.

OPPORTUNITIES

The park is near Parkview Middle School, where the City has joint use of the gymnasium.

Skytower Park

SIZE

13.3 acres

EXISTING FACILITIES

- Signage
- Playground equipment (very small)
- Pergola picnic shelter
- 1 basketball court
- 4 softball fields
- Recreation building with restrooms
- Parking (lighted)



PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

None noted

DEFICIENCIES

The playground area is very small, and mostly suited for tots. It is also not well connected with other areas of the park. Staff also reported that this developer-built park was not built to the specifications of typical city parks, and as a result is more maintenance-intensive.

DESCRIPTION

Skytower Park was built by a developer as part of an agreement negotiated by the City. The park includes a storm water detention basin, where the baseball fields are located. The park has a unique character, and is very peaceful. The major feature of this park is the recreation building, which has a large tower as an architectural feature. The tower is a visual feature only, and is not accessible to the public. The building has a classroom, used for preschool, and a multipurpose room available for classes and events. Pergolas extend off the building, and provide shade for picnic areas. The park includes a basketball court, which is well-sited and was being used by a group of teenagers on the weekday afternoon when MIG staff visited this park. Newly constructed Eastside High School, opened in early 2006, is nearby. The playground area is very small, and only suited for tots. Although it is convenient to the building and the parking lot, it is not well connected to the picnic areas and other features of the park. The detention basin area was built with soccer fields. After construction of the Lancaster National Soccer Center, the Pony Colt league built four softball fields in place of the soccer fields. These unlighted fields have skinned infields, but are used by the Pony Colt league for baseball.

OPPORTUNITIES

Eastside High School is nearby.

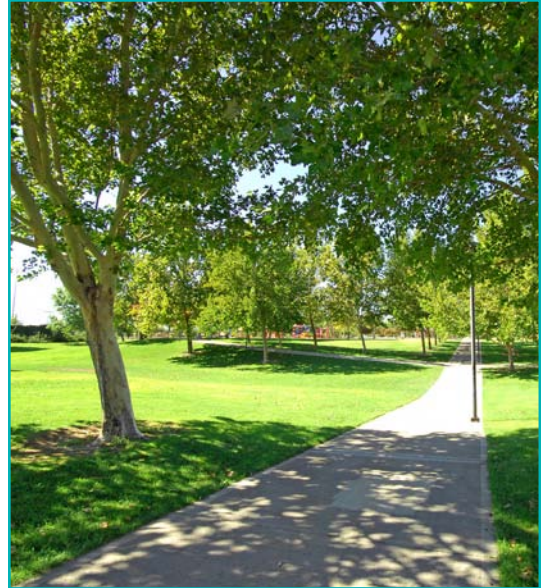
Tierra Bonita Park

SIZE

27 acres

EXISTING FACILITIES

- Signage
- Playground equipment
- Site amenities
- Paved path
- Open turf area
- Multipurpose football/soccer field (lighted)
- 2 softball fields (lighted)
- Restrooms with recreation office
- Parking (lighted)



PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

None noted

DEFICIENCIES

None noted

DESCRIPTION

Tierra Bonita Park is adjacent to Tierra Bonita elementary school and nearby a middle school. It is one of Lancaster's largest parks. A newer park, Tierra Bonita is very attractive and includes some features that are shared with the elementary school. The parking area at the park is shared with the school, and the turnaround area is used by elementary school parents for drop-off and pick-up of students. The playground area has separate tot and youth areas, and includes swings. It is one of the larger playgrounds in Lancaster, and has benches and other amenities for parents. The restrooms and recreation office are located nearby. This park incorporates a storm drainage facility, which is well-integrated into the park and provides topographic interest in a community that is relatively flat. Tierra Bonita Park also has a large entry feature with landscaping, the most elaborate of Lancaster's parks. The softball fields get some spillover from City Park for league play. The park is also the site of two tournaments, one in July and one in October, with 80 to 90 youth Western region teams. The landscaping around the playground area is in good condition. One acre of this site is used for a Los Angeles County fire station. Staff indicated the fire station is a benefit, as it is staffed round the clock and provides "eyes" on the park during off hours.

OPPORTUNITIES

This park has capacity to add additional features, and has even been discussed as a potential site for a large recreation center.

appendix c
COMMUNITY NEEDS

community needs

The following tables reflect Lancaster’s needs for facilities, parks, and programs, based on the research conducted by the Project Team. Methods for identifying community needs included:

- Phone survey and stakeholder interviews;
- Feedback from the Community Advisory Committee, Project Management Team, and focus groups for educational partners, seniors, trails and open space, cultural arts, and youth;
- Visioning workshop and youth visioning workshop;
- Poppy Festival activities and outreach;
- Level of service (LOS) analysis; and
- Demographic analysis.

TABLE C-1: FACILITIES NEEDS

CATEGORY	COMMUNITY NEEDS	SOURCE/S	POTENTIAL PARTNERS TO ADDRESS NEEDS
Amenities	More group picnic areas and playgrounds	Phone Survey	
Amenities	Enhanced availability of facilities (especially in evenings) and facility cleanliness	Phone Survey	
Amenities	Enhanced availability of restrooms; restrooms open for longer hours; cleaner restrooms	Phone Survey; Community Advisory Committee	
Amenities	Improved sense of safety and security in parks	Phone Survey; Community Advisory Committee; Focus Groups; Stakeholder Interviews; Poppy Festival	
Amenities	Pay phones	Senior Focus Group	
Amenities	More tot lots and playgrounds with benches to provide a space for supervised play	Senior Focus Group	
Amenities	Park amenities that support daylong excursions/adventures	Park and Recreation Trends in California 2005	
Amenities	A variety of park amenities that allow for longer visits, social gatherings, and meals, particularly for ethnic groups	Park and Recreation Trends in California 2005	
Sports fields & courts	Informal recreation; more sports fields for non-competitive sports, such as casual “pick-up” games	Phone Survey; Visioning Workshop	Antelope Valley College and local public and private schools
Sports fields & courts	Tennis facilities with at least four courts	Phone Survey	
Aquatic facilities	More seniors, youth, and AVC students to use the AVC pool	Antelope Valley College	Antelope Valley College

TABLE C-1: FACILITIES NEEDS (CONTINUED)

CATEGORY	COMMUNITY NEEDS	SOURCE/S	POTENTIAL PARTNERS TO ADDRESS NEEDS
Aquatic facilities	More swimming pools (specifically indoor pools) and pool activities	Phone Survey; Youth Focus Group; Poppy Festival youth respondents	
Trails	A citywide system of paths and trails for walking, running, horseback riding, and bicycling; trail connectivity; connections to key destinations; walkable/bikeable neighborhoods	Visioning Workshop; Poppy Festival; Educational Partners Focus Group; Project Management Team; Trails & Open Space Focus Group; Poppy Festival youth respondents; Youth Visioning Workshop	City Planning & Public Works Departments; local bicycle, walking, and equestrian groups; local education providers; neighboring city and county officials; AVC and other destinations
Trails	A safer, healthier, and more beautiful way to travel around town to help reduce travel by car	Poppy Festival	
Trails	Information about safety and proper use of current trails; clear definitions of right-of-way	Trails & Open Space and Youth Focus Groups	Local bicycle, walking, and equestrian groups

TABLE C-2: PARKS NEEDS

CATEGORY	COMMUNITY NEEDS	SOURCE/S	POTENTIAL PARTNERS TO ADDRESS NEEDS
Neighborhood Parks	More neighborhood parks within walking distance of residents' homes; more pocket parks	Poppy Festival; Phone Survey; Visioning Workshop	City Planning & Public Works Departments; housing developers; local business associations
Neighborhood Parks	Co-location of parks and schools and coordinated park and school programming	Visioning Workshop; Focus Groups	Local public and private schools
Neighborhood Parks	New parks in new housing developments	Visioning Workshop	City Planning Department; housing developers
Neighborhood Parks	More dedicated park land in order to reach and maintain the current park standard	LOS Analysis	
Community Parks	More smaller community parks	Visioning Workshop	
Community Parks	Parks with sports fields and courts for a growing population	Demographic Analysis	Sports advocate groups; Little League; other sports groups
Community Parks	More "destination" parks that can host community events	Poppy Festival; Phone Survey	Local arts groups; ethnic organizations; family service providers
Linear Parks	Trails for walking, running, horseback riding, and bicycling	Poppy Festival	Community trails groups; public land preservation groups; City Planning & Public Works Department

TABLE C-2: PARKS NEEDS (CONTINUED)

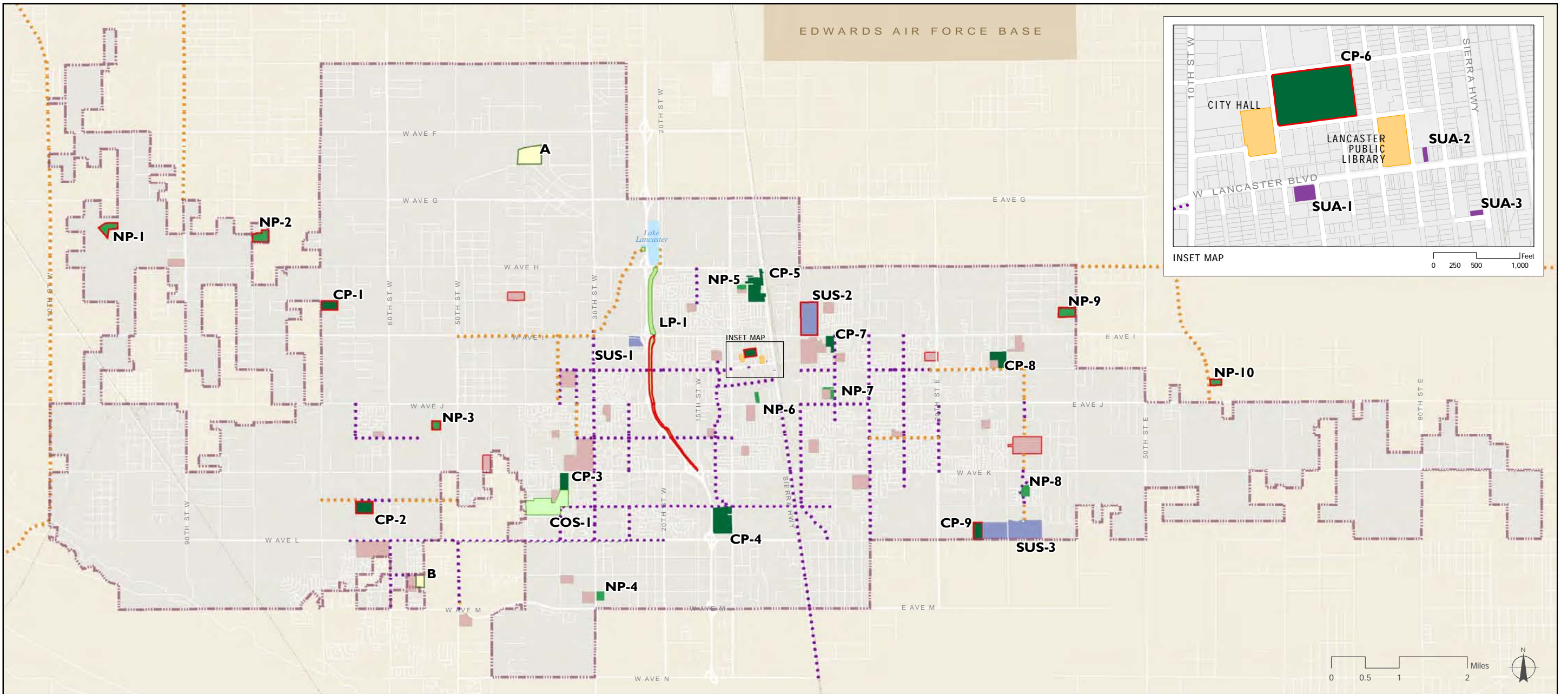
CATEGORY	COMMUNITY NEEDS	SOURCE/S	POTENTIAL PARTNERS TO ADDRESS NEEDS
Linear Parks	Network of trails and greenbelts; transportation corridors	Visioning Workshop	Community trails groups; public land preservation groups; City Planning & Public Works Departments
Conservation/ Open Space	Preservation of existing open spaces and natural desert landscape (in the face of rapid growth)	Phone Survey; Demographic Analysis; Visioning Workshops	City Planning Department; Antelope Valley Conservancy and other land conservation societies
Conservation/ Open Space	Acquisition of additional public open spaces and preserves given population growth	Demographic Analysis	Housing developers
Special Use Areas	More informal sports and multi-use fields located throughout the city that are accessible to all residents	Phone Survey	
Special Use Areas	Additional cultural arts programs and experiences that are smaller in scope and neighborhood-based	Phone Survey	
Safety Considerations for All Park Types	Enhanced sense of safety and security		Neighborhood associations; special interest groups
Safety Considerations for All Park Types	Programs to address negative or deviant behavior among park users (loose dogs, etc.)		Park ranger program; police
Other Design & Development Features	Meet General Plan LOS standard of 5.0 acres/1,000 people at build-out	LOS; Demographic Analysis	
Other Design & Development Features	Information about safety and proper use of current trails; clear definitions of right-of-way	LOS; Demographic Analysis	
Other Design & Development Features	Consistent level of service for new residents; more parks on the eastern and western edges of the city	LOS; Demographic Analysis	
Other Design & Development Features	Parks that serve both formal and informal uses and the everyday recreational needs of residents	Poppy Festival; Phone Survey; Visioning Workshop	
Other Design & Development Features	Upgraded existing equipment	Poppy Festival; Phone Survey	
Other Design & Development Features	Continued high level of maintenance at existing parks	Poppy Festival; Phone Survey	

TABLE C-3: PROGRAM NEEDS

CATEGORY	COMMUNITY NEEDS	SOURCE/S	POTENTIAL PARTNERS TO ADDRESS NEEDS
Athletics	Programs that support health and fitness	Phone Survey	
Athletics	Space for informal, non-competitive recreation activities and sports games, possibly at school sites	Youth Focus Group; Poppy Festival youth respondents; Educational Partners Focus Group	Local public and private schools
Athletics	More flexible scheduling; more open use times for facilities		Private fitness centers
Aquatics	Additional programs and facilities in general	Phone Survey; Poppy Festival	
Community Programs	Courses that are geared towards adults only	Phone Survey; Course Analysis	Antelope Valley College; other City departments
Community Programs	Additional programming for a growing senior population (though there is high satisfaction with the Antelope Valley Senior Center)	Phone Survey; Demographic Analysis	
Community Programs	More arts and “life skills” courses offered at local schools	Education Focus Group	Local public and private schools
Community Programs	More youth-oriented programming in general	Youth Focus Group; Phone Survey; Demographic Analysis	Local public and private schools; Youth Commission
Community Programs	Accessible recreation opportunities and course locations; address transportation barriers (particularly for seniors and youth)	Youth Focus Group; Community Advisory Committee; Demographic Analysis	
Special Events	More community festivals (e.g., street fairs, farmers’ markets, downtown or neighborhood festivals; ethnic festivals)	Phone Survey; Poppy Festival youth respondents; Phone Survey	Neighboring cities; local businesses; City Redevelopment Agency; ethnic and cultural organizations
Special Events	Live music concerts in the park and teen dances	Poppy Festival youth respondents	
Special Events	Organized community gatherings, family events, and teen/family entertainment	Visioning Workshops; Youth Focus Group	Local businesses and organizations
Special Events	Acquisition of additional public open spaces and preserves given population growth	Youth Focus Group	Youth Commission
Cultural Arts	Enhanced youth activities and performing arts programs (e.g., music, dance, and visual arts)	Poppy Festival; Poppy Festival youth respondents; Phone Survey	Private cultural arts providers
Cultural Arts	Arts programs just for adults	Phone Survey	Private cultural arts providers
Cultural Arts	Supplemental arts programming at schools, which lack capacity	Educational Focus Group; Community Advisory Committee	
Cultural Arts	Integrating public art throughout Lancaster	Cultural Arts Focus Group	

TABLE C-3: PROGRAM NEEDS (CONTINUED)

CATEGORY	COMMUNITY NEEDS	SOURCE/S	POTENTIAL PARTNERS TO ADDRESS NEEDS
Youth Programming	Programs for the increasing number of children and youth	Demographic Analysis	
Youth Programming	Transportation to programs	Youth Focus Group	
Youth Programming	Programming that helps teens feel safe and secure, yet retains their level of independence	Youth Focus Group	
Youth Programming	Youth programs that address the growing rate of obesity	Community Advisory Committee	
Marketing & Outreach	Enhanced communication and marketing about facilities, services, upcoming events, and arts programs to increase awareness	Phone Survey; Project Management Team; Community Advisory Committee; Cultural Arts Focus Group	
Marketing & Outreach	Marketing efforts that are oriented to youth and the media that youth use	Youth Focus Group	
Marketing & Outreach	Targeted outreach efforts for new residents that reflect emerging recreation trends	Project Management Team; Community Advisory Committee	
Marketing & Outreach	Marketing materials for non-English speakers	Demographic Analysis	



Existing Parks

- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Open Space
- Linear Park
- County Park

Special Use Areas

- Arts
- Sports

- City Limits
- Railroad

Future Use Areas

- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Linear Park
- Sports
- Public School

Trails and Bikeways

- Existing
- Proposed

- Public School
- Public Building

Neighborhood Parks

- NP-1 Future Westside NP-a
- NP-2 Future Westside NP-b
- NP-3 Future Westside NP-c
- NP-4 Hull Park
- NP-5 Mariposa Park
- NP-6 Jane Reynolds Park/
Webber Pool
- NP-7 El Dorado Park
- NP-8 Skytower Park
- NP-9 Future Eastside NP-d
- NP-10 Future Eastside NP-e

Linear Park

- LP-1 Amargosa Creek Linear Park

Community Parks

- CP-1 Future Westside CP-a
- CP-2 Future Westside CP-b
- CP-3 Rawley Duntley Park
- CP-4 Lancaster City Park
- CP-5 Whit Carter Park
- CP-6 Gilley Park
- CP-7 Pierre W. Bain Park/
Eastside Pool
- CP-8 Tierra Bonita Park
- CP-9 Future Eastside CP-c

County Parks

- A Apollo County Park
- B George Lane Park

Special Use Area - Arts

- SUA-1 Lancaster Performing Arts Center
- SUA-2 Western Hotel
- SUA-3 Lancaster Museum/Art Gallery

Special Use Area - Sports

- SUS-1 Clear Channel Stadium
- SUS-2 Youth Baseball / Softball Complex
- SUS-3 Lancaster National Soccer Center

Conservation/Open Space Area

- COS-1 Prime Desert Woodland Preserve



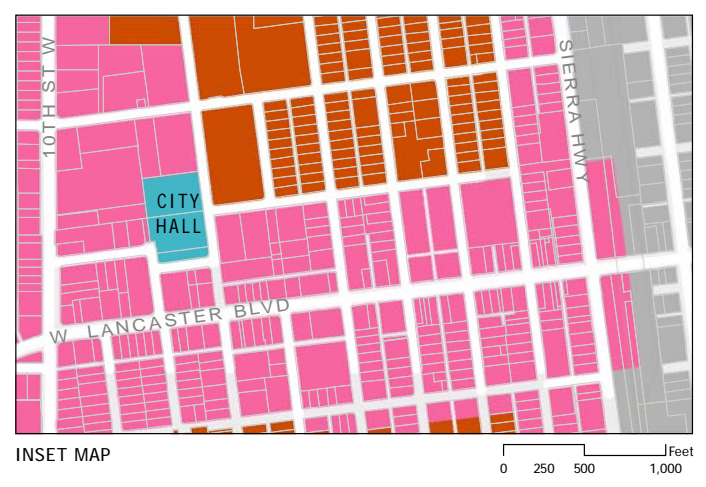
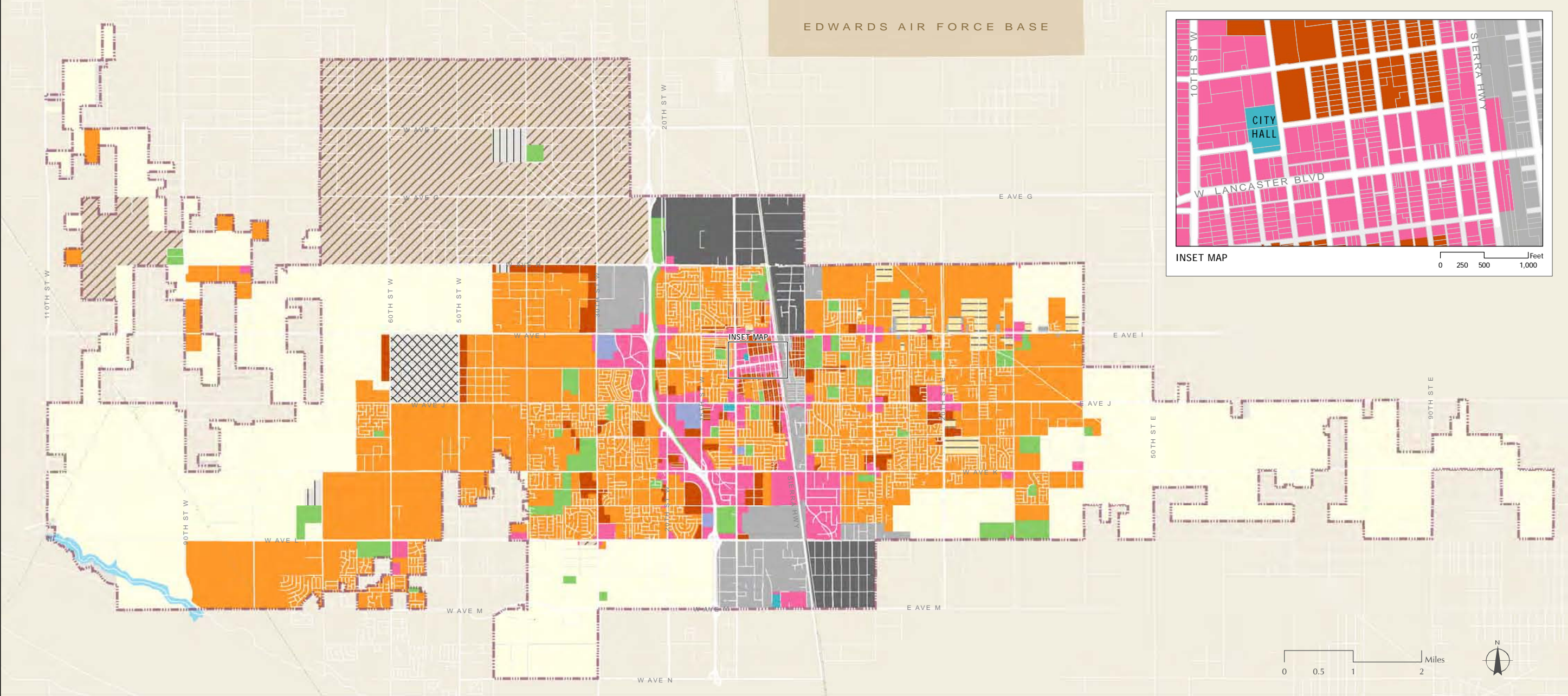
Department of Parks, Recreation and Arts
Lancaster, California



















Existing and Future Park Facilities




MOORE IACOFANO GOLTSMAN, INC.


August 2007

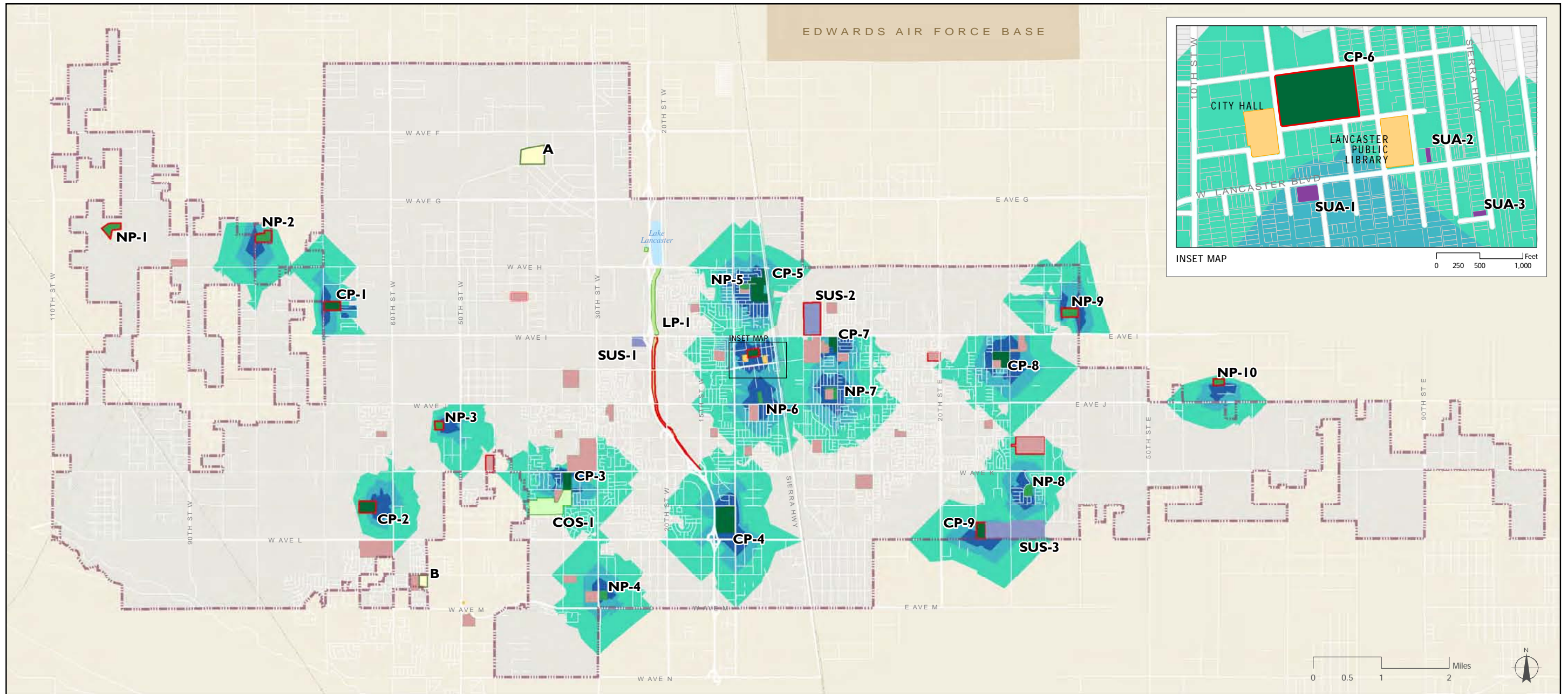


 Mobile Home Park	 Open Space	 School Service Area
 Rural Residential: 1 unit / 1 acre or 1 unit / 2.5 acres or 1-2 units / 1 acre	 Specific Plan	 Neighborhood Park Service Area
 Single Family Residential on 7,000 to 15,000 sq.ft. lots	 Heavy Industrial	 Community Park Service Area
 Moderate and High Density Residential of 6.6--30 units/acre and Apartment Complexes	 Light Industrial	 Status to be Determined
 Commercial: Regional, General, Planned Development, Business Park, Central Business District and Office Professional	 Public	 Prison
	 Hospital	 City Limits
		 California Aqueduct


 Department of Parks, Recreation and Arts
 Lancaster, California

Zoning


 MOORE IACOFANO GOLTSMAN, INC.
 August 2007



Existing Parks	Future Use Areas
Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood Park
Community Park	Community Park
Open Space	Linear Park
Linear Park	Sports
County Park	Public School
Special Use Areas	Service Areas
Arts	0 to 1/4 Mile
Sports	1/4 to 1/2 Mile
City Limits	1/2 to 1 Mile
Railroad	<small>Note: NP-1 has no surrounding road network</small>
	Public School
	Public Building

Neighborhood Parks	Community Parks	Special Use Area - Arts
NP-1 Future Westside NP-a	CP-1 Future Westside CP-a	SUA-1 Lancaster Performing Arts Center
NP-2 Future Westside NP-b	CP-2 Future Westside CP-b	SUA-2 Western Hotel
NP-3 Future Westside NP-c	CP-3 Rawley Duntley Park	SUA-3 Lancaster Museum/Art Gallery
NP-4 Hull Park	CP-4 Lancaster City Park	Special Use Area - Sports
NP-5 Mariposa Park	CP-5 Whit Carter Park	SUS-1 Clear Channel Stadium
NP-6 Jane Reynolds Park/ Webber Pool	CP-6 Gilley Park	SUS-2 Youth Baseball / Softball Complex
NP-7 El Dorado Park	CP-7 Pierre W. Bain Park/ Eastside Pool	SUS-3 Lancaster National Soccer Center
NP-8 Skytower Park	CP-8 Tierra Bonita Park	
NP-9 Future Eastside NP-d	CP-9 Future Eastside CP-c	
NP-10 Future Eastside NP-e		
Linear Park	County Parks	Conservation/Open Space Area
LP-1 Amargosa Creek Linear Park	A Apollo County Park	COS-1 Prime Desert Woodland Preserve
	B George Lane Park	



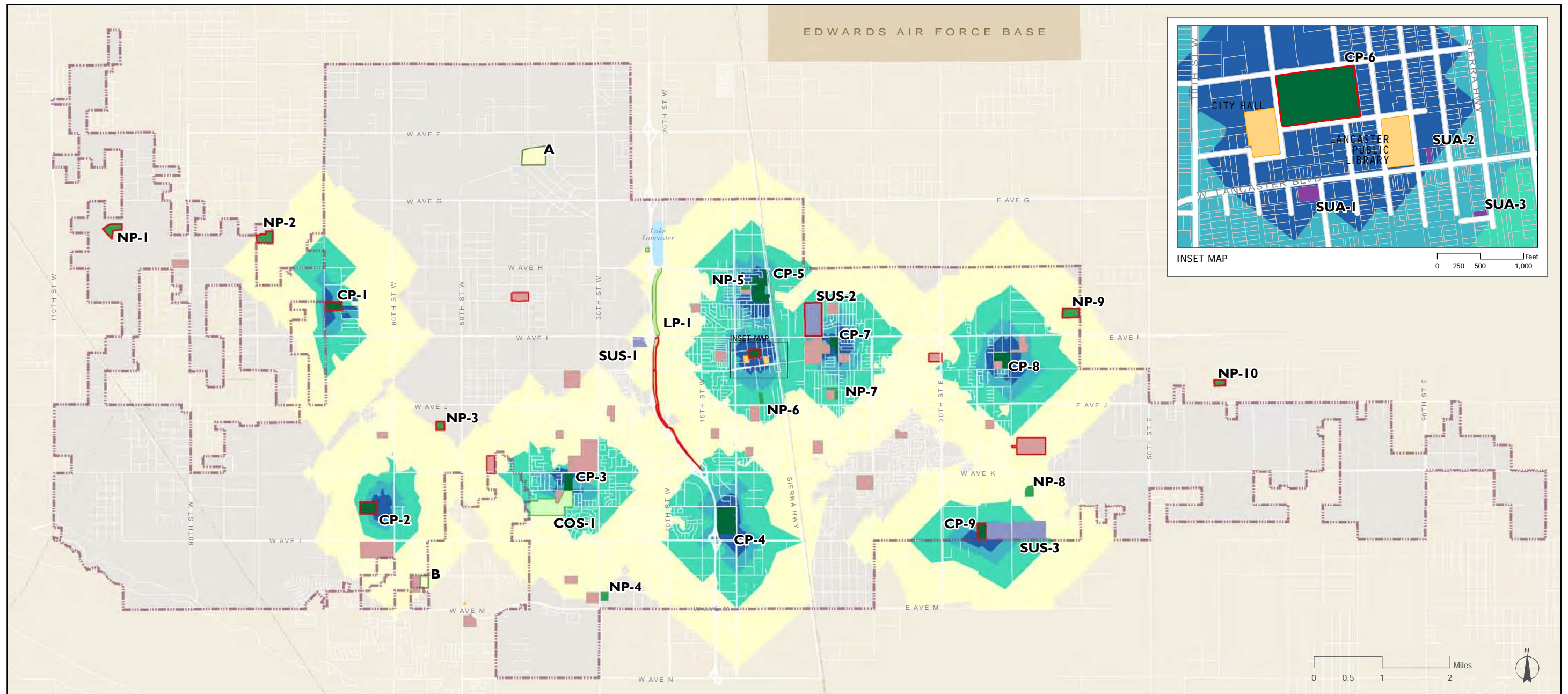
Department of Parks, Recreation and Arts
Lancaster, California

Neighborhood Park Service Area



MOORE IACOFANO GOLTSMAN, INC.
August 2007

MAP 3-1: NEIGHBORHOOD PARK SERVICE AREA



Existing Parks		Future Use Areas	
	Neighborhood Park		Neighborhood Park
	Community Park		Community Park
	Open Space		Linear Park
	Linear Park		Sports
	County Park		Public School
Special Use Areas		Service Areas	
	Arts		0 to 1/4 Mile
	Sports		1/4 to 1/2 Mile
	City Limits		1/2 to 1 Mile
	Railroad		1 to 2 Miles
			Public School
			Public Building

- Neighborhood Parks**
- NP-1 Future Westside NP-a
 - NP-2 Future Westside NP-b
 - NP-3 Future Westside NP-c
 - NP-4 Hull Park
 - NP-5 Mariposa Park
 - NP-6 Jane Reynolds Park/ Webber Pool
 - NP-7 El Dorado Park
 - NP-8 Skytower Park
 - NP-9 Future Eastside NP-d
 - NP-10 Future Eastside NP-e
- Linear Park**
- LP-1 Amargosa Creek Linear Park

- Community Parks**
- CP-1 Future Westside CP-a
 - CP-2 Future Westside CP-b
 - CP-3 Rawley Duntley Park
 - CP-4 Lancaster City Park
 - CP-5 Whit Carter Park
 - CP-6 Gilley Park
 - CP-7 Pierre W. Bain Park/ Eastside Pool
 - CP-8 Tierra Bonita Park
 - CP-9 Future Eastside CP-c
- County Parks**
- A Apollo County Park
 - B George Lane Park

- Special Use Area - Arts**
- SUA-1 Lancaster Performing Arts Center
 - SUA-2 Western Hotel
 - SUA-3 Lancaster Museum/Art Gallery
- Special Use Area - Sports**
- SUS-1 Clear Channel Stadium
 - SUS-2 Youth Baseball / Softball Complex
 - SUS-3 Lancaster National Soccer Center
- Conservation/Open Space Area**
- COS-1 Prime Desert Woodland Preserve

Department of Parks, Recreation and Arts

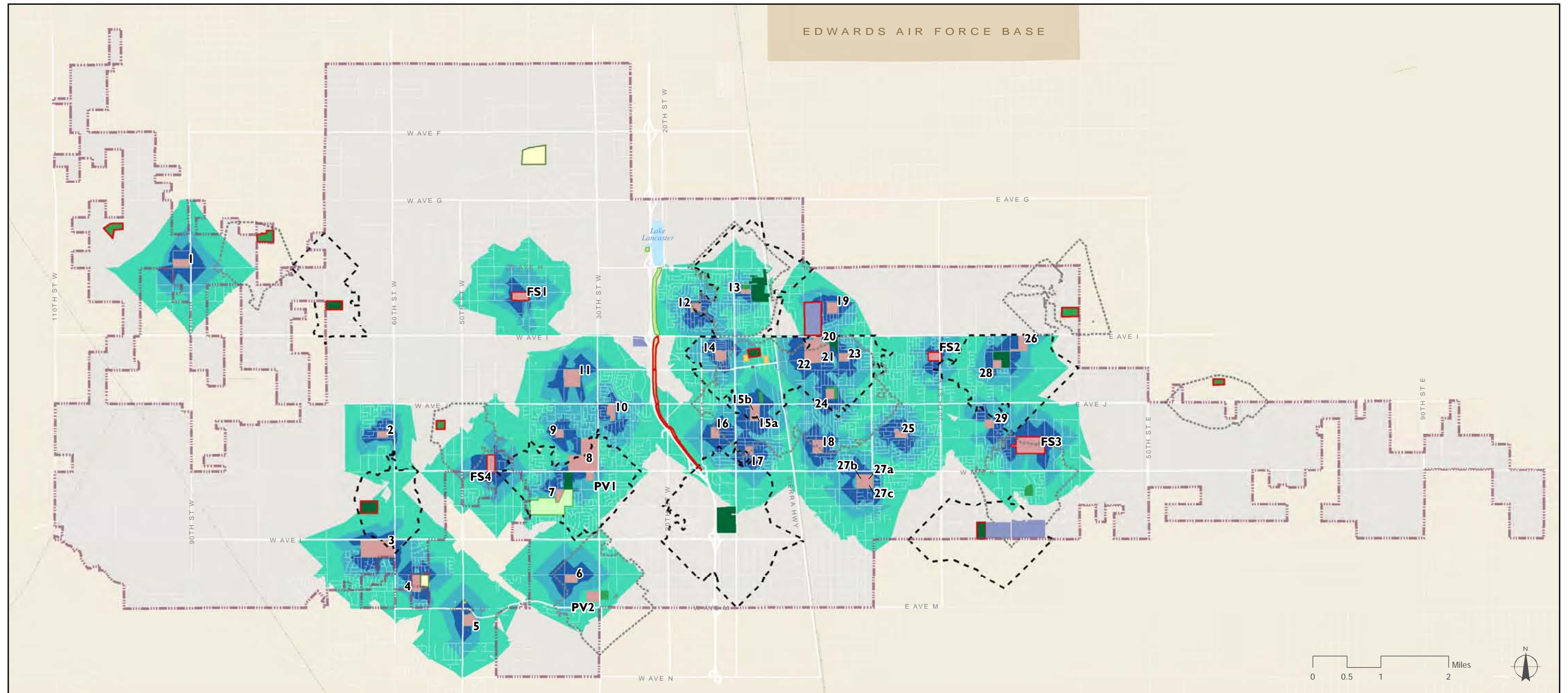
 Lancaster, California

Community Park Service Area

MOORE IACOFANO GOLTSMAN, INC.

 August 2007

MAP 3-2: COMMUNITY PARK SERVICE AREA



Existing Parks	Service Areas
Neighborhood Park	0 to 1/4 Mile
Community Park	1/4 to 1/2 Mile
Open Space	1/2 to 1 Mile
Linear Park	1 Mile Community Park
County Park	1 Mile Neighborhood Park
Future Use Areas	
Neighborhood Park	Arts
Community Park	Sports
Linear Park	Public School
Sports	Public Building
Public School	
City Limits	
Railroad	

Lancaster Unified School District	Antelope Valley Union High School District
7 - Nancy Cory Elementary	3 - Quartz Hill High School
9 - West Wind Elem School	11 - Lancaster High School
10 - Amargosa Creek Middle	20 - Desert Winds Continuation High School
12 - Desert View Elem School	21 - Antelope Valley Adult School
13 - Mariposa Elem School	22 - Antelope Valley High School
14 - Monte Vista School	FS3 - Eastside High School
15a - Crossroads	
15b - Park View Middle School	Westside Unified School District
16 - Sunnysdale Elem School	1 - Del Sur School
17 - Sierra Elementary	2 - Sundown Elem School
18 - Joshua Elem School	4 - Joe Walker Middle School
	5 - Quartz Hill Elem School
	6 - Valley View Elem School
	Private
	PV1 - Bethel Christian Academy
	PV2 - Paraclete High School
Eastside Unified School District	
26 - Gifford C. Cole Middle School	
29 - Columbia Elementary	
28 - Tierra Bonita South Elem School	
Other Schools	
8 - Antelope Valley College	
19 - Piute Middle School	
23 - Linda Verde Elem School	
24 - El Dorado Elem School	
25 - Lincoln Elem School	
27a - Jack Northrop Elem School	
27b - New Vista Middle School	
27c - Endeavor Middle School	
FS1 - Vacant Land	
FS2 - New Elementary School #1	
FS4 - Future Middle School	

Department of Parks, Recreation and Arts
 Lancaster, California

School & Park Property Service Area

MOORE IACOFANO GOLTSMAN, INC.
 August 2007