

Parks & Recreation Master Plan Update



Chapter 2: Planning Context



Town of
Yucca Valley

2.0 – PLANNING CONTEXT

2.1 Regional Context

Yucca Valley is a Southern California high desert community (elevation 3,300 ft.) in San Bernardino County that lies between the San Bernardino Mountains and the Joshua Tree National Park. Located about 25 minutes from Palm Springs, the town is characterized by moderate temperatures, clean air and amazingly starry nights. Situated on State Highway 62 where it is intersected by State Highway 247, Yucca Valley is often considered the hub of the Morongo Basin’s communities and a host of recreational activities and shopping opportunities. The community is a frequent stop for travelers en route to the Colorado River vacation destinations.

With its rich western and mining heritage, Yucca Valley has maintained its small town atmosphere while experiencing recent residential and commercial growth. Voters approved incorporation in 1991 and the community has thrived under local control since that time.



2.2 Service Area

The Town of Yucca Valley Community Services Department primarily provides facilities and recreation services for residents of Yucca Valley. However, the actual service area extends beyond the town’s limits due to the limited recreation

facilities and services in Morongo Valley, Joshua Tree, and the other unincorporated areas of San Bernardino County adjacent to the Town.

Exhibit 2.1 is a map of the Town of Yucca Valley showing the Town limits and the facilities provided by the Community Service Department to residents of Yucca Valley and nearby communities.

2.3 Demographic Characteristics

A quick look at the Town of Yucca Valley shows a current population of approximately 21,500 people, taking into account those within the Town’s sphere of influence. Future residential development will ultimately increase the population to around 60,000.

The male and female distribution is approximately 49% male and 51% female. The median age in Yucca Valley is 41 years of age, which is older than the national average of 36 years.

The number of persons five years of age or younger makes up 7% and the number of persons 6 to 17 makes up 15% of the Town’s population. This is the same as both the state and national average for under five population, which is approximately 7% and slightly higher than the state and national average of 11% for 6 to 17 year olds.

The population between the ages of 18 to 65 makes up 58% of the population and the remaining 20% are senior citizens, which is higher than the 12% national average.

The approximate population distribution by age currently looks like this:

Children 5 or under	1,505
Youth 6 to 17	3,225
Adults 18-65	12,470
Seniors 65 and over	4,300

The number of both youth and seniors is projected to grow larger as new residential development is designed to attract young families and senior citizens.

According to the U.S. Census, the average Yucca Valley household size in 2005 was 2.4 persons, while the average family size was 3.0.

There are approximately 8,000 current housing units in Yucca Valley.

Owner-occupied housing makes up about 70% of the households, and rental-occupied housing makes up the remaining 30% of the households.

The percentage of owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing units is in line with the national average for cities with a population the size of Yucca Valley.

Thirteen percent of the population in Yucca Valley has a four-year college degree or higher. This is lower than the national average of 27% with a four-year college degree or higher for cities with a population the size of Yucca Valley.

Fifty-six percent of the population is married, and 10% of the population speak a language other than English at home.

In the labor force the average travel time to work is 29 minutes. This means that the average worker in Yucca Valley spends approximately one hour a day traveling to and from work.

The median family income in 2005 was \$37,000 and the per capita income in 2005 was \$18,000. This indicates that a significant number of families have more than one income in the household.

2.4 Demographic Trends

In the coming years national trends in the perception of the environment, socio-economics, technology, and in urban development will affect the need for and use of recreation and park recreation facilities. In 2004 the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) developed a list of trends which will cause the greatest impact on local agencies planning for recreational facilities. The NRPA's list of pertinent trends are likely to affect the Town of Yucca Valley's planning efforts for developing recreation facilities and programs.

- ◆ A greater need for walking and biking on trails, sidewalks, within parks and along streets, and utility corridors.
- ◆ Collaboration between parks and schools to share construction, development, and use of lands and facilities.
- ◆ Preventive recreation, that is, recreation as an antidote for social problems.
- ◆ Recreation for groups limited by income, physical disability, language, or cultural barriers.
- ◆ Collaboration among program and facility providers, partnering and cooperation between public, private, and non-profit sectors, especially cultural organizations.
- ◆ Family recreation centers (Intergenerational Campuses) that offer a variety of services for each family member.
- ◆ Pressure to increase park capacity and infrastructure of existing parks and concern for adequate maintenance.
- ◆ Community volunteering opportunities, such as adopt a park projects, friends of the parks groups, and park watch programs.
- ◆ Increased demand for Tiny-Tot and Pre-School programs and activities.
- ◆ Protective measures for open space.
- ◆ Provision for aquatics programs and water safety instruction.
- ◆ Provision for Senior Citizen programs and Activities.
- ◆ The need for financial sustainability in order to deliver quality recreation services and facilities.

In addition to these national trends, the future socio-demographic make up of Yucca Valley will also influence the planning for recreation and parks.

In summary, planning for recreation services and park facilities should take into account the following:

- ◆ The Town is primarily a working class community with limited discretionary income

- ◆ It is desirous of protecting its “small town atmosphere” and is concerned about too much growth
- ◆ Residents want to protect their open space and natural environment, including Joshua Tree National Park
- ◆ The family and senior citizen populations in the Town are increasing. (See *Chapter 6* for a more detailed demographic analysis.)

