

# CHAPTER 1

## Executive Summary





## MISSION

**Champion  
everyday  
experiences that  
encourage the  
community to  
discover, imagine,  
and grow**



## **CHAPTER 1 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **PROJECT PURPOSE AND GOAL**

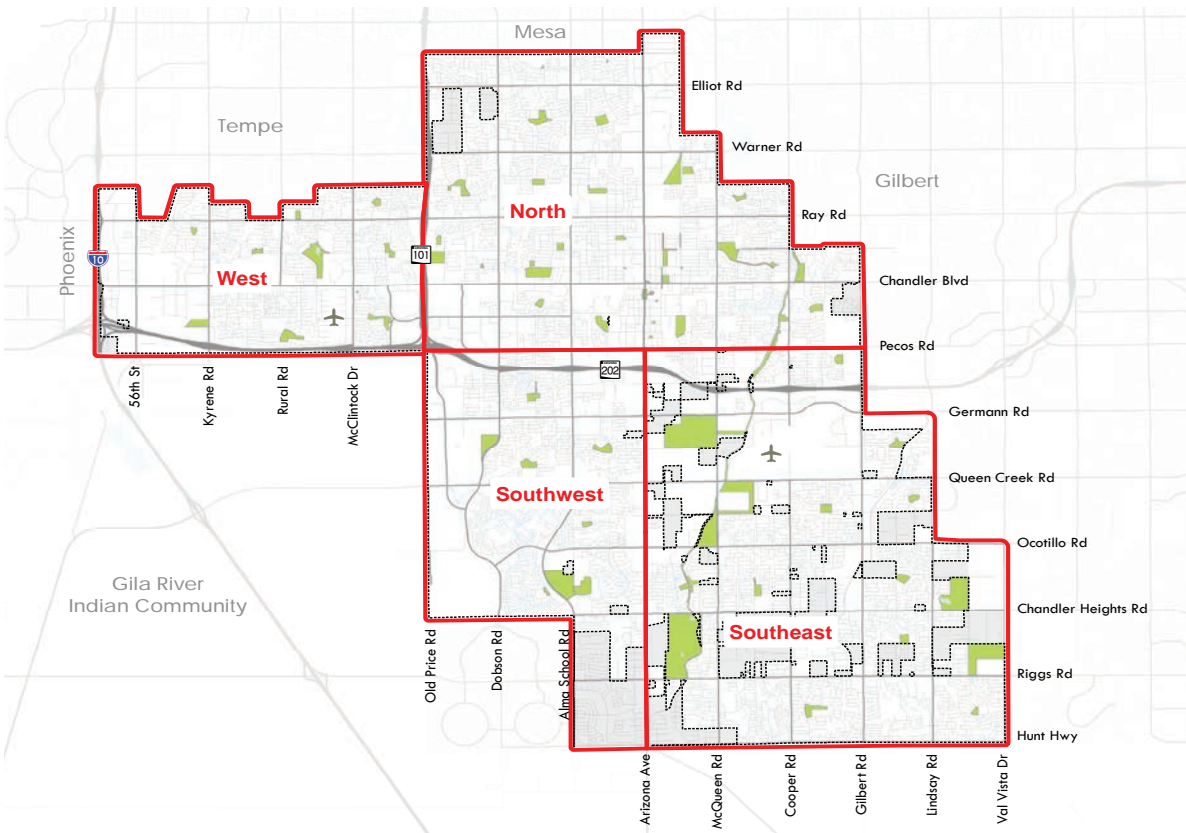
At nearly a quarter of a million residents, the City of Chandler (City) is the fourth largest city in Arizona. Per its mission, the City's Community Services Department (Department) 'champions everyday experiences that encourage the community to discover, imagine, and grow.' As the city has grown since its establishment in 1912 to encompass 64.90 incorporated square miles, the number of parks and facilities has equally grown.

The purpose of this Strategic Parks Master Plan is to provide the City of Chandler a roadmap for future development and improvement of recreational facilities and opportunities for the City. This plan is based on nationally recognized park planning principles and standards and reflects local input from residents, stakeholders, City Staff, City Council, the Department, and the Parks and Recreation Board.



The City of Chandler Strategic Parks Master Plan (Master Plan) focuses on identifying the City’s current and future recreation needs to aid City staff and decision-makers in providing, improving, and expanding the equitable distribution of recreational facilities and opportunities to City residents and stakeholders. This includes preserving the quality of the City’s parks and facilities while expanding access to better connect people to outdoor recreation and educational opportunities. Primary outcomes of the Master Plan included:

- Evaluating the existing park system and project future conditions (as noted in COC Agenda Memo CP20-080)
- Documenting priorities and needs of the current and projected population growth based on data-driven input
- Establishing the vision, goals, and policies to guide decision-making
- Developing a three-tiered capital improvement plan that outlines projects, anticipated costs, potential funding sources, operation and maintenance implications, and implementation strategy
- Providing a record of issues discussed and decisions made
- Evaluating total cost of ownership of constructing and operating the parks and recreation system
- Creation of an Asset Management Plan to inventory physical amenities, evaluate their condition, and create a replacement schedule.



## PROJECT PROCESS

The foundation of the Master Plan was to incorporate a variety of data and mine local knowledge using a comprehensive stakeholder participation process and community surveys. The stakeholder input process incorporated a variety of methods that included interviews, focus group meetings, and public forums/presentations. The data generated from these critical community interactions helped to define the true unmet recreation needs of the community and strategize on how to best position the City and the Department to move forward for optimum results.

## ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN

The planning process for the Master Plan was completed with City Staff and included:

- ▲ The collection of available information
- ▲ Data analysis to determine inventory and condition of current facilities
- ▲ Determination of supply and demand within the community
- ▲ Developing recommendations for meeting the needs of the community through an analysis of facilities, maintenance practices, and levels of service

The data collected from the staff and onsite facility assessments was utilized to identify key factors, issues, and concerns regarding the parks and recreation system and how the Department manages operations.

## MASTER PLAN ORGANIZATION

This Master Plan presents the overall analysis, findings, and recommendations for the next 15 years. This document begins with an Executive Summary that provides an overview, and the following sections respond to the primary outcomes, determine needs, and offer capital improvement recommendations.

## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the assessment of the City's parks and recreation system, a variety of key findings were identified to support the implementation of the Master Plan. These key findings help to guide decision-making for the next 15 years.



## MARKET ANALYSIS KEY FINDINGS

### POPULATION

- ▲ The population is increasing and is projected to experience a 32% population growth over the next 15 years.
- ▲ With a significantly growing population, in particular in the Southeast and Southwest park planning areas, park and recreation services will need to strategically invest, develop, and maintain parks and facilities in relation to current and future housing development areas.

### AGE SEGMENTATION

- ▲ Chandler currently has a balanced age segmentation with the largest group being 35-54 and the second largest group being 0-17.
- ▲ Over the next 15 years, the 55+ age segment will increase by 4.9% while those who are 0-17 are projected to decrease by 2%, making up 23.2% of the population by 2034.
- ▲ This is assumed to be a consequence of a vast amount of the Baby Boomer generation shifting into the senior age segment.
- ▲ Given the differences in how active adults (55 and older) participate in recreation programs, the trend is moving toward having at least two to three different program-age segments for older adults.
- ▲ When developing the park and recreation system, the City should evaluate recreation experiences that would cater to active adults in the 55-64, 65-74, and 75+ age segments.



### RACE AND ETHNICITY

- ▲ A diversifying population will likely focus the City on providing traditional programming and service offerings while always seeking to identify emerging activities and sports such as pickleball, cricket, and lacrosse.

### HOUSEHOLDS AND INCOME

- ▲ With median and per capita household income averages well above that of state and national averages, it is important for the City to prioritize providing offerings that are first class with exceptional customer service while seeking opportunities to create revenue generation.



## **COMMUNITY INPUT KEY FINDINGS**

Input from the community confirmed that the City's parks are loved by many but there are gaps in service and amenities. Additional city investment is needed to maintain existing parks and develop new parks and facilities for the growing community. Participants see the system as one that is well-maintained with great staff. Unmet needs exist as the demand for select services is currently outweighing the available facilities and/or existing amenities. The following summarizes the themes of community input:

### ***ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PARK DEVELOPMENT***

Opportunity exists for park development to enhance and/or advance economic development. There is also an opportunity for economic development to enhance and support park development.

- ▲ Parks can play a significant role in business attraction, residential development, and the overall quality of life attributes desired by the community.
- ▲ Investment in parks reflects the community's value set and the City's overall attitude of being an active player in the betterment of the community.
- ▲ The development of a Sports Complex can serve as an economic catalyst, via sports tourism.

### ***INVESTING IN THE EXISTING PARKS SYSTEM***

- ▲ Continue to focus on reinvesting in and maintaining existing parks.
- ▲ Opportunities exist to, in part, help meet the park needs of the community through partnership with Maricopa County.

### ***TRAILS AND CONNECTIVITY***

- ▲ Desire for a connected, accessible recreational trail system that also supports active transportation and Safe Routes to School initiatives.

### ***ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS***

- ▲ Increased and targeted communication/marketing is needed to develop more advocacy for, and the awareness of, the parks system.

### ***FUNDING THE PARKS SYSTEM***

- ▲ Multiple funding strategies are required to meet the needs of the community.
- ▲ Focus on opportunities to expand the City's partnership with Maricopa County and the development community to meet the park needs of the community.
- ▲ Securing funding through bond initiatives and grants will be critical for funding park development over the next 10 years.

## PROGRAM AND FACILITY PRIORITY RANKINGS

The purpose of the Program and Facility Priority Rankings is to provide a prioritized list of program/service and facility/amenity needs for the community served by the City. The analysis completed evaluated both quantitative and qualitative data. The following charts identify the highest program/service and facility/amenity priorities by Park Planning Area.

### PROGRAM/SERVICE HIGH PRIORITY RANKINGS – BY PARK PLANNING AREA

High Priority Programs and Services	City-Wide	North	Southeast	Southwest	West
Fitness & wellness	●	●	●	●	●
Walking/jogging/biking/hiking	●	●	●	●	●
General visitation of parks	●	●	●	●	●
Outdoor/adventure programs	●	●	●	●	○
Nature programs	●	●	○	●	○
Swimming	○	○	●	○	○
Fishing	○	○	●	●	○
Socialization with dogs	○	○	●	○	○

### FACILITY/AMENITY HIGH PRIORITY RANKINGS – BY PARK PLANNING AREA

High Priority Facilities and Amenities	City-Wide	North	Southeast	Southwest	West
Paved walking & biking trails	●	●	●	●	●
Soft surface walking & biking trails	●	●	●	●	●
Community gardens	●	●	●	●	●
Open space conservation areas/trails	●	●	●	●	●
Covered picnic areas/ramadas	●	●	○	●	●
Adventure area	●	●	●	○	●
Small neighborhood parks	●	●	●	○	●
Off-leash dog park	●	●	○	○	●
Large community parks	●	○	●	○	●
Splash Pads	○	●	●	○	○

### SUMMARY OF LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS)

As Chandler develops over the next decade, a number of future developed parks or strategic changes to parks have been identified. In working with the Department, these future and strategic changes to parks are summarized to the right:

The table identifies an additional 159.27 acres that, when developed, will be added to the City's parks system. Future parks include Lantana, Homestead North, and Mesquite Grove. The development of a regional park is also recommended.

Recreation Component	STRATEGIC CHANGES TO EXISTING PARKS	FUTURE PLANNED PARKLAND DEVELOPMENT
<b>PARKS AND SPECIAL USE FACILITIES</b>		
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS		7.60
COMMUNITY PARKS		53.27
REGIONAL PARKS	235.00	98.40
SPECIAL USE PARKS	(235.00)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>159.27</b>

## PLANNED FUTURE PARKS IMPACT ON LEVEL OF SERVICE NEEDS

To understand the impact that the future parks will have on the City’s ability to meet the LOS standard needs shown on the previous table, a comparative level of service table was developed as shown below.

Recreation Component	Inventory				2035 Needs BEFORE STRATEGIC CHANGES and FUTURE PLANNED PARKLAND DEVELOPMENT		2035 Needs AFTER STRATEGIC CHANGES and FUTURE PLANNED PARKLAND DEVELOPMENT	
	Current Inventory	Strategic Changes to Existing Park System	Future Planned Park Development	Total Inventory After Implementation	Meet Standard/ Need Exists	Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed	Meet Standard/ Need Exists	Additional Facilities Recommended
<b>PARKS AND SPECIAL USE FACILITIES</b>								
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS	1,186.57		7.60	1,194.17	Need Exists	33 Acre(s)	Need Exists	13 Acre(s)
COMMUNITY PARKS	417.12		53.27	470.39	Need Exists	48 Acre(s)	Meets Standard	- Acre(s)
REGIONAL PARKS	211.10	235.00	98.40	544.50	Need Exists	329 Acre(s)	Meets Standard	- Acre(s)
SPECIAL USE PARKS	472.56	(235.00)		237.56	Meets Standard	- Acre(s)	Meets Standard	- Acre(s)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,287.35</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>159.27</b>	<b>2,446.62</b>	<b>Meets Standard</b>	<b>409 Acre(s)</b>	<b>Need Exists</b>	<b>13 Acre(s)</b>

The development of the future parks has an impact on four park classification categories and is summarized as follows:

- Neighborhood Parks:** The development of seven neighborhood park acres will reduce the City’s neighborhood park acreage needs in 2035 by 35% – from 20 acres needed to 13 acres needed.
- Community Parks:** The development of 53.27 acres of future community parks will fully satisfy the City’s 2035 community park acreage needs.
- Regional Parks:** The development of 98.4 acres of future regional parks and the development of a 235 acre Regional Park, will fully satisfy the City’s 2035 regional park acreage needs.

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Recreation Component	2020 Inventory				Service Levels				2035 Standards (City Contribution Level)			City Contribution Level - Full Build Out		
	City Inventory	HOA/Other Inventory	Total Inventory	Current % of Inventory Provided by City	Current Service Level		Recommended Service Levels		% of Future Inventory Recommended to be Provided by City to Meet Needs	Additional Facilities Recommended	% of Future Inventory Recommended to be Provided by City to Meet Needs	Additional Facilities Needed (Chandler Contribution)		
<b>DEVELOPED PARKS</b>														
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS	385.47	801.10	1,186.57	32%	4.26 acres per	1,000	4.50 acres per	1,000	20%	33 Acre(s)	20%	94 Acre(s)		
COMMUNITY PARKS	417.12		417.12	100%	1.50 acres per	1,000	1.55 acres per	1,000	100%	48 Acre(s)	100%	153 Acre(s)		
REGIONAL PARKS	211.10		211.10	100%	0.76 acres per	1,000	1.80 acres per	1,000	100%	329 Acre(s)	100%	451 Acre(s)		
SPECIAL USE PARKS	472.56		472.56	100%	1.70 acres per	1,000	0.65 acres per	1,000	100%	- Acre(s)	100%	- Acre(s)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,486.25</b>	<b>801.10</b>	<b>2,287.35</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>8.22 acres per</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>8.50 acres per</b>	<b>1,000</b>		<b>409 Acre(s)</b>		<b>698 Acre(s)</b>		
<b>OPEN SPACE AND LINEAR PARK</b>														
LINEAR PARKS (PATHWAYS)	80.55		80.55	100%	0.29 acres per	1,000	NA acres per	1,000	100%	NA Acre(s)	100%	NA Acre(s)		
<b>OUTDOOR AMENITIES</b>														
BASEBALL FIELD (LIGHTED)	20.00		20.00	100%	1.00 Field per	13,915	1.00 Field per	13,000	100%	3 Field	100%	8 Field		
MULTIUSE FIELD (LIGHTED)	22.00		22.00	100%	1.00 Field per	12,650	1.00 Field per	10,000	100%	8 Field	100%	15 Field		
SOFTBALL FIELD (LIGHTED)	9.00		9.00	100%	1.00 Field per	30,923	1.00 Field per	25,000	100%	3 Field	100%	6 Field		
CRICKET FIELD	1.00		1.00	100%	1.00 Field per	278,303	1.00 Field per	150,000	100%	1 Field	100%	1 Field		
BASKETBALL COURT (LIGHTED)	40.00	36.00	76.00	53%	1.00 Court per	3,662	1.00 Court per	4,500	50%	- Court	50%	3 Court		
PICKLEBALL COURT	9.00	6.00	15.00	60%	1.00 Court per	18,554	1.00 Court per	12,000	50%	5 Court	50%	8 Court		
TENNIS COURT (LIGHTED)	25.00	17.00	57.00	44%	1.00 Court per	6,626	1.00 Court per	7,000	70%	1 Court	70%	7 Court		
VOLLEYBALL COURT (SAND/GRASS)	35.00	25.00	60.00	58%	1.00 court per	4,638	1.00 court per	7,500	50%	- Court	50%	- Court		
DOG PARK	4.00	4.00	8.00	50%	1.00 Site per	34,788	1.00 Site per	30,000	50%	1 Site	50%	2 Site		
PLAYGROUNDS	95.00	240.00	335.00	28%	1.00 Site per	831	1.00 Site per	1,050	25%	- Site	25%	4 Site		
RAMADA	155.00	321.00	476.00	33%	1.00 Site per	585	1.00 Site per	750	33%	- Site	33%	5 Site		
GOLF COURSE (18 holes)	1.00	6.50	7.50	13%	1.00 Course per	37,107	1.00 Course per	50,000	0%	- Course	0%	- Course		
DISC GOLF COURSE	1.00		1.00	100%	1.00 Course per	278,303	1.00 Course per	150,000	100%	1 Course	100%	1 Course		
BIKE PARK/SKATEPARK/PUMP TRACK	2.00		2.00	100%	1.00 Site per	139,152	1.00 Site per	100,000	100%	1 Site	100%	2 Site		



To plan and prioritize capital improvement projects, recommendations include balancing the maintenance of current assets with the development of new facilities. The departmental Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) framework is utilized to determine CIP projects in concert with an implementable financial plan. A key priority is also focused on maintaining the integrity of the current park infrastructure and amenities before expanding and/or enhancing parks and facilities.

A two-tier plan is recommended to help guide the decision-making process for CIP investments. The two-tiered plan acknowledges a fiscal reality, leading to the continuous rebalancing of priorities and their associated expenditures. Each tier reflects different assumptions about available resources. A complete list of the projects in each is identified in this section. The two tiers include:

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## SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS

- ▲ Critical maintenance projects, including lifecycle replacement, repair of existing equipment, safety and ADA improvements, and existing debt service obligations. Many of these types of improvements typically require one-time funding and are not likely to increase annual operations and maintenance costs. In many cases, these types of projects may reduce annual operations and maintenance costs.

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## VISIONARY PROJECTS

- ▲ Projects that include strategic changes to the existing parks system to better meet the unmet needs of the community, including adding features to extend recreation opportunities, such as playfields, shade structures, adult fitness equipment, covered picnic shelters, and trail loops. These types of improvements typically require one-time funding and may trigger slight increases in annual operations and maintenance costs, depending on the nature of the improvements.
- ▲ Complete park renovation, land acquisition, and new park/trail development, such as a new sports complex and major trail developments. These improvements will likely increase annual operations and maintenance costs.

**The following are the general assumptions utilized in the development of the recommended capital improvement plan:**

- ▲ All projects must be financially viable
- ▲ All projects must align with the City of Chandler's seven-year CIP cycles
- ▲ Only projects likely to be implemented are included in the plan
- ▲ Projects must be consistent with other planning efforts, where applicable
- ▲ Cost escalators have been included for projects

*Note that values shown within the tables below are based on 2021 dollars with cost escalators added in years 7-15 (35%) and years 16+ (55%). The City should continue to evaluate costing information with current market conditions throughout the life of the plan.*



### CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS: 1- 7 YEARS

<b>Sustainable Projects</b>	<b>\$44,460,375</b>
Existing Neighborhood Park Improvements	
Existing Community Park Improvements	
<b>Visionary Projects</b>	<b>\$92,292,350</b>
<i>Featured Projects:</i>	
Mesquite Groves Park - Phase 2	
Mesquite Groves Park - Phase 3	
Lantana Ranch Park - Phase 2	
Folley Park Improvements	
Tumbleweed Park Improvements	
Harmony Hollow Park Improvements	
Pinelake Park Improvements	
Regional Park Feasibility Study and Master Plan	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$136,752,725</b>

The current value of the existing park system amenities, excluding land value, in 2021 dollars is \$220,191,520

### CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS: 8- 15 YEARS

<b>Sustainable Projects</b>	<b>\$217,685,449</b>
Existing Neighborhood Park Improvements	
Existing Community Park Improvements	
<b>Visionary Projects</b>	<b>\$164,751,504</b>
<i>Featured Projects:</i>	
Desert Breeze Park Improvements	
Boys and Girls Club Park Improvements	
San Tan Park Renovation	
*New Regional Sports Complex - Phase 1	
Tumbleweed Park Improvements	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$382,436,953</b>

*\*if determined feasible, a new regional park equals \$151,248,399 of the total estimated cost for years 8-15*

### CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS: 16+ YEARS

<b>Sustainable Projects</b>	<b>\$103,910,819</b>
Existing Neighborhood Park Improvements	
Existing Community Park Improvements	
<b>Visionary Projects</b>	<b>\$116,114,348</b>
<i>Featured Projects:</i>	
Desert Breeze Park Improvements	
Navarrete Park Improvements	
San Marcos Park Improvements	
Tumbleweed Park Improvements	
+New Regional Sports Complex - Phase 2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$220,025,166</b>

*\*if determined feasible, a new regional park equals \$98,404,823 of the total estimated cost for years 16+*

## FUNDING THE MASTER PLAN

In order to continue to build and maintain the parks system, funding should be pursued for operations and capital improvement projects, such as those presented in this plan.

New, sustainable funding sources are essential to implementing a capital improvement plan. There is substantial potential for increasing revenues for the parks and recreation system while still providing affordable recreation opportunities. The following are high-level funding options that should be vetted as the Department updates its Master Plan and implements the Capital Improvement Program beginning in 2021.

To achieve the outcomes identified in the key findings and recommendations as presented in the Master Plan, the following funding sources were identified and analyzed:

### PRIMARY FUNDING SOURCES

- ▲ Grants
- ▲ Park Development Fees
- ▲ Parks and Recreation Bond Issues
- ▲ Partnerships

### OTHER FUNDING OPTIONS

- ▲ Community Parks Foundation
- ▲ Capital Improvement Fees
- ▲ Friends' Association
- ▲ Corporate and Personal Lead Giving
- ▲ Donations
- ▲ User Fees
- ▲ Park Revolving Fund
- ▲ Advertising Sales
- ▲ Maintenance Endowment Fund
- ▲ Leasebacks
- ▲ Franchise Fee Utility Right-Of-Ways
- ▲ Private Concessionaires Operating within a Land Lease
- ▲ Volunteerism



## STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Upon completion of the data collection and park assessments phase of the project, the findings were synthesized to develop a framework of strategic recommendations for the Department. The key to success for the Department is to continue to build on current achievements while adding programs, services, and facility improvements that will generate revenue, reduce operational expenditures, and enhance recreation experiences for the residents of Chandler.

The following six strategic focus areas are recommended:

1. Improve Access to Parks and Trails and Maintain Quality
2. Increase Connectivity
3. Invest in Existing Resources
4. Create an Economic Catalyst
5. Grow Operations and Staffing
6. Finance the System



## **RECOMMENDED PRIORITY ACTIONS (THROUGH 2028)**

- 1. Prioritize lifecycle replacement of assets in neighborhood and community parks per the CIP** (Focus Area: Invest in Existing Resources)
- 2. Provide significant renovations at aging neighborhood parks** (Focus Areas: Improve Access and Maintain Quality, Invest in Existing Resources)
- 3. Complete a renovation of Folley Park** (Focus Areas: Improve Access and Maintain Quality, Invest in Existing Resources)
- 4. Complete design and construction of four softball fields at Tumbleweed Park** (Focus Areas: Improve Access and Maintain Quality, Invest in Existing Resources)
- 5. Consider the development of an updated site-specific master plan for Desert Breeze Park** (Focus Areas: Improve Access and Maintain Quality, Increase Connectivity, Invest in Existing Resources)
- 6. Develop a Bike/Trails Master Plan** (Focus Areas: Improve Access and Maintain Quality, Increase Connectivity)
- 7. Consider the conversion of select athletic fields from natural turf to synthetic turf** (Focus Areas: Improve Access and Maintain Quality, Invest in Existing Resources, Create an Economic Catalyst)
- 8. Continued improvements to Snedigar Sports Complex** (Focus Areas: Improve Access and Maintain Quality, Increase Connectivity, Invest in Existing Resources, Create an Economic Catalyst)
- 9. Conduct a sports tourism feasibility study to include current park assets and impact of new facilities being built in surrounding communities** (Mesa and Gila River) (Focus Areas: Create an Economic Catalyst)
- 10. Conduct a feasibility study and site-specific master plan for a regional park** (i.e. Sports Tourism and Adventure Area) (Focus Area: Create an Economic Catalyst)
- 11. Continue to implement the existing master plan for Tumbleweed Park and explore partnerships and/or development opportunities for the northeast corner.** (Focus Areas: Improve Access and Maintain Quality, Increase Connectivity, Invest in Existing Resources, Create an Economic Catalyst)
- 12. Complete the development of Lantana, Mesquite Grove, and Homestead North Parks** (Focus Area: Improve Access and Maintain Quality)
- 13. Consider exploring options with private developers to meet park needs in north Chandler and to address other community needs and wants throughout the City** (Focus Area: Improve Access and Maintain Quality)

