



WASHOE COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN

Moving Forward

SEPTEMBER 2019



WHERE PARKS ARE TODAY

4.9 MILLION+
VISITORS ANNUALLY

QUALITY OF LIFE

Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space (Parks) is responsible for managing over 13,000 acres of parks, trails and open space including some of the most popular parks in the area. These resources take advantage of the County's natural wonders and provide the region with an economic benefit that attracts new visitors while providing a quality of life that is treasured by a majority of the residents making this area a unique place to work and live.



PARKS MISSION...

"To provide exceptional parks, open space and recreational opportunities while preserving our natural, historical and cultural resources."

Park Type	Neighborhood and Community Parks	Regional Parks	Special Use Parks	Open Space & Trails	Totals
Locations	39	10	7	69	119
Acres	435 ±	2,694 ±	982 ±	9,113 ±	13,224 ±

CHALLENGES



RESETTING AFTER THE RECESSION

Since the Great Recession, Parks have learned how to cope with the new budget levels. Parks has been able to keep facilities open by maintaining them at a minimum level. Moving forward, to accomplish the goals of the master plan, Parks needs to discover new funding sources that will allow them to continue the mission into the future. This is a national phenomenon that continues to impact the status of Parks.



RESPONDING TO THE POPULATION

Washoe County's population continues to increase creating a rise in park visitation and a surge in demand for new parks, trails and open space. This puts additional pressure on existing facilities, potentially exceeding their capacities and impacting the resources making maintenance unsustainable.



GETTING BACK ON TRACK

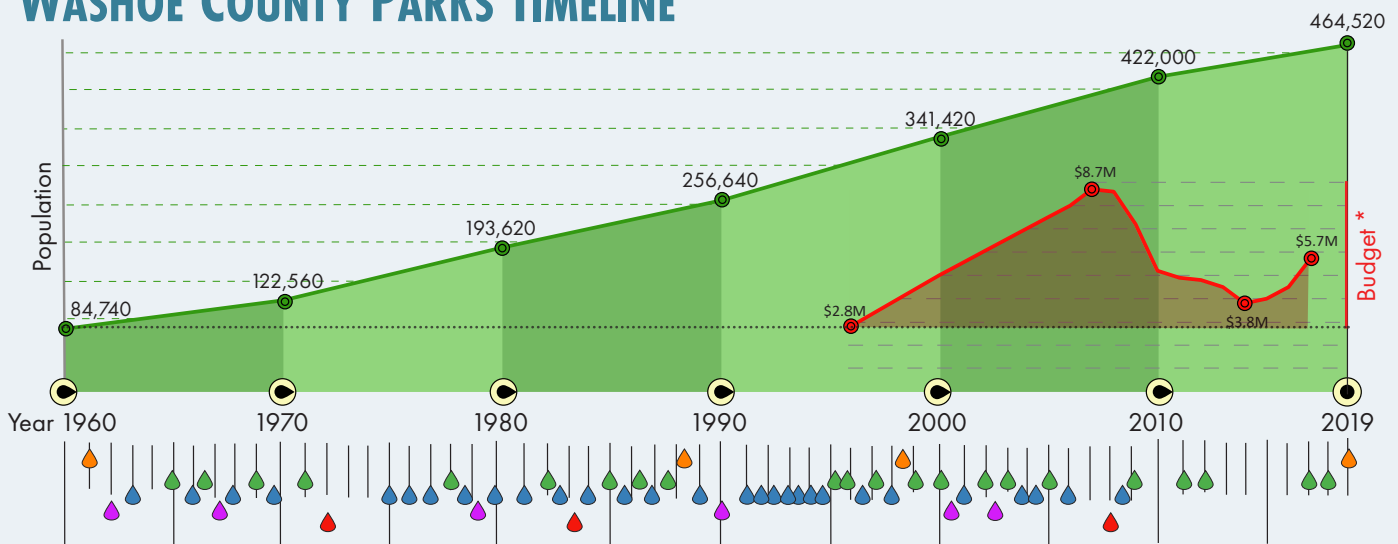
Parks has a rich history of acquiring land for the preservation of open space and the construction of parks and trails. Over the years there have been a total of 29 major land acquisitions and the construction of 22 parks. These were often helped by the passage of bonds through strong support of the voters for a total of 6 bonds over the last 60 years. Two of these bonds (SQ-1 and WC-1) brought in \$172.5 million dollars between bonds and leveraged funds.



IDENTIFYING THE RESIDENTS' NEEDS

The physical size of Washoe County means the landscapes and natural resources vary throughout. Some are unique to a specific region and may need to be managed differently than other parts of the county. Furthermore, recreation needs also vary depending on the region. Therefore, the master plan created planning areas that would allow Parks to analyze and identify opportunities specific to each region.

WASHOE COUNTY PARKS TIMELINE



▲ - WC Park Master Plan
 ▲ - Park Construction
 ▲ - Park Acquisition
 ▲ - Park Bond Issue Passed by Voters
 ▲ - Reduction to WC Parks Budget
 *Budget shown from 1996 - 2017
 Population from the Nevada State Demographer





GOALS GOING FORWARD

CLOSING THE FUNDING GAP

Based on National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) metrics for dollars spent per person and using the budget prior to the 2008 budget cuts, there has been a \$48 million-dollar gap in spending. This has led to a backlog of maintenance and capital improvement projects. If this trend continues for another 20 years this gap could grow by another \$94 million-dollars, creating a \$142 million-dollar gap over a 30-year period.

PARKS BUDGET BASED ON POPULATION

CURRENT	NRPA STANDARDS
\$ 5.7 MILLION	\$ 10.1 MILLION
* Based on \$21.70 per resident per year	

RESETTING STAFF LEVELS

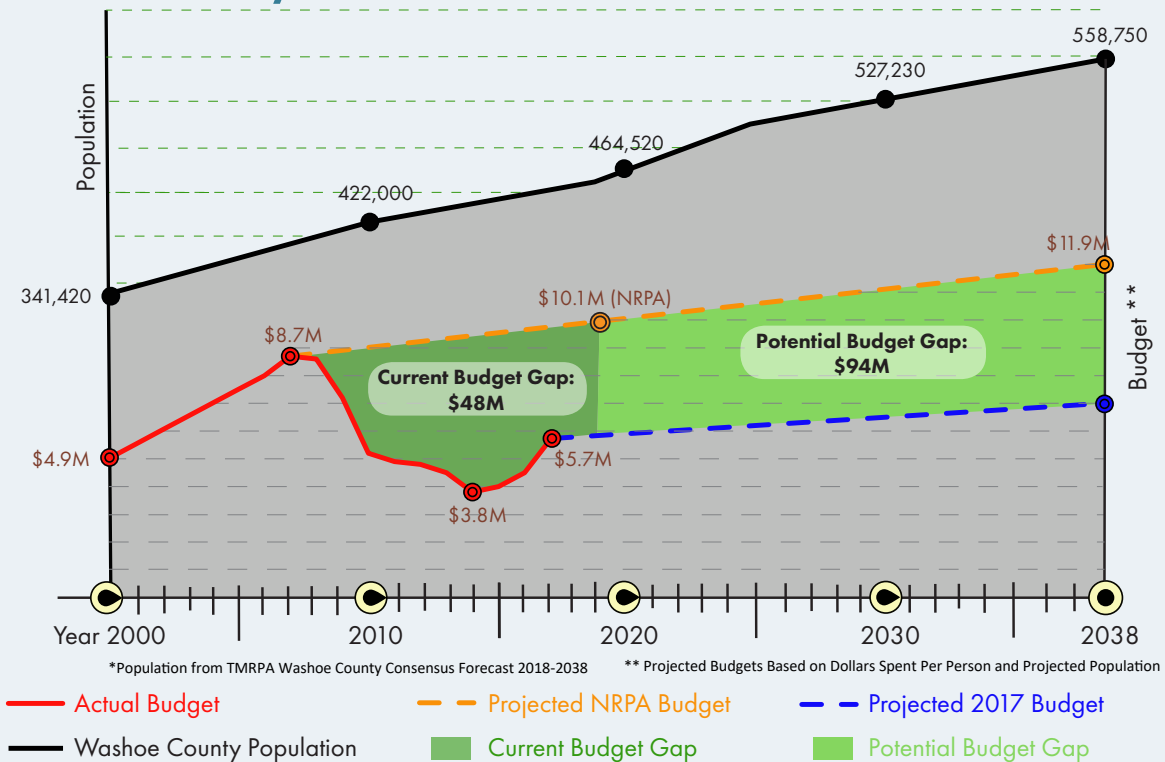
Based on the existing and projected population, Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) staffing levels are well below the national standards. Based on projected population Parks staff needs to nearly triple over the next 20 years.

PARKS FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTEs) ON STAFF FOR EVERY 10,000 RESIDENTS

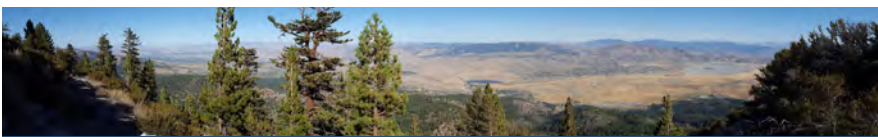
CURRENT	NRPA STANDARDS
0.9 FTEs	3.9 FTEs



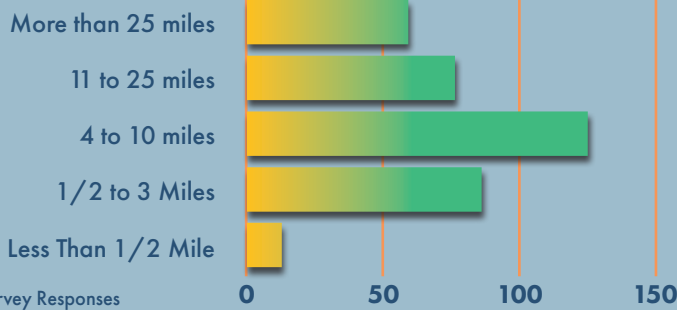
PROJECTION OF 2007/2017 BUDGETS BASED ON DOLLARS SPENT PER PERSON



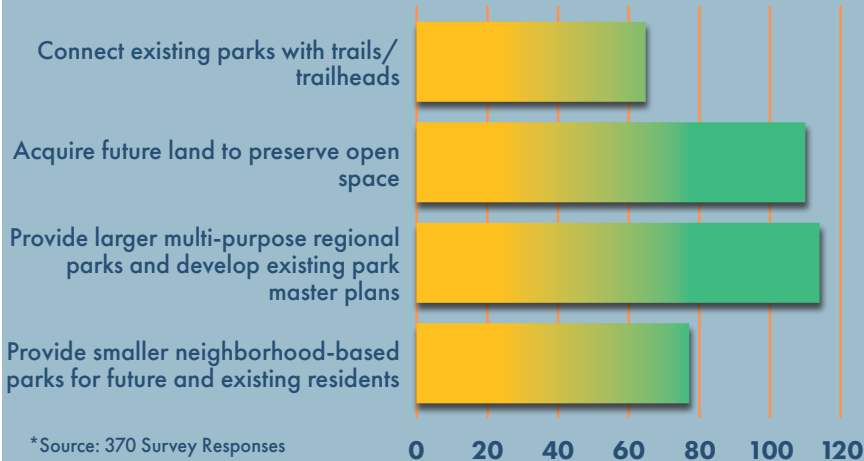
* Washoe County parks budget does not include City of Reno or City of Sparks



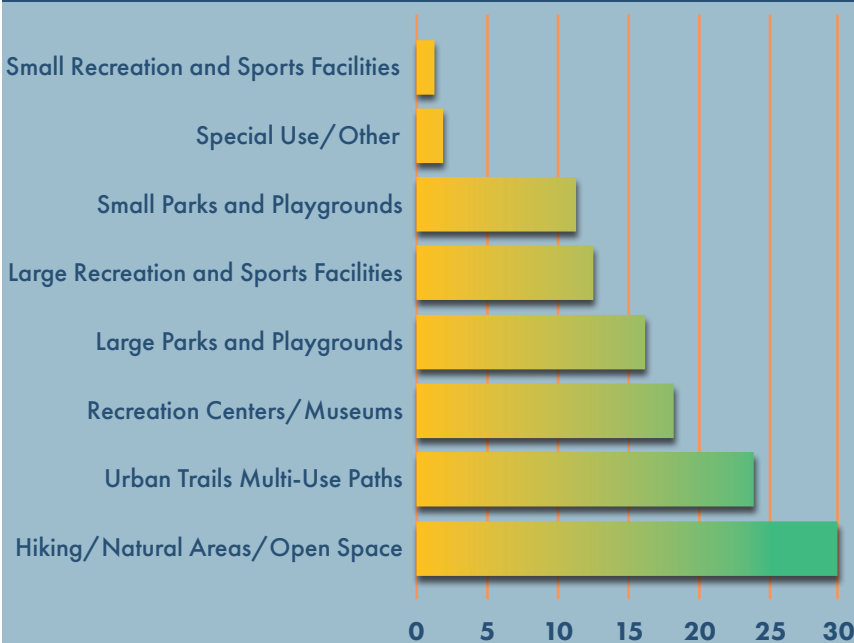
HOW FAR ARE WASHOE COUNTY RESIDENTS WILLING TO TRAVEL FOR THE PARK FACILITIES THAT MOST INTEREST THEM?



WHERE WOULD WASHOE COUNTY RESIDENTS LIKE TO SEE THE BIGGEST FOCUS OF RESOURCES?



WHICH FACILITIES DO WASHOE COUNTY RESIDENTS USE MOST?



TAKEAWAYS



RESIDENTS WANT REGIONAL PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Extensive outreach from the public and stakeholders' group found that most residents wanted to see a focus of resources on regional parks. This is due to the willingness of most residents to travel far distances to get to a regional park. This is true because regional parks often have a variety of facilities that interest residents most which typically include sports facilities, playgrounds, recreation/community centers, aquatic facilities, dog parks, and natural and urban trails/trailheads.

FUTURE GROWTH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED

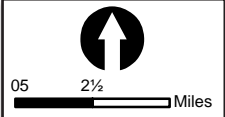
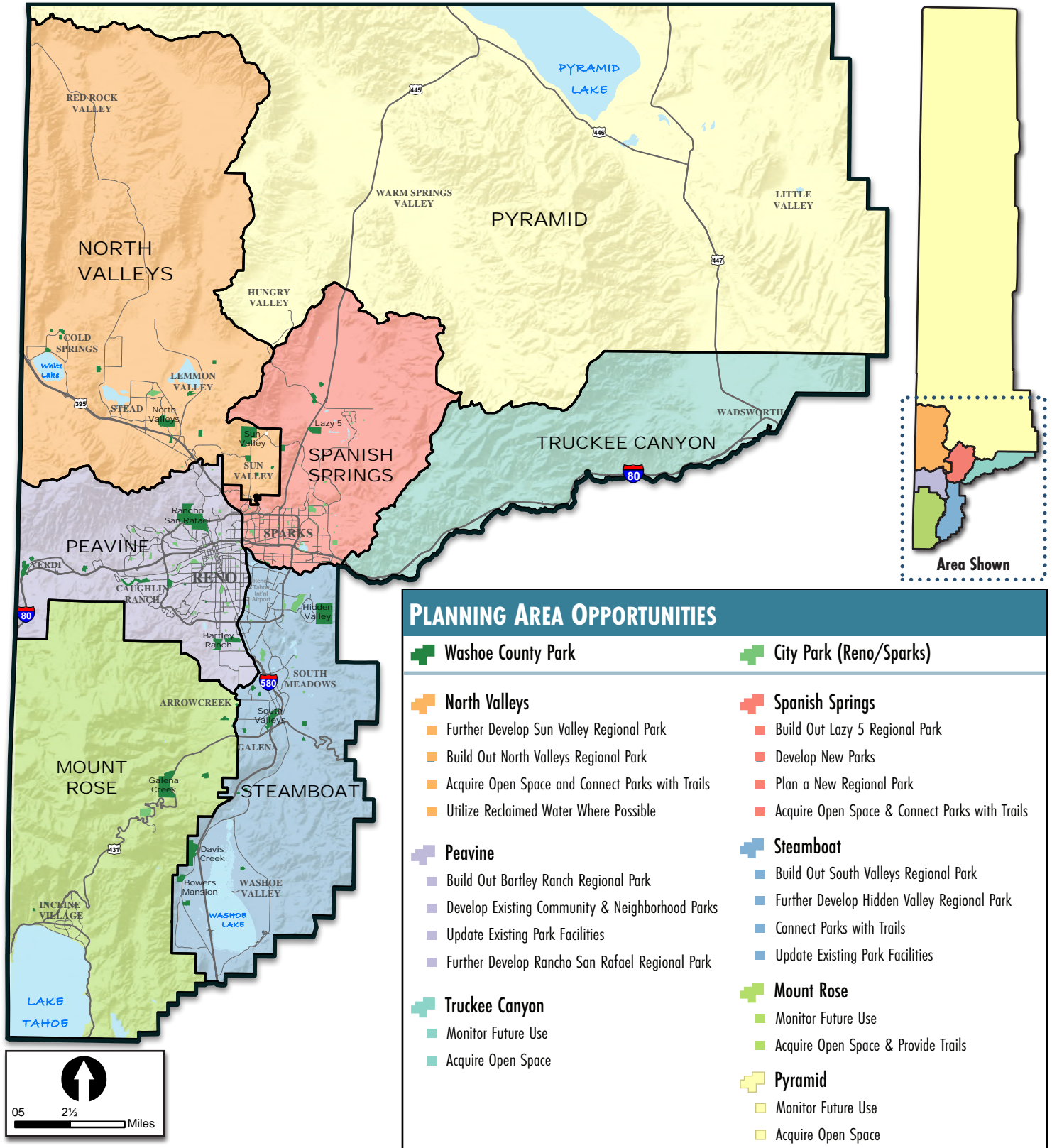
Future growth is not only tied to funding new parks, it also shows how much an area could grow over the next 20 years. Monitoring future growth and understanding the current needs of a region would be beneficial to Parks and allow them to more accurately plan for new parks, trails and open space.



PLANNING AREAS

INTRODUCTION TO PLANNING AREAS

The planning area boundaries identified in this master plan were developed to help Parks better analyze and identify priorities and opportunities specific to the different neighborhoods found throughout Washoe County. Although residents may recreate in parks, greenways/open space, trails and trailheads outside of the planning area in which they live, the majority of their recreation adventures will likely occur in the planning area boundaries where they reside.



SOLUTIONS AND DRIVING CHANGE

SHORT-TERM

DEVELOP A PROJECT LIST INCLUDING COSTS

Further assessments need to be completed to determine what projects have priority based on the opportunities identified within each planning area. These lists can be used to determine staff levels required to maintain the project and to associate dollar amounts that can be used to secure funding. These assessments include:

- ✓ Strategize Acquisition & Priority Projects for State Conservation Bond
- ✓ Complete a Service Plan Study
- ✓ Further Develop the Capital and Infrastructure Preservation Program



MID-TERM

SEEK ALTERNATIVE FUNDING

Current funding levels are not sufficient to sustain Parks and provide the opportunities identified within the master plan. In order to provide the public with the level of service established in the past, alternative and sustainable funding sources should be pursued including:

- ✓ Develop Facilities and Programs That Generate Revenue
- ✓ Educate Policy Makers About the Benefits of Funding Recreation
- ✓ Conduct Feasibility Study for a Regional Park District
- ✓ Reconfigure the Residential Construction Tax (RCT) Districts



LONG-TERM

RESTRUCTURE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF CURRENT AND FUTURE LEGISLATION

A bill was recently signed into law that creates a new state Division of Outdoor Recreation. This bill and other legislation acknowledge the environmental, economic, and educational benefits of parks, trails and open space. Parks should capitalize on this momentum by:

- ✓ Fostering Partnerships that Promote Economic Vitality Through Recreation
- ✓ Targeting Legislative Updates Supporting Diverse and Lasting Funding for Parks, Trails and Open Space
- ✓ Rebalancing and Distributing Capital Expenditures

