





chapter seven

PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

Easy access to safe and well-maintained parks, open space, and recreation facilities is vital to Indio as a community. Quality green spaces can encourage physical activity, improve well-being, provide a respite from developed areas, serve as habitat for native species, and provide an aesthetic backdrop to the City. Taken together, such parks and natural areas can contribute to a more livable and attractive urban environment. In addition, parks and open space provide urban sanctuaries that reduce stress and promote good mental health, accommodate trees and vegetation that reduce the heat-island effect of paved developed areas. The City of Indio recognizes that parks, recreational facilities, and open space provide numerous benefits to the community while contributing to the character and charm of Indio. As the City of Indio continues to expand and develop, future demand for open space and parks will increase. The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element establishes long-term goals and policies for producing, managing, and maintaining public parks, citywide trails network, open space, and recreational facilities in Indio. This Element also provides an inventory of existing parks and recreational facilities, urban agricultural sites, and parkland classifications.

Key Considerations and Strategies

Well-designed and properly-maintained parks and recreational facilities promote a healthy community and enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors. Parks provide space for active and passive recreation and special events, enhance the appearance of the community, and contribute to higher property values. Natural open space can protect critical habitat and special status species, creating places for trees and other vegetation that work to improve air and water quality.

As Indio continues to grow in population, conservation of open space for ecosystems services, expanded resource conservation efforts, and passive and active recreational facilities planning is imperative. Indio's parks underserve existing, disadvantaged neighborhoods, and are not distributed evenly across the City. Indio provides 1.2 acres of City-owned parkland per 1,000 residents (this excludes resort open spaces, such as golf courses. Using the Quimby Act's, California Government Code Section 66477, standard of 3 acres per 1,000 residents, the City provides approximately 40% of the recommended park acreage (*107 acres of parkspace with a population of 87,883 in 2018*). Key strategies moving forward will include expanding parkland citywide and targeting specific neighborhoods in an effort to reach disadvantaged populations.

The City maintains sixteen existing parks, and owns several other properties which may be developed as parks in the future. Indio is also exploring opportunities to provide a network of recreational trails for residents and visitors to enjoy. Existing pedestrian hiking trails are located generally northeast of Golf Center Parkway, as well as along Avenue 38 adjacent to the Talavera/Andreas Ranch development. The following parks improvements and construction efforts are expected:

- + Miles Avenue Park rehabilitation;
- + Expansion of Dr. Carreon Park;
- + Development of a sports park located south of Avenue 44 and north of Market Street; and
- + Development a neighborhood park located south of Avenue 49 and west of Monroe Street.

The following trail expansion projects are also planned:

- + Development of CV Link and trail spurs;
- + The North Indio Trailhead located at Golf Center Parkway and Ave 42;
- + Internal pedestrian trails and trailheads connecting to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands in and surrounding the Virada Specific Plan area;
- + Hiking and pedestrian trails within the Indio Trails Specific Plan area;
- + Hiking and pedestrian trails within the Citrus Ranch Specific Plan area; and
- + Recreational trails within the Indio Ranchos Polo Resort Specific Plan area and Indio Ranchos Polo Estates Specific Plan area.

Additional opportunities to increase parkland include negotiating joint-use agreements with the school districts to ensure school recreational facilities are open to the public during non-school hours, and working with utility and public service providers to allow recreational easements along utility corridors. Another potential opportunity is allowing vacant property to be leased for the establishment of temporary urban parks or community gardens to create a sense of place and promote economic development.

The Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) is currently working on the Coachella Valley Link (CV Link), a multi-modal transportation route that is intended to traverse the Coachella Valley. CV Link serves as an integral component of Indio’s recreational open space system by accommodating cyclists, pedestrians, low-speed electric, and other alternative-powered vehicles. Accompanying recreational and commercial uses will be permitted along this route, such as healthy food stands, bicycle rental stations, and charging stations. As described in the Mobility Element, the City is designing a multi-modal transportation network that will provide connections to the CV Link and other recreational open space areas throughout Indio.

Context

Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities

There are sixteen existing City parks totaling 107 acres distributed throughout Indio. Each park provides a variety of amenities that support passive and active recreation. Table 7-1 summarizes the existing public parks in Indio. Figure 7-1 identifies the location of existing public parks in Indio, as well as their respective service areas.

Table 7-1: Existing Park and Recreation Facilities

Park Name	Size	Park Type	Amenities
Burr Street Park	2.5 acres	Mini	Basketball court, playground equipment, picnic grounds
Cahuilla Park	4 acres	Neighborhood	Basketball court, open turf, picnic grounds, playground equipment, group shelter
Dominguez Park	3.3 acres	Neighborhood	Basketball court, loop walk, open turf, picnic grounds
Doug York Plaza	0.25 acre	Mini	Open turf and group shelter
Dr. Carreon Park	2.4 acres	Neighborhood	Basketball court, loop walk, open turf, playground equipment, public art, restrooms
George S. Patton Park	4.3 acres	Neighborhood	Basketball court, tennis court, open turf, playground equipment, restrooms, and group shelter
Hjorth Street Park	3 acres	Neighborhood	Loop walk, open turf, picnic grounds
Marshall Parkway	0.5 acre	Mini	Garden and playground equipment
Miles Avenue Park	16 acres	Community	Basketball court, open turf, picnic grounds, playground equipment, restroom, event space, and group shelter
Mulligan Dog Park	2 acres	Neighborhood	Dog park with fenced dog run and benches
Municipal Golf Course	46 acres	Special Use	Driving range, clubhouse/pro shop, putting green, 3 par course
North Jackson Park and Rotary Field	4.5 acres	Community	Softball fields, basketball court, racquetball, tennis court, concessions with restrooms, loop walk, picnic grounds, playground equipment, and group shelter

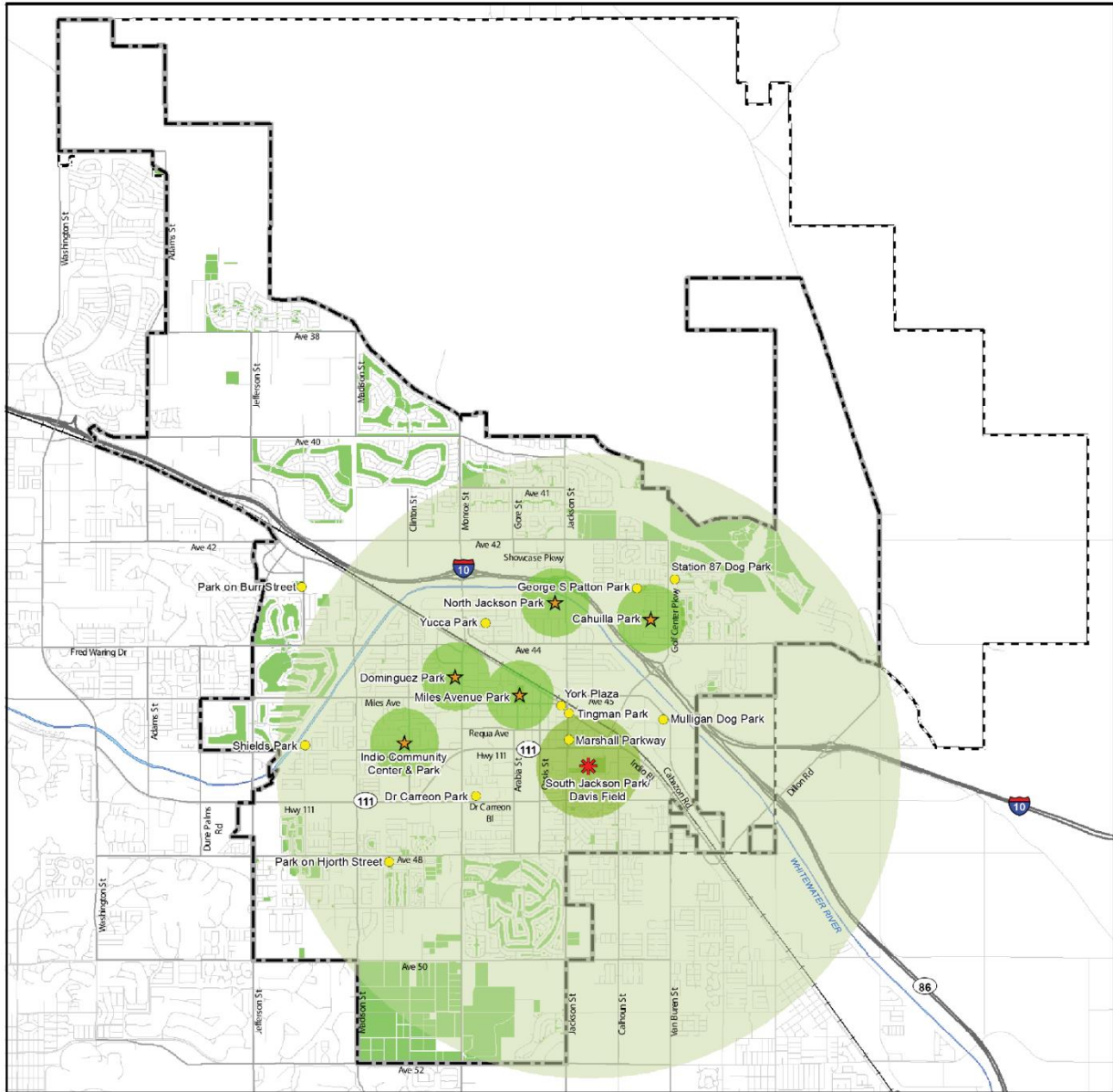
Shields Park	1 acre	Mini	Loop walk and picnic grounds
South Jackson Park and Davis Field	17.5 acres	Community	Soccer field, racquetball, tennis courts, concessions with restrooms, open turf, picnic grounds, playground equipment, public art, event space, and group shelter. It also includes the Pawley Pool Family Aquatic Complex, owned by the Desert Recreation District. This complex features a lap pool, wading pool, and splash pad
Station 87 Dog Park	0.8 acres	Mini	Dog park with fenced dog run, separation for small and large dogs, benches, water and shade structure
Yucca Park	1 acre	Neighborhood	Basketball courts, picnic grounds, playground equipment, and group shelter

The South Jackson Community Park also hosts the Boys and Girls Club John Carroll and Jim O’Brien Clubhouse. This clubhouse serves as an afterschool center for local students. In addition to these parks, the Desert Recreation District operates the Indio Community Center, gymnasium, and park located at Avenue 46 and Clinton Street. The Community Center offers a variety of programs and services to residents including fitness programs, children’s programs, and recreation opportunities, which are enhanced by the outdoor park space. The park includes playground equipment, a walking path and benches, and open turf areas.



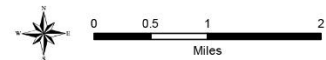
South Jackson Park

Figure 7-1: Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities



Existing Park Service Radii

- City Boundary
- Sphere of Influence
- Roads
- Railroads
- Highways
- Other Open Space / Recreation
- Parks Under 5 Acres
- Neighborhood Parks 5-20 Acres
- Community Parks 20-100 Acres
- Mini Parks: 1/4 Mile Radius
- Neighborhood Parks: 1/3 Mile Radius
- Community Parks: 1/2 Mile Radius
- Community Parks: 3 Mile Radius



Source: Riverside County/AFCO (City Boundary, 2012; SOI, 2012); Riverside County/ILMA (Roads, Railroads, Highways); Riverside County (River)

The information on this map was derived from various digital databases, sourced above. Care was taken in the creation of this map but it is provided "as is". PDC cannot accept any responsibility for any errors, omissions, or positional accuracy, and therefore, there are no warranties which accompany this product. Users are cautioned to field verify information on this product before making any decisions.

Parkland Classifications

As the City continues to acquire and develop parkland, the following classifications serve as a guideline for identifying the size and amenities to be provided for various types of parks. Refer to Figure 7-1 for a map of existing parks and recreational facilities.

Mini Parks

Parks that exist primarily in residential areas and have features, such as grass, shade trees, passive areas, green space, shelters, native plant life, playgrounds, and play structures. They may be implemented in “tot-lot” configurations that provide secure recreational space for small children and include equipment, such as swings, slides, ‘monkey bars’, and sand boxes, while leaving sufficient room for people to sit and enjoy the space. Mini-parks are typically less than an acre in size and are intended to serve a population within walking distance or short biking distance. Indio’s mini parks include: Shields Park, Doug York Plaza, Marshall Parkway, Burr Street Park, and Station 87 Dog Park.



Station 87 Dog Park

Plazas and Greens

Typically, two acres or less, plazas and greens host a wide variety of activities that serve as formal or informal community gathering spaces. These park types are shaped primarily by building frontages and are primarily hardscape with occasional landscape in planters or containers. Greens are landscaped open areas located at the center of a community. Features may include gazebos, water features, trees, shade, performance areas, public artwork, and other similar features. The open space between City Hall and the Indio Library is an example of a plaza.



Example of a typical plaza

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks provide unobstructed areas for passive or active recreation and are primarily located in residential areas. They include features such as: grass, trees, restrooms, tot lots, picnic and shade shelters, grills, playground equipment, open fields, informal sports areas, swimming pools, community gardens, or neighborhood centers. Neighborhood parks typically serve the surrounding neighborhood and are less than ten acres in size. Dominguez, Cahilla and Dr. Carreon Parks are examples of neighborhood parks in Indio.



Dominguez Park

Community Parks

Community parks are designed to serve all residents of the City. They are typically 10 to 50 acres in size and include features such as: a swimming pool, a community center, sports areas or complexes, lights, entertainment areas, large grass areas, large picnic and shelter areas, restrooms, on-site parking, special features such as skateboard areas, outdoor theatres, disc golf, BMX, exercise station, ponds, or water features. South Jackson Park is an example of a community park.



South Jackson Park

Special Use Areas

Special use areas may include a variety of activities including: large-scale sports complexes, fair grounds, polo grounds, tennis courts, swimming pools, gardens, concessions, lakes, and animal uses. Special use areas serve the entire community and may serve adjacent cities. The Fairgrounds and Empire Polo fields are examples of a special use area in Indio.



Empire Polo Fields

Open Space

Areas generally free from development or developed with low-intensity uses that respect the natural environment. Open space areas and serve as preservation of natural, cultural, archaeological resources, passive outdoor recreation, public safety and health, and shape urban form. This includes areas such as the Indio Hills and Whitewater River.



Open space in the Coachella Valley

Greenways and Trails

Greenways and trails consist of walking, biking, hiking, equestrian, greenway, long distance, off road, rail, canal, and waterway paths with the purpose to meet passive or active recreation, informal, or formal transportation. CV Link is an example of a greenway.



CV Link

Urban Agriculture

Urban agriculture also provides many benefits to public health, environmental sustainability, and economic vitality. Locally-grown food ensures healthy, nutritious, and fresh foods are accessible to the public. Urban agriculture also reduces the environmental impact of transporting food long distances to reach the consumer (i.e. vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions) and can provide social, physical, and emotional benefits of gardening.

In order to continue to provide access to locally-grown food, the City is creating opportunities to integrate small-scale agricultural activities into the City's neighborhoods in publicly-accessible community gardens, and edible landscaping on City property. Schools can also take part in providing urban agricultural activities by planting gardens on school properties that can serve as an educational resource and a healthy food source.

Goals and Policies

Open Space

A comprehensive network of parks and open space with both active and passive recreational facilities, promote healthy living and community wellness, and enhance the character of Indio.

Goal PR-1: Open Space Network: A comprehensive open space network that balances recreation, wellness, and habitat protection.

PR-1 Policies

PR-1.1 Accessibility to open space. Ensure that areas designated as open space for public use remain accessible to users of all ages and abilities.

PR-1.2 Balance conservation efforts with accessible open space. Balance public access to natural open space resources with habitat and wildlife conservation efforts by locating trail easements within the less environmentally-sensitive areas and directing users to remain on designated trails through signage or fencing. Implement the Coachella Valley Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan.

PR-1.3 CV Link. Support development and maintenance of the CV Link along the Whitewater River as a fundamental and integral part of Indio’s active recreational open space system, along with supportive, ancillary uses (e.g. healthy food stands, bicycle and alternative-fuel vehicle rental stations, and similar uses).

PR-1.4 CV Link spurs. Implement development of “spurs” that connect CV link to neighborhoods along Avenue 48 and Madison Street, and in North Indio. Considerations should be given to add CV Link Spurs on Hwy 111 and Downtown Indio.

PR-1.5 Trail connections. Encourage projects to provide connections to existing trails, and include mini parks, dog parks, community gardens, or other recreational features within the design.

PR-1.6 Regional open space. Support State and regional efforts to create regional open space networks.

Parks

The City offers parkland for existing and future residents, employees, and visitors.

Goal PR-2: High-Quality Parks. High-quality parks and recreational facilities that promote community health and are safe and convenient to access.

PR-2 Policies

PR-2.1 Park ratio. Work to achieve a ratio of 3 acres of public parks per 1,000 residents and place a park or recreation amenity within one-half mile of all Indio residents. Maintain adequate land dedication requirements and/or development fees for new development to meet the park ratio.

PR-2.2 Parks classification system. Utilize the parks classification system identified in the General Plan to help guide public park planning and improvements in the City.

- PR-2.3 Infill parks in disadvantaged neighborhoods.** Focus City efforts to create a variety of new parks types, including mini, neighborhood, and community gardens within Indio's existing neighborhoods, particularly the most disadvantaged neighborhoods as identified in the Health and Equity Element. Ensure parks are safe, easy to access, and well maintained.
- PR-2.4 Temporary/pop-up parks.** Encourage the establishment of temporary or pop-up urban parks, public plazas, community gardens, fitness opportunities, or similar on vacant land, parking lots, or undeveloped land until permanent development occurs. Use as a short-term placemaking strategy in Downtown, Midtown, and other areas of the City.
- PR-2.5 Design for heat.** Design cool parks and playgrounds to facilitate activity in hot weather conditions by including shade structures, shade trees, water fountains, splash pads, lighting for night play, and other design features that mitigate heat.
- PR-2.6 Design for safety.** Utilize CPTED design techniques, such as providing clear lines of sight, adequate lighting, and wayfinding signs, to ensure parks are safe. Face residential and commercial buildings towards new parks.
- PR-2.8 New development.** Ensure that new residential developments provide adequate on-site recreational and open space amenities consistent with the values and standards of the community and the needs of new development. Require projects to establish mechanisms, such as a Community Facilities District, to adequately maintain new parks and recreational facilities.
- PR-2.9 Existing gated communities.** Work with developers of residential neighborhoods to allow the general public access to private open space and recreational spaces.
- PR-2.10 Maintain public parks.** Provide the appropriate resources and staffing to improve and maintain existing park and recreational facilities in Indio.
- PR-2.11 Art in public spaces.** Ensure new park facilities have adequate spaces and equipment for active and passive recreation, as well as incorporate public art into the park design.
- PR-2.12 Recreation programs.** Promote opportunities for physical activities for all ages and abilities by improving and expanding community recreation programs.
- PR-2.13 Partner with local schools.** Seek opportunities to partner with local schools and public agencies to allow for the joint use of school properties as parks and recreational centers that are open to the public during non-school hours, and to develop community gardens on school property.
- PR-2.14 Park facility locations.** Ensure that public facilities and services are equitably distributed throughout Indio.
- PR-2.15 Smoke-free.** Encourage smoke-free and Vape-free workplaces, multi-family housing, parks, and other outdoor gathering places to reduce exposure to second-hand smoke.

Public Trails

Locate and design trails to protect sensitive habitats and natural resources to the extent practical.

Goal PR-3: Quality Trails Network. Trails sited to ensure compatibility with natural resource protection and to encourage physical activity.

PR-3 Policies

PR-3.1: Trails network. Support a comprehensive and cohesive system of recreational trails with linkages to the CV Link, key centers, parks, recreation, and open space areas.

PR-3.2: Trail design. Design and manage trails in natural open space areas in a manner consistent with the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan. Coordinate efforts with local hiking and equestrian trail groups.

PR-3.3 Dedicate space for trails. Require new development projects to dedicate easements for trails, trailheads, and other needed improvements, where appropriate. Dedications may include paseos, urban trails, greenways, and/or Class I bicycle facilities that connect to centers, schools, parks, and open space areas. Seek opportunities to enhance them with informational kiosks, public art, outdoor fitness equipment, and rest areas.

PR-3.4 Utility easements. Work with utility providers other key organizations and agencies to utilize utility easements for recreational purposes.

PR-3.5 Maintain public trails. Ensure adequate funding and resources are available to maintain the City's recreational trails.

Recreation

Indio has a rich history of festivals, special events, and community recreation. Continued support for these events will maintain the culture and character of the City.

Goal PR-4: Community Recreation. Offer a variety of recreational programs, festivals, and other special events that provide opportunities for community gathering and social interaction.

PR-4 Policies

PR-4.1: Equitable access to recreation and special events. Continue to ensure that residents have equal access and opportunity to participate in the City's recreational activities and programs regardless of age, economic status, disability, culture, or other factors

PR-4.2: Special events. Provide opportunities for special activities, such as open mic nights, movie nights, community dances, plays, concerts, and similar events, within the City's parks and other appropriate public spaces for all ages and abilities.

PR-4.3: Temporary open-air markets. Encourage the establishment of temporary markets and structures, such as farmers' markets, craft fairs, food trucks, and similar temporary or mobile vending opportunities. Use as a short-term placemaking strategy in Downtown, Midtown, and other areas of the City.

PR-4.4: Affordable events. Seek opportunities to partner with the Indio Performing Arts Center, College of the Desert, County of Riverside Indio Library, Coachella Valley History Museum, and other cultural institutions to provide affordable events and entertainment.

PR-4.5: Youth programs. Continue to support the Indio Teen Center, Boys and Girls Club, Desert Recreation District, after school programs, and other facilities and activities that cater to Indio’s youth.

PR-4.6: Adult and senior programs. Continue to support the Senior Center/Mature Adults Center, Life Long Learning Programs, and other facilities and activities that cater to Indio’s older adults.

PR-4.7: Promote physical activity. Promote physical activity by encouraging community sports and tournament events to take place within the City’s parks.

Urban Agriculture

Urban agriculture, including community gardens, edible landscapes, and community-support agriculture, supports a local-food system that increases access to healthy and nutritious foods, encourages social connectivity, and reduces natural resource consumption for the production and distribution of food.

Goal PR-5: Urban Agriculture. Promote urban agriculture that supports public health, fosters community involvement, and provides a local food source.

PR-5 Policies

PR-5.1: Urban agriculture. Support small-scale, urban agriculture and farming in residential areas, where possible, while ensuring such activities do not result in negative impacts on neighboring properties.

PR-5.2: Community gardens. Establish an Indio community garden program that provides opportunities for residents and school children to grow fruits, vegetables, and herbs for personal consumption. Ensure that public community gardens and other urban agricultural resources are accessible to all members of the community.

PR-5.3: Underutilized space. Allow underutilized park areas, utility right-of-ways, and other undeveloped land to be used as productive space for growing food.

PR-5.4: Farmers’ markets. Actively seek a farmers’ market for Indio.

PR-5.5: Farm stands. Allow farm stands diverse locations throughout Indio, including on commercial or mixed-use zoning districts, the Riverside County Fairgrounds, vacant lots, and parking lots.

PR-5.6: Edible landscaping. Use edible gardens and landscaping, where appropriate, in residential, commercial, and public and institutional projects.

PR-5.7: Promote healthy food education. Support educational opportunities for youth and adults to participate in healthy food activities, including community gardens, cooking classes, organic gardening, and health and nutrition classes.

PR-5.8: School gardens. Work with the Desert Sands Unified School District and other local schools to develop community gardens on school sites to raise awareness and promote an urban food system.

Implementation Actions

The table below identifies programs, policy updates, planning efforts, coordination efforts, and other actions that will help implement the General Plan’s parks, recreation, and open space vision and policies. Programs are consistent with this chapter’s goals and policies.

Table 7-2: Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Programs

	DESCRIPTION	PRIORITY	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
1	<p>Park Master Plan. Prepare a Park Master Plan that includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive inventory of the City’s existing and planned parks and recreational facilities, including regional park and open space initiatives. • A comprehensive inventory of the City’s existing and planned trails. • An assessment of future park and recreational needs. • Preferred planning and zoning tools for new development, such as land dedication and in lieu fees. • Park funding and financing options, including mechanisms to maintain existing and future park resources, including development extract, general fund, bonds, and grants. 	High	Short	Planning, Community Services
2	<p>Park and recreational facility fee study. Conduct a park and recreational facility fee study, in conjunction with other fee studies defined in the General Plan, to support updated park and recreational impact fees.</p>	High	Short	Planning, Community Services
3	<p>Urban agriculture. Amend the Municipal Code to implement the General Plan Update to support urban agriculture. Adopt regulations that specify the requirements for community gardens and other urban agricultural uses, such as farm stands, farmers’ markets, and animal keeping.</p>	Medium	Short	Planning
4	<p>Community garden program. Establish a Community Garden Program in the City.</p>	Medium	Medium	Community Services, Planning
5	<p>Park placemaking. Create incentives for converting vacant, underutilized, or parking lots into small parks or open spaces throughout the City.</p>	Medium	Short	Planning
6	<p>Increase parkland. Establish a funding source to increase parkland within Indio by transforming abandoned utility corridors into linear parks,</p>	Medium	Short	Planning and Public Works

	reclaiming unused street rights-of-way, or purchasing fallow farmland.			
7	Trail signage. Develop trail signage program to include signage along trails for interpretative purposes, and to display rules of appropriate use and conduct on trails.	Low	Short	Public Works
8	Edible landscaping program. Develop a program that permits planting fruit trees within parks or on other City property. Coordinate with non-profit organizations or community volunteers to identify funding sources, plant and maintain the trees, and harvest the fruit.	Low	Short	Planning and Public works, Parks
9	Joint use agreements. Create joint-use agreements with Desert Sands Unified School District to maximize shared community use of school facilities and City park facilities, where appropriate, to expand opportunities for physical activity.	High	Short	Planning, Community Services