



CHAPTER 5  
PARKS AND  
RECREATION

*Source: Fregonese Associates. Memorial Park. Payson, Utah. June, 2018.*



Parks provide a variety of health, social, economic, and environmental benefits. When communities have easy access to parks, many of these benefits are realized. Parks improve mental health outcomes and stimulate the economy by attracting visitors from neighboring communities. The air and water quality benefits parks offer are not only beneficial for the environment, they also improve public health. Planning for the future of parks is essential in maintaining and increasing the many benefits they provide.

Recreation programs also provide valuable opportunities for improving physical fitness and building connections within the community. Building on existing programs and responding to recreation trends will ensure Payson continues to offer high quality programming.

This chapter summarizes findings from Payson's Park and Recreation Master Plan and outlines a path forward for the Parks and Recreation Departments in Payson. The Master Plan envisions a system of parks, trails, recreation opportunities, and open spaces that promote health and wellness, equitable access, and environmental conservation. The Master Plan establishes a road map to guide Payson's efforts to provide high quality, well-maintained parks, trails, open spaces, and recreational opportunities for existing and future community members. The Master Plan establishes specific goals and strategies for developing, conserving, and maintaining high-quality parks,

trails, recreation programs, facilities, and open spaces across the city. The Master Plan goals and strategies align with Payson's General Plan and have been included at the end of this chapter.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1** Plan neighborhoods where all residents have access to nearby jobs, healthcare, education, services, shopping, parks, and open space.
- 2** Ensure our neighborhoods have sidewalks, pedestrian ways, bike facilities and trails that connect to key destinations.
- 3** Invest in new public infrastructure that benefits the community broadly and makes good use of public funds.

From small neighborhood parks to large recreation complexes, Payson offers an array of indoor and outdoor recreation options, social gathering spaces, and educational opportunities. Payson's parks are classified into six categories: community parks, neighborhood parks, pocket parks, linear parks, natural areas and open spaces, and special use.

### Community Parks

Community parks are larger in size, 15 to 50 acres, and are designed to serve several neighborhoods, typically within a 1-mile radius. Community parks can be very diverse in nature, offering both daytime and evening activities. Community park facilities may include large play structures, sports fields, trails, and swimming pools.

### Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks form the foundation of the park system and serve as the recreational and social focus of a neighborhood. These parks are typically designed within a limited amount of space, 5 to 10 acres, and have a ½ mile service area radius. Neighborhood parks provide facilities for all ages and are easily accessible, without barriers such as roads.

### Pocket Parks

Pocket parks are smaller spaces, typically less than 1 acre, that provide a safe and inviting environment for surrounding community members. These parks are most often located in a developed area surrounded by homes or on small lots with a few places for people to gather, relax, and enjoy the

outdoors. Pocket parks serve surrounding areas within a ¼ mile radius.

### Linear Parks

Linear parks support trail-oriented activities like walking, running, biking, and rolling. These parks may have limited facilities like benches or picnic tables.

### Natural Areas and Open Spaces

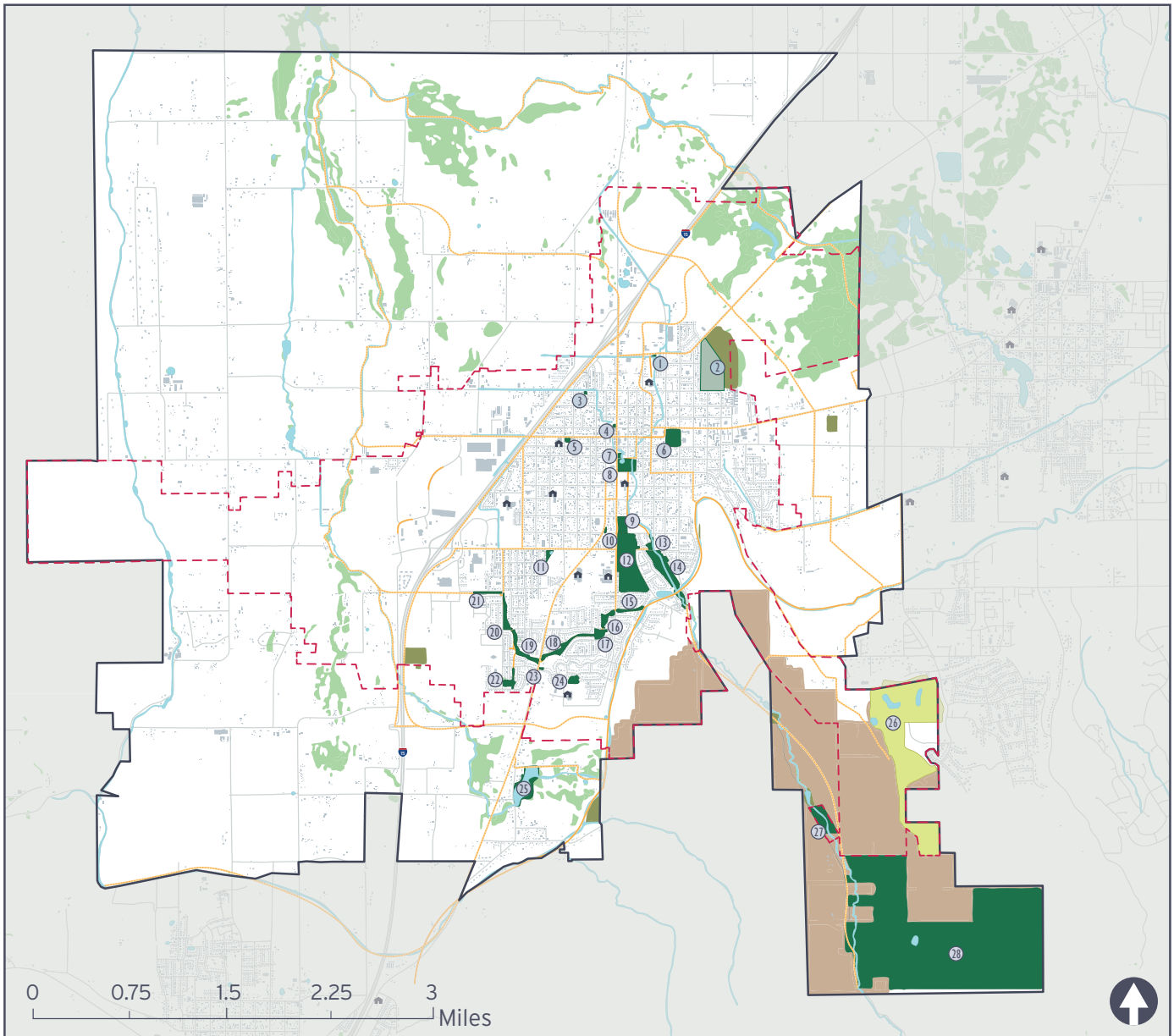
Natural areas and open spaces are undeveloped lands primarily left in a natural state and typically geographically or geologically unique. No standards exist or are proposed for natural resource areas or open spaces. Natural areas and open spaces may provide amenities like trails, picnic areas, and docks. In order to protect Natural Areas and Open Spaces, Payson City may adopt specific limitations and rules to manage said areas.

### Special Use

Special use areas are typically stand-alone sites that support specialized uses and recreational activities. Payson's special use areas include the Payson Cemetery, the Gladstan Golf Course, and the Peteeneet Museum and Cultural Arts Center.

Park Type	Name	Address	District	Acres
<i>Community Park</i>	Constitution Park	655 South Main Street	2	5.95
	Gene Hillman Recreation Complex	955 South Main Street	2,3	43.49
	Hollow Park	800 South 300 East	3	16.08
	Memorial Park	250 South Main	2	7.23
	Payson Canyon Kiwanis Park	Nebo Loop Road	4	14.08
<i>Neighborhood Park</i>	Blackhawk Park	935 East Jay Lane	2	1.79
	Dry Mountain Park	1400 South 200 West	3	4.27
	East Hill Park	400 West 1650 South	3	2.27
	Hidden Cove Park	1450 South 500 West	3	4.68
	Hideaway Park	1300 South 200 West	3	1.87
	Jesse Taylor Park	930 West 1400 South	3	4.54
	McMullin Park	600 West 800 South	3	1.34
	Pioneer Square	439 Utah Avenue	2	0.91
	Temple View Park	1600 South 910 West	3	3.18
	Walkara Park and Trail	1500 South 700 West	3	5.25
<i>Pocket Park</i>	Arrowhead Park	400 East 700 North	2	0.72
	Centennial Pioneer Plaza	100 N Main Street	2	0.27
	Library Corner	200 South Main	2	0.62
	Monument Park	700 South 100 West	2	0.30
	Saddlebrook Park 70	SR 198 Saddlebrook Drive	3	0.26
	Wightman Park	240 West 400 North	2	0.21
<i>Linear Park</i>	Dry Creek Parkway Extension	1130 South 930 West	3	0.89
	Dry Creek Trail Parkway	1250 South Main	3	3.15
<i>Natural Areas and Open Spaces</i>	Spring Lake Park	12240 South Spring Lake Road	4	21.07
	Forebay Recreation Area	13216 S Nebo Loop Road (FR15)	5	472.81
<i>Special Use</i>	Gladstan Golf Course	1 Gladstan Drive	5	208.29
	Payson Cemetery	805 East 400 North	6	30.60
	Peteetneet Museum and Cultural Arts Center	10 South 600 East	2	7.48

Figure 46. Payson Park Type and Acreage, 2021.



- |                                   |                               |                      |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| ① Arrowhead Park                  | ⑮ Dry Creek Trail Parkway     | Public Park          |
| ② Payson Cemetery                 | ⑯ Hideaway Park               | Cemetery             |
| ③ Wightman Park                   | ⑰ Dry Mountain Park           | Golf Course          |
| ④ Centennial Pioneer Plaza        | ⑱ Hidden Cove Park            | Public Open Space    |
| ⑤ Pioneer Square                  | ⑲ Walkara Park                | Critical Habitat     |
| ⑥ Peteetneet Museum               | ⑳ Jesse Taylor Park           | Wetland              |
| ⑦ Library Corner                  | ㉑ Dry Creek Parkway Extension | Water Body           |
| ⑧ Memorial Park                   | ㉒ Temple View Park            | Existing Trail       |
| ⑨ Constitution Park               | ㉓ Saddlebrook Park 70         | Future Trail         |
| ⑩ Monument Park                   | ㉔ East Hill Park              | Payson City Boundary |
| ⑪ McMullin Park                   | ㉕ Spring Lake Park            | Annexation Boundary  |
| ⑫ Gene Hillman Recreation Complex | ㉖ Gladstan Golf Course        | Road                 |
| ⑬ Blackhawk Park                  | ㉗ Payson Canyon Kiwanis Park  | Building Footprint   |
| ⑭ Hollow Park                     | ㉘ Forebay Recreation Area     | School               |

Figure 47. Payson Park and Recreation Facilities, 2021.

Determining level of service (LOS), a standard for providing park land, is one way to ensure park and recreation agencies are meeting the public need. LOS allows agencies to measure their progress each year and to plan for the provision of future park land. Level of service is typically measured by calculating the number of park acres per 1,000 residents or by establishing a dollar amount to be spent on park land per person. LOS should be established by local park and recreation agencies with detailed knowledge of the needs and expectations of the population they are serving.

Payson’s 2002 level of service was 7.09 acres per 1,000 people. Today (2021), Payson is providing 7.18 acres of park land per 1,000 people. In addition to measuring level of service by acreage, Payson will establish a monetary LOS that sets a standard for dollars spent on park land per person. Payson’s established LOS will reflect anticipated population growth and infrastructure needs.

In addition to establishing a level of service, looking at the provision of different park types and the service area of these parks can provide agencies with a more detailed understanding of potential gaps and needs. Service areas were established for community parks (1 mile radius), neighborhood parks (1/2 miles radius), and pocket parks (1/4 miles radius). These buffers were used to identify gaps for the entire park system and for each park type. Service areas were not determined for the remaining park types given the limited number of parks, large acreages, or limited amenities.

Overall, Payson is serving about half (45%) of its existing residential acres and 86% of its existing population (Figures 48-49). Payson’s total park service area (including community, neighborhood, and pocket parks) is concentrated in the center of the city. While the service area extends into all six park service areas, large gaps exist in areas 1, 4, 5, and 6 (Figure 50).

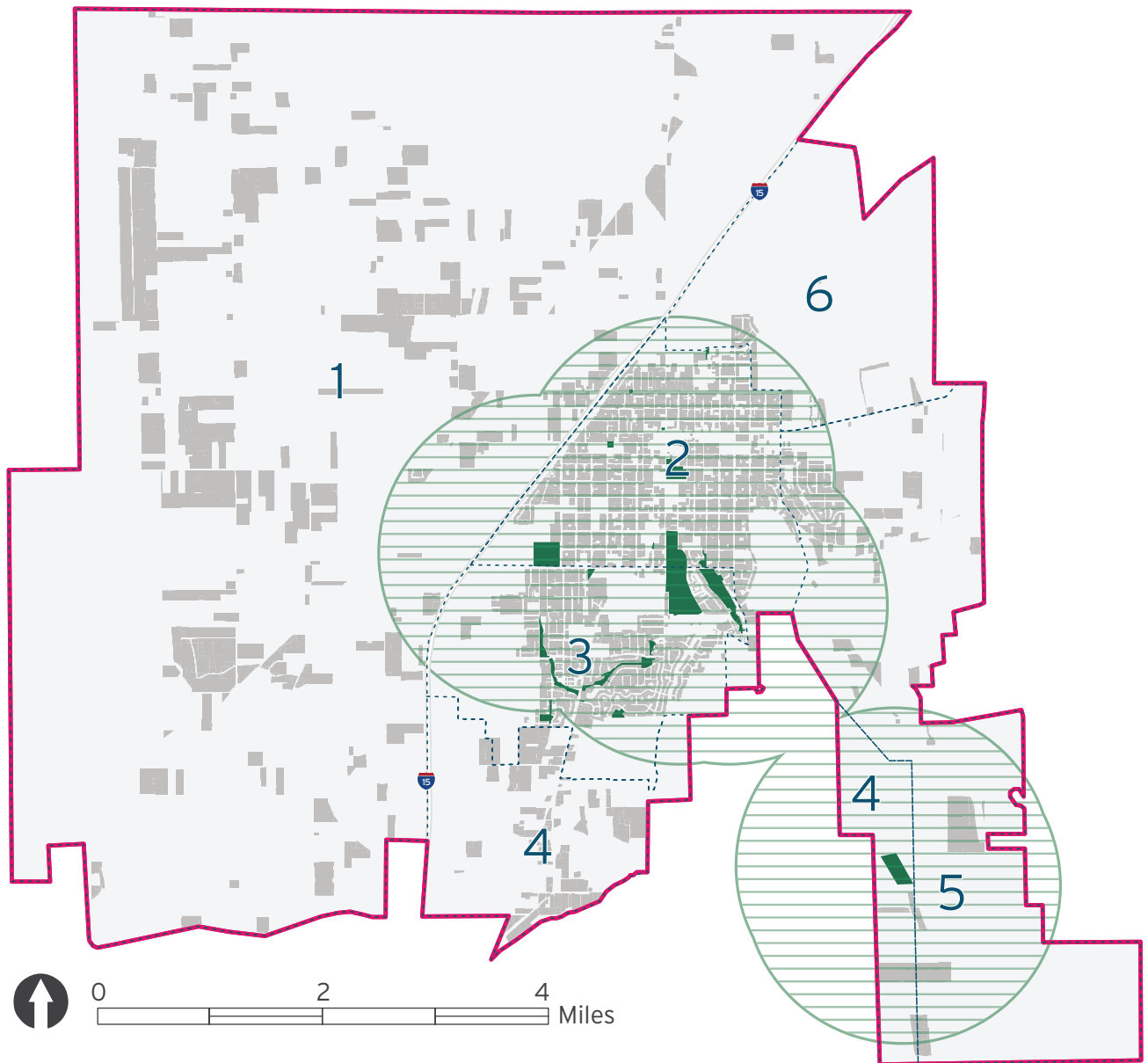
	Total Residential Acres	Acres Served	% Served	Acres Not Served	% Not Served
<b>Existing</b>	3,278 acres	1,477 acres	45.1%	1,801 acres	54.9%
<b>Future</b>	8,193 acres	2,972 acres	36.3%	5,221 acres	63.7%

Figure 48. Park Service for Existing and Future Residential Acres. Future totals are projected for the year 2050.

	Total Population	Population Served	% Served	Population Not Served	% Not Served
<b>Existing</b>	23,195 people	19,997 people	86.2%	3,198 people	13.8%
<b>Future</b>	60,962 people	32,071 people	52.6%	28,891 people	47.4%

Figure 49. Park Service for Payson’s Existing and Future Population. Future totals are projected for the year 2050.

\*Payson’s annexation boundary was used for service area calculations.



- Annexation Boundary
- Park District Boundary
- Existing Residential
- Community, Neighborhood, and Pocket Parks
- Park Service Area (Community, Neighborhood, and Pocket Parks)

Figure 50. Combined Park Service Area Buffers with Existing Residential Land

Payson Parks and Recreation runs more than 20 recreation programs for youth, adults, and seniors. These recreation opportunities accommodate a broad range of interests, skill levels, and physical ability, and are available to Payson residents and those from surrounding communities.

### YOUTH PROGRAMS

- ➔ Badminton
- ➔ Baseball
- ➔ Basketball
- ➔ Cheerleading
- ➔ Dance
- ➔ Fishing
- ➔ Flag Football
- ➔ Tackle Football
- ➔ Gymnastics
- ➔ Snowboarding
- ➔ Soccer
- ➔ Softball
- ➔ Swimming Lessons
- ➔ Swim Team
- ➔ Tennis
- ➔ Track & Field
- ➔ Wrestling
- ➔ Volleyball

### ADULT PROGRAMS

- ➔ Men's, Women's, and Coed Softball
- ➔ Women's & Coed Volleyball
- ➔ Men's Basketball
- ➔ Men's Flag Football

### SENIOR PROGRAMS

- ➔ Chair Yoga
- ➔ Discover Our World
- ➔ Game and Library Room
- ➔ Lunches and Social Time
- ➔ Silver Sneakers Seated Classics
- ➔ Tai Chi
- ➔ Yogalates

### ARTS AND CRAFTS

- ➔ Ceramics
- ➔ Oil Painting
- ➔ Wood Carving

### EVENTS

- ➔ Christmas Boutique
- ➔ Mariachi Festival
- ➔ Onion Days
- ➔ Salmon Supper
- ➔ Western Heritage Night

### EVENT SUPPORT

- ➔ Half Marathon
- ➔ Marathon
- ➔ Scottish Festival

### RUNNING EVENTS

- ➔ 1 mile, 5k, 10k



### Future Park Development

Payson's population is projected to reach over 60,000 people by 2060. If Payson's park service areas remain the same, the percentage of residential land served and the percentage of people served would decrease as the population grows and expands into new areas of the city (Figure 51).

Expanding the number of parks in Payson and expanding the distribution of parks will better serve existing and future populations. For community parks, there are large service gaps in districts 1, 4, and 6. Neighborhood and pocket parks require investment in park districts 1, 4, 5, and 6. By identifying appropriate locations for future park investment and land acquisition now, serving future populations will be more feasible.

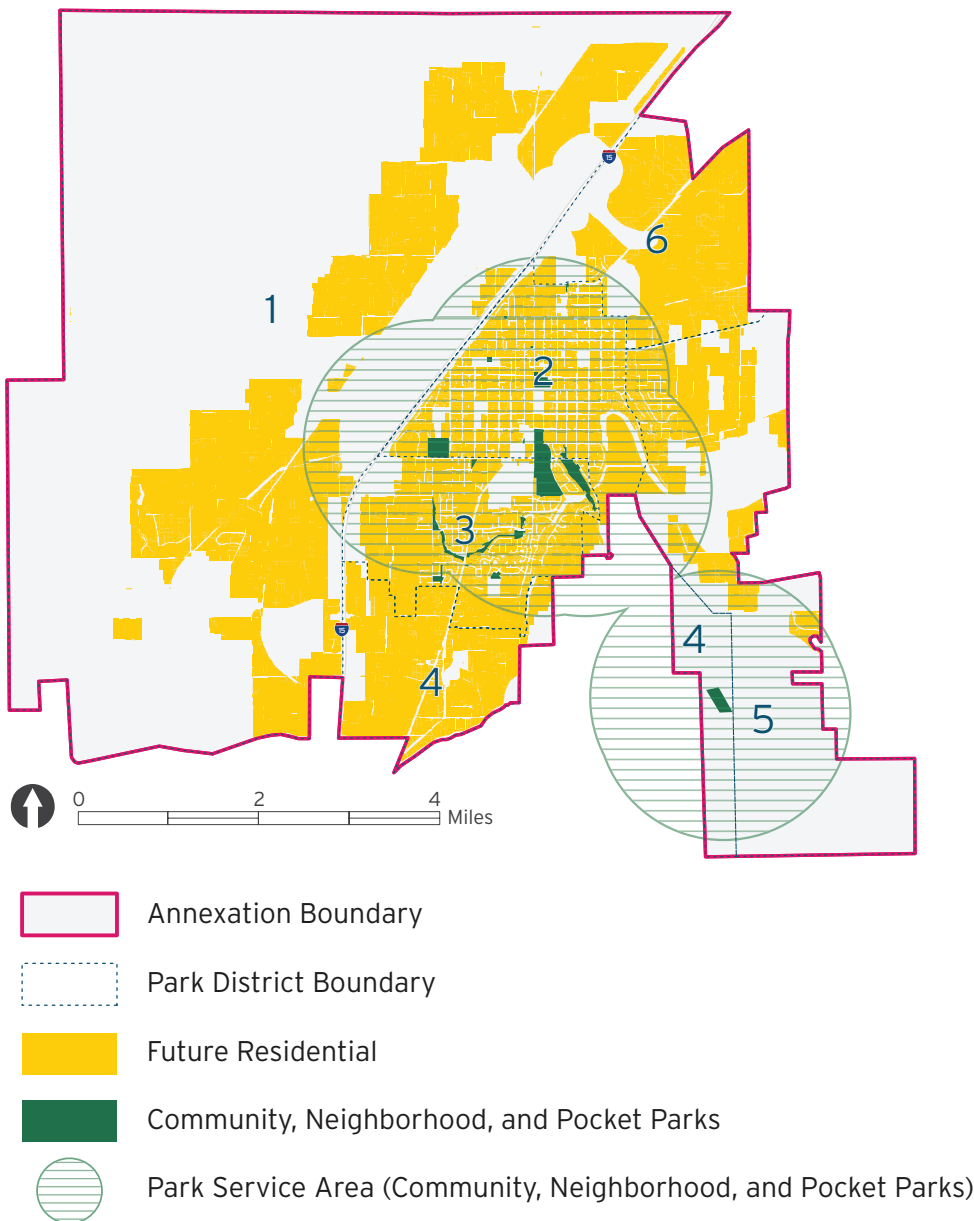


Figure 51. Combined Park Service Area Buffers with Future Residential Land for the year 2050.

## Park Improvements

Many existing Payson City parks have potential to be upgraded with new or renovated equipment that will better serve the community. Community supported ideas for improvements include:

**A new community splash pad** received strong support from the community. Splash pads offer inclusive play opportunities and allow children to develop motor skills. In addition, splash pads provide cooling benefits during hot summer months.

**An additional community park or regional park** received strong support from the community and will be essential as Payson grows and develops. Community parks have a large service area and offer a variety of amenities that are typically not found in smaller neighborhood or pocket parks. The community or regional park should be located in a gap area identified in the Level of Service Analysis. Identifying and purchasing suitable parcels of land for the park early will provide the City with time to prepare for a new park and design it in a way that meets community needs.

**Shade trees, seating, and restrooms** received moderate support in the Parks and Recreation Survey. High use parks with limited shade should be targeted for new plantings and restrooms.

**An all abilities park** would provide Payson with valuable inclusive play opportunities. All Abilities Parks are inclusive to people of all cognitive and physical abilities. An existing park could be retrofitted as an All Abilities Park or the City could

site an All Abilities Park on a new site or within a future community or regional park.

**Dog parks** are receiving increasing support from staff and the public. A dog park is currently being considered and additional parks could be added as population and demand grows.

**A connected trail system and trailhead parks** received strong community and staff support. Approximately 57 miles of new trails are proposed as a vital part of an active transportation strategy in the Payson Transportation Master Plan (2020), included in this plan as Figure 43 (pg. 94) and in the South Utah County Active Transportation Plan (2016).

Trail connections to parks and other important destinations should be a priority for the City. Individual trail improvements and construction should be planned in connection with other active transportation infrastructure, such as sidewalks and bike lanes. Identifying future land acquisitions that will provide additional connectivity is imperative in planning for the future of the trails system.

There is also a need for the variety of trail types offered to be expanded. New trail offerings could include off-highway motor vehicle trails in appropriate locations, such as the West Mountain Recreation Area.

**An education facility or classroom** is needed to provide access to nature-based education and to offer additional opportunities for the public to become involved in parks and recreation.

**Community gardens and demonstration**

**gardens** would provide new spaces for the community to participate in gardening. Community gardens support local food initiatives and demonstration gardens can attract visitors outside of the city.

**A meditation and reflection park** is an easy way to diversify the types of parks Payson offers. This park type would provide a calm space for the community to sit with nature.

**Recreation Improvements**

While Payson's current recreation programs are popular, there are some considerations that will help maintain and improve future participation, relevance, and accessibility of the programs:

**Ongoing engagement with the Payson community** will allow the Parks and Recreation to determine whether current recreation programs are meeting community needs. The outreach may be conducted by a formal survey or open house event, or through tabling at community events and informal discussions with residents. Information gathered from these outreach efforts can help inform whether the department should eliminate or modify existing programs or add programs to their offerings. Programs such as racquetball, cycling, and water sports received support from the community in the parks and recreation survey.

**Monitoring local and regional recreation trends** will allow the department to adapt to the

needs of the community and maintain a relevant roster of programs. These trends can be followed through industry publications such as those from the National Recreation and Park Association, Recreation Management Magazine, the Outdoor Industry Association, and the Sports and Fitness Industry Association.

**Maintaining adequate staff and volunteer levels**

is essential to keep recreation programs running smoothly. This includes staff and volunteer for administration and facilitation of programs, both seasonally and year-round. Adding additional staff and volunteers will be necessary as Payson grows and demand for recreation programs increases.

**Additional recreation facilities**, particularly a new community recreation center, is one of the top recreation needs identified by both department staff and community members. A recreation center would provide a dedicated city-owned space for athletic programs, an indoor pool, and other community gatherings and events.

Additional recreation facilities may include tennis courts, outdoor volleyball, a horseshoe pit, an indoor or outdoor climbing wall, a lacrosse field, a shooting range, a pump track or bicycle skills track, a motocross track, and a zip line.

**Partnerships**

Local and regional groups such as non-profit organizations, church organizations, or school districts who share a similar vision present opportunity for collaboration and partnerships in developing new parks and recreation programs for



the Payson community. Many communities have had success in creating public-private partnerships to further the development of new parks.

### **Insufficient Funding and Staffing**

Lack of adequate funding will create a significant barrier to many plan recommendations, including the development of new parks, renovation of existing parks, parks maintenance, new recreation programs, and additional FTE staff.

Like a lack of funding, an insufficient number of FTE staff will hinder the implementation of many Plan recommendations. The Payson Parks and Recreation Departments are already understaffed for a city of its size, and existing staff will be stretched thin as the city grows and new parks are developed.

The current lack of a dedicated Parks Department facility has left the department without a ‘home base’ where they can conduct meetings and store equipment in a central location.

The Recreation Department is currently housed within Payson High School, which is scheduled to be replaced by 2025. A maintenance building for the athletic fields will eventually house the field foreman’s office within the Gene Hillman Recreation Complex. Adequate and potentially consolidated office space for staff should be a priority.



Source: Fregonese Associates, Memorial Park. June 2018.

**GOAL 1****Provide ongoing opportunities for community engagement**

- Strategy 1.1** Promote and distribute information about park and recreation activities and programs, events, and volunteer opportunities
- 
- Strategy 1.2** Offer park improvement and maintenance volunteer opportunities
- 
- Strategy 1.3** Provide a variety of opportunities to engage with parks and recreation staff throughout the year
- 
- Strategy 1.4** Use community engagement to identify opportunities for new programming that aligns with needs and trends
- 
- Strategy 1.5** Allow community members to comment on the design/amenities of proposed new parks/recreation facilities
- 
- Strategy 1.6** Create web page with park descriptions and maps that highlight current and future park improvements

**GOAL 2****Ensure that Payson's current and future residents are well-served by a comprehensive system of parks, recreation facilities, and open space**

- Strategy 2.1** Identify areas suitable for future parks as the City expands geographically
- 
- Strategy 2.2** Provide parks to a service area of 7.18 acres/1000 residents
- 
- Strategy 2.3** Update development code to require parks as part of new subdivisions/residential developments
- 
- Strategy 2.4** Identify/acquire park land in currently underserved areas or neighborhoods

**GOAL 3**

Acquire land for parks, trails, and open space that will meet the needs of current and future Payson residents

**Strategy 3.1** Identify parcels of land to target for acquisition, based on existing geographic and level of service needs

---

**Strategy 3.2** Prioritize park land acquisition as Payson grows by identifying and acquiring land that will meet the parks needs of future residents

---

**Strategy 3.3** Acquire and set aside land to preserve as open space and natural areas as the city continues to develop, with a focus on sensitive areas such as wetlands and significant wildlife habitats

**GOAL 4**

Create a well-connected network of parks and trails that serves all Payson community members

**Strategy 4.1** Develop a network of multi-use trails that connects the city's parks, neighborhoods, and amenities

---

**Strategy 4.2** Coordinate trails development with the goals of the Payson City Transportation Master Plan

---

**Strategy 4.3** Continue to develop and acquire right-of-way along canals, streams, utility corridors, and roadways for the development of a trails network

---

**Strategy 4.4** Develop a citywide wayfinding signage system to direct residents and visitors to parks, open space, and trails

---

**Strategy 4.5** Coordinate with and guide local trail users to maintain and modify trails, as appropriate, in alignment with the Forebay Management Plan

**GOAL 5**

Provide opportunities for Payson residents to build connections within their communities

**Strategy 5.1** Design parks and facilities to encourage and facilitate interaction between community members

---

**Strategy 5.2** Continue to sponsor community-focused events such as Golden Onion Days and the Salmon Supper



**GOAL 6** Provide a high-quality parks and recreation system that is a source of pride for the Payson community

**Strategy 6.1** Ensure that park design allows for use and enjoyment by people of all ages and abilities

---

**Strategy 6.2** Adopt minimum development/design standards for future parks, based on recommended minimum amenities for each park type

---

**Strategy 6.3** Incorporate public art into park design wherever possible, prioritizing work by local artists

---

**Strategy 6.4** Examine existing parks for opportunities to improve the site, add amenities, and make it more user friendly

**GOAL 7** Explore options for a recreation center that serves the community with a wide range of recreation amenities and programming

**Strategy 7.1** Explore opportunities for construction of a new recreation center

---

**Strategy 7.2** Continue to engage with members of the community to determine what type of facilities and amenities should be provided in a new recreation center

**GOAL 8** Work with experts and the community to determine the best future for the aquatic center

**Strategy 8.1** Conduct a study to determine feasibility and costs of covering the aquatic center or incorporating a pool into a future recreation center

---

**Strategy 8.2** Conduct additional formal and informal community outreach efforts to gauge interest in converting the aquatic center to an indoor facility, including outreach and education about the costs involved

**GOAL 9** Ensure that current and future parks and recreation amenities are well maintained

- Strategy 9.1** Develop an up-to-date inventory of parks and facilities that documents condition, needed improvements, and ongoing maintenance schedules
- 
- Strategy 9.2** Prioritize maintenance of existing park facilities based on cost and community need
- 
- Strategy 9.3** Ensure that the annual budget provides sufficient funding for the operation and maintenance of parks and recreation facilities
- 

**GOAL 10** Promote public health and a sense of community through a wide range of recreation programming that serves Payson residents of all ages, abilities, and activity levels

- Strategy 10.1** Tailor recreation offerings based on local and nation recreation trends and the needs of the community as determined by ongoing public outreach
- 
- Strategy 10.2** Partner with outside public and private agencies to expand recreation program offerings
- 
- Strategy 10.3** Promote special events to enhance community identity in alignment with recent branding strategies
- 
- Strategy 10.4** Assess current programs and look for ways to improve them to better serve the community
- 
- Strategy 10.5** Explore partnership opportunities with Mountain View Hospital and local health care providers to promote local recreation opportunities and Park RX America
- 

**GOAL 11** Increase community resiliency to natural hazards

- Strategy 11.1** Design parks with green infrastructure to capture stormwater and reduce the impacts of flooding
- 
- Strategy 11.2** Design parks to facilitate social gathering and resource sharing in the event of a disaster
-

**GOAL 12** Promote sustainable practices in parks

**Strategy 12.1** Improve water efficiency by utilizing Smart and WaterWise irrigation systems

---

**Strategy 12.2** Provide educational installations in parks that showcase sustainable management practices

---

**GOAL 13** Ensure staffing is sufficient to meet the desired level of service

**Strategy 13.1** Determine the number of full-time employees, equipment, and facilities needed to keep up to date on parks maintenance and management

---

**Strategy 13.2** Budget for adequate staffing levels in the parks and recreation departments

---

**Strategy 13.3** Explore the development of a dedicated parks and recreation building to accommodate department staff and equipment

---

**Strategy 13.4** Promote professional development and training such as URPA, NRPA, and STMA

---

**GOAL 14** Obtain and provide adequate funding for park construction, park maintenance, recreation programs, and department operations

**Strategy 14.1** Pursue a diverse array of funding sources, such as grants, bonds, and public-private partnerships to fund the correction of current deficiencies and for on-going maintenance of facilities and programming

---

**Strategy 14.2** Evaluate recreation users fees to determine and/or maintain appropriate user fee levels to assist in operation costs

---

**Strategy 14.3** Pursue appropriate impact fee assessments to support new growth and development

---





Source: Fregonese Associates, Payson park and recreation facilities. June 2018.