

ACTIVATESJ STRATEGIC PLAN (2020-2040)



A Park and Recreation
System that builds community
and inspires belonging
through exceptional
experiences and destinations

SAN JOSE
PARKS, RECREATION &
NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES



Building Community Through Fun

Si necesita este documento traducido a otro idioma, póngase en
contacto con ActivateSJ@sanjoseca.gov.

Nếu quý vị cần dịch tài liệu này sang ngôn ngữ khác, xin vui lòng
liên hệ ActivateSJ@sanjoseca.gov.

Almaden Lake Park Egg Hunt

TABLE OF CONTENTS



Roosevelt Skating Rink

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTORii

INTRODUCTION1

STEWARDSHIP11

NATURE21

EQUITY & ACCESS29

IDENTITY41

PUBLIC LIFE49

APPENDIX

THE IMPORTANCE OF FEEDBACKA

ENVISION 2040 ALIGNMENTB

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTSC

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



San José Community,

I am honored to lead the City of San José’s Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS). The Department serves our city’s residents and visitors by connecting people to places and each other.

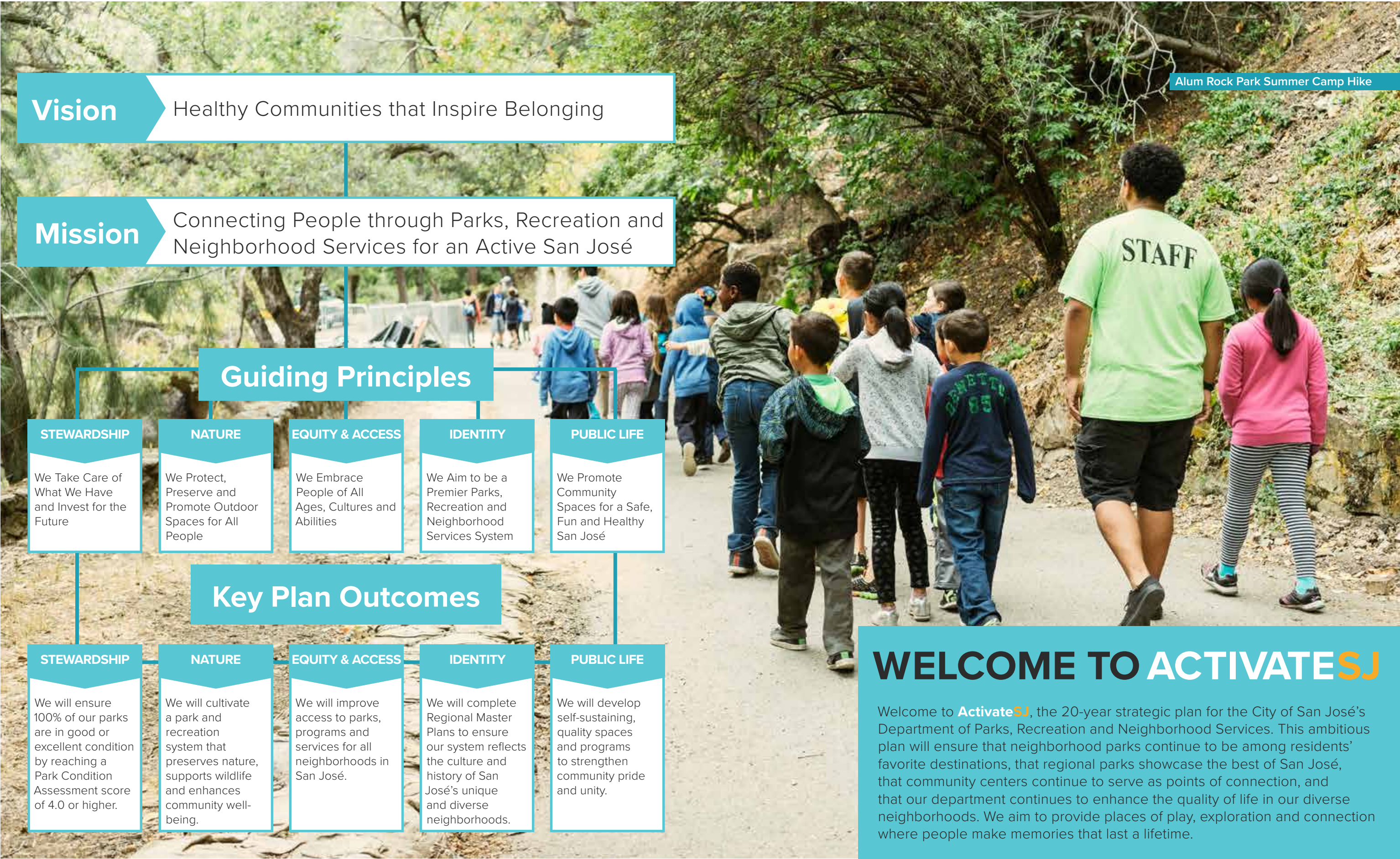
In 1942, the city council passed an ordinance to create a five-member recreation commission with a director — and the “parks” department was born. Since then, our city has gone from a population of 70,000 to more than a million, and what was the Valley of Hearts Delight became the Capital of Silicon Valley. Although we have changed as a city, we remain a community with a rich history made up of diverse people who are eager to innovate, and PRNS has evolved to meet the needs of today’s community. Like most organizations, we plan for the future by taking stock of where we are, our opportunities and challenges, and how we can move forward. With this document, we present **ActivateSJ**, our 20-year strategic plan.

Our prior strategic plan, the Greenprint, helped build today’s large and varied parks and recreation system. **ActivateSJ** is different from the Greenprint. **ActivateSJ** is a people-focused, service-driven plan. The five guiding principles speak directly to what San Joseans value and expect from a parks and recreation department in the 10th largest city in the nation. They are strategic priorities that will carry us into the future, help us identify opportunities and guide our decisions, which may include the development of regional capital-centric Greenprints. Each guiding principle acts as a building block, beginning with the foundation of stewardship and culminating in public life.

ActivateSJ has been informed by the community and refined by our parks professionals. Together, we will build a leading parks, recreation and neighborhood services system that enhances the quality of life in San José.

I encourage you to join us in our people-first approach to parks and recreation in San José as we build community through fun!

Jon Cicirelli
Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services



Alum Rock Park Summer Camp Hike

Vision Healthy Communities that Inspire Belonging

Mission Connecting People through Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services for an Active San José

Guiding Principles

- STEWARDSHIP**
We Take Care of What We Have and Invest for the Future
- NATURE**
We Protect, Preserve and Promote Outdoor Spaces for All People
- EQUITY & ACCESS**
We Embrace People of All Ages, Cultures and Abilities
- IDENTITY**
We Aim to be a Premier Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services System
- PUBLIC LIFE**
We Promote Community Spaces for a Safe, Fun and Healthy San José

Key Plan Outcomes

- STEWARDSHIP**
We will ensure 100% of our parks are in good or excellent condition by reaching a Park Condition Assessment score of 4.0 or higher.
- NATURE**
We will cultivate a park and recreation system that preserves nature, supports wildlife and enhances community well-being.
- EQUITY & ACCESS**
We will improve access to parks, programs and services for all neighborhoods in San José.
- IDENTITY**
We will complete Regional Master Plans to ensure our system reflects the culture and history of San José's unique and diverse neighborhoods.
- PUBLIC LIFE**
We will develop self-sustaining, quality spaces and programs to strengthen community pride and unity.

WELCOME TO ACTIVATE^{SJ}

Welcome to **Activate^{SJ}**, the 20-year strategic plan for the City of San José's Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services. This ambitious plan will ensure that neighborhood parks continue to be among residents' favorite destinations, that regional parks showcase the best of San José, that community centers continue to serve as points of connection, and that our department continues to enhance the quality of life in our diverse neighborhoods. We aim to provide places of play, exploration and connection where people make memories that last a lifetime.



COMMUNITY-INSPIRED PLAN

In November 2000, San José voters approved Measure P, the San José Safe Neighborhood Parks and Recreation Bond. With Measure P’s \$228 million in funding, and with the guidance of Greenprint 2000, we improved or constructed 69 neighborhood parks, seven regional park projects, nine community centers, and five major trail projects.

Both Greenprint 2000 and its update in 2009 focused primarily on capital projects. Greenprint 2009 provided the flexibility to respond to economic challenges; which included a doubling of land costs between 2000 to 2007, major construction cost increases, and increased population projections. The update also included a focus on financial sustainability and accessibility.

While this document was originally intended to be an update to Greenprint 2009, early in the outreach process the community shared that they wanted us to focus on services and the delivery of a sustainable parks and recreation system. **ActivateSJ** sets a framework for the Department’s daily operations and complements — rather than replaces — the Greenprint.

ActivateSJ envisions the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services as adaptable to meet future challenges while always focusing on our community. The chapters that follow describe guiding principles that were gleaned from community feedback. For each principle we outlined our current work, our opportunities and challenges, and our future direction.

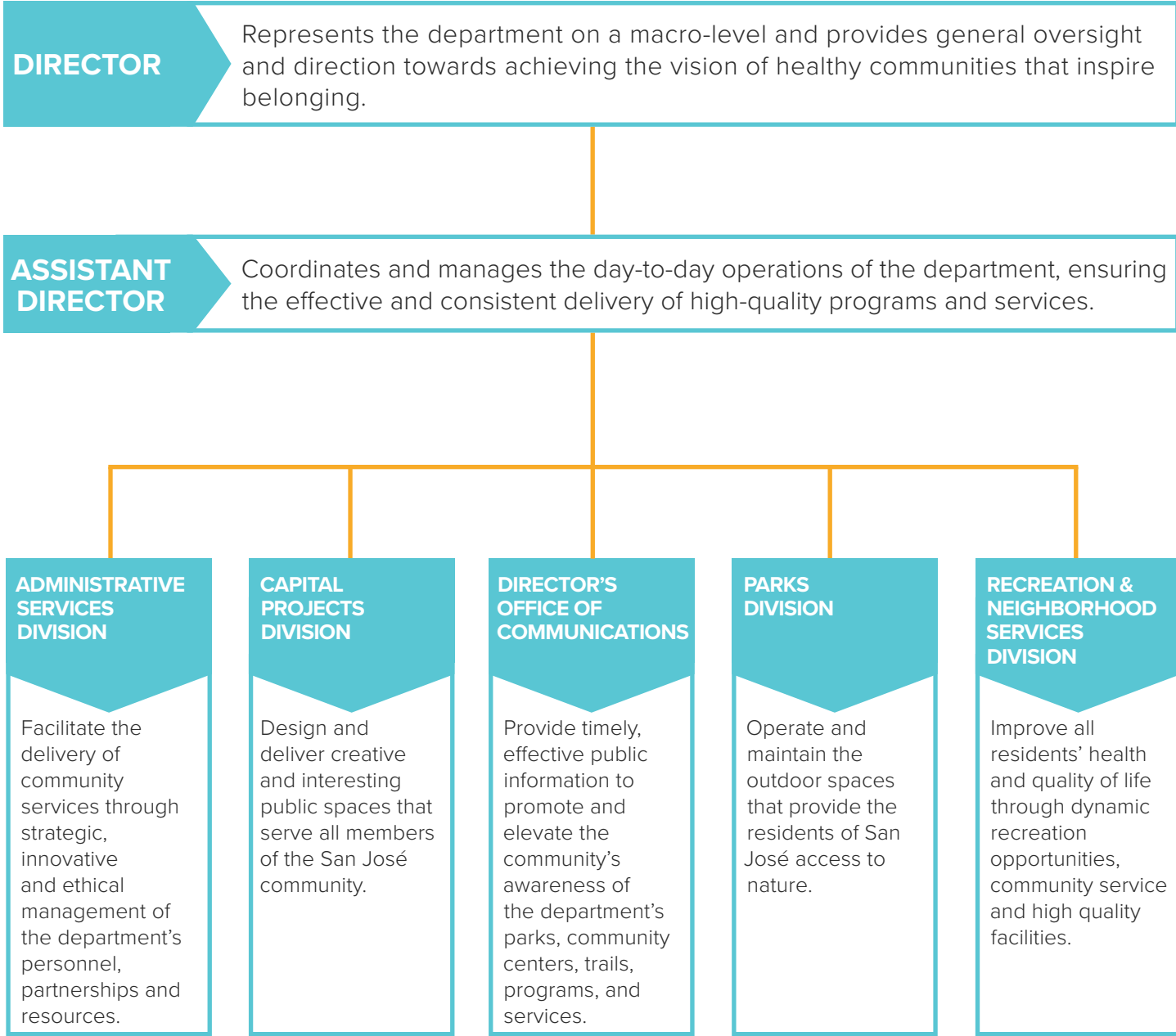
To guide our efforts, each chapter includes benchmarks that define our aspirations and the steps we will take to accomplish them. We will evaluate progress, measure success and refine or adjust the benchmarks every five years from 2020-2040. In this way, **ActivateSJ** is a living document with regular community engagement to ensure we are truly responsive to the residents of San José.

Plaza de César E. Chávez Park
ActivateSJ Intercept Survey

WHO WE ARE

We manage 206 parks, 50 community centers, over 61 miles of trails, neighborhood services that help keep our communities safe, programs that keep seniors healthy, activities that keep youth engaged, and public life events that connect our communities. We are proud of the broad range of programs and services we offer and our role in serving our community. We aspire to do even more, while meeting high expectations and navigating a wide variety of challenges.

DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION



Japanese Friendship Garden
Under One Moon Festival
Photo by Chris Bolor

PRNS LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES

We Are All Leaders:

The PRNS Leader leads from where they are. They evaluate the situation and are eager to meet the challenge. They know when to lead, when to follow and most of all, they know their own potential. A PRNS leader makes every attempt to go above and beyond.

Service Focused:

The PRNS Leader puts the community first. Their every action, decision or plan begins and ends with the community in-mind.

Lead by Example:

The PRNS Leader is an extension of the Department. They are consummate professionals who exemplify excellence, integrity and respect for all. They have a bias for action that motivates others to perform at their very best.

Seek Knowledge & Ask Questions:

The PRNS Leader is constantly learning and always seeking to improve. They are explorers who take calculated risks, eargerly question and act in the pursuit of knowledge.

Deliver Quality Results:

The PRNS Leader focuses on data to deliver a high quality product in a timely fashion. When faced with obstacles, they rise to the occasion, offer no excuses and never settle. Leaders have high standards of others and the highest standards of themselves.

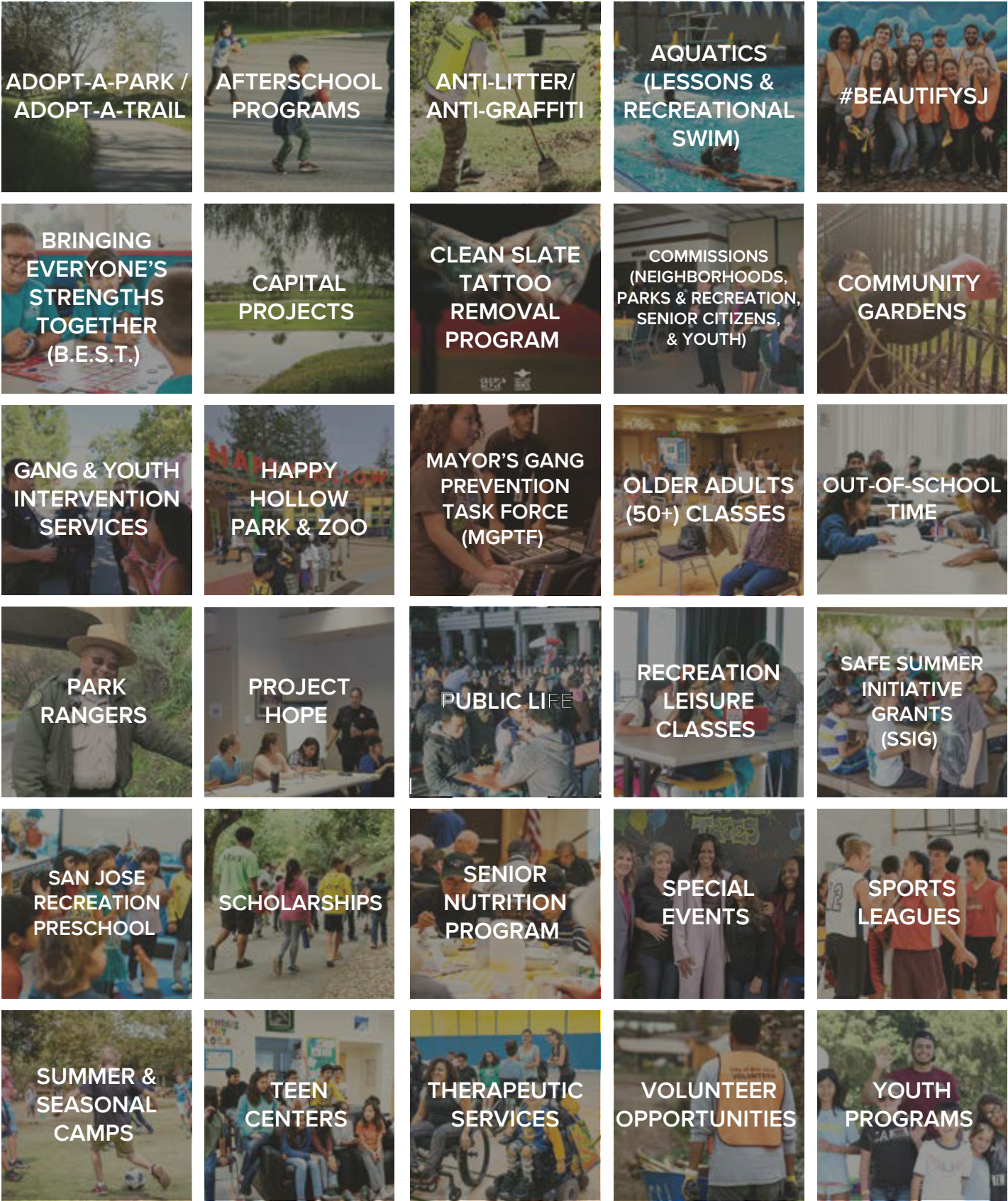
Act Strategically:

The PRNS Leader uses all data sources available to find the most comprehensive solution. They know their operational environment, pay attention to detail and assess frequently to optimize service delivery. Leaders are mindful of the Department's vision, mission and guiding principles in all they do.

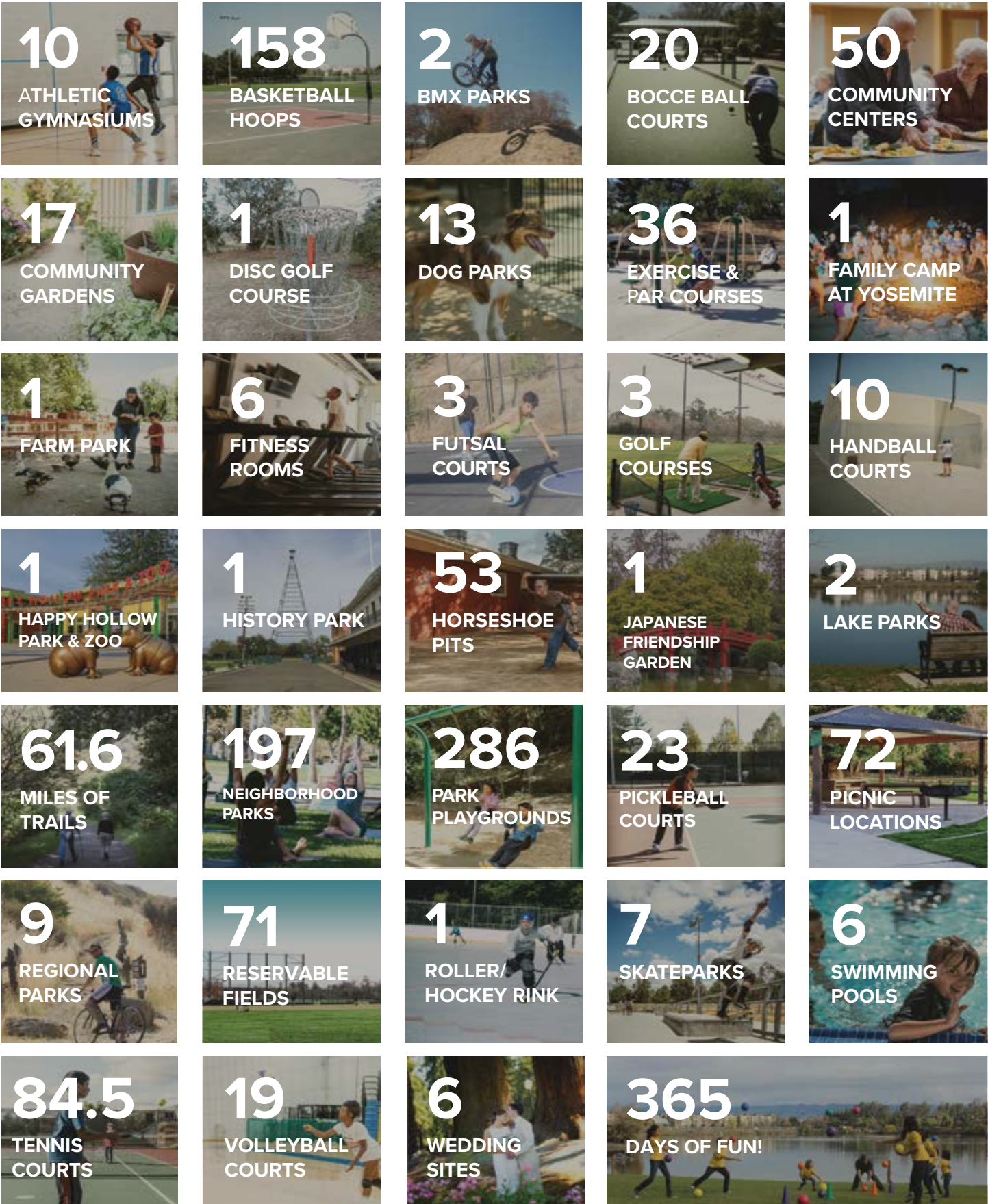
Create a Lasting Impact:

The PRNS Leader thinks big and acts bold in their pursuit of the Department's vision. They create, communicate and take actions that inspire. They teach, coach and mentor the next generation of leaders and are always seeking to raise the bar.

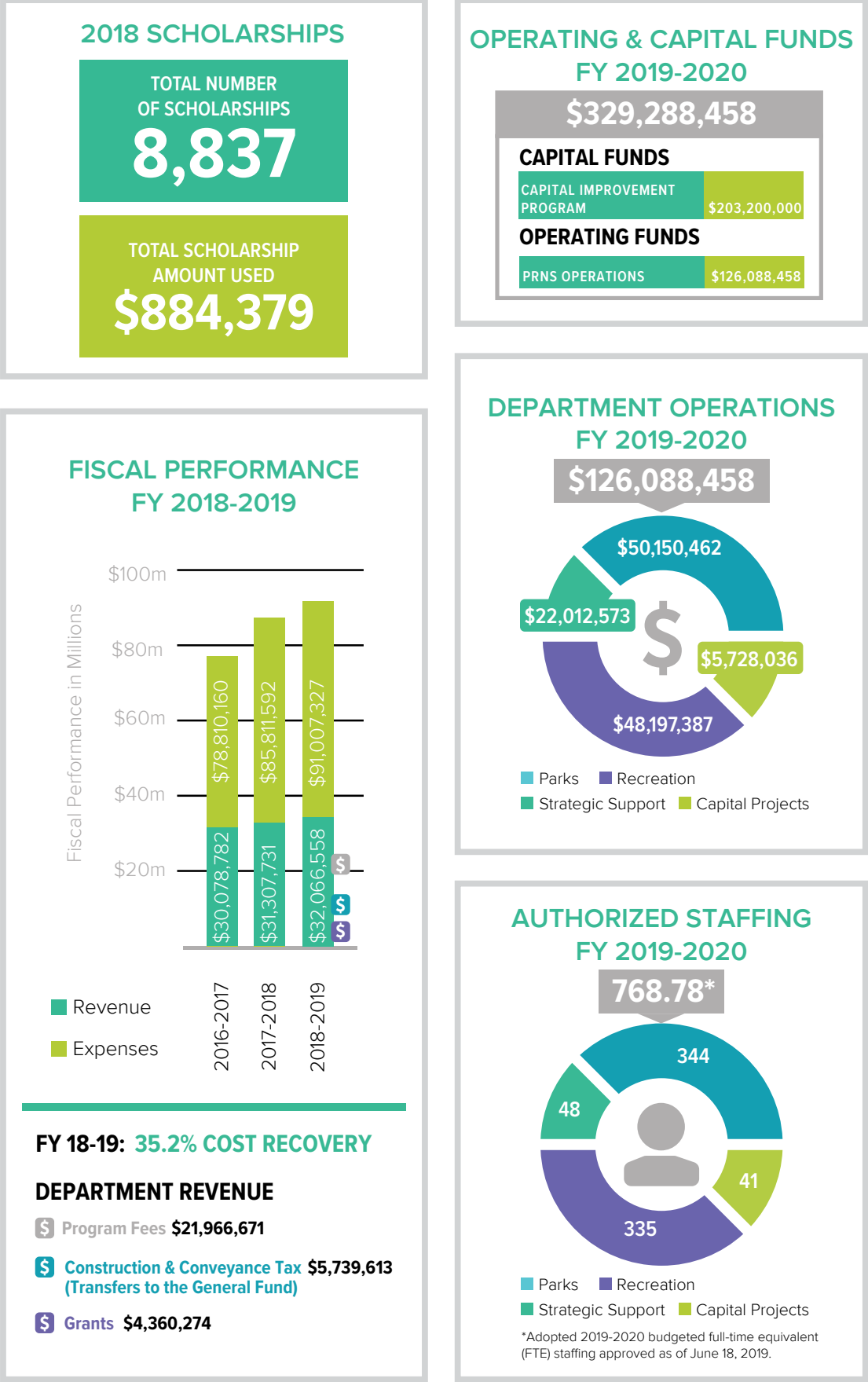
COMMUNITY PROGRAMS & SERVICES



COMMUNITY AMENITIES



DEPARTMENT FINANCIALS





STEWARDSHIP

We Take Care of What We Have and Invest for the Future

San Joseans emphasized the importance of safe and clean parks, trails and community centers. We are taking these comments to heart. As we move forward and strengthen our department, we will strive for greater effectiveness in protecting the resources entrusted to our care.

WHERE WE ARE

Demands on our department are extensive and expectations are high. We work hard to serve the community and are proud of the work we do. We maintain parks, trails and community centers; we operate recreation programming that offers opportunities for health and wellness

across all ages and abilities; we manage neighborhood programs that partner with community members to improve neighborhoods and engage marginalized communities; and we are the central focus for community support in times of disaster.



Our community centers serve as shelters during emergency response operations. This is true for major disasters, as well as for smaller, localized events that displace residents. Planning and staffing for these events can be complex, yet our commitment to serve our community is steadfast.



Mayfair Community Center Playground

MAINTENANCE & INFRASTRUCTURE

Data-informed decisions are advancing our ability to take strategic actions. Thanks to recent budget additions, in 2018 the Park Condition Assessment scores for 10 parks improved to reach an *Acceptable* level (a score of 3.0 out of 5.0)¹.

Over the past year, our Parks Rehabilitation Strike team has renovated turf, replaced irrigation and enhanced amenities at 13 parks. Out of 206 parks, 74% are in an *Acceptable* or better condition². We will strive for 100% of our parks to be in *Good* or *Excellent* condition.

Park Condition Assessment scores are impacted by the age of the assets in the park system, including park furniture, drinking fountains and playgrounds. Many of our parks’ assets have out-lived their typical life span, which increases the demand on maintenance staff to repair them. Increases in usage and the expansion of park facilities has magnified demands for maintenance. In addition to our parks, we are responsible for more than 61 miles of trails and 50 community centers of various sizes, plus numerous restrooms, shade structures and ancillary buildings throughout the parks system.

The buildings are of varying age and condition and require consistent attention. While our partners in Public Works perform the maintenance and capital improvements for these facilities, our staff coordinates and prioritizes this work. The Adopted 2019-2020 budget includes, for the first time, dedicated staffing to support Public Works and recreation program staff in building management.

¹Park Condition Assessment Scale – 1.0 (Unacceptable), 2.0 (Needs Improvement), 3.0 (Acceptable), 4.0 (Good), 5.0 (Excellent)

² Sustainable Park Maintenance Memorandum <https://sanjose.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3862907&GUID=C9C73196-C51F-477C-80E1-6DA3AC19C92C>

SAFETY

Safety in our parks and facilities is a major concern to the community and to us. People feel unsafe because of crime, the potential for wildfire and the condition of some parks and facilities.

The presence of illegal activity in and near our parks, community centers and trails hinders our ability to deliver quality of life programs and services to our community. Our Youth Intervention Services team helps keep our neighborhoods and youth safe, and our current partnership with the San Jose Police Department helps address crime. Yet, we understand that people do not feel safe in spaces where delinquent behavior may take place or where unhoused residents may live. There is much to be done in this area, and there is not an easy solution. Knowing we cannot resolve this issue on our own, we will continue to develop collaborative strategies across the City’s departments to advance solutions and improve our performance.

Park Ranger practices, weed abatement, maintenance, and volunteers help us create a fire safe community. Rangers restrict barbecue use or close parks when weather conditions call for high-fire danger. Weed abatement practices are specifically designed to create a fire safe boundary at parks like Alum Rock Park, which has been scorched by wildfires in the past. Picnic area maintenance helps prevent fires, and volunteers assist with weed abatement by removing invasive non-native, highly flammable plants and replacing them with ones that are adaptive to our park environments.

We operate and maintain 43 soccer fields and serve nearly 100 leagues through our Citywide Sports Program. The safety of our grass fields can be compromised by pest infestations. Recent Integrated Pest Management pilot programs to abate rodents have been successful and have improved conditions in our parks and sport fields.

With the addition of the Arcadia Ballfields and the Police Activities League (PAL) complex, our Citywide Sports Program is expanding. The Arcadia and PAL complexes will add to our current inventory of 71 reservable fields, bringing the total to 78, and will help us meet the growing demand for sports fields as we evaluate our current operating model for these essential facilities.



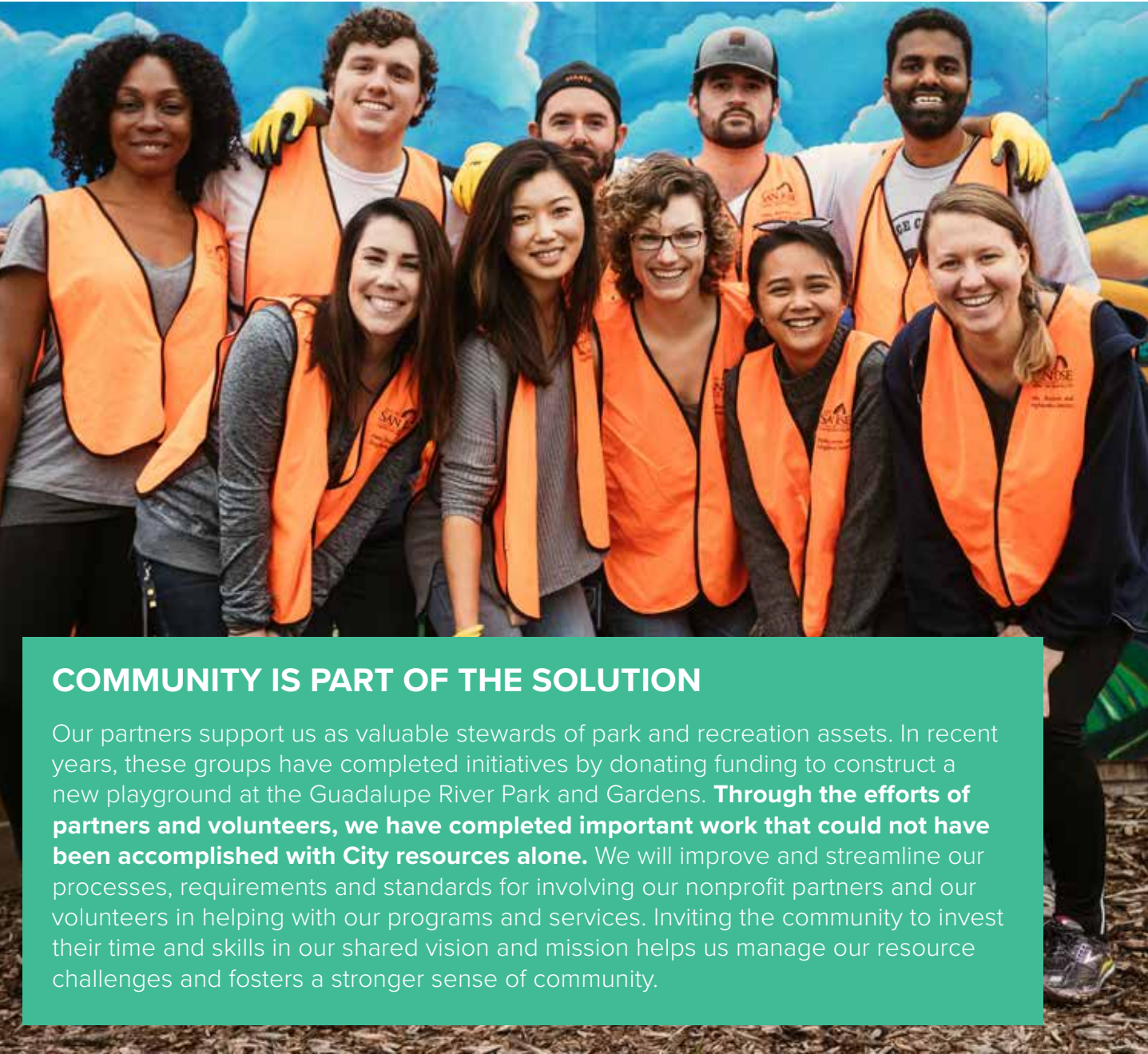
Berryessa Community Center Touch-a-Truck

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

The City’s General Fund supports our operational expenses, yet it is vulnerable to Silicon Valley’s economic cycles. Our limited capital revenue is inadequate to meet the demands of aging parks and infrastructure and is insufficient to ensure that the San José of tomorrow will have the park and recreation space it needs for a healthy community. We can foresee that the development-based Park

Trust Fund, an important source of capital funding to build projects, will experience reduced revenue once residential development peaks.

We provide critical community services, whose absence negatively impacts quality of life, thus we will seek opportunities to become a financially sustainable parks and recreation system.

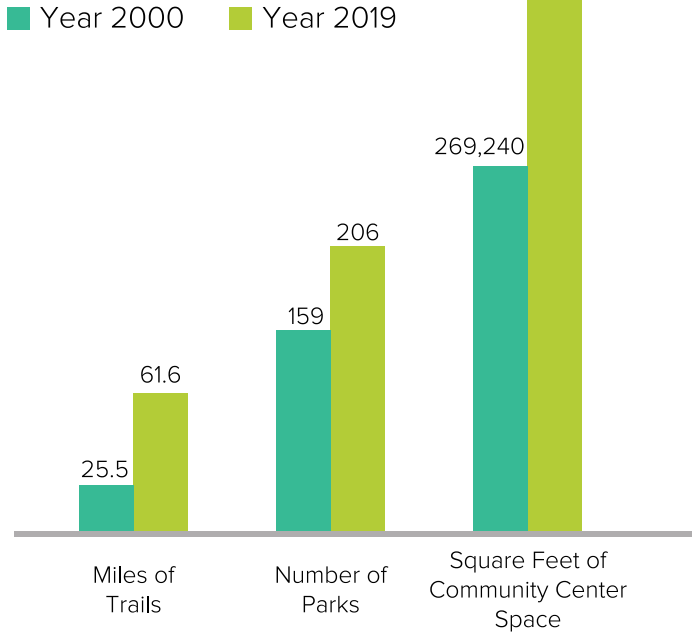


SYSTEM GROWTH

Since the initial Greenprint in 2000, our parks and recreation system has grown. We currently have 206 parks (30% growth), approximately 548,000 square feet of community center space (104% growth) and 61 trail miles (142% growth)³. Contract services to sustain park sites of less than two acres have helped manage the workload, but our larger parks continue to suffer from lack of resources.

Our service offerings have expanded over the past 10 years. Summer camps are now offered at parks; we opened the Lake Cunningham Action Sports Park; the Placemaking team is activating underutilized neighborhood parks via the Viva Parks program; we now oversee the citywide community beautification initiative – #BeautifySJ; community centers offer preschool; the Vietnamese-American Cultural Center was established at the George Shirikawa Community Center; and Project Hope has expanded from one site in 2016 to nine sites in 2020. New programs, locations and approaches have added to the variety of quality of life services we provide our community, yet they also depend on our limited resources.

ASSET COMPARISON



³ Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) 2000 Greenprint, 2009 Greenprint Update and 2019-2020 Adopted Budget

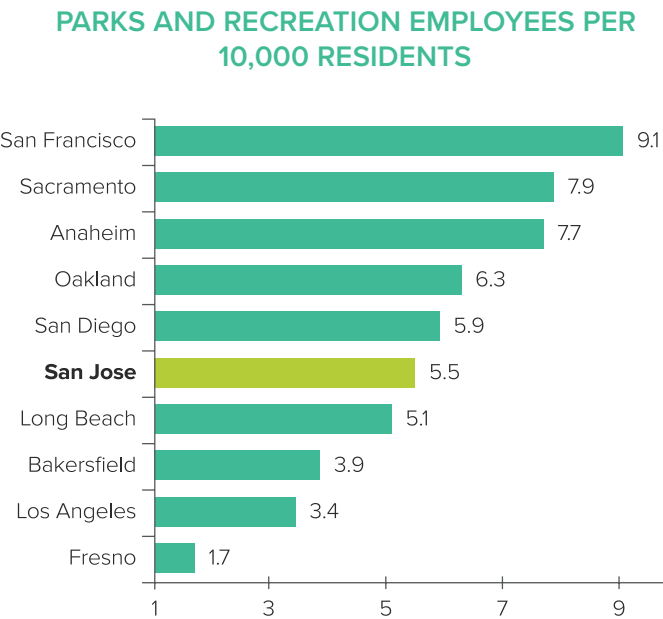
STAFFING

The city’s population has grown by 14% over the past decade⁴. Staffing per 10,000 residents varies greatly among California cities. When compared to other cities, San José is among the cities with lower staffing⁵. Furthermore, the chart to the right suggests our staffing levels may be overestimated since we offer neighborhood services while the majority of parks and recreation organizations do not.

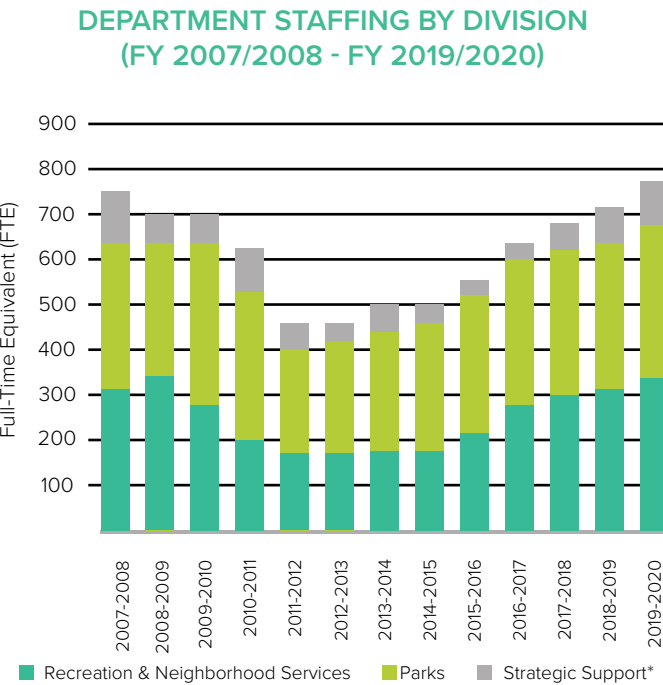
Since 2011-2012, the department has added the equivalent of 309 full-time staff. The growth has allowed us to rebuild youth gang prevention and intervention programs, but staffing the Park Ranger Program remains a challenge. We have begun creatively addressing parks infrastructure needs with a Parks Rehabilitation Strike team, a Pest Management team and a Turf Replacement team. While our staffing levels are now equivalent to pre-recession times, we have not kept pace with population and system growth.

The 2019-2020 Adopted Budget for our department adds funding of \$25.9 million, for a total operating budget of approximately \$126 million⁶. This includes 51.55 one-time positions. The one-time positions will support our services in the short-term but will not provide a long-term solution for staffing needs. Such solutions may require funding sources outside the City’s General Fund.

The retirements of longtime, experienced staff have further contributed to staffing challenges. We will engage and train the next generation of staff to become experts in their fields as they are critical to our long-term success. We will build on our seven leadership principles by developing and implementing standards and norms across all our work. Investing in our teams and ensuring that we are equipped to be leaders in the community and in the parks and recreation industry will strengthen our ability to be good stewards.



Source: The Trust for Public Land: 2017 City Park Facts



*Strategic Support includes the divisions of Administrative Services, Capital Projects and the Director's Office of Communications.



WE ASPIRE TO:

- Focus our efforts to maintain and improve existing parks, recreational facilities and trails in our system;
- Innovate to continuously improve all aspects of our work;
- Welcome and engage all members of the community to partner with us in caring for our spaces, resources and programs;
- Diversify our funding for a sustainable system; and
- Build, equip and recognize a workforce of experts and leaders who take pride in service to the community.

⁴ City of San José Annual Report on City Services 2017-18
⁵ City of San José Annual Report on City Services 2016-17
⁶ 2019-2020 City of San José Adopted Operating Budget (Includes \$13.5 million from the sale of the Coleman Avenue property to address Parks Infrastructure needs on a one-time basis)

The following benchmarks define and guide our Stewardship efforts. The steps listed below will be integrated into department work plans, where performance measures will be developed to track the progress of each step. Every five years, we will revisit our Accomplishments and adjust as needed.

WE ASPIRE TO...	TO ACCOMPLISH OUR ASPIRATION, WE WILL...	IN THE NEXT 3 TO 5 YEARS WE WILL...
<p>Welcome and engage all members of the community to partner with us in caring for our spaces, resources and programs.</p>	<p>S8. Engage the community in our stewardship and volunteer efforts; and</p> <p>S9. Expand the range of volunteer opportunities available for our community.</p>	<p>S8a. Build on our successful volunteer programs, i.e. Adopt-A-Park and Anti-Litter, to establish and maintain volunteer opportunities for all facility and program offerings; and</p> <p>S8b. Make volunteering in our parks and community centers easier by implementing online resources.</p> <p>S9a. Evaluate volunteer participation and satisfaction across various department programs and recommend modifications to enhance both;</p> <p>S9b. Increase the promotion of volunteer opportunities; and</p> <p>S9c. Identify and implement strategies to increase volunteer opportunities and participation in marginalized communities.</p>
<p>Diversify our funding for a sustainable system.</p>	<p>S10. Seek sustainable funding mechanisms for our parks and recreation system; and</p> <p>S11. Continue to strengthen relationships with our nonprofit partners.</p>	<p>S10a. Build on the success of recent donor funded projects to develop and implement a sponsorship program for parks, facilities and programs including scholarships;</p> <p>S10b. Establish a grants team responsible for identifying and preparing grant opportunities;</p> <p>S10c. Evaluate and seek the implementation of additional funding sources to augment general fund resources;</p> <p>S10d. Complete the parks nexus study to refine fees on residential development; and</p> <p>S10e. Evaluate the implementation of a park fee program on commercial development.</p> <p>S11a. Develop guidelines to serve community members and nonprofit groups in their work with the City; and</p> <p>S11b. Assign and train staff to work with and serve as liaisons to key nonprofit partners.</p>
<p>Build, equip and recognize a workforce of experts and leaders who take pride in service to the community.</p>	<p>S12. Establish and maintain Agency Accreditation from the Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA);</p> <p>S13. Prioritize training and development to allow staff to excel locally and nationally as experts in their fields; and</p> <p>S14. Engage the next generation of parks and recreation professionals.</p>	<p>S12a. Review and evaluate the requirements to assess the feasibility of undertaking CAPRA Accreditation.</p> <p>S13a. Benchmark peer organizations and review industry standards for park maintenance, recreational programming and administrative staff training;</p> <p>S13b. Develop training tracks to support staff expertise and leadership in the administration, planning, development, neighborhood organizing, maintenance, operations, and programming of parks and recreational facilities;</p> <p>S13c. Increase the number of staff with National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) certifications; and</p> <p>S13d. Increase the number of San José expert presenters at state and national conferences to bring awareness to and elevate the innovative work done by the San José Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department.</p> <p>S14a. Leverage existing programs like SJWorks to educate young people on parks and recreation career opportunities; and</p> <p>S14b. Develop relationships with local schools to create a pipeline for career development in the profession.</p>



NATURE

We Protect, Preserve and Promote Outdoor Spaces for All People

Access to nature encourages early childhood development, reduces stress and promotes socialization⁷. Nature exists in parks, trails, community gardens, community centers, and open space. Well planned outdoor spaces can support wildlife corridors, provide tree canopy, sustain our waterways, and offset the effects of climate change. As the provider of parks, recreation and neighborhood services in a rapidly growing city, we embrace access to nature for all residents.

⁷ The Trust for Public Land, From Fitness Zones to the Medical Mile: How Urban Park Systems Can Best Promote Health and Wellness (2011)

WHERE WE ARE

San José has more than 3,500 acres of parkland. The benefits of open space to people and the environment are well documented by many organizations including the Trust for Public Land (TPL). In addition to providing health benefits, parks are critical infrastructure in reducing the effects of climate change.

CLIMATE CHANGE – A GLOBAL ISSUE WITH LOCAL IMPACTS

TPL cites four ways parks provide climate benefits: Cool, Absorb, Protect, and Connect. Parks “Cool” by being shady, green spaces that reduce the “heat island” effect. Parks “Absorb” by allowing rainwater to infiltrate their green spaces, reducing flooding and adding drinking water supplies. Parks “Protect” by providing important flood storage along creeks and shorelines. Finally, parks and trail systems “Connect” by offering carbon free transportation options⁸.

Plants, trees and shrubs in parks promote cleaner air by removing pollutants that can harm human health, reducing pollution control costs in San José by \$1.18 million each year⁹.

NATURE IN NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Access to nature brings with it an opportunity to understand and appreciate local natural habitat. To promote greater use of native plants in park landscapes, we are piloting Meadow Spot, a program to seed native wildflowers in parkland to help nurture and protect a wide array of biodiversity. Our Adopt-A-Park community champions are installing and maintaining native California and drought-tolerant landscapes in parks throughout the city.

⁸ The Trust for Public Land Climate Smart Cities™

⁹ The Trust for Public Land, The Economic Benefits of the Park & Recreation System in San José, California (2016)



Alum Rock Park Trail

NATURE-BASED PROGRAMMING

Our community centers and regional parks offer a range of nature-based programming. Emma Prusch Farm Park offers summer camps and seasonal classes on the basics of farm life, caring for farm animals and gardening. Happy Hollow Park & Zoo focuses on conservation and endangered species; while our Park Ranger team, in partnership with the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority and our nonprofit partners, lead sunset walks to encourage community understanding of our local wildlife and to enjoy the beauty of nature at night.

Our most unique nature-based park opportunity is Family Camp at Yosemite. Recently celebrating its 50-year anniversary, Family Camp hosts nearly 5,000 campers each year. This popular program affords a fun, well-planned camping experience to families who might not otherwise experience the Sierra Nevada mountains. Annually, our Senior Services team provides a special nature excursion, complete with transportation to Yosemite, and the Mayor’s Gang Prevention Task Force takes youth to Family Camp, giving many participants their first camping and wilderness trip.



Willow Glen Community Center Bugs and Butterflies Camp



Tuolumne River, Family Camp at Yosemite

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

CONNECTING PEOPLE TO NATURE

Nature-based programs are in high-demand. We need to work with our nonprofit partners and staff to expand these programs so more residents can participate, including people of all ages, abilities and zip codes. Lack of dedicated staff limit our ability to coordinate programming in a meaningful way. Moving forward, we will identify areas where we can expand or develop new nature-based programs so more people have

access to nature. To help us fulfill these goals, we will identify partners, reconnect to those we have worked with and reach out to new ones.

With greater resources available, community centers and parks could grow their nature-based programming. We can provide rich opportunities to explore waterways and the biodiversity of our valley’s watersheds. Park Rangers can provide interpretive programs, lead hiking groups and offer park-centered explorations and activities such as nature photography.



Family Camp at Yosemite Animal Presentation

INTENTIONAL DESIGN

Increasing access to nature in parks can help the environment and people.

Emphasizing the use of California native and drought-tolerant landscapes in park and landscape designs will support native wildlife, better suit our localized climate and improve maintenance practices.

In selected areas, we will reduce hardscape, expand the Meadow Spot pilot program and convert grass areas to native landscape; providing health benefits while enhancing bird, bee and butterfly habitat.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Integrating green stormwater infrastructure provides an opportunity to create or enhance recreational uses while improving water quality and the environment. This is in keeping with the City of San José Green Stormwater Infrastructure Plan goal to “protect beneficial uses of waterways within San José, including the Bay, and provide environmental and community benefits.¹⁰”

Another benefit to both people and the environment is San José’s tree canopy. Trees reduce rainwater runoff, provide shade and help decrease greenhouse gases and the impacts of climate change. Underutilized park space creates opportunities for tree planting. We will research and connect with potential partners to promote tree planting and tree health, as well as pursue the development of a parks and recreation Urban Forestry Program for effective management of this vital resource.

¹⁰ City of San José Green Stormwater Infrastructure Plan



Alum Rock Park Great Horned Owl mother and owlet

Photo by Stephen Rosenthal



WE ASPIRE TO:

- Enhance opportunities to connect people to nature through programs, scenic facilities and open spaces;
- Support the community’s resilience and well-being with access to natural, recreational spaces;
- Honor nature and wildlife through intentional design to create a sense of place; and
- Protect, preserve and promote nature for our rapidly urbanizing city.

MEASURING OUR SUCCESS

The following benchmarks define and guide our Nature efforts. The steps listed below will be integrated into department work plans, where performance measures will be developed to track the progress of each step. Every five years, we will revisit our Accomplishments and adjust as needed.

WE ASPIRE TO...	TO ACCOMPLISH OUR ASPIRATION, WE WILL...	IN THE NEXT 3 TO 5 YEARS WE WILL...
Enhance opportunities to connect people to nature through programs, scenic facilities and open spaces.	N1. Increase participation in nature-based programs.	N1a. Develop an inventory of current nature-based programs offered by the City and nonprofit partners to identify gaps in program offerings and participation; N1b. Use the combined services of City staff and nonprofit partners to create and implement a nature-focused, interpretive education program with service offerings at community centers and neighborhood and regional parks; and N1c. Use existing nature play areas at Happy Hollow Park & Zoo as a model to identify and implement locations for "nature play" features within the park system.
Support the community's resilience and well-being with access to natural, recreational spaces.	N2. Continue to integrate elements that acknowledge parks as critical infrastructure in reducing the effects of climate change and environmental impacts.	N2a. Continue to meet regulatory requirements for stormwater management and green infrastructure in new park designs; N2b. Continue to work with our partners in the Public Works and Environmental Services (ESD) departments to consider ways to address regional stormwater management needs; N2c. Seek funding and training for the adequate maintenance of green stormwater infrastructure that is located within parks; and N2d. Work with our partners in ESD to acknowledge the park system as a vital element of the City's Climate Smart San José Plan.
Honor nature and wildlife through intentional design to create a sense of place.	N3. Emphasize the use of California friendly and drought tolerant landscape in park and landscape design.	N3a. Incorporate landscape standards into the Park Design Guidelines and Community Center Design Guidelines for native (and appropriate non-native) plantings; N3b. Increase the acreage of California friendly planting and habitat in San José neighborhood parks and civic grounds; and N3c. Use the resources of the City and our partners to install at least one new pollinator garden in each council district.
Protect, preserve and promote nature for our rapidly urbanizing city.	N4. Establish an Urban Forestry Program within the San José parks system; and N5. Coordinate with Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department, Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority and Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to enhance programs and services in rural open spaces.	N4a. Inventory all trees within the San José parks system to evaluate the health and biodiversity of the tree canopy; N4b. Develop and implement a dedicated Urban Forestry Program to guide and sustain our tree canopy and increase the biodiversity, habitat value and longevity of our resources; and N4c. Establish forestry related protocols and standards to manage all tree resources, with a focus on habitat enhancement, climate change and carbon sequestration. N5a. Identify and assign a liaison from our department to partner agencies; and N5b. Support partner agencies in their efforts to preserve and protect the open spaces outside the urban core.



EQUITY & ACCESS

We Embrace People of All Ages, Cultures and Abilities

All San José residents – whatever their age, gender identity, income, ability, or culture – have a right to health, wellness and access to parks and recreation opportunities. We will embrace our community as co-creators of our programs, services and spaces. We will build trust in marginalized communities to enhance quality of life for everyone.

WHERE WE ARE

San José is home to a diverse and vibrant population that is facing challenges with increasing density and growing income disparity. The City is challenged to undo historic and systematic inequality. We commit to understanding diversity as a strength and we will deliver services that address people’s access to better, safer and healthier opportunities. We are a department that is representative of the community, and we are committed to providing services to all, including the historically marginalized.

EXCEPTIONAL EXPERIENCES FOR ALL

Our Therapeutic Recreation Services team offers recreation opportunities to individuals with physical and intellectual disabilities, who make up 5% of the city’s population¹¹. Specialized programming invites persons with disabilities of all ages to engage in leisure pursuits in a welcoming, non-judgmental environment with

staff who have the knowledge and skills to meet their needs.

The Mayor’s Gang Prevention Task Force, managed by our Neighborhood Services team, is a national model for youth intervention services and community involvement that has worked to prevent and reduce youth violence and crime for over 25 years. We are committed to serving gang-impacted youth and their families.

Project Hope facilitates civic engagement and leadership. Our #BeautifySJ, Anti-Graffiti and Anti-Litter programs aim to support safe, clean streets and neighborhoods for all.

Together, with our committed volunteers and partners, we remove an estimated two million square feet of graffiti and 4,000 cubic yards of litter each year.



Bascom Community Center
All Access Sports & Recreation

¹¹ United States Census Bureau: San José, California (2018)



We will focus our efforts on ensuring all San José residents can walk to a neighborhood park in 10 minutes, and we will continue to pursue the Envision 2040 goal of 3.5 acres of neighborhood parkland per 1,000 people.

We acknowledge that many unhoused residents live in our parks and trails and near community centers. The 2019 Homeless Census and Survey identified 6,097 people in San José, a 40% increase from the 2017 count¹². We will continue to partner with the City’s Housing Department and others to provide appropriate shelter and services for these individuals. We are joining in a county-wide effort to develop a plan to address homelessness, while continuing to meet the challenge of serving all residents with dignity and respect.

We staff and operate 11 regional community centers and collaborate with nonprofit organizations to staff and operate the remaining 39 neighborhood community centers. The 11 regional centers serve as comprehensive hubs offering a broad range of activities and classes, such as senior meals, teen centers, afterschool programs, early childhood education, and specialty recreational classes such as dance, martial arts, painting, soccer, and yoga.

To ensure financial access to regional center programs, we award close to \$1 million annually in scholarships, but the need outpaces available funding.

IMPROVING HEALTH

A key element of equity is for all residents to have a park they can call their own. The City’s Envision 2040 general plan includes a goal of 3.5 acres of neighborhood parkland per 1,000 people, so everyone can have access to a neighborhood park. Currently, neighborhood parkland provides 2.9 acres per 1,000 residents. More than three-quarters of San José residents have good access to parks, meaning they can walk to a neighborhood park in 10 minutes or less, yet there are several areas in San José that have a Very High Level of Park Need¹³. We will utilize metrics like this to prioritize our investments through an equitable framework.

¹² 2019 Santa Clara County Homeless Census and Survey
¹³ Trust for Public Land 2019 Park Score: <https://www.tpl.org/parkscore> & <https://www.tpl.org/city/san-jose-california>

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Our staff care deeply about serving the community and are proud to be part of such an impactful City department. We are invested in the lives of the youth, seniors and adults who participate in our programs and services at our community centers and parks. Daily interaction with residents allows us to stay current with community needs and wants.

We communicate with our customers monthly through our registration system newsletter, and we regularly survey our guests and participants regarding our programs and services. Although the current process for programmatic feedback yields good information, we are continually looking for ways to improve and grow.

We engage communities throughout San José as we develop new programs and services and design new facilities, parks and trails.

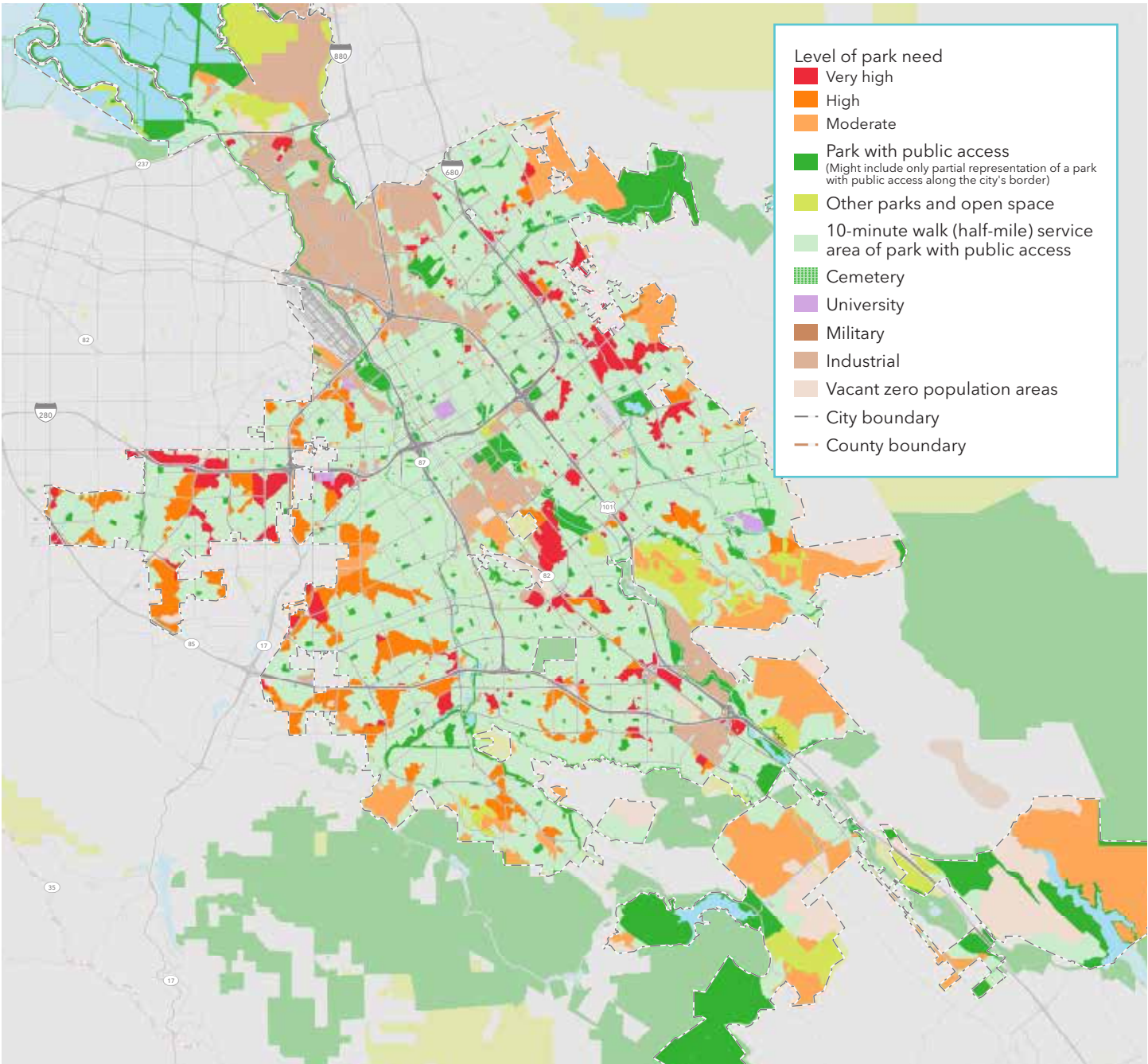
In 2018, we attended or hosted more than 65 community meetings and shared 4,600 social media posts through our 30 social media channels to discuss new programs, parks and initiatives.

Most recently, we have incorporated online surveys that are distributed through social media channels. These surveys have greatly increased the input we receive, ranging from a few people who attend a community meeting to hundreds of online replies.



By using our parks, trails and community centers, 24,000 adult residents engaged in sufficient physical activity in 2016 to provide an annual medical cost savings of \$28.3 million¹⁴.

¹⁴ The Trust for Public Land, The Economic Benefits of the Park & Recreation System in San José, California (2016)



The Trust for Public Land *ParkScore*[®] Index

SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

The Trust for Public Land ParkScore[®] index analyzes public access to existing parks and open space. The analysis incorporates a two-step approach: 1) determines where there are gaps in park availability, and 2) constructs a demographic profile to identify gaps with the most urgent need for parkland. Park gaps are based on a dynamic 1/2-mile service area (10-minute walking distance) for all parks. In this analysis, service areas use the street network to determine walkable distance - streets such as highways, freeways, and interstates are considered barriers.

Demographic profiles are based on 2018 Forecast block groups provided by Esri to determine park need for density of youth,

density of individuals in households with income less than 75% of city median income (San Jose less than \$75,000), and population density (people per acre).

The combined level of park need result shown on the large map combines the three demographic profile results and assigns the following weights:

- 50% = population density (people per acre)
- 25% = density of youth age 19 and younger
- 25% = density of individuals in households with income less than \$75,000

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION AND ACCESS

Although we offer a robust and diverse set of services, programs and classes to meet the needs of all in our community, our fee-based model can limit participation in our social and recreational services. Furthermore, this model does not always meet the neighborhood-level needs of transit-dependent or low-income residents.

To meet the growing need, we must work to expand our scholarship funds so residents who have limited income can participate in our programs.

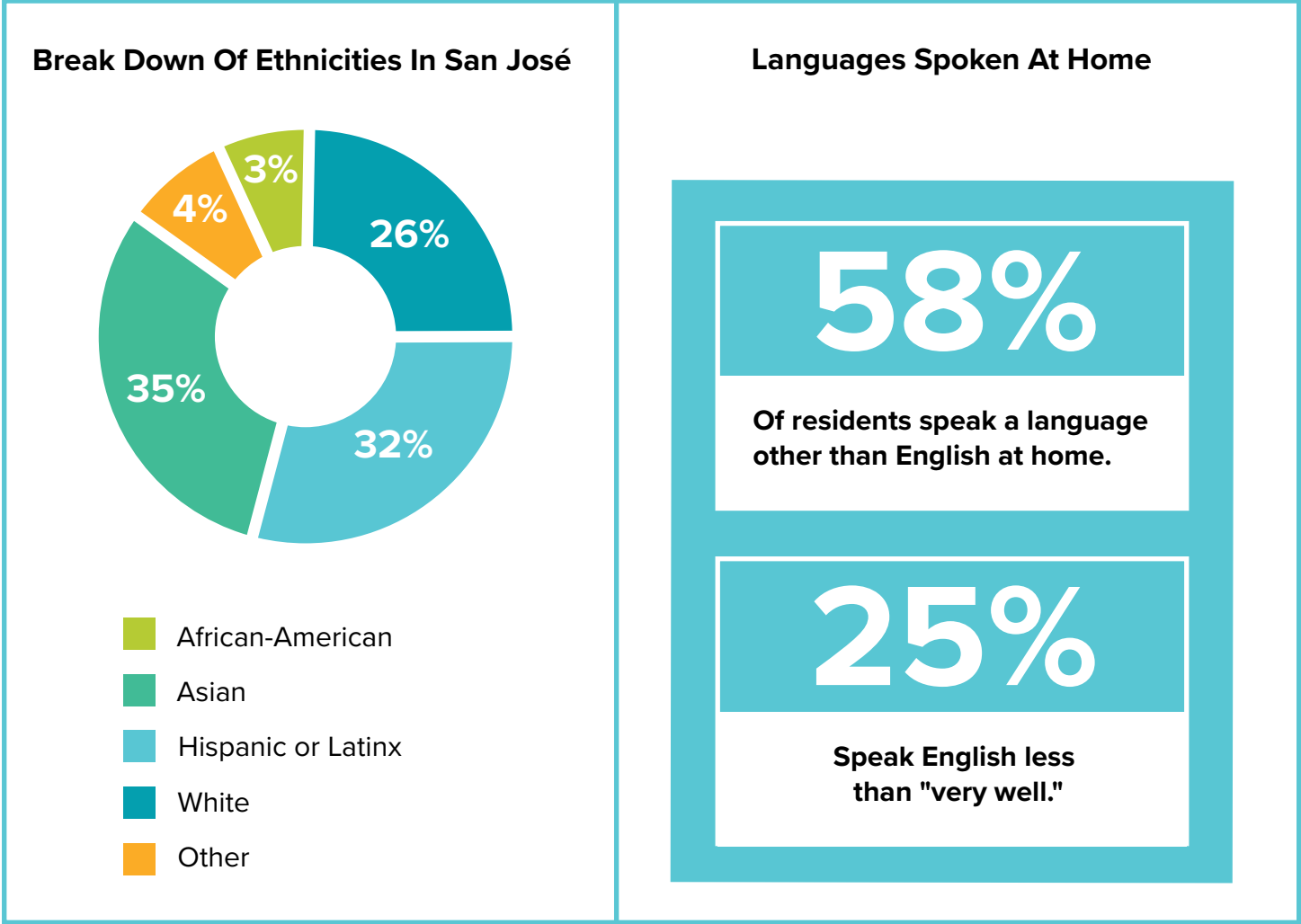
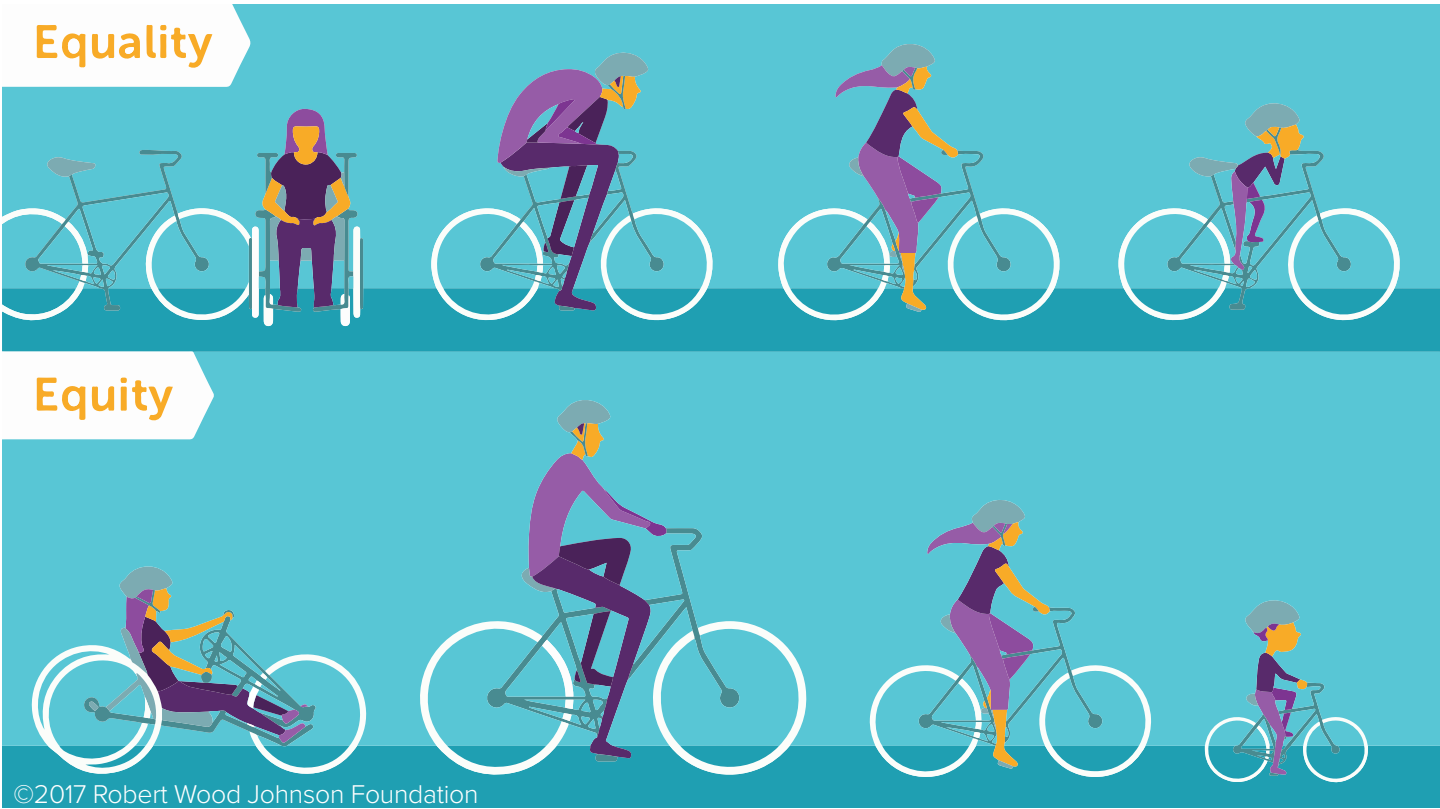
To remove barriers to access, we will partner with for-profit, nonprofit and public entities to advance opportunities that can benefit all people, and we will develop a strategic acquisition plan to achieve a 10-minute walk to a quality park for all residents.

Key funding for capital improvements comes from the City assessing residential development fees and construction and conveyance taxes. These are separate from the City's General Fund and support the acquisition, development and rehabilitation of our parks, recreational facilities, trails, and open space.

The growth of high-rise residential development has provided downtown and north San José with fee collections to support new park construction and recreational amenities. Older, established neighborhoods in east, west and south San José see fewer developments, hence, fewer new park and recreational resources. The City's capital funding mechanism is tied to new development and limited geographically. This current structure contributes to the inequitable distribution of funding for the growth and improvement of our parks and recreation system. To promote equity, we will study alternative methods for using the fees collected through the capital funding program.



Arena Green mini-pitch soccer court



CHANGING HOW WE OPERATE

While the City celebrates our community’s diversity, we recognize that systematic inequities result in poor education, health and safety outcomes for people of color and other marginalized groups. We will support high need communities through advocacy, training, coaching, and the removal of systemic barriers that can prevent meaningful engagement in leisure.

We are eager to advance the Department’s efforts as part of the City’s involvement in the Government Alliance for Racial Equity (GARE) Initiative. We are committed to training our workforce to understand inequities, adopting and applying equity tools to assess our programs and services, and allocating resources in alignment with an equity-based framework to meet the needs of marginalized communities, while benefitting all of San José.

"We have begun the journey towards equity, but we have a long way to go. We are currently developing an equity metrics mapping tool to identify the most vulnerable neighborhoods. From there, we will develop an equity plan to help guide our decisions about how to best deploy resources to the places and programs that have not experienced the same level of investment as others." – Jon Cicirelli, PRNS Director



Cadwallader R.O.C.K. Afterschool Program

INCLUSIVE DECISION MAKING

A robust and balanced parks, recreation and neighborhood services department is built on the support of our community. Our services are only meaningful if they meet the needs of the community we serve. Without authentic engagement, we cannot understand those needs.

Currently, outreach efforts include digital communication, advertisements, media, and community relations. We host community meetings as facilities, parks or trails are being planned, designed or changed. We strive for constant improvement and staying current with new and emerging trends and community engagement is no exception.

Our outreach methods continue to develop and grow. We want to tailor our efforts to meet the needs of each particular audience and engage with various tactics, including two-way dialogues. With over half of all San José residents speak a language other than English at home, we are committed to equipping our staff to provide translation services to ensure that all residents can participate in our programs and services. Beyond language access, we will aim to keep our messages relevant to all cultures. To do this, we will need to assess areas in need of improvement, train and expand our current staff and partner with specialized agencies to provide necessary services.



WE ASPIRE TO:

- Improve community health in partnership with others;
- Provide exceptional experiences for all people in San José regardless of age, ability, income, or neighborhood; and
- Be a trusted partner through inclusive decision making.

MEASURING OUR SUCCESS

The following benchmarks define and guide our Equity & Access efforts. The steps listed below will be integrated into department work plans, where performance measures will be developed to track the progress of each step. Every five years, we will revisit our Accomplishments and adjust as needed.

WE ASPIRE TO...	TO ACCOMPLISH OUR ASPIRATION, WE WILL...	IN THE NEXT 3 TO 5 YEARS WE WILL...
Improve community health in partnership with others.	EA1. Promote parks and recreational experiences for marginalized groups to increase healthy behaviors;	EA1a. Develop a Department campaign to encourage community awareness of parks, trails, recreation facilities, programs, and services; EA1b. Implement and scale the Early Education and Expanded Learning Quality Standards; EA1c. Identify health differences among specific population groups at the city, zip code and neighborhood level through analysis and mapping and determine appropriate investment levels; and EA1d. Develop and scale programs, parks and partnerships that promote positive behaviors and reduce risk factors for populations most affected by health differences.
	EA2. Reduce social isolation for older adults and people with disabilities;	EA2a. Create and implement the Department's Philosophy and Protocol Manual on Inclusion; and EA2b. Implement ID5a (Lead and coordinate the citywide Age-Friendly Initiative).
	EA3. Provide sustained efforts to beautify and improve quality of life in neighborhoods; and	EA3a. Lead the citywide coordination of #BeautifySJ, the anti-blight service delivery model; and EA3b. Work with our partners in the Information Technology Department to incorporate the park concerns hotline with the MySanJose app and support the implementation of appropriate responses to community requests.
	EA4. Achieve a 10-minute walk to a quality park.	EA4a. Develop a strategic acquisition plan that identifies and prioritizes areas that are park deficient; and EA4b. Make a recommendation to city council that San José commit to the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) 10-Minute Walk Program as the outcome aligns with Envision 2040 and the United Nation's Urban Environmental Accords.
Provide exceptional experiences for all people in San José regardless of age, ability, income, or neighborhood.	EA5. Evaluate revenue generating programs and increase scholarship assistance programs;	EA5a. Update the Pricing and Revenue Council Policy #1-21 to align subsidies with intended outcomes related to public, merit and private services; and EA5b. Expand and market the department-wide scholarship program to increase donations so we can meet the growing needs.
	EA6. Develop and implement an outcomes-based, performance management system for all department programs and services; and EA7. Strengthen community awareness of our parks, programs and services with emphasis on outreach to marginalized communities.	EA6a. Implement best practices and quality standards for all programs and services; EA6b. Collect, analyze and report on the demographics of our customers including race and ethnicity to better understand who we serve and identify emerging populations; EA6c. Evaluate program staffing models to ensure our services meet quality standards and the needs of our customers; and EA6d. Be a partner in the citywide effort in addressing the challenges of unhoused residents in our parks and community centers. EA7a. Develop and implement a communications plan by benchmarking peer organizations and industry standards to determine appropriate communications related resources to support our programs and facilities; EA7b. Count and survey regional park and community center users to better understand who is using our services and why so we can connect the San José community to our department's portfolio; and EA7c. Use EA7a to evaluate a staffing model that will ensure all people are aware of the opportunities presented by our department.

WE ASPIRE TO...	TO ACCOMPLISH OUR ASPIRATION, WE WILL...	IN THE NEXT 3 TO 5 YEARS WE WILL...
Be a trusted partner through inclusive decision making.	EA8. Adopt and implement best practices for community engagement and participatory decision making;	EA8a. Inventory and evaluate our practices of community outreach, engagement and contracting; EA8b. Research and develop standards and strategies for community engagement that embrace marginalized populations as the outcome aligns with Envision 2040; EA8c. Establish an equity awareness program for employees and stakeholders to understand the City's strategies for achieving equity and access; and EA8d. Align our efforts with the City's Language Access policy.
	EA9. Prioritize capital projects and expenditures with a lens of equity; and	EA9a. Develop, adopt and implement a quantitative framework to prioritize capital improvement projects; and EA9b. Evaluate and modify parks and recreation capital funding programs to allow distribution of a portion of the funding based on need.
	EA10. Implement an equity toolkit to prioritize funding decisions and programmatic investments.	EA10a. Align training and process adoption with the City-led Government Alliance for Racial Equity (GARE) Initiative; EA10b. Develop and implement an equity plan for evaluating and prioritizing programs based on need; and EA10c. Pilot and refine a decision-making tool.



IDENTITY

We Aim To Be A Premier Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services System

San Joseans want to welcome people to a city that is instantly recognizable by its sights and cultural events. Many residents also want to preserve and protect the unique character of individual neighborhoods as San José grows and develops. The City’s general plan calls for San José to forge a stronger identity, and we offer key opportunities to reach that goal.

WHERE WE ARE

A GREAT PLACE TO VISIT

San José’s more than 200 parks provide neighborhood, community and regional recreational opportunities. Many are known throughout the Bay Area, such as the oldest municipal park in California, Alum Rock Park, which has been a memorable destination for generations of families since 1872. Guadalupe River Park and Gardens, the striking backbone of the downtown core, is an award-winning flood protection project as well as a 250-acre venue for large events. Happy Hollow Park & Zoo’s unique animal-centered education and play opportunities are a favorite of children, families and teachers, and the San José Municipal Rose Garden is known nationally for its prized rose collections and as a center for rose enthusiasts.

Our centers serve as hubs of neighborhood and cultural identity. The Vietnamese-American Cultural Center, nestled near two of the City’s busiest Vietnamese business districts, has become a premier gathering place for our Vietnamese residents to celebrate events like the Mid-Autumn and Tet festivals. The Mayfair Community Center includes design elements that pay homage to the Mayfair neighborhood – home to labor leader and civil rights activist César Chávez who played an influential role in our California history. The specialized design of three of our regional centers, Almaden, Bascom and Seven Trees, incorporates a partnership model by providing community members access to both recreation and library programs and services that enhance quality of life and health.



Municipal Rose Garden Volunteer



Mayfair Community Center, Gen2Gen Program

An important feature of our parks is the special sense of place they help create in San José. They invite residents and visitors alike to come out, mingle and play. For instance, Plaza de César Chávez Park is known for its refreshing fountain and the yearly spectacle, Christmas in the Park. Emma Prusch Farm Park is familiar to many in the Bay Area for its kid-friendly agricultural programs and one-of-a-kind Aztec New Year celebration.

BUILDING AN ICONIC TRAIL NETWORK, PROMOTING A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

We are building one of the nation’s largest urban trail networks, with more than 60 miles of trails for walking and biking enthusiasts. Our trail network welcomes users with gateway features that reinforce each trail system’s identity. As they weave throughout all areas of San José, our trails unite our neighborhoods, serving recreational and active transportation users alike.

We are well on our way to reaching our 100-mile goal of an interconnected urban trail network. The number and proximity of our trails make us nationally distinctive.

ONE OF THE NATION’S HEALTHIEST CITIES

Thanks to the efforts of our Senior Services team and partners, the World Health Organization (WHO) honored San José with the recognition as an Age-Friendly City in 2017. This designation recognizes San José’s commitment to promote healthy aging through eight domains of an Age-Friendly City, including Outdoor Spaces and Buildings; Transportation; Housing; Social Participation; Respect and Social Inclusion; Civic Participation and Employment; Communication and Information; and Community and Health Services¹⁶. This recognition, as well as the active, outdoor aspect of San José’s character, should be celebrated.

¹⁶ World Health Organization Checklist of Essential Features of Age-Friendly Cities



Guadalupe River Trail, Lupe the Mammoth

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES



Roosevelt Community Center
National Night Out

Historically, The Valley of Heart’s Delight was San José’s identity – a suburban city with a small, urban downtown. San José is now the Capital of Silicon Valley, and its character is transitioning to a more urban form, with taller buildings, denser housing options and smaller park sites. This trend is most apparent in our downtown core.

New high-rise development has created interest in downtown as a focal point. We recognize the draw of urban centers as iconic destinations for visitors and residents, and we must plan accordingly. At the same time, we must invest in public spaces throughout San José. The urban village¹⁷ plans currently underway need open spaces, and existing park areas need ongoing care.

CELEBRATING SAN JOSÉ’S DIVERSITY, CULTURE AND HISTORY

We must look at our park and recreation system holistically, identify existing resources and assets within various regions and outline a plan that recognizes future needs and allocates funding for them.

As we continue to create a memorable parks and recreation system, we must pay attention to design details that embrace San José’s history, culture and diversity.

Our facilities must reflect the individual neighborhood context in their design. We will pursue implementing identity features into our parks, trails and centers wherever possible. In support of the WHO Age-Friendly designation, we will develop design standards and programming to meet the needs of our growing aging adult population and promote inclusivity for all ages.

¹⁷ Envision 2040 clarifies Urban Villages as “Walkable, bicycle-friendly, transit-oriented, mixed use settings that provide both housing and jobs” (supporting Envision 2040’s environmental goals)

All-inclusive playgrounds add a meaningful dimension to the social and cultural context of San José. All-inclusive playground design provides experiences for people with physical and intellectual disabilities of all ages to come together and share in the joy of play. San José’s first all-inclusive playground, the Rotary PlayGarden, operated and maintained by the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy, is immensely popular, highlighting the need for more all-inclusive playgrounds. We received grants from Santa Clara County to expand the Rotary PlayGarden and create three new all-inclusive playgrounds at Lincoln Glen Park, Almaden Lake Park and Emma Prusch Farm Park.

The Envision 2040 general plan sets forward the concept of “Grand Parks” for the City of San José. We will continue to explore this topic in the coming years as the park system develops. Securing large spaces is challenging given land costs and availability. Strategically planning the location of new parks so all residents have access to outdoor space is critical. Increasing urbanization may, in some cases, necessitate smaller “pocket” parks to provide designated outdoor space. However, reserving space for larger parks of more than one-half acre remains a top priority.



Emma Prusch Farm Park Barn



WE ASPIRE TO:

- Celebrate San José’s diversity, culture and history;
- Create memorable and iconic destinations that provide exceptional experiences;
- Provide quality programs that promote a healthy lifestyle; and
- Advance San José’s reputation as one of the nation’s healthiest cities.

MEASURING OUR SUCCESS

The following benchmarks define and guide our Identity efforts. The steps listed below will be integrated into department work plans, where performance measures will be developed to track the progress of each step. Every five years, we will revisit our Accomplishments and adjust as needed.

WE ASPIRE TO...	TO ACCOMPLISH OUR ASPIRATION, WE WILL...	IN THE NEXT 3 TO 5 YEARS WE WILL...
Celebrate San José’s diversity, culture and history.	ID1. Embrace the city’s regional parks as iconic destinations.	ID1a. Establish a unified, high-quality signage (wayfinding) guide for regional parks and propose funding mechanisms for implementing it; and ID1b. Coordinate with our partner agencies across Santa Clara County to create “seamless experiences” and accommodate longer hikes and more trail access points.
Create memorable and iconic destinations that provide exceptional experiences.	ID2. Complete Parks and Facilities Master Planning for regions of the city to ensure park, community center and trail amenities reflect the culture and history of the neighborhoods in which they are located; and ID3. Develop a brand for all our facilities and parks.	ID2a. Identify six to 10 Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Planning areas and prioritize them for study; and ID2b. Complete one Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan to review demographics of the area and existing park, trail and recreation resources; identify gaps in those resources; and propose solutions for filling the gaps. ID3a. Develop and implement Park Design Guidelines and Community Center Design Guidelines with a focus on all-inclusive design; and ID3b. Incorporate identity features into design wherever possible.
Provide quality programs that promote a healthy lifestyle.	ID4. Encourage healthy lifestyles for all.	ID4a. Coordinate with Santa Clara County partners to include San José parks in the Parks Prescription Initiative and the Healthy Parks Healthy People program; ID4b. Support the City’s Family-Friendly priority of increasing child care opportunities by assessing both community needs and the feasibility of our facilities and operations to expand child care spaces; and ID4c. Install bike racks at each of our facilities as capital improvements are completed.
Advance San José’s reputation as one of the nation’s healthiest cities.	ID5. Support the World Health Organization (WHO) Age-Friendly San José designation through programming and facilities.	ID5a. Lead and coordinate the citywide Age-Friendly Initiative by promoting policies and programs to support the eight domains of livability as defined by the WHO; ID5b. Evaluate programming for consistency with the WHO Age-Friendly designation and modify or update as needed; and ID5c. Support our nonprofit partners in their delivery of programs that support the WHO Age-Friendly San José efforts.



PUBLIC LIFE

We Promote Community Spaces for a Safe, Fun and Healthy San José

We will strengthen community life and neighborhood vitality by connecting people through safe, fun events and daily activities. We will focus on creating a clean and inviting parks and recreation system for all.

WHERE WE ARE

We believe in the importance of everyday life. Families enjoy afternoon strolls, birthday parties and memorable events at our parks and community centers. They celebrate life milestones like marriages, baby showers and quinceañeras. Individuals enjoy the solace and scenic surroundings of our parks and trails. Children play and learn, seniors build strong friendships when they gather over a nutritious meal and volunteers show pride in their City when they beautify a park or their own neighborhood. A healthy and vibrant public life is the culmination of everything we aspire to achieve.

More than 50,000 people attend nearly 4,000 classes at our community centers, and 88% of residents visited a San José park in the past year¹⁸.

Each year, more than a million people attend our events and those offered by private vendors at San José parks. With many picnic sites, community

gardens, trails, skateparks, sports fields, and exercise classes, we provide a multitude of opportunities to bring people together.

Our department, and the public life we support, is part of San José’s economic engine. San Joseans benefit from access to a wide range of reduced or no-cost recreational opportunities throughout our parks and recreation system (estimated at \$51.2 million)¹⁹. San José’s open space, clean air and water, and abundant opportunities for outdoor recreation and community connection help attract skilled workers. Nearly 8% of people who visit San José come to see our parks, trails and community centers.²⁰

By enjoying everyday public life through our parks, trails, community centers, programs, and events, visitors contribute \$120 million annually to the local economy and generate nearly \$5 million in local tax revenues²¹.



Rotary PlayGarden

¹⁸ City of San José – Annual Report on City Services 2017-18 and PRNS Community Impact Report
¹⁹ The Trust for Public Land, The Economic Benefits of the Park & Recreation System in San José, California (2016)
²⁰ The Trust for Public Land, The Economic Benefits of the Park & Recreation System in San José, California (2016)
²¹ The Trust for Public Land, The Economic Benefits of the Park & Recreation System in San José, California (2016)



Roosevelt Community Center & Park
National Night Out

**PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO
CONNECT AND PLAY**

Our downtown parks have brought new life to San José’s center and contribute to a stronger sense of community connection. As the site for cultural events and activities throughout the year, Plaza de César Chávez Park is a focal point. The Guadalupe River Park’s events draw large audiences, and walks and marathons fill its trail system. Our regional parks like Almaden Lake Park and Emma Prusch Farm Park bring crowds to large-scale events, while Alum Rock Park and others invite groups to nature-based programs and hikes.

Our Placemaking team plans and creates activities and events to contribute to everyday happiness and health. They connect people to people and people to places. Public life events can build bridges between communities. Viva CalleSJ is our flagship open streets event. It continues to enhance neighborhood connections by bringing communities together to slow their pace and walk, bike, skate, wheel, and play throughout the city. On average, each event draws around 100,000 people and for the first time in 2019, we expanded to hold two Viva CalleSJ events per year.

The Viva Parks Neighborhoods summer series invites residents to play at their local neighborhood parks. In 2019, almost 8,400 neighbors joined together at 21 different parks to enjoy social, recreational and healthy activity opportunities for all.

Our 50 regional and neighborhood centers serve as places for people to connect throughout the city. They are safe places where long-time residents and newer families can meet and build community relationships through events like our Neighbor Nights series.

Our centers are well used: 42% of our city’s 1,050,000 residents have accessed a recreation or community center within the past year²².

²² City of San José – Annual Report on City Services 2017-18

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

Connecting people to people means providing spaces where the community feels welcome to engage with one another. We need to design and arrange our spaces to enhance everyday activities and create an environment that is safe, clean, accessible, and aesthetically pleasing.

We can look to other countries and cultures for inspiration as we develop spaces to connect and play. We can design diverse spaces that invite the community to gather for events or enjoy the solace of nature. New designs may include opportunities for cafes, beer gardens, night markets, or similar elements that encourage togetherness.

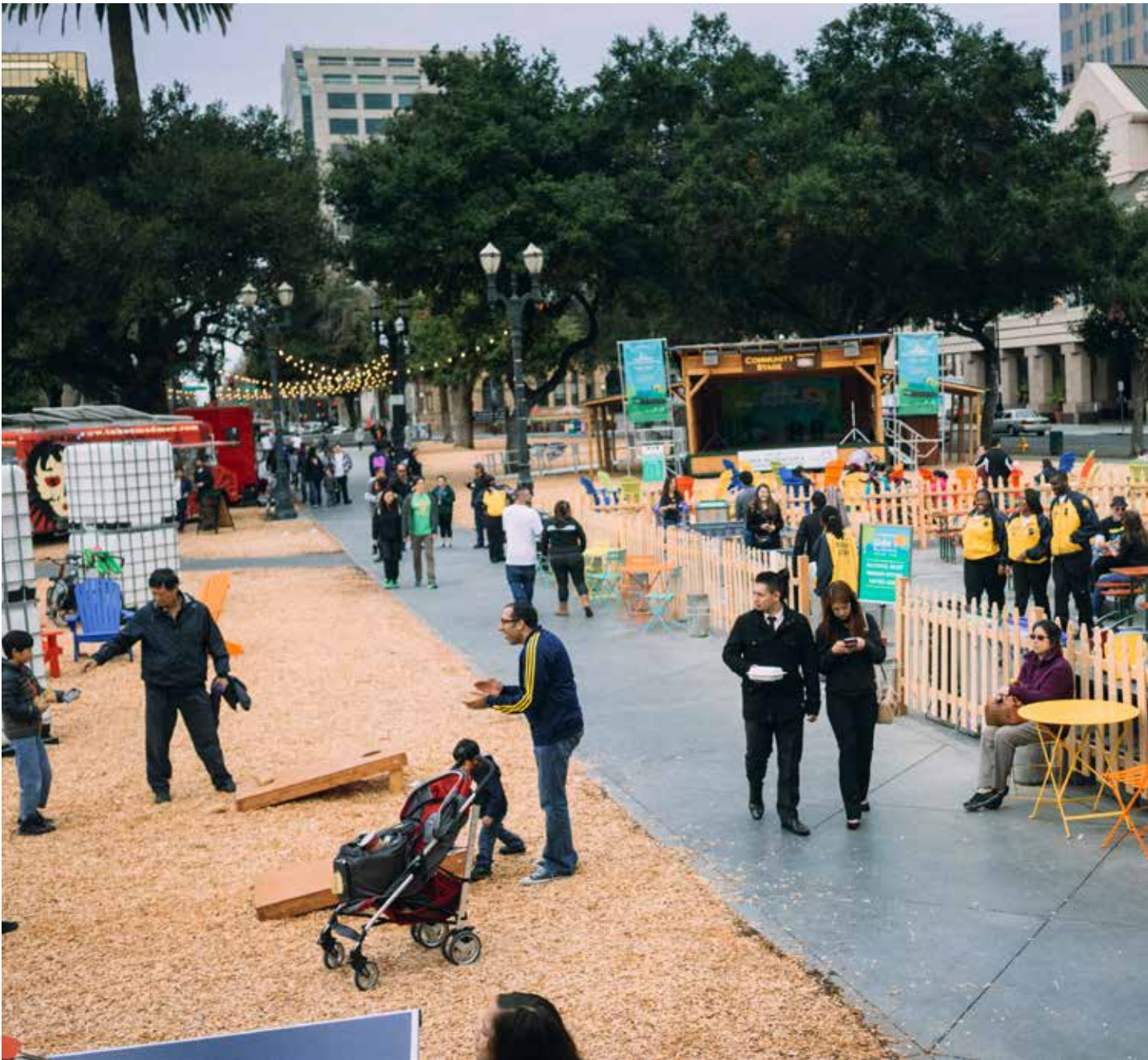
As we continue to envision new uses of our facilities, we will study policy changes regarding food and beverages and how and when vendors might use our public spaces. At the same time, we will consider the potential impacts of increased use on our facilities.

**SUSTAINED IMPROVEMENTS
REQUIRE PARTNERS**

As we work to strengthen public life in San José, we will coordinate with City departments and other partners. Together we can broaden our programs and transcend neighborhood boundaries. We can connect youth and older adults to the many services available at our parks and community centers. Our staff and partners can play vital roles as a daily presence for neighbors to connect as part of our recreation programs. From large-scale, seasonal events to weekly, neighborhood get-togethers and everyday life activities, we are committed to enhancing public life in San José.



Plaza de César Chávez Park Paint Night



WE ASPIRE TO:

- Connect our unique and diverse neighborhoods to strengthen San José pride and unity;
- Provide opportunities to connect and play;
- Provide welcoming places for people to gather, create memories and make friends; and
- Design parks and facilities that build bridges and accommodate everyday life.

MEASURING OUR SUCCESS

The following benchmarks define and guide our Public Life efforts. The steps listed below will be integrated into department work plans, where performance measures will be developed to track the progress of each step. Every five years, we will revisit our Accomplishments and adjust as needed.

WE ASPIRE TO...	TO ACCOMPLISH OUR ASPIRATION, WE WILL...	IN THE NEXT 3 TO 5 YEARS WE WILL...
Connect our unique and diverse neighborhoods to strengthen San José pride and unity.	PL1. Support public spaces and programs that enhance everyday life; PL2. Promote arts and culture in our parks and community centers that reflect local neighborhoods; and PL3. Increase opportunities that connect neighbors in marginalized communities.	PL1a. Create and lead a citywide Task Force of internal and external stakeholders to implement previously developed public life strategies; and PL1b. Evaluate and modify policies and procedures to enhance and diversify the use of our parks and community centers, such as introducing commerce. PL2a. Collaborate with our community partners to cultivate self-sustaining neighborhood-centric art and artist engagement that builds community pride through a sense of place. PL3a. Sustain the Placemaking team with an emphasis on engaging diverse community groups to activate underutilized spaces.
Provide opportunities to connect and play.	PL4. Create programs that encourage physical activity, community building and better health for all residents; and PL5. Ensure adequate programming space is available in all areas of the city.	PL4a. Inventory and evaluate departmental programs and community group offerings against demographic data to identify gaps in programming and make recommendations for enhancements or expansion to fill gaps and increase intergenerational programming. PL5a. Develop a target for community center programming space, inventory existing space and identify gaps to better serve San José’s residents.
Provide welcoming places for people to gather, create memories and make friends.	PL6. Create a built environment that sparks imagination, encourages physical activity and community interaction; and PL7. Ensure that people feel welcomed into our parks and facilities.	PL6a. Identify opportunities for the installation of smaller play features throughout our civic spaces to encourage play for all residents. PL7a. Strengthen relationships with our partners to support everyday life and activations in our parks and community centers.
Design parks and facilities that build bridges and accommodate everyday life.	PL8. Develop design guidelines and standards that emphasize everyday activities.	PL8a. Incorporate design principles into Park Design Guidelines and Community Center Design Guidelines that balance contemplative, social and active spaces; and PL8b. Host short-term activations at newly opened parks to help establish a sense of neighborhood ownership.

APPENDIX A: THE IMPORTANCE OF FEEDBACK

ActivateSJ is a strategic plan informed by the community and refined by us – parks, recreation and neighborhood services professionals. The plan is the result of a multi-year process that engaged residents, stakeholders, partners, City Council, and staff to define a path for a leading, people-focused department.

The process for developing **ActivateSJ** involved significant public and staff input from 2016-2019, including community events, presentations at various City commissions, focus groups, stakeholder interviews, a trilingual survey, an interactive mapping tool, involvement of a community-based steering committee, and a public comment period of our draft document.

Internally, staff gave input through numerous meetings and surveys. We involved partner City departments through presentations and a technical advisory group. We emerged from the multi-year process with clarity on our vision and mission and used our findings to develop and frame the plan’s guiding principles.

A. COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Council Committees

- Neighborhood Services and Education
- Transportation and Environment

City of San José Commissions

- Human Services
- Neighborhoods
- Parks & Recreation
- Senior Citizens
- Youth

Community-Based Steering Committee

- Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County
- Committee for Green Foothills
- CommUniverCity & San Jose State University
- East Side Union High School District
- Guadalupe River Park Conservancy
- Joyner Payne Youth Services Agency
- Knight Foundation
- LUNA (Latinos Unidos Por Una Nueva America)

- National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- San Jose Parks Advocates
- San José Parks and Recreation Commission
- San Jose Parks Foundation
- San José Senior Citizens Commission
- Santa Clara County Department of Public Health
- Save Our Trails
- Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society
- School of Arts and Culture at Mexican Heritage Plaza
- SVCcreates
- The Schoennauer Company
- Veggielution

Community and Business Survey (Citywide)

- 1,400+ responses
- Trilingual survey (English, Spanish and Vietnamese)

Community Events

- 26 events; a minimum of one in every Council District

Council District Leadership Forums and Community Meetings

- Council District Leadership Forums
- Monolingual Vietnamese–Language Community Meeting
- Somos Mayfair Community Meeting with Si Se Puede Collaborative

Crowd-Source Data Collection Survey (Mapita)

- 1,440+ responses
- Trilingual survey (English, Spanish and Vietnamese)

Focus Groups and Stakeholder Meetings

- Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- City/School Collaborative
- Department of Transportation
- Developer’s Roundtable
- Emma Prusch Farm Park Foundation
- Friends of Japanese Friendship Garden
- Guadalupe River Park Conservancy
- Happy Hollow Foundation
- Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful
- Knight Foundation's Copenhagen Study Tour Team
- Levitt Pavilion
- Our City Forest
- San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR)
- San Jose Parks Advocates

- San Jose Parks Foundation
- San Jose School Superintendents
- Save Our Trails
- Senior Network Agenda
- Si Se Puede Collaborative
- South Bay Clean Creeks Coalition
- Sports Leagues Focus Group
- Veggielution
- Vietnamese-American Cultural Center (VACC)

Community and Business 30-Day Public Review Period (Citywide)

- 450+ survey responses
- 11 emails

B. CITY DEPARTMENTS OUTREACH

Presentations to PRNS Work Groups

- 20+ meetings

PRNS Department-Wide Surveys

- Full- and part-time staff
- Two surveys / 345 responses

PRNS Manager and Supervisor Surveys

- Two surveys / 41 responses

Technical Advisory Group

- Multiple City Departments
- Five meetings

APPENDIX B:

ENVISION 2040 ALIGNMENT

CITY OF SAN JOSE GENERAL PLAN

ENVISION 2040 GOAL	STEWARDSHIP	NATURE	EQUITY & ACCESS	IDENTITY	PUBLIC LIFE
Goal CE-1 Active Community Engagement			CE-1.6, CE-1.7		
Goal CE-2 Community Partnerships			CE-2.1, CE-2.2, CE-2.3, CE-2.4		
Goal FS-1 City Operations	FS-1.3, FS-1.7				
Goal FS-2 Cultivate Fiscal Resources	FS-2.5				
Goal FS-5 Fiscally Sustainable Service Delivery	FS-5.4				
Goal MS-3 Water Conservation and Quality		MS-3.3			
Goal MS-21 Community Forest		MS-21.1 through MS-21.20			
Goal PR-1 High Quality Facilities and Programs	PR-1.5, PR-1.8, PR-1.13	PR-1.10	PR-1.1, PR-1.2, PR-1.3, PR-1.4, PR-1.9, PR-1.12, PR-1.14	PR-1.6, PR-1.7, PR-1.16, PR-1.17	PR-1.7, PR-1.11, PR-1.15
Goal PR-2 Contribute to a Healthful Community	PR-2.8, PR-2.9		PR-2.1, PR-2.2, PR-2.3, PR-2.4, PR-2.5, PR-2.6	PR-2.7, PR-2.10	
Goal PR-3 Provide an Equitable Park System			PR-3.1, PR-3.2, PR-3.3, PR-3.4, PR-3.5		
Goal PR-4 Community Identity			PR-4.1	PR-4.2, PR-4.3, PR-4.4, PR-4.6	PR-4.5
Goal PR-5 Grand Parks				PR-5.1, PR-5.2, PR-5.3, PR-5.4, PR-5.5	
Goal PR-6 Sustainable Parks and Recreation	PR-6.2	PR-6.1, PR-6.2, PR-6.3, PR-6.4, PR-6.5, PR-6.6, PR-6.7, PR-6.8, PR-6.9			

ENVISION 2040 GOAL	STEWARDSHIP	NATURE	EQUITY & ACCESS	IDENTITY	PUBLIC LIFE
Goal PR-7 Interconnected Parks System			PR-7.1, PR-7.2, PR-7.3, PR-7.4, PR-7.5		PR-7.1, PR-7.3, PR-7.4
Goal PR-8 Fiscal Management of Parks and Recreation Resources	PR-8.1 through PR-8.20				
Goal TR-1 Balanced Transportation System			TR-1.4, TR-1.11		
Goal TR-2 Walking and Bicycling	TR-2.15, TR-2.16				
Goal TN-1 National Model for Trail Development and Use		TN-1.2, TN-1.3	TN-1.5	TN-1.1, TN-1.4, TN-1.6	
Goal TN-2 Trails as Transportation	TN-2.4, TN-2.7, TN-2.10, TN-2.11		TN-2.1, TN-2.2, TN-2.3, TN-2.5, TN-2.8, TN-2.9, TN-2.12, TN-2.13	TN-2.6	
Goal TN-3 Accessible, Safe, and Well-Functioning Trails			TN-3.1, TN-3.2, TN-3.3, TN-3.4, TN-3.5, TN-3.6		
Goal VN-1 Vibrant, Attractive, and Complete Neighborhoods			VN-1.1, VN-1.4	VN-1.12, VN-1.14	VN-1.2
Goal VN-2 Community Empowerment			VN-2.1, VN-2.2, VN-2.3		
Goal VN-4 Cultural Opportunities					VN-4.4, VN-4.5

APPENDIX C: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

MAYOR

Sam Liccardo

CITY COUNCIL

- Vice Mayor Charles "Chappie" Jones, District 1
- Sergio Jimenez, District 2
- Raul Peralez, District 3
- Lan Diep, District 4
- Magdalena Carrasco, District 5
- Devora "Dev" Davis, District 6
- Maya Esparza, District 7
- Sylvia Arenas, District 8
- Pam Foley, District 9
- Johnny Khamis, District 10

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

- Dave Sykes, City Manager
- Jennifer A. Maguire, Assistant City Manager
- Angel Rios, Jr., Deputy City Manager

CITY OF SAN JOSE COMMITTEES

- Neighborhood Services and Education
- Transportation and Environment

CITY OF SAN JOSE COMMISSIONS

- Human Services
- Senior Citizens
- Neighborhoods
- Youth
- Parks and Recreation

PRNS EXECUTIVE TEAM

- Jon Cicirelli, Director
- Justin Long, Deputy Director
- Neil Rufino, Deputy Director
- Nicolle Burnham, Deputy Director
- Avi Yotam, Division Manager
- Carolina Camarena, Public Information Manager

ACTIVATESJ (formerly Greenprint Update) STEERING COMMITTEE

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Barinder Ahluwalia | Erik Schoennauer |
| Bill Rankin | Harvey Darnell |
| Bob Levy | Hewitt Joyner |
| Bonnie Broderick | Jean Dresden |
| Cayce Hill | Kathy Sutherland |
| Chava Bustamante | Larry Ames |
| Chet Mandair | Leslee Hamilton |
| Chris Funk | Megan Fluke |
| Christine Pham | Michelle Wexler |
| Connie Martinez | Rhonda McClinton-Brown |
| Danny Harris | Sara Reyes |
| Dayana Salazar | Shani Kleinhaus |
| Emily Schwing | Tamara Alvarado |
| Erica Carr | Warren Gannon |

CITY OF SAN JOSE FOUNDATIONS

- Emma Prusch Farm Park
- Guadalupe River Park Conservancy
- Happy Hollow
- San Jose Parks
- Youth Connections

CITY OF SAN JOSE PROJECT STAFF (2016-2019)

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Andrea Flores-Shelton | Jon Cicirelli |
| Angel Rios, Jr. | Justin Long |
| Avi Yotam | Kathy LeVeque |
| Brianna Guillory | Krinjal Mathur |
| Carolina Camarena | Marybeth Harasz |
| Daniel Lazo | Matt Cano |
| Dave DeLong | Mike Will |
| Demetria Machado | Neil Rufino |
| Dylan Kuhlmann | Nicolle Burnham |
| Ed Bautista | Steven Quintero |
| Elisabeth Tidwell | Vivian Truong |
| Janine Bray | Yves Zsutty |

PRNS CONTRIBUTING STAFF TEAMS

- Administrative Services Division
- Analyst Team
- Capital Projects Division
- Community Center Supervisors
- Director's Office of Communications
- Leadership Forum
- Leisure Specialist Team
- Neighborhood Services Team
- Out of School Time Afterschool Team
- Parks Division

- Park Facility Supervisor and Park Manager Team
- Park Ranger Team
- Recreation and Neighborhood Services Division
- Senior Services Team
- Therapeutic/All Access Sports and Recreation Team
- Youth Intervention Team

COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

- Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- City/School Collaborative
- Council District Leadership Forums
- Department of Transportation
- Developer's Roundtable
- Friends of Japanese Friendship Garden
- Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful
- Knight Foundation
- Knight Foundation's Copenhagen Study Tour Team
- Levitt Pavillion
- Our City Forest
- San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR)
- San Jose Parks Advocates
- San Jose School Superintendents
- Save Our Trails
- Senior Network Agenda
- Si Se Puede Collaborative
- South Bay Clean Creeks Coalition
- Sports Leagues Focus Group
- Technical Advisory Group
- Veggielution
- Vietnamese-American Cultural Center (VACC)
- Design in Mind
- Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Incorporated (MIG, Inc.)
- Warbler Communications



ACTIVATESJ STRATEGIC PLAN

SAN JOSE
PARKS, RECREATION &
NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES



Building Community Through Fun

Guadalupe River Trail