

Parks & Recreation Master Plan Update



Chapter 6: Needs Assessment



Town of
Yucca Valley

6.0 – NEEDS ASSESSMENT

6.1 Introduction/Methodology

The purpose of a Demand and Needs Analysis is to quantify and understand both the facility and recreational program needs of the community. In order for the Yucca Valley Community Services Department to develop a long range plan for providing the right recreational facilities and programs it must understand the nature of the community, its recreational desires, its actual needs, its social makeup, and its ability to provide the services that are determined necessary through the Demand and Needs Analysis.

Demand and Needs is sometimes difficult to quantify. A numerical standard may not reflect the makeup of a community, its economic situation, history, traditional recreation uses, or political environment. This report assesses the recreational programming and park facilities needs of the Town of Yucca Valley starting with national and state trends, past levels of service, public involvement, and identified community demands and desires.

6.2 Socio-Demographic Analysis and Projections

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 when planning for recreational facilities and programs. In today's society, no agency is immune to the effects of what is going on across the country, consequently we have included the NRPA's list of pertinent trends that will influence the Town of Yucca Valley's planning efforts for developing recreation facilities and programs. They are as follows:

- ◆ A greater need for walking and biking trails, sidewalks, within parks and along streets, and utility easements.
- ◆ Collaboration between parks and schools to share construction, development, and use of lands and facilities.

- ◆ Preventive recreation, that is, recreation as a means to engage youth in productive and entertaining pursuits that enhance growth and encourage good citizenship.
- ◆ 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

In addition to these national trends, the socio-demographic make up of the community will also influence the demands and needs for recreation and parks. A quick look at the Town of Yucca Valley shows a current population of approximately 21,500 people, taking into consideration the Town's sphere of influence. Future residential development will ultimately increase the population to 40,000 to 60,000.

Using US Census Bureau statistics and updating them with growth information from the Town of Yucca Valley Planning Department we find that the current 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 six to 17 makes up 15% of the City'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 six 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 of senior citizens in a community. 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 household size in 2005 was 2.4 persons per household. However, the average family size was 3.0. There are approximately 8000 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 housing units is right in line with the national average for cities with a population the size of Yucca Valley, and so are the renter-occupied housing units.

Thirteen percent (13%) 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 speaks 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.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Fact Finder website, the median family income in 2000 was approximately

\$37,000 and the per capita income in 2000 was \$16,000. This indicates that a significant number of families have more than one income in the household. Data acquired during the telephone survey shows a significant increase in household income since the 2000 census. (See *Appendix C4* for the Telephone Survey statistics.)

In summary, the demand and needs for recreation services and park facilities should take into account that the Town is primarily a working class community with limited discretionary income that is increasing in population, especially in family residential and senior citizens.

6.3 Public Opinion Surveys

6.3.1 Introduction

Research Network Ltd. conducted a resident survey for the Town of Yucca Valley. The resident survey was done as part of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update. The purpose of the survey was to obtain statistically valid, community-wide input on a variety of issues related to the Master Plan.

The resident survey is one of several methods being undertaken to involve the community in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update process. Other methods included public workshops, stakeholder interviews, and surveys with organized sports and community group organizations. The purpose of gathering community input through a variety of methods is to ensure that the Park and Recreation Master Plan Update is as inclusive as possible and that it reflects the views, preferences, and recreating patterns of Yucca Valley residents.

Below is a snapshot of the results of the telephone survey. The report summary is contained in *Appendix CA*.

6.3.2 Methodology

A total of 300 interviews were completed with adult household heads living in the Town of Yucca Valley. These respondents were contacted through the use of a random

digit dial sample. This sample methodology compensates for the incidence of unlisted telephone numbers.

Such a methodology, however, introduces to the sample telephone numbers of non-residential locations as well as residential locations not in Yucca Valley, since telephone prefixes do not respect jurisdictional boundaries. Therefore, within the design of the survey instrument, a screening question was implemented to eliminate those contacts that did not constitute residents of the Town of Yucca Valley.

The subject areas of interest within the resident telephone survey included:

- ◆ One Feature that Makes Yucca Valley Desirable
- ◆ One Improvement Wanted in Yucca Valley
- ◆ Recreation Information Sources Used
- ◆ Recreation Benefits Desired
- ◆ Frequency of Recreation Facility Usage
- ◆ Frequency of Joshua Tree National Park Usage
- ◆ Park Most Often Used in Last Year
- ◆ Frequency of Recreation Activities Participation
- ◆ Frequency of Recreation Program Participation
- ◆ Rating Town Recreation Facilities Maintenance
- ◆ Preferred Type of Area Improvements
- ◆ One New Recreation Facility Desired
- ◆ One New Recreation Program Desired
- ◆ Willingness to Pay Additional Annual Funding
- ◆ Awareness of Name Hi-Desert Nature Museum
- ◆ Reported Visitation of Hi-Desert Nature Museum
- ◆ Reason Not Visited Hi-Desert Nature Museum
- ◆ Propensity to Use Performing Arts Center
- ◆ Propensity to Use Art Galleries, Art Festivals
- ◆ Propensity to Use New Museum/Interpretive Center

- ◆ Age Distribution of Population
- ◆ Tenure in Yucca Valley
- ◆ Employment in Yucca Valley
- ◆ Ethnicity
- ◆ Household Composition
- ◆ Household Income

6.3.3 Highlights

After a careful review of the responses to the Yucca Valley resident survey, Research Network Ltd. has gleaned the following highlights.

6.3.4 One Desirable Feature

- ◆ Three of every 10 residents polled (28%) identified “Small Town Atmosphere” as the one feature that makes Yucca Valley a desirable place to live
- ◆ An additional 21% reported “Climate”
- ◆ Similarly, an additional 7% of households polled volunteered the feature “Air Quality”
- ◆ Six percent 6% more cited “Open Space”
- ◆ One of every 20 respondents (5%) volunteered “Quiet/Peaceful” as the feature
- ◆ “No Traffic” (4%) and “Affordable Housing” (3%) were also reported

6.3.5 One Desired Change

When asked what improvement they would make in Yucca Valley:

- ◆ Fifteen percent (15%) of the households polled stated that they would “Create New Parks and Recreation Facilities”
- ◆ While 10% of respondents would “Repair Streets”
- ◆ An additional 8% of those interviewed stated they would “Increase Street Signalization”
- ◆ Eight percent (8%) would “Limit Growth.”

- ◆ “Preserve Open Space” was a volunteered response by 7% of the households polled
- ◆ One in 20 respondents (5%) stated that they would “Add More/Better Shopping”
- ◆ Five percent (5%) would “Widen or Connect Streets”

6.3.6 Recreation Sources

- ◆ Nearly four of every 10 residents polled (39%) stated that they get their recreation program and facility information from the Town of Yucca Valley
- ◆ While an additional 24% reported using the Newspaper
- ◆ Nearly one of every 10 respondents (9%) stated that they use Postings at Recreation Sites as their information source.
- ◆ Eight percent (8%) reported using the Telephone Book
- ◆ The Town of Yucca Valley Website was reportedly used by 7% of respondents as their information source.
- ◆ Six percent (6%) reported using the Internet
- ◆ An additional 5% refer to the Town Brochure; and
- ◆ Four percent (4%) stated that such information is gathered from the library

6.3.7 Recreation Benefits

- ◆ More than one-third of the households polled (35%) stated that they seek physical fitness, health and well being benefits from their recreation choices.
- ◆ An equal share of respondents (35%) replied that an opportunity to gather and socialize with others is the primary benefit they seek from recreation.
- ◆ The benefit of learning opportunities for hobby, self-improvement or career development was cited by 18% of those polled.
- ◆ While the benefit from recreational opportunities to give back to the community through volunteer work was a priority for 13% of the Town’s responding residents.

6.3.8 Recreation Facility Use

- ◆ One third (33%) of the sample of telephone respondents described themselves as a “Frequent User” of parks and recreation facilities (patrons of facilities at least three times per month).
- ◆ Four of every 10 residents (40%) were “Moderate Users” (patrons of facilities at least two to 24 times annually) of recreation facilities during the past year.
- ◆ The remainder (27%) was labeled “Light/Non Users” (patrons of facilities once per year and non-users).

6.3.9 Joshua Tree National Park Use

- ◆ Frequent users of Joshua Tree National Park represented 4% of the sample of telephone respondents
- ◆ While an additional 28% were “Moderate Users” (patrons at least two to 24 times annually) during the last year.
- ◆ The remainder (68%) was labeled “Light/Non Users” (patrons once per year and non-users.)

6.3.10 Most Used Facility

The recreation facilities reportedly most often used by households polled included:

- ◆ Yucca Valley Community Center (Including Community Center, Senior Center & Hi-Desert Museum) (42%)
- ◆ Joshua Tree National Park (12%)
- ◆ Yucca Valley High School (4%)
- ◆ Machris Park (4%)
- ◆ Jacobs Park (2%)
- ◆ Boys and Girls Club (2%)
- ◆ South Park (2%)
- ◆ Yucca Valley Branch Library (2%)
- ◆ Big Bear Lake (2%)

6.3.11 Recreation Activities

The tested activities cited as being undertaken by the largest portion of Yucca Valley residents surveyed were:

- ◆ Biking, walking, running, horse riding, and hiking on unpaved trails for recreation or fitness (46%);
- ◆ Picnicking in developed sites (43%);
- ◆ Swimming in public pools for recreation or lessons (20%);
- ◆ Use of senior and mature adult services and programs (20%);
- ◆ Use of play equipment/tot lots in public parks (16%);
- ◆ Outdoor basketball/ informal play for youth or adults (12%);
- ◆ Tennis: adults or youth (10%);

The remaining activities tested were reportedly conducted by less than one of every 10 resident households.

6.3.12 Programs Use

When asked about frequency of recreation program use:

- ◆ Fifteen percent (15%) of the sample of telephone respondents described themselves as a “Frequent User” (patrons of programs at least three times per month.)
- ◆ Less than one of every five residents (17%) was a “Moderate User” (patrons at least two to 24 times annually) of recreation programs during the past year.
- ◆ The remainder (68%) was labeled “Light/Non Users” (patrons of programs once per year and non-users).

6.3.13 Program Participation

The tested programs cited as being undertaken by the largest portion of Yucca Valley residents surveyed were:

- ◆ Special Community Events (25%)
- ◆ Music, Drama or Performing Arts Classes (15%)
- ◆ Arts, Crafts, or Cooking Lessons (14%)

- ◆ Fitness, Gymnastic or Wellness Classes (13%)
- ◆ Parenting, Early Childhood Development Lessons or Classes (8%).

6.3.14 Facilities Maintenance

When asked to describe their satisfaction with the maintenance of recreation and parks facilities in the Town of Yucca Valley, ***95% of those polled stated they are either “very” or “somewhat satisfied.”***

6.3.15 Preferred Improvement

The tested type of improvement receiving the largest responses were:

- ◆ Open Space Preservation and Enjoyment, chosen by more than one-third of households polled (34%)
- ◆ The next most often chosen category, “Arts and Cultural, Museum, or Performing Arts Facilities and Programs,” was chosen by nearly three of every 10 households (29%)
- ◆ Active Sports Facilities and Programs was the selection of more than one in five residents (22%)
- ◆ Classes, Lessons, and Community Events garnered a 14% response rate.

6.3.16 One Desired Facility

The recreation facilities cited as most desired by Yucca Valley residents surveyed were:

- ◆ Swimming Pool for Recreation or Lessons (11%)
- ◆ Golf Course/Driving Range (5%)
- ◆ Bike Trails (4%)
- ◆ Walking/Running/Jogging Paths (4%)
- ◆ Gymnasium (3%)
- ◆ Picnic Facilities (3%)
- ◆ More/Better Parks (3%)
- ◆ Performing Arts Center (3%)

- ◆ Off-Road Vehicle Facilities (3%)
- ◆ Dog Park (3%)
- ◆ No desire for new facilities (19%)

6.3.17 One Desired Program

The recreation programs respondents most often desired included:

- ◆ Arts or Crafts Instruction or Lessons (10%)
- ◆ Dance Instruction or Classes (6%)
- ◆ Swimming Lessons (3%)
- ◆ Aerobics, Spinning, or Fitness Instruction or Classes (3%)
- ◆ Cooking Instruction or Classes (3%)
- ◆ Yoga, Meditation, or Stress Relief Instruction or Classes (3%)
- ◆ Gymnastics Instruction or Classes (3%)
- ◆ No desire for new recreation programs (24%)

6.3.18 Propensity to Pay

- ◆ Three of every four households polled (75%) stated they are “somewhat” or “very” willing to support a \$12 per year tax increase to fund new parks and recreation facilities and programs.
- ◆ Nearly one in five respondents (18%) stated they are “not at all” willing to support such an increase.
- ◆ Seven percent (7%) were undecided

6.3.19 Museum Awareness

- ◆ Two of every three Yucca Valley respondents polled (66%) reported having visited the Hi-Desert Nature Museum.
- ◆ Eight percent (8%) of those surveyed had heard the name, but had not visited the Museum
- ◆ Thirteen percent (13%) of households stated they had never heard the name “Hi-Desert Nature Museum”

6.3.20 Reasons Not Visited

- ◆ Nearly three of every four respondents (74%) of the respondents that stated they had not visited the Museum stated that they either had no time or were not interested in visiting the Museum.
- ◆ An additional 8% of those responding to this inquiry stated their disability or illness prevented such a visit
- ◆ Five percent (5%) volunteered “don’t know what’s there.”

6.3.21 Visits in Last Year

When asked how frequently they had visited the Hi-Desert Museum in the past year:

- ◆ 2% of the sample of telephone respondents described themselves as a “Frequent User” of the Hi-Desert Museum (patrons at least three times per month)
- ◆ Three of every 10 residents (30%) was a “Moderate User” (patrons at least two to 24 times annually) of the Hi-Desert Museum during the past year
- ◆ The remainder (68%) was labeled “Light/Non Users” (patrons once per year and non-users). Half of the polled Yucca Valley household stated they had not visited the Museum in the past year.

6.3.22 Proposed Facility Use

Respondents polled reported high likelihood of using all of the tested types of facilities:

- ◆ The highest share of residents (85%) stating they would use a Performing Arts Center
- ◆ The smallest share (78%) stating they would visit Art Galleries, Art Festivals and Events.

6.3.23 Demography

Key demographic characteristics (household composition and ethnicity) of households interviewed were compiled and reviewed against comparable benchmark data from the 2000 Census to conclude that the sample of respondents polled is a

statistically reliable representation of the Town of Yucca Valley as a whole.

6.4 Focus Groups & Community Interviews

6.4.1 General Comments

All of the stakeholder groups and individuals interviewed were very supportive of the Community Services Department. For the most part they understood the major issues facing the department were growth, funding, and community perception of what is actually warranted in Yucca Valley compared to other communities. The following comments are arranged by issue, facility, or perceived need in Yucca Valley.

6.4.2 Programs and Facilities for Youth

The most recurring theme throughout the interviews as far as facilities and programs were concerned, programs for youth was the most often mentioned. From the need for youth sports fields; the need for before and after school programs; the need for children enrichment programs; the need for teen programs; and the need for places and facilities for youth that are clean and safe was the most predominant issue brought out in the interviews.

6.4.3 Sports Fields

There are both immediate and long-term needs for sports fields. Boys and Girls high school fields are in fair to poor condition and need improvement. Field amenities such as bleachers, lights, and synthetic turf were suggested. Scoreboards, shade shelters, and concession stands were also requested. All school and town fields are pretty much used on a year round basis. There is a need for more game fields that can host tournaments. Youth sports such as soccer, softball, baseball, and football have different age divisions using fields at different locations which makes transportation a problem. All youth sports organizations reported that they are running out of field space for both practice and games. More lighted fields were requested by both youth and adult organized sports groups.

6.4.4 Facilities Currently Being Used

According to the interviewees the facilities most used by the community are the current Community Center; Gyms at the High School and Boys & Girls Club; Swimming Pool at the High School; Hi-Desert Nature Museum; Senior Center and the Library.

6.4.5 Coordination with Other Agencies

The Town of Yucca Valley Community Services Department seems to work well with the School District and staff interviewed seemed to have the perception that the Town and the School District shared facilities and made joint use of facilities. Further investigation needs to be completed regarding Town, School District relationship and what potential opportunities there may be for joint facility development and use of school facilities for recreation programming. The Community Services Department also works well with the Boys & Girls Club, Churches and Organizations in the community to coordinate and meet both program and facility demands.

6.4.6 Miscellaneous Comments

The following are quotes and or comments listed in no particular order made by the interviewees that pertain to a variety of issues:

- ◆ There should be a dog park on both the West and the East end of the Town
- ◆ Competitive swimming opportunities need to be expanded with a new swim complex
- ◆ More senior activities especially for handicapped seniors are needed
- ◆ It would be nice to have a “Side by Side” facility that offers ice and roller skating rinks
- ◆ A commercial family fun center with miniature golf and activities would be good to have
- ◆ There should be more parks like in Europe where there are trees, fountains, walkways and places to sit

- ◆ The senior citizen population is growing and we need an expanded senior center with more socializing activities for seniors
- ◆ The Town needs more tot lots with children play equipment that are covered with a shade structure
- ◆ There should be a community park with a lake for fishing and operating remote controlled boats
- ◆ Parks should contain more native trees for shade
- ◆ There should be a lawn bowling facility for senior citizens
- ◆ New neighborhood parks are needed in the outlying areas so that residents don't have to drive long way to visit a park
- ◆ There is a grass roots music and art scene in Yucca Valley and venues for music and art need to be developed
- ◆ There should be a connection between our environment and the arts in the design and development of future parks
- ◆ The Town needs a new fair grounds/events space as people here love outdoor events that they can attend year around
- ◆ The Community Services Department needs a better marketing campaign to let people know what facilities and programs are available to them
- ◆ New facilities need to be thought about differently and designed to pay for themselves. Fee based activities and activities that draw from a larger area should be considered
- ◆ The Town and School District should partner together on a new swim complex and gymnasium
- ◆ The surrounding open space needs to be appreciated, respected, and conserved for future generations and this should be a priority in the Master Plan
- ◆ More soccer fields, baseball fields, and tennis courts are needed to meet the growing demand for these activities

- ◆ A multi-purpose gymnasium that can host all types of sports and cultural activities should be the Town's number one priority for new facilities
- ◆ More activities for youth and for senior will be needed in the future
- ◆ More music venues and places for outdoor concerts are needed
- ◆ The Town needs to host more art shows and festivals
- ◆ A large museum complex centrally located and easily accessible to attract tourist is needed
- ◆ Places for walking and jogging, i.e., a trail system that is convenient for families should be included in all new park development
- ◆ The current community center is booked to capacity. A new community center with more classrooms and multi-purpose space is needed.

6.5 Summary of Workshop #1

The following is a summary of the comments and input made by attendees at the first community input workshop.

Attendees were divided into two groups and asked to discuss their priorities for the Recreation and Parks Master Plan. The groups presented the following comments:

GROUP 1

6.5.1 Desired Programs:

Soccer, basketball, swimming, baseball, bridge, summer arts, art programs, concerts in park, Grubstake Community fair/parade, exercise classes, Earth Day volunteer programs, drop in adult programs, Farmers Market, Kite Day, 5k/10k runs, snow day, Starry Nights Festival.

6.5.2 Sites/Facilities (new/needed):

Dog Park, Senior Park (shuffle board, checkers, shade benches, walking paths), basketball courts, soccer fields, bike trails, gym space, water park/splash pool.

6.5.3 Open Space/Trails:

Improve upon existing areas, botanical garden, equestrian trails, bike trails, hiking trails, fair grounds, more park space/playgrounds, open space to retain desert environment.

GROUP 2

6.5.4 Desired Programs:

Tennis (youth/adult, wheelchair tennis; cardio workout with tennis) Table Tennis, Softball, Earth Day, Starry Nights, Kites Over Yucca Valley, Christmas parades, Senior trips, Summer concerts, Sport/Fitness, Maintain cohesive community, cultural activities including Amphitheater, art, music, performing arts, and dance. Public Art, sidewalk competitions. Hands on exhibits, desert ecology is an asset, Environmental education, Senior citizen educational programs, Programs for tots – mommy time, Adult night school, woodshop, crafts etc.

6.5.5 Sites/Facilities (new/needed):

Art Park, meditation memorial, Library, class room facilities, Miniature golf, water park, Pool, Playgrounds, Handicapped baseball field, tennis courts, Cultural Center, amphitheater, Community Hall/Dining, Synergy between facilities, Equestrian facilities/Fairgrounds, Dog Park, Skate Board Park, indoor skate rink, Tennis courts – 4-court groupings to run programs, Tennis Center

6.5.6 Open Space/Trails

Acquire more land, save wildlife corridors, save the tortoise, Conserve open space, pedestrian friendly walking and bike trails, no development on Ridgeline/Hillside, enforcement of Light Ordinance, strict enforcement/expansion native plant ordinance, horse trails into pioneer town, rock climbing, Save the Joshua trees.

6.5.7 Ranking

Participants were asked to rank their priorities and the groups attending ranked the following items:

1. Gym/Pool/Sports Complex
2. Teen Center
3. Senior Center and park
4. Splash pools/water parks
5. Dog Parks
6. Fair Grounds, Equestrian Center
7. Open Spaces, Wildlife Corridor/Preservation area
8. Bike/Walking trails
9. Community Center
10. Soccer Fields
11. Tennis Courts

6.5.8 Comments Regarding Current Operations

Finally, the Water Cooler board enabled the workshop participants to express additional thoughts about current operations by writing comments on post-its:

- ◆ More green areas
- ◆ Lights at night in the parks
- ◆ More swings in the parks
- ◆ Develop North Park
- ◆ We need Dog Parks
- ◆ The Town needs a YMCA
- ◆ More advertising of programs and services is needed
- ◆ Connect areas of town – Old Town, Southside Community Center, Shopping, Campgrounds, Library
- ◆ Rock climbing wall
- ◆ Provide Side Walks in the town
- ◆ Take care of existing facilities
- ◆ Better parking situation at community center
- ◆ Flood zone parks

- ◆ South Park needs better parking and trail identification
- ◆ Cover over the playgrounds at parks
- ◆ Fair Grounds/Event Facility
- ◆ More Meeting rooms
- ◆ We need more fields
- ◆ Rehabilitate and make use of tennis courts at Burnt Mountain
- ◆ Re-aim ball field lighting and BMX lighting downward
- ◆ Flying school
- ◆ Reopen the Yucca Valley Golf Course
- ◆ Develop trails in the Washes
- ◆ Develop joint use facilities: School District, College, Unincorporated area with County
- ◆ Build a Cultural Center
- ◆ Sculpture Garden/Public Art
- ◆ Handicapped youth baseball field / Rubberized for wheelchair use / ¼ sized / Low maintenance
- ◆ Indoor soccer facility
- ◆ Provide transportation for kids
- ◆ Need year round aquatics program
- ◆ Cash in by selling south side park land and build now
- ◆ Keep North Park for open space and trails
- ◆ Catering to the youth in the community by way of activities to keep them away from harm and out of trouble
- ◆ Bicycle Paths: Designated and well defined, Protected and fenced, Wide enough to accommodate runners, bikes, strollers, etc.
- ◆ Entertainment Center
- ◆ Alternative energy and “green” architecture may open up grant opportunities and alternative funding

- ◆ Grass is the key to meeting most of the demands for youth programs

6.6 Summary of Workshop #2

The second community workshop conducted as part of the Master Plan input process was another opportunity for the community to express its desire for facilities and programs.

Participants were asked if they thought centralizing community facilities was a better approach to serving all residents or if decentralizing and putting some facilities in each area of the town made more sense. The group attending came up with the following chart:

Pros & Cons of Centralization vs Decentralization

| Centralizing New Facilities | |
|---|---|
| Pros | Cons |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Economically better ◆ Ecologically better ◆ Less Travel Time ◆ Easier for Families to Transport Kids ◆ Easy Maintenance ◆ Able to Host Tournaments ◆ Multi-Use Facilities ◆ Promotes Meeting Diverse Cultures ◆ Water Limitations ◆ Easier for Kids to Get From One Program to Another <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Better safety control ▪ Easier Police Enforcement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Events could conflict with one another ◆ Separate Uses need separate areas ◆ Possible Parking Impacts |
| Decentralizing New Facilities | |
| Pros | Cons |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Don't need as large a piece of property ◆ Local Use More Convenient ◆ Provides for Specialty Parks ◆ Play Area That Kids Can Access Locally | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Separate Venues makes travel harder ◆ Increased Maintenance costs ◆ Increased security costs |

Participants were asked to give input on possible locations for new facilities and provided the following insight:

| Possible Locations for New Facilities | |
|---|---|
| Yes | No |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Hi Desert Water District Land ◆ Center of Town ◆ Boys and Girls Club ◆ South Side Community Center-Dense Area (Low Impact Use) ◆ Section 11 – Old Woman Springs Road for Fairgrounds ◆ Flood Control Areas ◆ Pioneer Town Land ◆ Waymego Trail (Equestrian Uses) ◆ Current Community Center ◆ Land on Yucca Mesa | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Land Along HWY 247 ◆ South Side Park (Joshua Lane) ◆ North Park |

Participants were asked what they would spend their dollars on in the community and the following is a summary of that exercise ranked in order of number of responses:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Gymnasium | 11. Senior Center |
| 2. Soccer Fields | 12. Teen Center |
| 3. Dog Park | 13. Open Areas |
| 4. Bike Trails | 14. Festival/Event/Amphitheatre Facility |
| 5. Community Parks | 15. Cultural Center |
| 6. Neighborhood Parks | 16. Public Art |
| 7. Tennis Courts | 17. Sports Fields |
| 8. Swimming Pool | 18. Golf Course |
| 9. Multi-purpose Community Center | 19. Fitness/Exercise Center |
| 10. Walking/Jogging Trails | 20. Water Play Parks |

6.7 Summary of Workshop #3

Workshop 3 concentrated on community input as to possible locations for new facilities as requested from Workshops 1 and 2. Participants were given large maps of Yucca Valley (See *Appendix C8* for Sample Map) along with disks that represented all types of facilities including community centers, senior centers, dog parks, skate parks, swimming pools, neighborhood parks, community parks, equestrian centers, etc.

Participants were divided into several groups and asked to glue the disks onto the maps at the locations within the Town that their group believed was the best location for each of the facilities represented by the disks.

Some of the groups felt that all of the new facilities should be developed adjacent to the Highway 62 Corridor while other groups felt the facilities should be decentralized into various areas of the Town and the remaining groups felt facilities should be centralized in areas North, East, South and West within the Town.

Several groups felt that in addition to traditional facilities there should also be an area designated for extreme sports such as skate boarding, BMX, rock climbing, etc.

In summarizing all eight groups providing input on the maps the following were common themes:

- ◆ The Old Town Master Plan should contain a cultural center/art center/community plaza.
- ◆ Equestrian uses/rodeo/events area should be located where it does not impact residential developments.
- ◆ Multiuse community center/senior center/teen center/gymnasium/aquatics facility should be centrally located.
- ◆ More neighborhood parks are needed in residential areas.
- ◆ Community parks with sports fields, dog parks, informal play areas, tot lots, and splash pools should be located on both the East and West sides of Town.
- ◆ Public art should be included wherever new public facilities are built.
- ◆ The Town should pursue joint development of facilities with the School District.
- ◆ Street rights of way, flood control channels, washes, and pathways within parks should be used to develop a connecting town wide trail system.

6.8 Special Interest Input

In addition to providing input at the Community Workshops there were two special interest groups that provided the consultants with additional public input.

6.8.1 Old Town Specific Plan

The first was a group of interested citizens that provided a concept plan to the consultants for their idea to centralize a number of needed facilities adjacent to the “Old Town” specific plan.

Their idea to place community facilities on the North side of the proposed realignment of SR62 would connect the Old Town area with North Park via a linear park along the potential future alignment of Pioneer Town Road. By including a new community center, aquatics facility, arts and entertainment center, community park, festival and show grounds area, equestrian and rodeo arenas, and trail heads they believe that it would create a major destination attraction that would be convenient for the community and would allow the recreational uses and Old Town commercial uses to coordinate activities and generate pedestrian traffic for both venues.

6.8.2 Dog Parks

The second group of interested citizens submitted a petition with over 2,000 signatures requesting that the Master Plan include “Dog Parks” for the Town of Yucca Valley. The consultants received a letter from the group’s organizer listing the reasons people signing the petition believe are the positives for including “Doggie Parks” in the Master Plan.

6.9 Sports Organization Survey Questionnaires

A questionnaire was sent to each of the youth and adult sports organizations in the Town that use Town, School District, and Non-Profit Organization fields for their practices and games. (See *Appendix C2*.)

The purpose of the questionnaire was to solicit the perceived needs of community sports organizations and achieve the objective of outreach to these community sports groups. The questionnaire was designed to provide valuable information regarding facility usage, team size, recreation season, and player volume. This data was then used in the demand analysis for future sports field needs.

Questionnaires were sent to all sports organizations within the Town. Six organizations responded, including Yucca Valley High School Sports, Morongo Basin Youth Soccer Association, J T Kids Club, Tri-Valley Little League, Morongo Basin Tennis Association and Yucca Valley Youth Football, with the requested information. The results of these surveys show that:

- ◆ There are approximately 900 kids involved in youth soccer
- ◆ Approximately 600 kids involved in youth baseball
- ◆ There are also over 175 kids involved in youth tennis
- ◆ About 80 kids in youth football
- ◆ Over a 100 girls softball; and
- ◆ Over 340 boys and girls involved in High School level Soccer, Softball, Baseball, Football, Track and Cross Country sports activities

The following table is a summary of the completed surveys, a copy of which is contained in *Appendix C2*. The common standard for practice fields is one field for every 10 teams and the common standard for game fields is one field for every six teams.

| Sport | # Teams | # Players | Std # Practice Fields Req | Std # Game Fields Req |
|----------------|---------|-----------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Jr Football | 4 | 80 | 1 | 1 |
| Girls Softball | 8 | 100 | 1 | 1 |
| Youth Baseball | 48 | 600 | 5 | 8 |
| Youth Soccer | 80 | 250 | 8 | 12 |

These participation figures show that ideally, Yucca Valley should have a total of twelve soccer practice/game fields and one football practice/game field to accommodate the current number of teams participating in football and soccer. Based on future population growth these participation figures should grow about 6% per year.

Currently the Town has two soccer fields that are used for both practice and games. Therefore, the Master Plan should call for a minimum of at least 10 more soccer fields based on these standards.

There is currently sufficient number of football, softball and baseball fields, however the projected population growth will necessitate more fields in the future.

6.10 Key Findings

The Town of Yucca Valley has not built any new community recreation facilities for over 30 years, although it has purchased park property and has had park property acquired through land dedication by developers. It also is considering future land dedications and donations for future parks and facilities.

Park acreage standards are generally established through an acreage requirement per 1,000 residents. The Subdivision Map Act and the Quimby Act (Section 66477 of the Govt. Code) relating to parkland dedication allows a city or town to adopt a local ordinance establishing a citywide park standard and the requirement of parkland dedication or fair market value in-lieu fees when there is residential development.

Several years ago the National Recreation and Parks Association established guidelines for park facilities for both urban and rural communities. They also defined a number of issues that affect the demand for park facilities, including: environmental trends, social trends, economic trends, demographic trends, technology trends, and trends in urban development. The Project Team has identified a number of these issues that affect the demand for facilities in Yucca Valley:

- ◆ Disappearing resources such as open space and natural habitats
- ◆ Cost of available land within the Town limits to acquire for parkland
- ◆ Environmental regulations regarding water quality, runoff, and hazardous waste
- ◆ Reduction in number of vehicle trips mandated by states and communities
- ◆ Poverty – homelessness and unemployment

- ◆ Crime and violence in homes and school, drugs, vandalism, and social tension
- ◆ Increased number of children at risk
- ◆ Increased desire for citizen participation and involvement
- ◆ Social service networking – organizing community organizations and resources to attack social problems
- ◆ Increasing concern for personal and family safety
- ◆ Increased public cost for maintenance and upgrading aging infrastructure
- ◆ Increased labor and energy costs
- ◆ Aging of the community
- ◆ Fewer “traditional” family households, i.e.: single-parent families, families sharing living units, extended families living together, etc.
- ◆ Increasing cultural diversity
- ◆ Increased residential density
- ◆ Increased contact with computers in the home or the workplace
- ◆ Revitalization and retrofitting both residential and commercial development
- ◆ Political pressure for parks, open space and recreation facilities

Through the surveys and interviews obtained from the community, it is apparent that people expect the Community Services Department to provide essential recreation opportunities.

There was a strong demand for additional park space, open space, trails and recreation facilities for soccer, basketball, softball/baseball, children’s play areas, picnic facilities, aquatics, and public meeting room space. It was a unanimous consensus that additional land and facilities are needed in Yucca Valley for sports fields and community center expansion.

These preferences reflect an increased demand and appreciation for parks, open space, and facilities and the

community’s desire to have them easily accessible. There was a strong consensus that the Town needs to work with the school district and non-profit organizations to “partner” in meeting facility demands.

Based on the interviews and surveys obtained through the input process, the project team has developed a list of facilities most requested by the community and that reflect the trends in park and recreation facility development. Table 6.9 below shows these facilities and compares the current number of facilities in the Town of Yucca Valley Community Services Department Service Area with facility guidelines developed by the project team based on the number of each facility that is recommended in Table 4.3 for Community Parks and Table 4.4 for Neighborhood Parks. The Town’s desired standard for Community Parks is one Community Park each 4-mile radius and one Neighborhood Park each 1-mile radius. The total number of square miles within the Yucca Valley Town limits is 40. Consequently, there are eight (8) 4-mile radius areas within the Yucca Valley Community Services Departments service area. Thus, the desired number of facilities in the total service area would be as follows:

| Table 6.9 - Type of Facility | Desired Number |
|--|-----------------------|
| Walking/Jogging Paths (One each area) | 8 |
| Child Play Area/Tot Lots (One each area) | 8 |
| Dog Parks (One for each 4 areas) | 2 |
| Family Picnic Facilities (One each area) | 8 |
| Group Picnic Facilities (One for each 4 areas) | 2 |
| Community Center/Gym (One for each 4 areas) | 2 |
| Informal Open Turf Areas (One each area) | 8 |
| Soccer Fields (One for each area) | 8 |
| Softball Fields (One for each 2 areas) | 4 |
| Baseball Fields (One for each 2 areas) | 4 |
| Aquatics Complex (One for each 8 areas) | 1 |
| Splash Parks (One for each 2 areas) | 4 |
| Basketball Courts (One each area) | 8 |
| Tennis Courts (One each area) | 8 |
| Cultural Center/Museum (One for each 8 areas) | 1 |

TABLE 6.10 – Difference Between Currently Available Community and Neighborhood Park Facilities and the Desired Number of Facilities per Guidelines from Tables 4.3 & 4.4.

| Facility Type | Facilities Currently Available in Yucca Valley Service Area | Desired Number of Facilities for Yucca Valley Service Area | Difference |
|----------------------------|---|--|------------|
| Walking/Jogging Path | 1 | 8 | -7 |
| Child Area/Tot Lots | 6 | 8 | -2 |
| Dog Parks | 0 | 2 | -2 |
| Family Picnic | 2 | 8 | -6 |
| Group Picnic | 3 | 2 | +1 |
| Community Center/Gymnasium | 0 | 2 | -2 |
| Informal Turf Areas | 1 | 8 | -7 |
| Soccer Fields | 2 | 8 | -6 |
| Softball Fields | 6 | 4 | +2 |
| Baseball Fields | 3 | 4 | -1 |
| Aquatics Complex | 0 | 1 | -1 |
| Basketball Courts | 12 | 8 | +4 |
| Tennis Courts | 2 | 8 | -6 |
| Cultural Center/ Museum | 1 | 1 | 0 |

Note: The “Currently Available” column only includes facilities that the Town has access to for programming and community use. If a facility exist in the Town, but the Community Services Department does not have access to use it for either scheduling reasons or cost reasons, the facility was deemed unavailable and not included in this analysis.

6.10.1 Summary of Table 6.10

Table 6.10 is an indication of what facilities the Town of Yucca Valley should include when developing future Neighborhood and Community Parks. By addressing the deficits shown in Table 6.10 when the Town designs and builds future parks the Town will begin to provide the facilities most requested and desired by the community.

6.10.2 Methodology for Determining Key Findings

The methodology used to develop the key findings included:

- ◆ Survey questionnaires distributed to sports organizations and individuals associated with various user groups
- ◆ Individual interviews with stakeholders
- ◆ Review of Standards and Trends established by the National Recreation and Park Association adjusted to

reflect the size, social economic makeup, ethnicity, and population density of Yucca Valley

- ◆ Review of facilities and programs available to Yucca Valley residents in the surrounding areas of Yucca Valley.
- ◆ Review of the Yucca Valley General Plan and associated documents
- ◆ Project Team site tour of all existing Yucca Valley recreation facilities and possible future sites that may be potential areas for future facility development
- ◆ A statistically valid citywide phone survey

Using the above methodology the Project Team believes the data, analysis and key findings regarding facility needs and demands reflect the desires of the Yucca Valley community.

6.10.3 Findings for Facility Requirements

The consultant team reviewed and analyzed all of the community input obtained through the various public input processes and in terms of community demand and needs the facilities that would best meet the desired demand for the future in Yucca Valley are:

- ◆ More sports fields on both the west side and east side of the Town
- ◆ Multi-Generational Community Complex to serve all ages for recreation classes, meeting rooms and community events
- ◆ Aquatics Complex
- ◆ Multi-Purpose Gymnasium/Events Center
- ◆ Festival/Show Grounds/Equestrian Center
- ◆ Neighborhood Parks with fields, tot lots, spray pools, family picnic areas, and informal open space
- ◆ Community Parks with sports fields, dog parks, group picnic areas, trails, tot lots, rest rooms and open space
- ◆ Nature Parks with trail systems

- ◆ Cultural Facilities, including Museum, Library, Performing Arts Center, Art Center, Outdoor Amphitheater, Community Events Plaza
- ◆ Special Use Parks, such as a Skateboard Facility, BMX Course, Frisbee Golf Course, etc.

6.10.4 Findings for Space Requirements

The following represents the approximate space requirement the Town would need for the above desired facilities:

| Recreational Facilities | Space Needed |
|---|--------------|
| Multi-Generational Community Complex | 20 Acres |
| Aquatics Complex | 10 Acres |
| Multi-Purpose Gym/Events Center | 5 Acres |
| Sports Complex | 10–20 Acres |
| Festival/Show Grounds/Equestrian Center | 200 Acres |
| Neighborhood Parks | 3-15 Acres |
| Community Parks | 15-40 Acres |
| Nature Parks with trails | Varies |

| Cultural Facilities | Space Needed |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Museum | 15,000 s.f. |
| Library | 20,000 s.f. |
| Performing Arts Center | 10,000 s.f. |
| Amphitheater | 20,000 s.f. |
| Art Center | 5,000 s.f. |
| Community Events Plaza | 10,000 s.f. |
| Extreme Sports Park | 20 -30 Acres |

Note: Some facilities could be centralized and combined and therefore could require less space.