



*City of Salinas*

# Parks, Rec & Libraries

MASTER PLAN | July 2019

# DRAFT







*City of Salinas*

# **Parks, Rec & Libraries**

**MASTER PLAN** | July 2019

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

***The City of Salinas sincerely thanks all of the residents, stakeholders and others who contributed to this planning effort and gave their time and insights to inform the Parks, Recreation & Library Services Master Plan.***

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# Purpose & Process

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*The purpose of this Master Plan is to create a vision for an innovative, inclusive and interconnected system of parks and open spaces that promotes outdoor recreation, healthy living and environmental conservation as integral elements of a thriving, livable Salinas, as well as creating and maintaining recreation and library facilities that support excellent programming and services. The Plan will establish a path forward to guide the City's efforts to provide high quality, community-driven programs, parks, libraries, and recreational opportunities across Salinas.*

The 2019 Master Plan considers the park, recreation and library needs of residents citywide. It provides current inventories, demographic conditions, needs analyses, management considerations and capital

project cost estimates. The Plan establishes specific goals, recommendations and actions for developing, conserving and maintaining high-quality parks, facilities, amenities and open spaces across the city.

This Parks, Recreation and Libraries Master Plan is a document that guides city elected and appointed officials, management and staff when making decisions or taking actions regarding planning, funding, acquiring, developing or implementing parks, open space, recreational programs and library facilities. The Plan is intended to be updated periodically to remain current with the community's leisure interests.

## 1.1. PROCESS

This citywide Master Plan is a reflection of the community's interests and needs for high quality parks, recreational facilities and programs and library services. The planning process to develop the Master Plan encouraged and enabled public engagement in the choices, priorities and future direction of these facilities and services. The Plan's project team, consisting of project consultants, city staff and a stakeholder steering committee, conducted a variety of public outreach activities to solicit feedback and comments, in concert with a review of the parks and facilities inventory, level of service review and system-wide needs assessment.

Current community interests were identified through a series of public outreach efforts that included a mail and online survey, numerous open house meetings and pop-up events, focus group and stakeholder discussions, website content and Library & Community Services Commission meetings. An assessment of the park inventory became the basis for determining the current performance of the City's system of parks. In addition, an overarching needs analysis was conducted for recreation programs and facilities and for library facilities to assess current demands and forecast future demand accounting for population growth and land development.

To guide the implementation of the Plan's goals, a capital facilities plan was developed with a set of strategies that identified costs and potential funding sources. Together, this process was incorporated into the Plan document, which will become a component of the City's General Plan and direct park system service delivery for the next 20 years. However, the Plan is intended to be updated periodically, as needed, to remain current with the community's leisure interests and public library needs.

## 1.2. ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

The Parks, Recreation and Libraries Master Plan is comprised of the following chapters. Following is a brief overview of each chapter.

- Chapter 1: Purpose & Process
- Chapter 2: Introduction
- Chapter 3: The Salinas Community
- Chapter 4: Community Outreach Findings
- Chapter 5: Our Planning Structure: Themes, Policies & Goals
- Chapter 6: Parks System Needs Assessment
- Chapter 7: Recreation Facilities & Programs
- Chapter 8: Library Facilities & Services
- Chapter 9: Implementation
- Chapter 10: Operations & Maintenance
- Appendices (under separate cover)





# Introduction

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*In 2017, the City undertook 'Visión Salinas' to coordinate several major planning initiatives to ensure a unified focus and to initiate visioning efforts for the City's General Plan Update. The input received from the community as part of the Visión Salinas outreach, other planning efforts and recently adopted City documents was compiled by staff and crafted into Guiding Principles reflecting those topics that the community voiced as being important to the future of the City. It is intended that these Guiding Principles will inform the update of the City's General Plan in 2019 and the preparation of other planning documents, such as this Master Plan.*

## 2.1. VISIÓN SALINAS GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Guiding Principles consist of an Overarching Core Value and eight topic principles as follows:

All of the City's decisions, policies and practices are rooted in the principles of social equity and sustainability to ensure the fundamental needs of all people are met. The overarching core value for Salinas as "an inclusive, diverse and welcoming City where all persons can thrive" is embedded in the City's Guiding Principles and provides a foundation for the goals for the provision of parks, recreation centers and library services. More specifically, a selection from the City's guiding principles that frame these goals are summarized below.

### **Healthy and Safe Community – A City which strives to protect and improve the personal safety, health and welfare of the people who live, work, and visit:**

- Build a trusting dialogue between the community and public safety to reduce violence and ensure people feel safe going about their daily activities.

- Address the root causes of violence through investment in strategies that support safe neighborhoods, youth, and families.
- Emphasize crime prevention through the design of the built environment.
- Partner with health providers and organizations to improve the mental and physical health of the community, reduce health inequities, and provide access to health care.
- Promote equitable access to healthy food, parks, recreation and other desired amenities to encourage healthier lifestyle choices.
- Ensure the protection and sustainable use of the City's air, water, land, and natural resources.
- Cultivate the preparedness of our most vulnerable population, improve the resiliency of the City's hard infrastructure, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to ensure a better response to climate change and natural disasters.

### **Youth are the Future – A City where youth flourish and have equitable access to education, recreation and a healthy urban environment:**

- Develop innovative and culturally relevant collaborations to end childhood poverty, improve literacy and prevent youth violence.
- Ensure all youth have access to quality preschools, schools, after-school programs, libraries and recreational opportunities.
- Support educational and training pathways and opportunities for all youth so they can gain skills that will help them improve their well-being, upward mobility, secure employment and allow them to remain in the community.
- Foster access to family support services to help parents, families and caregivers fulfill their roles and provide a safe, caring and healthy atmosphere where youth can thrive and achieve their full potential.



*Salinas' park facilities provide a range of opportunities for active recreation*



*Parks and open space bring community together*

**Livable and Sustainable Community – A well-planned City with a thriving community core and commercial corridors, excellent infrastructure (streets, sewers, parks, trees and open spaces, libraries, and community facilities, etc.) that meet the unique and changing needs of the community:**

- Promote livability by focusing on sustainable land use planning, targeted circulation and infrastructure

improvements that provide equitable access and the efficient use of resources.

- Encourage vibrant and active community gathering spaces such as libraries, community facilities, performance venues, open spaces, parks, and plazas.
- Ensure the City's infrastructure is well-maintained, has sufficient capacity, is accessible for disabled persons, and is adaptable to emerging development patterns, changing land uses, technological advances and lifestyles.

- Work cooperatively with the community members and others to maintain properties, promote volunteerism, ensure effective code enforcement, preserve natural and architectural assets, revitalize disinvested commercial and residential corridors and promote greening and beautification of the City.

## **Connectivity, Access and Mobility – An active City with a well-connected, eco-friendly network of multi-modal streets, bikeways, greenways and trails, and effective public transportation options:**

- Facilitate community interaction by removing physical barriers and improving connectivity.
- Create a modern, safe, sustainable and connected transportation network that provides a variety of mobility choices for all.
- Improve access and connect pedestrian and bicycle linkages and public transit from all neighborhoods to schools, parks, open space, shopping and services, employment centers, downtown and other community core areas to promote connectivity.
- Emphasize walking, biking, and public transit when considering new development or revitalizing existing neighborhoods.

## **A Community to Celebrate – A City that celebrates, promotes, preserves and honors the diversity, history, art, and culture of its community:**

- Promote the rich diversity and culture in Salinas through art, music, festivals, parades and other community events.
- Celebrate the City's history, the architecture of its buildings, the diverse cultures of its people, and its rich immigrant history.
- Foster a sense of place by encouraging community driven transformation, initiating themed districts, and by building upon existing neighborhood identity.

## **2.2. CONTEXT WITH OTHER PLANS**

The City of Salinas has a strong legacy of community-based planning, and these past plans have help guide the course for Salinas' development. Ongoing and past community plans and other relevant documents were reviewed for policy direction and goals as they pertain to the provision and planning for parks, open space, recreation and library opportunities in Salinas. Consideration of these plans provided a context for an updated community assessment and a lens through which to see local resident interests over time.

This Plan draws from and builds on the following previous planning work, including:

- City of Salinas General Plan (2002)
- City of Salinas Park and Sports Facility Standards (2009: draft version, never adopted)
- Salinas Bikeways Plan (2002)
- City of Salinas Pedestrian Plan (2003)
- City of Salinas Zoning Code
- City of Salinas Urban Greening Plan Needs Assessment (2015)
- Salinas Downtown Vibrancy Plan (2016)
- City of Salinas Subdivision Ordinance (2016)
- City of Salinas Housing Element 2016-2023
- City of Salinas General Plan Economic Development Element (2017)



- Building Healthy Communities, East Salinas Logic Models and Plan Narrative (2010)
- City of Salinas Alisal Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (2015)
- City of Salinas Comprehensive Strategy for Community-wide Violence Reduction 2013-2018
- Transportation Agency for Monterey County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (2011)
- Complete Streets Guidebook for the Monterey Bay Area (2013)
- City of Salinas Stormwater Management Plan Update (2013)
- Urban Forest Assessment (2014)
- Urban Greening Plan Needs Assessment (2015)
- City of Salinas 2015-2019 Consolidated Plan
- Impact Monterey County Community Assessment Survey (2015)
- City of Salinas Park Classifications and Sports Facility Standards (2018)

This Parks, Recreation & Libraries Master Plan is intended to supplement and implement the applicable goals, policies and implementation programs (actions) contained in the General Plan.



*Field sports enable teamwork and provide a strong foundation for active play*



*Tennis and pickleball are life-long sports and foster time to socialize*





## OVER 2,500 PEOPLE PROVIDED INPUT AND ENGAGED WITH THIS PROJECT

Throughout this planning process, the public provided information and expressed opinions about their needs and priorities for parks and open spaces, recreation and library facilities, and programs and services in Salinas. This feedback played a crucial role in updating policy statements and prioritizing the capital facilities project list contained within this Plan.

### 2.3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In recent years, the City of Salinas has worked to change its community engagement strategy from a transactional approach to one of true community engagement where residents are at the center and are empowered to not only participate but help design the approach. Consistent with that approach, the City identified a Steering Committee made up of stakeholders, residents, organizational leaders to assist in designing the engagement strategies and help to facilitate various forms of outreach.

Community engagement and feedback played an important role in identifying current community priorities, and the City of Salinas conducted an extensive, broad and varied public outreach program. Residents appreciated the opportunity to offer feedback in the development of this Plan, and most care about the future of Salinas' parks, recreation and library system. A variety of public outreach methods were used, including:

- Mail and online community survey
- 8 community meetings
- 57 community pop-up activities
- 7 focus group discussions
- Website content
- City newsletter
- Library and Community Services Commission sessions

As discussed in the Introduction chapter of this Master Plan, the City undertook Vision Salinas, a bilingual outreach effort to engage the public and to coordinate several major planning initiatives to ensure a unified planning focus. As part of this effort, Guiding Principles (reflecting the extensive input received from the public) were prepared to inform and guide the update of the General Plan in 2019 and the preparation of other planning documents such as this Master Plan.

### 2.3.1. Community Survey

The development of this Plan included the administration of a community survey between March and April 2017. The purpose of the survey was to gather input to help determine park, open space, recreation and library service priorities in the community. In collaboration with staff, the project team designed a 16-question survey to assess residents' interests, preferences and priorities. This allowed the survey to be tailored to issues of strategic importance to effectively plan the future of the parks, recreation and library system.

The survey was mailed to a random sample of 2,500 households in Salinas on March 15, 2017. An online version of the survey was posted to the City's website on the same day. Reminder postcards were mailed to the 2,500 households on March 24th. Information about the survey was provided on the City's website home page and on the Recreation & Community Services - Master Plan project subpage and on the Library's webpage. In addition, the City of Salinas printed and made available print versions of the survey in English and Spanish for several open house meetings and pop-up community events in March and April of 2017. The survey was closed on April 21, 2017 and 797 responses were recorded. Since the survey was open to the general public and respondents were not selected solely through statistical sampling methods, the results are not necessarily representative of all Salinas residents.

Major survey findings are noted below, and a more detailed discussion of results can be found in the Needs Assessment (Chapter 3). The survey instrument and a summary of the response data from the survey is provided in Appendix A.

#### MAJOR FINDINGS

- Nearly all City residents (98%) feel that public parks, recreational opportunities, and library services are important or essential to the quality of life in Salinas.
- Just over half (56%) of respondents indicated that they are very or somewhat satisfied with the overall value they receive from parks, recreation and library services in Salinas.
- Perceptions of maintenance and upkeep affect usage. Overall, less than half of residents (43%) rated the park and recreation system as either in 'excellent' or 'good' condition. Another 39% rated the condition as 'fair', while 18% rated it 'poor'. Also, 43% of respondents cited safety concerns for not being a frequent user of City of Salinas parks and recreation centers, while 34% stated that parks and facilities are not well maintained.
- Public perceptions about library facilities were better. Residents rate the condition of Salinas' libraries as either 'excellent' (15%) or 'good' (49%), but still noted concerns of safety.
- A majority of residents feel there are 'not enough' of parks (63%) and recreation/community centers (76%) in Salinas. Just under half feel there are 'not enough' libraries.
- More than 80% of respondents considered upgrading existing parks and renovating existing recreation centers a high or top priority. Developing new or expanding library facilities, acquiring land for future parks, developing new active use parks, off-leash dog areas, and walking/biking trails were also very popular improvements - over two-thirds of respondents felt these were priority investments.

*“Before expanding, please start by improving what we already have. Our parks are a treasure, but they need A LOT of love and improvements.”*

**—SURVEY RESPONDENT**



### 2.3.2. Public Meetings & Pop-Up Events

City staff from the Library & Community Services Department, in collaboration with Steering Committee members, led and conducted extensive outreach to the community through topic-oriented community meetings and numerous pop-up events across the city. In an effort to more fully engage residents and community leaders, the City hosted outreach facilitation trainings to build capacity in local volunteers to support and help lead the vigorous, community-driven public campaign. The full-day training sessions occurred in March 2017 and draw over 80 participants.

Within weeks of the training sessions, the City hosted four topic-based open house sessions using recently trained resident facilitators and were held on the following dates:

- Recreation Programming focus – March 11, 2017
- Library focus – March 11, 2017
- Sports focus – March 13, 2017
- Parks & Open Space focus – March 14, 2017

For each session, staff and resident facilitators provided an overview of the project, summary of current facilities and programs, and an overview of trends and ideas from other places. Table-based group exercises were used to focus dialogue toward key questions regarding local needs and interests in facilities and programs, needs for enhancements and priorities for improvement.

The City has a strong commitment to inclusiveness, diversity and equity and used this lens to ensure a strategic and deliberate approach to engaging residents who previously may have felt disenfranchised and have not had their voices heard. On May 11, 2017, the City along with its partner, Building Healthy Communities – East Salinas,



*Residents from across the city provided ideas and suggestions for this Plan*

conducted a Spanish community meeting focusing on each of the four topic areas (Recreation, Library, Sports and Parks & Open Spaces) in the Alisal area. Over sixty residents attended and provided critical feedback.

In January 2018, the City hosted a second series of open house meetings. Three sessions were scheduled (January 17th, 18th, and 30th) to review and validate community insights provided to date from the survey and past public meetings. Attendees were asked to offer comments on priorities and needed improvements. Consistent with our previous approach to ensuring an equitable approach to our outreach, one of these meetings was held in the Alisal in Spanish.

Newsletter articles, fliers, social media and email announcements were used to publicize the events and encourage participation.

## 2.3.3. Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions with external stakeholders were conducted to more broadly assess the opportunities for facility and program enhancements, partnerships and coordination. Stakeholders were identified by City staff based on their involvement or interest in the future of the City's park, recreation or library facilities. The focus group meetings were held in March 2017 and from January to February 2018, and focus group discussions centered around the following interests:

- Seniors
- Youth
- Young Adult
- Arts & Culture
- Parks & Open Space
- Sports
- Community Partners

Stakeholder comments were often specific to the particular perspective or interest of the stakeholder group. Overall, comments were favorable with regard to existing City programs and opportunities, in addition to the improvements to Salinas parks, programs and library facilities. Specific recommendations are reflected in the Needs Assessment chapters.

## 2.3.4. Library and Community Services Commission Meetings

The Library and Community Services Commission was provided periodic updates and provided feedback on the community outreach and planning effort during regularly scheduled public sessions. The Commission also received an overview of the draft



*Pop-up meetings held throughout Salinas were geographically spread to encourage local participation*

Plan that included a review of the planning process, key themes and draft recommendations for parks, recreation and library facility opportunities.

## 2.3.5. Other Public Outreach and Engagement Methods

In addition to the direct outreach opportunities noted above, the Salinas community was informed about the planning process through a variety of media. The following methods were used to inform residents about the project, as well as opportunities to participate and offer comments.

- City website
- City e-newsletter
- Other email blasts





Community meetings provided opportunities for deeper conversations about needs

A project webpage was posted on the City's website to provide background information, meeting announcements and project materials such as meeting notes and summary reports. The page was updated periodically to keep residents informed of progress and alerted to opportunities for involvement during the process. In addition, the Master Plan was represented on the Vision Salinas website where updates on progress were posted periodically.

## PARKS, REC, & LIBRARIES MASTER PLAN

HOME » OUR CITY SERVICES » RECREATION & COMMUNITY SERVICES » PARKS, REC, & LIBRARIES MASTER PLAN



### Help Shape the Future of Salinas' Park, Recreation Centers and Libraries!

Please join us at one of three community priority setting meetings this month:

- Wednesday, January 17th 6:00-8:00 PM- John Steinbeck Library, 350 Lincoln Ave.
- Thursday, January 18th 6:00-8:00 PM- El Dorado Park, 1655 El Dorado Drive
- Tuesday, January 30th 6:00-8:00 PM- Bread Box Recreation Center, 745 N. Sanborn Ave.

During these meeting, you will learn about the community input received thus far and help to prioritize infrastructure improvements and programming. **Don't miss your opportunity to help identify what the City can do to make an immediate improvement to our parks, recreation centers and libraries!** For more information, please call 758-7306.



#### Volunteer in my community?

It is our goal to recruit, train, utilize and recognize...

#### Helpful Links

- [Vision Salinas Website](#)

The City website included a project webpage which provided information about the project and outreach opportunities





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# The Salinas Community

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## 3.1. COMMUNITY PROFILE

Salinas is a city of about 162,000 residents in Central California. It is capital city of the agricultural Salinas Valley, referred to as the “salad bowl of the world”. It is the largest city and county seat of Monterey County, serving as a cultural, governmental, commercial and industrial center for the area. The city was incorporated in 1874, with most of its growth occurring in the latter half of the twentieth century. Salinas’ population is expected to continue to grow over the coming decades.

Salinas is home to many younger adults and families with children, which represent nearly forty-five percent of households. The community is primarily Hispanic or Latino, and a majority of residents speak Spanish at home. Agriculture is a principal employer.

### Location

Salinas lies south of the metropolitan San Francisco Bay Area and approximately 8 miles from the Pacific Ocean, at the mouth of the Salinas River. The city is surrounded by agricultural and grazing lands. The Gabilan Mountain Range can be seen rising to the west of the city, separating the valley from the coast. Other nearby cities include the coastal tourist city of Monterrey and the agricultural hub of Watsonville. Salinas is bisected by US-101, which provides convenient access to San Jose and other cities in the region.

## History

Native American people, including the Esselen and the Rumsen, originally inhabited the Salinas Valley and the Salinas area. After Spanish settlement, the area became part of Catholic missions. Missions were later converted to smaller cattle ranchos once Mexico gained its independence in the early 1800s. The end of the Mexican-American War in 1848 brought the region into the United States and the State of California.

Salinas was developed at the junction of two main stagecoach routes – early (1850s) buildings included a post office and travelers inn. Development of nearby railroads in the late 1860s and the conversion of grazing lands to agricultural crops spurred growth in the area. The city was incorporated in 1874 and was named after the nearby marshlands of the Alisal Slough, as the town's name means 'salty marshes' in Spanish.

Salinas quickly became a hub for agricultural production in the area and was home to the headquarters of major agricultural companies. Asian immigrants, primarily Chinese, settled in Salinas to work on nearby farms, resulting in a large Chinese minority. The advent of irrigation systems in the valley led to the rapid expansion of agriculture, and the conversion to high value row crops. With

the success of the local agricultural economy, Salinas grew from just over 4,300 people in 1920 to nearly 10,300 people in 1930. It also led Salinas to have the highest per capita income in the United States in 1924. The growth of Salinas in the early nineteenth century is evident in the city's Art Deco and Moderne architecture.

Following World War II, Salinas began to convert agricultural land to residential development to meet the needs of new residents. The city experienced particularly strong growth from 1950 to 1970, when it grew from just under 14,000 residents to nearly 59,000. Part of this growth was due to the settlement of Hispanic immigrants, primarily from Mexico, in the Alisal area. The Hispanic population, including both native-born Americans and immigrants, continued to grow throughout the second half of the twentieth century. Hispanic and Latino residents now make up three-quarters of the city's population.

## Economy

Salinas' economy still centers on the local agricultural industry, which employs nearly one-quarter of employed residents. Major employers include several fresh fruit, vegetable and meat packing plants, as well as

local government, schools and hospitals.

Approximately six in ten residents over 18 are employed, though 6% are unemployed, and the remaining 36% are out of the work force. While employment levels are relatively high for the area, jobs tend to be low-paying. At approximately \$50,000, the median income in Salinas is nearly \$10,000 less than that of surrounding Monterey County. The community also suffers from high rates of poverty. Most residents (60%) have completed high school, though only 12% have gone on to complete higher levels of education. Higher-education rates are lower for residents of color.

## Meeting the needs of a growing community

In 2019, Salinas was home to an estimated 162,800 people, according to the California Department of Finance. Salinas experienced significant population growth between 1970 and 2000, when the city grew by over 92,000 people, at an annual rate of approximately 3.8% (see Figure 1). However, growth has slowed to an annual rate of just 0.3% since 2000. This rate of population growth is slower than that of Monterey County (0.53% annually) and California (1.1% annually).

In 2015, the City of Salinas adopted an update to the Housing Element of the City's General Plan. This update projects further population growth between 2015 and 2023. It estimates that the City's population will remain stable for the next few years (remaining at approximately 156,800 people in 2020). The projections do forecast additional population growth in later years, reaching approximately 166,900 people by 2030 and 172,500 people by 2035. This growth would represent a 10% increase in total population between 2015 and 2035.

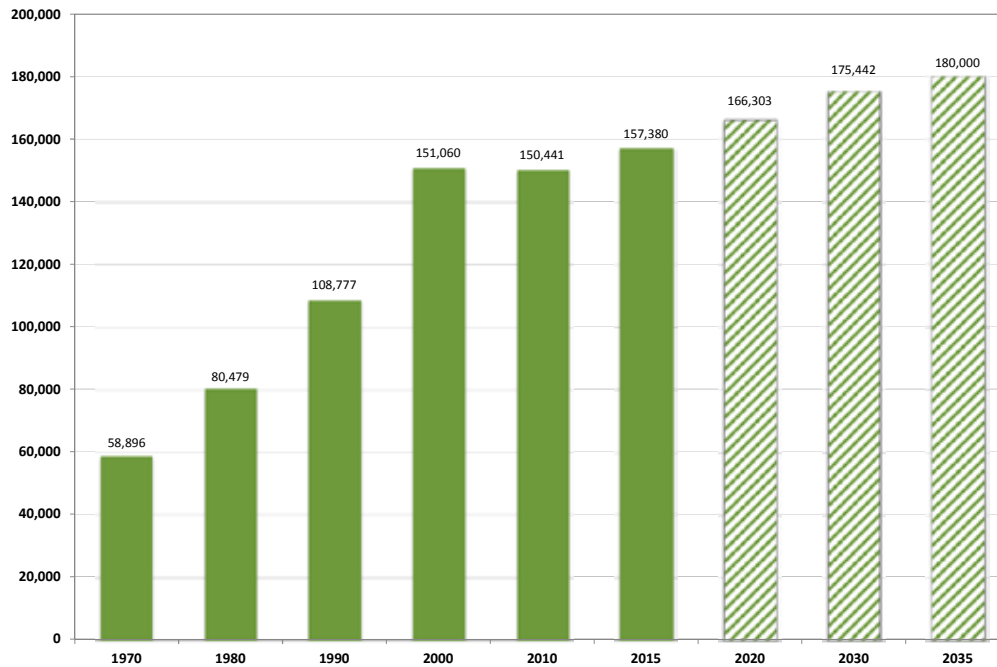
In the future, more residents will likely mean more demand for the City's recreational facilities and programs. As Salinas grows, the City will need to acquire and develop additional parkland to meet these community needs. Salinas can also expand into new urban areas to the northeast of the City through annexation. Residential growth in these areas will require the City to plan for and provide parks to serve existing and new residents. The City's currently stable population trends may offer an opportunity to reinvest in existing facilities and proactively plan for new parkland acquisitions.

**FIGURE 1. POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS: SALINAS, MONTEREY COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

Demographics	Salinas	Monterey County	California
<b>Population Characteristics</b>			
Population (2019)	<b>162,797</b>	445,414	39,927,315
Population (2010)	<b>150,441</b>	415,057	37,253,956
Population (2000)	<b>151,060</b>	401,762	33,871,648
Percent Change (2000-19)	<b>8%</b>	11%	18%
Persons w/ Disabilities (%)	<b>7.6%</b>	9.0%	10.4%
<b>Household Characteristics (2011-15)</b>			
Households	<b>40,892</b>	125,402	12,717,801
Percent with children	<b>44.7%</b>	36.0%	31.9%
Median HH Income	<b>\$49,840</b>	\$58,783	\$61,818
Average Household Size	<b>3.75</b>	3.26	2.96
Average Family Size	<b>4.15</b>	3.79	3.54
Owner Occupancy Rate	<b>42.7%</b>	49.2%	54.3%
<b>Age Groups (2010)</b>			
Median Age	<b>28.8</b>	32.9	35.2
Population < 5 years of age	<b>9.5%</b>	7.8%	6.8%
Population < 18 years of age	<b>31.4%</b>	26.7%	25.0%
Population 18 - 64 years of age	<b>61.1%</b>	62.6%	63.6%
Population > 65 years of age	<b>7.5%</b>	10.7%	11.4%

Sources: US Census, 2010 Census, 2015 American Community Survey; CA Dept of Finance



**FIGURE 2. POPULATION CHANGE - 1970 - 2035**

### Providing age-appropriate recreational services

On average, residents of Salinas are much younger (median age 28.8) than residents of Monterey County (32.9) and California (35.2). In fact, youth under 19 years old make up the city's largest 20-year population group, comprising 35% of the overall population in 2010. This differs from Monterey County, where the largest group is 15 to 34 year olds (31%). Salinas' younger population

has important implications for park and recreation needs.

- Youth under 5 years of age make up 9.5% of Salinas' population, see Figure 3. This group represents users of preschool and tot programs and facilities, and as trails and open space users, are often in strollers. These individuals are the future participants in youth activities.
- Children 5 to 14 years make up current youth program participants. Approximately

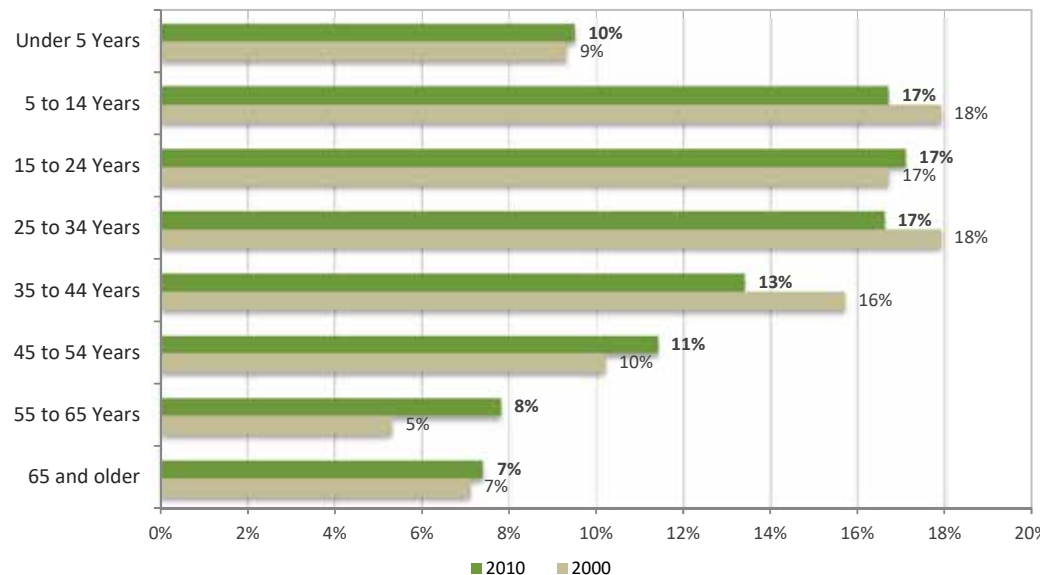
17% of the city's population falls into this age range.

- Teens and young adults, age 15 to 24 years, are in transition from youth program to adult programs and participate in teen/young adult programs where available. Members of this age group are often seasonal employment seekers. About 17% percent of Salinas residents are teens and young adults.
- While Salinas' overall population is relatively young compared to the county and state, the average age of a city resident has increased by slightly since 2000 (28.5). Much of this change is due to a growing percentage of adults over 45 years of age and a declining percentage of people aged 35 to 44. This increasing percentage of adults also has impacts on recreational needs.
- Adults ages 25 to 34 years are users of adult programs. Approximately 17% of residents are in this age category. These residents may be entering long-term relationships and establishing families. One-third of Salinas' households are families with children (32%).
- Adults between 35 and 54 years of age represent users of a wide range of

adult programs and park facilities. Their characteristics extend from having children using preschool and youth programs to becoming empty nesters. This age group makes up 25% of Salinas' population.

- Older adults, ages 55 years plus, make up approximately 15% of Salinas' population. This group represents users of older adult programs. These residents may be approaching retirement or already retired and may be spending time with grandchildren. This group also ranges from very healthy, active seniors to more physically inactive seniors.

**FIGURE 3. AGE GROUP DISTRIBUTIONS: 2000 & 2010**



## Providing services for community members with disabilities

Approximately one in twelve Salinas residents (7.6% or 11,960 persons) has a disability that interferes with life activities. While this rate is lower than that of Monterey County (9%) and the state (10.4%), it signals a potential need to design inclusive parks, recreational facilities and programs. Planning, designing, and operating a park system that facilitates participation by residents of all abilities will also help ensure compliance with Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Just over 3% of city youth between 5 and 17 have a disability that interferes with daily life. These young residents, and their families, may need additional support or accommodations to fully enjoy recreational activities.

Nearly half of residents 65 and older (39% or 11,622 persons) have a disability that impacts daily life. This is similar to the percentage found in the general senior population of California (36%). The majority of older residents with a disability are affected by a mobility impairment (26%), hearing difficulty (13%) or cognitive difficulty (11%), which may have implications for park design, recreation offerings and senior programs like those offered at the Firehouse Recreation Center.

## Recreation for a diverse community

Salinas is a diverse community. In 2010, three in four residents identified as Hispanic or Latino. In the same year, 46% of city residents identified as White alone, 6.3% as Asian, 2% as Black or African American, 1.3% American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 0.3% Native

Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. More than one-third of residents (39%) identified as some other race and 5% as two or more races. The diversity of Salinas' population remained relatively constant over the decade between 2000 and 2010.

More than one-third (38%) of Salinas' residents were born outside the United States. Most of these foreign-born residents moved from Latin America (87%) and have lived in the U.S. for at least five years (95%). Additionally, 69% of Salinas' population speaks a language other than English at home, compared to 44% across California, according to the 2015 American Community Survey. More than one in three of these residents (39%) does not speak English very well. The most popular language spoken at home is Spanish (64% of the total population).

To serve this diverse community, Salinas must plan and provide recreational opportunities, programs, and information that are accessible to, and meet the needs of, all community members.

## **Serving residents of all income levels**

A community's level of household income can impact the types of recreational services prioritized by community members as well as their willingness and ability to pay for recreational services. Perhaps more importantly, household income is also closely linked with levels of physical activity. Low-income households are three times more likely to live a sedentary lifestyle than middle and upper-income households, according to an analysis of national data by the Active Living by Design organization.

In 2015, the median household income in Salinas was \$49,840, according to the American Community Survey. This figure is about \$8,940 (-18%) lower than the median household income for Monterey County residents and about \$11,980 (-24%) lower than the average California household. In addition, the median household income in Salinas only increased by a total of 1% between 2010 and 2015, despite a nearly 9% increase in the Consumer Price Index over the same period.

At the lower end of the household income scale, 20% of Salinas households earn less than \$25,000 annually, which is a larger segment than in both Monterey County

and California (16% each). According to 2015 American Community Survey, 20% of city residents and 17.5% of families are living below the poverty level. The poverty threshold was an income of \$24,250 for a family of four. Poverty affects 30% of children under 18 and 11% of those 65 and older, also higher than county and statewide levels.

Lower-income residents can face a number of barriers to physical activity including poor access to parks and recreational facilities, a lack of transportation options, a lack of time, and poor health. Low-income residents may also be less able financially able to afford recreational service fees or to pay for services, like childcare, that can make physical activity possible.

Higher income households have an increased ability and willingness to pay for recreation and leisure services, and often face fewer barriers to participation. Approximately 18% of City households have household incomes over \$100,000, fewer than the county (29%) and state (35%).



Park and recreation facilities provide opportunities to engage with family, friends, and neighbors, thereby increasing social capital and community cohesion, which can improve residents' mental health and overall well-being. People who feel that they are connected to their community and those who participate in recreational, community and other activities are more likely to have better mental and physical health and to live longer lives. Access to parks and recreational facilities has also been linked to reductions in crime, particularly juvenile delinquency.

### Recreation for health

A number of organizations and non-profits have documented the overall health and wellness benefits provided by parks, open space and trails. The Trust for Public Land published a report in 2005 called *The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space*. This report makes the following observations about the health, economic, environmental and social benefits of parks and open space:

- Physical activity makes people healthier.
- Physical activity increases with access to parks.
- Contact with the natural world improves physical and physiological health.
- Value is added to community and economic development sustainability.
- Benefits of tourism are enhanced.
- Trees are effective in improving air quality and act as natural air conditioners, assisting with storm water control and erosion.
- Recreational opportunities for all ages are provided.

Approximately 22% of Monterey County residents are obese, a rate that is low compared to other counties across California and nationwide. However, in 2010,

approximately 47% of Salinas' youth were overweight or obese and the average BMI for adults was 27.8 (30 or higher is designated as obese). These high rates of obesity could have significant and lasting impacts on the health of city residents.

According to the County Health Rankings, Monterey County ranks slightly above average of California counties (21st out of 56) for overall health outcomes (including length and quality of life) and health factors (such as health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and the physical environment).

Parks, open space, trails and recreational facilities provide opportunities for residents to be physically active and to experience nature. Monterey County has many such places, including parks and public or private community centers, gyms or other recreational facilities. In fact, the County ranks 6th out of 56 California counties for access to adequate physical activity opportunities. This accessibility of recreational opportunities may contribute to residents' physical activity levels. Only 16% of Monterey County adults age 20 and older report getting no leisure-time physical activity, compared to 18% across California. This rate is better than even the highest performing counties nationwide, which average 21%.



## 3.2 REGIONAL PARKS & RECREATION RESOURCES

Within Monterey County, multiple federal, state and county governments and local districts own and operate parks, recreational facilities, trails and open space. Land management agencies (outside the jurisdictional limits of the City include the U.S. National Parks Service (NPS), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), California State Parks (CSP), Monterey County, and local park agencies and districts. Notable public lands and open space include Los Padres National Forest, the Big Sur Coast state parks, as well as Lake Nacimiento, Lake San Antonio, and Laguna Seca Regional Parks.

There are hundreds of miles of hiking, equestrian and bike trails in Monterey County. Notable hiking trails in Monterey County include the Fort Ord Monument trails, the Monterey Bay Coastal Trails, and several trails within the Los Padres National Forest. In addition, according to the Ventana Wilderness Alliance, there are over fifty hiking trails within the Ventana Wilderness alone. Many of the state parks also offer extensive trail systems, including the Fremont Peak State Park trails, the Point

### Federally-owned Lands

The federal government owns and manages several hundred thousand acres of land in Monterey County, including Fort Ord National Monument, Los Padres National Forest, Pinnacles National Monument, the Salinas River National Wildlife Refuge and a broad array of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands.

#### FORT ORD NATIONAL MONUMENT

Managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the 14,658-acre Fort Ord National Monument was created in 2012 from the former US Army training and deployment center. With more than 86 miles of trails for hiking biking or horseback riding, the land provides extensive opportunities for outdoor day use experiences.



*Fort Ord National Monument*



*Pinnacles National Park*





*Salinas River National Wildlife Refuge*

### **PINNACLES NATIONAL PARK**

Pinnacles National Park, created to protect the remains of an ancient volcano, is currently managed by the National Park Service. A small portion of the 26,000-acre Monument is in eastern Monterey County. Permitted activities include camping, hiking, caving, rock climbing and bird watching.

### **SALINAS RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

The Salinas River National Wildlife Refuge is located where the Salinas River empties into the Monterey Bay, approximately 11 miles north of the City of Monterey. The refuge provides habitat for several threatened and endangered species including the California brown pelican, Smith's blue butterfly, the western snowy plover, the Monterey sand gilia, and the Monterey spineflower. Permitted activities include fishing, photography, seasonal hunting and wildlife observation.

## **California State Parks**

The California State Parks (CSP) owns and operates 20 park units in Monterey County, totaling 17,567 acres. Most of these units are on or near the coast. These state parks and reserves include Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve, Fremont Peak State Park, Garrapata State Park, Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park, Monterey State Historic Park, Moss Landing State Wildlife Area, Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park and Point Lobos State Natural Reserve.

## **Monterey County Parks**

Toro Regional Park is located six miles from downtown Salinas along Highway 68. Park facilities include an equestrian staging area and riding trails, softball fields, playgrounds, horseshoe pits, volleyball courts, mountain biking trails and more than 20 miles of hiking trails. Laguna Seca Recreation Area (also located along Highway 68) approximately 10 miles further to the southwest has camping for tents and RVs on 177 sites. The recreation area has a rifle and pistol range and Hospitality Pavilion available for rental use. Laguna Seca Recreation Area is also the site of the WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca and Sea Otter Classic Sports Festival. Since that



*Toro Regional Park*

# DRAFT

original water-based recreation area, Monterey County Parks has expanded with additional lands throughout the region. Manzanita Park is a 500-acre recreation facility and nature preserve, just north of Salinas in the Prunedale area. With a focus on youth recreation, the park has scheduled activities including baseball and softball games, soccer games, BMX racing, batting cage practice and dog training events.

## Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary is a federally protected marine area off the coast, approximately 25 miles from Salinas. Its designated shoreline spans 276 miles from Marin to Cambria. The sanctuary is popular for paddling, boating, fishing, wildlife viewing, birding and other ocean-oriented recreational activities.

## California State University Monterey Bay

Transformed from part of the Fort Ord, former military base, the CSUMB hosts events at their World Theater and through their athletic sports programs as well as lectures, conferences, walking and learning opportunities on campus.

## Monterey Bay Coastal Trail

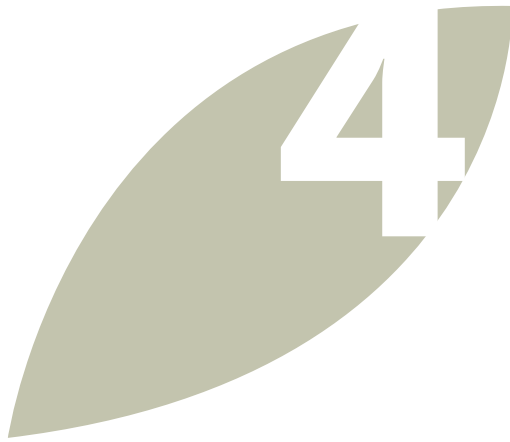
The Monterey Bay Coastal Trail is 29 miles long and winds through several Monterey County communities, including Pebble Beach, Pacific Grove, Monterey, Sand City, Seaside, and Marina. The trail is used by both joggers, skaters, walkers and cyclists.



*Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary*



*Monterey Bay Coastal Trail*



## Community Outreach Findings

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*Over 2,500 people connected with the Parks, Recreation and Libraries Master Plan during the two year planning process. As a critical component to the Master Plan, the project team conducted public outreach through topic-specific community meetings (parks & open space; recreation; sports; and libraries), pop-up meetings and a Spanish language meeting to identify core interests and priorities. Spanish language translation was also provided in all English language meetings. Across the city, all of the mapped quadrants had good representation and participation. The outreach process represented a good balance of age groups from across Salinas.*

## 4.1. OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS

Public input is summarized below from the four topic-specific outreach meetings (parks & open space; recreation; sports; and libraries), the pop-up meetings and the Spanish language meeting to identify core interests and priorities (ranked), and that suggest importance by the community who gave their input. Additional relevant information from the community survey also is noted.

### 4.1.1. Highlights of Highest Priorities of All Four Group Sessions

#### SAFETY

- Safety concerns were the most common reason residents of all ages do not use parks, recreation facilities, and libraries more often. Residents are wary of illegal activities.
- Maintenance and perceptions about upkeep impact usage and visitation.

#### EXPANDED PROGRAMING

- More variety of art, culture, wellness and educational programs - especially for youth and seniors

#### EXPANDED SPORTS FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

- More baseball fields; renovate tennis courts; lighting
- Increase youth after-school sports programs
- Provide adult sports leagues

#### COMMUNITY GATHERING AND EVENTS

- People want to have more places to get together with family, friends and neighbors
- Community rooms and flex spaces for classes, events, programs
- Picnic areas
- Community events

#### MORE TRAILS

- Walking / biking
- Access to nature
- Connect places (parks / schools / etc.)

#### NEW SPECIALIZED FACILITIES

- Water parks / splash pads
- Dog parks

Generally, Spanish speakers placed the most value on safety and welcoming facilities, and also prioritized the need for more bilingual and friendly staff, as well as culturally-relevant programming.

In terms of facility and program improvements, attendees at the pop-up meetings selected the following as the top areas of focus:

- Water Play
- Arts & Enrichment Programs
- After-school Programs
- Technology & Workforce development





*Attendees add comments to an idea board*



*Attendees use dots to identify priorities*

### 4.1.2. Parks & Open Spaces Session

#### SAFETY & MAINTENANCE

Concerns about safety and lack of maintenance are the top two reasons why Salinas residents do not use parks and facilities more frequently.

#### TRAILS FOR WALKING AND BIKING

Most residents, of all ages, support expanding or improving trails for walking, running and biking. Specifically, they expressed interest in more trails that connect parks and other destinations and that allow users to experience nature.

#### WATER PLAY

Residents expressed interest in more access to places to play in and enjoy water, such as pools, water parks, splash parks, and parks with ponds or waterways.

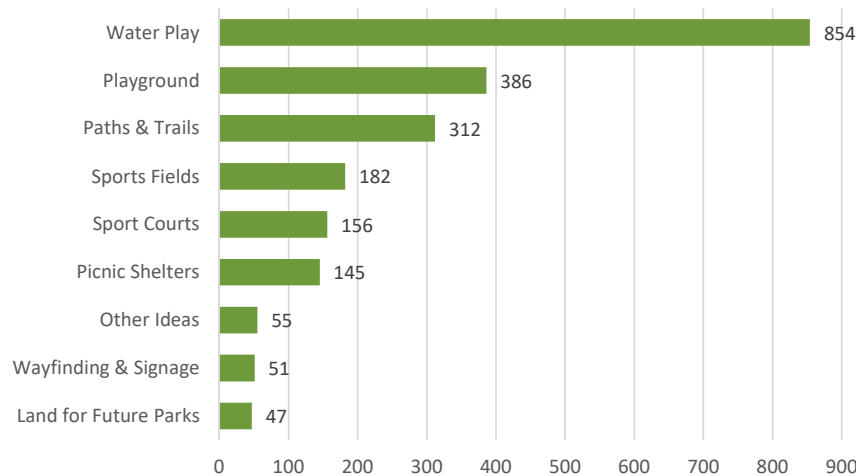
#### DOG PARKS

Over two-thirds of residents think the City should prioritize developing an off-leash dog park. In addition, many residents commented on their interest for this type of facility through the survey and meetings.

#### FAMILY/SOCIAL GATHERING

Residents enjoy spending time with friends and family outside. They would like to see more places and activities, such as picnic areas and community events, to do so. Some residents also suggested creating additional reservable picnic areas and installing more barbecues.

During the pop-up meetings, attendees were asked to use sticky dots to identify their top priorities. The following represents the responses (as a tally of dots from all pop-up meetings combined).



**FIGURE 4. PARKS & OPEN SPACE DOT EXERCISE RESULTS (2017)**

The pop-up meetings in January and February 2018 included a slightly modified arrangement of priorities for attendees to select from. Since many of the facility types noted relate closely to parks and open spaces, they are listed here.



**FIGURE 5. PARKS & OPEN SPACE DOT EXERCISE RESULTS (2018)**

## 4.1.3. Sports Facilities & Programs Session

### YOUTH/AFTER-SCHOOL SPORTS PROGRAMS

Most residents (80%) think Salinas needs more youth sports programs. Traditional sports like baseball, tennis, soccer, and football were mentioned, as were rugby, lacrosse, karate, and golf. Residents suggested expanding after-school programs in particular. Other ideas included recruiting and training more volunteer coaches and referees and updating sports equipment.

### ADULT LEAGUES & PROGRAMS

Most residents (62%) would like to see adult sports leagues and programs offered, particularly for baseball, soccer and tennis. Residents also expressed a desire for more teen and young adult leagues.

### INDOOR GYMS AND COURTS

About 40% of residents would like to see more, or improved,

gymnasiums and indoor sports courts. However, participants in the Sports and Recreation meetings did not mention this issue.

### SPORTS FIELDS & FACILITIES

Nearly one-third of residents think that the City should prioritize improving sports fields and facilities. Many commented on the need for more baseball/softball fields, renovation of tennis courts, and field/court lighting.

### OUTREACH/COMMUNICATION ABOUT SPORTS PROGRAMMING

Residents appreciate Spanish-language programs, information and staff. They would like to see more outreach through schools and more frequent and accessible information about sports programs (such as through the recreation guide).

The following represents the responses from the pop-up meetings specific to sport facilities and programs.

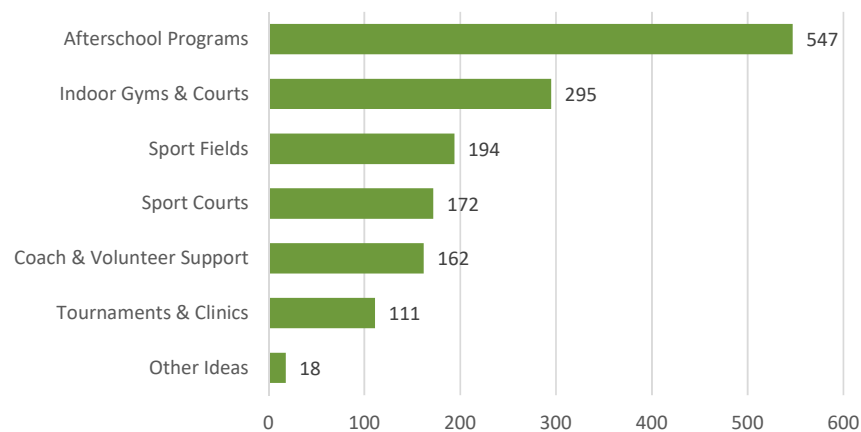


FIGURE 6. SPORT FACILITIES DOT EXERCISE RESULTS (2017)

### 4.1.4. Recreation Session

#### CLEAN, SAFE, WELL-MAINTAINED FACILITIES AND SPACES

Residents appreciate the availability, cleanliness and décor of the City's facilities and community spaces. Nearby parking and transit service is also appreciated. Residents expressed an interest in more flex-spaces for community meetings, events and programs as well as youth and teen-focused spaces. They would like to see safety improved outside the Recreation Center.

#### ARTS/ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

Residents enjoy the variety of cultural, arts, and enrichment programs offered by the City. More than three in four residents support expanding programs of all types. They specifically mentioned a diverse array of programs, including wellness, cooking and fitness; music and art; technology; cultural; nature; and educational programs focused on the interests and needs of teens/young adults and seniors.

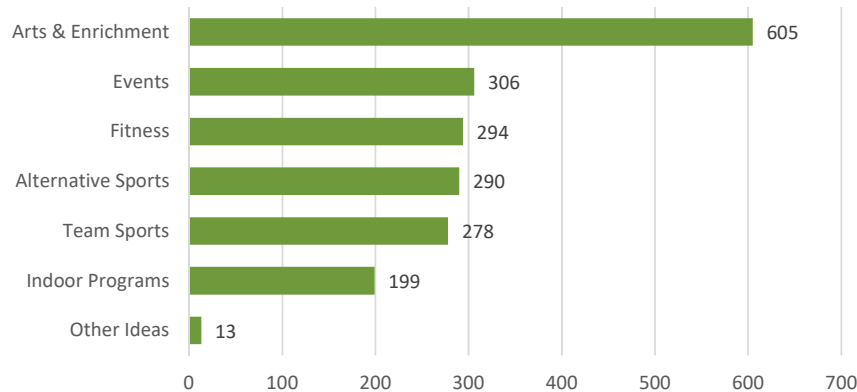
#### FITNESS/EXERCISE PROGRAMS

Two-thirds of residents would like to see enhanced fitness and exercise programs in Salinas. They specifically mentioned yoga, Zumba, and other classes commonly offered at gyms as well as outdoor programs like walking, hiking, and cycling. They also expressed some interest in additional fitness/weight rooms.

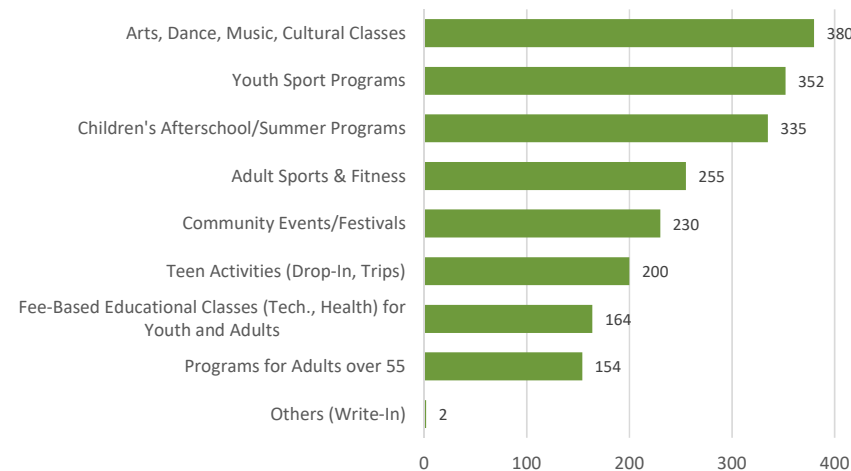
#### WELCOMING STAFF

Residents feel that staff are friendly, helpful and welcoming and truly community-oriented. They also appreciate that Spanish-speaking staff are available.

The following represents the responses from the pop-up meetings specific to recreation facilities and programs.



**FIGURE 7. RECREATION PROGRAMMING DOT EXERCISE RESULTS (2017)**



**FIGURE 8. RECREATION PROGRAMMING DOT EXERCISE RESULTS (2018)**

## 4.1.5. Libraries Session

Generally, about half of residents feel current library offerings are adequate, while half feel they should be expanded.

### FACILITIES AND COMMUNITY SPACES - SAFETY, RENOVATION, AND EXPANSION

Safety concerns are the primary reason residents who do not use the Salinas Public Library frequently do not visit more often. Residents like having community spaces available for meetings, classes, and other events. Ideas to improve facilities and community spaces include additional community rooms, outdoor spaces with tables or benches, age-focused spaces for young children or teens, and a coffee/food vendor.

### TECHNOLOGY AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

Using a computer or wi-fi is one of the key reasons why residents visit the library. Residents appreciate the availability of computers and wi-fi and current technology classes. They would like to see expanded technology education for seniors, as well as adult employment programs (GED, career preparation, employment search, resume classes, etc.).

### CHILDREN'S DISCOVERY AND LITERACY SERVICES

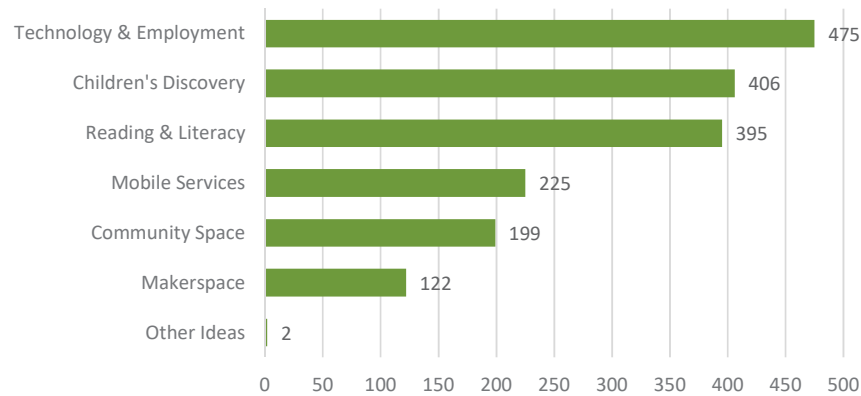
Visiting with a child or attending a library program for children is a common reason why people visit the library. Residents think Salinas Public Library is doing a good job with its children's programs, including literacy and homework programs. They would like to see additional child and adult-child reading programs.

### COLLECTION ACCESSIBILITY

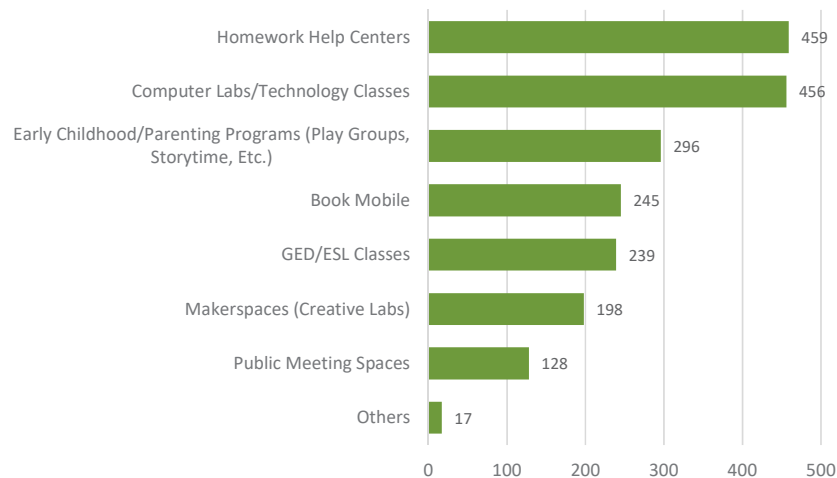
Most residents visit the library to borrow materials and they are



generally satisfied with the collection. Residents appreciate alternative ways to access materials, such as the e-book and other special collections, the Book Mobile, and Paletero. These programs were of particular importance to Spanish-language residents. Some residents suggested expanding the Book Mobile and Paletero programs to schools through a partnership with the School District.



**FIGURE 9. LIBRARY SERVICES DOT EXERCISE RESULTS (2017)**



**FIGURE 10. LIBRARY SERVICES DOT EXERCISE RESULTS (2018)**



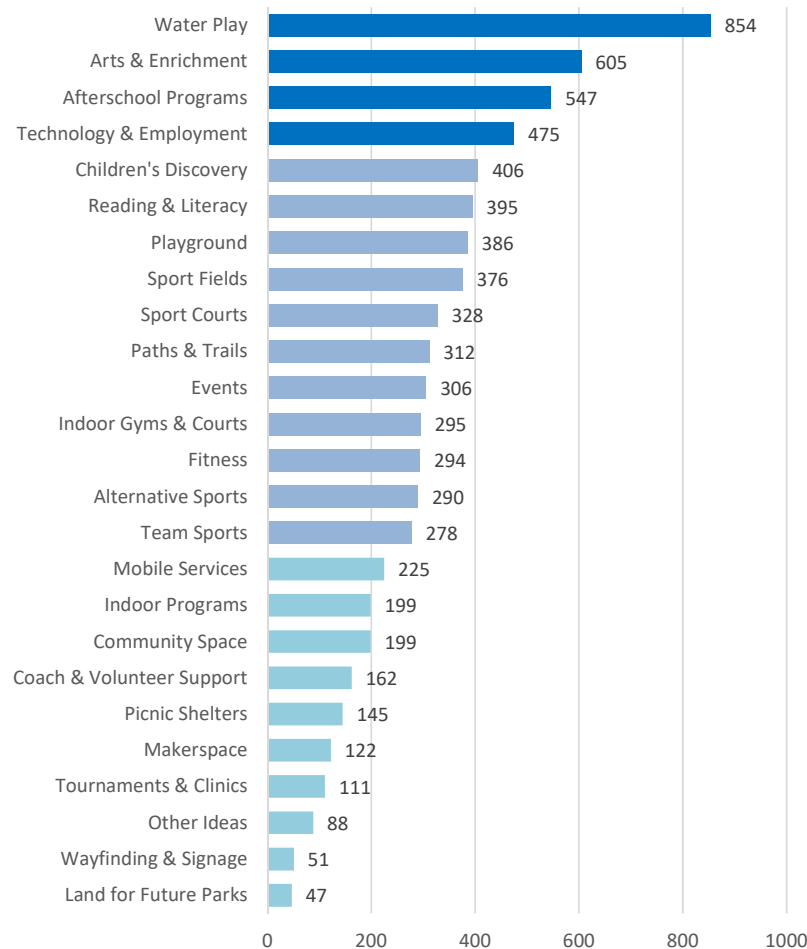
*Pop-up meeting attendees use dots to identify priorities*



*Pop-up meeting attendees discuss projects important to them*

In aggregating the tally of dots from all of the pop-up meetings into a single chart, a more clear picture of overall, local and immediate interests emerges. It should be noted that these responses from the pop-up meetings are not statistically valid, and there are variations when compared to the data collected from the community survey. For example, the survey noted a much higher interest for trails and a

much lower interest in water play, than the responses from the pop-up meetings. The time of year the data were gathered may have affected the results somewhat, since the pop-up meetings generally occurred during the warm summer months when access to water play may have been of greater interest.



**FIGURE 11. OVERALL PRIORITIES FROM DOT EXERCISES**

## 4.2. COMMUNITY SURVEY

In an effort to explore broader community needs, the City of Salinas conducted a survey in English and in Spanish between March and April 2017 to assess community needs and priorities regarding parks, recreation and library services.

### Community Value of Parks

Nearly all City residents (98%) feel that public parks, recreational opportunities, and library services are important or essential to the quality of life in Salinas. Nearly nine in ten residents feel that they are essential; while an additional 10% believe that they are important to quality of life, but not essential. Less than 0.5% of respondents believe parks are "a luxury that we don't need".

### Public Use of Parks, Recreation & Library Facilities

The City asked residents which park, recreation and library facilities they, or members of their household, have visited. Approximately two-thirds of residents have visited the park nearest their home in the past year. The John Steinbeck Library was the only specific facility that was

visited by more than half of respondents (58%). Cesar Chavez Library was the second most frequented facility (38%), followed by El Dorado Park (34%), the Community Center/Sherwood Hall (33%), Central Park (30%), and El Gabilan Library (28%). Approximately half of respondents have used a school playground or sports field in the past year.

Respondents to the Spanish-language survey were more than twice as likely to have visited Cesar Chavez Library (77% versus 33%), the Breadbox Recreation Center (29% versus 12%), and the Hebbbron Family Center (21% versus 7%). They were much less likely to have visited the John Steinbeck Library, El Gabilan Library, and Salinas Recreation Center (Lincoln Ave).

Younger residents are more likely to visit the Breadbox Recreation Center, Hebbbron Family Center, and El Dorado Park; while older residents are more likely to have visited the John Steinbeck Library.

## Condition of Park & Recreation Facilities

Survey respondents were asked to rate the general condition of City park and recreation facilities they had visited. Overall, less than half of residents (43%) rated the park and recreation system as either in 'excellent' or 'good' condition. Another 39% rated the condition as 'fair', while 18% rated it 'poor'.

Resident's relatively low rating of park and facility condition may relate to concerns about the safety and maintenance of park and recreation facilities. When asked why they do not use City of Salinas parks or recreation facilities more often, about 43% of respondents cited safety concerns, while one-third stated that parks and facilities are not well maintained. Other relatively common responses were 'I don't know what is offered' (21%) and 'parks do not have the right equipment' (19%). Other issues, including a lack of desired programs, high use/

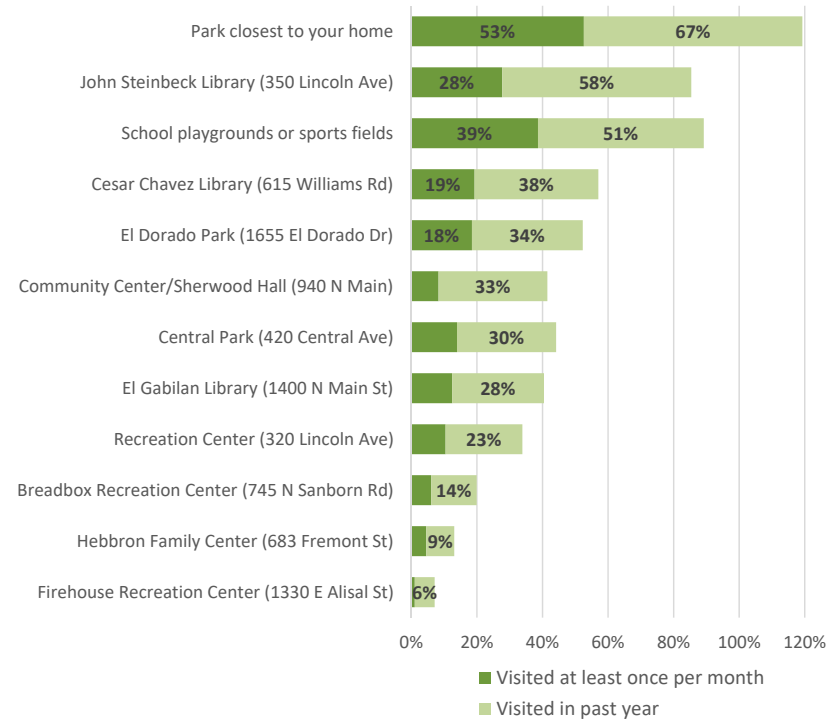


FIGURE 12. PARK VISITATION RESPONSES FROM SURVEY

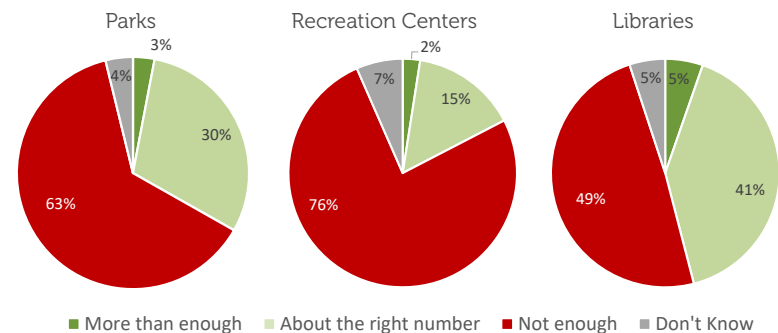


FIGURE 13. SENSE OF FULFILLMENT FOR MAJOR SERVICES

busyness of existing facilities, time constraints, etc. limit participation by fewer than one in eight residents.

## Park, Recreation and Library Infrastructure Improvement Priorities

Survey respondents were presented with a list of potential improvements to Salinas' parks, recreation, and library system, including upgrades to existing facilities and development of new facilities. Over sixty percent of respondents felt nearly all improvements listed should be a high or top priority for the city. More than 80% of respondents considered upgrading existing parks and renovating existing recreation centers a high or top priority. Developing new or expanding library facilities, acquiring land for future parks, developing new active use parks, off-leash dog areas, and walking/biking trails were also very popular improvements - over two-thirds of respondents felt these were priority investments. Respondents were less supportive of developing the Carr Lake property for recreation – 66% of respondents felt this was a low priority or not a priority.

Younger residents – particularly those between 35 and 44 years of age - were generally more than twice as likely to support park and recreation improvements than residents over 55. Residents who live east of Highway 101 were generally more supportive of upgrading and expanding a variety of park amenities than residents to the west.

A second question asked about resident priorities for expanding or improving recreational opportunities. More than half of respondents supported expanding or improving walking and hiking trails (70%), restrooms in parks (64%), arts and other cultural programs (63%), community events (54%), and biking trails (53%). Between one-third

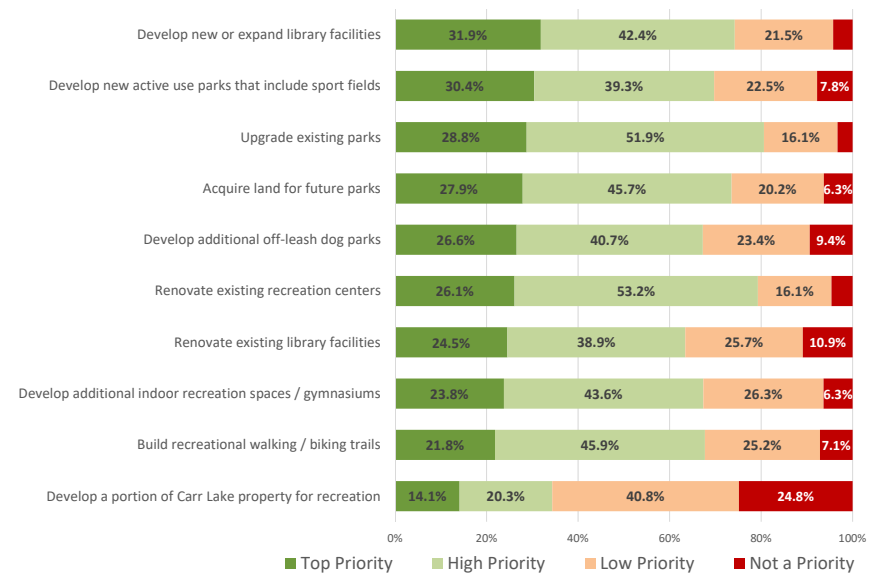


FIGURE 14. PRIORITIZATION FOR RECREATION & LIBRARY FACILITIES

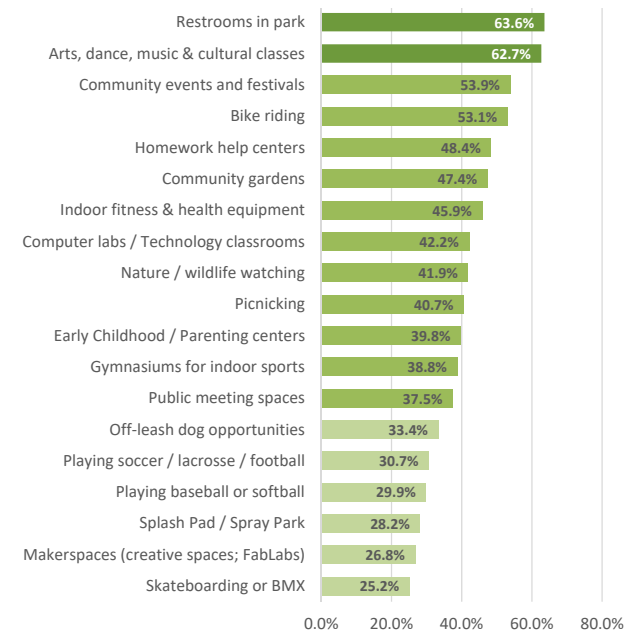


FIGURE 15. OVERALL PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVED RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES



and one-half of respondents would like the City to expand or improve homework help centers; community gardens; access to indoor fitness & health equipment, nature/wildlife watching; computer labs/technology classrooms; picnicking; early childhood/parenting centers; gymnasiums for indoor sports; public meeting spaces; and off-leash dog opportunities. Less popular responses included sports fields, splash pads, makerspaces, and skateboarding/BMX parks - each with 30% or less support.

Expanding walking/hiking trails, nature/wildlife watching, community events, and off-leash dog parks was supported by similar levels of respondents, regardless of age. Improving facilities for more active activities – such as bike riding, sports fields, splash pads, and gymnasiums; as well as youth-oriented facilities like homework help centers, was generally more supported by younger residents.

Support for specific park, recreation, and library system improvements varied between respondents to the Spanish and English language surveys. Respondents to the Spanish language survey were notably more likely to support improvements for nature/wildlife watching; playing soccer/lacrosse/football; skateboarding/BMX; homework help centers; makerspaces; and computer or technology labs.



*Homework help centers at the library serve many local youth*



*Celebrating local culture is an important aspect of the Salinas community*

## Recreational Program Participation & Priorities

A majority of residents (63%) have participated in a special event, such as a concert, festival, movie, or community fun run, in the past year. Approximately half of residents, or their households, have participated in youth-oriented activities and programs including sports and after-school programs. Significantly fewer residents (36% or less) have participated in teen, adult, or senior recreation programs, including arts, sports, and educational programs.

Regardless of their current participation, respondents were asked whether existing recreational programs and activities are adequate. More than three in four residents felt that the City should expand most current recreation program offerings, with the highest demand for special events, teen programs, arts programs, and children's activities. Very few respondents (less than 2%) felt the City should reduce offerings of any of its recreational programs.

Respondents were more likely to participate in - and support expansion of - programs that match the demographics of themselves or their families. For examples, older adults participate in and believe there should be more programs for adults 55 and over. Similarly, adults age 35 to 55 - who are most likely to have children at home - are more likely to feel more youth and teen programs are needed.

## Affordability of Recreation Programs

Nearly half of residents (48%) feel City recreation programs are either inexpensive and a good bargain (10%) or fair and reasonably priced (38%). Nearly 15% feel they are too expensive, while 37% stated that they "didn't know".

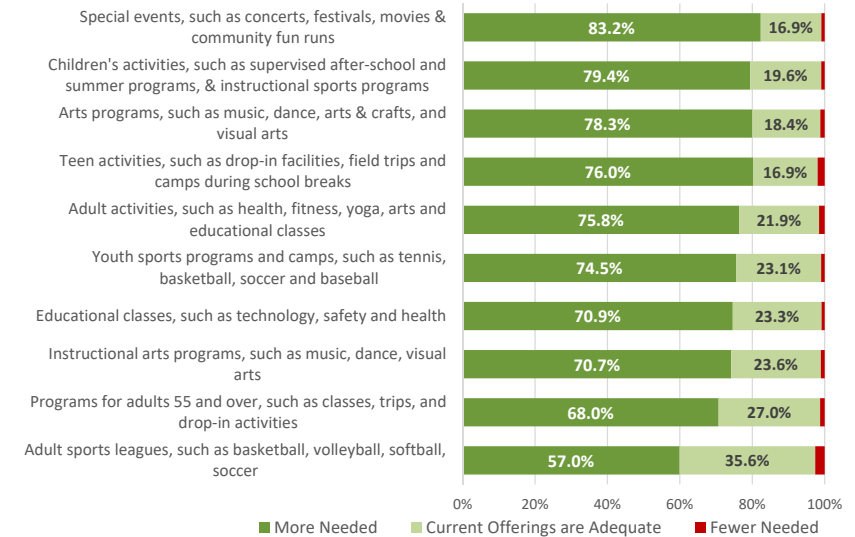


FIGURE 16. SENSE OF FULFILLMENT IN RECREATION PROGRAMS

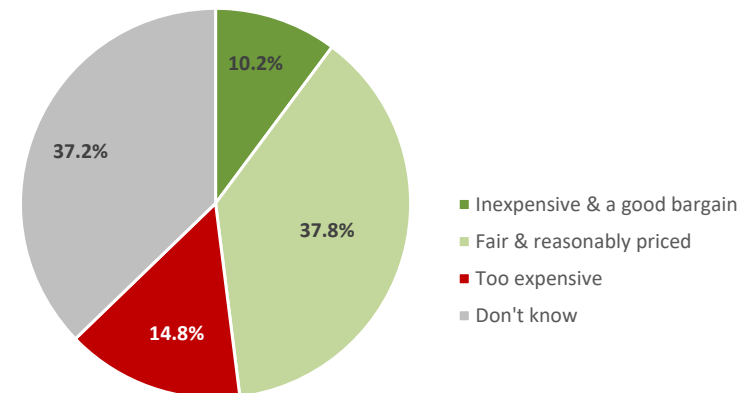
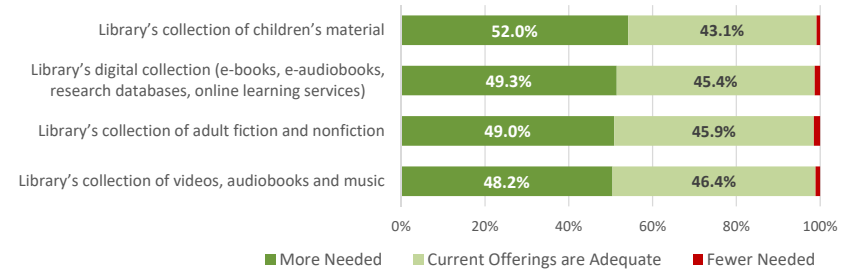


FIGURE 17. AFFORDABILITY OF RECREATION PROGRAMS

## Library Participation & Priorities

Just under half of residents used the Salinas Public Library to access children's material or adult fiction and nonfiction. Approximately 35% of residents used the library's collection of videos, audiobooks, and music or its digital collection of e-books, research, and online learning services. In general, residents are roughly split on whether they feel current library offerings are adequate (about 45% of residents think so) or should be expanded (about 54% of residents). However, very few (1%) think fewer offerings are needed.

When visiting the library, the majority of patrons (59%) borrow library material. Between 25% and 40% use wireless internet access or a library computer/printer, are accompanying a child, or asked a library for assistance in finding information. Fewer patrons attended library programs for children (19%) or adults (9%), studied (13%), or volunteered (2%) during their visits. Respondents to the Spanish-language survey were more likely than English language respondents to have borrowed library material, used a computer or printer, or attend a children's program and less likely to have asked a librarian for assistance.



**FIGURE 18. SENSE OF FULFILLMENT FOR LIBRARY SERVICES**



*The range of offerings at the libraries bring the community together*









# Our Planning Structure: Themes, Policies & Goals

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## 5.1. THEMES

To achieve the vision of strengthening Salinas' quality of life through a diverse and interconnected system of parks, recreation facilities and library services, this Plan frames the City's goals for the future around four core themes, which are based on the needs identified through public engagement and the technical assessments of the system.

- **Creating Connections** - The Recreation & Community Services Department is committed to expanding its efforts to bring the community together through its communications, its Commission and its efforts to improve equity and inclusion in programs and services.
- **Meeting Expectations** - The Recreation & Community Services Department is committed to a safe, sustainable and high-quality park, recreation and library system that meets the needs of residents and adopted service standards.
- **Providing Experiences** - The Recreation & Community Services Department is committed to promoting and celebrating the rich diversity and culture of the City through its programs and services, together with local partners and advocacy groups.
- **Building The Future** - The Recreation & Community Services Department is committed to ensuring that existing facilities are adequately maintained and that the youth of Salinas have access to quality libraries and recreational opportunities.

## 5.2. POLICIES, GOALS & INITIATIVES

THEMES: WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

POLICIES: HOW WILL WE DO THINGS?

GOALS: WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH?

INITIATIVES: ACTIONS THAT MOVE US TOWARD OUR GOALS



### THEME: CREATING CONNECTIONS

#### POLICIES:

- *We involve residents and stakeholders in system-wide planning, park and facility design and program development.*
- *We use a diverse set of communication and information materials to solicit community input, facilitate project understanding and build public support.*
- *We use the Library and Community Services Commission as the forum for public discussion of park, recreation and library issues.*
- *We will strive to ensure that the racial diversity of our workforce is reflective of the overall population of the city and promotes an internal culture of respect, inclusion and equity across the organization.*

**GOAL ONE: CREATE A COMMUNITY OF LEADERS, STAKEHOLDERS AND USERS WHO ARE CONNECTED AND ENGAGED WITH THE CARE AND FUTURE OF THE PARKS, RECREATION AND LIBRARY SYSTEM.**

**Initiatives**

1. Conduct periodic joint sessions between the Library & Community Services Commission and other standing City boards, such as the Planning and Transportation Commissions, and with the City Council to improve coordination and discuss policy matters of mutual interest pertaining to recreational resources, opportunities and funding.
2. Facilitate an annual gathering of non-profit community-oriented organizations to recognize their contributions and encourage their continued collaborations and networking to improve the quality of life for all residents.
3. Foster the formation of "Friends of" groups that facilitate volunteer park improvement and stewardship projects and promote community ownership of community, neighborhood and pocket parks.
4. Explore the development of a Foundation in order to foster relationships with the philanthropic community and with individual and corporate donors to increase the capacity for making improvements in parks and recreation facilities.

**GOAL TWO: IDENTIFY UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS AND WORK TO IMPROVE THEIR CAPACITY TO PARTICIPATE IN PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING FOR PARKS, RECREATION AND LIBRARY SERVICES IN ORDER TO ENSURE INCLUSION AND BUILD EQUITY IN THE COMMUNITY.**

**Initiatives**

1. Promote the Neighborhood Leadership Academy to advocates and program users as a means to further increase the local community's leadership capacity.
2. Support internship and mentoring opportunities and establish a comprehensive scholarship program to engage and provide opportunities for under-represented segments of the community (see Goal 6).
3. Prepare an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan to guide Division policies and set a direction for the Division to advance racial equity in every aspect of its work.

## THEME: MEETING EXPECTATIONS

### POLICIES:

- *We will strive to provide large community parks to a service standard of 1.5 acres per 1,000 persons.*
- *We will strive to provide neighborhood and small parks to a combined service standard of 0.9 acres per 1,000 persons.*
- *We will strive to provide public library facilities to a service standard of 0.5 square feet per capita and located within 2 miles of any residential use.*
- *We will encourage development of private commercial recreation facilities to provide unique and/or specialized recreation opportunities.*
- *We will incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) practices in the design and renovation of park facilities to help ensure safe spaces and ease of monitoring.*
- *We will endeavor to maintain all parks and facilities in a manner that keeps them in safe and attractive condition and will repair or remove damaged components immediately upon identification.*
- *We will develop park sites based on master plans, management plans, or other adopted strategies to ensure parks reflect local needs, community input, recreational and conservation goals and available financial resources.*
- *We will support a safe, sustainable and connected transportation network that provides mobility choices for all and will design and construct new trails with consideration of and attention to users safety and a priority to accommodate multiple trail uses, when appropriate.*

### GOAL THREE: DEVELOP A HIGH-QUALITY PARK, RECREATION AND LIBRARY SYSTEM TO PROVIDE CONVENIENTLY ACCESSIBLE QUALITY OF LIFE BENEFITS FOR THE RESIDENTS OF SALINAS.

#### Initiatives

1. Coordinate with Community Development for Recreation & Community Services Department staff review on development proposals to improve park siting and community planning; update the development code as necessary to accommodate development review for park infrastructure.
2. Coordinate with the Community Development Department to periodically review and update the Park and Recreation Facility Standards.
3. Explore options to co-locate or develop more space in libraries for technology and meetings; develop a greater variety of spaces, including community meeting areas and dedicated space for teens, as well as space to support technical and creative programs.
4. Consider formation of special district and the use of bonds or other financing methods to ensure adequate and sustainable funding for parks, recreation facilities and library services.
5. Conduct detailed assessments of the Hebborn and Bread Box Centers to determine programming and cost scenarios for refurbishing or replacing each center.



**GOAL FOUR: IMPROVE AND REINFORCE THE SAFETY AND ENJOYMENT OF PARKS, RECREATION AND LIBRARY USERS THROUGH THE THOUGHTFUL MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING OF FACILITIES.**

**Initiatives**

1. Develop and maintain an inventory of park and recreation assets and their condition; update the inventory as assets are added, updated or removed from the system and periodically assess the condition of park and recreation facilities and infrastructure. Provide this information to residents on the City's Open Data Portal.
2. Coordinate with law enforcement and neighborhood watch programs to assist with monitoring public park use and encouraging park and trail etiquette. Consider the use of cameras and other technology as appropriate.
3. Develop a plan to conserve and reduce water use through design and renovation of parks including minimizing wide expanses of green lawn to reduce irrigation needs, utilizing gray-water methods where appropriate and safe, and installing drought-tolerant plantings.
4. Collaborate with local health care providers to encourage and support greater outdoor physical activities in parks, on trails and participating in recreational programs through a "Prescription for Parks" program.

**GOAL FIVE: ENHANCE UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS FOR ALL RESIDENTS.**

**Initiatives**

1. Design and maintain parks and facilities to offer universal accessibility for residents of all physical capabilities, skill levels and age as appropriate; assess planned and existing parks and trails for compliance with the adopted Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design for requisite upgrades.
2. Develop a long-term ADA transition plan for all Salinas parks to include updates to playgrounds and other highly-utilized park amenities.
3. Identify and address special user recreation needs.
4. Work with City of Salinas transportation planners to develop a plan to connect and coordinate park pathways and trails with the City's bikeway and pedestrian plans.
5. Study methods to expand the system of off-street recreational trails by utilizing parks, utility corridors and sensitive areas as appropriate.

## THEME: PROVIDING EXPERIENCES

### POLICIES:

- *We will leverage City resources by forming and maintaining partnerships with other public, non-profit and private recreation providers to deliver recreation and cultural services and secure access to existing facilities for community recreation.*
- *We will continually explore options to diversify and expand programs offered, focusing on programs that are in high demand or serve a range of users.*
- *We will cross-train library and recreation staff as applicable in order to maximize resources, eliminate duplication and provide for unique opportunities to provide recreation, education and social services at numerous locations.*
- *We will require that all outside groups and organizations that utilize City parks and recreation facilities have a formal, signed contract in place, which should require that basic custodial services, on-going maintenance and utilities to be paid by the group or organization.*
- *We will monitor local and regional recreation and library trends to ensure community needs and interests are addressed by available programming.*
- *We will continue to develop and support partnerships with local arts organizations and provides for the promotion and delivery of cultural arts programs in Salinas.*
- *We will promote and celebrate the rich diversity and culture in Salinas through expanded art, music, festivals, parades and the other community events.*

- *We will encourage vibrant and active community gathering spaces within the design of libraries, open spaces, parks and plazas.*
- *We will expand and promote access to technology and literacy for all ages in library facilities.*

### GOAL SIX: PROVIDE FACILITIES AND PROGRAMMING THAT SUPPORT LIFELONG PLAY, ACTIVE LIVING, HEALTH AND WELLNESS, DISCOVERY, CREATIVITY AND LEARNING FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES.

#### Initiatives

1. Develop Strategic Program Plans for recreation and library services to take into consideration the needs of the community, the role of the Department, and the expectations and roles of other organizations and other service providers in the area.
2. Explore options to diversify and expand programs offered, focusing on programs that are in high demand or serve a range of users.
3. Establish and enhance partnerships with local school districts to maximize public use of recreation facilities on school sites, especially athletic fields and gymnasiums, and to encourage provision of community enrichment programming.
4. Develop and adopt a Fee Policy document that outlines the criteria for setting fees for certain programs and services, to include cost recovery goals, the financial performance of recreation programs and services, and a comprehensive scholarship program.

5. Establish a maintenance and operations plan for all indoor facilities, including leased facilities. Operating plans shall address staffing levels, program and service delivery, maintenance and marketing.
6. Coordinate youth programs and services with PAL to eliminate duplication of services and assure the full utilization of all facilities.
7. Establish media centers throughout the city to provide better family access and enhanced "1st Five" programming.
8. Provide opportunities to increase access to grow healthy, affordable and culturally diverse foods through community gardens and educational gardening courses.
9. Continue to support the arts community through space at the Bread Box Center and assess the future need and usage of this facility for recreation programs.
10. Explore options to expand the quantity and breadth of adult programs offered, in partnership with other recreation providers and organizations.
11. Continue to provide and expand opportunities for seniors to engage in social, recreational, educational, nutritional, and health programs designed to encourage independence, in partnership with community agencies.
12. Update and expand the John Steinbeck Library and include a discovery center for lifelong learning opportunities.

**GOAL SEVEN: DEVELOP THE UNIQUE SENSE OF PLACE CHARACTERISTICS THAT PROMOTE RECREATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND, THUS, GENERATE INCREASED HEALTH, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS.**

**Initiatives**

1. Foster a sense of place by encouraging community driven transformation, initiating themed districts, and by building upon existing neighborhood identity.
2. Expand on the "Take It Outside" annual program to encourage youth and family activities in parks and open space lands.
3. Enhance the park and outdoor recreation opportunities through the addition of water play/splash pads, dog parks (off-leash areas), gathering spaces (picnic shelters), sport fields and sport courts.
4. Identify appropriate locations within parks and greenways for the installation of public art, murals, interpretive signs, or cultural displays.

## THEME: BUILDING THE FUTURE

### POLICIES:

- *We will ensure that all youth have access to quality preschools, after-school programs, libraries and recreational opportunities.*
- *We will enhance child literacy and discovery services through library services.*
- *We will manage stormwater on-site, where feasible, and consider the preservation of natural hydrologic patterns in the planning and design of new developments.*
- *We will actively pursue opportunities to improve the condition of City-owned parks and open spaces through invasive species removal; planting of native species; restoration of urban forests, waterways, wetlands and other habitat; and improvement of hydrological conditions.*
- *We proactively seek parkland identified within this Plan, in both developed and undeveloped areas, to secure suitable new parks locations and prioritize lands for inclusion in the parks and open space system based on factors such as contribution to level of service, connectivity, geographic distribution, preservation and scenic or recreational opportunities for residents.*

### GOAL EIGHT: ENSURE BRIGHT FUTURES FOR THE YOUTH OF THE COMMUNITY THROUGH ACCESS TO PROGRAMS, MENTORING, EDUCATION, RECREATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

#### Initiatives

1. Continue homework help centers and develop age-focused spaces for young children and teens.
2. Engage and mentor older youth through employment and internship opportunities in recreational programming, library services and seasonal facility maintenance.
3. Continue to promote early literacy and coordinate with school districts and partners to focus on reading at grade level by 3rd grade as a benchmark.



**GOAL NINE: PROTECT THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF SALINAS TO INTEGRATE THE NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND CAPTURE THE BENEFITS OF ALL ECOSYSTEM SERVICES AND HUMAN CONTACT WITH NATURE.**

**Initiatives**

1. Coordinate with the Big Sur Land Trust in the long-range planning for Carr Lake's future ownership, restoration and development.
2. Actively pursue opportunities to improve the condition of City-owned parks and open spaces through invasive species removal; planting of native species; restoration of urban forests, waterways, wetlands and other habitat; and improvement of hydrological conditions.
3. Create a program to "Green Salinas Streets" through the development and implementation of a community forestry plan and program.

**GOAL TEN: SERVE THE CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT AND ON-GOING MAINTENANCE OF NEW PARKS, RECREATION AND LIBRARY FACILITIES.**

**Initiatives**

1. Complete the construction of the new El Gabilan Library.
2. Complete the transformation of the old Municipal Pool facility into the new Sherwood Recreation and Sports Center.
3. Begin implementing the long-range plan for Carr Lake in collaboration with community organizations.
4. Support implementation plans for the new Salinas Regional Soccer Complex.



## 6

## Parks & Open Space

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*Parks and open space represent the basic foundation of a healthy park and recreation system, providing opportunities for residents of all ages to meet, play, grow and thrive. Salinas' parks provide residents with a diverse array of active and passive recreational amenities and options. They are a place to come together with family and friends, to exercise and play, to learn and explore, and to engage with the city's landscape, history and culture.*

By improving existing parks and providing new facilities to meet the needs of the whole community, Salinas can actively support the mental and physical health of its residents and create places that are welcoming and engaging for all.

## 6.1. PARK SYSTEM INVENTORY & CLASSIFICATIONS

Pursuant to the City's Park Classifications and Sports Facilities Standards that were adopted in 2018, parkland is classified to assist in planning for the community's recreational needs. The Salinas park system is composed of a hierarchy of various park types, each offering recreation and/or natural area opportunities. Separately, each park type may serve only one function, but collectively the system will serve the full range of community needs. Classifying parkland by function allows the City to evaluate its needs and to plan for an efficient, cost effective and usable park system that minimizes conflicts between park users and adjacent uses. The classification characteristics address the intended size and use of each park type. The following six classifications are in effect in Salinas and are defined as follows.

- Community Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Small Parks
- School Parks
- Greenways
- Special Use Areas

More detailed information about classifications, intended amenity offerings and specific standards is provided in Appendix F: Park Classifications and Sports Facility Standards.

### Classifications for Types of Parks

These classifications are intended to generally describe the type of facilities that are appropriate in each class of park.

#### COMMUNITY PARK

A Community Park is a large park a minimum of 20 acres or larger of developed recreational spaces that serves several neighborhoods, or a large sector of the City. Community parks serve as an "anchor" for providing a broad range of recreational amenities to residents within a 10-minute drive or 2-mile radius. Community parks provide a population-based standard of 1.5 acres/1000 persons. A community park may include a mix of passive and active recreation areas as well as natural or conservation areas, but shall typically include significant provision of intense recreation facilities. Recreation activities are the primary focus, thus a large percentage of the land shall be available for active recreation. These parks shall be able to accommodate formal and organized recreation tournaments. Greenways, natural areas and conservation areas are considered passive use areas and are limited to 20% of the land area for the community park.

#### NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

A neighborhood park is a medium-sized park encompassing a minimum of 2 acres that provides a social focus and recreational activities within a 10-minute or ½-mile walking distance of the neighborhood it serves. The combined population-based standard for neighborhood parks and small parks (below) shall be 0.9 acres per 1,000 population, with neighborhood parks providing at least 0.8 acres per 1,000 population. Both active and passive recreation opportunities shall be accommodated within neighborhood parks, as appropriate. Uses and facilities which are intended to serve the surrounding



neighborhood can include an active sports field, sport courts, picnic shelter, playgrounds, open areas for informal play, park amenities such as benches, drinking fountains, picnic tables, restrooms, landscaping with irrigation and natural areas. Neighborhood parks may be located adjacent to indoor gymnasiums, community centers or school parks.

### **SMALL PARKS**

Small parks are the smallest park classification and are used to address limited recreational needs. Small parks serve as recreational and social spaces, focal elements, and “community front yards,” but may also include active recreation uses, where feasible. Small parks serve adjacent residences, or provide a small gathering place within a neighborhood center. Less than two acres in size with a minimum of ½-acre, these small parks provide some recreation service to residents within ¼-mile walking distance. The combined population-based standard for neighborhood parks (above) and small parks shall be 0.9 acres per 1,000 population, with small parks being weighted to 0.1 acres per 1,000 population of the combined total, at the direction of staff. Examples of such parks include pocket parks and small play lots. Locating small parks adjacent to other park system components, such as recreational trails, is also desirable.

### **SCHOOL PARKS**

School parks are associated with public school facilities but are designed to accommodate public access to recreational amenities during non-school hours. Most typically, school parks are elementary schools with developed playgrounds, but middle and high school sites may also be considered when sports facilities are shared with community and non-school sports organizations’ use. School parks contribute a lower acreage service level due to their restricted hours of public recreational access and are not counted toward the City’s

required parkland acreage standards but are supplemental to other public parkland provided. As such, no acreage standard is applied to school parks. Any adjacent public parks shall apply their designated acreage standard separately from the acreage of the school park.

### **GREENWAYS**

Greenways are undeveloped lands primarily left in a natural state with recreational use as a secondary objective. Greenways are usually owned or managed by a governmental agency or set aside as a tract managed by a homeowners association or maintenance district and may or may not have public access. This type of land often includes wetlands, steep hillsides or other similar spaces. In some cases, environmentally sensitive areas are considered greenways and can include wildlife habitats, stream and creek corridors, or unique and/or endangered plant species. Greenways may serve as trail corridors, and low-impact or passive activities, such as walking or nature observation, where appropriate.

While greenway tracts may be desirable and beneficial, no specific standards exist or are proposed for greenways, and greenway acreage does not count towards the City’s required parkland acreage standards but are supplemental to other public parkland provided. The only exception is for the inclusion of greenway areas within community parks, such that the greenway area does not exceed the greenway area allowance described above.

### **SPECIAL USE AREAS**

Special use areas include single-purpose recreational areas or stand-alone sites designed to support a specific, specialized use. This classification includes stand-alone sport field complexes, arenas, community centers, community gardens or sites occupied

by buildings. Specialized facilities may also be provided within a park of another classification. No standards exist or are proposed concerning special facilities, since facility size is a function of the specific use.

## Facility Inventory

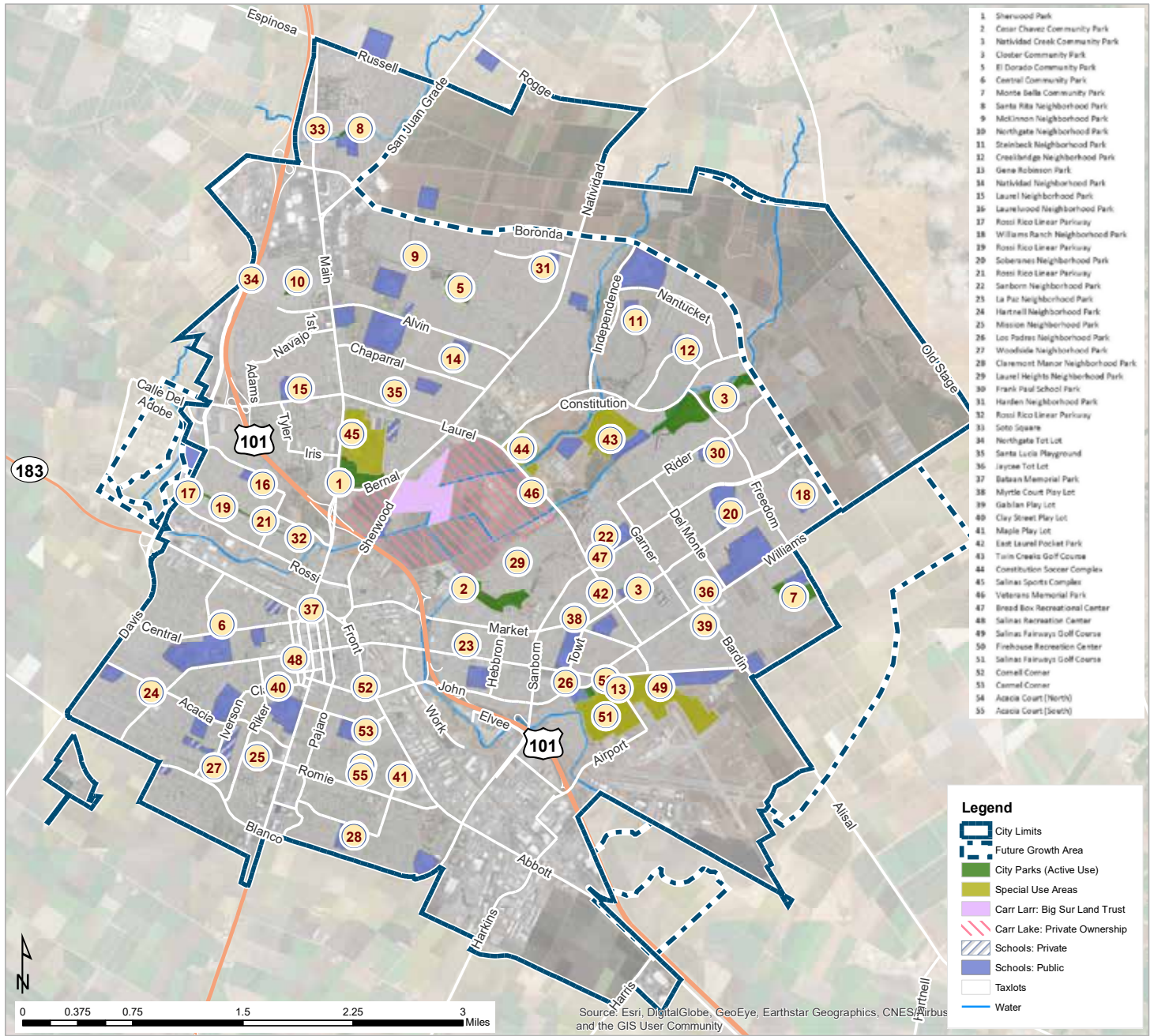
Salinas provides and maintains a growing system of parks that supports a range of active and passive experiences. The park and open space inventory identifies the recreational assets within Salinas. The City provides over 684 acres of public parkland and recreation facilities distributed among 52 park sites and numerous open space parcels. The following table summarizes the current land inventory in Salinas.

A detailed assessment of each park, to include existing amenities and improvement recommendations, is available in Appendix G.

**FIGURE 19. EXISTING INVENTORY: CITY-OWNED PARKS & OPEN SPACES**

Community		Acres
Central Community Park		7.8
Cesar Chavez Community Park		28.8
Closter Community Park		7.0
El Dorado Community Park		17.0
Monte Bella Community Park		18.5
Natividad Creek Community Park		55.2
Sherwood Park		25.6
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>160.0</b>
Neighborhood		Acres
Claremont Manor Neighborhood Park		4.6
Creekbridge Neighborhood Park		1.8
Frank Paul School Park		4.2
Harden Neighborhood Park		4.9
Hartnell Neighborhood Park		4.2
La Paz Neighborhood Park		1.5
Laurel Heights Neighborhood Park		3.0
Laurel Neighborhood Park		3.7
Laurelwood Neighborhood Park		3.0
Los Padres Neighborhood Park		2.7
McKinnon Neighborhood Park		4.5
Mission Neighborhood Park		2.5
Natividad Neighborhood Park		1.8
Northgate Neighborhood Park		4.8
Rossi Rico Linear Parkway		10.8
Sanborn Neighborhood Park		4.5
Santa Rita Neighborhood Park		4.9
Soberanes Neighborhood Park		2.7
Steinbeck Neighborhood Park		3.1
Williams Ranch Neighborhood Park		4.6
Woodside Neighborhood Park		3.0
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>80.7</b>
Small		Acres
Azahel Cruz Park		0.8
Bataan Memorial Park		0.7
Clay Street Play Lot		0.4
El Gabilan Play Lot		0.5
Jaycee Tot Lot		0.7
Maple Play Lot		0.8
Myrtle Court Play Lot		0.7
Northgate Tot Lot		0.4
Santa Lucia Playground		0.5
Soto Square		0.7
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>6.1</b>
Special Use Areas		Acres
Constitution Soccer Complex		19.3
Twin Creeks Golf Course		46.9
Gene Robinson Park (American Little League)		1.2
Salinas Sports Complex		62.9
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>130.3</b>
Other		Acres
Acacia Court (North)		0.0
Acacia Court (South)		0.1
Bread Box Recreational Center		1.0
Carmel Corner		0.3
Cornell Corner		0.1
Firehouse Recreation Center		1.2
Salinas Fairways Golf Course		145.2
Salinas Golf & County Club		119.4
Salinas Recreation Center		0.6
Veterans Memorial Park		3.5
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>271.4</b>
		<b>TOTAL ACREAGE 648.5</b>

FIGURE 20. EXISTING PARKS & OPEN SPACES





## 6.2. PARK FACILITY CONDITIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

From fall 2016 through fall 2017, the project team conducted an inventory and assessment of park facilities owned and operated by Salinas. The outdoor conditions of 47 parks, recreation centers and special use facilities were examined for function, safety and accessibility. The assessment considered recreation amenities such as playgrounds and sport courts; site amenities such as benches, tables, signs, parking, fountains and lighting; and park structures including restrooms and picnic shelters. The team also examined general conditions in the landscape involving park trees, turf grass and landscape beds.

The chart on the following page tabulates the resulting conditions for the examined features within each park facility. Note that the average “score” rating existing conditions was 2.04. This rating places the bulk of park facilities in the “fair” category. A good rating of “3” would indicate fully functional condition. A “poor” rating of “1” recommends repair or replacement. A failing rating of “0” directs removal, replacement or complete decommissioning of the subject amenity.

Highlights from that park facility assessment (Appendix G) is summarized on the following pages.



*Several older playground structures were noted for replacement*



*Ramping at the playground edge provides an accessible route to play equipment*



FIGURE 21. CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

				Recreation Amenities														Site Amenities					Park Structures				Vegetation			
				General Site Condition	Playgrounds	Paved Courts: Basketball	Paved Courts: Tennis	Soccer Fields / Court	Baseball / Softball Fields	Pathways / Trails	Skate Park / Spray Park	Other Rec Element	Site Furnishings	Lighting	Signage	Parking Areas	Drinking Fountain	Restrooms	Picnic Areas / Pavilions	Amphitheater / Stage	Other Buildings / Structures	Turf	Park Trees	Landscaped Beds	Irrigation					
PARKS				Classification	Acreage	Address																								
Acacia Court	Other	0.09	327 & 328 Acacia Street & Alameda Ave																											
Azahel Cruz Park	Small	0.82	1110 East Laurel Drive	2.11	2	3				2			2	2	3	NA	0						2			3				
Bataan Memorial Park	Small	0.71	15 E Market Street & Salinas Street	2.50										2	3	NA							2	3	2	3				
Bread Box Recreational Center	Other	1.00	745 Sanborn Road	2.67									2			3							2	3	3	3				
Carmel Corner	Other	0.33	5 Carmel Avenue & Santa Lucia Avenue	1.50						1															2					
Central Community Park	Community	7.78	420 Central Avenue	1.94	2	2	1			1	0	2	3	2	3	2		2	3			3	1	2	1	3				
Cesar Chavez Community Park	Community	28.82	250 N. Madeira & Circle Drive	2.14	3	3							2		3	2	0	2					2	3	2					
Claremont Manor Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood	4.60	1220 San Fernando Drive	2.50	3	3	2		3				3		1		3	3					2	3	2					
Clay Street Play Lot	Small	0.40	70 Clay St	2.22	2				3				2	3	1	NA	3						2	2	2					
Closter Community Park	Community	6.95	Towt Stand Dewey St	1.93	2	3			2	2		2	2	2	2	NA	0	2				2	2	2	2					
Constitution Soccer Complex	Special Rec	19.34	1440 Constitution Blvd	2.25				2		2			2		2	2		2	3			2	2	3	3	2				
Cornell Corner	Other	0.08	485 Front St	2.67												NA							2	3		3				
Creekbridge Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood	1.82	1793 Declaration St	2.44	3			2					2	3	2	NA	3						2		2	3				
El Dorado Community Park	Community	17.01	1655 El Dorado Dr	2.24	3	3			2	3		2	2	3	2	2	2	2	1			2	2	2	2	3				
Firehouse Recreation Center	Other	1.19	1330 E Alisal St	2.42	3	2				2			2	3	2	2			2				3	3	2	3				
Frank Paul School Park	Neighborhood	4.23																												
El Gabilan Play Lot	Small	0.46		2.14	2					2			2	2	2	NA							2	3						
Gene Robinson Park	Community	1.16		2.00					2							2	NA													
Harden Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood	4.95		2.46	2	2				2		2	2	3	3	NA	2				3	3	3	2	3					
Hartnell Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood	4.22	725 W. Acacia St	2.09	2	2				2		2	1		3	NA	2	2					2	3	2					
Jaycee Tot Lot	Small	0.65	1415 Bardin Way	2.14	2								3	2	2	NA							2	2	2					
La Paz Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood	1.46	560 Roosevelt St	2.36	2	3	2						2	3	2	NA				3			2	3	1	3				
Laurel Heights Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood	2.98	751 Circle Dr	2.75	3	3				3			2		3	NA							3	3	2					
Laurel Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood	3.70	340 W. Laurel Drive	2.00	3	2	1		2	2			2		1	NA		2					2	3	2					
Laurelwood Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood	2.97	915 Victor Street	2.50	2	3				2			3		3	NA	2						2	3						
Los Padres Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood	2.65	1210 John St	2.00	2					2						2	NA						2	2						
Maple Play Lot	Small	0.78	860 Los Palos Dr	2.44	3					2			2		1	NA	3						3	3	2	3				
McKinnon Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood	4.52	1700 McKinnon Park	2.17	2					2		2	2	3	2	2	2						2	2	2	3				
Mission Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood	2.50	110 W. Romie Lane	1.88	3					1			2		2	NA	0						2	3	2					
Monte Bella Community Park	Community	18.53	1601 Monte Bella Blvd	2.13	3	3		2	2				2	3	2	2	1	2	2				2	3	2	1				
Myrtle Court Play Lot	Small	0.68	33 Myrtle Court	2.33	2								3		2	NA							2		2	3				
Natividad Creek Community Park	Community	55.25	1395 Nogal Drive	2.43	3	3	2					2	3		2				2											
Natividad Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood	1.80		1.86	3	1		2		1						2	NA						2			2				
Northgate Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood	4.75	1600 Seville St	1.89	3	2				2			2		2	NA		1				2	1	2						
Northgate Tot Lot	Small	0.40	1611 Cherokee Dr	2.00	2								2		2	NA							2		2					
Rossi Rico Linear Parkway	Neighborhood	10.78	701 Victor St	1.86						2		2			1	NA							2	2	2	2				
Salinas Recreation Center	Other	0.62	320 Lincoln Ave	2.00						1					2	3							2	2						
Sanborn Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood	4.54																												
Santa Lucia Playground	Small	0.49	320 Elwood St	2.22	2					2			2	2	2	NA							2	3	2	3				
Santa Rita Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood	4.88	290 Bolivar St	2.00	2					2			2		1	NA							2		2	3				
Sherwood Park	Large Urban	25.64		1.78	2		2								2	2	1		2	1			2	2						
Soberanes Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood	2.72	1140 Paseo Grande	2.09	2				2	2		2	2	2	2	NA	3						2		2	2				
Soto Square	Small	0.70	2140 N. Main St	1.67	2					1					2	NA							1	1		3				
Steinbeck Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood	3.12	1700 Burlington Dr	2.10	2				3	2			1		2	NA	3						1	2	2	3				
Veterans Memorial Park	Other	3.48	Veterans Way- East of Laurel Dr	2.38						2			2		2	3		2						3	2	3				
Williams Ranch Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood	4.58	1530 Falcon Dr	1.89	1					2			1	2	3	NA							2	2	2	2				
Woodside Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood	2.97	1045 Iverson St	1.91	2	1			3	2			2		2	NA	0				1	3	2		3					
Average:				2.04	2.34	2.44	1.67	2	2.3	1.90	0	2	2.09	2.47	2.07	2.27	1.56	2.1	2.14	2	2.14	2.03	2.52	2	2.72					

FIGURE 22. CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT RATING SCALES

## RATING SCALE

**Playgrounds:**

3	In good condition: no drainage issues; 0-40% material deterioration safety surfacing with a border at the site.
2	In fair condition: drainage issues; 40-25% material deterioration; some small compliance issues that could be spot fixed.
1	In poor condition: drainage issues; 25% or greater material deterioration; needs repair or replacement (but workable).

**Paved Courts:**

3	In good condition: no cracks in surfacing; fencing is functional, free of protrusions, and free of holes/passages; painting and striping are appropriately located, whole, and uniform in color.
2	In fair condition: hairline cracks to ¼", surfacing required; fencing has minor protrusions, or holes/passages that do not affect game play; painting and striping have flaking or color fading.
1	In poor condition: horizontal cracks more than ½" wide, surfacing required; fencing has large protrusions, holes/passages or defects; painting and striping are patchy and color has faded dramatically.

**Sports Fields:**

3	In good condition: thick grass with few bare spots; few depressions; no noticeable drainage issues, proper slope and layout; fencing if present is functional, free of protrusions, and free of holes.
2	In fair condition: grass with bare turf areas in high-use locations, some drainage issues in overuse areas, slope is within one percent of proper field slope, infields have grading problems (bump) at transition to grass and have no additive, may not have proper layout and/or orientation, fencing if present has minor protrusions, or holes/passages that do not affect game play.
1	In poor condition: bare areas throughout the year, uneven playing surface that holds water in certain places, drainage issues, slopes not uniform and/or more than one percent from proper field slope, improper layout and/or orientation; fencing has large protrusions, holes/passages or defects.

**Pathways / Trails:**

3	In good condition: surface generally smooth and even; proper width and material for type of pathway; proper clearances; minimal drainage issues.
2	In fair condition: uneven surfaces in places; some drainage issues; some cracking; narrow widths in some places.
1	In poor condition: uneven surfaces; inadequate width; significant cracking or heaving; clearance issues.

**Skate Park:**

3	In good condition: little to no signs of cracking; little or no erosion; elements target a diversity of age groups.
2	In fair condition: some cracking, but still usable; furnishings (i.e. - metal rails) might need spot fixes.
1	In poor condition: parts of the structure are damaged or deteriorated, chipped off or broken; edges of the structure are eroded possibly causing safety issues; elements target a specific / narrow age range.

**Splash Pad / Spray Park:**

3	In good condition: spray pad has little or no cracking; spray furnishings have little or no damage; no vandalism; good drainage.
2	In fair condition: spray pad has some cracking; spray furnishings have signs of wear, but are in working condition; color fading.
1	In poor condition: drainage issues with clogging or sinking pad; large cracks; spray furnishings broken.

**Site Furnishings:**

3	In good condition; not damaged; free of peeling or chipped paint; consistent throughout park. Trash receptacles, drinking fountain, picnic tables, benches on paved surface.
2	In fair condition; 0-20% furnishings are damaged and require replacing parts; some peeling or chipped paint; furnishings are not consistent, but are operational.
1	In poor condition; 20% or more are damaged and require replacing parts; significant peeling or chipped paint; multiple styles within park site require different maintenance.

**Lighting:**

Y	Yes.
N	No.

**Signage:**

3	In good condition: a signage system for the site, appropriate signs, no damaged signs.
2	In fair condition; multiple signage system within one site, a few damaged signs (0-40%), need maintenance.
1	In poor condition; multiple signage systems within one site, signs that are not legible from a reasonable distance, some damaged signs (40-25%), old logos, deteriorated materials, no signage.

**Parking Areas:**

3	In good condition: paving and drainage do not need repair; pavement markings clear; pathway connection provided to facility; proper layout.
2	In fair condition: paving needs patching or has some drainage problems; has wheel stops and curbs.
1	In poor condition: surfaces (gravel, asphalt, or concrete) needs repair; uneven grading; limited signage; no delineation for vehicles.

**Public Art:**

3	In good condition: no vandalism; no signs of weathering.
2	In fair condition: minor signs of weathering or wear.
1	In poor condition: metal leaching/concrete efflorescence/paint peeling/wood chipped or carved into or warping; vandalized.

**Park Structures (Restrooms, Picnic Shelters, Concession Building):**

3	In good condition: roof has no leaks; floor shows little sign of wear; finishes are fresh with no graffiti or vandalism; all elements are in working order.
2	In fair condition: roof shows signs of wear but is structurally sound; floor shows some wear; finishes show some wear with some marks or blemishes.
1	In poor condition: roof leaks or otherwise needs repair; floor show significant wear and is difficult to maintain; finishes are dull or discolored, have graffiti, or are not easily maintained; some elements not working or in need of repair (e.g., non-functioning sink).

**Amphitheater/Stage:**

3	In good condition: paving, stage and stair materials have little to no cracking or peeling; vegetation that is present is healthy; seating and other furnishings show modest signs of wear; views to stage from all seating vantage points.
2	In fair condition: paving, stage and stair materials have some cracking or peeling; vegetation that is present is healthy, but some soil compaction might be present; seating and other furnishings show signs of wear, but are still usable; stage orientation not be ideal for all viewers.
1	In poor condition: paving, stage and stair materials have significant cracking or peeling; vegetation is unhealthy (pests, disease, topped trees), compacted soil; seating and other furnishings need repair or replacement; redesign of space is needed for proper viewing and access.

**Turf:**

3	In good condition: lush and full, few weeds, no drainage problems.
2	In fair condition: some bare spots, some drainage problems.
1	In poor condition: irrigation problems, bare spots, weeds, soil compacted.

**Park Trees:**

3	In good condition: trees overall have good form and spacing; no topping; free of disease or pest infestation; no vandalism; no hazard trees.
2	In fair condition: some crowding may exist but overall health is good; less than 5% of trees show signs of topping, disease or pest infestation; vandalism has not impacted tree health (graffiti, not girdling).
1	In poor condition: Form or spacing issues may exist; evidence of disease or pests; vandalism affecting tree health; some hazard trees or trees in danger of becoming hazard trees.

**Landscaped Beds:**

3	In good condition: few weeds; no bare or worn areas; plants appear healthy with no signs of pest or disease infestation.
2	In fair condition: some weeds present; some bare or worn spots; plants are still generally healthy.
1	In poor condition: many weeds present; large bare or worn areas; plants show signs of pests or disease; compacted soils.

**Natural Areas:**

3	In good condition: barely noticeable invasives, high species diversity, healthy plants.
2	In fair conditions: Noticeable invasives, fewer species but still healthy.
1	In poor condition: Invasives have taken over, low diversity, unhealthy plants.

## Aging Infrastructure

Overall, the park system needs to address its aging infrastructure - demonstrated by broken pavement in pathways and sport courts and the need to repair or replace picnic tables, benches and drinking fountains currently in poor condition or inoperable. Playgrounds feature a wide age range of equipment and play safety surfacing. Generally, play equipment older than 20-25 years has reach its expected lifespan and could be targeted for replacement with updated and safer equipment that enables a wider range of play value.

## ADA Compliance

Existing benches, drinking fountains, picnic tables and other site furnishings include a mix of ages and styles. Many of these site furnishings are not compliant with ADA guidelines. Limited access to amenities, such as picnic tables scattered throughout lawn areas, may require paved pathways for selected table sites to meet the 50% accessibility requirement. Replacements for aging site furnishings should conform to universal access characteristics and ADA guidelines. The need to remove barriers to access, such as edges at playground areas, also was noted. Where asphalt pavement repair is needed to remove access barriers and tripping hazards, the City should consider how best to replace with concrete pavement for longevity and durability.

## Repairing Site Amenities

A number of drinking fountains were inoperable, and many fountains were not ADA accessible. Broken benches and missing tables should be replaced. The need to repair or replace broken or outdated (often unsafe) play equipment was noted.



*Several older playground structures were noted for replacement*



*Ramping at the playground edge provides an accessible route to play equipment*



## Tree Canopy

A notable accumulation of tree stumps in many parks triggered a concern for a regular replanting program to restore and enhance the tree canopy in the park system. Shaded areas become preferred picnic spots, and extended tree canopies contribute to the green infrastructure in the City. Tree removals over time have resulted in less shade, reduced bird habitat, and more sun and heat exposure for park users. A program of tree replacements and new shade tree plantings to increase shade tree canopies will add value to park users and improve perceptions of care and stewardship. To ensure the sustained health of established trees, enhanced stewardship of park trees should include adding bark mulch around tree trunks and beneath trees to remove grass competition for water and nutrients and minimize physical damage from mowers and weeders.



*Tree canopy provides shade and enhances the character of the park*

## Drought-tolerant Plants

The need to shift to more drought-tolerant landscapes and reduce the amount of open grass area was noted throughout the park system. Determining the specific desired areas for open lawn play spaces, in coordination with delineating and installing drought-tolerant planting beds and groundcover, could reduce the need for long-term irrigation and mowing and enhance the character and habitat of park landscapes.

## Open Grass Lawns

Natural grass areas become worn with use resulting in conspicuous bare areas that are less amenable for general play activities. Once delineated as areas in need of open grass for park users, increased levels of turf grass management such as soil aeration and over-seeding in these reduced zones could help to restore and renovate grass cover within parks adding open play benefits for park users. Irrigation



*Healthy turf gives an even terrain for running and playing safely*



zones would need to be realigned to coincide with related landscape approaches.

### Additional Site Amenities

Playground areas typically lack shade and a comfortable place for parents to sit and for families to gather while visiting a park. Small picnic shelters are limited across the system, and providing a comfortable place for gathering was identified during the public engagement process. The park inventory showed no functioning water play features, and public engagement identified the desire for new water-based amenities such as spray parks/splash pads. Disc golf features were cited in public input as a recreational amenity of interest, and several park evaluations noted sites having room to accommodate this element. These include Central Community Park, Cesar Chavez Park, Hartnell Neighborhood Park, and Laurel Heights Park. Exercise stations were suggested in some parks with room for additional features. When linked with walking loops, these exercise elements help promote healthy physical activities and provide diversity to outdoor recreation. The lack of or reduced presence of benches across the park system indicates a need for installing additional benches for respite and relaxation.

### Dogs in Parks

The need was expressed during public engagement for off-leash dog areas. Additionally, the project team cited a number of occasions when users suggested allowing dogs in parks and adding dog waste stations. The City may want to consider a policy shift to allow dogs on leashes in parks with reinforcement of the need to pick up dog waste as a requirement (subject to a fine). In many communities, dog owners are often the most regular park users even in inclement weather and help add monitoring to parks to discourage undesirable behaviors.



*Exercise stations in parks could provide a new range of healthy opportunities*



*Enclosed dog parks are popular spaces for socialization for dogs and their owners*

## Multi-use sports courts

Several existing tennis courts and basketball courts could be re-lined to allow for other sport activities. Pickleball, a fast-growing group activity nationally, and futsal can be played on tennis court areas. Funnel ball is a fun play activity for younger children who are not yet ready for basketball. Providing a range of recreational options allows for different ages and abilities to recreate in parks.

## Community Gardens

A number of parks (developed and undeveloped) were noted as having space to accommodate community gardens. Providing access to healthy food, promoting outdoor activities, creating gathering spaces and encouraging park visitation are benefits adding of small community garden plots within public spaces. Potential sites to accommodate community gardens include Acacia Court, Carmel Corner and El Gabilan Play Lot.

## Small Parking Spaces

The need to create and enhance additional access to parks for all users triggers the consideration of adding small parking areas to several different parks. Some park users are not mobile enough to walk longer distances to parks or to manage several children being taken to playgrounds. Providing opportunities for parking at the following sites can expand the range of users: Cesar Chavez Park (east end), Hartnell Neighborhood Park, Northgate Neighborhood Park and Rossi Rico Park.

## Walking/Biking Pathways

Existing parks were noted to primarily provide paved pathways from park edges to playgrounds and restrooms. Other site amenities like



*Pickleball is fastest growing sport court activity, and they can be added to refurbished tennis courts*



*Community gardens offer spaces for people to grow healthy produce*



ball fields, sport courts and picnic tables were not always on the paved circulation system. The site conditions assessment and public input noted the need for additional walking and biking trails that provide access to nature and connections. Across the country, walking trails rank as the highest desired amenity in park systems. Loop trails within parks help provide that desired experience of outdoor and natural walking environments. Few existing parks in Salinas provide that amenity, and opportunities to install pathways exist at the following:

- Claremont Manor
- Central Community Park (widen/repair)
- Constitution Soccer Complex
- Hartnell Neighborhood Park
- Laurelwood Neighborhood Park
- Myrtle Court Play Lot
- Natividad Creek Park
- Northgate Neighborhood Park
- Steinbeck Park
- Williams Ranch Neighborhood Park

### Park Safety Perceptions

Safety concerns were the most common reason residents of all ages were not using parks, recreation facilities and libraries as often as they might like. Maintenance practices and public perceptions about upkeep impact current usage and visitation. The prevalence of aging infrastructure creates added challenges to the image of safe outdoor recreation spaces. To help address concerns about safety, any undesirable park conditions such as graffiti, vandalism and homeless occupation must be addressed promptly to avoid increases in perceived safety concerns or the further deterioration in physical site conditions of parks and facilities.



*Installing walking paths through parks can increase park usage and provide space for safe walking and running*



*Restorations and upkeep help maintain existing assets*

### 6.3. SYSTEMWIDE GAP ANALYSIS

Salinas residents are fortunate to have generally good access to their parks and recreation facilities. Through thoughtful planning, the City has secured numerous park sites over the years, and a strong core system of parks and open spaces exists today. However, Salinas' continued and projected growth will place further pressure on access to new recreational lands. Understanding the known gaps in the park system and re-visiting the City's service standards will provide a foundation for strategic planning to ensure that tomorrow's residents have access to an equitable and distributed system of parks, paths and amenities to stay healthy and active.

#### Parkland Walksheds

In 2014, the Trust for Public Lands produced the *City Park Facts Report*, which defines park access as the ability to reach a publicly owned park within a half-mile walk on the road network, unobstructed by freeways, rivers, fences and other obstacles. This metric can be evaluated by using a geographic information system (GIS) and Census data to determine the percentage of households that are within walking distance from a park or the geographic area that is within walking distance of an existing park. Walking distance is most commonly defined as a half-mile or a ten-minute walk. Of the 100 largest cities in the U.S. that have explicit park distance goals, over 60% use a half mile measurement. Determining the 'walksheds' for a community's existing parks can reveal the gaps where residential areas have no public parks within reasonable walking distance. These gaps provide a measure of need to provide a more equitable distribution of park facilities. Identified gaps within the park system can become targets for future parkland acquisition.

To better understand where acquisition efforts should be directed, a gap analysis of the park system was conducted to examine and assess the current distribution of parks throughout the city. The analysis reviewed the locations and types of existing facilities, land use classifications, transportation/access barriers and other factors as a means to identify preliminary acquisition target areas. In reviewing parkland distribution and assessing opportunities to fill identified gaps, residentially zoned lands were isolated, since neighborhood and community parks primarily serve these areas.

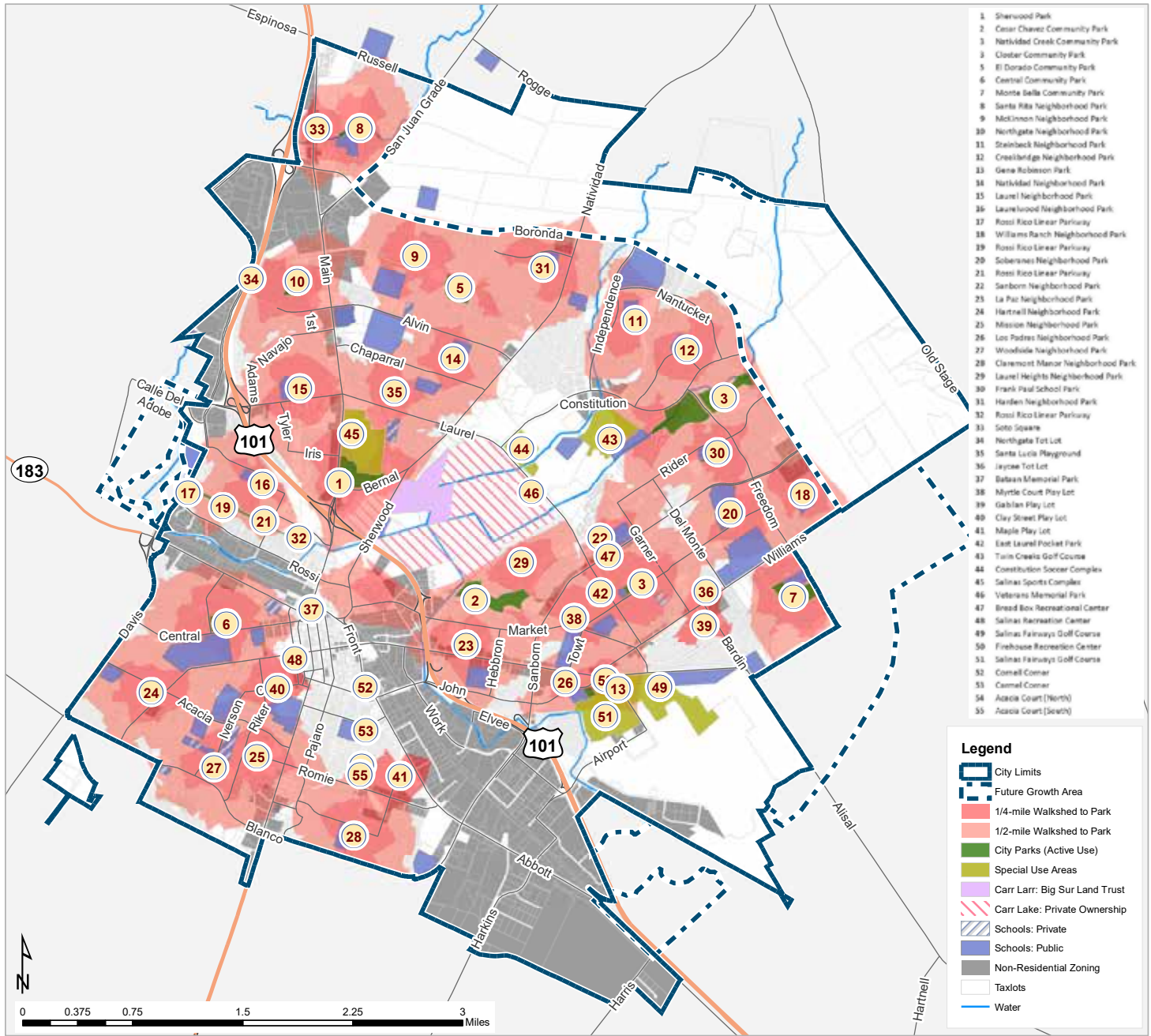
Additionally, walksheds were defined for small and neighborhood parks using a ¼-mile primary and ½-mile secondary service area with travel distances calculated along the road network starting from known and accessible access points at each park. Walksheds for community parks were derived using ¼-mile, ½-mile, 1-mile and 2-mile travel distances to acknowledge that community parks serve a wider array of users and driving to such sites is typical.

Figure 23 illustrates the application of the distribution criteria from existing small, neighborhood and community parks to the ½-mile walkshed. Gaps in parkland distribution appear in 11 areas of the city:

- Parajo St near John St
- El Paso St near Carmel Ave
- Romie Ln near Abbott St
- Near Bardin Elementary
- Williams Rd near Market St
- Del Monte Ave near Sanborn Rd
- Carr Lake
- Garner Ave near Alamo Way
- Cambrian Dr near El Sur Ave
- Natividad Rd near Alvin Dr
- School park near Harden Middle School & N Salinas High School



FIGURE 23. GAP ANALYSIS MAP



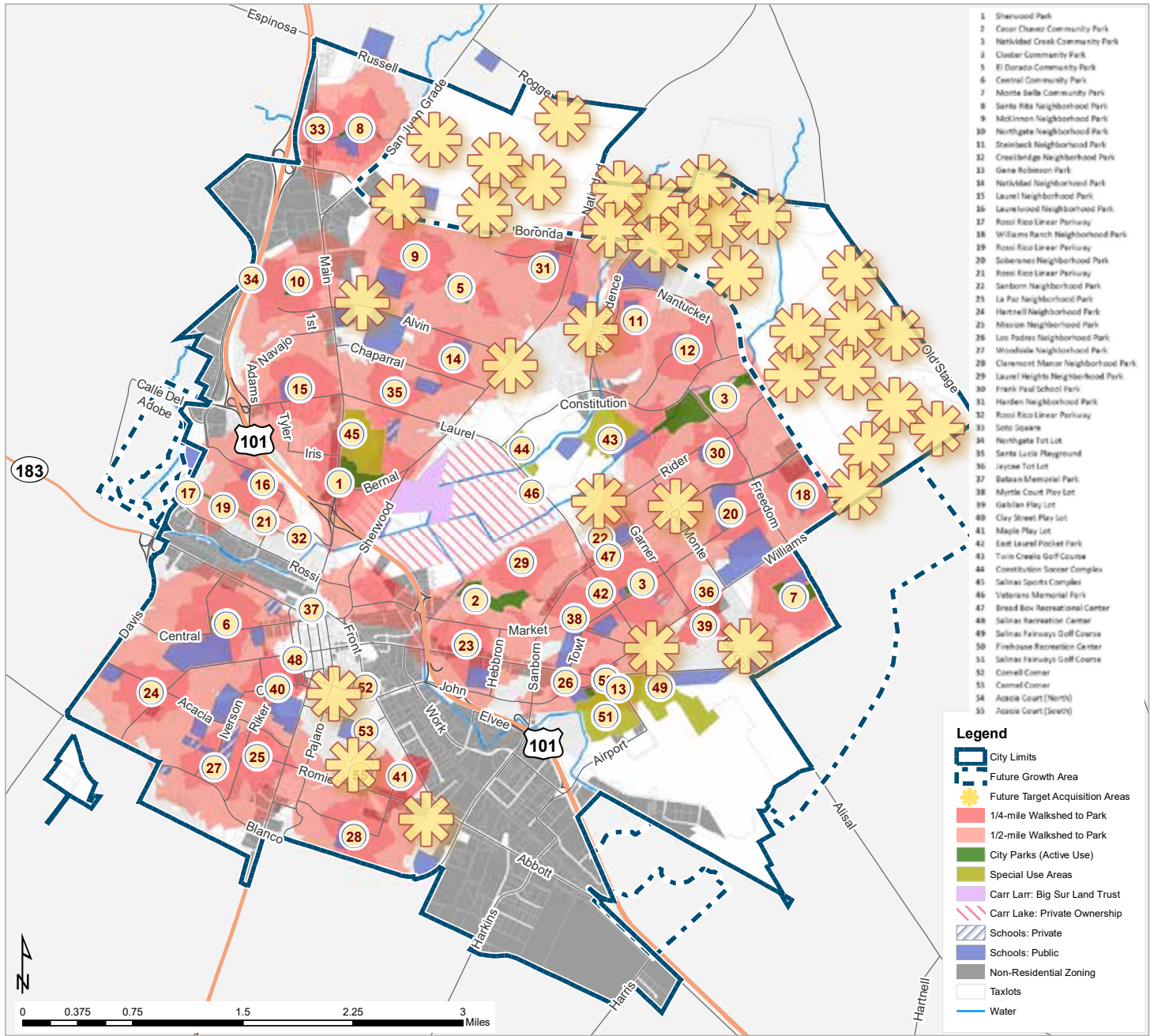
Meeting the intent to provide a neighborhood or community park within a reasonable walking distance (e.g., ½-mile) will require both acquiring new park properties in currently under-served locations and improving multi-modal transportation connections to allow local residents to safely and conveniently reach their local park. As Salinas continues to develop and acquisition opportunities diminish, the City will need to be prepared to take advantage of acquisition opportunities in strategic locations to better serve City residents. In planning for growth, the City should implement the three subarea plans for the north of Boronda Future Growth Areas, which include the identification of integrated park areas related to future development.

Resulting from this assessment, potential acquisition areas are identified for future parks and are noted in the Capital Facilities Plan chapter of this Plan. While the targeted acquisition areas do not identify a specific parcel(s) for consideration, the area encompasses a broader region in which an acquisition would be ideally suited. These acquisition targets represent a long-term vision for improving parkland distribution throughout Salinas.

Although the gap analysis shows coverage for existing park distribution and local access, the analysis does not indicate the population per watershed to further assess predicted park use. Where higher populations and denser housing put pressure for heavy use on small neighborhood parks, acquiring additional park acreage through the extension of an existing park or creating a new site for a park may be justified to meet the local needs for outdoor recreational space.

The greatest documented need is for additional neighborhood and community parks to improve overall distribution and equity, while promoting active-use recreational spaces that can accommodate field sports, court sports and open play.

FIGURE 24. POTENTIAL TARGET ACQUISITION AREAS





## 6.4. LEVEL OF SERVICE ASSESSMENT

In addition to and in support of the gap analysis, a level of service (LOS) review was conducted as a means to understand the distribution of parkland acreage by classification and for a broader measure of how well the City is serving its residents with access to parks and open space. Service standards are the adopted guidelines or benchmarks the City is trying to attain with their parks system; the level of service is a snapshot in time of how well the City is meeting the adopted standards.

The use of service standards for parks and recreation has a long history. Also, standards have been widely applied in park systems across the country as a means to benchmark where a community is and target where it wants to be with regard to the provision of parks, open space, trails and facilities.

The use of numeric standards, typically framed as parkland acres per capita, has become tradition for parks agencies, in part, tied to dated publications from the National Recreation and Park Association that are no longer in favor. Locally, Salinas also has a long history with park standards, and the City has used these standards to guide the growth of its system.

This section begins with a review of current standards and the resulting level of service for different park types. It concludes with a discussion of other considerations and options for standards for the City to consider into the future.

### Background on Current Standards

The 1975 Quimby Act, a provision of the State Subdivision Map Act, enables California cities and counties to require the dedication of land

and/or payment of in-lieu fees for parks and recreation purposes as a condition of approval of a tentative map or parcel map subdivision. The dedication of land and/or payment of in-lieu fees must be based on parkland dedication policies and standards established in the city or county general plan as applicable. Coordinated local ordinances must include definite standards for determining the proportion of the subdivision to be dedicated and the amount of the fee to be paid by the developer.

Following on the State's enabling legislation, Salinas Municipal Code, Chapter 31, establishes regulations pertaining to subdivision development in the city and Section 31.802 establishes the city's parks and recreation facilities standards. As a condition of approval of a tentative map, the subdivider must dedicate land or pay a fee in lieu of for park or recreational purposes. The land dedicated and the fees paid must be used for park and recreational purposes in conjunction with the approval of residential development. The Code determines that the public interest, convenience, health, safety and welfare require that three acres of property for each one thousand persons (3 acres per 1,000) residing within the city be devoted to small, neighborhood, and community parks for recreational purposes in accordance with the conservation/open space element of the General Plan.

The City of Salinas General Plan's Conservation/Open Space Element addresses natural and historic resource preservation and enhancement as well as the provision and maintenance of open space and recreational facilities.

- The Conservation/Open Space Element also provides policy and plans for developing new facilities to meet the new demand from population growth.



- Policy 7.9 requires “new residential development to provide land and/or fees to achieve a minimum of 3.0 acres per additional 1,000 population for developed parklands for community or neighborhood parks.”
- Policy 7.13 states that developments within Future Growth Areas shall provide all the land and improvements required to achieve the parkland standard of three acres of developed public parkland per 1,000 residents.

The Land Use Element indicates that the Parks Service and Facility Standard is “3.0 acres of developed community park per 1,000 population scheduled for construction within a 5-year period for development in Future Growth Area.”

### Level of Service Performance Review

As a measure of performance to meeting the adopted standards for provision of parks and recreation, a level of service (LOS) review was conducted to understand the distribution and acreage needs for parkland. This performance review assesses how well the community can access and enjoys parks, recreation and open space. Traditionally, numeric standards using an acreage per population has served as the primary measurement for adopted benchmark standards. Today, however, park systems are being measured through a combination of quantitative and qualitative characteristics to assess the current needs and future directions for a community’s park and recreation system. The adopted service standards stated above as three acres of parkland per 1,000 people (by California, Monterey and Salinas) are referenced as the overall target for quantitative measure of the entire park system, including developed recreational facilities and special use parklands. In addition, different segments of park and recreation facilities are

reviewed to consider more specific needs for the community’s park and recreation demands and needs.

### PARKLAND ACREAGE

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) prepared a report in 2015 using their Park and Recreation Operating Ratio and Geographic Information System (PRORAGIS) database that reflects the current levels of service (LOS) of park agencies across the country based on population density per square mile. Figure 25 indicates the range of acres per 1,000 population from jurisdictions with less than 500 residents per square mile up to urban communities with over 2,500 persons per square mile. Based on its current estimated population of 162,797 (2019) residents, Salinas’ population density was 7,017 persons per square mile for its 23.2 square miles land area. This population density is similar to the medium/high-density urban conditions that are typical of much larger cities, such as Anaheim, Milwaukee and Buffalo.

In reviewing the PRORAGIS data, Salinas’ level of service would be below the lower quartile for urban communities with its 1.52 acres per 1,000 population for “core parks” (small, neighborhood and community parks) and below the median for urban communities with similar population density with its 3.98 acres per 1,000 if including all parkland acreage with golf courses and sports complexes.

Level of Service measurements can vary widely due to a community’s history, culture, demographics, density, development patterns, and other factors. The acreage LOS of communities within the PRORAGIS database ranges from less than 2 acres per 1,000 citizens to over 100 acres per 1,000 citizens. The PRORAGIS data reveals that parkland acreage ratios typically drop as population density increases.

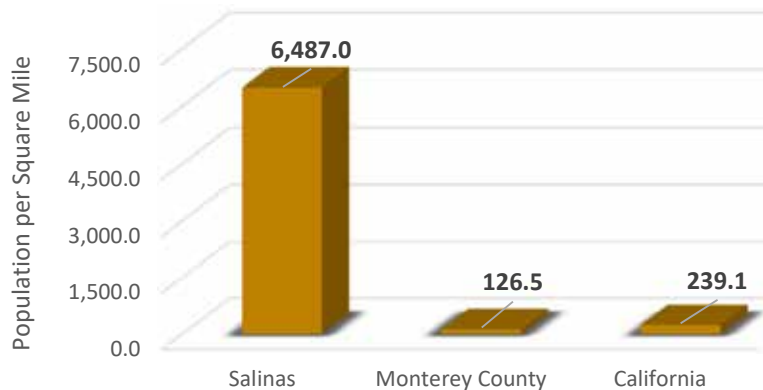
**FIGURE 25. NATIONAL LEVEL OF SERVICE DATA BY POPULATION DENSITY PER SQUARE MILE**

	All Agencies	Population Density per square mile			
		Less than 500	500 to 1,500	1,501 to 2,500	Over 2,500
Lower Quartile	<b>4.5 ac/1000</b>	4.8 ac/1000	6.3 ac/1000	7.5 ac/1000	3.3 ac/1000
Median	<b>9.9 ac/1000</b>	9.9 ac/1000	12.1 ac/1000	12.9 ac/1000	6.4 ac/1000
Upper Quartile	<b>17.5 ac/1000</b>	17.3 ac/1000	19.9 ac/1000	20.6 ac/1000	13.5 ac/1000

It should be noted that diverse approaches are used to classify park lands when applied to meeting a level of service standard. Since the PRORAGIS database relies on self-reporting by municipalities, some agencies only include developed, active parks while others include natural lands with limited or no improvements, amenities or access. The comparative standards in the table below should be weighed with this variability in mind.

When considering the Salinas population density and with its targeted parkland acreage standard relative to the State and County, the comparison presents a stark difference. Figure 26 illustrates the high density of the City with the relative population densities of both county and state.

**FIGURE 26. RELATIVE POPULATION DENSITIES OF CITY, COUNTY, AND STATE (BASED ON 2010 CENSUS)**



This population comparison presents a rationale for realistically comparing the state and county parkland standard of three acres per thousand to the City's compact and densely populated land area.

Salinas' parklands offer a variety of community recreation values covering small pocket parks to larger community parks, special sports facilities and open spaces. Existing measurements of level of service have been reviewed with both the City's core parks and all parklands ranging from core parks and special facilities to all open spaces. In assessing the City's LOS for core parks and all parklands, the adopted standard of 3 acres per 1,000 was used as the initial performance measurement.

Across the entire 648.5-acre park system, Salinas currently provides 3.98 acres of parklands per thousand residents, which meets the adopted standard of 3 acres per 1,000 set by the General Plan Public Services and Facility Service Standards, the Park Classifications and Sport Facility Standards and the City's Subdivision Ordinance/Quimby requirements. However, when measured strictly by developed local and community parks, that performance standard drops to 1.52 acre per 1,000 using the combined 246.8 acreage of small, neighborhood and community parks.

**FIGURE 27. EXISTING LEVEL OF SERVICE MEASUREMENT FOR ALL PARKS**

Metric		Measurement		
Current Level of Service (LOS) Standard		3 acres per 1,000 residents		
2019 Population		162,797 residents		
2035 Population		180,000 residents		
Parkland Acreage		Core Parks		With All Parklands
<b>Total</b>		<b>246.8 acres</b>		<b>648.5 acres</b>
Level of Service	2019	2035	2019	2035
Effective Level of Service based on total acreage (acres/1,000 residents)	1.52	1.37	3.98	3.60
Net LOS to Standard (acres/1,000 residents)	(1.48)	(1.63)	1.58	1.20
Performance to Standard	51%	46%	133%	120%
Acreage surplus (deficit)	(241.59)	(293.20)	160.11	108.50

For its core parks, Salinas is targeting a more specific park acreage standard to focus on the need to address public access to local parks, particularly as the city continues to grow. The targeted standard separates community, neighborhood and small parks with their own measures for service levels, except as prescribed in applicable approved Specific Plans. The community park standard is proposed as 1.5 acres per 1,000. If neighborhood and small parks are both being developed, the standard is 0.9 acres per 1,000 which can be further subdivided into 0.8 acres per 1,000 (minimum) for neighborhood parks and 0.1 acres per 1,000 for small parks.

The current level of service for Salinas' core parks does not meet either the General Plan's 3 acres per 1,000 or the proposed standard of 2.4 acres per 1,000 (combined LOS for community, neighborhood and small parks). Evaluating the LOS for the adopted 3 acres per 1,000 using only core parks reveals a current need for an additional 241.6 acres of developed core parks, and a future (2035) need for 293.2 acres of developed parks. In the land area context for Salinas, these parkland acreage targets are unrealistically high.

Modifying the overall 3 acres per 1,000 for parklands to the proposed separate community (1.5 ac/1,000) and neighborhood/small (0.9 ac/1,000) park acreage standards will reduce the total acreage needs for core local parks. However, with a combined 2.4 acres per 1,000 population park standard, additional parks are still needed to meet the proposed park acreage standard.

Figure 28 outlines the proposed core park standards with the current demand (to meet the standard) for park acreage and the need (gap between existing acreage and proposed standard). To reach the proposed core park standards of 1.5 acres per 1,000 for community parks, an additional 84.2 acres of community parkland is needed today. To achieve

the proposed core park standard for neighborhood parks of 0.9 acres per 1,000, an additional 59.7 acres of developed neighborhood parks (or 49.5 acres of neighborhood parks and 10.2 acres of small parks) are needed. A total of 143.9 acres of additional parklands are needed for the current Salinas population to reach the proposed standard for core park acreage.

**FIGURE 28. CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE AND ACREAGE NEEDS USING PROPOSED CORE PARKS STANDARD**

Classification	Acreage	Standard	2019 LOS	Demand (acres)	Need (acres)
<b>Community</b>	160.0	1.5 ac/1,000	0.98	244.2	84.2
<b>Neighborhood</b>	80.7	0.8 ac/1,000	0.50	130.2	49.5
<b>Small</b>	6.1	0.1 ac/1000	0.04	16.3	10.2
<b>Total Core Parks</b>	<b>246.8</b>	<b>2.4 ac/1,000</b>	<b>1.52</b>	<b>390.7</b>	<b>143.9</b>

Projecting into the future, the need for additional acreage will continue to grow as the population grows over the next twenty years. By 2035, the need for additional parkland will increase to 185.2 acres for core local parks.

**FIGURE 29. FUTURE 2035 LEVEL OF SERVICE AND ACREAGE NEEDS USING PROPOSED CORE PARKS STANDARD**

Classification	Acreage	Standard	2035 LOS	Demand (acres)	Need (acres)
Community	160.0	1.5 ac/1,000	0.89	270.0	110.0
Neighborhood	80.7	0.8 ac/1,000	0.45	144.0	63.3
Small	6.1	0.1 ac/1000	0.03	18.0	11.9
<b>Total Core Parks</b>	<b>246.8</b>	<b>2.4 ac/1,000</b>	<b>1.37</b>	<b>432.00</b>	<b>185.2</b>

Undevelopable lands, such as conservation areas, wetlands and water bodies, do not typically help a community meet its needs for parks, playgrounds, athletic fields, open play space, recreation centers, and other basic parks and recreation facilities. Privately-owned parkland or golf courses are not typically open to the public and could be sold or redeveloped. Public parkland owned by another jurisdiction (such as state or county-owned land within a municipality) could be counted, though only for the population served by that jurisdiction.

## Other Considerations for Service Standards

Acreage alone cannot provide an accurate measurement for the adequate provision of parks and recreation services within a community. While park acreage standards have long been a performance measure for park providers and continue to provide guidance, other variables are also recognized as valuable contributors to the success of providing outdoor recreation and open space for promoting the quality of life in a community.

### PARK PRESSURE

Park pressure refers to the potential demand on a park. One method of exploration examines the proximity of residential populations to a park and assumes that the residents in a 'parkshed' use the park closest to them and that people visit their closest park more often than those farther away. Using GIS, the 'parkshed' is defined by a polygon or a park service area containing all households having the given park as their closest park. The population within this park service area can then be calculated, providing an estimate of the number of nearby potential park users. The acreage of the subject park is then used to calculate the number of park acres available per 1,000 people within the parkshed. This measure of probable park use and population pressure identifies the adequacy of the park land (in acres per 1,000) rather than simply the location and 'walkability' determined by the park accessibility metric. Depending on the amenities and attractions within the park, the higher the population within a parkshed will result in greater the use and potential increased maintenance and wear and tear.



## PARK AMENITY MIX

Providing unique outdoor experiences, while working to fulfill basic recreational park amenities, will result in parks with a variety of amenities. The variety and location of amenities available within a community's parks and recreational facilities will create a range of different preferences and levels of park usage by residents. Park systems should ensure an equitable distribution and quantity the most common amenities like playgrounds, picnic shelters, restrooms, sports courts, sports field and trails to help distribute the potential usage of load on individual parks. Park planners should also consider that many park users, particularly families, look for a variety of amenities in a park that will provide a range of outdoor recreation activities for every visit.

The site conditions assessment and public input noted the need for additional walking and biking trails that provide access to nature and connections to places (parks, schools, etc.). A strong preference has been expressed by the public for more places to gather with family, friends and neighbors. Some of this need could be met by adding small picnic shelters in parks. Public engagement also identified the desire for new specialized amenities including spray parks/splash pads and dog parks. To ensure adequate outdoor recreation provision, additional amenities should be provided in Salinas' existing parks.

## PARK AMENITY CONDITION

In addition to understanding the quantity of park amenities, communities must also assess the condition of each park's general infrastructure and amenities. The condition or quality of park amenities is a key measure of park adequacy and a required assurance of public safety. General park infrastructure may include walkways, parking lots, restrooms, drainage and irrigation, lighting systems and vegetation. Amenities can include picnic shelters, play equipment,

site furnishings, sports courts, sports fields and other recreational assets. Deferred maintenance over a long time period can result in unusable amenities when perceived as unsafe or undesirable by park patrons. Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines can also provide a measure of acceptable condition. Older park facilities may lack universal accessibility limiting the value of the recreational assets by inadvertently excluding some park users.

While not usually considered as a level of service, park safety and the perception of safety for park users is a critical variable in meeting the needs of the community. As the park facilities and amenities are repaired and upgraded special attention should be given to incorporating CPTED (crime prevention through environmental design) principles to assist in improved safety conditions. Coordination with public safety patrols and assurance of night lighting in appropriate areas is recommended to help enhance park safety and the reduction of graffiti, vandalism and homeless loitering.





# Recreation Facilities & Programs

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*The City of Salinas currently has a limited offering of recreation programs and services for its citizens. Like many cities in the United States, Salinas faces challenges in the delivery of recreation services in a cost effective and efficient manner. Prior to the Great Recession, the Department had a robust offering of recreation programs and services in a variety of interest areas, but as a result of limited funds, the Department was forced to reduce staff (from 24 full-time down to 7 in 2010 but now back up to 12) and programs in a significant way.*

Another result of the recession was that some City recreation facilities were turned over to other agencies to operate including, the Aquatic Center and Closter Park. The Community Center was leased outright to Millennium Charter High School. This has limited the locations for recreation programming.

- The responsibility for recreation programming sits with the Recreation and Community Services Division of the Library and Community Services Department.
- The Recreation and Community Services Division focuses the majority of its programming efforts on youth, teens and seniors.
- Recreation programs and services are generally planned and delivered on a neighborhood/senior center level to be responsive to varying needs and expectations.
- The Division has basic performance measures and record keeping regarding recreation programs.

## 7.1. CURRENT RECREATION PROGRAM ANALYSIS

### 7.1.1. Programming Classifications

The categories below represent the major areas of focus for current Salinas recreation programs and services by categories commonly found in parks and recreation agencies nationally. Program lists are based on a review of class and program offerings for 2015-2016 that were provided by the Division.

**FIGURE 30. MAJOR AREAS OF FOCUS FOR RECREATION PROGRAMMING**

Program Area	Focus	Program Offerings
<b>Sports</b>	Youth Sports	Basketball, Softball, Soccer, Flag Football, Volleyball, Basketball Clinics, Basketball Camp, Soccer Camp, Karate
	Adult Sports	N/A
<b>Fitness</b>	Youth	N/A
	Adult	Zumba, Senior Walking Club
<b>Cultural Arts</b>	Youth	Vocal, Mariachi, Illustration through partnerships
	Adult	N/A
<b>Aquatics</b>	Youth	Offered through partnerships
	Adult	Offered through partnerships
<b>Education</b>	Youth	Integrated with After School and other youth programs
	Adult	Integrated into seniors programming
<b>General Interest</b>	Youth	Computer
	Adult	N/A
<b>Special Needs</b>	Youth	N/A
	Adult	N/A
<b>Self-Directed</b>	Youth	Drop-in Basketball / Volleyball, Billiards, Table Tennis
	Adult	Drop-in Basketball / Volleyball, Billiards, Table Tennis
<b>Special Events</b>		Block Parties, Wellness Event, National Night Out, Dia del Nino
<b>Youth</b>		After School, Summer Camps, Skate Club, Tiny Tots
<b>Teens</b>		Saturday Night Teen Scene
<b>Seniors</b>		Senior Program, Meal Program, Trips, Wellness
<b>Social Services</b>		Monthly Blood Bank, Food Bank Distribution, Summer Lunch Program
<b>Outdoor Recreation</b>		N/A



### 7.1.2. Recreation Program Statistics

The following are general program and facility use statistics for various recreation services offered by the Recreation and Community Services Division over the last five years.

#### PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

Figure 31 summarizes the delivery of recreation services by the City's Recreation and Community Services Division.

**FIGURE 31. 5-YEAR PROGRAM & FACILITY USAGE**

Performance Measures	FY13-14 Actual	FY14-15 Actual	FY15-16 Actual	FY16-17 Actual	FY17-18 Actual
Recreation Center Attendees	209,187	219,986	220,635	240,000	240,000
Youth Sports Participants	3,251	3,500	3,936	4,000	4,000
Summer Camp Participants	449	492	420	450	475
Senior Program Participants	12,545	15,482	10,893	11,433	12,965
Teen Program Participants		1,539	2,584	3,823	3,396

#### SUMMARY

- Overall, youth sports participation has increased over the last three years.
- The number of attendees at the City's recreation centers has increased over the last three years as well.
- The classification of programs indicates that there are a significant number of areas where no programming is being offered by the Recreation and Community Services Division.

**FIGURE 32. 5-YEAR RECREATION CENTER VISITATION**

Facility	FY13-14 Actual	FY14-15 Actual	FY15-16 Actual	FY16-17 Actual	FY17-18 Actual
Bread Box	38,532	39,031	48,121	46,499	37,083
Central Park	22,932	24,610	23,139	18,107	31,052
El Dorado	35,076	32,765	39,172	95,425	119,233
Firehouse	21,356	23,990	14,438	28,438	20,423
Hebbron Family Center	50,236	47,990	52,007	30,720	53,127
Recreation Center	40,556	42,297	42,066	56,541	61,478
Closter Park <sup>1</sup>	N/A	1,394	1,682	824	2,625
Community Center (Sherwood Hall) <sup>2</sup>	51,968	39,376	43,385	43,840	30,000
<b>Total Participants</b>	<b>260,656</b>	<b>251,453</b>	<b>264,010</b>	<b>320,394</b>	<b>355,021</b>

[1] Closter Park was leased to Salinas Boxing Club but the summer recreation program was restored in FY-14-15.

[2] Sherwood Hall is utilized by Millennium Charter School on a regular basis as well as for public events.

**FIGURE 33. 5-YEAR YOUTH SPORTS PROGRAM PARTICIPATION**

Program	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Pee Wee Basketball	773	707	800	800	800
Youth Basketball	629	984	996	996	700
Winter Hoops	198	115	176	176	148
Winter Basketball Clinic	50	76	45	45	70
Pee Wee Softball	180	179	184	Cancelled	Cancelled
Youth Softball	Cancelled	160	Cancelled	Cancelled	Cancelled
Summer Basketball Clinic	50	0	120	145	170
Summer Hoops	175	170	177	202	196
Youth Soccer	153	120	198	168	172
Girls Volleyball	332	319	468	507	574
Youth Flag Football	325	255	342	360	255
KFL	87	88	75	140	120
Summer Soccer Camp	200	100	200	100	124
Summer Basketball Camp	100	100	100	96	70
Summer Fun Fest				68	92
<b>Total Participants</b>	<b>3,252</b>	<b>3,373</b>	<b>3,881</b>	<b>3,803</b>	<b>3,491</b>

## 7.2. RECREATION PROGRAM CATEGORIES OF PRIORITY

In an effort to refine and refocus programming, this Plan recommends providing recreational programs and activities based on three categories of priority – Core, Secondary and Support. The placement of programs into these three categories does not indicate the overall importance of these activities in the community, but rather the role of the Division in providing these programs. The proposed distribution of program areas between the Core, Secondary and Support categories is similar to the City's current focus of recreation programs, with only a few adjustments.

- **Core Programs** are programs that are currently the primary responsibility of the Division to provide as City based activities.
- **Secondary Programs** are programs that are currently a lower priority to be provided directly by the Division, but may be offered by other organizations through contract with the City.
- **Support Programs** are programs that are not currently a priority for the Division to be providing directly to the community,

but where the City may provide support through facilities and promotion of activities for other organizations.

The City's existing offerings, as well as future needs, were divided into these categories based on the following criteria:

- **Facilities:** Does the City have the necessary facilities to support the program? If not, the program was included in the support category.
- **Number of People Served:** Does the program or service serve a relatively large population base? The greater the number of people served, the more likely the program is to be in the core category.
- **Cost/Revenue:** What is the cost of providing the program in relationship to revenues generated? The better the cost recovery level, the more likely the program is to be a core or secondary service.
- **Demand:** Is the program or service in high demand by the community? The higher the demand the greater the likelihood of the program being in the core area.
- **Partnerships:** Are there partners that can assist with the provision of programs and facilities? Partnerships place a program in the secondary or even support category.
- **Other Providers:** Are there other providers that are able to provide the program or service? If there are viable other providers then the program is probably in the support category.
- **Economic Benefit:** Does the activity provide an economic benefit to the community and attract visitors? The greater the economic benefit the more likely the program is to be in the core or secondary category.

### 7.2.1. Current Program Assessment

The following chart identifies and summarizes current core programs, secondary programs, and support program areas for the Salinas Recreation and Community Services Division.

CORE PROGRAMS	SECONDARY PROGRAMS	SUPPORT PROGRAMS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth Sports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General Interest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adult Sports</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth Programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education Programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fitness / Wellness</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teen Programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Special Events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aquatics</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural Arts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outdoor Recreation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-Directed Programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Special Needs</li> </ul>
		

**FIGURE 34. CLASSIFICATION OF CURRENT RECREATION PROGRAM AREAS**

#### CORE

##### *Youth Sports*

Currently, the Division provides programs for a number of team sports. Even with youth sports organizations in the area taking on the responsibility for many organized youth team sports activities, the Division will continue to have a role in the future. There may also be opportunities to expand some sports offerings and also add youth sports camps and clinics to support sports run by other organizations.

The Division has very little programming available in individual and lifetime sports. It will probably be necessary to expand these types of programs in concert with other community organizations that focus on lifetime sports or by contract (i.e., Tennis Center). In addition,

the Division may need to increase its focus on the development of adventure sports (skateboarding, climbing, fencing, Ultimate Frisbee, BMX, etc.).

##### *Youth Programs*

With the Division's after school and summer camp program, youth programming is a primary area of emphasis for recreation, and it is anticipated that this will remain so well into the future. The ability to continue to integrate education, social services and even fitness/wellness into these programs will be critical in the future.

## ***Seniors Programs***

The Division utilizes the Firehouse Recreation Center as the primary location for senior programs and services. The Division will need to continue to take an active role and likely expand programming and service opportunities for this age group. It should be noted that as the Baby Boomer generation ages they are bringing new needs and expectations to senior services, which are more in line with active recreation pursuits that they have grown up with. This will require different types of senior services and a possible change in facilities too.

## ***Teen Programs***

The hub of the Division's teen programming is based out of the Bread Box Center, but other centers have programming for this age group as well (Hebbron, Firehouse and Cesar Chavez Library). In the future, additional services and programs will need to be targeted to this age group. It is anticipated that these will be offered by both the Division and other providers with experience with this age group.

## ***Social Services***

The Division attempts to integrate a number of social service programs into its recreation offerings. This includes youth summer meal programs, senior meals, food bank distribution, violence prevention, Building Healthy Communities, and other efforts. This is a unique program area for most recreation agencies but one that should be embraced and celebrated as being very supportive and complimentary to more conventional recreation services. This area should continue to be a strong focus for the Division in the future, but with the realization that the County will continue to be the primary provider of these types of services.

## **SECONDARY**

### ***Cultural Arts***

This is currently a small program area for the Division, and these activities are part of basic recreation services that are offered through the youth after school program and seniors programming. Sherwood Hall provides a unique setting to grow the number of performing arts programs and presentations, and it is anticipated that additional emphasis in this area is probably going to be needed. Any expansion in this program area will likely require coordination with other non-profit cultural arts organizations located in Salinas and the surrounding area.

### ***General Interest Programs***

There are very limited programs in this category, and most of these consist of computer classes. It should be anticipated that there will need to be more programs in this area (and fee based) in the future with most of these being provided by the Division or other organizations or providers.

### ***Education Programs***

Currently, the Division's educational focus is primarily in the area of youth and senior programming. However, the library side of the Division does have a significant education program in place for youth, and they should remain the primary provider of these services. In addition to libraries, education-based programming is often being provided by local school districts, specialized non-profits or private providers. As a result, it is not anticipated that the Division will grow its educational programming much in the future, and this area (beyond the existing programs) should probably remain in the secondary or drop to the support category.



***Special Events***

The Division only offers a few internally provided special events, some at the individual center level and others on a city-wide basis. This is very unusual, as recreation departments across the United States are seeing a greater emphasis placed on special events that draw communities together, as well as attract individuals from outside the community. However, a number of events a year are being provided by outside organizations on a permit basis through the City. It should be anticipated that if the City's financial situation continues to improve city-wide special events may become more important; however, other community groups should be encouraged to be the primary organizers of as many community wide events as possible, rather than the Recreation and Community Services Division.

***Self-Directed Programs***

Even though these types of activities are not formal programs, they do require that the Division provide the opportunities and time in facilities for this to occur. With community centers, an indoor pool, tennis center and other facilities, self-directed activities will remain an area of some emphasis.

**SUPPORT*****Adult Sports***

The Recreation Division (before the Great Recession) was a strong provider of adult sports leagues, but this is no longer the case as other community organizations have taken up this role or the activities are no longer available. In the future, the Division may want to consider providing some adult sports leagues and may also want to consider developing more individual and adventure sports.

***Fitness / Wellness Programs***

Without a doubt, this is one of the greatest areas of growth in public recreation programming. With a society that has an increasing awareness of the benefits of good health and a realization that obesity (especially among children) is a major risk for Americans, there has become a much higher demand for programming in this area. The Division has virtually no fitness/wellness programming due in part to limited facilities. The Division should emphasize the importance of integrating wellness initiatives into other existing program areas (seniors, youth, etc.), as well as adding some basic programs in this area. Developing partnerships with local health care providers for more medically based services is advised.

***Aquatics***

Although the City has an indoor pool, it is managed and programmed by a contract provider, so the Division has no direct role in the provision of aquatic programs and services. It is not anticipated that this situation will change in the near future.

***Special Needs Programs***

It appears that the Division does not offer special needs programming. It is difficult for most recreation agencies to have a comprehensive special needs program on their own. As a result, many agencies in a region will often band together to provide these services in a more cost-effective manner. The Division should consider partnering with other organizations for special needs programming in the future.

## Outdoor Recreation Programs

There currently is no emphasis given to this program area by the Division. However, nationally, as well as in California, there has been an increased interest in Outdoor Recreation and residents often see this as an important aspect of a recreation department. As a result, outdoor recreation will also need to see increased emphasis in the future, but this program area will likely be the role of other providers more than the Division.

## 7.2.2. Future Recreation Program Focus

The following chart identifies and summarizes the projected new programming classifications for the Recreation and Community Services Division.

The new distribution of program areas from Core to Secondary and Support has four important changes with Adult Sports moving from Support to Secondary, Fitness/Wellness moving from Support to Secondary, and Cultural Arts moving from Secondary to Core. Education moves down from a Secondary to the Support category. Over an extended period of time (5 plus years), it is likely that Fitness/Wellness will need to move from Secondary to Core. However, this will require an upgrade in facilities to better serve the fitness/wellness needs of the community.

The Recreation and Community Services Division should continue to build on its areas of strength including youth sports, youth programming, seniors, teens, and social services. Other areas of increased programming emphasis will need to include:

CORE PROGRAMS	SECONDARY PROGRAMS	SUPPORT PROGRAMS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth Sports</li> <li>Youth Programs</li> <li>Teen Programs</li> <li>Senior Programs</li> <li>Social Services</li> <li><u>Cultural Arts</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General Interest</li> <li>Special Events</li> <li>Self-Directed Programs</li> <li><u>Adult Sports</u></li> <li><u>Fitness / Wellness</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aquatics</li> <li>Outdoor Recreation</li> <li>Special Needs</li> <li><u>Education Programs</u></li> </ul>
		

## Cultural Arts

Currently, the Division has a very limited level of programming in this area and most of it is integrated into youth or senior programs or activities. Adding programming in the areas of the visual arts, as well as the performing arts is being requested by the public. Since the City has Sherwood Hall, which is a fine venue for performing arts, it should be utilized for this purpose. There are other community groups that have existing programs in cultural arts, and these groups should also be a major provider of programming of this type.

FIGURE 35. CLASSIFICATION OF FUTURE RECREATION PROGRAM AREAS

***Fitness / Wellness Programs***

This area will need special emphasis and needs to include more than just fitness classes. There will need to be a strong focus on wellness and healthy living activities and events. This effort should focus on youth obesity, as well as senior wellness activities. It is realized that without physical alterations to the existing community centers, it will be more difficult to adequately serve this need. Expanding partnerships with prominent healthcare providers in the market will provide important expertise and credibility to this effort.

***Special Events***

The development of two to three community wide special events should be a goal for the Division. These events should be organized and conducted by the Division and should have a definite theme and goal in mind. Finding sponsors will be critical to help defer the cost of these new events.

***Education Programs***

The community has identified this program category as an area of focus for the future. It is not anticipated that the Recreation and Community Services Division will be a main provider of these services in the future. In addition to the education programs provided through the libraries, education based programming is often being provided by local school districts, specialized non-profits or private providers.

***Adult Sports***

The Division currently does not provide virtually any adult sports, but there is a public expectation that programming will be available in this area. This could include the introduction/expansion of team sports, such as flag football, volleyball, soccer, softball or basketball, as well as a focus on individual sports. Other providers will certainly need to be a primary source of programming in this area.

Other important program directions to consider include:

- Youth Sports should see sustained growth with team sports continuing to be offered by the Division, as well as other providers. The future focus for youth sports should also be on camps and clinics as well as individual sports and adventure sports.
- Aquatics will likely continue to be offered by the contract operator of the Aquatic Center, but a revised agreement is needed to assure a higher level of community-based programming.
- Youth programming will need to remain a core program area for the Division with a continued focus on after-school and summer camp programs.
- General Interest is not seen as a strong area of programming emphasis for the Division in the future and most of these services should be provided by other organizations.
- Special Needs programming should be provided through contracts with other providers or as a consortium with other cities in the area.
- Outdoor Recreation is not a strong area of emphasis for the Division and these services should be provided by other organizations in the future.
- Senior program is delivered primarily out of the Firehouse location and this should continue for most services. However, the Division should still attempt to increase off-site senior programming at some of the other community center locations.
- Teen programming has basically been offered out of the Bread Box center and it is anticipated that this will continue into the future.

- With a variety of parks, community centers and the aquatic center, the City will always be a primary provider of venues for Self-Directed activities.
- The Division has done a good job of integrating Social Services into recreation programming, and it is expected that this will continue.
- As has been noted, the major focus of parks and recreation programming is on youth and seniors. However, increasing programming for adults as well as the family unit should be a future goal.
- The Division has not had any real focus on providing fee-based programs and services to the community. However, despite the lower income nature of segments of the community, offering these types of programs in the future should be emphasized.
- Other programming considerations (especially for fee-based programs):
  - Develop programs that are single day or no more than four sessions at a time.
  - Consider more Saturday programs and introduce some Sunday programming (especially in adult sports leagues).
  - Introduce programs that are oriented toward specific ethnic groups.
  - Stagger the days and times of similar programs that are offered at multiple locations.

## 7.3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RECREATION PROGRAMS

Based on the analysis of existing programs and the input received from the public, the following are basic recommendations for future recreation programs and services.

### Programming Philosophy

The Division should develop a Programming Philosophy that details how the Recreation and Community Services Division will deliver recreation programs and services in the future. This should be based on the concept that the City will provide a basic offering of programs and services in a number of key program areas and rely on other organizations and providers as the source for other programs and services. There will need to be recognition that the Division will need to step-in and provide some programs and services where other providers are not available or cannot adequately serve the needs of the community.

As part of a greater programming philosophy, the Division must determine what programs and services will be offered directly by the recreation staff and which will be contracted to other individuals or organizations. Increasingly, recreation departments are turning to contracted services or the outright rental of facilities to other providers to broaden programming and limit the role of in-house employees.

Before determining which programs and services to contract or have provided by others, an assessment of the specific pros and cons of such a move needs to be completed. A major aspect of this analysis should be to determine the financial impacts and quality of the services that will be provided. Key questions to be asked include:



- Will this be the most cost-effective method to obtain the program, service or function?
- Does the Department have the knowledge and equipment to provide the program, service or function?
- Will the quality of the program, service or function suffer if it is contracted to other organizations?
- Are there other more qualified organizations that should provide the program, service or function?
- Is the service, program or function only available from a contract provider?
- Are the safety and liability risks too high to provide the program or service in house?

## Communications & Marketing

The Recreation and Community Services Division should commit to taking a stronger role in coordinating and delivering recreation programs and services in the community to ensure that there is a broad base of programming options available. This will require strong communications with other providers to determine roles, tracking of programs offered and number of participants, plus actively promoting the availability of services.

To maximize the programming offerings by the Division, as well as other providers in the community, there needs to be a strong marketing effort to inform and promote the recreation programs and services that are available. This can best be accomplished by having a

comprehensive Division marketing plan for recreation programs and services. This needs to be a simple, easy to implement document that serves as a guideline for specific marketing efforts. There should be a more visionary 5-year plan as well as a very specific yearly plan that outlines areas of focus, marketing tools and specific tasks, in addition to identifying the responsible staff member for implementation, financial resources that are required and a thorough evaluation process. The marketing plan should focus on the following areas:

- Website enhancement to better promote programs and services.
- The development of a 3 times a year program catalog.
- Promotion of program registration options and especially on-line options.
- Program options availability by region and/or area of the community.
- Programs and services offered by other providers.

There must be a strong recognition of the different demographic markets that have to be served. The youth, senior and family populations in the area should be specifically addressed as should the different ethnic groups.

## Recreation Program Plan

The Division should develop a Program Plan for recreation services. This plan needs to take into consideration the needs of the community, the role of the Recreation and Community Services Division, and the expectations and role of other organizations and

recreation providers in the area. There should be clearly identified areas of programmatic responsibility to ensure that there is not overlap in resource allocation or that gaps in services are not present.

The five-year program plan should identify the priorities for Division wide program development, the responsible staff member and the required resources. Each community center, or other facility, would then develop their own five-year plan with a specific and detailed implementation plan for each year.

The Division needs to develop more extensive administrative procedures for recreation programming. This includes:

- The need for every new program or service to develop a program proposal form to determine the direct cost of offering the activity as well as the minimum number of registrants needed to conduct the program. This proposal form should also evaluate the need for the program, its market focus, and the ability to support the program plan and priorities of the Division.
- Follow-up when each program or service is completed, with a program report that itemizes the exact cost and revenues that were generated by the program and the number of individuals served. This will determine if the program or service met its financial goals and also its service goals.
- Develop specific program performance measures that track the following:
  - Rates of fill for classes and programs (number of registrants compared to the capacity).
  - Participation numbers by individual programs and totals by program areas are essential along with comparisons to past

years/seasons (3 to 5-year comparisons).

- Rate of program cancellations.
- Financial performance of individual programs (operating expenses vs. revenues) including cost per participant.
- Evaluations from participants with a numeric scoring system for comparative purposes.

## Resources

The Recreation and Community Services Division must assess and align its programming efforts with available staff and financial resources. It should also be recognized that increasing the role of the Division in providing programs will require an increase in staff and other resources. As a result, the program plan should be developed incrementally with small steps being taken at a time that does not require significant staff or budgetary resources to accomplish.

## Distribution

Recreation programs provided by the Division should be organized on both a neighborhood and city-wide basis. Basic programs such as after-school and summer camps should be available on a neighborhood basis, while activities such as tennis, performing arts, teens and fee-based programming should be offered on more of a city-wide basis.

## Role of Other Providers

With limited resources, the City of Salinas will need to continue to partner with other groups and organizations to provide recreation programs and services for the community.

- The Division will need to be a “clearinghouse” for recreation programs and services provided by others. This may involve promotion of their activities, coordinating of some programs, and scheduling of facilities.
- The Recreation and Community Services Division will still need to be a provider of many of the facilities (especially community centers, parks, and athletic fields) for other organizations to use.
- Continued partnerships with other organizations and entities will be necessary to develop and expand recreation programs. All partnerships should be backed up by a memorandum of understanding or contract to formalize the relationship.

## Support Issues

Other important issues that can support and enhance recreation program offerings include:

- **Registration Software** – It is absolutely imperative that the Division has a comprehensive registration software program and the required software that handles all program and service registrations, allows for on-line registration, point of sale, and remote on-site use. All programs (regardless if a fee is collected) should have all participants registered for the activity.

- **Credit Cards and Time Payments** - Even though there are presently a limited number of fee programs, with the future direction of programming and a commitment to more fee-based programs being available, the Division must be able to accept credit card payment for any services and also over-time payments for some high fee programs.
- **Policies and Procedures** – Having comprehensive policies in place that provide a framework for program administration, development, and implementation is an important management tool.
- **Safety and Security** – Critical to growing recreation programs and services is the assurance that participants safety and security is being addressed on an on-going basis. There should be a specific safety plan for the Division that includes an emergency action plan.
- **Evaluation and Adjustments** – One of the keys to having a dynamic program plan for recreation programs and services is having an internal and external evaluation process in place. The evaluation of the overall plan on a city-wide basis as well as a neighborhood basis must be outcome based. The process will need to integrate staff assessments with those of the users and the general community. The results of the evaluation process need to be utilized to make adjustments to the programming process as well as individual programs themselves.

The Division must require that all outside groups and organizations that utilize City parks and recreation facilities have a formal, signed, contracts in place. New contracts should require that basic custodial services, on-going maintenance, and utilities to be paid by the group or organization.

Recreation-oriented programming must be integrated with library services to maximize resources, eliminate duplication and provide for unique opportunities. This is a prime opportunity to provide recreation, education and social services in programming at numerous locations.

The Division should also coordinate youth programs and services with PAL to eliminate duplication of services and assure the full utilization of all facilities.

A Fee Policy document should be prepared by the Division that outlines the criteria for setting fees for certain programs and services. This should also deal with cost recovery goals, the financial performance of recreation programs and services, and outline a comprehensive scholarship program.

Lastly, the City should plan to add two to three new Recreation Coordinators in the next three-five years to assist with program coordination and development.

## 7.4. RECREATION FACILITIES

### 7.4.1. Inventory & Assessment

Having adequate facilities is essential to maintaining and improving the overall level of recreation programming that is available in the community.

Generally, the City has a neighborhood approach to providing indoor recreation. However, these are augmented by more city-wide facilities, such as Sherwood Hall and the Salinas Aquatic Center. The City needs to address a hub and spoke concept with a hub center (larger multi-generational center) in each of the three regions of the City and then smaller spoke (neighborhood and/or special use) facilities. The hub facilities should include Sherwood Community Center in North Salinas, a new Hebborn Community Center in East Salinas and a renovated or new Salinas Recreation Center in Central/South Salinas.

### SALINAS RECREATION CENTER

The Salinas Recreation Center is part of the City's Lincoln Avenue civic center complex. Originally built in 1941 as a USO clubhouse, this historically significant facility has hosted many civic and community events over the years. The approximately 16,200 square foot facility is organized around a large, flexible lobby from which visitors can access the public program spaces. The gymnasium is an attractive and well-used space, with beautiful wood trusses supporting a pitched roof. The stage area is located at the west end of the gym with bleacher-style seating. A classroom in the southeast corner of the building has been renovated for recreation use. The second floor is accessible only by climbing stairs, and as such has been removed from the pool of programmable public space. The second floor is still used for staff work space and building storage.



*Indoor activities at the Bread Box Recreation Center*



### CENTRAL PARK RECREATION BUILDING

Central Park is one of the oldest parks in Salinas. At the time of its dedication by President Teddy Roosevelt, this was the edge of town. The approximately 1,500 square foot Central Park Recreation Building is organized around a single program space of about 640 square foot. An adjacent room provides staff work space, storage and kitchen equipment. In general, most finishes and equipment in this facility are worn and due for replacement.

### SHERWOOD COMMUNITY CENTER

Sherwood Community Center is a signature asset for Salinas. Since it opened in 1976, this premier performance and event facility has hosted numerous regional and national headliners, as well as civic, community and private events. The approximately 43,000 square foot facility comprises two separate buildings – Sherwood Hall and the Community Center – connected by an enclosed second floor Gallery. The City operated the entire facility until 2010, when it leased the facility to the Steinbeck Center. The City took the facility back about four years ago and made some significant repairs before leasing the Community Center building and the second level Gallery to the Millennium Charter High School.

Sherwood Hall's entry lobby is an attractive space filled with light and art. A large expanse of glass offers views of Sherwood Park, including the whimsical "Hat in Three Stages of Landing" sculptures by internationally-renowned artists Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen. Sherwood Hall's grand auditorium/theater has a seating capacity of approximately 1,580. Sherwood Hall's full commercial kitchen is used mostly for caterers to reheat/stage food prepared off-site.

### EL DORADO PARK RECREATION BUILDING

The Recreation Building at El Dorado Park is approximately 3,400 square feet. The building is organized around a single program space of about 2,400 square feet, with an adjacent raised platform/stage of about 400 square feet that also includes kitchen equipment.

### BREAD BOX RECREATION CENTER

This former bakery warehouse and retail sales facility was acquired by the City and converted to a recreation center in 1991. The building underwent selective renovation in 2011. This building currently houses two tenant organizations - The Second Chance program and the Alisal Center for Fine Arts (ACFA). The City provides recreation services in the remainder of the western half of the building. The parking lot is sometimes used for recreation program activities such as skateboarding and street soccer; supplemental lighting is used for evening activities in this area in winter.

### CLOSTER PARK RECREATION BUILDING

The Closter Park Recreation Building is leased to the Salinas Boxing Club who provides a sport and recreation program dedicated to providing training, promoting healthy living and education through the sport of boxing. This approximately 4,900 square foot facility comprises two separate buildings, connected by a covered breezeway area that is fenced and currently used for storage. During the summer months, the City provides a recreation program Monday-Saturday, which includes a free lunch and snack during the week.

### FIREHOUSE RECREATION CENTER

Originally built as a fire station, this approximately 7,400 square foot facility was purchased by the City and converted for recreation use

in the late 1980s. The Firehouse Recreation Center has a program emphasis on seniors, serving approximately 30-40 seniors daily for meals and recreation activities, and approximately 70 seniors at monthly events. In addition to providing a variety of senior programs, the Firehouse also serves youth and teens throughout the year during the after school hours and during out of school periods like winter and summer breaks.

## HEBBRON FAMILY CENTER

The Hebbbron Family Center is a converted former church of approximately 8,500 square feet. This center offers a range of recreation options, including a homework center, drop-in after school program and summer programs, among others.

### 7.4.2. Recreation Facilities Recommendations

The overall level of maintenance needs to be improved and the buildings are not generally well configured or may be lacking the spaces needed to enhance programming as outlined above. This is particularly true for the community centers, which often have only small classrooms for programming. Improving Central Park and El Dorado is important, and replacing Hebbbron and renovating Salinas Recreation Center (Lincoln) should be done.

A number of the facilities (primarily community centers) are controlled by other organizations. This limits the availability of these centers for recreation programming. Taking back utilization of the entire Bread Box building would allow for the expansion of teen based programming. Having use of the Sherwood Community Center would allow for the re-establishment of fee-based programming.

Other facility changes that are needed include:

- Completion of the renovation of the old indoor pool into a gym space.
- Renovation of Sherwood Hall
- Maintain a 3rd party lease to continue to provide some recreational use in this space.

Priorities for improvements to or new recreation facilities include:

- Top Priorities
  - Complete the renovation of the old indoor pool into a recreation facility.
  - Replace the Hebbbron Center
  - Renovate the Salinas Recreation Center
  - Renovate Sherwood Hall
  - Renovate Sherwood Community Center (if it returns to public use).
- Second Priorities
  - Make improvements to the Firehouse Recreation Center to make it more functional for recreation activities
  - Utilize the full Bread Box Recreation Center for recreation activities and remove the temporary center wall.
  - Replace or close Central Park Community Center
  - Remodel and update El Dorado Community Center

- Third Priorities
  - Build a new hub center in the northeast region of the City. A new community center should ideally be developed in conjunction with a library facility.

Facility services and management recommendations include:

- The City needs to establish the goal of having between 0.75 and 1.0 square feet per capita of indoor recreation space for the future.
- The Division utilizes school facilities for some programs and services, yet there is not a formal intergovernmental agreement with the school districts for this use. The Division needs to develop IGA's with key school districts that serve the community to secure access to indoor and outdoor spaces.
- Establish a comprehensive list of deferred maintenance items for each existing recreation building that the city owns (this includes facilities operated/leased by other organizations).
- Track actual usage at each facility on a daily, quarterly and annual basis. Figures are currently available on an annual basis.
- Establish an overall maintenance management system for all indoor facilities
  - Develop a specific maintenance plan for each facility
  - Utilize a maintenance software system
  - Fully utilize the new computerized work order system
  - Establish a custodial/maintenance performance plan

## 7.5. FUTURE CHALLENGES

As a summary, the future challenges to improving the delivery of recreation programs and services are as follows:

- **Funding** – With limited operational and capital funding available it will be difficult to increase the level of recreation programming available or make improvements to facilities to facilitate greater programming.
- **Staffing** – There will need to be a commitment from staff to implement and manage the new program plan for it to be successful. There will also need to be adequate staffing on the administrative, supervisory and delivery levels to implement the plan. Staff will also need to be trained and held accountable for increasing overall program and services growth.
- **Aging Facilities** – The City is faced with a significant number of aging recreation facilities that need to be renovated and updated to meet today's recreation demands.
- **Smaller/Single Use Facilities** – Many of the indoor facilities are smaller single use facilities that lack a multi-generational appeal to the community.
- **Fee Tolerance** – It is difficult to adopt more of a fee for service approach to funding programming due to the demographic characteristics of significant portions of the community, but there needs to be a concerted effort to charge for services when possible and for those types of programs that command a higher fee value.
- **Partnerships** – Due to the ever increasing recreation program demands and the lack of funding, there will need to be a continued emphasis on partnerships with other groups and organizations in the community.







## 8

# Library Facilities & Services

*The Salinas Public Library (SPL) currently operates three library facilities, which are geographically located to serve Salinas' north, east, and central/south zones. Within these zones, all three libraries have high-profile locations that are relatively easily accessible by car and transit. In addition, SPL also offers a bookmobile service which is currently dedicated toward serving kindergarten classrooms throughout Salinas.*

## 8.1. EXISTING FACILITIES ASSESSMENT

### John Steinbeck Library

The John Steinbeck Library serves as Salinas' main library, housing SPL's administration, central operations functions such as

cataloging and processing of new materials and special collections, as well as general public library programs and services. The

# DRAFT

Steinbeck Library shares a city block with the Recreation Center on the Lincoln corridor that houses other City services, near the historic Main Street district. Built in 1960, the original Steinbeck Library building featured an area that was a half-level lower than the main floor level; a mezzanine added over this area in 1972 brought the Steinbeck Library to its current size of approximately 30,000 square feet.

The design of the library has many positive features, including a flexible plan and good natural light. Unlike many other libraries of its age, the Steinbeck Library does not feel filled with shelves, and provides a fairly open, spacious interior.

After more than 60 years of continuous service, the Steinbeck Library is showing its age. Although the mechanical system has been upgraded recently, the original meeting room, which now serves as the Friends of the Salinas Public Library (FOSPL) used book store, on the north side of the building was quite warm on the day of the site tour. While recent roof upgrades have been completed, signs from past water infiltration are still visible inside the library. Restrooms are small, and City representatives report that the plumbing system cannot keep up with levels

of use – resulting in frequent maintenance calls.

While on-site parking is limited, library visitors can use the city-owned parking garage

directly across Lincoln Avenue. The site appears to provide capacity for a larger library building, through either expansion toward Lincoln Avenue or replacement.



*Interior and exterior images of the John Steinbeck Library*



Summer reading event at the John Steinbeck Library

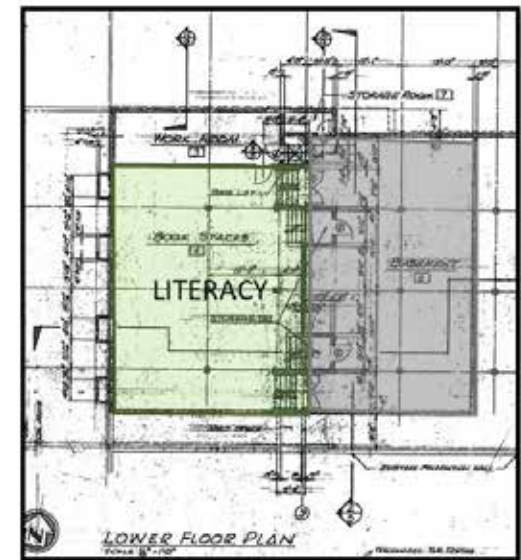
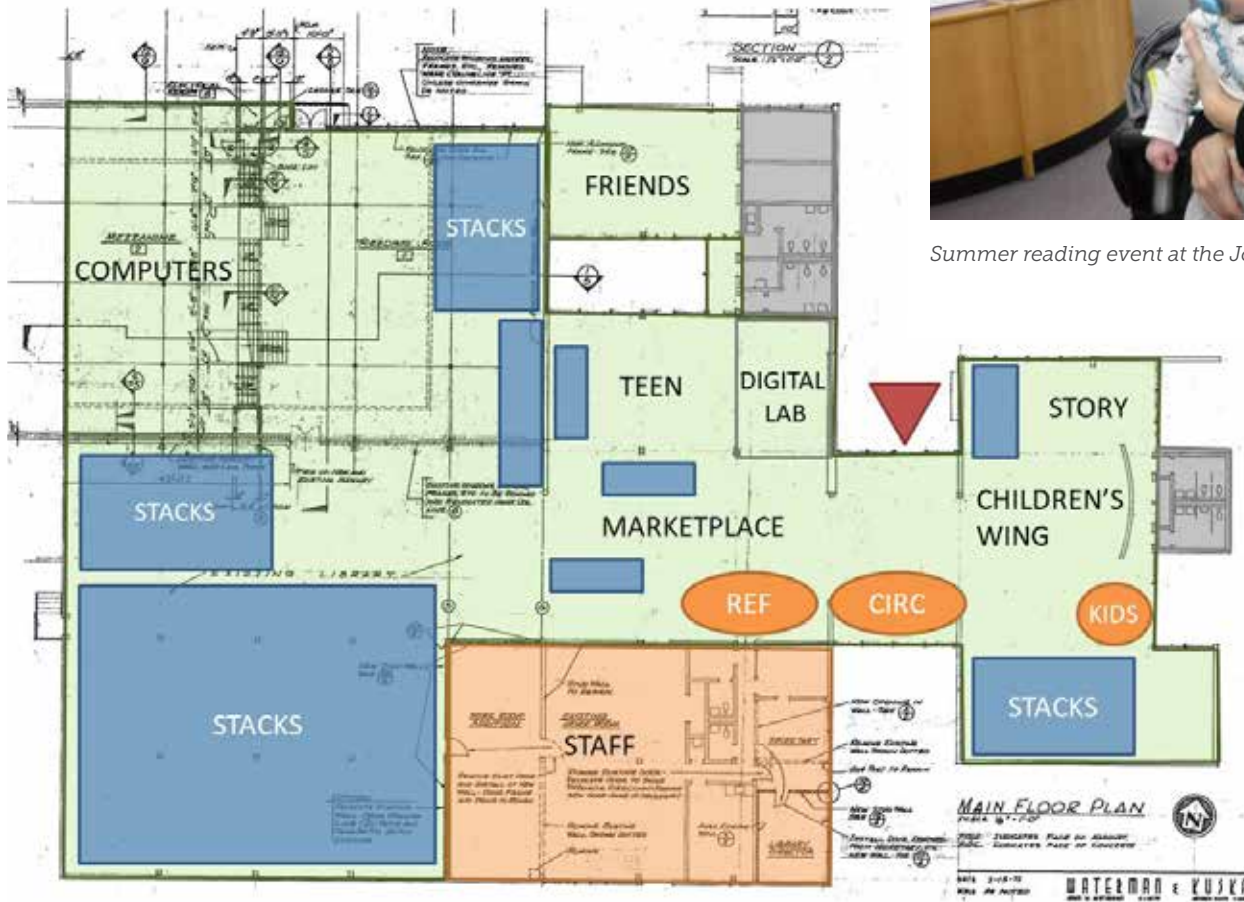


FIGURE 36. FLOOR PLAN OF THE JOHN STEINBECK LIBRARY



# DRAFT

## Cesar Chávez Library

Originally built in 1978, the César Chávez Library underwent a major renovation and expansion in 2012. The approximately 15,000 square foot building and its major systems are generally in good condition.

The Cesar Chávez Library has a highly visible location on a corner site along a major circulation corridor. It is within walking distance of neighborhood schools, which makes it a popular after-school destination for area students. It is an attractive, light-filled building that offers a variety of pleasant spaces for reading and working. Most collection stacks are located in the original wing, while the new wing emphasizes program space and seating.

While the expansion project added significant space, the layout of the expanded Cesar Chávez Library presents some operational challenges and inefficiencies. The circulation desk is located at the intersection of the original and new wings, but provides little visibility of most public areas of the library. The corridor from the entry into the original wing becomes crowded when customers queue up to check out materials at the circulation desk. Although the meeting room can be operated independently, staff cannot

see it from any other part of the library and must make a special trip through the homework center to access it.

The site appears to offer capacity for building expansion, such as by enclosing the open courtyard on the north side of the building.



Interior and exterior images of the Cesar Chávez Library





The Literacy Center at the new Cesar Chavez Library



Exterior image of the Cesar Chávez Library

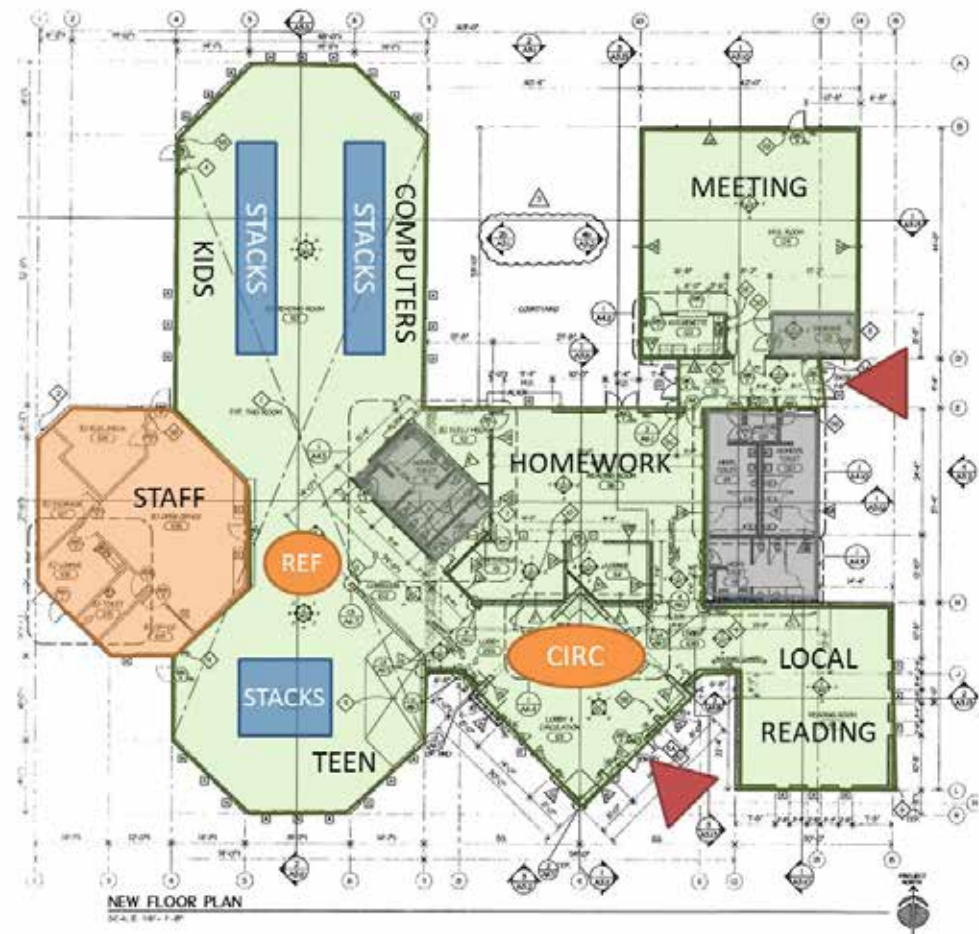


FIGURE 37. FLOOR PLAN OF THE CESAR CHÁVEZ LIBRARY

## El Gabilan Library

No assessment was conducted for the current El Gabilan Library, which is located on Main Street less than a mile north of the Sherwood Park complex, given this facility was slated to be demolished to make way for the construction of a two-story, approximately 21,000 square foot new library. Construction of the new facility is expected to be completed in early 2020.

The City Council on May 15, 2018 approved the funding plan to build a 21,000 square foot library in North Salinas. After more than a year of public feedback and analysis, the Council's vote promises to usher in a new chapter for the Salinas Public Library. The new library broke ground in 2018 to build a much needed library that will replace the small El Gabilan Library.



FIGURE 38. RENDERING OF THE NEW EL GABILAN LIBRARY

## 8.2. LIBRARY CAPACITY ASSESSMENT & SERVICE LEVEL

A common method of calculating the capacity or level of service of libraries is by comparing facility square footage per capita. Since the demand for library services tends to grow proportionate to the population, the need for library space to support those services also tends to grow. For this reason, the ratio of space to service population is a time-tested measure for evaluating and planning library space.

### Current Library Capacity

The John Steinbeck Library and the Cesar Chavez Library currently provide between 0.37 and 0.38 square feet per capita of library space to the populations living in the central/south and east zones. When the new 21,000 square foot El Gabilan Library opens in 2019, it will increase library capacity in the north Salinas zone to more than 0.4 square feet per capita.

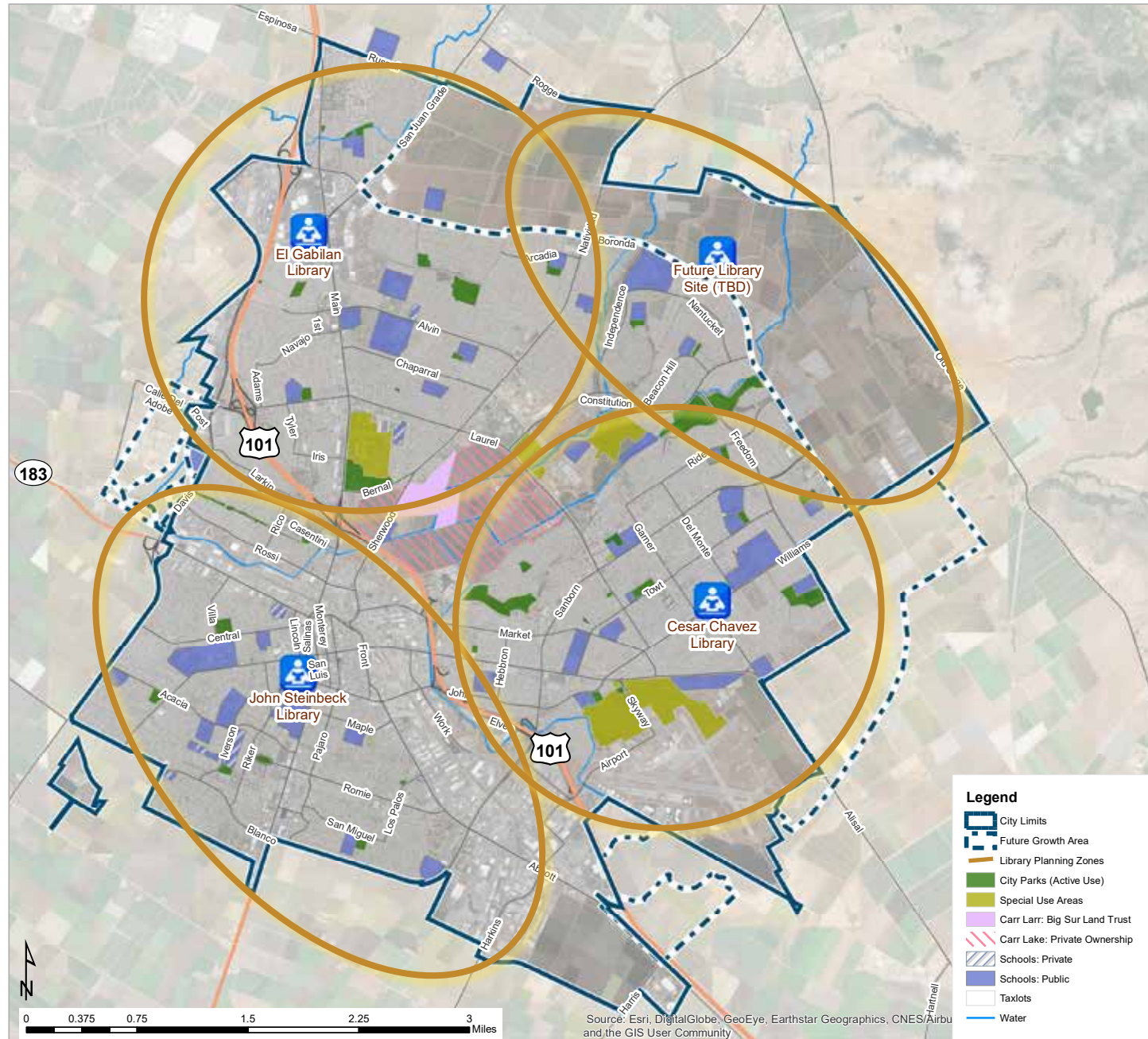
However, even with the new El Gabilan Library bringing the a citywide average to 0.4 square feet per capita, Salinas' libraries still will not provide enough space to

meet community needs. Public outreach conducted for this Plan revealed the need for expanded library services for all ages, including early childhood programs, support for K-12 education, GED and ESL classes, and enrichment and lifelong learning programs for adults and seniors. Salinas residents also requested more space in their libraries for technology and meetings. Additionally, SPL staff reported the need for a greater variety of spaces for people in the library, including dedicated space for teens, as well as space to support technical and creative programs.

Without additional facility space, the deficit of library space will continue to grow over time. Modest, but steady, growth is anticipated for the population of Salinas over the next 20 years. The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) projects that the population of Salinas will increase by an additional 18,000 people by 2035. Without an expansion of library capacity, the ratio of library space to population will drop back to less than 0.37 square feet per capita by 2035.



FIGURE 39. LIBRARY PLANNING ZONES





## Library Planning Target

For libraries, there is no square-foot-per-capita factor that is universally appropriate for all communities. Each community establishes its own library space planning target, taking into consideration its unique community profile, mobility, needs, and patterns of library use. It also considers its library's mission, organizational characteristics, service priorities, partnerships, and available resources.

Based on the analysis of the Salinas Public Library and the community it serves, the goal of 0.5 square feet of library space per capita outlined in the Salinas General Plan is proposed and should be maintained as the citywide service standard for library facilities. Factors that support this as an appropriate standard for Salinas include:

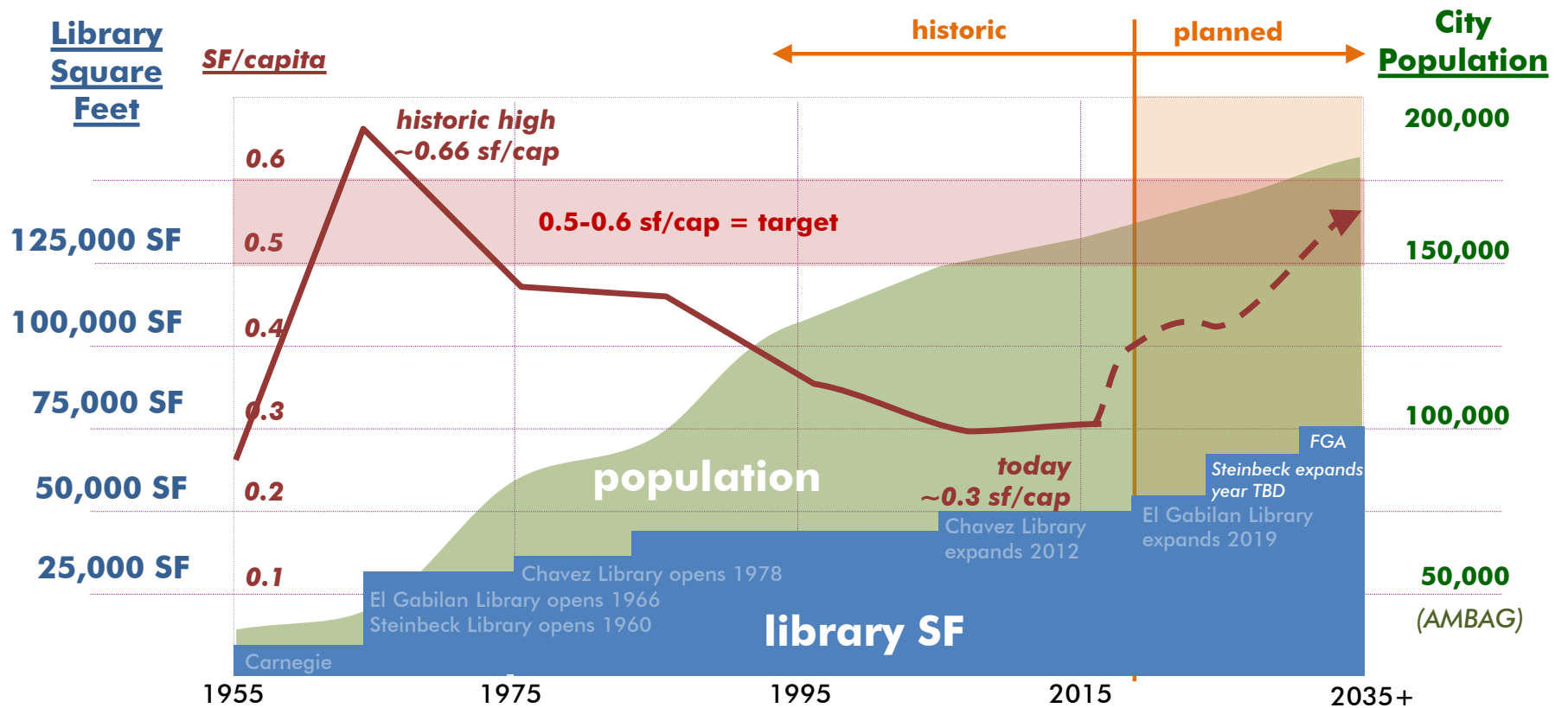
- **Good community mobility:** Communities with significant barriers to mobility (such as a big river or significant elevation change) tend to need more library space than communities whose populations can travel more freely. Although transportation modes and travel patterns in Salinas vary, in general the geography and topography of Salinas support relatively good mobility community-wide.

- **Program emphasis:** Although libraries provide significantly more services than “just books,” it is still true that a library's physical collection size is a significant driver of the need for space. In outreach for this master plan, Salinas community members reported general satisfaction with the size and quality of SPL's collection – which suggests the need for modest expansion (at most) of library space to accommodate physical materials.
- **Strong partnerships:** The Salinas Public Library is part of the City's Library & Community Services Department which includes the City's recreation centers and services. This connection has the potential to minimize duplication of services and spaces, and enable SPL to focus on its areas of core competency and value.

At the 0.5 square feet per capita target level, even after the new El Gabilan Library is completed, Salinas will still have a citywide deficit of about 16,000 square feet. As the population grows to the projected 180,000, this deficit will reach up to about 24,000 square feet by 2035.

The City's planning for the north of Boronda Future Growth Area assumes a 22,000 square foot library to serve that area. If a future library site is secured and a facility constructed, it will help improve the citywide level of service for libraries. The added population of approximately 30,000 to 40,000 people who will reside in the Boronda FGA will be well-served by a new library north of Boronda; however, the larger citywide population served by four libraries will still experience a deficit of approximately 17,000 square feet of library space to meet the stated service standard. Figure 40 on the following page illustrates the relationship between population growth, library square footage over time and the resulting level of service as square feet per capita.

FIGURE 40. PROPOSED LIBRARY SPACE LEVEL OF SERVICE



### 8.3. LIBRARY FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Salinas should strive to provide library space at a ratio of 0.5 square feet per capita – citywide and in each planning zone (north, east, central/south and future growth area). In expanding its capacity, Salinas should consider the following development principles in an effort to maximize library service, value for capital investment and long-term operational sustainability.

#### Expand Sustainably

The City's current network of three libraries – one per geographic zone – is a strategy that balances community access with operating costs. SPL should strive to grow by expanding its existing facilities where possible. To accommodate the planned population growth in the Boronda Future Growth Area, a new 22,000 square foot library should be built as funding allows.

Depending on the size and design, expanded libraries may be operated with few or even no added staff – whereas each additional, new library facility will require an additional complement of staff (and cost).

Opportunities to expand Salinas' existing libraries include the following:

- **John Steinbeck Library:** Of Salinas' three libraries, the Steinbeck Library offers the most potential for increased capacity. Expanding the Steinbeck Library to approximately 40,000 square feet could be accomplished on the current site through either an addition to the existing building or replacement of the existing building with new construction. The City should also evaluate the feasibility and impacts of alternate sites and development strategies, including the potential for a new joint facility to replace the Steinbeck Library and Lincoln Avenue Recreation Center.
- **Cesar Chavez Library:** The Chavez Library has been renovated relatively recently, and is a lower priority for improvement than Steinbeck Library. At the next major life cycle renovation interval, the City can assess the feasibility and costs of expanding the building. Unless at least several thousand square feet can be added in a functional and operationally efficient configuration, the City should look for more cost-effective capacity-building alternatives (see the Partnerships section below).
- **El Gabilan Library:** The El Gabilan Library site is fairly compact and does not appear to provide much (if any) capacity for further expansion from the planned 21,000 sq foot new facility.
- **Boronda Future Growth Area:** The City should expand access to library service in north Salinas, in concert with the development of the future growth area. A 2-acre library site was identified in the Central Area Subarea Plan, and is located near Hemingway north of East Boronda. This future library site will accommodate a 22,000 square foot library to serve the approximately 45,000 residents that will live in that area. The City also adopted Public Facilities fees that support library facilities to help fund the construction of such a facility.

## Leverage Partnerships

Providing library service in partner facilities can be a cost-effective strategy for building capacity, while also increasing access for the community. Salinas' citywide network of community recreation facilities offers the potential for expanding access to library services. As the City plans to improve, expand or build new recreation facilities, it should assess the potential impact and return on investment of incorporating a library presence in each recreation location. It should also assess opportunities to cross-train library and recreation staff in an effort to increase flexibility and capacity for programs and services, as well as for providing and operating space.

The previous section highlighted the opportunity to develop a new joint library-recreation facility to replace the Steinbeck Library and Lincoln Avenue Recreation Center. Other opportunities for developing a library presence in recreation facilities in Salinas include:

- **Recreation Center Partnership:** Replacement of the current Hebbron Family Center facility will offer the opportunity to develop a more integrated library presence with services that complement recreation programs. The future renovations of the Firehouse or Bread Box Recreation Centers represents other opportunities to increase access to library services in east Salinas.



*Reading programs at the library engage community youth*



*The library Paletero cart provides mobile services*





# Implementation

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*The following is a summary of key project recommendations which will require commitment from the City and its residents to continue to support a healthy park and recreation system that preserves and enhances the safety, livability and character of the community.*

## 9.1. KEY PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Recreation Center & Library Facility Improvements**

The City should explore options to renovate/expand or replace the John Steinbeck Library to add capacity for library services and programs. This could include the potential for a new joint facility to replace the Steinbeck Library and Salinas Recreation Center (on Lincoln Ave). Other priority facility changes should include the renovation of the Salinas

Recreation Center, replacement of the Hebbbron Family Center, and improvements to the Firehouse Recreation Center.

### **Land Acquisition to Meet Growing Needs & Fill Gaps**

The City must acquire additional parkland to serve its current and future population and provide more accessible outdoor recreation for the community. A total of 143 acres

of additional developed parklands (84.2 acres of community parks and 59.7 acres of neighborhood parks) are needed for the current Salinas population to reach the proposed standard for core park acreage. In partnership with the Big Sur Land Trust, a 73-acre portion of Carr Lake is being considered for future development into a “central park.” This future parkland acreage could provide a significant amount of the necessary land for providing park, trail and recreational amenities. However, even with the Carr Lake site’s development, the need for additional acreage will continue to grow as the population grows over the next twenty years. By 2035, the need for additional parkland will increase to approximately 185 acres for core local parks. Other opportunities to acquire large park sites may be difficult and require Salinas to develop an aggressive acquisition program, as well as think creatively and foster partnerships to provide desired public parkland with sufficient room for park amenities. To implement a successful acquisition program, the City may need to contract for acquisition specialists to expedite the focused effort to secure future parcels. The City should continue to nurture their relationship with Big Sur Land Trust to encourage additional land acquisitions for future parkland. Concurrently, partnerships with the local school districts could provide

opportunities to improve school facilities in ways that may help meet community park needs. The City must also firmly implement the Specific Plans for the Future Growth Areas to secure the identified park and open space lands. The near term goal is to acquire sufficient acreage for two community parks and eight neighborhood parks to fill major gaps in the central city and have sufficiently large sites for future park development.

## Sport Fields Enhancements

Sport fields, particularly all-weather turf fields that withstand wear and tear throughout the seasons and during inclement weather to reliable scheduling, will be desirable as the demands for sport field use continues to grow in Salinas. One or more of the existing fields could be upgraded or converted to artificial turf, and new fields could be acquired. One of the proposed new community parks could include sport fields in its mix of outdoor recreation amenities. Coordination with the school districts for field usage and improvements may provide for some of the youth and adult sports needs for practice and game play. The Salinas Regional Soccer Complex continues to be a major priority for the City. The Salinas Regional Sport Authority (SRSA), in partnership with the City of Salinas and the County of Monterey, has broken



*Acquisitions and agreements with developers for future parklands will improve the City’s service levels*



*Sport field enhancements and the development of the soccer complex will improve capacity and player safety*



*Accessible access to site furnishings and amenities will improve the utility of the park system for all users*



*New amenities, like a pump track, can bring new users to the park system*

ground on a \$21,000,000 project. Located on 68 acres in the heart of the Salinas Valley, the Salinas Regional Soccer Complex will be a place for families. One of the finest sports facilities in Monterey County, the complex will include 21 tournament-quality outdoor fields (two of which are artificial turf), an indoor field, an indoor learning, health and training center, a Celebration Plaza, a children's play area, perimeter walking and exercise paths and a picnic area.

### ADA Enhancements & Park Enhancements

Minor improvements to access, such as providing ramped entrances, for site furnishings are necessary to conform to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and ensure universal accessibility. Also, the City should evaluate the play equipment and its signage for code compliance and replace outdated equipment as appropriate. The Capital Facilities Program includes a line item for covering small upgrades and improvements to remove barriers and improve universal access. In general, the City should make improvements to existing parks as needed to ensure proper maintenance, usability and quality of park features and grounds.

### New Park Design & Development

As the proposed parkland acquisition program successfully secures properties for future parks, these new sites will undergo design and development to provide both basic park amenities and unique places for community use. While park development standards can ensure unified site furnishings across the park system, each park site can be designed and developed to create its own unique character. Providing for gathering places and including facilities for alternative or emerging sports can offer residents a more diverse range of recreational experiences, while creating destinations that attract and engage park users. Opportunities and facilities for skate spots, bike skill challenges, climbing apparatus and other alternative sports could be expanded in the city.



## Park Operations and Maintenance

As part of the planning process, a preliminary assessment of existing park operations was conducted to compare Salinas staffing levels to other park and recreation providers. The comparison indicated an existing low level of park maintenance staffing that has been significantly reduced over the last decade. To some extent, outside contracts have been negotiated to target seasonal mowing tasks to reduce the need for required full-time employees. However, the mowing workload has not been equivalent to the reduction in staffing. With continued reduced FTEs, Salinas can expect to face the gradual deterioration of park infrastructure, maintenance backlogs and increasing needs for capital repairs. Park conditions have a direct effect on the perception of safety within the park. Safety was the top concern expressed by the public relative to park use during the planning process. The City should consider approving the authorized (and budgeted) allocation of park operations personnel to ensure continued care of existing park facilities, as well as plan for additional staff as the system grows with new park acquisitions.

## Park & Trail Connections

Recreational path and trail connections, improvements and relationships to streets, sidewalks and bike lanes have been developing as Salinas grows. Plans for Salinas (General Plan, Bikeways & Pedestrian Plan) have recommended the further development of a more “walkable” and “bikeable” community. Additionally, the County bicycle and pedestrian plan identified several priority local sidewalk/bikeway/trail projects and improvement opportunities to be accomplished to close the gaps for walking access that provides a critical element of a livable community. The City should continue to implement its trail planning and coordinate trail-related projects with transportation system planning or related public works projects. Linking easy access to parks from residential neighborhoods is a critical element in promoting healthy communities. There may also be opportunities to explore trail development partnerships with local user groups and pursue additional trail segments and connections, as appropriate.

## Communications

To broaden public awareness, the City’s website should be expanded to facilitate quick links to popular destinations (with



*Bikeways and trail connections enable healthy lifestyles and improve safety*



*Exercise stations can be co-located with playground areas or trails*





*Off leash dog areas attract daily park users*



*Shelters and pavilions provide space for families and small groups to gather in the parks*

descriptions of the available facilities) and be designed with mobile users in mind, either through a mobile-friendly site or a web-based application. The website should include easy-to-access park system and facility maps, trail maps and an up-to-date listing of park sites and amenities to enhance the experience of the on-the-go user. Programming and event announcements should be kept up-to-date and easily accessible. Links to sports leagues for all ages should coordinate information with the school districts to help expand sports leagues and participation (including coaches, referees, etc.). Both on-line communications and program instructors should be bilingual to be fully inclusive. The City should consider introducing and utilizing QR codes on signage as a means to share with or receive information from visitors about maintenance, restoration or monitoring data.

### Wayfinding & Signage

Parks, trails, urban plazas and other public open spaces are the primary targets for unifying an urban environment into a cohesive, accessible and connected community through an identifiable wayfinding program. The value of a unifying wayfinding system can enhance the accessibility and familiarity of the park system. Salinas should pursue a

comprehensive wayfinding program that includes both visual graphic standards and site furnishing standards. Colors, sign types, and information can help park and trail users navigate the outdoor recreation experiences offered by the City.

### Upgrades

The City should also consider adding the following recreation features and amenities to expand recreational opportunities:

- Gathering spaces (picnic shelters, etc.)
- Community events
- Renovated tennis courts
- Spray parks / splash pads (water play amenities)
- Irrigation system assessment, upgrades and retrofits
- Dog-friendly parks

A general consideration shared during the public outreach was the desire to create a park system that provided year-round facilities for all ages and all abilities to gather and recreate in diverse range of safe, clean and well-maintained park facilities.

## 9.2. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

A number of strategies exist to improve park and recreation service delivery for Salinas Parks, Recreation and Library Services; however, clear decisions must be made in an environment of competing interests and limited resources. A strong community will is necessary to bring many of the projects listed in this Plan to life.

The following considerations are presented to offer near-term direction on implementation and as a means to continue dialogue between the City, its residents and its partners. Given that the operating and capital budgets for the Department are limited, the implementation measures identified below look primarily to non-General Fund options. Additionally, a review of potential implementation tools is included in Appendix E and identifies local financing, federal and state grant and conservation programs, acquisition methods and others.

### Partner Coordination & Collaboration

Specific projects and goals identified in this Plan demand a high degree of coordination and collaboration with other city divisions and outside organizations.

Coordination with the Community Development Department will be crucial in reviewing development applications with consideration toward potential parkland acquisition areas and for easement or set-aside requests, especially with regard to planning for future amenities to serve the future growth areas. Ongoing coordination with the Public Works Department will be necessary to review park maintenance demands and, going forward, to explore the potential for dual purpose stormwater parks and enhanced trail and sidewalk

connectivity utilizing the road network. However, to more fully extend the park system and recreation programs, additional partnerships and collaborations should be sought.

The City should prepare and seek approval of intergovernmental agreements with the school districts to utilize school facilities for some programs and services. The agreements should focus first on those districts that are strategically situated to improve or expand service to the community and secure access to indoor gymnasium and classroom space and outdoor field and court spaces.

With the recent approvals by the City and the County for the future development of a regional soccer complex, the City should continue to coordinate with and facilitate development and programming discussions with the County and the Salinas Regional Sports Authority as a project supporter and partner. Additionally, the City should facilitate annual discussions with local youth leagues and staff from the school districts for the purposes of sport field planning and coordination. Even with youth sports organizations in the area taking on the responsibility for many organized youth team sports activities, the City should explore opportunities to expand sports offerings and also add youth sports camps and clinics to support sports run by other organizations.

Planning for the future of Carr Lake is another regionally-significant partnership project. The City should remain as an active partner to the Big Sur Land Trust and participant in the planning for the city's future 'central park' by coordinating with and co-sponsoring community outreach and site planning. Numerous opportunities exist for the site to serve in functions for parks and open space, ecological restoration, water quality improvement and flood control.



*Volunteers provide important contributions to the City's services for recreation and libraries*

## Volunteer & Community-Based Action

The public process for this Plan has demonstrated that residents want to be involved in improving the City's parks, programs and service offerings and want to have their energies guided through coordination with the City. The Neighborhood Services function within the Recreation & Community Services Department currently coordinates volunteer opportunities, and the Department should continue to promote its projects to solicit volunteers and grow program supporters. Community sponsored park clean-ups, beautification and planting projects, among others, engage citizens and create a stronger sense of community pride and ownership in park and recreation facilities. The City should also maintain a revolving list of potential small works or volunteer-appropriate projects to post on its website, while also reaching out to high school and university students to encourage student projects.



*Future park and facility development can unite the community*

## Future Development

With the recent and projected growth in residential development and redevelopment, the City should continue to implement its Park Classifications and Sports Facility Standards. Park dedication regulations require developers to provide suitable and sufficient parkland to serve residents of proposed developments, based on these local level of service standards.

## Low Impact Design & Stormwater Capturing Opportunities

The resurgence of integrated landscape design provides an opportunity to consider options to design and restore parks to naturally capture and filter stormwater to improve watershed health and enable environmental education and interpretation. Wetland



restoration, visible stormwater features that collect the nitrogen and detain it prior to reaching the wetlands, and educational signage and design elements could improve watershed health and inform visitors about the impacts of pollutants (dog waste, pesticides and herbicides) and encourage more environmentally-friendly choices. The City should also consider connecting existing and future parks with stormwater capture elements and the adaptive re-use and/or redesign of large stormwater detention facilities in areas with parkland deficiencies, such that these sites serve dual functions for water detention and dry-season recreation.

## Grants

Several state and federal grant programs are available on a competitive basis, including several offered through California State Parks (Prop 68, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Outdoor Environmental Education Facilities and Habitat Conservation Fund). Pursuing grants is not a panacea for park system funding, since grants are both competitive and often require a significant percentage of local funds to match the request to the granting agency, which depending on the grant program can be as much as 50% of the total project budget. Salinas should continue to leverage its local resources to the greatest extent by pursuing grants independently and in cooperation with other local partners.

## Local Funding

Although a variety of approaches exist to support individual projects or programs, the broader assessment of community needs suggests that additional, dedicated funding may be required to finance upgrades to and growth in the parks and library system. A short-term bond or levy could be structured to maximize voter support to include parkland

acquisitions and redevelopment, general park element upgrades, recreation center renovations and/or library expansions. This will require additional effort by the Community Services Commission or citizen group to compile a specific funding package, along with an assessment of potential revenue, political willingness and potential voter support.

## Other Implementation Tools

Appendix E identifies other implementation tools, such as governmental programs and acquisition tactics, that the City could utilize to further the implementation of the projects noted in the Capital Facilities Plan.

## 9.3. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN

The Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) assigns estimated costs for specific projects to guide the implementation of this Plan. The CIP is not an official budget and is intended to serve as a guiding document for city staff in the preparation of departmental budgets, inform project priorities and calculate the Park Impact Fee.

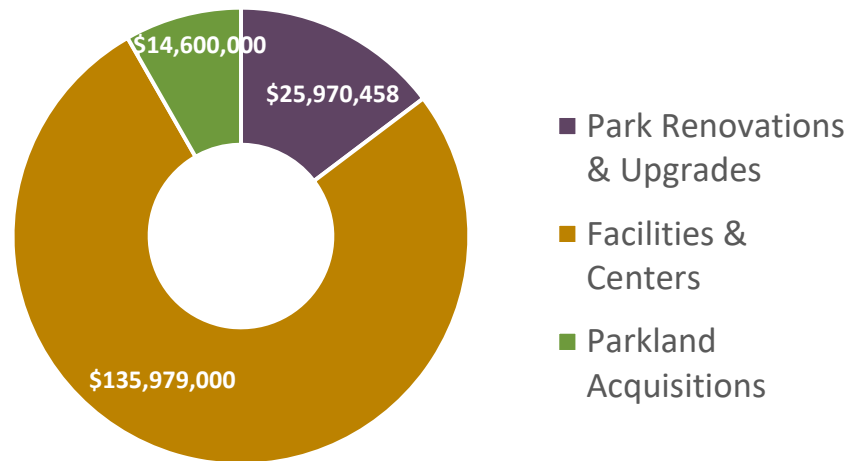
The CIP on the following pages lists the park and facility projects considered for the next 20 years. The majority of these projects entail the acquisition and development of parks, renovating or enhancing existing facilities, and expanding recreational amenities. The CIP provides brief project descriptions for those projects to assist staff in preparing future capital budget requests.

The projects were selected based on the need to implement long-standing plans for improvements and work toward meeting the goal



to better connect and create access to park and recreation facilities. Figure 41 summarizes the aggregate capital estimates from the 2019-2028 CIP by project type.

**FIGURE 41. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN EXPENDITURES SUMMARY**



The CIP also includes a prioritization of projects based on public feedback and staff review. In February 2019, City staff led the public through a public process to rank in importance six different criteria to apply to the draft capital project list. These criteria were as follows:

- Significance
- Funding Leverage
- Community Need
- Safety / Security
- Usage / Benefit
- Location / Demographics

Attendees were asked to rank each criteria 1 through 6, with 1 as the most important. Rankings were done by the individual, then discussed at tables, then discussed as a large community group to finalize the ranking for the criteria.

The ranked criteria were then applied to the project list as weighted values. For each listed project, City staff identified a score for each of the criteria on a 1 to 3 scale, with 1 as the highest need. The individual project scores for each criteria were then weighted against the priority ranking of each criteria in a matrix. The result was a composite score to identify the overall project score for the criteria. The CIP was sorted based on these scores, and a priority rank was applied to each project. The sorting of the CIP project list was segmented between the three major project classifications: Park Renovations & Upgrades, Facilities & Centers, and Parkland Acquisitions.

Council District	Class	Park Site	Project Highlights	Staff-based Scoring (scale: 1 high - 3 low)						Priority Score	Priority Rank	Total Cost
				Significance	Funding Leverage	Community Need	Safety / Security	Usage / Benefit	Location / Demographics			
<b>Park Renovations &amp; Upgrades</b>												
	COM	Closter Community Park	Renovate restroom & concession stand; Install new restroom; Install skate elements; Repair chain link & backstop; Regrade ball fields	1	1	1	1	1	1	0.533	1	\$896,440
	COM	Natividad Creek Community Park	Install 2 new restrooms; Install 2 soccer fields; Repair skate park, amphitheater & BMX area fencing; Resurface sport courts; Redesign disc golf course	1	1	1	2	1	1	0.567	2	\$5,591,902
	COM	Sherwood Park	Repair/replace surfacing at tennis courts; Install splash pad, restroom & amphitheater; Resurface parking lot at Tatum's Garden	1	1	1	2	1	1	0.567	3	\$2,048,760
	COM	Central Community Park	Renovate/replace playground, walkways, furnishings & tennis courts	1	2	1	1	1	1	0.633	4	\$1,769,755
	COM	Cesar Chavez Community Park	Resurface parking & repair walkways; Replace restroom; Install 2 soccer fields	1	2	1	1	1	1	0.633	5	\$495,112
	NH	McKinnon Neighborhood Park	Repair/replace picnic tables & accessible route to playground; Install new walkways, skate elements & exercise stations	1	2	1	1	1	1	0.633	6	\$258,638
	COM	El Dorado Community Park	Renovate restrooms; Replace picnic shelters; Regrade ball fields; Resurface parking areas	1	3	1	1	1	1	0.733	7	\$1,473,127
	NH	Claremont Manor Neighborhood Park	Refurbish restroom & tennis courts; Install exercise stations	2	2	1	2	1	1	0.800	8	\$338,097
	NH	Laurel Neighborhood Park	Install new restroom & picnic tables; Install soccer field	2	2	1	3	1	1	0.833	9	\$1,096,582
	NH	Northgate Neighborhood Park	Install soccer field, restroom, exercise station & furnishings	2	2	1	3	1	1	0.833	10	\$1,265,865
	NH	Soberanes Neighborhood Park	Repair/renovate sport court, ball field & furnishings; Install walkways & safety fall material at playground	2	3	1	1	1	1	0.867	11	\$127,208
	NH	Williams Ranch Neighborhood Park	Install walkways & accessible route to playground; Install furnishings & plantings; Renovate baseball field	2	3	1	1	1	1	0.867	12	\$194,127
	NH	Mission Neighborhood Park	Repair/replace walkways; Install new walkways, skate elements & exercise stations	2	2	1	1	1	2	0.933	13	\$496,099
	COM	Exposition Grounds (Expo Site)	Install new restroom, play equipment & walkway	2	2	2	1	1	2	0.967	14	\$1,713,921
	NH	Hartnell Neighborhood Park	Install new restroom & walkways; Restripe sport court	2	2	1	2	2	2	1.033	15	\$562,287
	NH	Woodside Neighborhood Park	Install walkways, furnishings & plantings; Renovate restroom & concession building; Install safety fall material at playground	2	3	1	1	1	2	1.033	16	\$617,806
	NH	Laurel Heights Neighborhood Park	Repair existing & install new walkways; Install furnishings, sign & exercise equipment	2	3	1	2	2	2	1.133	17	\$200,068
	S	Jaycee Tot Lot	Install accessible path to playground; Install plantings	3	3	2	2	2	1	1.133	18	\$57,982
	Other	Carmel Corner	Install playground, walkway & plantings; Install community garden	3	2	1	2	2	2	1.167	19	\$227,032
	NH	Harden Neighborhood Park	Install new safety fall material at playground; Install furnishings & plantings	3	2	2	1	2	2	1.167	20	\$184,808
	NH	Natividad Neighborhood Park	Install basketball court, furnishings & plantings	2	3	2	2	2	2	1.167	21	\$658,244
	SPEC	Constitution Soccer Complex	Install concrete walkways, furnishings & plantings	2	3	2	3	2	2	1.200	22	\$714,197
	NH	Creekbridge Neighborhood Park	Install walkway, furnishings & safety fall material in playground	3	3	1	1	2	2	1.233	23	\$136,424
	Other	Bread Box Recreational Center	Repair/replace pavement; Install new arbor & furnishings	3	3	2	3	3	1	1.233	24	\$259,571
	NH	Los Padres Neighborhood Park	Repair concrete & install bike rack	3	3	3	2	3	1	1.233	25	\$26,005
	S	Myrtle Court Play Lot	Install new playground & safety fall material; Install furnishings, sign & plantings	3	2	1	1	1	3	1.233	26	\$126,324
	S	Clay Street Play Lot	Install furnishings & sign	3	3	3	3	3	1	1.267	27	\$17,563
	Other	Firehouse Recreation Center	Resurface asphalt; Repair arbor	3	3	3	3	3	1	1.267	28	\$50,468
	NH	La Paz Neighborhood Park	Install furnishings, sign & plantings	3	3	3	3	3	1	1.267	29	\$187,183
	S	Northgate Tot Lot	Install safety fall material at playground; Install walkways, furnishings & plantings	3	3	2	1	2	2	1.267	30	\$82,979
	Other	Salinas Recreation Center	Renovate parking lot with new curbing	3	3	3	3	3	1	1.267	31	\$47,830
	NH	Santa Rita Neighborhood Park	Repair walkways & benches; Install safety fall material at playground; Install fencing at playground	3	3	2	1	2	2	1.267	32	\$526,965
	S	Santa Lucia Playground	Install walkways, furnishings & plantings	3	3	2	2	2	2	1.300	33	\$275,387
	S	Gabilan Play Lot	Install half basketball court; Install sign & furnishings	3	3	2	3	2	2	1.333	34	\$116,748
	NH	Laurelwood Neighborhood Park	Install walkway, furnishings & plantings	3	3	2	3	2	2	1.333	35	\$27,217
	NH	Steinbeck Neighborhood Park	Install walkways, furnishings & plantings	3	3	3	2	2	2	1.333	36	\$178,866
	Other	Veterans Memorial Park	Install restroom & plantings	3	3	2	3	2	2	1.333	37	\$1,041,534
	S	Maple Play Lot	Install furnishings & plantings	3	3	3	3	3	2	1.433	38	\$64,250
	COM	Monte Bella Community Park	Reseed turf area; Replace plantings	3	3	3	3	3	2	1.433	39	\$117,057
	Other	Cornell Corner	Install walkway, sign & plantings	3	3	2	3	2	3	1.500	40	\$139,661
	S	Azahel Cruz (East Laurel) Park	Install new fencing, paving, furnishings & plantings	3	3	2	2	3	3	1.533	41	\$87,635

Council District	Class	Park Site	Project Highlights	Staff-based Scoring (scale: 1 high - 3 low)						Priority Score	Priority Rank	Total Cost
				Significance	Funding Leverage	Community Need	Safety / Security	Usage / Benefit	Location / Demographics			
NH		Rossi Rico Linear Parkway	Install walkways, furnishings & plantings	3	3	2	2	3	3	1.533	42	\$838,110
S		Soto Square	Install furnishings & plantings	3	3	3	2	3	3	1.567	43	\$353,415
Other		Acacia Court	Install sculpture garden, benches, sign, plantings; Install irrigation	3	3	3	3	3	3	1.600	44	\$54,567
S		Bataan Memorial Park	Install new park sign	3	3	3	3	3	3	1.600	45	\$226,641
<b>Facilities &amp; Centers</b>												
		Hebbron Family Recreation Center	Replace center	1	1	1	1	1	1	0.533	1	\$13,125,000
		Firehouse Recreation Center	Renovate center	1	2	1	1	1	1	0.633	2	\$4,884,000
		John Steinbeck Library	Expand library to approximately 40,000 sf	1	2	1	3	1	1	0.700	3	\$29,800,000
		Sherwood Hall	Renovate hall	1	1	1	2	1	2	0.733	4	\$15,180,000
		Salinas Recreation Center	Replace center	2	2	2	2	1	1	0.833	5	\$35,000,000
		Bread Box Recreation Center	Renovate center	1	2	2	2	1	2	0.867	6	\$7,000,000
		Sherwood Community Center	Renovate center	1	2	2	2	1	2	0.867	7	\$13,200,000
		Cesar Chavez Library	Expand library by up to 10,000 sf	2	2	2	3	1	1	0.867	8	\$15,100,000
		El Dorado Recreation Center	Renovate center	2	2	2	2	1	2	1.000	9	\$1,700,000
		Central Park Recreation Center	( * ) Replace or Decommission	2	2	2	1	2	2	1.033	10	\$0
		Closter Recreation Center	Decommission center	2	3	3	1	3	2	1.233	11	\$990,000
<b>Parkland Acquisitions</b>												
COM		Carr Lake	TBD	1	1	1	3	1	1	0.600	1	\$0
COM			( * ) FYI - add placeholders for Future Growth Areas	1	1	1	3	2	1	0.667	2	\$0
NH		Neighborhood Park	Acquire 0.5 - 1 acres near Parajo & John	2	2	1	3	1	1	0.833	3	\$1,200,000
NH		Neighborhood Park	Acquire 1 - 2 acres along Bardin or adjacent to Bardin School	2	2	2	3	1	1	0.867	4	\$2,000,000
NH		Neighborhood Park	Acquire 0.5 - 1 acres south of E Romie Ln	2	2	2	3	1	1	0.867	5	\$1,400,000
NH		Neighborhood Park	Acquire 0.5 - 1 acres near Millbrae & Natividad	2	2	2	3	2	1	0.933	6	\$2,000,000
NH		Neighborhood Park	Acquire 0.5 - 1 acres south of Loma Vista School	2	2	2	3	2	1	0.933	7	\$1,500,000
NH		Neighborhood Park	Acquire 1 - 2 acres near Williams & Market	2	2	2	3	1	2	1.033	8	\$2,500,000
NH		Neighborhood Park	Acquire 1 - 2 acres north of Alamo Way	2	2	2	3	2	2	1.100	9	\$2,500,000
NH		Neighborhood Park	Acquire 0.5 - 1 acres near Del Monte & Sanborn	2	2	2	3	2	2	1.100	10	\$1,500,000

**NOTES:**

This CIP identifies planning-level cost estimates and does not assume the value of volunteer or other non-City contributions. Detailed costing may be necessary for projects noted.

This CIP is not an official budget and intended as a guiding document for City staff in the preparation of departmental budgets.





NORTHGATE PARK  
CITY OF SALINAS  
RECREATION PARKS DEPT.  
CLOSED SUNSET-SUNRISE  
NO DOGS ALLOWED





# Operations & Maintenance

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*The City's Park Operations staff are a critical component of the current and future success of the parks and recreation system. To effectively plan, develop, maintain and operate a high-quality park and recreation system, Salinas will need to continuously reassess and reinvest in its staff, as well as examine its operations, structure and maintenance protocols.*

## 10.1. STAFFING CAPACITY & COMPARISONS

The current population in Salinas already exhibits heavy use of the park system that adds pressure for increasing facilities and grounds maintenance. As Salinas continues to grow, the City should plan to add more park spaces and amenities to address the demand for outdoor recreation for the existing and future population. As new features are added to existing parks, new lands are acquired for future parks, and new parks are developed for growing neighborhoods, the operational staff capacity for park maintenance will need to be expanded to keep up with the need for the administration and management of a larger park system. To adequately care for the existing park system, a backlog of capital repairs, deferred maintenance and upgrades to aging infrastructure will also need to be addressed.

This assessment of operations and maintenance staffing offers an overview of past Salinas park operations staffing history, some current trends in operations and comparative information from nationwide parks agencies to provide a generalized benchmark for consideration as the Salinas park system grows in response to its population and needs. Resources for information and data for a detailed evaluation are limited. This overview uses local content garnered from interviews with Public Works and Parks staff conducted in May 2018, staffing budgets from Public Works: Parks and Community Services and Facilities Maintenance, as well national trends collected from the NRPA PRORAGIS reports generated from park and recreation agencies across the country. The intent of the following discussion focuses on a preliminary look at current staffing and the opportunity for incremental improvements based on existing available data.

At the time of this operational overview, Salinas assigned the maintenance of parks to its Public Works Department under Environmental and Maintenance Services. The Parks and Community Services Division provided care for the city's inventory of parks, green belts, open spaces, medians, planters, facility landscapes, and landscape maintenance districts. This division's operations were separate from forestry operations and the facility maintenance division.

The City will need to consider when and how maintenance services should expand and be budgeted, in addition to how many additional full-time equivalent employees (FTEs) should be hired and trained or outsourced work contracts enabled to perform the duties necessary to maintain and operate a safe and clean park system. The current contracted services for time-intensive tasks such as mowing may require adapting to creative allocation contracts to help address escalating costs and avoidance of sole source contracts that might reduce competitive pricing. Irrigation operations and repairs, janitorial

duties and specialized maintenance tasks may require additional training as vacancies are filled from retired staff who knew the 'ins and outs' of the park system and its facilities. This training need can initially reduce the efficiency of the parks operations staff and result in a slower ramping up of needed skills and experience. Alternatively, tasks previously assigned to park maintenance staff could be outsourced where those tasks are easier quantified, defined and allocated, such as regular janitorial services, irrigation updates and repairs and some specialized tasks like playground equipment safety inspections.

In addition to addressing additional labor needs, whether through additional full-time employees or outside contracted work, the City should evaluate its organizational structure to ensure that park and recreation services are provided in an efficient and effective manner.

## Existing Staffing Comparisons

To help assess the park operations staffing levels for Salinas, multiple analyses were conducted to explore similarities of comparable jurisdictions. A comparison to other jurisdictions of similar population density and/or jurisdiction size was conducted using the 2018 NRPA Agency Performance Review. Also, a review of California-specific comparable cities was also completed.

The NRPA PRORAGIS system provided data from across the country to compile the performance report. Some key responsibilities reported in the data reveals that park and recreation agencies across the country take on many responsibilities for their communities, beyond their "traditional" roles of operating parks and facilities and providing recreation programming and services. In addition to those two functions, the top responsibilities for park and recreation agencies are as follows:

- Have budgetary responsibility for their administrative staff (89 percent)
- Operate and maintain indoor facilities (88%)
- Conduct major jurisdiction-wide special events (73%)
- Operate, maintain or manage trails, greenways and/or blueways (75%)
- Operate, maintain or manage special purpose parks and open spaces (66%)
- Administer or manage tournament/event-quality outdoor sports complexes (55%)
- Operate, maintain or contract outdoor swim facilities/water parks (48 %)
- Operate, maintain or contract tennis center facilities (46%)
- Administer community gardens (41%).

The report offers a snapshot view of how Salinas compares with other peer park agencies throughout the US. It should be noted that not all comparative agencies provide recreation programming, and many park systems have differing sizes, locations and standards. Some statistics apply to population density, while others apply to population size. These variations can create inconsistent comparisons. In general, the snapshot viewpoint offers a benchmark for Salinas to consider, rather than concrete targets.

Highlighted observations from the agency comparison should be considered for Salinas' park system as it grows:

- Higher population densities tend to require increasing park operating expenditures per acre of parkland. This factor seems intuitive as more people uses a park, that land may require more attention and maintenance.

- Salinas park operations have 12 FTEs with the additional equivalent of 4 FTEs as contracted mowing services. To compare with the NRPA average of 36 FTEs in a park and recreation agency, adding the 14 recreation FTEs brings the Salinas park and recreation staffing comparative to 30 FTEs. Compared to the median of all park agencies reporting in PRORAGIS, Salinas had 83% of the staffing level of park and recreation FTEs. This staffing disparity relates more to park operations since many park agencies provide the bulk of their recreation programming through non-full-time employees or independent contractors.
- The typical park and recreation agency has 7.9 FTEs on staff for each 10,000 residents living in the jurisdiction. Agencies tend to have fewer FTEs on staff when located in more populated areas. Salinas park and recreation provide 1.9 FTEs per 10,000 residents, a much lower figure than comparable jurisdictions. The NRPA study reveals that, while there are many responsibilities covered by an agency's park and recreation professionals, more than half of all primary work responsibilities involve operations and maintenance.
- In addition to the maintenance of 450 acres in 47 park/site facilities, the Salinas park operations division has responsibility for an additional 90 acres of median islands and greenbelt areas throughout the city. In the NRPA study, approximately 67% of the jurisdictions in the comparable size range also have responsibility for the maintenance of non-park sites.

Figure 42 below offers some direct comparison from the NRPA agency performance report for Salinas park operations. The PRORAGIS agencies often included full recreation facilities and programs in their submitted data, so direct staffing comparisons are not always

interchangeable. The “Jurisdiction Populations 100,000-250,000” represent PRORAGIS communities with sizes similar to Salinas. The “All Agencies” data comprises responses from park and recreation agencies who submitted data to NRPA from across the country.

The most driving comparison shows Salinas with responsibility for more park acreage and non-park sites using less staffing to operate and manage those acres. This staffing level, when weighed against the number of residents per park (much higher in Salinas), indicates the heavy use of parks and suggests the potential need for higher levels of maintenance.

**FIGURE 42. NRPA AGENCY PERFORMANCE REPORT COMPARISONS**

Staffing Comparatives	Salinas	Jurisdiction Population 100,000-250,000	All Agencies
FTEs per 10,000 population	1.9	7.2	7.9
FTE's (P&R combined)	30	109.5	36
Parks Operating Budget (2018)	\$2,686,760	\$11,670,000	\$3,313,040
Capital Budget (5-yr)	\$2,541,000	\$6,586,000	\$3,075,880
Population (2018)	161,784	-	36,000
Residents per Park	2,889	3,300	2,114
Operating Dollars per Capita	\$16.61	\$70.39	\$78.26
Parklands: Acres per 1,000	1.53	8.5	10.1

The typical park agency having annual operating expenditures of \$3,313,040 or \$78.26 on a per capita basis.

Further examination shows that the median-level operating expenditures is \$6,589 per acre of park and non-park sites managed by the agency and that the typical park and recreation agency has \$92,916 in annual operations expenditures for each employee (as measured by full time equivalents or FTEs).

Personnel services represent 55% of the operations budget. This includes expenditures for all salaries, wages and benefits for both full-time and non-full-time personnel along with contracted individuals.

Expenditures dedicated to parks or recreation is split with 43% of an agency's operating expenditures going to parks and 40% going to recreation.

While no two agencies contain exactly the same facilities or provide exactly identical services, these general comparisons show a need for Salinas to increase their human resources that contribute to the ongoing maintenance of parks facilities.

As with differing agencies, the constituent parks of each park system may vary widely in the amount of labor required for annual care. Parks with extensive multi-purpose mown grass fields will demand higher labor hours than parks with natural areas or much smaller mown grass areas. More intensive park labor tasks are typically associated with mowing and janitorial services. Parks without restrooms or irrigated turf grass would have significantly lower demands on labor time. With comparative park system sizes and the additional non-park sites under the park operations division, the City should consider additional operations and maintenance staffing for their growing park system.

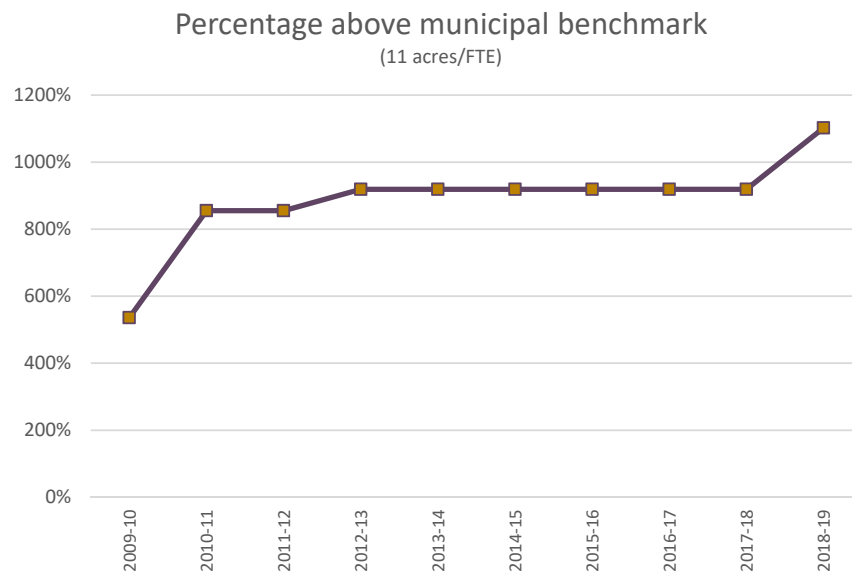
Further examination of staffing comparisons considers the current organization of Salinas' park operations division against other park agencies, departments and divisions with comparable community populations ranging from 100,000-250,000 residents. Salinas' parks operations has 9 full-time employees (budgeted) covering the operation and maintenance of its facilities. Contracted mowing services provide an equivalent to 4 FTEs performing maintenance tasks within the park system.

One striking comparison shows how much the average park and recreation agency and those agencies in similar-sized jurisdictions spend in operating budget per capita for parks. Salinas spends \$16.61 per capita for its parks, while most jurisdictions spend four times that amount. The NRPA data does not separate park operations from recreation services in this operating expenditure calculation, but the difference is still notable.



For Salinas, a review of past park operations performance reveals a trend of stretching labor beyond adopted standards and reasonable expectations. The authorized park positions have varied from 10 to 12 in the last decade of operating budgets, however, the actual approved positions have stayed steady at five. The expected performance standard of 11 acres per FTE has been far exceeded from 536% on FY 2009-10 to 919% in FY 2017-18. Trends indicating reduced labor forces typically lead to deteriorating park infrastructure and lower park system quality and user experiences.

**FIGURE 43. MUNICIPAL PERFORMANCE FOR PARK ACREAGE PER FTE OVER LAST DECADE**



## 10.2. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Discussions with representatives in the departments of Library and Community Services (LCS) and Public Works (PW) provided some history and information about the current relationships between recreation services and park operations. In the past, Salinas hosted a combined parks and recreation group that contained a robust labor force with more than 30 FTEs. Over the years, departmental reorganizations have shifted park operations into a larger maintenance services division within Public Works. Additionally, staffing has been reduced in response to budget cuts, and some services have been out-sourced in an effort to reduce expenditures. Recreation and Community Services (in LCS) are managed independently from park operations (in PW), requiring an added level of coordination when special events, programming and seasonal park uses trigger additional maintenance or specialty labor services for park facilities. With maintenance services under one department, coordination is smoother across parks, forestry, facilities and streets. However, parks by their nature have the added public interface with programming, daily interactions, seasonal activities, major events and annual celebrations. These public engagements, while often repetitive, require unique handling for maintenance services that deviate from the normal daily load. Additional planning at the supervisory level is needed to assure smooth operations for both the programmed recreational uses and the integration into required application of maintenance staff time. While the discrete functions of parks operations may be viable under either LCS or PW, the added layers of coordination and public interface suggest that the full responsibility for park system maintenance should fall under the direction of Library and Community Services.

To further explore the differences between park operations within either the traditional parks and recreation agency or public works department, a look at a number of California cities within the range of Salinas' population was considered for defining the recommended organizational structure. Nine cities (including one park district encompassing several cities) within a reasonably similar population size to Salinas were examined. Comparisons were made between numbers of park facilities, acres of parkland, park and recreation FTE staffing, operating budgets, 5-year capital spending, and population density.

**FIGURE 44. COMPARATIVE CALIFORNIA JURISDICTIONS PROVIDING PARK AND RECREATION SERVICES**

RANK	CITY	COUNTY	2017 TOTAL POPULATION	2018 TOTAL POPULATION	PERCENT CHANGE
137	Stockton	San Joaquin	311,724	315,103	1.10%
200	Modesto	Stanislaus	214,181	215,692	0.70%
245	Oxnard	Ventura	205,489	206,499	0.50%
318	Santa Rosa	Sonoma	178,064	178,488	0.20%
104	Ontario	San Bernardino	175,157	177,589	1.40%
280	Hayward	Alameda	161,455	162,030	0.40%
345	Salinas	Monterey	161,521	161,784	0.20%
240	Fullerton	Orange	143,499	144,214	0.50%
64	Roseville	Placer	134,650	137,213	1.90%
74	Visalia	Tulare	133,841	136,246	1.80%
153	Berkeley	Alameda	120,700	121,874	1.00%

Each city had their own approach for providing park and recreation services. While the more traditional approach for the provision of parks and recreation is to provide all services under one roof, the alignment of park operations separate from recreation services is not unique. Many of the larger jurisdictions have shifted park maintenance into the broader realm of public works. In smaller municipalities without park and recreation departments, park operations are often nested within public works, while any recreation or community events reside within a city manager's office. As park systems, recreation facilities and programming grow and become more complicated, many local governments separate services with specialized staffing and departmental organization. Under pressure to provide services and

maintain funding, some areas shift to unified park districts with their own governance and financing. The Hayward Area Parks and Recreation District (H.A.R.D.) provides parks and recreation services in a unified system across its region shares the provision of parkland with a regional provider, the East Bay Regional Parks District, while also maintaining 30 school-owned, outdoor recreation facilities (primarily sports fields) as part of its operations and maintenance.

Looking strictly at the park maintenance organizational approaches across the comparative jurisdictions including Salinas, the service provision for parks O&M was evenly split between those who organized that function within a parks and recreation department and those located within public works.

Figure 45 shows the different management arrangements for park planning, design, development and capital projects. In situations with park operations under public works, the planning, administration and development of new parks and facilities and capital projects were often within parks administration rather than under public works. Comparisons across these jurisdictions regarding capital budgets showed a wide spread of capital spending per resident from Stockton’s \$1.54 per resident (averaging a 3-year CIP budget) to as much as \$90.77 per resident in the Hayward Area Parks District. The NRPA PRORAGIS data for jurisdictions with 100,000-250,000 population ranged from \$5.27 to \$13.17 per resident. Salinas spends approximately \$3.14 per resident in capital parks spending. When Salinas plans to develop a new park (such as Carr Lake), capital parks spending per capita will increase and may trigger the need to address planning and project management staff resources.

**FIGURE 45. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE COMPARISONS FOR PARK OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE**

Organizational Structures	Stockton	Modesto	Oxnard	Santa Rosa	HARD	Fullerton	Roseville	Visalia	Berkeley	Salinas
Park O & M within Park & Rec*										
Park O & M within Public Works										
Park Planning/Proj Mgt within Parks & Rec										
Park Planning/Proj Mgt within Public Works										

*\*Park & Recreation may be a division within a community services department*

While half the jurisdictions have park maintenance within public works departments, the management of golf courses (mostly through outside contracts) was kept mostly under control of parks and recreation administration. In Visalia and Stockton where parks O&M were under public works administration, their public golf courses were managed as outside contracts through parks and recreation administration.

No approach to service provision was an equal match to another jurisdiction. In addition to different organizational approaches to parks maintenance, recreation services were often co-located with community and neighborhood services, libraries, family services, cultural arts, event planning, golf course and waterfront management.

One notable comparison across the different jurisdictions related to the potential population pressure on park facilities, regardless of where park operation was internally located. Population density was examined across all ten park and recreation providers revealing H.A.R.D. as the least densely populated in its 100 square mile region with 2,800 persons per square mile and Berkeley with 7,008 persons per square mile in its 17.4 square miles limits. Salinas follows Berkeley in the comparative review with its 6,973 persons per square mile.

This population pressure can trigger increased maintenance needs to help park facilities recover from heavy use and extra wear and tear.

This density was also examined relative to the number of park facilities provided within the service area (exclusive of regional or state lands). Salinas had the lowest number of facilities across these comparative park and recreation providers and the second highest population density. Salinas' ratio of residents to parks was approximately 15% higher than the average value across all ten providers.

**FIGURE 46. POPULATION DENSITY COMPARISONS FOR PARK FACILITIES IN DIFFERENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES**

	Jurisdictions with Park Operations in Public Works						Jurisdictions with Parks Operation w/in P&R			
	Stockton	Modesto	Oxnard	Fullerton	Visalia	Salinas	Santa Rosa	H.A.R.D.	Roseville	Berkeley
<b>Population 2018</b>	315,103	215,692	206,499	144,214	136,246	161,784	178,488	280,000	137,213	121,874
<b>Population Density</b>	4,866	4,813	5,266	6,427	3,634	6,973	3,935	2,800	3,192	7,008
<b>Park Facilities</b>	66	75	50	49	54	47	66	104	79	52
<b>Residents/Park</b>	4,774	2,876	4,130	2,943	2,523	3,442	2,704	2,692	1,737	2,344

While different park and recreation providers approach the unification or separation of parks operations from park planning, design, development and programming from different perspectives, there are two additional considerations should be examined when park and recreation services splits into different departments.

1. Developing maintenance standards that define the level of park upkeep and care can help identify and clarify the expectations for both the parks operations and for the public. If maintenance standards are solely defined by the level of budgetary support, a loss in efficiency and a gradual lowering of quality, care and safety may result. Lower levels of maintenance often lead to higher capital repair needs due, in part, to a growing backlog of deferred maintenance. Park standards have been developed and refined for Salinas' new park design and development. Park standards for

acceptable levels of maintenance should also be developed to proactively identify the level of care in existing parks.

2. The value of scheduled coordination meetings can be captured for parks and recreation services that are established in separate departments to help alleviate the organizational "disconnect" between parks operations and recreation services. While regularly scheduled meetings may require the commitment of added time (a precious resource with low staffing levels), coordination becomes smoother across the needs of programming and care for parks. Face-to-face encounters provide better memorialization of tasks, roles and responsibilities and help establish the cyclical needs for the park system and its seasonal uses. Salinas should consider how often a "regular" meeting should be scheduled between LCS and PW to help bridge the gaps in communication and coordination efforts.



10.3. PARK STANDARDS & ASSET MANAGEMENT

The need to maintain standards of quality to ensure the safety and value of visitor experiences requires a set of guidelines for maintenance and operation levels of service, which may rely on a variety of techniques to help define their quality of care ranging from user satisfaction surveys to asset management policies and requests for work activities. Park and recreation providers seek to incorporate best management practices into their operations and maintenance to gain efficiencies in expenditures. Adopting a set of standards for park facilities allows the agency to be prepared for future tasks and responsive to the potential for budgetary changes in funding levels of care. Park standards can provide specifications for in-house expectations as well as outside contracted performance. The degree of public tolerance can also inform the level of acceptable care for each park facility. The activities listed below offer a sample palette of the types of work tasks that can be defined to specifically guide the degree of attention and length of time that is typical of each activity.

FIGURE 47. TYPICAL OPERATION & MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES

TYPICAL O&M ACTIVITIES		
Mowing	Litter Control	Painting / rust control
Edging	Weed Control	Pavement monitoring
Rough Mowing	Tree Pruning	Pest control
Weed Eater	Vegetation Management	Graffiti removal
Aeration	Invasive plant control	Vandalism repairs
Fertilization	Power washing pavements	Janitorial services
Mowing	Power washing site fixtures	Playground safety inspection

Some tasks require daily attention while others can be performed annually or based on monitoring or inspection results. Different levels of care (time and attention) can be established for park landscape areas coordinated with their landscape type based on past practices that provided satisfactory results. For example an irrigated grass sports field will require more mowing and turf management then a non-irrigated shrub bed. These specific maintenance activities can be tracked and assigned typical man hours. When funding levels affect labor resources, the impact to park landscapes’ level of care can be predicted (i.e., will grass grow too long and impact turf quality? will restrooms be open for limited time periods?). Resource allocation based on funding support becomes a more informed process.

Asset management programs are a best management practice for park operations to help manage current infrastructure and predict future capital repair and replacement needs. Many public works departments already have asset management programs in place and ties to their geographic information systems (GIS) network to help locate the distribution of regular operational activities, unusual work orders, repair demands, and other maintenance responses. Some types

of public facilities can be approached on a very predictable basis for establishing asset management levels, however, public parks engage the highly sensitive perception of public outdoor recreation use and must respond to perceptions of safety, cleanliness and user attraction. Safety, especially in regard to playgrounds, should be of paramount importance, and at least two parks operations staff should be certified as playground safety inspectors.

While the human variable for park care adds an additional expectation to be met, an active and proactive asset management program can track O&M needs and predict a more reliable need for future maintenance levels.

Incorporating park operations and maintenance standards for levels of care and an asset management program for public parks can help guide Salinas into its future park service provision needs.

## 10.4. PREDICTING FUTURE STAFFING NEEDS

To help predict the future staffing need as new parks and additional amenities are developed, an example (Figure 48) from a Pacific Northwest park system offers a look at the labor hours and costs on a per park basis with distinctions made for type of park being maintained. This per acre information can be extrapolated to predict how much staffing might be necessary per new park. A new 5-acre neighborhood park would require the time of  $\frac{1}{4}$  FTE equivalent. For every four new neighborhood parks, one FTE should be added to cover necessary labor needs. For a 20-acre community park, one full time staff would be needed to ensure proper care and maintenance of the new facility. Special facilities such as sports complexes often require higher levels of staffing than a community park. This comparison includes mowing time as part of the labor need. The agency in the table below uses in-house labor for mowing services. Salinas could compare their contracted mowing services with full-time equivalents when using the sample park system for predicting future labor needs. If (or when) the contracted mowing service costs become escalated beyond the equivalent cost for providing additional

in-house labor to achieve the same work tasks, the City should reconsider replacing outside contracts with additional FTEs in the parks operations division.

**FIGURE 48. EXAMPLE OF LABOR COSTS & HOURS FROM A PACIFIC NORTH-WEST PARK AGENCY.**

Type of Facility	Average Acreage per Park	Annual Cost per Acre	Annual Labor Hours per Acre
Neighborhood Parks	4.8	\$5,500	110
Community Parks	26.2	\$4,400	112
Regional Parks	63.4	\$3,330	100
Green Spaces/Undeveloped Parks	5.6	\$2,400	16

Distinctive differences occur across park systems when comparing labor needs for park maintenance. Park acreage in mown grass cannot be the single measurement variable for determining man hours, since park design, location and intensity of use add to the time needed for adequate care. Mobilization time, travel and load/unload of equipment add considerably across systems and can trigger higher time dedication per acre for small pocket parks and in jurisdictions with traffic congestion or great distances between parks.

From the recent NRPA Salary Survey, a number of park agency organizational charts were reviewed to assess the range of positions and responsibilities for park and recreation professionals. Park system operation and management can be approached from a variety of different ways. Again, no two systems are identical. However, one clear development as a system grows is the need to include specialized professional expertise to provide the level of training and service required in the provision of parks and open space. Whether

the expertise is in forestry, horticulture, athletic facilities or project management, agencies found value in having specialized expertise provided in-house. If contracted services for maintenance or specialized functions are to be considered and more extensively used than they are today in Salinas, the City also should consider and plan for a greater demand for contract management over these services. One approach may be to re-orient an existing parks operations position to serve the role of contract manager over multiple third-party maintenance contracts to ensure that the City is receiving the services it is paying for, provide a clear chain of command for disputes or corrective actions and ensure that the contractors are adhering to the City's maintenance standards and protocols.

In addition to general operations and maintenance for a park system in a growing population, Salinas will need to accomplish a significant amount of capital improvement projects in the next twenty years to upgrade facilities, develop parks and expand their existing parkland inventory, especially the potential addition of Carr Lake acreage. To achieve the required level of park system growth, the park operations division would benefit from both added maintenance staffing and the addition of a park professional position that focuses specifically on the division's planning and capital improvement work. This position would be responsible for land-use planning, land acquisition, capital planning and capital budget oversight, project management, and individual park and system master plans. The park planner would conduct various plans and studies that provide direction for the city's ability to meet community needs for park and recreation services. The position also manages public input processes related to capital development. The position requires a high degree of interaction and collaboration with engineers, contractors, developers, consultants, other city departments and local governmental entities.

## 10.5. COSTS FOR EMPLOYEES/ PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

For communities comparable to Salinas, the NRPA survey data shows that the median-level operating expenditures is \$6,589 per acre of park and non-park sites managed by the agency and that the typical park and recreation agency has \$92,916 in annual operations expenditures for each employee (as measured by full time equivalents or FTEs). Across park and recreation agencies, personnel services represent 55 percent of the operations budget. This includes expenditures for all salaries, wages and benefits for both full-time and non-full-time personnel along with contracted (recreation programming) individuals. Expenditures dedicated to parks or recreation is split with 43 percent of an agency's operating expenditures going to parks and 40 percent going to recreation.

The NRPA salary survey offers ranges of salaries expectations for the different levels of park professionals, based on level of responsibility and years of experience. Median base salary for a park planning/project management professional started at \$85,290 and increased to \$129,006 with certification as a park and recreation professional, years of experience and level of responsibility (including size of park system and degree of supervision).

In order to accomplish the existing and future park services desired by the City, Salinas should consider increasing its staffing for both park system administration and labor force. However, some services can continue to be reliably out-sourced rather than provided from in-house full-time employees. Tasks for out-sourcing to private contracted services must be clearly defined and the need for a reasonable degree of oversight should be expected to manage those

contracted services to ensure meeting the City's standards for quality control and value of rendered services.

Park acquisition, planning, design and development are included in many park and recreation agency staffing but professional design and planning firms can offer a scope of services from acquisition planning through construction management and even playground safety inspection and ADA (accessibility) assessments. Professional consulting services to be out-sourced must have a defined scope, targeted timeline and meet the requirements of city procurement guidelines.

Additionally, many park and recreation agencies engage contractors for a variety of seasonal and year-round maintenance services, mostly focused on janitorial and mowing contracts. Since janitorial services can be easily standardized and often are provided by many different private companies, the incorporation of out-sourcing can ease the pressure for time-consuming maintenance tasks from full-time permanent park operations staff. However, the costs for out-sourcing continual annual workloads may not necessarily save considerable money, since contractors must also meet prevailing wage requirements and provide health and other employee benefits to their labor force. The need to streamline and find efficiencies exists without sacrificing the integrity of park facilities and their general safety for public use.

## 10.6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recognizing that Salinas is poised for growth of its park system and renewed care of existing facilities, the City will face hard choices about how to perform and finance park maintenance to ensure the quality and safety of recreation facilities the community expects. The City should structure those discussions around how services are provided and the value received through those service delivery options. The following should be considered to inform the future direction of the City's parks operations.

- **Adopted Park Standards.** Prepare park operations and maintenance standards for levels of care addressing the scope, range and frequency of maintenance, as well as expediency of repairs and work orders. Preparation of park maintenance standards will require tracking time for labor required for various typical and non-typical work tasks and developing a targeted level of service that has a defined time requirement. Park maintenance level of service standards, once defined and clarified through constant record keeping can also assist in accurately predicting the additional work necessary for maintaining new facilities so budgets can be planned accordingly.
- **Asset Management Program.** Prepare an asset management program for public parks to help manage current infrastructure and predict future capital repair and replacement needs. Tracking existing work tasks and requests for service and compiling these activities with predictions for capital replacements, repairs and future maintenance will help coordinate appropriate staffing needs across the system. An active asset management system would also help predict capital repair, replacement and upgrade needs rather than reliance on an "emergency fund" for unexpected capital repairs.



- **Playground Safety Inspection.** The City can approach the assurance of safe play equipment through either certifying existing park operations or park planning staff as playground safety inspectors or by outsourcing this inspection need to qualified outside contractors.
- **Structural Re-Organization.** Re-orient parks operations as a function under Library and Community Services. Since park operations and maintenance services must be responsive to active public coordination, a stronger connection is needed between the labor force deployment and the system planning and administration. Regardless of where park operations are located, cross-department coordination should occur for coordinated capital repairs such as pavement repairs, plumbing/sewer repairs, equipment sharing (where feasible), and other opportunities to combine park and facility upkeep, repair and renovation and capture potential savings in unified in-house or contracted work.
- **Additional Workforce.** Increase staffing for both parks operations and park system administration (planning and project management). Given the historic reductions and planned growth of the system, plan to add nine FTEs for parks operations and two FTEs for planning, capital projects and project management support. Current staffing that struggle to “put out fires” or who can only respond reactively limit the ability of the City to more proactively and efficiently manage its park assets. Added staff can enable the development of clearer park maintenance standards, asset management and the true cost of managing and maintenance the park system for its community.
- **Expanded Contracts.** Barring the option of an expanded, internal parks operations work force to replace lost labor from past decades,

evaluate and plan for the expanded usage of outsourced labor and job order contracting. Irrigation system management, janitorial services, playground safety inspection are potential areas to add to mowing contracts and engineered wood chip replacement contracts. Plans to move further in this operational direction must be balanced with the need for enhanced, internal contract management oversight.

The recommendations listed above were determined from a combination of national and regional park operations comparisons and management trends as well as the inputs from managers and administrators who oversee various aspects of Salinas’ park and recreation services. At some time, the City may wish to explore more specific organizational deployment of staffing and resources. To accomplish this goal, more detailed information will be required for existing staffing hours, tasks, activities, equipment, fleet management, distinctions between regular, seasonal and annual maintenance and operational responsibilities. It was clear from staff interviews and past budget data that the trend in reduced staffing levels has crippled the ability to spend more time tracking and analyzing existing and potential labor deployment strategies for the park system.

