

# Parks & Recreation Master Plan Update



## Chapter 3: Existing Parks & Facilities



Town of  
Yucca Valley

## 3.0 – EXISTING PARKS AND FACILITIES

### 3.1 – Introduction

This Chapter provides a description of the Town’s existing parks and recreation facilities. This includes maps showing the locations of the Town’s parks and schools, the Park Amenities Inventory, along with an overview of recreation facilities offered by other organizations for the community.

The Community Services Department currently oversees the use of six built parks and recreation areas and two undeveloped open spaces encompassing more than 174 acres within the Town limits. These sites range in size from 80 acres to 0.2 acres and offer a variety of passive and active recreation opportunities including organized sports, informal play, hiking, picnicking or group gatherings. (See *Exhibit 2.1 – Existing Parks, Recreation Areas and Facilities* and *Exhibit 3.1 Existing Schools*.)

### 3.2 Park Land Definitions

In order to address specific planning needs for park, open space, and recreational areas, park classifications have been used. Each park class provides a distinct type of recreational opportunity. The ideal community park system is made up of several different types or classifications of parks. Design guidelines for each park type are found in Section 4.3. The classification system used in this document is as follows:

Neighborhood Parks: Neighborhood parks are designed primarily for non-supervised, non-organized recreation activities. They are generally small in size (3-15 acres) and serve people living within approximately one-half mile of the park. Since these parks are located within walking and bicycling distance of most users, the activities they offer serve the entire neighborhood, including children. Typical facilities found in a neighborhood park include: playgrounds, picnic areas, trails, open grass areas for passive use, outdoor basketball courts, and multi-use open grass areas for practice field sports.

Community Parks: A community park (15-40 acres) is planned primarily to provide opportunities for organized activities and sports, although individual and family activities are also encouraged. Community parks can also provide indoor facilities to meet a wider range of recreation interests. Community parks serve a larger area and offer more facilities. As a result, they require more support facilities, such as parking, restrooms, and covered play areas. Community parks usually have sport fields or similar facilities as the central focus of the park. Their service area has roughly a 2-3 mile radius.

Regional Parks: Regional parks are large recreation areas designed to serve an entire region beyond the city limits. Often they are acquired to provide a specific and sometimes unique recreation opportunity. Most frequently they are owned and maintained by a County agency.

Special Use Areas: Special use areas are sites often occupied by a specialized recreation facility. Some uses that fall into this category include waterfront parks, boat ramps, botanical gardens, community gardens, single purpose sites used for a particular field sport, or sites occupied by recreation buildings.

Natural Open Space: Natural open space is defined as undeveloped land primarily left in its natural state with recreation uses as a secondary objective. It is usually owned or managed by a governmental agency and may or may not have public access. This type of land may include wetlands, steep hillsides, or other similar spaces. In some cases, environmentally sensitive areas are considered open space and can include wildlife habitats, stream and creek corridors, or unique and/or endangered plant species.

Undeveloped Land: This land is undeveloped and has not yet been designated for a specific park use.

The table below gives a snapshot of parkland acreage in Yucca Valley. It clearly shows that the majority of land designated as recreation areas are undeveloped and not utilized for recreation activities.

Park Supply Inventory Summary				
Park Site & Type	Total Acreage	Developed Acreage	Undeveloped Acreage	Land Ownership
<b>Community</b>				
Community Center Park	22.21	19.94	2.27	Town
<b>Neighborhood</b>				
Machris Park	12	12		Town
Jacobs Park	5	5		Town
Paradise Park	5	5		Town
<b>Natural Land/Open Space</b>				
South Park	40		40	BLM
North Park	80		80	BLM
<b>Special Use</b>				
Sunnyslope Park BMX Track	10.53	2.53	8	Town
Remembrance Park	0.2	0.2		Town
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>174.94</b>	<b>44.67</b>	<b>130.27</b>	

### 3.3 Inventory of Yucca Valley Park & Recreation Facilities

An inventory of park and recreation facilities for this Master Plan was developed using information provided by the Town of Yucca Valley Community Services Department, from site visits by the MIG team, and from private and non-profit agencies that also provide recreation facilities and programs for the community. The Park Amenities Inventory is a matrix showing total amenities in each of the parks in the Town and total acreage for each park as well as additional facilities available through the schools, private, public or non-profit agencies.

Following the inventory is an overview of each Town park including an aerial or other photo identifying the site, a description of size, classification, development status, existing amenities, its overall condition and any proposed improvements.



## COMMUNITY CENTER PARK

built in 1973



Size:	22.2 Acres
Address:	57090 Twentynine Palms Highway
Classification:	Community Park
Status:	Developed
Existing Facilities:	Community Center w/meeting rooms; Library; Senior Center; large parking lot; softball field with turf outfield, 2 sets of bleachers; 2 full lighted basketball courts; covered group picnic shelter w/3 ADA tables and 4 non ADA tables; 2 BBQs; 2 sinks; 1 non ADA drinking fountain; lighted sand volleyball court; 9-element skatepark; 2-5 & 5-12 accessible tot lots; swings; turf multi-use open space; family picnic shelter; 3 horseshoe pits; doggie waste stations; grass area near playground; restroom bldg. The site is also the location of Town Hall, the Hi Desert Nature Museum, and a public safety substation.
Conditions:	Facilities well-maintained and clean; turf areas very well kept; skatepark needs improvement; picnic shelter needs upgrading and more ADA tables needed.
Planned Improvements:	Complex redesign recommended.

## MACHRIS PARK

built prior to 1970



Size:	12 Acres
Address:	59100 Santa Barbara Drive
Classification:	Neighborhood Park
Status:	Developed
Existing Facilities:	26 parking spaces + 3 ADA; restroom/concession bldg.; tot lot and swings; fenced and lighted softball field w/turf outfield; group picnic shelter, drinking fountains, doggie waste station, community meeting room
Conditions:	Well-maintained grounds; tot lot surface filled with wood chips needs ADA upgrading
Planned Improvements:	No improvements planned at this time

## JACOBS PARK

built prior to 1970



Size:	5 Acres, leased from Morongo Unified School District
Address:	55680 Onaga Trail
Classification:	Neighborhood Park
Status:	Developed
Existing Facilities:	Dirt T-Ball fields with 2 backstops; group picnic shelter w/3 ADA tables; 4 non-ADA picnic tables in open area; 2 BBQs; 1 ADA drinking fountain; restroom bldg.; 2-5 tot lot on sand base; 5-12 tot lot on sand base; 2 basketball half-courts; 2 fenced lighted tennis courts; shuffle board court; small meeting room/bldg.; small parking lot
Conditions:	Clean and well kept; no turf; little shade; entire park needs ADA upgrading; adjacent to Yucca Valley Elementary school
Planned Improvements:	Two additional lighted tennis courts planned



## PARADISE PARK

first phase built prior to 1970



Size:	5 Acres
Address:	58938 Barron Drive
Classification:	Neighborhood Park
Status:	Developed
Existing Facilities:	small parking lot; security lighting; basketball half-court; picnic shelter w/2 tables; 2 BBQs; 4 permanent picnic tables; restroom; recreation building; backstop with dirt t-ball field and 4 benches; 2-5 tot lot with partial ADA access; high/low drinking fountain; swings
Conditions:	Well-maintained; sparse landscaping and trees; large unimproved areas with little shade and no turf; needs ADA accessibility improvements.
Planned Improvements:	No improvements planned at this time

# SOUTH PARK



acquired circa 1960

Size:	40 Acres, on patent from Bureau of Land Management
Address:	End of Black Rock Canyon Road
Classification:	Natural area
Status:	Undeveloped
Existing Facilities:	Trail head with .7 mile loop trail; 2 benches; 8 dirt parking spaces
Conditions:	Natural Area
Planned Improvements:	No improvements planned at this time

## REMEMBRANCE PARK

originally built prior to 1970, re-constructed 1995



Size:	.2 Acres
Address:	Highway 62 at Yucca Trail and Apache Trail
Classification:	Mini Park (landscaped island)
Status:	Developed
Existing Facilities:	Pathway; veterans memorial; saber tooth tiger sculpture; flagpole
Conditions:	Well-maintained landscape and hardscape
Planned Improvements:	No improvements planned at this time

# SUNNYSLOPE PARK

acquired in 1994



Size:	10.53 Acres
Address:	Sunnyslope Drive at Sage Avenue
Classification:	BMX Track and undeveloped park area
Status:	2.53 Acres Developed; 8 Acres Undeveloped
Existing Facilities:	Fenced BMX track with bleachers, snack bar, and announcer booth. Thirty dirt parking spaces
Conditions:	Well-maintained
Planned Improvements:	No improvements planned at this time

## NORTH PARK

acquired for local use prior to 1970



Size:	80 Acres on patent from Bureau of Land Management
Address:	Near the terminus of Fairway Drive
Classification:	Open Space
Status:	Undeveloped, rustic hiking trail
Existing Facilities:	None
Conditions:	Natural, access rights under review
Planned Improvements:	No improvements planned at this time

### 3.4 Facilities and Services Provided by Others

In addition to the facilities offered by the Town of Yucca Valley, federal and county agencies along with private and non-profit groups provide recreation facilities, activities and programs to local residents. These programs and facilities sometimes offer unique recreation experiences for participants or visitors to the area.

#### Joshua Tree National Park

Running along the southern boundary of the Town of Yucca Valley is the 794,000 acre Joshua Tree National Park which boasts approximately 1.4 million visitors per year. Cared for and maintained by the National Park Service, the park offers year-round interest for hikers, rock climbers, equestrians,

campers, birders, photographers, biologists, naturalists and fun seekers from around the world.

### County of San Bernardino

Yucca Valley is surrounded by unincorporated County land, some of which is protected habitat for endangered flora and fauna such as the desert tortoise and Joshua Trees which conservationists and environmentalists are keen to preserve and study. These same remote locations also attract those who like riding off road vehicles.

The County of San Bernardino also runs a public library located at the Community Center complex.

### Public Schools

The Morongo Unified School District (MUSD), with headquarters located in neighboring Twentynine Palms, provides K-12 public education to nearly 9,300 students throughout the Morongo Basin. The MUSD runs five\* schools in the Town of Yucca Valley; they are listed in the table below. (See *Exhibit 3.1: Existing Schools*.) (\*Yucca Mesa Elementary School is not within Town limits, but serves some of the Yucca Valley population.)

**MUSD Schools In Yucca Valley**

School	Education Level
Yucca Valley Elementary School 7601 Hopi Trail	K-6
Yucca Mesa Elementary School 3380 Avalon Road	K-6
Onaga Elementary School 58001 Onaga Trail	K-6
La Contenta Middle School 7050 La Contenta Road	7-8
Sky Continuation High School 59273 Sunnyslope Drive	9-12
Yucca Valley High School 7600 Sage Avenue	9-12

## Colleges and Universities

Several higher educational campuses are within a two hour drive of Yucca Valley. The closest campus is Copper Mountain College in the adjacent community of Joshua Tree. Copper Mountain College, founded in 1966, is a member of the California Community Colleges and has its own district.

The college offers transfer curricula, two-year degrees and certificate programs in 24 fields of study. It operates on a semester system with sessions in fall, spring, and summer. Though its main campus is in Joshua Tree, it also operates satellite campuses in various locations.

There are two California State University campuses within an hour's drive from Yucca Valley: San Bernardino and its rapidly developing extension campus in Palm Desert. The University of California, Riverside campus is also within 70 miles. Transfer credits can be applied from Copper Mountain College to four-year degrees at these universities.

## Local Nonprofit Organizations

Three local non-profit entities have developed recreational facilities in the area of Palm Avenue and Little League Drive. The facilities vary in purpose, but all contribute to meeting the public's recreational needs.

The Boys & Girls Club of Yucca Valley has played an active role in the lives of local children since the early 1980's. Its gymnasium and meeting rooms are a well-used resource to the community. The Club provides a well-attended after-school program during the week as well as a summer youth program. Through an annual agreement, the Town of Yucca Valley has use of the facility during off-peak times for a boxing program, youth basketball league, and other occasional activities and events.

The Brehm Youth Sports Park is a multi-use athletic field maintained by the Youth Sports Park Coalition and the Town of Yucca Valley. This sports park hosts organized and informal soccer and softball play.

Pop Rauch Park is owned and operated by Tri-Valley Little League, one of the few such organizations in the country that



owns their own facilities. The park consists of a baseball field, a junior baseball field, a softball field and a t-ball field. The site also has restrooms, a snack bar, batting cages, bleachers and parking. Pop Rauch Park is the home of all local Little League and T-Ball games and some regional tournaments.

The softball field at Calvary Baptist Church is used for practice and game play by local leagues, however, the Calvary Baptist Church field is rarely, if ever, available for public use. The gym at the Evangelical Free Church hosts several town events during the year. The Community Services Department also rents space at the Evangelical Free Church gymnasium for youth basketball leagues. However, this facility is not available for drop in public use. The Town's recreation program also rents space in the Joshua Springs Calvary Chapel gym when available and the La Contenta Middle School multi-purpose room for its youth basketball program.

### 3.5 Conclusions

The overall impression of Yucca Valley Park facilities is that they are maintained at a high level and have a neat and clean appearance. Despite a comment from maintenance staff that there is a problem with vandalism and graffiti, it is apparent that these occurrences are dealt with quickly.

It is evident that all the parks are showing their age in terms of level of equipment, amenities and compliance with ADA accommodation.

Because Yucca Valley is located in the high desert both the residents and Town official have a strong concern about water usage. However, there are also issues with regard to providing public green spaces and shelter from the sun during warm season months. Both those issues must be given equal weight in making recommendations regarding upgrading or improving existing facilities.

Recommendations regarding existing facilities are covered in detail in Chapter 9.



