



City of Gilroy

STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item Title: Recreation Needs Assessment Implementation Introduction

Meeting Date: September 9, 2024

From: Jimmy Forbis, City Administrator

Department: Administration

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STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Develop a Financially Resilient Organization
Ensure Neighborhood Equity from City Services
Maintain and Improve City Infrastructure

RECOMMENDATION

Council receive the presentation and provide direction if desired.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recreation had commenced a City of Gilroy Recreation Facility and Program Needs Assessment (Assessment) by a consultant that began pre-pandemic but completed as the pandemic was underway. Recreation has been focused on meeting needs and restoring as much of the programming to pre-pandemic levels as possible and is now moving towards implementation of the Assessment.

This agenda item is a report on the approach staff is currently planning towards addressing the needs identified. In this report is the listing of the strategies identified and summary of status or plan towards implementation, as well as discussion on the capital improvements.

Additionally, staff is providing a discussion on the planned use of the \$100,000 budgeted for implementation.

BACKGROUND

To optimize the delivery of recreation services, the City hired PROS Consulting in fall 2019 for the development of a Facility and Program Needs Assessment. With support from the Mt. Madonna YMCA for the community survey, this Assessment included a robust community engagement process and market research to identify current and future resident needs related to recreation programs and facilities. The research was used in tandem with industry knowledge and an internal assessment to determine strategic priorities for advancing the Recreation Division's operations and increasing access to quality recreation in the Community.

It is important to note that the Covid-19 Pandemic began during the Needs Assessment. Not only did this create major shifts to the organization during the assessment, but the extensive community engagement process and feedback from residents was collected prior to the pandemic. Every effort was made to reevaluate the assessment and address Recreation at its then current state post-pandemic; however, there were some components of the Assessment, such as community input, that were not feasible to update.

Since the receipt of the assessment, and the fundamental changes post-pandemic, the Recreation Division has been focused on its direction from Council, which is to provide services to the community's vulnerable populations (seniors, adaptive, children) as a first priority, and then to provide the remaining full recreational programming to the greatest extent possible within its personnel and financial resources.

As a result of the reductions during the pandemic, recreation staffing has been reduced in half, from 13 authorized full-time positions to six full-time authorized positions. Immediately following the reduction, staff was able to perform the traditional services to the vulnerable populations, as well as limited general recreational services. Since then, the reduced recreation staffing has been able to provide levels of recreational programming close to pre-pandemic levels despite the reduced staffing and financial resources. This has been accomplished using contractors, both of full programs such as aquatics as well as the use of contract classes, in combination with Recreation staff provided programming.

ANALYSIS

The 2020 Recreational Needs Assessment (Assessment) presents a detailed assessment of the community's demographics, feedback of participating community members in the input process, input from City staff at the time, and review of facilities. From this information the assessment presented a set of identified needs. As the Recreation Division has focused over the several past years on restoring the services and programming that was reduced from the pandemic, it has progressed to a level now where staff is returning to the needs assessment to accomplish two goals:

1. Begin or continue implementing many of the identified strategies to meet the service needs listed in the Assessment; and
2. Use the Assessment to inform the development of a plan for Recreation's growth and service provision for the next 5-10 years.

The Recreation Division and other City departments have already made some progress on the identified strategies from the Assessment, and a lot of work is about to commence. Below are updates on some of the implementation items for work underway.

- Add fee-based programs targeting adults 18-54

Based on the Assessment's input from the community, this is one of the highest needs. Although there is some adult programming, it is definitely the one that receives the least amount of service, not just from City programming, but also from potential contractors. Staff has a pilot program as part of the implementation of the Assessment aimed to meet this need.

The City's contract for classes and youth and children programming typically has a revenue share where the contractor receives 60-70% of the revenue from participants paying for classes, and the City receives the remainder to offset costs, use of facilities, and other administrative actions. Staff is evaluating the option of setting up select adult aged programming contracts to provide 90% revenue share for the contractor, and the City receiving 10%. The intent is that this level of revenue share might entice local organizations or individuals to offer more of the adult aged classes that are needed according to the Assessment.

- Restore key programs at 100% Cost Recovery

A significant number of the key programs, aside from services for vulnerable populations, have been restored over the past few years since the Assessment was released. The programs are targeting 100% cost recovery and will continue to make adjustments as part of the recreation fees to maintain 100% cost recovery for those categories as identified in the Council's approved cost recovery ordinance. This has been met with the annual update to the user fee schedule that Council adopted.

- Recruit 5-8 new contract instructors per year

Recreation will continue this practice of soliciting for programs that are not currently being provided and searching for new contractors to bring into the growing list of providers who deliver programming through the City's recreation programs. For example, last year two new arts-related classes were initiated with the aid of a contract instructor, and more are being pursued.

- Use more digital advertising to promote programs

Recreation staff will be working with the City's Communications and Engagement Office, as well as possibly outside consultants, to help better market and advertise programming, and to better utilize these methods as part of the growth plan.

- Community Center

The assessment identified updating and retrofitting the Wheeler Center to perform the functions of a community center. However, since the adoption of the plan, Council has approved the creation of an updated Civic Center Master Plan. The development of a multipurpose Community Center shall be considered as part of the Civic Center master plan update, which the request for proposals for the consultant on this project has just been issued.

A new community center as part of the Civic Center Plan will greatly address the needs as identified in the assessment, as well as meet a lot of the interest and requests that have been heard over the past several years from the community and community-based organizations.

- Create a Downtown Park
The Downtown Committee identified and recommended to Council the creation of the downtown pop-up park. The Council supported that effort and so the Donald “Elvis” Prieto Downtown Pop-up Park was developed in its current state. Recently, the Parks and Recreation Commission adopted a recommendation that will be coming to the City Council to contract for a park design to further enhance its aesthetics and use as a park. This matter will be coming to Council in early 2025 as staff is working to identify funding availability for the project.
- Add grant writing support
The City’s grant writing firm and staff have been applying for funding and will continue to do so.
- Establish a foundation
A citizen foundation for Gilroy parks has been formed by concerned residents. Staff will be considering as part of the implementation ways to mutually conduct fundraising and gathering donations for improvements in our parks. Additionally, Council approved this year the Donation and Fundraising Policy, which specifically authorized staff and the Parks and Recreation Commission to prepare and conduct fundraising and solicit donations for parks and recreational purposes.

Existing Recreation-Related Capital Projects

The Assessment identifies the below projects that were in the CIP at the time of production. Below is the list from the document, with prices estimated at 2020 values.

Planned Capital Improvements for Parks and Recreation			
Site	Project	Est Completion	Projected Cost
Christmas Hill Park Trail	Wayfinding Signage	Beyond FY25	\$ 87,300
Christmas Hill Ranch	Update / Complete Master Plan	Beyond FY25	\$ 363,000
Christopher HS Pool	Replastering	Beyond FY25	\$ 433,800
City Bike Trails	Updated Bike Master Plan	Beyond FY25	\$ 251,100
Farrell Park	Develop Master Plan	Beyond FY25	\$ 200,400
Forest Street Park	Park Expansion	Beyond FY25	\$ 600,000
Gilroy Golf Course	Water Tank Replacement	Beyond FY25	\$ 121,000
Gilroy Sports Park	Improvements Phase IV & V	Beyond FY25	\$ 10,063,372
Las Animas / Christmas Hill	Softball Field Rehabilitation	Beyond FY25	\$ 121,700
Las Animas Park	Misc Facility Rehabilitation	Beyond FY25	\$ 2,503,600
Lions Creek	Trail Development - West of Santa Teresa & Day	Beyond FY25	\$ 1,240,600
Lions Creek	Trail Development - West Gap Closure	Beyond FY25	\$ 3,022,800
Miller / Uvas Creek Trail	Pedestrian Improvements	Beyond FY25	\$ 604,400
Miller Park Restrooms	Electrical Undergrounding	Beyond FY25	\$ 81,400
San Ysidro Park	Healthy Living Enhancement	Beyond FY25	\$ 3,021,600
Senior Center	Roof Replacement	Beyond FY25	\$ 135,000
Senior Center	ADA Restrooms	Beyond FY25	\$ 50,000
Uvas Creek Park Preserve	Develop Master Plan	Beyond FY25	\$ 235,800
Wheeler Center	HVAC & Electrical Upgrades	Beyond FY25	\$ 654,500
Wheeler Center	Evacuation Center Upgrades	Beyond FY25	\$ 240,000
Wheeler Center	Trellis Replacement	Beyond FY25	\$ 2,923,800
Total CIP Investment			\$ 26,955,172

Below are updates on some of the projects identified above, all others are currently awaiting funding.

- Gilroy Golf Course Water Tank Replacement – the water tank for the irrigation system is budgeted for this fiscal year.
- Lions Creek Trail Development – the City has received a US Congressional Grant, as well as a Recreational Trail Program Grant for this project. Staff is completing required submittals and environmental work on this project currently.
- San Ysidro Park Healthy Living Enhancement – the City received a US Congressional Grant for this project. Staff is awaiting confirmation from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development authorizing the City to proceed with the project.
- Wheeler Center Trellis Replacement – the deteriorating trellis has been removed. At this time, no funding has been allocated for replacement. This facility is going to be evaluated as part of the Civic Center Master Plan update.

For the remaining and future capital projects, staff will be evaluating the feasibility of some pilot programs to help deliver such projects. These include:

1. Use of donated materials and volunteers for completing smaller capital improvements and construction

Recreation staff will work with Public Works, Human Resources, Risk Management and Finance to identify and explore ways to engage donations of materials and of volunteer time from professionals to complete smaller to moderate sized projects to help deliver improvements or new construction of outdoor and smaller facilities. As one example of this proposed strategy, staff will be reaching out to regional trade schools and apprenticeship organizations to evaluate the opportunity to work with them and their students on projects that might provide them project experience and materials to work with while constructing outside facility improvements for the City at a significantly reduced cost compared to traditional approaches.

2. Evaluate micro-phasing for parks-related capital improvements

For larger capital projects, in addition to phasing a project, staff will be evaluating micro-phasing of projects to see if it is viable for outdoor facilities. An example might be soccer fields, phasing a multi-field project to a single soccer field, but then micro-phasing based on available funding to do ground leveling and preparation, then irrigation installation and grass seed-casting, then soccer goals and signage as a third-microphase. Projects would take longer than if constructed at one time, but forward momentum and constant improvement activity would be possible with smaller funding streams.

Planned Use of the \$100,000 for Implementation

The adopted budget for Fiscal Year 2025 identifies \$100,000 for implementation of the Assessment, including identifying sites for pickleball, BMX and Frisbee Golf. Staff is about to complete a year-long project with the Parks and Recreation Commission to issue a recommendation to the City Council of ranked preference for City parks for the location of potential future pickleball courts. Based on this experience, staff feels that identifying potential site locations within existing City properties is within the capabilities of staff and the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Staff is planning on the implementation and growth planning to be done in-house. Therefore, staff is proposing to use the above amount authorized by Council in this budget for construction of one of the implementation projects in the Assessment, the ADA restroom door retrofits at the Senior Center.

As mentioned before, the primary duty of the Recreation Division after the pandemic is to provide services to the community's vulnerable populations. Additionally, all other project improvements, with the inflation rates having been observed over the past few years, would price out other projects with the amount appropriated. The ADA retrofits will help keep the Senior Center as accessible, allowing more users to visit the site without concerns about being able to utilize the restrooms. The project was originally quoted at \$50,000 in 2020, but the project will likely land in the range of \$80,000 to the full \$100,000 based on inflation. Should there be any extra funding remaining, staff is

planning on using it for other, smaller cost repairs and improvements at either the Senior Center or one of the other City facilities or parks.

ALTERNATIVES

No alternatives have been analyzed for this report. The report is primarily informational as the implementation continues and expands. As the work is performed, updates will be provided, and any task requiring Council approval or direction will be brought before Council, with listed alternatives for the project or program in question.

FISCAL IMPACT/FUNDING SOURCE

No fiscal impacts are created by means of this report. Individual projects will use staff time and budget appropriations already approved by the City Council, including the \$100,000 appropriated specifically for this effort. Should any future activity trigger a need for additional appropriations, staff will return to Council for any amendments to the adopted budget.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

There was public outreach and input gathered by the consultant of the original study. This item was included on the publicly posted agenda for this meeting.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will commence more detailed planning and implementation of the approaches identified in this report, except for any which Council may provide alternative direction.

Attachments:

1. 2020 City of Gilroy Recreation Facility and Program Needs Assessment – Executive Summary



Facility & Program Needs Assessment

2020





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THANK YOU TO ALL THE RESIDENTS & STAKEHOLDERS FOR CONTRIBUTING
INPUT THROUGHOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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SPECIAL THANKS TO THE MT. MADONNA YMCA FOR CONTRIBUTING TO THE
COMMUNITY SURVEY



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CHAPTER ONE – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The City of Gilroy (“City”) is a hard-working, suburban community, full of rich heritage and vibrant culture. It is a youthful city with strong family values that is well known throughout the bay area and beyond as the Garlic Capital of the World. Gilroy has a storied past that makes it unique and represents a community that is defined by its resiliency. Like many great cities, Gilroy also provides enhanced quality of life for residents through its parks, trails, and recreational facilities. The Gilroy Recreation Division (“GRD”) plays a vital role in the community by providing access to recreation opportunities through the provision of quality programs and services.

In an effort to optimize the delivery of services, the City, with support from the Mt. Madonna YMCA for the community survey, hired PROS Consulting for the development of a Facility and Program Needs Assessment (“Assessment”). This Assessment included a robust community engagement process and market research to identify current and future resident needs related to recreation programs and facilities. The research is used in tandem with industry knowledge and an internal assessment to determine strategic priorities for advancing GRD and increasing access to quality recreation in the City.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, GRD had a set of goals that are no longer attainable due to limitations imposed by major budget cuts, the elimination of program offerings, and the reorganization of GRD, which reduced it from a “Recreation Department” to a “Recreation Division”. During the pandemic, the City began developing protocols for mitigation and the financial situation resulted in significant budgetary and staffing cutbacks. This included a freeze on all current programs that were not able to generate full cost recovery unless they were deemed essential services serving vulnerable populations.

It is important to note that the Covid-19 Pandemic began during the final steps of the Needs Assessment. Not only did this create major shifts to the organization in the midst of the Assessment, but the extensive community engagement process and feedback from residents was collected prior to the pandemic. Every effort was made to reevaluate the Assessment and address GRD in its current state, post-pandemic; however, there were some components of the Assessment, such as community input, that were not feasible to update.

The City of Gilroy managed to keep outdoor recreation available to residents throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and GRD has done its best to continue providing offerings to the Community within the current limitations. The staff has continued to monitor changes in local and State Executive Orders and health guidance to adjust and maximize programming within restrictions.

The following passages of the Executive Summary provide a high-level summary of the Assessment findings and outlines the key strategies moving forward. The full Assessment report ensues the Executive summary and provides more detailed findings.

1.2 HISTORY

The following is a brief timeline of the history of GRD:

- In 1947, the Recreation Department was established in order to provide recreational opportunities for Gilroy residents.
- In an effort to create greater efficiency throughout City Hall, and per directive from City Council, the Recreation Department expanded into the Community Services Department, which was made up of: Recreation, Parks, Facilities, Environmental Services, and the Gilroy Museum.
- In 2002, City of Gilroy issued a Parks and Recreation System Master Plan. It was updated in 2004.

FACILITY & PROGRAM NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- During the Great Recession in 2009, the Community Services Department was disbanded and, due to the budget cuts, some staff were laid off. Recreation became its own department. Parks, Facilities and Environmental Services was transferred to Public Works. The Museum was operated by volunteers through the Gilroy Historical Society.
- In 2012, the City opened the Christopher High School Aquatics Center, offering both recreation swim and swimming lessons.
- In 2020, during the Covid-19 Pandemic, the City experienced another budget downturn, which led to Recreation Department staff layoffs. The smaller staff now make up the Recreation Division, which is operating out of the Administration Department.

1.3 GOALS

The following goals were established for the Needs Assessment:

- Engage the diverse Gilroy community served by the GRD and YMCA, leadership, and stakeholders through an inclusive, and innovative public outreach process to build a shared vision for facilities and programs.
- Utilize a wide variety of data sources and best practices including a bi-lingual (English and Spanish) statistically-valid survey to predict trends and patterns of use and how to address unmet facility and program needs in Gilroy served by the GRD and YMCA.
- Determine unique Level of Service Standards and utilization to develop appropriate actions regarding that reflects the GRD and YMCA's strong commitment in providing high quality facilities and programs for the Gilroy community.
- Understand program capacity and compatibility with users through innovation and “next” practices for the GRD and YMCA to achieve the strategic objectives, identify current and project future recreation facility demands, and highlight revenue generation and partnership opportunities.
- Develop a prioritized needs assessment to ensure long-term success through a data driven and community values supported approach.



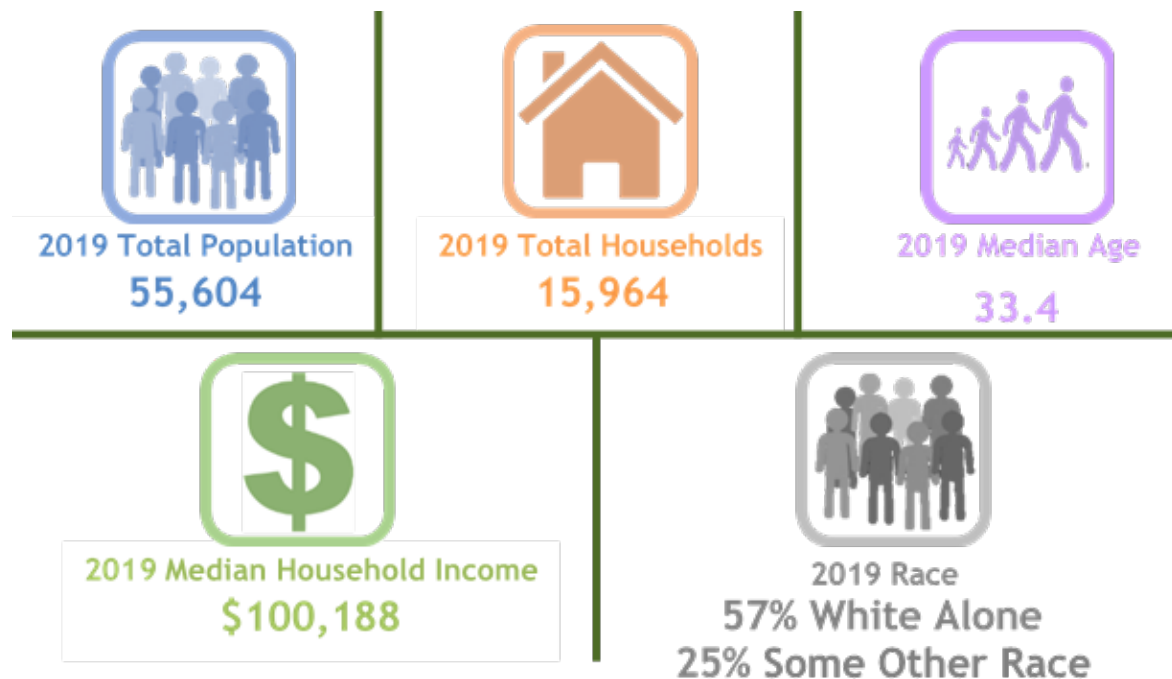
1.4 KEY FINDINGS

The following sections highlight the major elements of the Plan and outlines the key findings from the Needs Assessment.

1.4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The following are the key takeaways from the Demographic Analysis found in section 2.2.

- The population is growing rapidly, at nearly twice times the national growth rate. As the population continues to grow, GRD must pay close attention to demographic shifts in the future to ensure that offerings continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of the community.
- City residents are much younger than average and there is a strong presence of families; however, the active adult population (55+ years old) is the only age segment expected to grow over the next 15 years. By 2034, the active adult population is expected to supplant the youth population (0-17 year olds) as the largest age segment in the City. GRD must continue to provide services for all and reevaluate its programming mix to effectively transition as the population ages.
- The local populace is very diverse and unique in its racial / ethnic composition. A significant presence of Hispanic / Latino residents emphasizes the importance of providing services and marketing programs in a bilingual format. Based on population projections, the Asian population is expected to be the fastest growing race in the City, so it will be important to confirm that participation among Asians is consistent with the trend and marketing is effective in reaching the growing population (i.e. evaluate language barriers and cultural interests).
- While household income is significantly higher than average, earning per individual is much closer to average. This is a factor of large household sizes in the City and a tendency for multi-generational, multi-family dwellings. It is important to consider this household dynamic where families tend to be larger, more cohesive units and are likely interested in recreational opportunities that are conducive to larger groups, emphasize culture / community, and pricing that offers value at the household level.



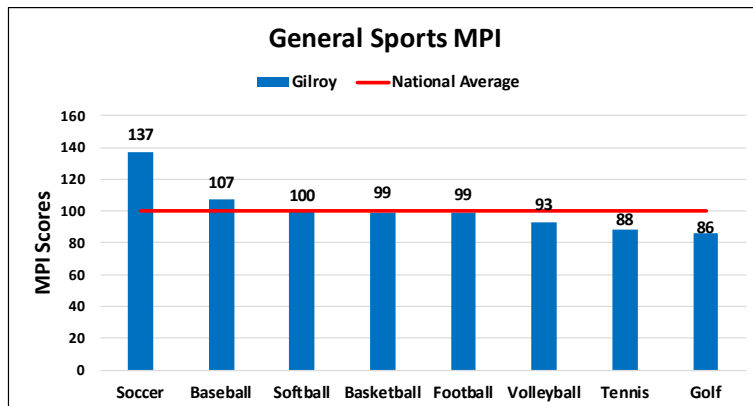
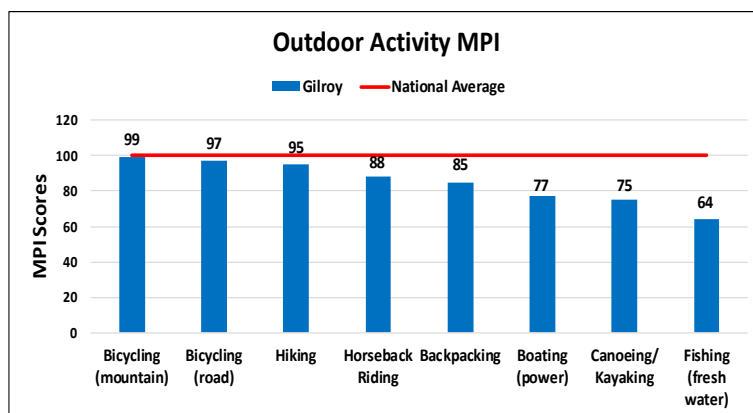
FACILITY & PROGRAM NEEDS ASSESSMENT

1.4.2 RECREATION TRENDS

The Plan also explored recreational trends on a national, regional, and local level to better understand the types of activities District residents are likely to participate in. The full Recreational Trends Analysis can be found in **Section 2.3**.

Overall, residents demonstrate below average MPI numbers, with only 25% of activities assessed exceeding the national average. The outdoor recreation category has the highest deficiencies in MPI, as no single activity is above the national average. Activities with the highest MPI scores include Soccer, Visiting a Theme Park, Zumba, Visiting an Indoor Water Park, Dancing, and Baseball. The lowest rated activities, based on MPI, were all water related: Freshwater Fishing, Canoeing / Kayaking, and Power Boating.

Below average MPI scores suggest that residents have a rather low participation presence in recreational activities and could indicate a lack of access to open space, facilities, and programs / services. This is significant because GRD is a primary provider of recreation for residents and its mission is to provide broad access and opportunities for recreating in Gilroy.



1.4.3 PUBLIC INPUT

As a fundamental component of the planning process, the project team conducted a series of stakeholder interviews and public meetings over a two-day period in December 2019. The feedback received from community stakeholders is critical to the discovery phase of the Facility & Program Needs Assessment to uncover the recreational needs, interests, and challenges facing GRD from the perspective of residents, users, and other key stakeholders of the system. Questions asked were designed to better understand current strengths, opportunities, and priorities for GRD as it continues to be a leader in providing recreational opportunities in the community.

In total, the public input process connected with approximately 225 individuals. Stakeholder interview and public meeting attendees included:

- Residents and various user groups
- Elected Officials
- City Departments
- South County Youth Task Force

- City Staff
- GRD Leadership
- Mt. Madonna YMCA
- Community Advocacy Groups
- Local Business Community

Although the Stakeholders have a variety of priorities for GRD, some common themes were identified through interviews. First and foremost, GRD must find the best path to fiscal sustainability, while addressing shortcomings related to aging infrastructure and future needs of the community. Many are hopeful this planning process clearly identifies the recreational needs of the community, provides a vision for GRD, and gauges the support for additional taxes that could solidify the operational and/or capital needs of the community.

Top priorities for GRD that were most frequently mentioned include:

1. Increase access to indoor recreation space, specifically a multi-generational, multi-purpose recreation center.
2. Provide healthy, vibrant recreational programs for all Gilroy residents.
3. Improve fiscal sustainability for GRD by establishing cost recovery goals, an effective pricing strategy, and performance metrics.
4. Understand community wants and needs for facilities and programs.
5. Improve existing facilities and infrastructure.
6. Better communicate the value and benefits of GRD to bolster support from city council and the community at large.

Additional details about the subjective public input in included in **Section 3.1 & 3.2.**

1.4.4 STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY

ETC Institute administered a parks and recreation needs assessment in late 2019 for the City. This assessment was administered as part of the City's efforts to develop area parks, facilities, and programs. Information compiled from the assessment will provide key data to set a clear vision for the future. This survey helps determine priorities for parks, recreation facilities, program offerings, and special event offerings in the City from the residents' perspective.

The goal was to obtain completed surveys from at least 375 residents. The goal was exceeded with a total of 419 residents completing the survey. The overall results for the sample of 419 households have a precision of at least +/-4.8% at the 95% level of confidence.

The detailed results are presented in **Section 3.3.**

Priorities for Investment: The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) was developed to provide organizations with an objective tool for evaluating the priority that should be placed on Parks and Recreation investments. The PIR equally weights (1) the importance that residents place on facilities / programs and (2) how many residents have unmet needs for the facility / program.

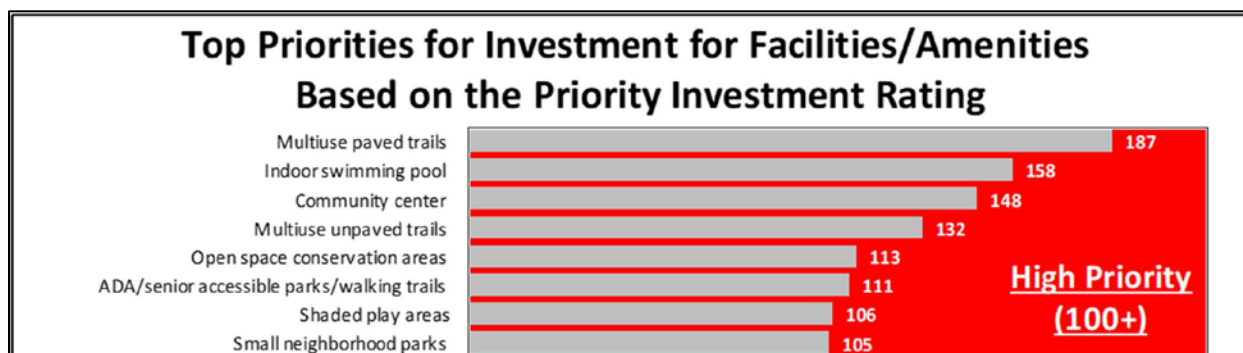
In order to ensure that GRD continues to meet the needs and expectations of the community, this Needs Assessment recommends that the City sustain and/or improve the performance in the following areas that were identified as "high priorities" by the Priority Investment Rating (PIR).

FACILITY & PROGRAM NEEDS ASSESSMENT

FACILITY / AMENITY PRIORITIES

Based the Priority Investment Rating (PIR), the following eight facilities/amenities were rated as high priorities for investment:

- Multiuse paved trails (PIR=187)
- Indoor swimming pool (PIR=158)
- Community center (PIR=148)
- Multiuse unpaved trails (PIR=132)
- Open space conservation areas (PIR=113)
- ADA/senior accessible parks/walking trails (PIR=111)
- Shaded play areas (PIR=106)
- Small neighborhood parks (PIR=105)

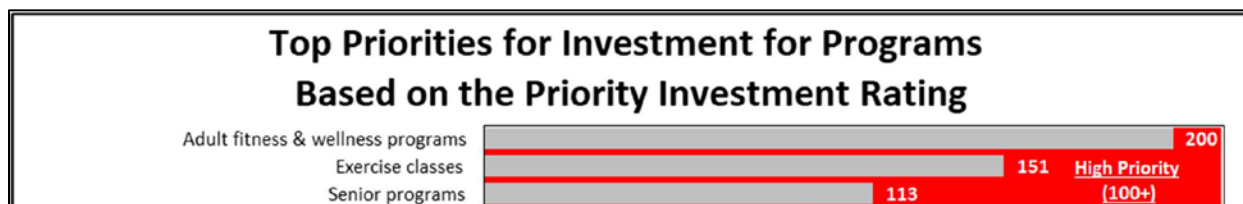


Source: ETC Institute 2019

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

Based on the priority investment rating (PIR), the following three activities/programs were rated as “high priorities” for investment:

- Adult fitness and wellness programs (PIR=200)
- Exercise classes (PIR=151)
- Senior programs (PIR=113)



Source: ETC Institute 2019

1.4.5 ONLINE COMMUNITY SURVEY

In addition to the statistically-valid community survey, an online survey (powered by SurveyMonkey) was conducted to better understand the characteristics, preferences, and satisfaction levels of residents. The online survey mirrored questions from the statistically-valid survey distributed by ETC. This allowed residents that were not randomly selected for the ETC survey the opportunity to be part of the community input process.



The survey was available from May to June 2020, and included versions in both English and Spanish. The online survey received a total of 640 anonymous responses, which consisted of 613 taken in English and 27 completed in Spanish. The following is a summary of the findings:

COVID-19 IMPACT / COMMUNITY BENEFIT

- 74% of survey respondents believe that the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the household value of recreation, parks, trails, and open space.
- 81% of survey respondents Agree or Strongly Agree that GRD makes Gilroy a more desirable place to live
- 79% of those surveyed Agree or Strongly Agree that GRD provides volunteer opportunities for the community.
- 79% of survey respondents Agree or Strongly Agree that GRD provides positive social interactions for households

PARKS AND FACILITIES

- 94% of those surveyed have visited a City park or facility within the last year, with 74% visiting at least once a week.
- 68% of respondents that visited a park or facility rate the quality as either Good or Excellent.
- Top three barriers for park visits include, Do not feel safe using parks/trails (42%), Lack of restrooms (38%), and Lack of features we want to use (35%).
- Top three needs include; Multi use paved trails, large community parks, and multi-use unpaved trails.
- The top three most important amenities include Multi-use paved trails, indoor swimming pool, and multi-use unpaved trails.

MARKETING

- Top three marketing methods used to learn about recreation programs include the City Recreation Guide (70%), City Website (58%), and Friends & neighbors (52%).
- Respondents indicated they would prefer to learn most through the City Recreation Guide (55%), Emails (53%), and City Website (44%).

PROGRAMS

- 58% of respondents have participated in GRD programs in the last year, with 68% participating in at least two programs per year.
- 91% of those surveyed rated the quality of programs as either Good or Excellent.
- Top three barriers for participation in programs include; I don't know what is being offered (28%), Too busy/not interested (25%), Program times are not convenient (22%).
- Top three program needs include: Community special events, adult fitness and wellness, and exercise classes.

FACILITY & PROGRAM NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- Most important programs include; adult fitness and wellness, swim lessons, and Youth sports programs/camps.

POTENTIAL SUPPORT FOR MULTI-GENERATIONAL COMMUNITY CENTER

- If the City developed a multi-generational facility, survey respondents indicated the most used recreation spaces would be: indoor swimming pool lap lanes, aerobics/fitness/gymnastics space, and indoor walking/running track.
- Among those surveyed, funding of a potential facility has the most support at a 50%/50% split for taxes and user fees, followed closely by 75% tax / 25% user fees.



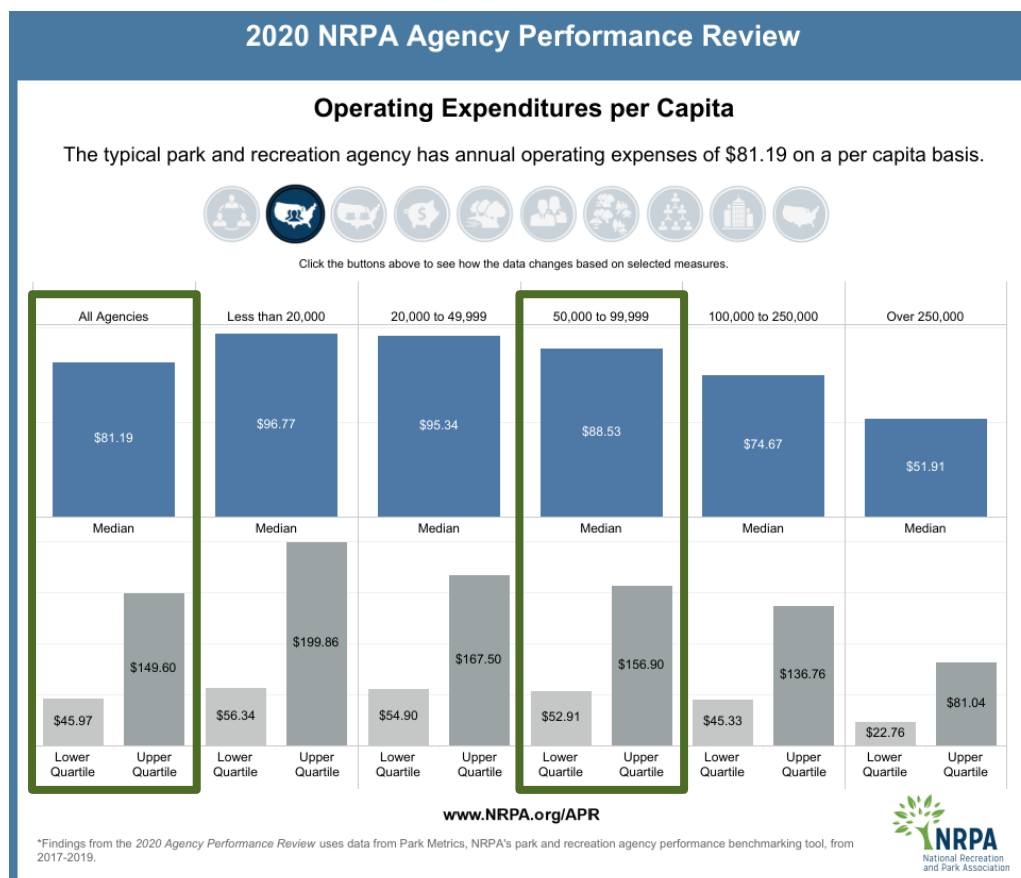
1.4.6 BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

Benchmarking is a great tool for evaluating how effective an organization is by comparing it to competitors, similar agencies, and/or industry best practices. By looking outward, GRD can better understand how well it is performing relative to industry norms. The goal of the analysis is to evaluate how GRD is positioned among peer agencies, as it applies to efficiency and effectiveness practices.

Information was obtained from the National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) Park Metrics database and reflects data reported by park and recreation agencies from 2017-2019. This report focused on information from the full NRPA database as well as the subset of similar sized agencies (serving 50K-100K people), and information is provided at the lower quartile, median, and upper quartile levels for comparison.

The Benchmark Analysis provides a comparison of key performance factors for GRD to evaluate its own metrics against moving forward. As organizational changes continue to settle in for GRD, it will be important for the GRD to track performance measures and assess them against industry benchmark levels. The key performance metrics that were selected for analysis included:

- Park and Recreation FTEs per 10,000 residents
- Operating Expenditures per Capita
- Distribution of Operating Expenditures
- Park and Recreation Revenue per Capita
- Five-Year Capital Budget Spending
- Targets for Capital Expenditures



FACILITY & PROGRAM NEEDS ASSESSMENT

1.4.7 SWOT ANALYSIS

The following tables describe the strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of GRD that were identified during the planning process. It is important to note, the SWOT Analysis was conducted prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Strengths (Internal - May be able to control)	Weaknesses (Internal - May be able to control)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seasonal Activity Guide reaches all Gilroy households Experienced and adaptable recreation staff with varied backgrounds and levels of expertise Accessible and affordable programs for all residents Division-funded youth scholarship fund City-wide volunteer program Youth job development training / employment opportunities Successful partnerships (GUSD, community-based organizations, grass-roots, public health, businesses) Programming for at-risk youth (i.e., Late Night Gym, Pro-Com Tournaments, Public Safety Partnerships) Support South County Youth Task Force (San Ysidro/East Gilroy) New registration software that is more customer service friendly, provides more options and is easier to navigate Program offerings for non-residents Award-winning marketing/media promotions Multiple program locations/facilities in Gilroy In-house certified CPR, First Aid, AED, lifeguards and lifeguard instructors High level of customer satisfaction and loyalty Provide free recreational opportunities at-risk, disenfranchised and low-income children and families Successful partnership with public safety agencies Bilingual staff Offer culturally relevant programming Provide intergenerational programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program fees could be increased for recreation activities The non-resident fee is too low (Currently \$10) Staff supports four commissions, impeding on their ability to grow revenue generating programs Strong WiFi not available at all city facilities. No long-term marketing strategy or plan Lack Spanish translation on many marketing materials such flyers, email announcements, and parks and facility reservation policies Staff is not active enough in CPRS District 4 meetings, conferences and trainings Lack of opportunities for customer feedback on program experience Staff doesn't do enough to "Tell our story" using videos, images and social media outlets Lack of branding (name recognition) Lack of innovative and progressive programming (e.g., pet-involved, surfing/paddle boarding) Retention of experienced p/t staff Not enough time spent recruiting new contract instructors Long term programming for high profile grant funded programs is threatened when grant ends No dedicated grant writer No participant membership fee that would generate a steady revenue stream, similar to Morgan Hill

Opportunity (External-May not be able to control)	Threats (External - May not be able to control)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential San Jose Sharks ice-rink development / partnership • Potential development of an outdoor dirt bike park and trails • Dedicated Division Grant Writer • Dedicated Marketing Coordinator • Corporate sponsorships • Dedicated handyperson to make repairs on facilities • Child care program at shopping outlets • Employee registration discounts • City-owned, year-round swimming pool • Placement of marque/electronic billboard with high visibility location • Mobile Recreation Van to program in neighborhoods • Increase budget to reflect and serve growing population • Attract more regional participants in programming and special events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aging city-owned facilities lack modern amenities and accessibility • Staffing levels, program budgets, and facilities are limiting programming opportunities • Pressure to generate more revenue but still serve both affluent & low-income residents (income is lowest in SCC) • Gilroy residents participating in Morgan Hill recreation programs • Insurance requirements limit potential contractors • Trouble recruiting p/t staff due to low wages • Losing p/t staff due to a City policy that doesn't allow more than 25 hours • Length of time to recruit and onboard new employees and volunteers (i.e., Human Resources) • Lack of facilities for recreation classes • Lack of access to GUSD facilities and playgrounds due to student priority use & to protect from vandalism • State funded Free Transitional Kindergarten program, negatively affecting current ECR enrollment • Competition with state funded Power School program (free afterschool and summer programming) • Increased competition from CBO's, fitness/sports clubs, travel teams and churches • Lack of local jobs limiting commuters time to participate in recreational opportunities • Limited technological resources • Limited ability to conduct outreach to at-risk & disengaged children and youth • New Division staffing, budget and organizational situation

FACILITY & PROGRAM NEEDS ASSESSMENT

1.4.8 PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

As part of the Needs Assessment, the consulting team conducted a Recreation Program Assessment for GRD. The assessment offers an in-depth perspective of program and service offerings and helps identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities regarding programming. The assessment also assists in identifying core programs, program gaps within the community, key system-wide issues, areas of improvement, and future programs and services for residents and visitors. The following are the key highlights from the program assessment:

- A total of ten (10) Core Program Areas were established by the Division. Overall, the program descriptions effectively communicate the key benefits and goals of each Core Program Area.
- Age segment distribution is good, but this needs to be monitored to ensure program distribution aligns with community demographics, especially in regards to families and seniors. The Division's target audience has a strong family presence, while it is projected to experience an aging trend.
- The Classification of Programs analysis reveals the majority of the current mix is focused on Value-Added services, which are the most sustainable offerings because they are supported by user fees; however, these programs primarily benefit individual users. With less than 11% of programs classified as Essential services, the Division must assess whether it is providing sufficient opportunities for little to no cost that support the greater good of the community.
- The Program Lifecycle distribution reflects a mix of young and old programs offered by GRD. While the majority of programs are in the early lifecycle stages, the saturation and decline stages have a higher distribution of programs than recommended. It will be important to refresh the programming mix with new, or revised, programs that backfill the beginning lifecycle stages as existing programs begin to mature and reduce programs that are in decline.
- The Division's volunteer program allows residents and organizations to easily get involved and give back to the community through various volunteer opportunities, special events, programs, etc. The Division must continue to evaluate and improve its formal volunteer policy by tracking key performance data and trends.
- From a marketing and promotions standpoint, the staff utilizes a variety of marketing methods when promoting their programs including: printed and online program guides, the Division's website, email blasts, online newsletter, in-facility signage, and social media channels as a part of the marketing mix. The Division would benefit from identifying marketing Return on Investment (ROI) for all marketing initiatives and there may be opportunities to increase the number of cross-promotions.
- Currently, customer feedback methods are limited to only post-program surveys. Moving forward, it is strongly recommended that the Division begins incorporating additional user feedback on a consistent basis, as a key performance measure that can be tracked over time.
- Pricing strategies are varied across the different Program Areas and somewhat limited in the variety of tactics utilized. The most frequently used approaches include differential pricing based on residency and customer's ability to pay. These are good practices and must be continued, but there is a potential opportunity to incorporate a pricing strategy based on age segments, prime versus non-prime times, and tying pricing strategies to cost recovery goals.
- Financial performance measures such as cost recovery goals have recently been implemented and it will be important to effectively track the actual cost recovery performance and create more well-defined cost recovery goals. Moving forward, staff must be sure to track direct and indirect costs for programs down to the individual program offerings to better assess whether the Division is meeting established goals.

1.4.9 LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS) ANALYSIS

Level of Service (“LOS”) standards matrix was developed during the planning process, which describes the inventory for GRD and other similar providers (e.g. school district) in relation to the population served. The LOS is an effective measure that can be used to support capital investment decisions related to parks, facilities, and amenities.

In collaboration with GRD staff, the planning team developed the appropriate standard service level for a variety of parks, facilities, and amenities. The level of service standards were applied to the current population, as well as projections over the next five years to anticipate additional inventory that will be necessary to meet needs for a growing population over the next five years.

Applying the facility standards to the service area, gaps and surpluses in park and facility/amenity types are identified. Based on this methodology, it is recommended that the City add the following park acres, trail miles, and amenities by 2024:

- 46 acres of Neighborhood Parks
- 9 acres of Community Parks
- 3 miles of Paved Trail
- 9.69 miles of Unpaved Trail
- 1 Park Shelter
- 2 Pavilions
- 2 Multipurpose Fields
- 3 Outdoor Basketball Courts
- 2 Splashpads
- 1 Outdoor Pool
- 56,300 SF of Indoor Community Recreation Space
- 29,380 SF of Indoor Aquatic Space

2019 Inventory - Developed Facilities									2019 Facility Standards		2024 Facility Standards	
Park Type	Gilroy Inventory	School Inventory	Total Inventory	Current Service Level based upon population		Recommended Service Levels: Revised for Local Service Area			Meets Standard/ Need Exists	Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed	Meets Standard/ Need Exists	Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed
Mini/Pocket Parks	0.68		0.68	0.01	acres per	1,000	0.00	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)
Neighborhood Parks	42.40		42.40	0.76	acres per	1,000	1.50	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	41	Acre(s)
Community Parks	197.00		197.00	3.54	acres per	1,000	3.50	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)
Total Developed Park Acres	240.08	-	240.08	4.32	acres per	1,000	5.00	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	38	Acre(s)
Undeveloped (Open Spaces)	128.00		128.00	2.30	acres per	1,000	2.00	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)
Total Park Acres	368.08	-	368.08	6.62	acres per	1,000	7.00	acres per	1,000			
TRAILS:												
Paved Trails	11.69		11.69	0.21	miles per	1,000	0.25	miles per	1,000	Need Exists	2.21	Mile(s)
Natural Trails	5.00		5.00	0.09	miles per	1,000	0.25	miles per	1,000	Need Exists	8.90	Mile(s)
Total Trail Miles	16.69		16.69	0.30	miles per	1,000	0.50	miles per	1,000	Need Exists	11.11	Mile(s)
OUTDOOR AMENITIES:												
Park Shelters	5.00		5.00	1.00	site per	11,121	1.00	site per	10,000	Need Exists	1	Sites(s)
Pavilions	2.00		2.00	1.00	site per	27,802	1.00	site per	15,000	Need Exists	2	Sites(s)
Youth Ball Fields	7.00		7.00	1.00	field per	7,943	1.00	field per	9,000	Meets Standard	-	Field(s)
Adult Ball Fields	3.00		3.00	1.00	field per	18,535	1.00	field per	20,000	Meets Standard	-	Field(s)
Rectangular Multi-Purpose Fields	6.00		6.00	1.00	field per	9,267	1.00	field per	7,500	Need Exists	1	Field(s)
Basketball Courts	7.00		7.00	1.00	court per	7,943	1.00	court per	6,000	Need Exists	2	Court(s)
Tennis	10.00		10.00	1.00	court per	5,560	1.00	court per	7,500	Meets Standard	-	Court(s)
Playgrounds	17.00		17.00	1.00	site per	3,271	1.00	site per	5,000	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)
Dog Parks	2.00		2.00	1.00	site per	27,802	1.00	site per	30,000	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)
Skateparks	1.00		1.00	1.00	site per	55,604	1.00	site per	60,000	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)
Splashpads	-		-	1.00	site per	-	1.00	site per	30,000	Need Exists	2	Site(s)
Outdoor Pools	-	0.33	0.33	1.00	site per	168,497	1.00	site per	50,000	Need Exists	1	Site(s)
INDOOR AMENITIES:												
Indoor Recreation Space (Square Feet)	22,714.00	9,126.15	31,840.15	0.57	SF per person		1.50	SF per person		Need Exists	51,566	Square Feet
Indoor Aquatic Space (Square Feet)	-	-	-	-	SF per person		0.50	SF per person		Need Exists	27,802	Square Feet
Current Estimated Population	55,604											
5-Year Projected Population	58,760											

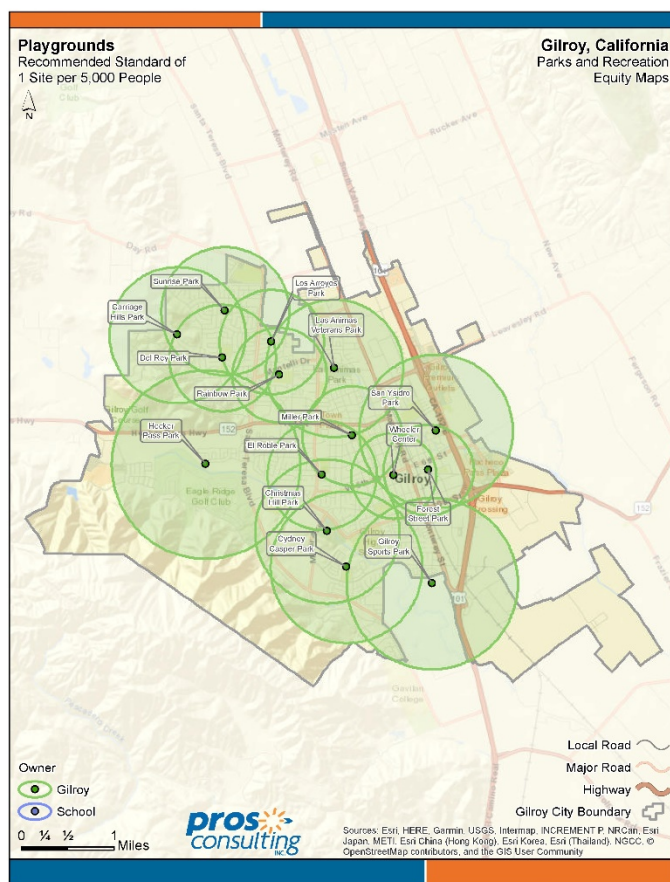
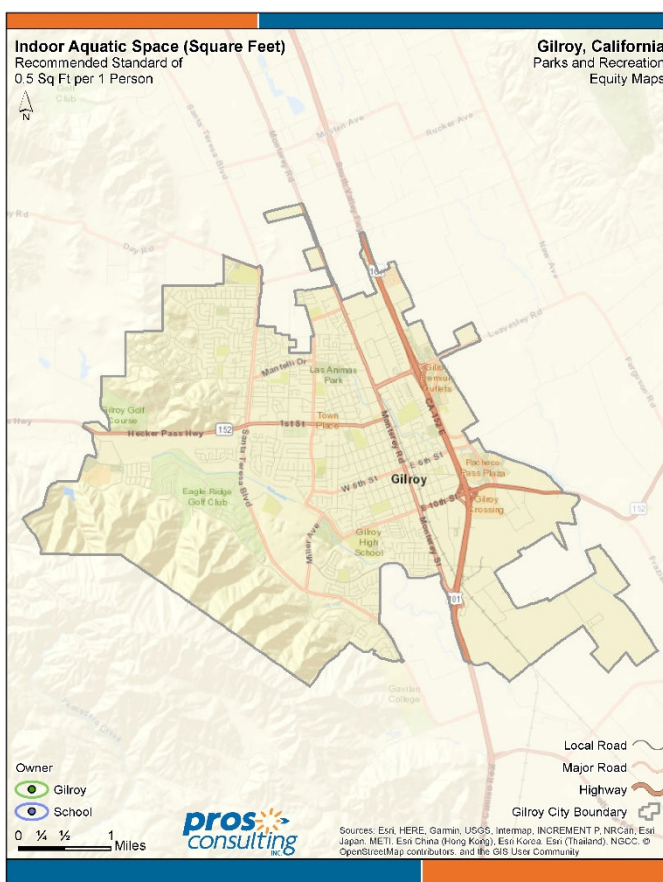
FACILITY & PROGRAM NEEDS ASSESSMENT

1.4.10 EQUITY MAPS

Equity Maps utilize level of service standards to assist City leadership and staff in assessing where services are offered and determining equitable service distribution and delivery across the service area. These maps provide a visual depiction of the effectiveness of the service as it pertains to the demographic density. In addition, Equity Maps allow GRD to identify gaps and overlap in services with respect to a specific park, trail, facility, or amenity. This assessment allows GRD to make appropriate capital improvement and development decisions based on the population needs and the Equity Maps allow a quick visualization of geographical areas that may be under/overserved. Equity Maps were developed for each of the following major assets:

The shaded rings in the Equity Maps indicate the service level (i.e. the population being served by a specific park type/facility/amenity) as outlined in the level of service matrix. Thus, the central point inside the ring indicates the location of the facility or amenity. The ring extends out from the central point based on the service reach of a particular park, facility, or amenity when compared to the population nearby. Equity Maps are based on the size of a park / facility or the number of amenities at a location, the established level of service standards, and the density of the surrounding population.

As can be seen, GRD is providing great access to Playgrounds, but is lacking any Indoor Aquatic Space. The Equity Maps for various park and amenity types are in **Section 5.6**.



1.4.11 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Due to unfavorable financial conditions, all capital improvements pertaining to parks and facilities have been frozen until at least 2025. Under these circumstances, the planning of capital investments is focused primarily on the backlog of existing needs and maintaining the quality and safety of the system. For purposes of the Needs Assessment, no additional capital improvements can be suggested until the freeze is released; however, additional needs will continue to accumulate due to existing level of service deficiencies, increasing demand, facility / amenity lifecycle replacements, and recommendations in this plan may not be applicable without access to funding.

Once the City resumes investing, it is recommended that the City maintains a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) related to parks and recreation facilities spanning a ten-year period, at a minimum, with appropriations recurring on an annual basis. This approach maintains flexibility in order to maximize efficiencies as the overall needs of GRD change from year to year.

1.4.12 EXISTING CIP OVERVIEW

The table below represents the existing CIP pertaining to GRD and details the site, project type, estimated completion date, and projected cost. As mentioned, no projects are planned to resume until after 2025. Many of these improvements are needed to address infrastructure needs and enhancements, which should place a high priority on any structures that are failing as funding becomes available. Planned CIP projects range from \$50,000 to over \$10 million, with a total estimated cost of nearly \$27 million to satisfy existing needs.

Planned Capital Improvements for Parks and Recreation			
Site	Project	Est Completion	Projected Cost
Christmas Hill Park Trail	Wayfinding Signage	Beyond FY25	\$ 87,300
Christmas Hill Ranch	Update / Complete Master Plan	Beyond FY25	\$ 363,000
Christopher HS Pool	Replastering	Beyond FY25	\$ 433,800
City Bike Trails	Updated Bike Master Plan	Beyond FY25	\$ 251,100
Farrell Park	Develop Master Plan	Beyond FY25	\$ 200,400
Forest Street Park	Park Expansion	Beyond FY25	\$ 600,000
Gilroy Golf Course	Water Tank Replacement	Beyond FY25	\$ 121,000
Gilroy Sports Park	Improvements Phase IV & V	Beyond FY25	\$ 10,063,372
Las Animas / Christmas Hill	Softball Field Rehabilitation	Beyond FY25	\$ 121,700
Las Animas Park	Misc Facility Rehabilitation	Beyond FY25	\$ 2,503,600
Lions Creek	Trail Development - West of Santa Teresa & Day	Beyond FY25	\$ 1,240,600
Lions Creek	Trail Development - West Gap Closure	Beyond FY25	\$ 3,022,800
Miller / Uvas Creek Trail	Pedestrian Improvements	Beyond FY25	\$ 604,400
Miller Park Restrooms	Electrical Undergrounding	Beyond FY25	\$ 81,400
San Ysidro Park	Healthy Living Enhancement	Beyond FY25	\$ 3,021,600
Senior Center	Roof Replacement	Beyond FY25	\$ 135,000
Senior Center	ADA Restrooms	Beyond FY25	\$ 50,000
Uvas Creek Park Preserve	Develop Master Plan	Beyond FY25	\$ 235,800
Wheeler Center	HVAC & Electrical Upgrades	Beyond FY25	\$ 654,500
Wheeler Center	Evacuation Center Upgrades	Beyond FY25	\$ 240,000
Wheeler Center	Trellis Replacement	Beyond FY25	\$ 2,923,800
Total CIP Investment			\$ 26,955,172

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1.5 VISIONING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Consulting Team conducted a visioning workshop with GRD leadership to determine the identity of the organization and chart a path moving forward. Using this iterative process along with community input, demographics and trends, and an analysis of GRD's offerings and levels of service, the Mission, Vision, and Core Values of the organization were established. These defining characteristics of the organization were then used to guide the development of a strategic action plan for GRD.

1.6 MISSION & VISION STATEMENTS

MISSION		VISION
To bring people and community together.		To create memories that last a lifetime.

1.7 CORE VALUES

These represent the organization's personality and establishes the virtues that staff strive to uphold: Equity & Inclusion, Community Centered, Fun, and Health & Wellness.

CORE VALUES	
	
Equity & Inclusion	Community Centered
Fun	Health & Wellness

1.8 STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

The following were the major recommendations that were developed through the Visioning Process. Key strategies were established across four focus areas: Programming, Facilities & Amenities, Maintenance & Operations, and Funding.

1.8.1 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES

- **Add fee-based programs targeting adults 18-54.** This will address an unmet service need for a large segment of the population and should include programs in Fitness, Aquatics, and the Arts.
- **Restore key programs at 100% CR.** Programs that are vital to the Gilroy community, such as Preschool, Soccer League, and Basketball League, should be reinstated based on pricing to achieve full cost recovery.
- **Add more Family Programs.** GRD is primed for offering programs that cater to the large presence of multi-generational households and families, which could include programs like Family Night, Movie Nights, Overnights in the Park.
- **Keep up with new program trends.** Continue to evaluate new and emerging program trends that serve the community's needs e.g. Virtual Programs and ESports / innovative senior programs etc.
- **Increase Community Special Events.** Gilroy residents really enjoy events that bring the community together and celebrate culture. Also, adding more special events ties into GRD's mission, "to bring people and community together."
- **Add more youth/teen programs.** GRD provides an important outlet for youth / teens and should explore additional programs in: Arts, STEM, Nature Education, Leadership, Outdoor Birthday Parties, and Drop-in Youth Centers.
- **Launch a Mobile Rec Van.** This would allow GRD to meet program participants anywhere in the community, expand its current lineup of programs, and reduce reliance on City parks and facilities to deliver programs.
- **Recruit 5-8 new contract instructors each year.** This initiative will help GRD freshen its programs and provide offerings that are relevant for users.
- **Use more digital advertising to promote programs.** An enhanced marketing effort will greatly improve GRD's ability to create awareness and optimize program participation. Some recommended digital platforms include Facebook, PeachJar, and Google Ads.

1.8.2 STRATEGIES FOR FACILITIES & AMENITIES

- **Senior Center Transformation.** A quick solution to addressing unmet needs for facility space dedicated to recreation programs in the City is to transform the existing Senior Center into a multi-generational community center with expanded services for all ages. This transformation could be implemented in the short term without the burden of capital investment for the development of a new facility or major renovation to existing facilities.
- **Renovate Wheeler Center.** Once capital funding becomes available, the Wheeler Center should be a high priority for investment. In its current condition, the facility is most in need of air conditioning, HVAC updates, and updated program spaces
- **Create a Downtown Park.** As the City looks to revitalize downtown, GRD should be an integral component by investing in new development or a popup park that can host recreation programming and serve as a community gathering place for small events.
- **Redesign tennis courts at El Roble Park.** This site is in need of a facelift and a repurposing of the courts could allow GRD to provide more trending programs, such as pickleball or futsal.

FACILITY & PROGRAM NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- **Conduct feasibility study for Center and Pool.** Throughout the community input process, the need for additional facilities in the form of an indoor community center and aquatics was loud and clear, so a feasibility study would be due diligence for evaluating potential options. Some potential options that currently exist would be new facility development at Sunrise Park or expanding the use of the Senior Center.
- **Build a splash pad and/or pool.** Based on the level of service analysis and feedback from the community, there is a significant need for a splash pad and/or an outdoor pool. If conducted, a feasibility study should include recommendations on where to develop a new splash pad and/or pool.
- **Add bathrooms to Sunrise Park and El Roble Park.** These locations generate significant traffic, but the length of experience for users is often cut short due to the lack of restroom facilities.
- **Upgrade Christmas Hill Temporary Environmental Education Center (TEEC) facility for better utilization.** This would include renovations to improve technology, replace flooring, update classrooms, and create more program spaces for teens.
- **Add large pod of outdoor basketball courts.** Basketball is a popular sport in the community and the level of service analysis identifies a need for at least 2-3 more courts in the near future, which would be best addressed by adding a large pod that can serve as a community hub for basketball.

1.8.3 MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS STRATEGIES

- **Upgrade Wheeler Center.** As previously mentioned, the Wheeler Center is one of the immediate maintenance and improvement needs for the City that directly impacts GRD's ability to provide quality programs. Existing facility shortcomings include: AC, locker rooms, stage, dance room, deep cleaning, and fresh paint.
- **Establish dedicated janitor / handyman position.** This would greatly improve facility upkeep and remove some of the challenges associated with operating programs at dated facilities.
- **Add evening operating hours at facilities.** By adding operating hours in the evening hours at an existing facility, such as the Senior Center, or at a new facility, GRD could provide a more robust program mix and can better meet demand for adult programs.
- **Increase security at parks and facilities.** Due to the tragic events that took place at the Garlic Festival, safety and security at parks and facilities is of the utmost importance to regain the trust of Gilroy residents using public spaces.
- **Add program registration stations in facility lobbies.** This will improve the existing registration capabilities of GRD and create a higher level of customer service that is highly visible with users of City facilities.

1.8.4 FUNDING STRATEGIES

- **Evaluate fees and charges / memberships model for recurring revenue.** As part of budget cuts, a significant portion of GRD programs were eliminated; however, there is potential to reintroduce programs that can maintain a sustainable cost recovery level through effective pricing that takes into account the cost of providing programs and established cost recovery goals. GRD could also increase its revenue generation by implementing a membership model for facility use or program participation, but this would likely require some improvements to existing facilities or the development of new ones.
- **Add grant writing support.** Due to limited funding through the general fund, a key source of alternative funding for GRD could be realized through better grant writing capabilities. This

could include adding a dedicated position or sharing grant writers from other City departments to focus on generating more grant revenues for GRD.

- **Establish a Foundation.** GRD could benefit greatly from establishing a foundation that is dedicated to raising money for recreation and supporting a youth scholarship program. This is a common approach for parks and recreation agencies that the City should explore.
- **Secure funding for park and facility development / upgrades.** Although capital funding has been frozen for the near future, City facilities will continue to deteriorate and this directly impacts the ability of GRD to provide services. Potential facility improvements that should be prioritized if/when funds become available include: The Wheeler Center, a new Community Center, TEEC, park restrooms, and pickleball courts.
- **Seek more support from council and emphasize balance between cost recovery and satisfying unmet program needs of the community.** While cost recovery is an important measure of performance, this should not be the only determinant of success of GRD. In many cases, recreation programs are essential to the well being of the community and, therefore, some programs should be subsidized because they are for the greater good of the community. GRD must ensure that council members are proponents of the Division by following the cost of service model that takes into consideration benefits received by residents.
- **Identify more non-tax revenue sources.** As funding challenges continue to persist, GRD must secure alternative funding sources to offset the operational deficit, such as grants, sponsorships, and partnerships with local businesses / organizations.
- **Explore tax / bond measure dedicated to operating expenses of GRD.** As described in the funding strategies section, GRD can establish recurring tax support for its operational costs through a dedicated bond. This will require careful planning and campaigning to ensure enough support exists to pass a referendum vote. If passed, a dedicated tax / bond would allow GRD to thrive without competing with other City departments for general tax fund dollars.

1.9 CONCLUSION

The pandemic, and the organizational changes that followed, caused significant setbacks for GRD; however, much like the Gilroy community, GRD is resilient and ready to embrace a new future. The findings from this Assessment indicate strong support for recreation in the City, and the extensive planning process resulted in a strategic roadmap for GRD to follow as it enters a new era.

Successful implementation of the strategies outlined in the Assessment will require GRD to be agile and adapt as it strives to meet the recreation needs of residents. This will likely require GRD to rely more on contract instructors, partnerships with outside organizations, and alternative funding sources. GRD will continue to provide recreation programs to the best of its ability while also supporting essential community efforts that are not related to recreation. Simply put, the goal for GRD is to find ways to expand offerings to reach more people of all ages and backgrounds, while working within the current constraints.

Gilroy is a vibrant community with residents that value the recreational opportunities provided through GRD. Using the strategic recommendations from this Assessment as a guiding light, GRD is poised to overcome adversity and continue enriching the lives of residents through recreation.