



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





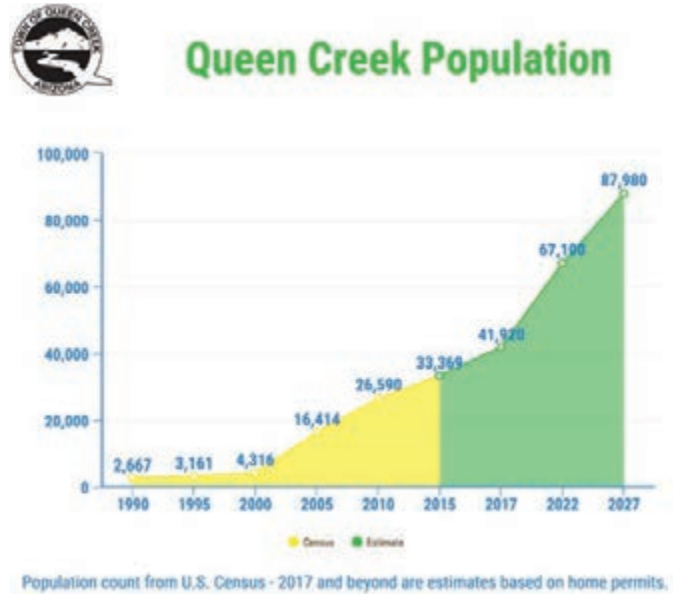
## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is to update the 2005 Town of Queen Creek Parks, Trails, & Open Space Master Plan and the 2007 Five Parks Master Plan (**Appendix B**). Since those plans were created, there have been significant changes in the community and at the state level:

- The Town’s population experienced rapid growth from 2005 to 2010, increasing by more than 10,000.
- The Great Recession tempered growth, requiring substantial organizational changes. Staffing levels were reduced and the Parks & Recreation Department was dissolved into other departments.
- Senate Bill 1525 restricted how impact fees could be used to develop parks and trails.

Queen Creek’s population continues to increase at a steady rate, more than doubling from when the previous plans were created. This updated 2017 Master Plan provides guidance for the next 10 years specifically related to the development of new facilities and recreation programs to serve the projected population of 87,980 (the population estimate does not include the April 2018 annexation of Ironwood Crossing).

Figure ES.1: **Queen Creek Population**



Population estimate does not include the April 2018 annexation of Ironwood Crossing.

## PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN VISION:

**A sustainable, balanced recreation system that offers a wide variety of activities serving people of all ages and reflecting the heritage and culture of Queen Creek.**



## CONTEXT

Queen Creek is a young community with a high median income and high level of educational attainment. Parks and recreation opportunities are essential components of a successful community, providing important health, environmental and economic benefits. Recognizing the value of parks and recreation opportunities, 71% of residents reported current recreation opportunities are good or excellent and 85% reported trails are good or excellent in the 2017 Citizen Survey.

Parks and recreation opportunities contribute to the overall quality of life — which is currently rated very favorably by Queen Creek residents. In the 2017 Citizen Survey, 97% of residents reported Queen Creek's quality of life as good or excellent, with 98% reporting Queen Creek is a good or excellent place to live.

### The Town currently provides five parks:

- Founders' Park (11 acres)
- Desert Mountain Park (29 acres)
- Horseshoe Park & Equestrian Centre (38 acres, not reflected in total developed park acres).
- Pocket Park for Pups (1 acre)
- Mansel Carter Oasis Park Phase I (48 acres – scheduled to open fall 2018)

In addition to these parks, Queen Creek also has an extensive trail system. Queen Creek's trail system is primarily located along the washes

Figure ES.2: **Queen Creek Demographics**



that run through the community and includes nine miles of paved multi-use paths and 10 miles of equestrian paths along the wash bottoms.

The Town's recreation programs include special interest classes at the Recreation Annex, youth sports through partner leagues, a weekly senior program and special events.

In addition to recreation staff to oversee the programs and events, parks staff ensure facilities are safe and well maintained.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

This plan outlines the necessary levels of service (LOS) for the Town to maintain adequate parks, trails and recreation opportunities as the population is anticipated to nearly double over the next 10 years.

The LOS is the number of park acres and recreation facilities per 10,000 residents.

The LOS in this plan was developed based on the following:

- The Town’s previously approved levels of service
- Five comparison jurisdictions selected by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee
- A statistically significant recreation preference survey conducted in July 2016 as part of this update process (95% confidence level)
- Community input received through interviews and focus groups, a community workshop and the Town’s social media platforms
- Financial considerations

- Public comment provided at monthly Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee meetings
- Recreation and demographic trends
- Town Council input and direction

### To meet the recommended LOS for park acreage, the following parks are recommended in the next 10 years:

- Queen Creek Sports Complex - 91 acres
- Sossaman Cloud Site - 22 acres
- Mansel Carter Oasis Park Phase II - 13 acres
- Desert Wells Park - 30 acres
- Sonoqui - 15 acres

Eagle Park, approximately 90 acres, is anticipated to be complete in 2020. The site is a former landfill, with limited uses and will be developed by a nonprofit and dedicated to the Town.

Also recommended is to continue building the 11-mile loop trail, along with multi-use trails with new development.

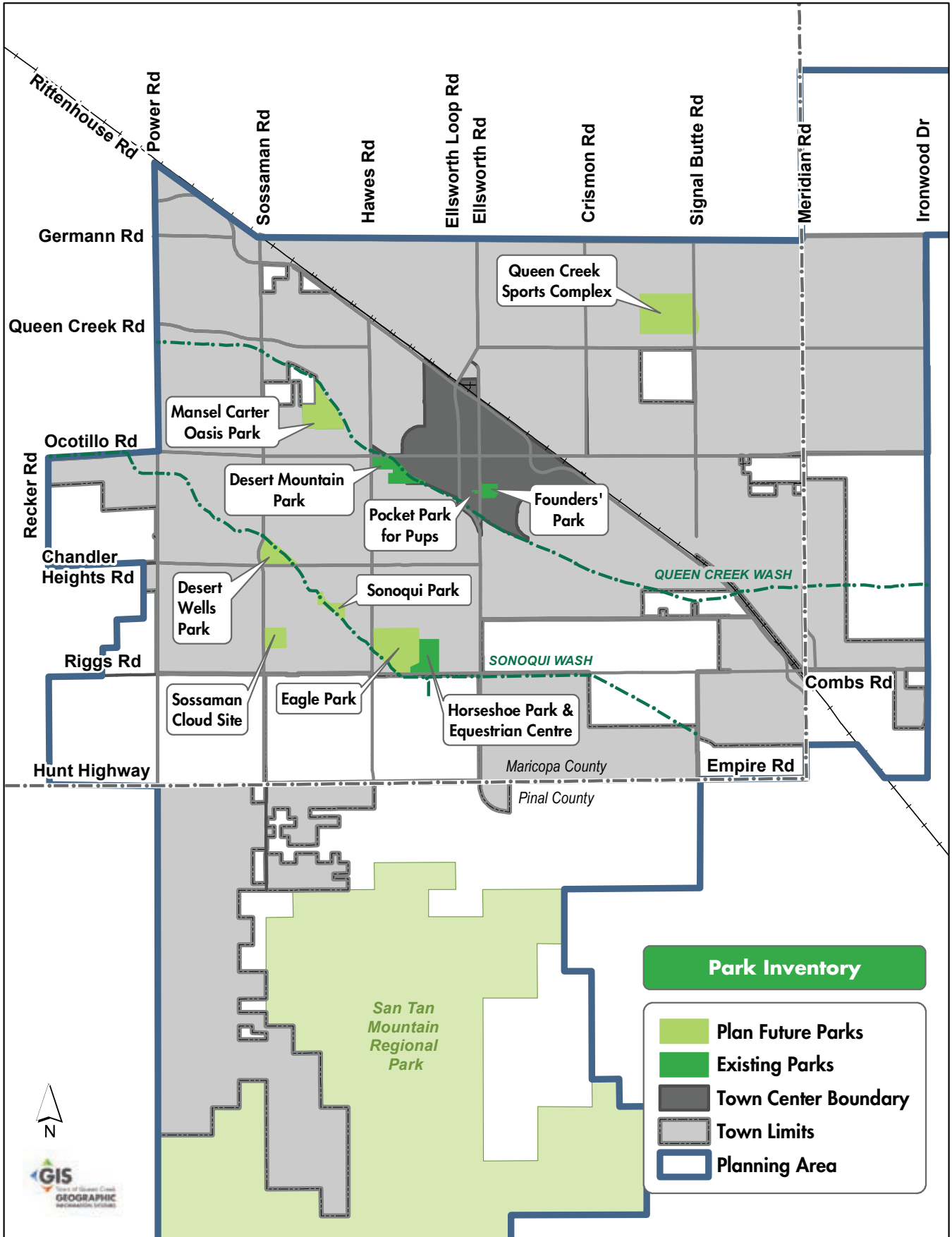
Figure ES.3: **Recommended Park Acres & Amenity Levels of Service**

Facility Type	Recommended LOS per 10,000 pop.	Current Inventory	Cumulative Total Needed	
			2018 - 2022	2023 - 2027
Park Acres	40* (51**)	89	268* (342**)	352* (449**)
Ballfields	3.58	9	24	32
Basketball Courts	1.76	6	12	16
Tennis/Pickleball Courts	2.50	0	17	22
Multi-use Fields	1.41	5	10	12
Volleyball Courts	1.16	4	8	10
Dog Parks	0.29	1	2	2.5
Splash Pads	0.23	2	1.5	2
Skate Parks	0.20	2	1	2

\* Transitional plan represents 40 acres per 10,000 residents. \*\*Represents the ultimate goal of 51 acres per 10,000.



Figure ES.4: **Park Inventory**





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recreation opportunities will also need to expand as the Town’s population continues to grow. Special interest classes will need to be added and adjusted as trends evolve. The Town will need to evaluate new partnerships to ensure there are adequate opportunities for youth and adult sports. Opportunities for new and enhanced special events, expanding the senior program as well as general partnerships will also need to be evaluated.

To successfully implement the LOS, the Town will also need to increase staffing levels, evaluate operational efficiencies of a more robust and complex parks and recreation system. Establishing a Parks and Recreation Department may be necessary to ensure coordination and increased efficiencies.

Figure ES.5: **Future Parks and Trails Timeline (based on priority)**

Project	Details
Mansel Park	Phase I - 48 of 61 acres
Trail Project	Sonoqui Wash - Riggs Rd Channel; Hawes to Ellsworth
Trail Project	Sonoqui Wash - Riggs Rd Channel; Ellsworth to Crismon
Eagle Park	90 acres of passive space
Trail Project	QC Wash - Crismon to Rittenhouse
QC Sports Complex	91 acres; moved up in the schedule to meet the demands of population growth and annexation growth
Trail Project	SRP Utility Easement Trail - Ellsworth to Signal Butte
Sossaman Cloud Site	22 acres
Trail Project	QC Wash - Rittenhouse to Town limits
Trail Project	Sonoqui Wash - Power to Recker
Mansel Park Phase II	13 acres
Desert Wells Park	30 acres
Trail Project	East trail connection - Cloud Rd to Empire Rd
Trail Project	QC Wash - Bike/Pedestrian Bridge at Meridian
Sonoqui Park	15 acres
Trail Project	Sonoqui Wash - Crismon Rd to Signal Butte Rd



## PLAN GOALS

1. Build and plan parks and recreation facilities that equitably provide recreation and leisure opportunities for all Queen Creek residents.
2. Connect parks and recreation facilities to each other, the Town Center, schools, cultural sites, neighborhoods, and other community destinations with paths and trails that maximize the use of Queen Creek and Sonoqui washes, and the San Tan Mountain Regional Park.
3. Maintain parks and recreation facilities so they are safe, attractive, and usable using state-of-the-art maintenance practices.
4. Leverage partnerships with the private sector and the county to accelerate the connection of parks, trails and recreation facilities to contribute to the Town’s economy.
5. Integrate health into recreation programs and park design.
6. Leverage local land use planning, rezoning and regional planning efforts to enhance the Town’s recreation system.
7. Provide public education about recreation opportunities and facilities for the community.
8. Maximize the range of recreation activities by providing programs that leverage recreation facility investments and meet identified recreation needs.
9. Work regionally by partnering with the county and the Flood Control District where feasible, to maximize recreation opportunities and resources for Queen Creek residents.
10. Plan for future park renovations and upgrades.

## FUNDING

Developing the parks financing plan is a comprehensive process that involves several steps. It includes identifying the level of service, preparing project cost estimates, and determining how much of the costs are related to growth to calculate impact fees.

It is expected the plan will be paid for via a combination of impact fees and existing Town resources – not new fees or taxes. Developing the financing plan is an iterative process when it comes to determining how the Town pays its share of the plan. The Town does not have a dedicated source to pay for the Town’s portion of the plan. As such, Town staff has the task of creating the funding within the Town’s existing revenue structure.

The estimated cost of the Master Plan is \$94 million over 10 years. This \$94 million estimated cost is summarized in the schedule below by type of expense.

Figure ES.6: **Funding Summary**

Expense Type	10-Year Amount
1. Existing Debt Service Payment	\$14M
2. New Improved Parks (261 Acres)	\$72M
3. New Trails (9 Miles)	\$8M
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$94M</b>

Under the proposal, \$38 million (40%) is estimated to come from impact fees and \$56 million (60%) from Town resources.