



City of Soledad

Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Soledad Parks and Recreation Department

October 1, 2025

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Executive Summary



Building a Thriving Community through Parks & Recreation

Soledad is a family friendly community in the heart of the Salinas Valley. Parks and recreation are essential to the community's quality of life. As the city grows, it is investing in its parks and recreation programs to better serve the community and support a healthy and vibrant environment.

This Soledad Parks and Recreation Master Plan ("PRMP"), was initiated in November 2022 to update the City's 2009 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. A community-driven plan, its purpose is to guide and support the City over the next 20 years, providing a roadmap for park, facility, and recreation improvements, and to guide ongoing improvements and decisions.

This PRMP has a foundation in a long-term Vision and Goals, presented on the following page, developed through extensive community input. Throughout the planning process, community members provided input and insight into what is valuable to the community, and how they envision the future of their city enhanced by their parks, facilities, and recreation programs.

Easter Event at Cesar Chavez

Community Vision

Soledad's city parks and recreation programs are central to the community's well-being, health, and lifestyle, providing a well-connected network of park and recreation facilities, offering diverse experiences, and bringing the community together.

Goals

1. Health & Wellness

Support physical and mental health by building awareness, encouraging an active lifestyle, a strong community, and places to enjoy nature and quiet through parks and recreation facilities and programs for all ages, genders, and abilities, enabling multi-generational use.

2. Connectivity & Access

Connect people to parks and recreation through a network of safe routes, well-maintained and convenient pathways between parks, through the city, and the region, as well as using innovative approaches to creating and activating "park" space wherever the public can gather.

3. Inclusive & Equitable

Provide a comprehensive system of parks and affordable recreational programs that welcome all, and celebrate art, culture, diversity, and history.

4. Sustainable, Resilient, & Well-Maintained

Ensure that current and future infrastructure and facilities are sustainably designed and well-maintained, mitigating the impacts of high winds, extreme weather, and climate change.

5. Resources & Partnerships

Leverage the City's park and facilities to attract partners and expand services to community members, creating lasting partnerships, maximizing resources, and providing youth with the necessary skills and tools for success.

Needs Assessment

A central aspect of the PRMP is the Community Needs Assessment, which provides the basis for the Policy Guidelines and Recommendations. The Needs Assessment outlines the multiple elements assessed to better understand what the community needs today and in the future. The Assessment included community input, analysis of the community profile and demographics, an assessment of the quality of existing parks and programs, a regional and national trends scan, evaluation of the availability and accessibility to the city's parks and facilities, and determination of the acres of parks per resident. Together this Assessment indicates the gaps, needs, and opportunities that this PRMP should address.

Guidelines & Recommendations

The PRMP's Policy Guidelines identify considerations, best practices and policies that achieve the community's Vision and fulfill their Goals. The Guidelines apply to all of the parks and programs and are organized by the goals that they support. The Guidelines include new policies from expanding park amenities and programming activities to support healthy lifestyles, to developing partnerships to

increase resources available to the city. They provide guidance to decision makers as new opportunities and challenges arise.

The PRMP's Recommendations build on the Vision and Goals, and the community Needs Assessment, with specific actions and improvements to make the existing parks and facilities function more effectively for the community, activate the parks and provide more gathering spaces, make access easier, and increase the diversity of offerings.

Further, the Recommendations offer citywide initiatives, recreation programming enhancements, and address potential new park sites. They include clear Standards to be followed in developing new parks or renovating existing parks.

Implementation

The Community Vision is a picture of what Soledad's parks and recreation system can be in the future. The PRMP's recommendations are intended to be implemented over a 20-year time horizon and is not intended to be a short-term action plan. For funding, staff capacity, and logistical reasons, the PRMP actions need to be sequenced over time. The pace of implementation will depend on the availability of resources, not only capital and operating dollars but also the workload capacity of City staff.

To assist the City in prioritizing improvements, an implementation framework has been incorporated into the plan, outlined on the adjacent page, categorizing recommendations based on the level of need allowing for flexibility and optimization of potential future opportunities.



Orchard Lane Park

Implementation Framework

The PRMP's recommendations span a 20-year timeframe, enabling the City to prioritize the most necessary improvements for today and plan for future needs as funding and demand changes. Recommendations are identified as:



Critical Need: 0-2 years

Representing an immediate need, safety improvement or opportunity that should be acted upon within the next 2 years



General Need: 0-5 years

Not required immediately, but important to complete within the next 5 years



Ongoing Maintenance & Operations: Ongoing

Requiring ongoing maintenance and or change in policy or operation practices



Adds Community Benefit: When possible

Not time sensitive, but should be done if funds and resources allow



Meeting the Vision: 5-20 years

Not an immediate need, but aiming to achieve the Vision in the timeline of this plan

The Soledad Parks and Recreation Master Plan is a living document. The PRMP's Guidelines and Implementation criteria are designed to allow the City the flexibility to respond to changing circumstances and needs, such as opportunities that are unforeseen at the time of this document, and to provide nimble responses to unforeseen challenges that may arise.



1. Introduction

1. Introduction

Soledad is located in central Monterey County in the heart of the agricultural Salinas Valley. The city's 2.2 square mile core is an island, with four non-contiguous parcels (prison complex, water reclamation facility, Los Coches Adobe, and closed landfill) making up the remainder of its 4.65 square mile area as shown in the map on the following page. A growing city, Soledad's population increased over 20% between 2010 and 2020. In 2023, its core is home to approximately 18,648 residents, excluding those incarcerated in the prison complex located within city limits. A community of family households, Soledad's population is predominantly Hispanic. Its warm-summer Mediterranean climate invites outdoor activities.

Since adoption of its 2009 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Soledad has added new neighborhood parks and a community park, taken over operation of the city's community center and formed its Parks and Recreation Department to provide recreational programming to the community. This updated PRMP provides a roadmap for Soledad's parks and recreation facilities' development and improvements, addresses maintenance and operations, and guides ongoing programming and decision-making. The PRMP planning process kicked off in November 2022 and was adopted in the summer of 2024.

This PRMP has been developed with extensive public engagement to reflect the community's desires and address their concerns. Input and direction from community members, staff, city council, key stakeholders, and partners is integrated into the plan, and ensures that the City considers the wide range of needs and opportunities identified by the community for its parks and recreation. The PRMP presents

the community's vision for Soledad's Parks and Recreation as it grows and changes. The plan's vision and goals help to focus future decisions, guide the City in allocating resources over the upcoming years, and assist the City in adapting to changing conditions and community needs.

The PRMP identifies current and anticipated future community needs, assesses the function and quality of Soledad's parks, facilities, and programs, and provides a clear set of recommendations for the City to meet community needs over the next 20 years. The recommendations, improvements, additions, and enhancements laid out in this plan focus on achieving the vision for the future of Soledad's parks and recreation by meeting the five goals. The PRMP is being developed in parallel to the City's General Plan, following a similar timeframe and ensuring alignment on goals and opportunities.

Beyond providing recommendations for park and program improvements, the PRMP also aims to address the challenges that the City faces – insufficient safe bike and pedestrian access to parks and recreation, vandalism, extreme wind, and limited funding and staffing capacity, among others - all of which are obstacles that the City must address and develop strategies to mitigate.

Community Pop-Ups



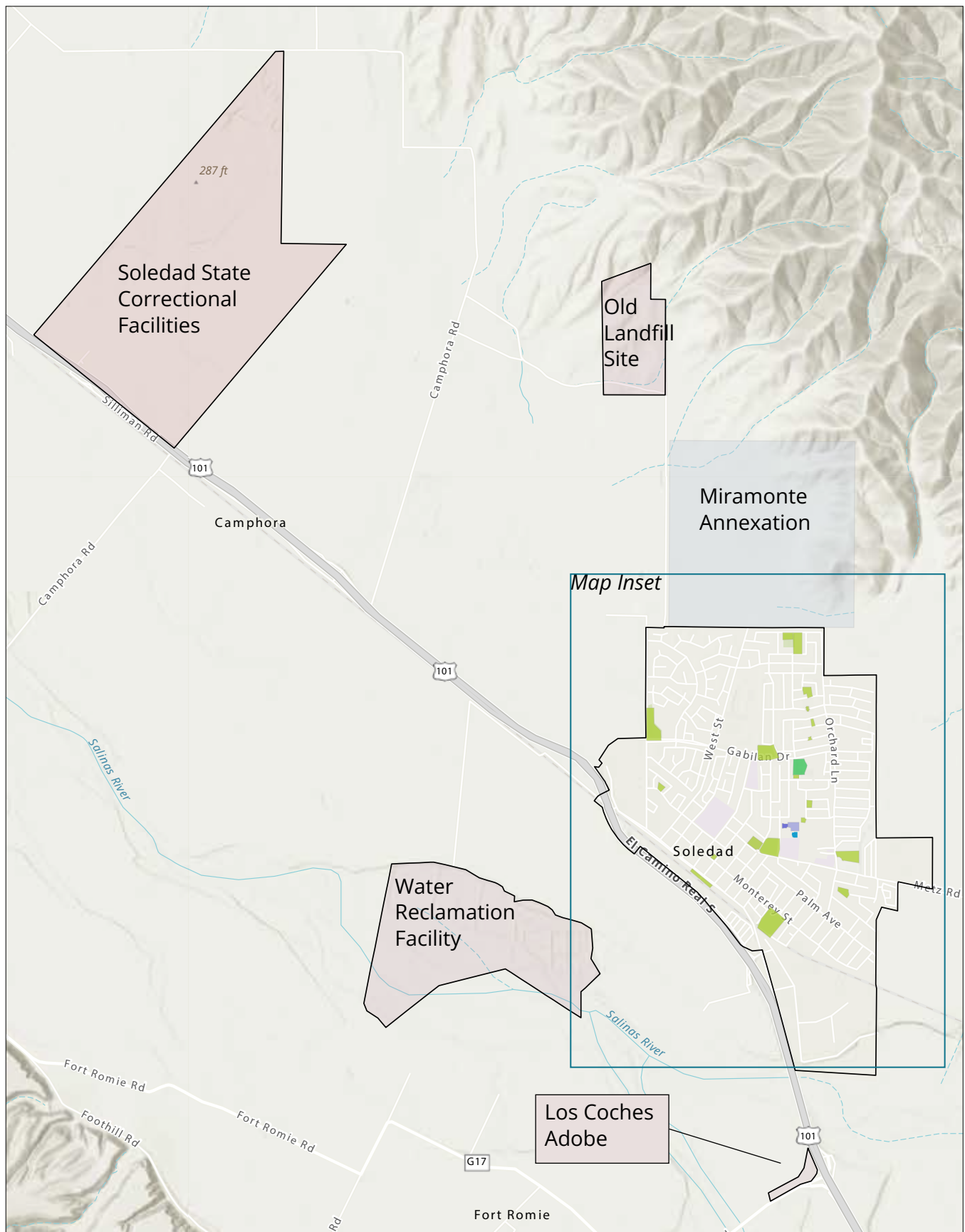


Figure 1. Map of City and Boundary of Planning Area

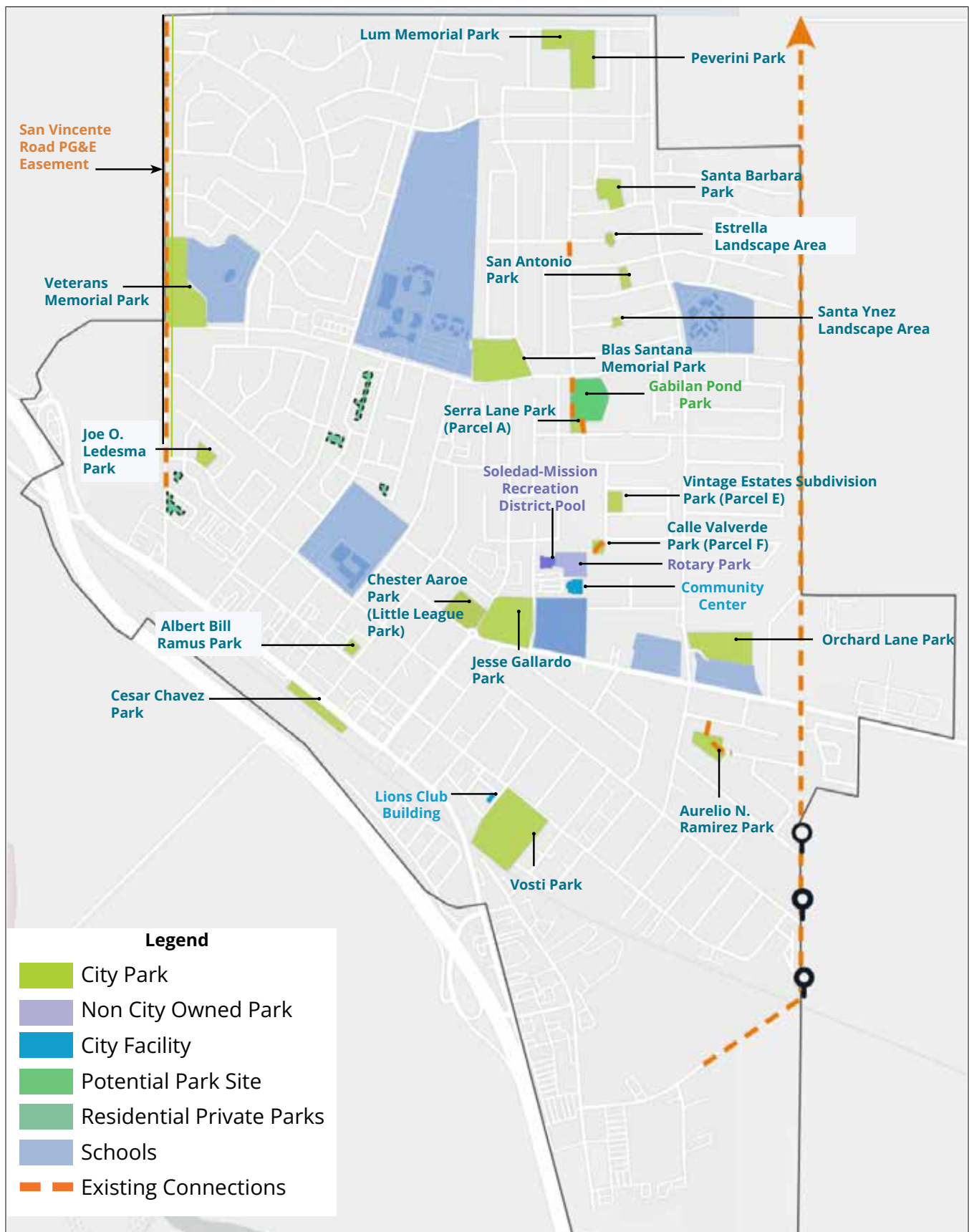


Figure 2. Inset Map of City and Boundary of Planning Area

About Soledad's Parks & Recreation

The City currently owns and maintains 20 developed parks, including the recently opened Orchard Lane Park, and a community recreation center, along with several undeveloped and potential park sites, including the Gabilan Pond site, a large former landfill site, and the historic Los Coches Adobe. The city's Public Works Department is responsible for the maintenance of the parks and other city-owned landscapes and facilities while the Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for park development and use, recreational services and Community Center.

The Soledad Parks and Recreation Department was formed in 2021, funded by Measure S, a permanent half cent sales tax voted in by the community. It took over the management and operation of the Soledad Community Center, which had previously been operated by the South County YMCA. Since its inception, the Department has continued to grow and offers a range of activities from summer camps to youth sports, and operates the Community Center facilities including a kitchen, fitness center, computer room, meeting rooms, and event rental spaces. The Department is actively expanding its programming to serve a wider range of community needs and interests, including offerings such as a mobile recreation program, and youth theater. The Department also provides permits and programming in the parks, with a variety of ballfields and open spaces that provide multiple sports opportunities, as well as outdoor family gathering locations.

In addition to the city's Parks and Recreation Department, Soledad is served by the Soledad-Mission Recreation District. This district adds to the city's recreational resources through an aquatic facility, a small park adjacent to the Community Center, and

some sports and martial arts programming. The Soledad-Mission Recreation District encompasses the city and surrounding unincorporated areas.

The Soledad Unified School District operates five elementary schools, one middle school, one high school, and one community school, serving nearly 5,000 students in grades K-12. The schools offer teen sports programs, such as basketball, baseball, soccer, and track and field, among others, as well as afterschool childcare programs. The District has a joint-use agreement with the City for a limited number of facilities and uses the Soledad-Mission Recreation District pool for its aquatics program.

The State Correctional Training Facility, commonly known as Soledad State Prison, is located on a noncontiguous parcel within Soledad city limits. Consisting of three independent facilities, it provides corrections and rehabilitation to minimum and medium security inmates. Its recreation facilities include several outdoor exercise areas and a half dozen ballfields for use of the incarcerated population there.



Soledad Parks and Recreation Logo

Planning Area

The City of Soledad is located in Monterey County, between the cities of Salinas and King City in the Salinas Valley. (See Figure 3) It is surrounded by agricultural lands, with the Santa Lucia Mountains to the west and the Gabilan Range to the east. Soledad is a gateway to Pinnacles National Park, and the area is home to several wineries, attracting a range of visitors. The Salinas River runs along the city's southern border.

The city is comprised of several noncontiguous areas, including its core where residents live, work, and play, the State prison and training center to the northeast, a large closed landfill site to the north, a water reclamation facility to the southwest, and the site of the historic Los Coches Adobe to the south. (See Figure 1). In this agriculturally rich valley, Soledad is one of the most densely populated cities. Its 2023 population is 18,648 residents, according to the California Department of Finance (26,230 including those incarcerated at the Correctional Facilities), with approximately 90% of the population of Hispanic heritage. The city is set for new growth and expansion, with increased services and retail in the main part of town. The 654-acre Miramonte Specific Plan Area on the current northern city limits will increase the core city's land area by 44%, adding commercial and residential land uses, and increasing the city's population by about 50%.

Soledad's topography is generally flat, rising gently toward the Gabilan foothills. The area has warm temperatures during the summer months (average highs peaking at 85 degrees Fahrenheit) and cool temperatures in the winter months (average lows reaching the high 30's). It is susceptible to extreme winds up to 32 mph, particularly during summer afternoons.

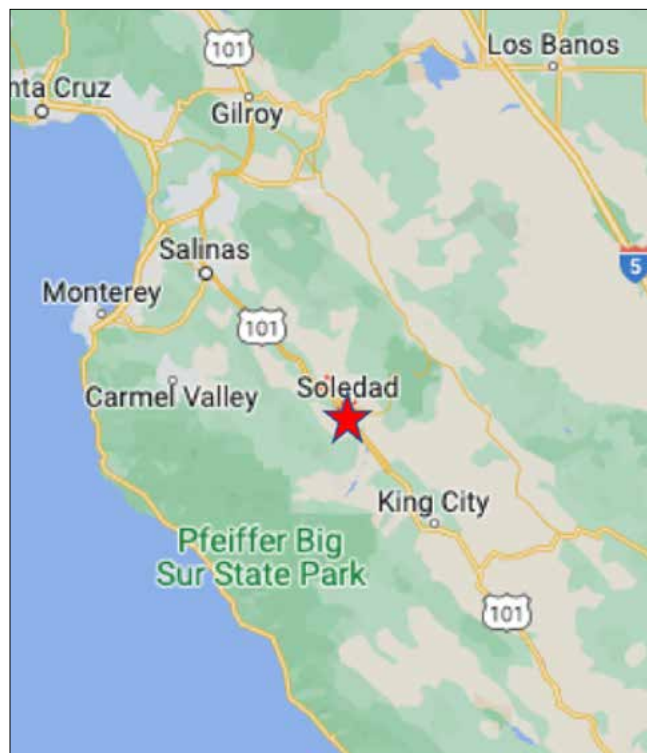


Figure 3. Soledad's Location in the Region



Soledad Neighboring Agricultural Land

History & Culture

The Salinas Valley region was home to Native American populations, including the Chalon Tribe of the Ohlone Indians as well as Rumsen and Mutsun. The valley's more recent history is rich in ranching and agriculture, and was once connected by stagecoach routes and railroad transportation. Soledad was named after one of the oldest Missions in California, founded in 1791 and located to the west of the city.

In the 1820s, artist Esteban Munras and his wife Catalina moved into the area and were granted the Rancho San Vicente. After Esteban's death, Catarina provided the foundation for the city by dividing up the Rancho and donating the land for a school, church, and other spaces that helped the town flourish. The Los Coches Adobe, built in 1843 and originally known as the Richardson Adobe, is a California Historical Landmark owned by the city.

Soledad was the end of the line for the Southern Pacific Railroad, which contributed to its initial growth. The city was incorporated in 1921. In 1952, Chester Aaroe built Little League Park, beginning the robust development of parks in the community. Soledad is also the setting for John Steinbeck's book *Of Mice and Men*.



1908 Soledad Schoolhouse



Dia de los Muertos event in Soledad

Soledad has grown to a city of over 18,000 as of 2020, per ACS. The surrounding agricultural lands offer the city's major employment along with the correctional facility just north of the city core. It is a tight-knit community. 90% of Soledad's population identifies as Hispanic/Latino, and the city's cultural events and festivals celebrate this heritage. The Soledad Hot Summer Days Car Show and Street Festival attracts thousands of visitors to enjoy the festivities while raising funds for the police department's youth recreational programs. Soledad also celebrates its Hispanic heritage with workshops and events from piñata-building workshops, and ofrenda craft nights for Dia de los Muertos celebrations, to traditional dance performances. Soledad often showcases traditional performances by its High School groups such as baile folklórico and the high school mariachi band.



Los Coches Adobe 2023

Planning & Policy Context

The Updated Parks and Recreation Master Plan is informed by multiple existing plans and policies within Soledad. In addition, several efforts are in process that were aligned and considered in the development of recommendations. This plan's recommendations should ultimately be integrated in the General Plan and future relevant citywide plans. Below are highlights of key connections.

Table 1. Planning & Policy Context

Plan Name	Date	Potential Impact to the PRMP
Soledad General Plan	<i>2005, and 2024 update</i>	Soledad is concurrently updating its General Plan, the governing document regarding land use patterns and needs, to address open space for all residents in a manner that considers social, economic and racial equity, correlated with the environmental justice policies in the general plan, as applicable. The previously adopted plan identified specific goals around parks and recreation facilities being within walking distance, open space trails in the Gabilan foothills, pedestrian and bike connections, and a goal of 5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. These goals have been considered in the framework of the PRMP. Soledad's General Plan update and this Parks and Recreation Master Plan update will be complementary and mutually reinforcing.
Housing Element Update	<i>2018, and 2024 update</i>	The Housing Element is part of the General Plan and indicates where there are opportunity sites for residential growth to meet Regional Housing Allocation Needs. This future residential growth impacts the need and location for future parks. According to the Housing element there is a significant percentage of overcrowding in Soledad homes, and a need to address this through policies and upzoning. This implies a greater need for parks to serve the current and projected residents within city limits.
Parks and Recreation Master Plan	<i>2009</i>	Soledad's first Parks and Recreation Master Plan was approved in 2009. Many of the actions described in the plan have been implemented, most notably the City's development of its own Parks and Recreation Department. This PRMP update builds on the progress made from the previous plan, including developing guidelines, policies, and recommendations regarding the City's expanded role in providing recreation services.
Downtown Specific Plan	<i>2012</i>	The Downtown Specific Plan adopted in 2012 encompasses Front Street and the surrounding areas, proposing to create a pedestrian-oriented and vibrant mixed-use downtown. Intensified and diversified uses would be anchored by a proposed train station and public plaza in the area currently occupied by Cesar Chavez Park. The plan proposes a strong pedestrian and visual connection between Front Street and Vosti Park, and to a new community center facility on the current City Yard on State Street. It encourages the inclusion of parks within the downtown area and ensures a balance of commercial and recreational uses within the downtown core.

Table 1. Planning & Policy Context (continued)

Plan Name	Date	Potential Impact to the PRMP
Miramonte Specific Plan	<i>TBD</i>	The Specific Plan for this 654-acre development area north of the current city limits is projected to increase the city's population by over 50%. The Plan provides for almost 60 acres of neighborhood and community parkland, which meets the goal of 5 acres per 1,000 new residents. There is the opportunity to work with the Miramonte developers to ensure that their parks provide elements that complement Soledad's existing parks.
Monterey County Active Transportation Plan	2018	The Transportation Agency for Monterey County's (TAMC) Active Transportation Plan proposed county-wide and city projects to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and connections. The identified projects support the PRMP's guidelines and recommendations for improved access to parks and encouraging active transportation for recreation.
Local Roadway Safety Plan	2022	The City of Soledad built on the TAMC's plan to further define and develop a safer roadway environment, to make the city more walkable and bikeable for all residents, and to support residents' ability to walk or bike to a park.
Relevant California Legislation	2024	The State of California recently enacted several pieces of legislation that impact park planning, funding possibilities and operation. This legislation includes; SB 1425 Section 65565.5 of the Government Code requiring cities to update their General Plans to address open space that considers social, economic, and racial equity, climate resilience, safety and more; SB 852 Section 62300 et.seq. of the Government Code, allowing cities, counties, or special districts to establish climate resilience districts (CRD's) that can receive funding for climate adaptation related projects; and AB 1572 that prohibits the use of potable water on "non-functional turf" over the next several years. Each of these pieces will be taken into consideration in the recommendations of Soledad's parks and recreation facilities.

Master Plan Organization

This Plan is organized into the following sections:

1. Introduction

Plan background and purpose, about Soledad's Parks and Recreation, planning area overview, history and culture overview, planning and policy context, and Master Plan organization.

2. Community Driven Plan

Community engagement and planning process, big ideas and themes, and community engagement details.

3. Climate Considerations

Climate, wind, wildfire and flooding risk, extreme heat and warm nights, and cascading risks.

4. Community Needs

Needs methodology, community profile, parks and facilities analysis, recreation programs assessment, park and recreation trends, and summary of community needs.

5. Parks & Recreation Guidelines

Policy guidelines to provide City staff and decision-makers with frameworks for making considered decisions regarding parks, facilities and programs, and responding to changing needs and opportunities over time.

6. Recommendations

Citywide, park and facility specific, and future site recommendations, and standards for development of new and renovation of existing parks.

7. Programming

Recreation programming and park programming recommendations, and cost recovery and fee considerations.

8. Implementation

Prioritization considerations, priority/implementation tables for capital projects, recreation programming, and maintenance, and funding mechanisms.

9. Appendices

Tree List, Complete Parks & Facilities inventory, Existing Conditions Report.



2. Community Driven Plan

2. Community Driven Plan

A. Community Engagement & Planning Process

The planning process for the PRMP offered a variety of opportunities for community engagement, as depicted in the process timeline diagram below.

The PRMP was informed by robust public input gathered through a year long community engagement process. All project phases integrated in-person activities such as workshops and pop-ups, in conjunction with online engagement tools. Engagement encompassed a range of stakeholders including community members, partner agencies, business interests, non-profits, and others. All engagement sessions and materials were provided in English and Spanish. The following is a summary of how community members were able to provide input into the process:

- A Community Advisory Committee was formed to provide input and feedback at various stages of plan development.
- City Council was kept advised of the plan's progress and provided their input at periodic presentations by BluePoint Planning and staff.
- A plan website, <https://www.soledadpark-sandrecplan.com/>, was developed to provide a project-focused hub for community feedback, information, and plan documents.
- Communication materials were developed for the City to distribute information about the project, details about how to be involved, and links to various activities. Mailings went out to the entire city with information about in-person workshops as well as information on how to provide feedback if residents were unable to attend the in-person workshops. Social media, flyers distributed by local youth, and banners were also used to promote outreach events, the visioning process, and the recommendations process.



Figure 4. Process Timeline

- Two open house workshops were held in January 2023, and May 2023, focused on learning about the plan and providing visioning and prioritization input. Workshops were advertised on Facebook, the plan website, and on flyers posted throughout the city.
- A community-wide survey was distributed online via the City's social media and website, in addition to the project website. Over 400 responses were received.
- Interactive outreach and engagement occurred at community events, including visioning at the City's Easter event, interactive boards posted in the Community Center and City Hall, and pop-up events at the city's shopping mall and Farmers' Market.
- Padlet, an online tool, allowed participants to share their ideas, photos, videos, etc. for park and recreation improvements. In total, over 420 likes and comments were received.
- Padlet was also used in the Recommendations phase. Participants were shown a map with location icons for each city park. For each park selected, participants were surveyed about their top priority for that park.
- The final PRMP will undergo staff review, be posted on the project website for a public review, and presented to Council for approval and adoption.



Project Flyer

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN NUMBERS

2

Project Surveys

401

Survey Responses

5

Community Pop-ups

1

Project Website

2

Online Engagement Activities

800+

Community Members Reached

B. Big Ideas & Themes

The following themes from the three rounds of engagement inform the PRMP goals, needs assessment, and recommendations.



Safety: Residents need to feel safe both in parks and getting to local parks to fully enjoy them.



Partnerships: There are local organizations that can be partnered with to maximize space and resources to best serve the community.



Limited Facilities: There are not enough park facilities available for soccer, community gatherings, or for outdoor fitness and walking.



Wind: The wind in Soledad is a huge barrier to outdoor recreation, especially in the early to mid-afternoon.



Limited Staffing: There are not enough staff to adequately maintain the parks, or support the growing recreation department.



Accessibility: There is room to improve the accessibility and inclusivity of all the city parks.



Awareness: As park and recreation services are growing, ensuring the community is aware of what is available is essential.



Diversity: As the recreation department continues to grow and expand, continuing to diversify the programs offered will be important.



C. Community Engagement Details

Round 1 Engagement: Understanding Vulnerabilities

Small Group Meetings

The first window of community engagement for the Soledad Parks and Recreation Master Plan was held on February 1– 2, 2023. The focus was on understanding the needs, desires, and opportunities of Soledad’s community through engaging in small group sessions. The project team met with six groups that represented Youth and Teens, Economic Development, Business and Tourism, Senior Housing and Health, Public Safety, Team and Active Sports, and Arts, Culture and Community. The top takeaways from the small groups are as follows:

- **The wind** is a major consideration for all parks, outdoor recreation, and events.
- There is a lot of excitement for the upcoming Cesar Chavez container park, activation plans, and new facilities. The City wants to create and foster “**a real hub downtown.**”
- The community wants to streamline a central permitting process to use parks for **special events** (e.g., at the upcoming Cesar Chavez container park).
- To enhance the **usability and accessibility of parks**, especially for seniors, windbreaks,

shade, shelters, and convenient seating are essential.

- **Increasing safety** and creating **dedicated bike/pedestrian routes and trails** will encourage active mobility through better networks and connectivity.
- There is a strong desire for more opportunities for **passive recreation**, including arts, culture, social gatherings, and recharge.
- There are not enough compelling **opportunities for youth** to engage in recreation.

Stakeholder Interviews

In February and March 2023 the project team interviewed Stakeholders including Soledad City Council members, Monterey County officials, representatives from schools (both Hartnell College and the Soledad Unified School District), Soledad-Mission Recreation District, Pinnacles National Park services, and other partners. These individuals offered unique perspectives into the community and the key takeaways are as follows.

- Soledad is a **family-friendly** town that has a **strong community** presence.
- **Sports, especially soccer**, are a prime aspect of the community, but the City lacks

the resources needed to accommodate the demand.

- **People want to gather** but there is a lack of multi-purpose areas both indoors and outdoors.
- There are extraordinarily **strong winds** that often stand as a barrier to outdoor events.
- Streets are wide and there is room to improve public transportation and traffic safety, and to add bike lanes.
- There are more parks than existing maintenance staff and resources can take care of.
- The City wants to see an increase in the number of **community programs** and the diversity of community programs both in type and audience.
- There are opportunities to develop existing structures, the landfill site, and the Los Coches Adobe for recreational use and these sites need to be affordable and accessible to the entire community.
- The community is interested in developing **new walking/hiking trails**.
- Soledad is one of the gateways to Pinnacles National Park, but the park is not easily

accessible. There has been an influx of visitors that the west entrance cannot sustain.

Community Survey

From February until April 2023, an online survey was conducted. This survey was designed to gauge how residents view the city's parks, what activities and amenities they value and desire, and what they would like the City to expand. The survey was advertised through door-to-door flyers, social media, and other City channels. The survey closed on April 8th, with a total of **401 respondents**, 372 in English, and 29 in Spanish. The key findings are as follows:

- Parks are not used equally. The most visited parks are Blas Santana Park (106), Chester Aaroe/Little League Parks (96) and Peverini/Lum Memorial Parks (95).
- Parks are used regularly. Most respondents (159) reported using parks weekly.
- Respondents rated the quality of the parks a 3.3 out of 5 stars, so there is room for improvement.
- Most respondents (65%) indicated using one or more of the current recreational services offered by the city.
- Sports (132) and youth programs (77) have the highest use.
- Park cleanliness (53), closed restrooms (80), and safety (50) are the top issues residents would like to focus on for park improvements.
- Respondents generally go to parks for exercise (200), their kids (186), or sports (148). They also go to parks to enjoy quiet relaxation (138) and to spend time with their friends (89).
- Most people walk to parks (317) and use their car (221) to get there.



Project Website

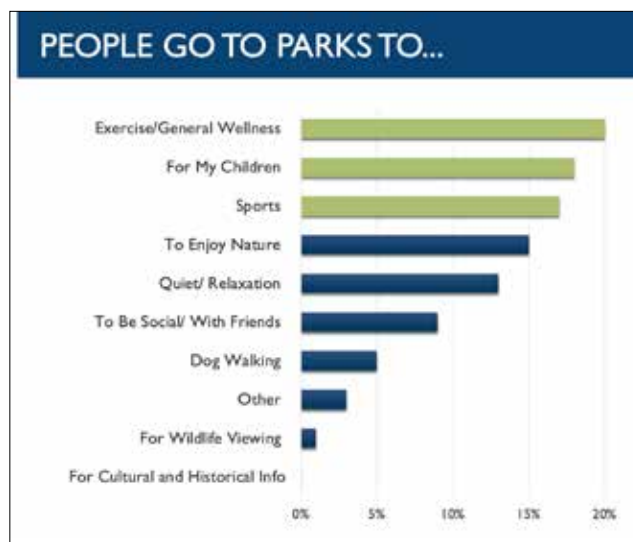
The community was asked what improvements they would like the City to focus on when thinking about recreation programs and facilities for the community, and the top responses were:

Recreation Programs:

- Child Care and Preschool Activities
- Teen Programs
- Art Classes
- Computer Classes
- Outdoor Camping and Hiking Programs
- More Fitness Programs

Facilities Improvements:

- Play Areas
- Walking and Hiking Areas
- Sports Fields
- Picnic and BBQ Areas
- Bathrooms



Community Survey, Why People Go to Parks

WHAT ARE THE TOP 3-5 PARK FACILITIES IMPROVEMENTS THE CITY SHOULD FOCUS ON?



Community Survey, Facilities Improvements

Engagement Round 2: Vision & Goals

The second round of community engagement began in April 2023 to develop a vision for the future of parks and recreation for the community. This round of engagement consisted of three pop-up events, a community workshop, and an online engagement activity. This round of engagement reached approximately **400 participants**.

Pop-Ups

The City held an Easter Event in Cesar Chavez Park and had over 300 participants in the visioning exercise. Four vision boards were used to display a broad range of pictures of different recreational activities and facilities to gauge interest. Participants were asked to place stickers on their top 3-5 pictures, along with sticky notes with their suggestions. A second set of the vision boards was placed in the corridor of the Community Center from April to June to allow patrons to participate as they entered the building, engaging approximately 50 participants. These vision boards were used again on May 23rd at a pop-up event held at the local shopping mall and engaged approximately 25 participants. The key trends from the vision boards are expressed below.

- Outdoor Sports and Activities: participants favored Adult & Youth Soccer (33), Volleyball (29), and Kids & Youth Sports (26).
- Indoor Recreation: the community favored Gymnastics and Tumbling (50), Martial Arts (27), and Cooking Classes (25).
- Community Gathering: respondents favored Cultural/Arts Performances (27), Sheltered Picnic Areas (25), and Wind Festivals and Activities (25).
- Something New: the community indicated

preferences for an Off-leash Dog Park (45), Hiking Trails (19), and a Pump Track (13). Also noted were football and rock climbing.



Vision Board Engagement 1



Vision Board Engagement 2



Vision Board Engagement 3

Online Visioning Engagement

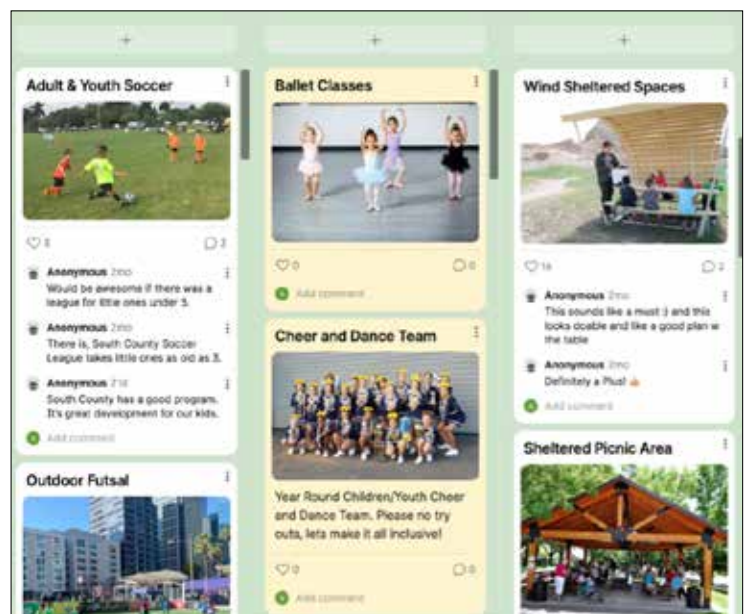
In conjunction with the vision boards, an online community engagement platform, “Padlet”, was used to invite community members to share what they would like to see in Soledad’s parks and recreation programs. Viewing the same pictures, participants were asked to like, comment, and add their own pictures or videos of their vision for Soledad’s Parks and Recreation. The Padlet was posted on the project website and on multiple flyers posted throughout the city and at other in-person events. The Padlet ran from April 8th, to June 9th in English and Spanish.

Below is a visual depiction of the Padlet. The yellow boxes indicate posts added by the community, the numbers by the heart indicate number of “likes” and the number by the message bubble indicate number of “comments.” Padlet is not a ranking or voting system, so the numbers are simply included to show where multiple comments or likes occurred, not to rank the suggestions. The Padlet received over **400 likes and 14 comments** and the key findings are shown below.

- Outdoor Sports and Activities: participants favored an Outdoor Gym (18), Volleyball (11), and Adult Baseball and Softball (9).
- Indoor Recreation: the community liked Cooking Classes (16) Gymnastics and Tumbling (13), and Art Classes (12).
- Community Gathering: respondents favored Sheltered Picnic Areas (23), Community Food Events (19), Wind Sheltered Spaces (18) and Places to Listen to Music (18).
- Something New: the community indicated Hiking Trails (12), Windbreak Walls (12) and a Protected Outdoor Classroom (11). Also noted were a plazita, outdoor parkour park, and basketball courts.

From these two visioning exercises the takeaways are:

- There is a strong desire for more places to gather and areas to express and celebrate culture and community.
- Community members are eager for more programming, especially for girls sports and all-ages leagues.
- There is a need for more protected areas from wind, sun, and heat.
- There is a desire for more diverse recreation classes for all ages, such as more cooking classes and art classes.



Vision Padlet

Community Workshop

At the May 23, 2023 Community Visioning Workshop, community members were invited to learn more about their parks and to share their ideas of a vision for the future. After a brief presentation, attendees were asked to participate in a visioning exercise by giving their opinions on what they would like to see in their local parks and recreation programs. Individuals helped to develop a visioning collage by placing pictures and words on a large sheet of paper, as well as writing their ideas about how they believe parks and recreation should evolve. The meeting was attended by **15 community members**.

Key Findings

- Health and wellness is important to the community. Teaching kids how to stay active at a young age and providing affordable resources for all ages to stay healthy are a necessity.

- Arts and culture are programs the community value and would like increased.
- The community would like to have more classes and programs offered centrally to eliminate the need to drive outside of town.
- Community gathering is important. Offering events, facilities, and opportunities for gathering is key.



Community Vision Wall Graphic

Round 3: Engagement Recommendations & Priorities

The third round of community engagement began in late September 2023 to January 2024 to begin prioritizing the recommendations developed from the previous rounds of engagement. This round consisted of two pop-up events and an online engagement activity. In person events reached approximately 70 participants.

Pop-Up Events

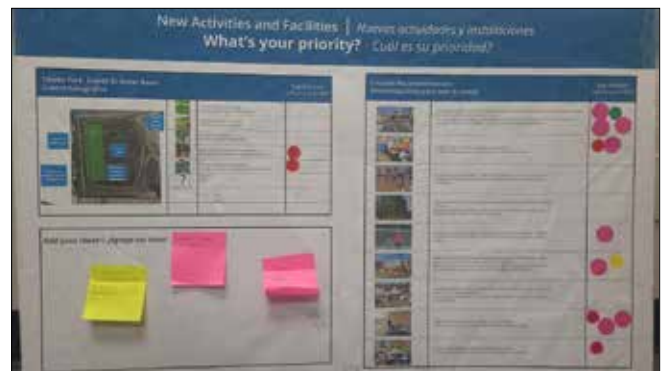
On September 28th, City staff held a pop-up event at the local Farmers Market and on October 1st the City staff led a pop-up event at the Resource Fair event at the newly opened Orchard Lane Park. Four recommendation boards were displayed with each park and their respective recommendations in English and Spanish. Participants were asked to identify which recommendation was their top priority for each park. Both of these events were subject to bad weather and did not reach optimal participation. Despite the weather, the key takeaways from the pop-ups are below.

Key takeaways are:

- The top priority for Vosti Park is to add fitness equipment.
- The top priority for Chester Aaroe/Little League Park is adding a flexible court.
- The top priorities for the Community Center are Cooking classes, Movies in the Park, and Adult and Senior Education classes.
- The top priorities for citywide recommendations are shade and wind protection, areas for teens to gather and socialize, and creating safe routes to parks.



Recommendations Pop-Up



Example Recommendations Board 1



Example Recommendations Board 2

Online Engagement Activity

In conjunction with the recommendation boards, the online community engagement platform, “Padlet”, was used to invite community members to prioritize recommendations that they would like to see in Soledad’s parks and recreation programs. This Padlet was in the form of an interactive map with a survey linked to each park location. Participants were asked to select their favorite parks and select which recommendation was their top priority. The recommendations were the same that were listed on the boards and were available in English and Spanish. The Padlet was posted on the project website and on multiple flyers posted throughout the city and at other in-person events. The Padlet ran from September 2023 to January 2024, . The Padlet received over **750 votes and 10 comments** and the results of each park are shown below.

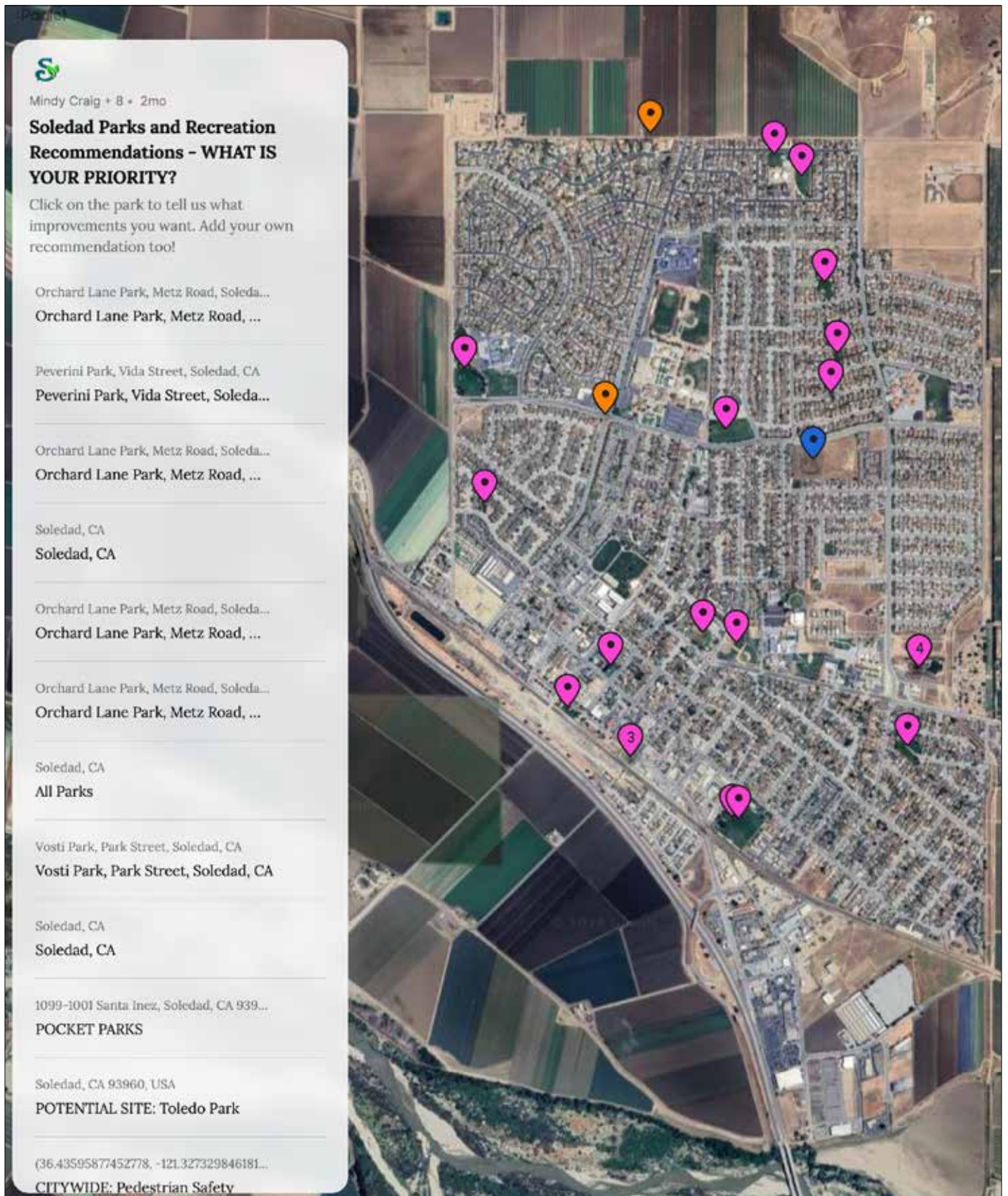
On the following page is a visual depiction of the Padlet. The pink location icons represent City-owned parks, the orange location icons represent citywide recommendations, the blue icons represent potential site recommendations, and location icons with numbers were added by community members.

Parks & their top recommendations:

- Citywide: Increasing pedestrian safety by adding protected bike lanes, more crosswalks, and pedestrian areas is the top priority (43), along with a walking path that goes around the city and connects the parks (34).
- Pocket Parks: add games like big chess and four square (16).
- Santa Barbara Park: add a playground (22).
- Lum Memorial Park: improve the large group picnic area by adding tables, shade, and a group BBQ (24).
- San Antonio Park: add a small picnic area

and playground (18).

- Blas Santana Park: create comfortable seating areas to hang out and socialize (26).
- Aurelio N. Ramirez Park: add ½ basketball court (16) and add a shaded picnic area with a BBQ (17).
- Vosti Park: increase activity spaces and amenities that are open to the community (29).
- Jesse Gallardo Park: add shaded and wind-protected picnic areas with BBQs (19), and improve crossing safety to restrooms and playgrounds at Little League Park (15).
- Cesar Chavez Park: add an area for small concerts (18).
- Chester Aaroe Little League Park: add a dog park/temporary overflow parking (12), and a flexible court (12).
- Albert Bill Ramus Park: provide additional seating and connections to the Farmers Market (24).
- Veterans Memorial Park: improve playground with parent seating and shade, and stroller and wheelchair access (17).
- Joe O. Ledesma Park: add shade at the play area and picnic area (18).



Recommendations Image from the Online Padlet



3. Climate Considerations

3. Climate Considerations

A Changing Climate

Addressing the increasing uncertainty and impacts of a changing climate are some of the most critical issues that cities will be responding to now and into the future. Parks can play a central role in mitigating and addressing some of the impacts related to climate change and are stepping up to respond to the challenge.

Nationally, parks and recreation departments are incorporating a range of strategies and practices to help reduce their greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change, as well as addressing impacts that are occurring today such as extreme weather, flooding, and wildfires. These practices include conserving water and energy, managing soil to create “carbon sinks” and better respond to drought conditions, reducing vehicle miles traveled by promoting and supporting walking and biking, and improving habitat by reducing the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers, and landscaping with native and climate adapted plants. In California, many jurisdictions have formally adopted regulations supporting a whole systems watershed approach, which fosters soil health, conserves water, sequesters carbon, and protects valuable resources while reducing waste and preventing pollution.

Extreme Heat & Warm Nights

Historically, the temperatures in Soledad have been moderate. However, the number of extreme heat days and the number of warm nights (without a cool down period) are expected to increase dramatically from an average of 5 extreme heat days to 17-20 extreme heat days in 2035; and an increase in warm nights from an average of 9 nights to 27-35 by 2035. (Figures 9 and 10). Residents without air conditioning will have a much harder time cooling off their homes and will need places such as cooling centers or parks for relief from the heat. Parks offer a respite to extreme heat, especially with the addition of trees and the reduction of asphalt and hard services that trap heat. Planting, water features, and shade in parks can offer people an important refuge.

The increase in extreme weather and warm nights may make the wind in Soledad more severe, resulting in trees being more susceptible to blowing down or dying. This reduction in shade and windbreaks, could create a cycle that would make Soledad’s parks and outdoor spaces less usable and enjoyable. Focusing on increasing resilient trees that can help mitigate wind and provide cooling will be essential.

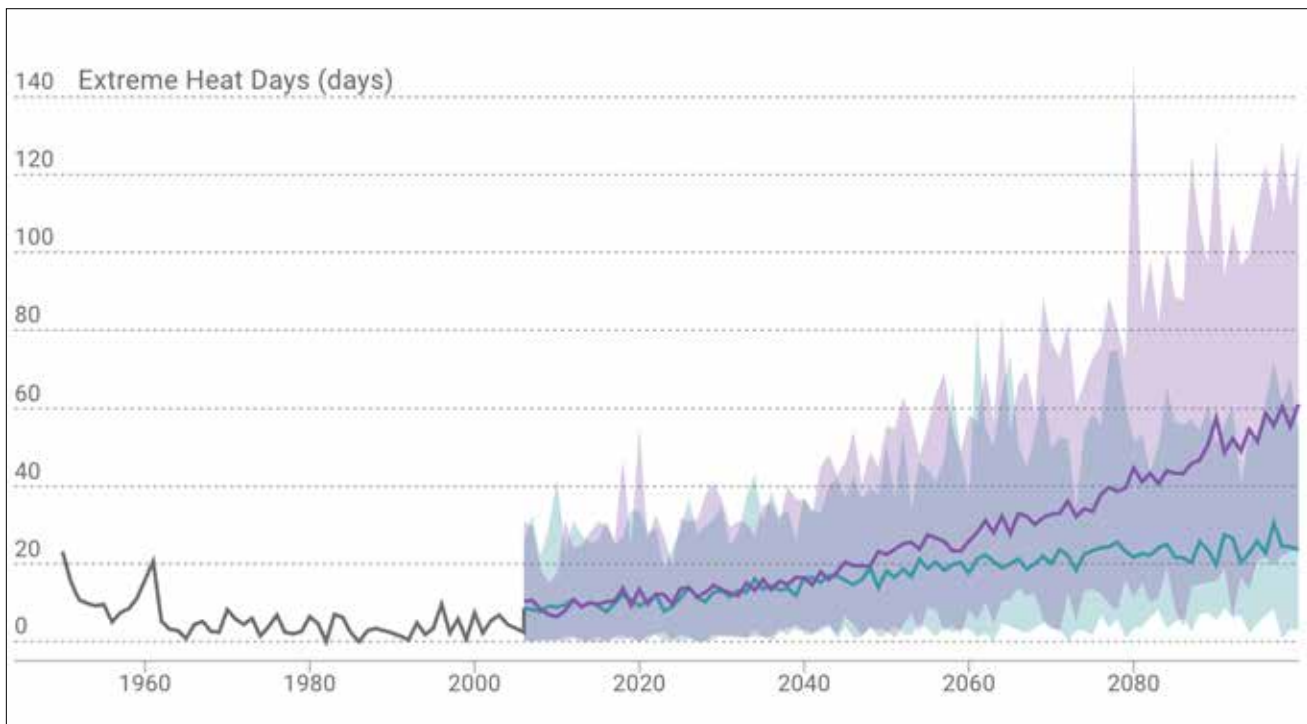


Figure 5. Extreme Heat Days

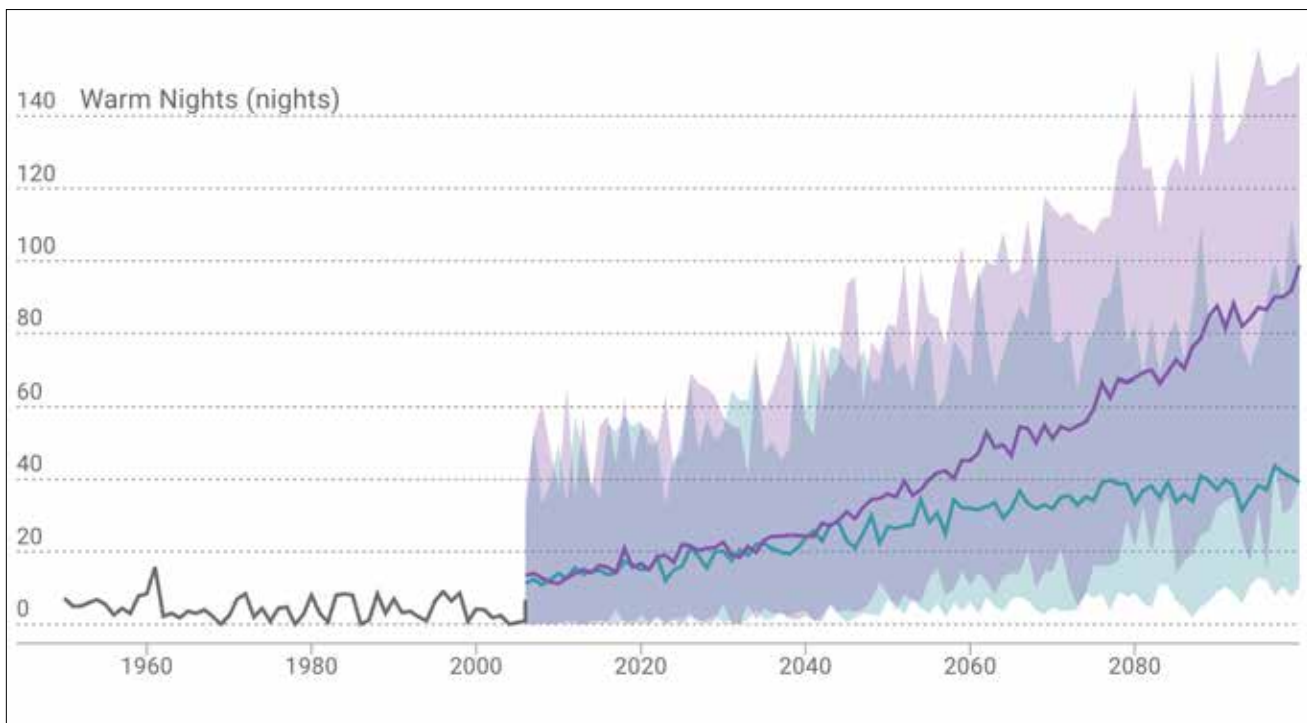


Figure 6. Warm Nights

Source: <https://cal-adapt.org/tools/local-climate-change-snapshot>

Climate & Wind

Soledad's weather is consistent with the valley's climate. Soledad is sunny, averaging 25 sunny days per month. Although this weather offers the perfect opportunity to engage in outside activities like picnics, hikes, or BBQs, Soledad's strong winds throughout much of the year can be a detriment and have only increased from year to year. Soledad is windiest in the summer months with an average of 6.2 mph, but even in the calmer winter months winds reach 4.5 mph on average. Most problematic are the strong gusts which occur during the mid to late afternoon, and reached a new high of 51 mph in February 2023. Figure 7 shows the wind speeds in Soledad on a typical summer day. The wind increases dramatically from around 2 pm to 6 pm, which is the prime time for outdoor recreation. These winds are projected to only increase as tree windbreaks die off in conjunction with increasing temperatures or are removed for development.

Windbreaks can mitigate the wind's impact and improve outdoor recreation. Linear plantings of trees and shrubs can slow the wind, provide shade, help control soil erosion, protect landscaping, and beautify the area. Architectural wind shelters, which can deflect wind and reduce wind speed by 75% on the opposing side, can be very useful around seating and picnic areas.

If wind structures are undesirable, an alternative would be to design spaces for indoor activities. The wind is strongest in the afternoon and early evening, when students are getting out of school and adults are getting off work. Increasing the number of indoor recreation activities or after school programs during this time would provide residents with a way to avoid the wind.



Windblown Trees at Rotary Park

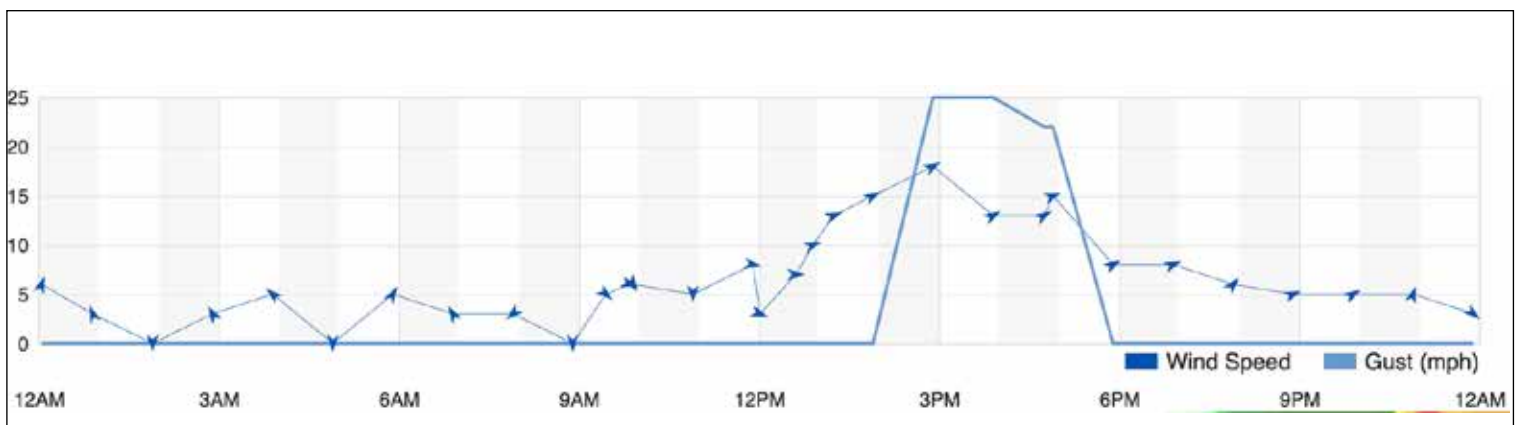


Figure 7. Wind Data Source: Weather Underground



Weather damaged trees at Vosti Park

Wildfire & Flooding Risk

In addition to high winds, Soledad has a moderate to high vulnerability to wildfires as illustrated in Figure 8. Flooding risk, shown on Figure 9, is primarily centered surrounding the Salinas River and outside of the city's boundaries. The land where the Los Coches Adobe stands is at risk for both fire and flooding. The Adobe itself is on high ground, but the surrounding area may be susceptible to flooding.



Windbreaks

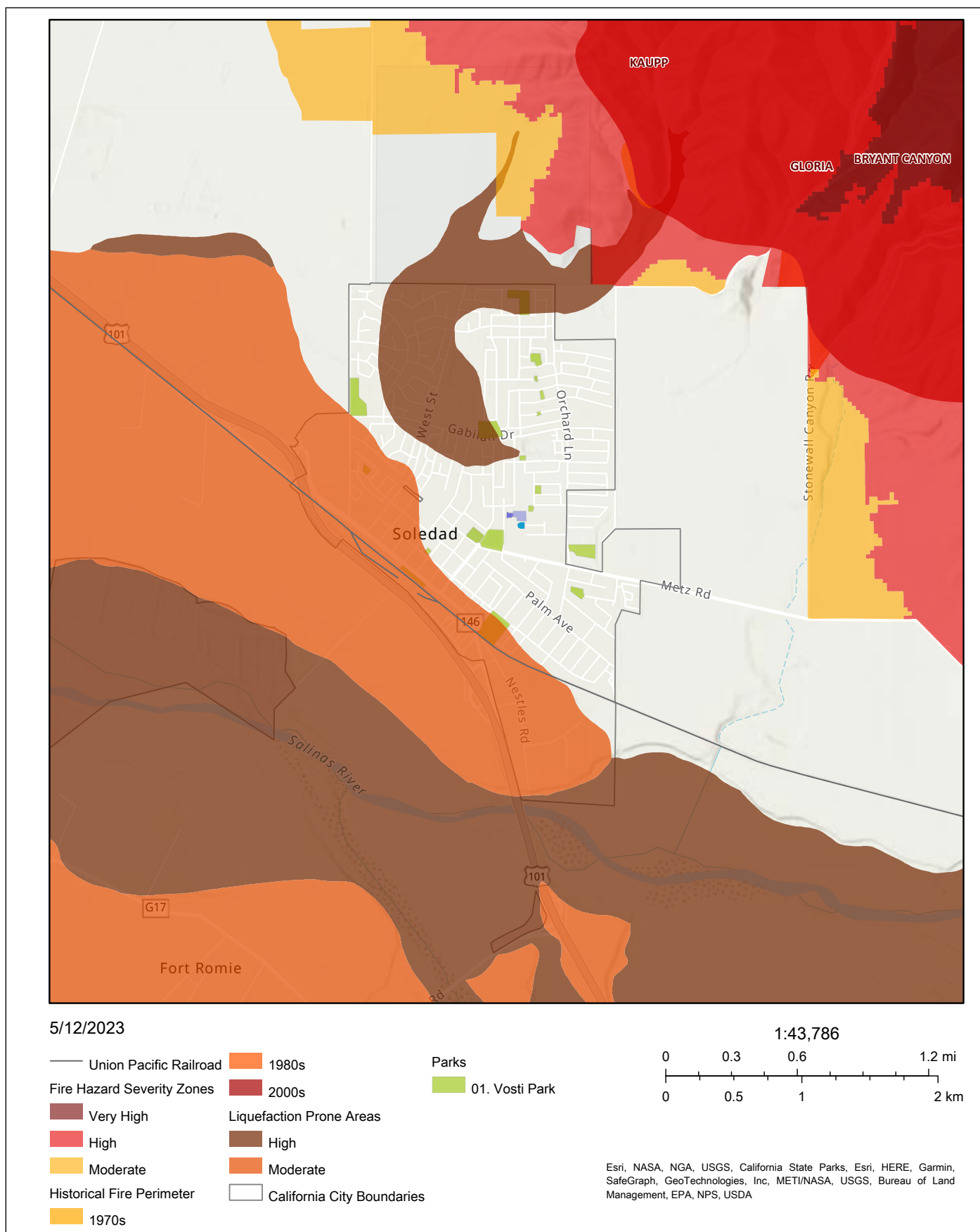


Figure 8. Soledad Wildfire Hazards Map

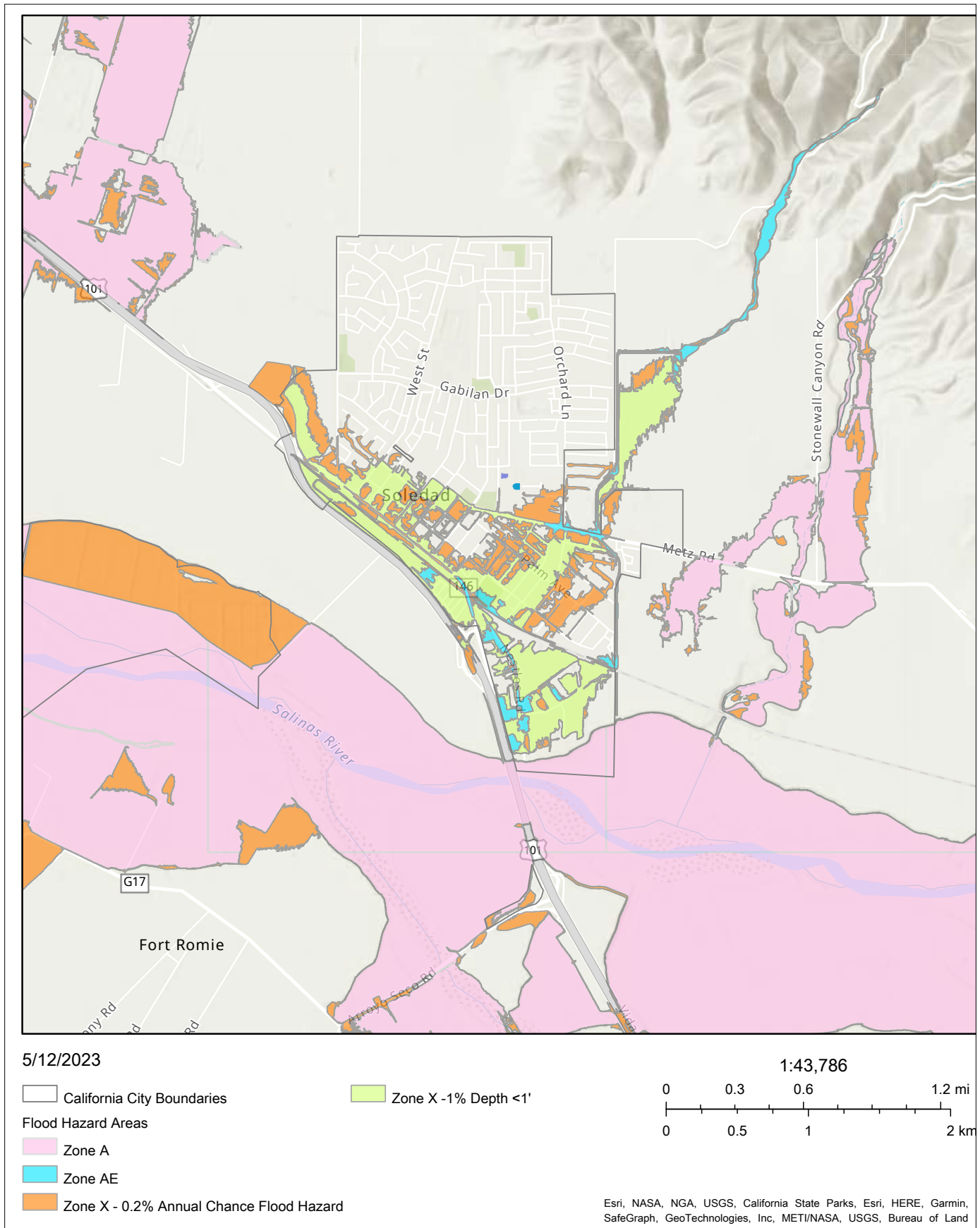


Figure 9. Soledad Flooding Risk Map

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4. Community Needs

4. Community Needs

Needs Assessment Methodology

A central component to developing an effective parks and recreation plan is understanding what the needs are for parks and for programs. This understanding is the basis for recommendations and for determining priority of investments moving forward. Needs are influenced by a number of elements from access and availability of particular amenities to awareness, cultural relevancy, and affordability considerations. Further, a needs assessment must consider the demands for today as well as address potential needs over the next 20 years. Recreation trends, growth of the community, changing demographics, and increasingly, the impacts of climate change will all influence how the provision of parks and recreation services must adapt. Finally, parks and recreation facilities and services are often the most visible and positive face of a city, providing some level of service for every resident and offering a connective fabric that unites the city as a cohesive whole.

In determining Soledad's needs regarding parks and recreation, a number of inputs provided an understanding of the community's needs in terms of parks, facilities, and recreation programming. The following factors shaped and influenced the needs assessment and subsequent refinements.

This chapter explores the key elements of the needs assessment, providing a demographic overview of the community, a summary of the inventory of parks, facilities and programs and an overview of current recreation trends, and summarizing overall community needs for Soledad.

Needs Assessment Components

Community input

Engaging and listening to the community through a variety of channels at multiple stages to inform identification of the community's desires, needs, and concerns.

Community profile and demographics

Analyzing the community population trends and how they may change over time, to support a wider analysis of the city's potential needs and gaps.

Quality of existing parks and programs

Assessing how well the city's parks and its recreation programs are currently meeting their intended purpose and serving community needs, including accessibility, features, usage, and function.

Trends analysis

Evaluating regional and national recreation and park trends and emerging ideas relevant to Soledad.

Accessibility to the parks and facilities

Determining how easily community members can reach parks and recreation facilities from their homes is an important indicator of equitable resource distribution.

Acres of parks per resident

The gross acreage of facilities available per resident provides an order-of-magnitude look at how the City is meeting its stated park goals.



A. Community Profile

Demographics

This section presents the characteristics of the Soledad community, providing context for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. It draws primarily from public sources such as the U.S. Census and the State of California Department of Finance, in conjunction with the General Plan Update. The data presented focuses on the portion of the population that is not housed in the correctional facilities located within city boundaries.

In 2023, Soledad had approximately 18,648 residents in the city core. The city is projected to grow in the range of 0.13 percent annually. Soledad is categorized as primarily rural but is quite dense with approximately 7,835 people per square mile in the core area.

On the following pages, an overview of the demographics of the city is presented with a comparison to California's demographics. These demographics are based on 2020 census numbers and should be considered approximate and not absolute numbers. The following are some of the key findings of the analysis.

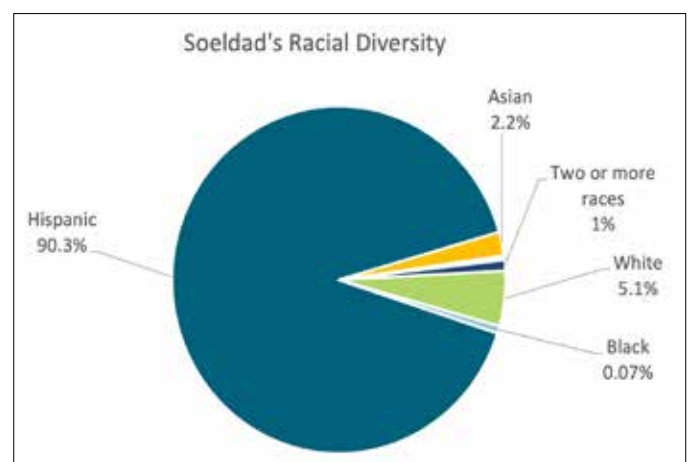


Figure 10. Soledad Racial Diversity

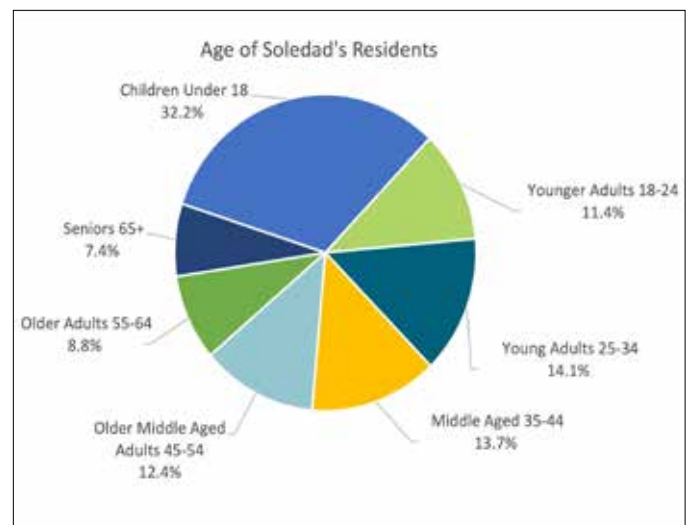


Figure 11. Age of Soledad Residents

Source 2021 Demographic, www.usa.com

Table 2. City of Soledad Demographics

2020 U.S. Census Data	Soledad	Soledad (%)	CA
Population Characteristics			
Population 2023	26,230		39,538,223
Population (excluding prisoners)	18,648		
Growth 2019-2020	0.13%		0.2%
Population Density/Sq Mile	5,640.90		251.3
Population by Gender			
Male	68.50%	68.50%	49.80%
Female	31.50%	31.50%	50.20%
Population by Gender (Excluding Prisoners)			
Male	62.41%	62.41%	49.80%
Female	37.59%	37.59%	50.20%
By Age			
Children Under 18	6,092	32.20%	22.00%
Younger Adults 18-24	2,167	11.40%	9.60%
Young Adults 25-34	2,671	14.10%	14.70%
Middle Aged 35-44	2,597	13.70%	13.50%
Older Middle Aged Adults 45-54	2,346	12.40%	12.60%
Older Adults 55-64	1,667	8.80%	12.30%
Seniors 65+	1,406	7.40%	14.20%
Median Age	29.4		37.50
By Race/Ethnicity			
White	972	5.10%	34.7%
Black	125	0.70%	5.4%
Hispanic	17,107	90.30%	39.4%
Asian	409	2.20%	15.1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	33	0.20%	0.3%
Native American	41	0.20%	0.4%
Two or more races	197	1.00%	4.1%

Table 2. City of Soledad Demographics (continued)

2020 U.S. Census Data	Soledad	Soledad (%)	CA
Education (over 25)			
Less Than High School	3,381	39.90%	8.70%
Some High School	751	8.90%	7.10%
High School Graduate	1,909	22.50%	20.40%
Some College	1,075	12.70%	20.50%
Associates Degree	751	8.90%	8%
Bachelor Degree	430	5.10%	21.90%
Graduate/Professional Degree	169	2.00%	13.40%
Housing			
Total Housing Units	4,524		14,392,140
Occupied Units	4,447		13,475,623
Owner Occupied	2,566	57.70%	7,348,329
Renter Occupied	1,881	42.30%	6,127,294
Vacant Housing Units	77	1.70%	6.40%
Average Household Size	4.23		2.86
Median Home Sale Price	\$ 624,000.00		\$ 744,000.00
Language Spoken at Home			
English	8,331	31.76%	56.1%
Spanish	14,753	56.24%	28.2%
Other Indo-European	100	0.38%	4.8%
Asian/Pacific	349	1.33%	9.8%
Other	224	0.85%	1.2%
Income and Poverty Rate			
Median Household Income	67,366		84,097
Poverty Rate	4,200	20.10%	12.3%

B. Community Profile Highlights



According to the 2023 California Department of Finance report, the city has 18,648 residing within the city's core. With a median age of 28.7 years, which is younger than California's median age of 37.5, programs and services need to be designed for all ages while ensuring they are affordable and accessible to the entire community.



The majority of Soledad's residents, 90.3 percent, are Hispanic followed by 5.1 percent White residents, and 2.2 percent Asian. Soledad's diverse population needs to be reflected in the programs and services offered moving forward.



Soledad is categorized as rural but the city core has the highest residential density in the county, with approximately 7,835 people per square mile.



The average household size of 4.57 people is high in comparison to the California average of 2.77 people per household and Monterey County's average of 3.06. With this household size and population density, Soledad's residents need public spaces to relax, gather, exercise, and socialize.



Soledad has a median income of \$67,366 which is lower than California's median household income of \$84,097. Affordability is a key consideration for programs and services for Soledad's residents.

Source US Census and American Community Survey



C. Parks & Facilities Analysis

The City of Soledad currently provides approximately 39.4 acres of developed parkland, or approximately 2.1 acres per 1,000 residents. This ratio increases to 2.5 acres per 1,000 when Rotary Park, which is operated by Soledad-Mission Recreation District, and Gabilan Pond, which is currently slated for development as a park, are considered. The current ratio of parks to residents is well below the General Plan's standard of 5 acres per 1,000 residents. However, with the inclusion of identified potential park sites, the City could achieve a ratio much closer to the desired acreage standard.

Table 3 (Summary Inventory) on the next page lists the existing parks, with their size and the acres per 1,000 residents that each category provides. Each park was evaluated, and rated in terms of its potential. Parks rated "Below Potential" are either undeveloped (potential park sites), or lack amenities that would greatly expand their uses and increase their value to the community. Parks that "Meet Potential with Needs" generally serve their intended purpose, but with improvements, could become more user friendly and provide a wider range of elements to serve the broader community. Parks that "Meet Potential" provide elements that fulfill their intended uses and serve the community well. Parks that "Exceed Expectations" are prime examples of parks that are well designed and include elements that support the community's Vision and Goals. A

full inventory of the city's parks and facilities is in the Appendix.

Park Classifications & Access

Soledad's City-owned parks consist of pocket parks, neighborhood parks, community parks and special use parks. Descriptions of each classification are in the summaries of each on the following pages. Additionally, some school district facilities are either subject to joint use agreements with the City, or have the potential to become joint use facilities, thus potentially increasing publicly available recreational spaces. A number of multi-family housing complexes also have play equipment or half court basketball for residents' use. The maps on the following pages show existing City-owned parks and facilities, school district facilities, other recreation opportunities, and potential park sites. The map on page 4.24 indicates areas of Soledad that are within a 10-minute walk to city parks.

Table 3. Summary Inventory

Park Name	Park Size	Fulfills Potential?
1. Pocket Park		
Calle Valverde Park (Parcel F)	.36	Meets Potential with Needs
Estrella Landscape Area	.22	Meets Potential
Santa Ynez Landscape Area	.22	Meets Potential
Serra Lane Park (Parcel A)	.36	Meets Potential with Needs
1. Pocket Park	1.16	0.1 Acres/Thousand
2. Neighborhood Park		
Albert Bill Ramus Park	0.45	Meets Potential
Aurelio N. Ramirez Park	1.25	Meets Potential with Needs
Joe O. Ledesma Park	0.6	Meets Potential with Needs
Lum Memorial Park	2.64	Meets Potential with Needs
Peaverini Park	2.9	Meets Potential with Needs
San Antonio Park	0.46	Meets Potential with Needs
Santa Barbara Park	1.08	Meets Potential with Needs
Vintage Estates Subdivision (Parcel E)	.5	Exceeds Potential
2. Neighborhood Park	9.88	0.5 Acres/Thousand
3. Community Park		
Blas Santana Memorial Park	4.2	Meets Potential with Needs
Chester Aaroe Park (Little League Park)	2.8	Meets Potential with Needs
Jesse Gallardo Park	4	Meets Potential
Orchard Lane Park	3.5	Exceeds Potential
Veterans Memorial Park	4	Meets Potential with Needs
Vosti Park	6.4	Meets Potential with Needs
3. Community Park	24.9	1.3 Acres/Thousand
4. Special Use		
Cesar Chavez Park	0.45	Below Potential
San Vicente Road PG&E Easement	*3	Below Potential
4. Special Use	3.45	0.2 Acres/Thousand
5. Potential Site		
Landfill Site	*120	Below Potential
Los Coches Adobe	9	Below Potential
Rotary Park	4	Below Potential
Salinas River Park	TBD	Not Evaluated
Gabilan Pond Park	3.78	Below Potential
Water Reclamation Facility	*12	Below Potential
5. Potential Site	148.78	8.0 Acres/Thousand

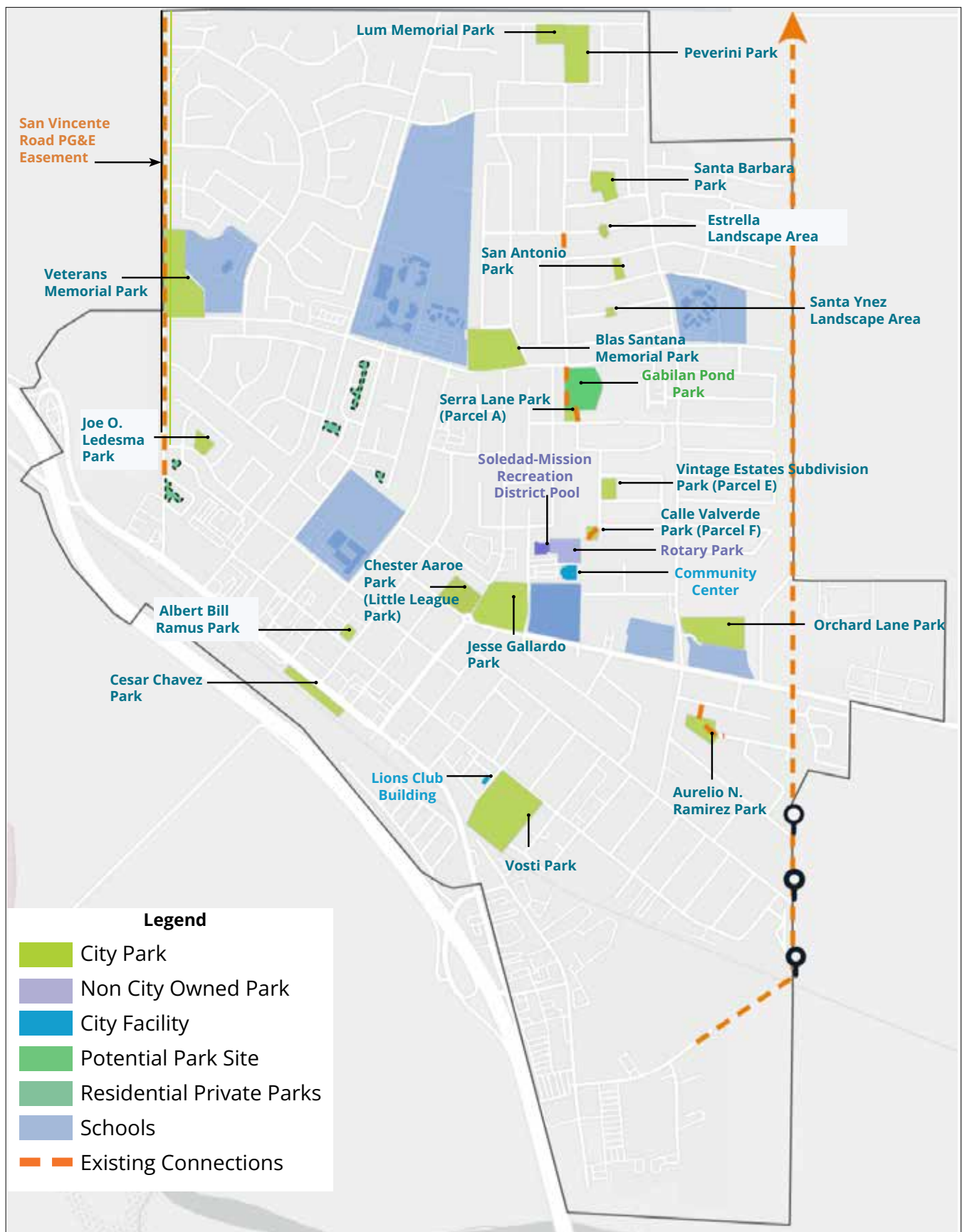


Figure 12. Map of Soledad Parks

Pocket & Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood and pocket parks serve the neighborhoods in which they are located.

Pocket parks are less than ½ acre in size, and have minimal amenities, such as a small lawn, landscaping, a pathway, and a bench. They are typically intended for passive use, or to provide small green spaces or connections within neighborhoods. Soledad's four pocket parks include:

- Calle Valverde Park (Parcel F)
- Estrella Landscape Area
- Santa Ynez Landscape Area
- Sierra Lane Park (Parcel A)

Neighborhood parks are typically ½ acre to 3 acres and include both active and passive elements. They may include multi-use turf, play equipment, and/or sports courts for active recreation, and picnic areas, benches, and landscaped and shaded areas for passive relaxation. Soledad's eight neighborhood parks include:

- Albert Bill Ramus Park
- Aurelio N. Ramirez Park
- Joe O. Ledesma Park
- Lum Memorial Park
- Peverini Park
- San Antonio Park
- Santa Barbara Park
- Village Estates Subdivision Park (Parcel E)

It should be noted that Lum Memorial Park and Peverini Park are contiguous and could be considered as a community park. Tucked into a northeastern residential neighborhood, they primarily serve that local neighborhood, but their large turf areas, full basketball court, large picnic area and restrooms allow for wider use.



Calle Valverde Park (Parcel F)



Estrella Landscape Area



Joe O. Ledesma Park



Orchard Lane Park

Community Parks

Community parks serve multiple neighborhoods or provide features that draw users from the entire city. Generally 3 acres or more, they may be large parks with multiple features such as sports fields, or smaller parks that have special features that attract users from a wider area, such as splash pads, skate parks, large off-leash dog areas, or amphitheaters. They typically include group picnic areas and restrooms. Soledad's six community parks include:

- Blas Santana Memorial Park
- Chester Aaroe Park (Little League Park)
- Jesse Gallardo Park
- Orchard Lane Park
- Veterans Memorial Park
- Vosti Park

Special Use Parks

Special use parks do not fit neatly into the above classifications but are important community spaces. Cesar Chavez Park, although small, is a key element of Soledad's downtown and the location for community events such as the City's Easter celebration. Its main amenities are its lawn, picnic tables, seating and restroom. It is adjacent to the site of the planned container plaza, and serves as a place to lunch and relax for users who come to the downtown commercial area. The San Vicente Road PG&E Easement provides a popular paved walking path for almost a mile along the city's western boundary.



D. Facilities

Community Center & Lions Club Building

The 23,513 square-foot Soledad Community Center is the heart of recreation programming. It includes a large and well-appointed gym, a commercial kitchen, a fitness center, a newly developed computer room and two multi-purpose rooms. The facility accommodates multiple activities such as fitness, gymnasium sports, community gatherings, meetings, and a range of classes from cooking to computers.

The City also owns a community building across from Vosti Park, which is currently leased by the Lions Club.

Joint Use

The City and the Soledad Unified School District recently renewed a joint use agreement, for a limited number of school and city facilities. Identified School District facilities include Soledad High School and Main Street Middle School gymnasiums for youth basketball, Gabilan Elementary School classrooms for recreation meetings or events, Gabilan Elementary School playground/structures when school is not in session, performing arts facilities on District campuses for approved uses, and computer labs at select campuses. Identified City facilities include the Community Center gym for volleyball and basketball, the Community Center for student performances, parent meetings, assemblies and ceremonies,

and City-owned outdoor playing fields. These agreements should continue to be maintained

Rotary Park, a public park owned and operated by the Soledad-Mission Recreation District, is listed and described on the City's Parks and Recreation Department website and is adjacent to the Community Center. There is an opportunity for greater collaboration between the City and the District to optimize the use of this park.

Potential Park Sites

There are four undeveloped sites owned by the City which may have the potential to be developed as parkland. They range in size from under 4 acres to around 120 acres and are discussed in Chapter 5. These sites include:

- Landfill Site
- Los Coches Adobe
- Gabilan Pond (currently slated for park development)
- Water Reclamation Facility
- Riverwalk (Salinas River)



E. Existing Recreation Programs Assessment

Since creating its recreation program and taking over operations and management of the Community Center in 2021, the City has been developing, expanding, and refining its recreation programming. Beginning this effort during the COVID pandemic created a difficult and challenging environment for the Department to bring together people in a meaningful way through recreation programs. As a new effort, the number of program offerings are more limited than those of other recreation providers in California, but is one of the most developed departments locally.

Programs and facilities can be accessed by annual memberships, monthly memberships, or drop-in fees. Since opening, participation has been steadily increasing, with memberships reaching well over 200.

The Soledad Parks and Recreation Department currently offers programs including:

- Pre-K Recreation (ages 0-5): art, culture & education, and sports camps and classes
- Youth Recreation (ages 5-13): sports leagues and clinics, performing arts, art, culture & education, and inclusive play
- Break Camps (ages 5-12): all seasons, plus after camp care
- Teen Recreation (ages 13-18): art, culture & education, sports leagues and clinics

- Adult Recreation (ages 18+): senior activities, arts, culture & social, sports leagues and clinics
- Fitness Classes
- Seasonal Programs: holiday, performing arts

Table 4 on the next page provides a list of the types of programs offered by the Recreation Department including membership card and sports programs as well as a comparison of the number of participants for each program annually. The Department has and will continue to adjust programs and shift focus based on the changing the level of interests, including adjusting the number of adult sports and fitness classes, increasing senior activities and some youth sports, and adding mobile recreation programming and youth theater.



Tiny Chefs

Table 4. Program Participation

	2021-2022	2022-2023	Change
Pre K Recreation(0-5)	200	222	22
Art, Culture & Education	200	159	-41
Sports (Camp, Classes)	0	63	63
Youth Recreation (5-13)	587	771	184
Art, Culture & Education	56	59	3
Sports (Leagues, Clinics)	483	593	100
Inclusive Play & Art	0	42	42
Performing Arts (Dance, Theater)	48	77	29
Break Camps (5-12)	216	628	412
Summer	182	223	41
Fall	19	14	-5
Winter	0	28	28
Spring	15	25	10
After Camp Care - All Camps	0	338	338
Teen Recreation (13-18)	76	67	-9
Art, Culture & Social	0	37	37
Sports (Leagues, Clinics)	76	30	-46
Adult Recreation (18+)	409	600	191
Arts, Culture and Social (Art, Bingo)	43	76	33
Sports (Leagues, Clinics)	178	70	-108
Senior Activities	188	454	266
Fitness	8348	10484	2136
Fitness Class	313	87	-226
Fitness Special	7	0	-7
Memberships (as of fiscal end)	8028	10397	2369
Annual	43	25	-18
Month-to-Month	247	216	-31
Drop-in	7738	10156	2418
Seasonal Programs	13	298	285
Craft Workshops	13	21	8
Events (Holiday, Perform Arts)	0	277	277
Volunteer Events	7	13	6
Total	9,856	13,083	3,227



F. Parks & Recreation Trends

The following is a summary of the key parks and recreation trends that are considered in analyzing community needs.

Health & Wellness

The physical and mental health benefits of parks and recreation services, programs, and facilities are gaining more recognition in the public health community. Some programs have been developed for health professionals to issue park “prescriptions” to encourage exercise and park use. In addition to the opportunities for physical exercise that parks provide, spending time outdoors in nature has proven mental health benefits. Ensuring alcohol-free parks, encouraging community walking programs, and offering health-focused activities and amenities are all part of the health solutions that parks and recreation are providing. Further, park and recreation departments are more frequently setting up at farmers’ markets and repositioning community centers to be community wellness hubs with exercise, nutrition, and more.

Safe Walking & Biking

Promoting a safe and walkable community supports the use of parks and recreation services. Many cities are focusing on encouraging active transportation and ensuring safe walking and biking. Vision Zero is a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all. Many jurisdictions

are adopting the Vision Zero approach, along with Safe Routes to Schools and Safe Routes to Parks plans. These approaches improve a city’s walkers’ and bikers’ safety and help to increase the use of the parks. Specific improvements being used to significantly reduce pedestrian accidents include increasing visibility in crosswalks, providing crosswalks with lights, instituting road diets, and providing paths between parks and around the city that can also be used as exercise routes to accommodate a range of fitness levels. Vision Zero also seeks to achieve effective roadway safety through education, engagement, and enforcement.



Youth Soccer Programs

Designing & Programming for Safety

The public's perception of safety in parks directly impacts park use. Designing and planning for public safety is an important national trend. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design ("CPTED") is increasingly being implemented as an approach to minimizing unwanted activity in parks. Some CPTED practices include local stewardship, maintaining good sightlines into and through parks and reducing dense vegetation, increased park lighting, and an increase in family-friendly activities to activate the parks. Most importantly, creating welcoming and engaging spaces and providing robust programming in parks is being used to keep "eyes on the parks" and reduce unwanted activity.



Family-friendly Parks



Parks for All Ages

Serving All Ages

One of the greatest challenges being addressed by communities nationwide is to support families and each family member at all ages. Considering children, teens, families, and elders, cities are looking at their entire networks, from streets and plazas to trails and parks, as an interconnected support system. Each element of the system must consider, invite, and support a range of users of all ages. Cities and agencies are looking to ensure that their park systems are providing facilities with space for active and passive recreation, with gathering places for small and large groups, and carefully considering the relationship of uses within parks in order to build a system that invites users of all generations.

To support children and their families, it is necessary to consider a number of age groups: 0 - 5 year olds; 5 - 12 year olds; 13- 18 year olds; young adults; and families as a whole. Each group presents particular demands that need to be weighed in the programming of the parks and open space system. Creating a park system that addresses child development - physical, social and cognitive - means designing parks that create the opportunity to enjoy and experience nature, as well as providing age appropriate play elements, and comfortable seating and amenities for parents, grandparents and extended family.

Teenagers are perhaps the most challenging of the youth groups. As a whole, they do not want to be categorized with children, may not want to be part of an organized group, and are often more interested in exploring a larger realm. They often indicate a desire to “hang out,” and need safe places day and night to do this. Skate parks and teen playgrounds are two areas that have some success in satisfying this need. Evaluating how to provide safe and enjoyable experiences for this group is paramount to fully serving the needs of residents. Additional programs integrating technology, maker spaces, and e-sports are also on the rise.

Active sports are engaging youth and people of various ages and skill levels. Year-round participation is allowing for enjoying the challenges, exercise, stress relief, and socialization that sports provide. Soccer and its many variations, such as street soccer, futsal, indoor soccer, and footgolf, continue to grow as a popular activity.

The Aspen Institute’s annual report, *State of Play*, analyzes national trends in the delivery of sport activities for youth ages 6 to 17. Significant among its *State of Play*



Active Youth Sports

2023 findings are that youth are trying sports about as much as they did before COVID-19, but they are playing less frequently. It has become apparent that youth see sports as a way to improve their mental health. Regular sports participation from the lowest-income households has increased for the fourth straight year, as community-based sports programming is returning post-pandemic with the help of foundations, corporations and governmental funding. Travel sports programs have grown, supporting the youth sports tourism industry.

As the population ages, seniors are living longer and remaining more active. Recreation and parks are playing an increasing role in supporting the health benefits that result from an active and engaged lifestyle. Among the strongest national trends in senior engagement are outdoor gyms in the parks and pickleball.



Teen Activities



Passive and Accessible Outdoor Activities

Enjoying the Outdoors

The COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on outdoor activities. People are enjoying the outdoors more than ever and are participating at a much higher rate than in the last few decades. The Outdoor Foundation's 2022 Outdoor Participation Trends Report states that participation rates are up across all demographics, with increasing participation rates for children, females of all ages, and men overall. The National Survey on Recreation and the Environment¹, which tracked recreation participation trends in people over 16 since the 1960s, reported that the most persistent activity throughout the years has been walking for pleasure. Walking and hiking, as well as running, biking and many other outdoor activities have seen substantial increases in participation over the last several decades.

All Abilities Access & Facilities

Going beyond basic ADA requirements and implementing Universal Design has become a high priority as parks and recreation departments strive to ensure access and encourage participation for people of all abilities. Implementing this idea of accessibility and inclusivity in the design of park and park systems is now considered a vital way of connecting the community. Providing play equipment and amenities for all ages from toddlers to seniors, and for all abilities is a great way to activate the park. Providing paved pathways to and throughout the parks can not only meet ADA guidelines, but also improve access for parents with strollers.

¹ Long-term National Trends in Outdoor Recreation Activity Participation – 1980 to Now, IRIS, May 2009, H. Ken Cordell, Gary T. Green and Carter J. Betz



Cultural Recreation Activities

Arts, History & Culture

Across the country, connecting history, art, and culture within parks is increasing as an opportunity to enhance the physical environment and interest of individual parks while providing another attraction for people not looking for active sports or recreation. Increasingly, community art, public art, and cultural activities have become essential features of parks and recreation. Art in a park can strengthen the identity of a park and increase connectivity in the community. Incorporating cultural activities and the arts showcases and celebrates local culture in the community, and attracts visitors and tourists.

Economics & Financing

Park and recreation professionals have often had to fight for resources to build and maintain a high-quality system of parks. The need for new sources of revenue is encouraging parks and recreation professionals to become more entrepreneurial. Expanding opportunities for sponsorships, as well as looking to new potential partners for funding programs and facilities is becoming a priority. Additionally, identifying and securing long-term funding sources for maintaining and renovating existing parks is an ongoing challenge.



G. Summary of Community Needs

The factors described in the previous sections, particularly the input of the Soledad community, revealed the opportunity to implement improvements in a number of areas. These areas of community needs may require short term and ongoing actions, or may be part of a longer term goal of achieving the community's Vision.

Gathering Spaces for the Community

Soledad is a relatively densely populated city, increasing the need for public spaces in which to socialize in large and small groups. The community has expressed the need for places to hang out with friends, as well as to accommodate family gatherings. Soledad's residents value family celebrations and social interaction. There is a high demand for spaces in the parks that can accommodate gatherings of family and friends, celebrations, and community events. Additional spaces for groups of various sizes are needed to satisfy the community's demand.

Many of the existing gathering spaces are virtually unusable during Soledad's afternoon summer winds. Sheltered benches, picnic areas and larger group gathering spaces are needed.

Soledad has a connected community with a strong culture. It is important to provide spaces for the community to showcase their culture through dance, music, and art and to celebrate cultural events.

Promote Use of the Parks & Programs for Health & Wellness

The 2022 Monterey County Community Health Needs Assessment includes a prioritized list of health needs throughout the county. Four of the top 5 community health needs (1. diabetes, 2. mental health, 4. nutrition, physical activity and weight, and 5. heart disease) are issues that can benefit from parks and recreation.

Although the city's parks generally provide a lawn for informal play and a play area for children, more could be done to encourage a healthy active lifestyle for all ages and abilities. This may include adding fitness stations and equipment, fields and courts for organized sports, natural environments for relaxation and mental health, and fun challenge features (climbing walls, zip lines, etc.) for teens and young adults. The community has expressed the desire for these features.

One of the most important ways for a city to increase health and wellness is through its programs. The City's new department is working on multiple avenues to expand its health and wellness efforts including partnering with the Blue Zones and other organizations. Finding the right mix of classes and activities can be a challenge, particularly when the community is not used to participating as adults in city activities. Connecting youth and sports events to broader



Multi-modal Transportation

community health activities can be one way to build awareness for the larger population. The Parks and Recreation Department should continue to explore and expand its program offerings of activities and education for community health and wellness.

Ensure Safe Walking & Biking to Parks

A critical piece for encouraging an active community is encouraging people to walk or bike. In Soledad, the topography is supportive of walking and biking, but there are limited hiking/walking trails for residents. Community members indicated in multiple engagements the desire for more walking paths and trails in and around the city, as well as within parks. Incorporating safe paths seamlessly through the city will help to promote walking for fitness as well as for transportation. Many community members do not have a car or good transportation readily available (or they are too young or old to drive) and would benefit from better non-motorized transportation.

The city's wide traffic lanes encourage faster vehicle speed and provide unsafe conditions for those who want to walk or bike. The Monterey County Transportation Plan, which proposed county-wide and city projects to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and

connections, noted that Soledad has a high number of collisions involving pedestrians and bicycles compared to the proportion of residents walking and biking.

Lack of adequate crosswalks on busy streets that must be crossed for neighborhood access to the city's parks may deter pedestrians access to parks. There is an overall lack of bike racks and routes that would be acceptable for kids and teens or adults to use. These conditions are likely part of the limited use of bikes in the city. Protected bike lanes on the very wide streets would both reduce traffic speeds, and increase the ability to bike and walk safely.

Connect the Community to the Outdoors

As a relatively urban city surrounded by agricultural fields, nature is relatively hard to experience in the parks. There is an opportunity to develop additional natural areas at the Landfill site, the Gabilan Pond as well as at Los Coches Adobe to help provide natural settings for the community.

Beyond the city, Pinnacles National Park offers residents a unique opportunity to enjoy more than 30 miles of hiking trails with phenomenal views, beautiful caves, and a rich ecological tapestry. Pinnacles National Park presents an



Pinnacles Programs

opportunity to increase hiking, sightseeing, and enjoyment of the outdoors. However, many community members are not comfortable exploring the National Park and do not have the experience to do so. Programs that take kids and families to the National Park to learn and experience this natural environment could establish this connection. The Gabilan foothills also provide the potential for outdoor recreation and exercise at the future Miramonte development and potentially at the former landfill site. Walking paths through and around the city are well-used and should be expanded.

Support Safe & Clean Parks

A few factors have resulted in the perception of a lack of safety at some parks and events. Safety concerns reduce park use and should be addressed. In some cases, undesirable behavior has been problematic, and park amenities that have been seen as attracting unwanted behavior have been removed. This further reduces available park features for the community, further reducing the use of the park. Safe access to parks, as well as perceived safety of the parks, would support community comfort, increased use, and park stewardship.

Soledad's Department of Public Works has kept the city's parks maintained at a higher level than most in Monterey County, however the park maintenance division is understaffed, limiting the areas that they can successfully address. They provide very good field and lawn maintenance and timely graffiti removal, but have had to curtail other types of maintenance such as tree replacement, general landscape maintenance, and other needs. Vandalism, including graffiti, has been a recurring challenge, demanding significant staff time.

A systematic approach to tree maintenance and replacement is essential for maintaining parks that provide respite, shade, cooling, and wind protection. There is a need for a scheduled approach to tree maintenance and replacement, as well as a reliable source of native or climate-adaptive tree stock that will survive and thrive in Soledad's environment.

Community parks and other parks where users come from beyond the local neighborhoods and stay for extended periods of time, need to have clean, amply sized and well-maintained restrooms. Although regularly maintained, some of the park restrooms are undersized, and should be enlarged to serve the volume of park users.



Community Maintenance

Ensure Accessibility, Proximity & Inclusivity

Most residences in the central part of Soledad proper are within a 1/2 mile (10 minute) walk of a park. Several areas of the city, as shown on Figure 13, lack equitable access to parks, particularly in the southeastern portion of the city. Many households in the northern portion of Soledad lack access to neighborhood parks, or are served only by small neighborhood parks that lack a playground. Given that these areas of the city are built out, joint use agreements with the areas schools are needed to fill those gaps. In the northwestern area, the Miramonte Specific Plan indicates planned parks near the existing city limit on San Vicente and West Streets that may address that gap in the future.

While parks are fairly well distributed throughout the city, there is a need for more sports fields, particularly soccer. The city fields are popular destinations for both the Soledad community and the wider Salinas Valley community. The demand for game and practice time exceeds capacity, especially when Vosti Park's soccer fields are closed for maintenance and field rest. The School District's fields are generally available only for school programs. There is a need for more publicly available sports fields, and for smaller footprint alternatives such as futsal.

There is an opportunity to add unique and distinct features to Soledad's parks, whether art, unique play equipment and site furnishings, or other elements that would make each park more distinct and memorable. The City should continue to explore and expand programming to satisfy different and evolving interests.

While most of Soledad's parks appear to meet ADA requirements, some have deteriorating pathways and features that are not accessible to residents with mobility issues or strollers. There is a need for additional amenities that are accessible to children and adults with varying abilities.

As Soledad grows, its recreation programming needs to continue to expand to serve the diverse needs of the community. There is a need for the City to strengthen and expand its existing partnerships and explore developing new partnerships with the Hartnell College, Pinnacles National Park, and other agencies, businesses, and community organizations, in order to better fulfill needs for access to sports fields, additional classroom space, access to and exploration of Pinnacles National Park, health education, and specialized or sponsored programming.

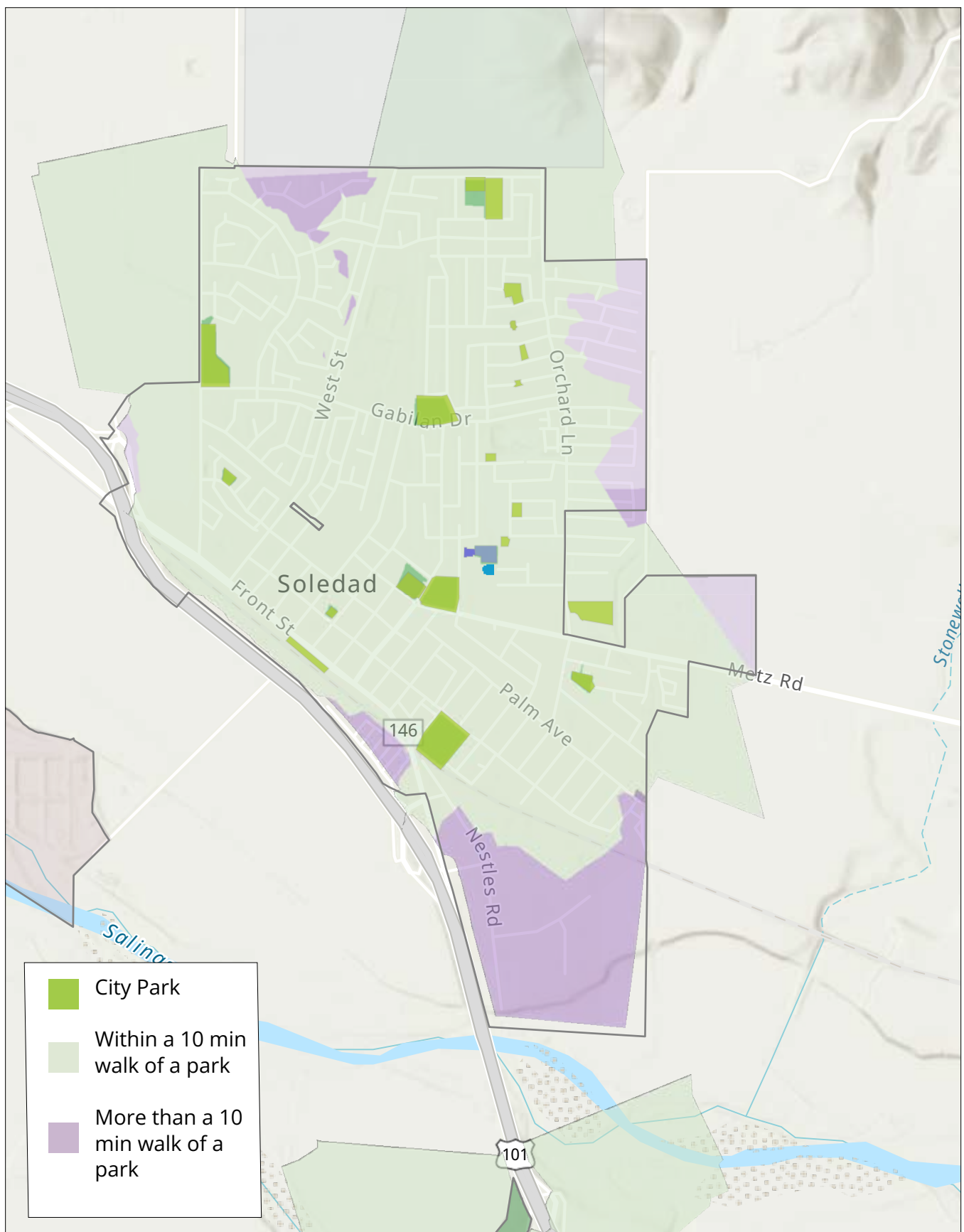


Figure 13. Ten Minute Walk



Wind Protected Outdoor Program Area

Create Multigenerational & Diverse Parks

Some of Soledad's parks do not provide a balance of features to support active and passive uses, social spaces and places for quiet contemplation, organized sports and informal play and do not serve the needs of all ages and abilities of residents that are currently not well accommodated. Reconfiguring underused spaces and adding features and amenities to existing parks, and planning new parks with consideration for residents of all ages and abilities would serve segments of the population that are currently not well accommodated. For example, many parks lack shaded and wind protected parent seating at play areas, and walking pathways used for exercise lack benches that would facilitate use by seniors. Community members have identified a desire for fitness equipment near playgrounds so that parents could exercise while their children play.

While many Soledad residents are active in sports such as soccer, there is a need to enhance and support free play for those uninterested in organized sports, as well as increasing the availability and diversity of recreation sports programs that focus on fun rather than competition.

Women and girls have the lowest participation in recreational activities. To counter this disparity, the City should explore incorporating programs that consider women's and girls' values and needs, such as socialization with friends, freedom to be creative, and programs that offer childcare to support participation. As sports participation has been increasing for girls, more opportunities for girls programs will be needed. The benefits to girls' and women's health are long lasting.

Identify Additional Indoor Recreation Spaces

There is a lack of available and usable sheltered/indoor spaces for the community to expand recreation, hold events and to participate in a range of activities.

A limiting factor for the City is the lack of adequate space at the Community Center, due to agencies' and organizations' use of otherwise available meeting rooms, rentals to non-residents reducing availability to Soledad residents, and the need for facility upgrades to accommodate additional programs for youth and teens. There is underused outdoor space that requires renovations to improve usability, including possible building expansion to create more indoor space. Entries and wide hallways are not meeting their potential for use



Girls Ballet Program

as comfortable spaces for youth and teens to gather or hang out.

Further, Soledad's afternoon winds, particularly in the summer make indoor and sheltered gathering spaces much more important. The extent of the recently renewed joint use agreement with the school district is limited, and coordination has not always been easy. There is a chance to partner with Hartnell College – Soledad Education Center and use facilities when available. Taking advantage of these and other potential partnerships could fulfill a major need for protected classroom, computer labs, or group activity spaces.

Maintain Affordability

To serve the entire Soledad community, costs for programs and space rentals have been kept low. A balanced cost recovery approach is needed to ensure that access to programs and rental of facilities, sports fields, and gathering spaces is available to community members, while those who can afford it pay reasonable costs. Developing sliding scales, scholarships, and resident vs. non-resident fee structures are possible strategies.

Additional funding sources will still be needed to support programs, operations and maintenance of the City's parks and facilities.

Dedicated City funding to expand grant writing capacity could potentially bring positive returns.

Increase Programs & Staff Capacity

Soledad's Parks and Recreation Department has continued to grow and expand its recreation programming since it took on that function in 2021. One limiting factor has been its difficulty in finding, and funding recreation staff to support the range of programs that could be possible. There is a need to expand the pool of contract instructors and partnerships with private businesses or other entities to increase programming offerings, as well as to increase the Department's funding to hire permanent full-time and part-time staff.

Identifying Future Parks & Opportunities

With a dense and virtually built-out core area, it will be essential to identify opportunities for more park and recreation space, whether City-owned sites such as the Gabilan Pond or the Wastewater Plant, or in joint use/ partnership with the school or other entities.



5. Parks & Recreation Guidelines

5. Parks & Recreation Guidelines



This section provides guidance on how the City can meet the Vision and Goals and needs identified by the community. The following pages provides overarching guidelines and policies by goal area. These guidelines will enable the City's staff and decision-making bodies to make informed decisions about the enhancement and development of parks and facilities over time, to be adaptable and innovative, and to respond to needs and wants that may not be foreseen today.

As these guidelines are designed to serve the city for the next 20-years, they are not presented as requirements. It is anticipated that as the city updates, refines, builds additional parks, these guidelines will be used to inform improvements, and to support the community in ensuring that their vision and goals are incorporated effectively.

The guidelines are organized around the Parks and Recreation Master Plan's Vision and its five Goals, which were developed with extensive community input.

Specific park and facility recommendations, as well as park standards, are addressed in Chapter 6. Recreation programming recommendations are addressed in Chapter 7.

Community Vision

Soledad's city parks and recreation programs are central to the community's well-being, health, and lifestyle, providing a well-connected network of park and recreation facilities, offering diverse experiences, and bringing the community together.

Goals

1. Health & Wellness

Support physical and mental health by building awareness, encouraging an active lifestyle, a strong community, and places to enjoy nature and quiet through parks and recreation facilities and programs for all ages, genders, and abilities, enabling multi-generational use.

2. Connectivity & Access

Connect people to parks and recreation through a network of safe routes, well-maintained and convenient pathways between parks, through the city, and the region, as well as using innovative approaches to creating and activating "park" space wherever the public can gather.

3. Inclusive & Equitable

Provide a comprehensive system of parks and affordable recreational programs that welcome all, and celebrate art, culture, diversity, and history.

4. Sustainable, Resilient, & Well-Maintained

Ensure that current and future infrastructure and facilities are sustainably designed and well-maintained, mitigating the impacts of high winds, extreme weather, and climate change.

5. Resources & Partnerships

Leverage the City's park and facilities to attract partners and expand services to community members, creating lasting partnerships, maximizing resources, and providing youth with the necessary skills and tools for success.



A. Goal 1 – Health & Wellness

1.1 Balanced Activities & Spaces

As possible, integrate elements to support active use, passive relaxation, and social interaction into each park. Open, serene landscapes and natural protected spaces provide relaxation.

- Include combinations of spaces for play equipment, informal play, fitness or organized sport, along with greenery and places for quiet relaxation, and seating and gathering spaces for socializing in large or small groups in parks.
- Ensure that there are activities for those of all ages and interests. Design new parks and updates to existing parks to adapt to evolving demographics, trends, and needs.
- For each park, strive to integrate spaces that support non-sport activities for girls and others who do not actively participate in organized sports activities. These spaces will differ depending on the park, but may include comfortable seating spaces, areas that have more natural plantings and contemplative space, art and culture elements, places to socialize in small or groups, areas for free play and games such as cornhole or table games, programs and spaces to engage in arts, music, dance and theater, places to quietly relax in the outdoors, etc.
- Community input shall inform design of any new park or major park renovation.

- Engage the community by providing safe and inviting parks and facilities in which to be physically active and mentally refreshed.

1.2 Active & Healthy Lifestyle

Support health and wellness by providing a variety of park types, which are easily accessible, and well maintained with amenities that support physical activity.

- Community surveys indicated that Soledad residents go to parks to exercise, and favored adding fitness equipment, outdoor gyms and additional hiking trails. Providing these features and others such as climbing walls, net-based climbers, pump tracks and skate features provide additional ways to engage youth and young adults.
- Pair physical amenities improvements with recreation programs that promote their benefits and help people to use them.
- Explore opportunities to integrate healthy food choices, community gardens, and multi-generational activities and spaces.

1.3 Indoor Fitness

Expand the availability and use of indoor recreation spaces to serve the community in poor weather and during high wind afternoons.

- Optimize the use of the Community Center to maximize the programs and spaces available to Soledad's residents by prioritizing residents' use of the facilities



All Ages and Abilities

and upgrading spaces such as the kitchen for more flexible and efficient use.

- Expand joint use of available facilities such as at SUSD and Hartnell College Soledad Education Center. *(Information about Joint Use Agreements, liability and legal issues, and examples of successful joint use partnerships can be found at <https://www.changelabsolutions.org/product/joint-use-california>)*

1.4 Universal Design

Where feasible, incorporate Universal Design practices in the development or renovation of parks and facilities to reduce the physical and attitudinal barriers between people with and without disabilities.

- Ensure that parks meet and when possible, exceed the Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines for park and facility construction improvements. Develop environments and programs that allow for the full range of human diversity, including physical, perceptual, and cognitive abilities, as well as different body sizes and shapes, and ages.
- Adaptive dance and exercise classes, inclusive facility design that goes beyond ADA requirements, and all abilities accessible play areas allow participation by all. Continue to partner with organizations

and local non-profits that provide services and support to special needs individuals and their families.

1.5 Multi-Generational Interaction

Incorporate amenities and elements to encourage and support multi-generational interaction, and use by persons of all ages.

- Ensure that gathering spaces, parks and facilities allow for the comfort and enjoyment of parents with small children, youth and teens, and seniors.
- Consider the needs of parents and grandparents by providing seating, shade and fitness areas by playgrounds.
- Thoughtfully situate gathering spaces and seating to provide spatial separation from active zones, but with visual connections to facilitate safe, multi-generational enjoyment of park activities.
- Provide spaces and seating for non-participants to watch sports and informal play.
- Proactively remove barriers to participation and use of Soledad's parks, facilities, and programs such as lack of awareness, affordability, amenities, or class availability.



B. Goal 2 – Connectivity & Access

2.1 Safe Routes to Parks

To ensure equitable access, strive to locate a park or green space within a 10-minute walk (1/2 mile) of every Soledad resident.

- Build upon the Safe Routes to Schools to make improvements that increase safe access to all parks and facilities for people of all ages and abilities, in all of Soledad's neighborhoods.
- Work with the Transportation Agency of Monterey County (TAMC) to ensure that routes to and around parks maximize pedestrian and bicycle access and are safe, well-maintained, and well-lit to encourage use.
- Encourage biking and walking to parks through programs such as park visit passports for youth.
- Provide site elements that support bicycle use, including bike racks and fix-it stations.
- Reduce vehicle speeds by instituting road diets and road improvements such as speed bumps or speed tables.

2.2 Citywide Connections

Create and strengthen safe and walkable or bikeable connections to and around parks and recreation facilities, neighborhoods, and community destinations.

- Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety by developing dedicated bike lane infrastructure.
- Ensure that there are crosswalks and curb bulb-outs to facilitate safe walking access to all major parks.
- Advocate to Caltrans, TAMC, and the National Park Service on behalf of the City for increased connections to regional trails and biking networks, especially in connection to Pinnacles National Park.

2.3 Internal Park Pathways

Provide safe, well-lit, and well-maintained walking routes within parks. Include workout stations, informational signs, and distance markers along pathways to increase usage and functionality.

- Add or improve these routes around existing ballfields, at existing volunteer paths, and at park perimeters to increase the activation and use of the parks.
- Locate park pathways to connect with city pathways and avoid conflicts with other park uses, for example, the Downtown Specific Plan's proposed connection between Vosti Park and Front Street.

2.4 Safe Parks

Design parks thoughtfully considering features to foster welcomed behaviors and discourage unwanted behaviors by incorporating



Creating street murals and using as a community asset

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design ("CPTED"), which is based on the five principles of surveillance, access control, territorial reinforcement, activity support and maintenance.

- Maintain visibility into parks from street frontages and provide adequate lighting levels in parks used after dark.
- Ensure parks are easily accessible with safe pedestrian and bicycle routes, public transit, and sufficient parking, as needed, to maximize the opportunity for use.
- Foster community ownership and involvement by engaging the community in the park design, incorporating more murals and community-driven art in parks and facilities, and encouraging "neighborhood Watch" programs and park clean-up events.
- Develop internships and stewardship opportunities such as a park attendant program for community youth. Encourage local stewardship by engaging the community and providing family-friendly activities to activate the parks.
- Build upon the CPTED-based National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA) guidelines on designing parks for social cohesion and safety.

NRPA: Creating Safe Parks Through Design & Programming

(Creating Safe Park Environments to Enhance Community Wellness, NRPA, Excerpts)

- Make sure that activities in the park include a human presence from early morning to evening
- Create programming and physical design of the park to encourage use of the park during the evenings
- Develop activities beyond those for organized sports facilities and playgrounds
- Improved lighting and increased legitimate activity allow for greater night time surveillance
- Clear sightlines which give the perception of actual safety because people can see what is ahead and around them and if other people are visible
- Physical access should be maximized by providing users with a choice of legible routes to and from park areas
- Good maintenance is crucial to maintain perceptions that areas are low risk. Vandalism can contribute to perceptions of fear because litter, graffiti and broken furniture all suggest a place is uncared for and possibly unsafe



Welcoming Signage to Encourage use and Orient people

2.5 Wayfinding & Signage

Install wayfinding and directional signage at parks and on pedestrian and bike-friendly roads to increase connectivity within the community and to help people locate parks and other destinations.

- Ensure that all signage is bilingual and culturally relevant.
- Enhance signage and wayfinding to direct visitors to major parks and recreation facilities. Develop citywide signage that leads people to parks with mile markers and inspiration for fitness and fun.
- Promote community awareness of Soledad's parks and recreation by providing recreation and park information, signage and education material, in print, in parks, and online in user friendly and accessible formats.



C. Goal 3 – Inclusive & Equitable

3.1 System of Parks

Parks and facilities do not exist in isolation, and should be located, designed or renovated with an awareness of the recreational spaces and amenities that are in the surrounding areas.

- Space parks through the city balancing the size, character, and usage, to enable residents, to the greatest extent possible, to have easy access to a range of recreation and park opportunities.
- Plan each new park or facility, or significant renovation of an existing park or facility to contribute to satisfying the recreational needs of the neighborhood that it serves and to be integrated into a system that serves the entire community. Design each improvement to complement the mix of uses in the neighborhood and the city as a whole.
- Consistently improve existing parks and design new parks to convey the character of Soledad, highlighting parks as an integral part of the city's system of public places.
- Design updates to existing and new parks to adapt to evolving demographics trends and needs, and design operations to be flexible enough to respond to changing needs in a streamlined and cost-effective manner, for example, when updating playgrounds or replacing underused elements.

3.2 Inviting, Welcoming & Comfortable Parks

Ensure that Soledad's parks and facilities are inviting and welcoming places for the community and are designed and maintained to consider the broad range of users that can be attracted to the park.

- Encourage people to comfortably linger, enjoy, spend time together or alone, and feel safe through park amenities.
- Including shelter from the wind and sun, seating, lighting, well-maintained bathrooms, water fountains, multi-generational spaces, and a range of recreation programs and equipment can foster a welcoming environment.
- Strategically placing planted windbreaks that do not block sightlines, and built structures that deflect wind at picnic areas and exposed benches can provide relief.
- Carefully design the physical layout of the site and the relationship of facilities and elements in the park to offer a selection of meaningful physical, social, and cultural experiences for the users.



Integrating Unique Natural Elements

3.4 Engage the Community

Routinely engage the community in the development, updating and creation of parks and recreation programs, and encourage volunteer participation for City recreation activities, amenities, and special events.

- When designing or renovating parks, or developing programming, reach out to the community to invite them to participate in the process so that their desires and concerns are heard and addressed. Provide various opportunities for community input.
- Connect with the community on a regular basis to understand and refine programming options that will excite and involve them. Continue to use pilot projects to test new ideas and bring people into programs. Create dynamic and fun community gathering areas, events and programs that encourage cultural and social interactions.
- Engage the community with projects and volunteer efforts to complement City parks and recreation programs. Consider an Adopt-a-Park, Friends of the Park, or Park Ambassador program to increase community involvement. These programs can encourage community members to provide additional eyes on the parks, to assist with maintenance activities such as

picking up trash, and organizing activities and events to encourage community ownership of their local park.

3.5 Art & Culture

Integrate art and elements that reflect the residents' diverse culture and history within parks and facilities. Encourage local artists, as well as youth and community participation.

- Art and cultural elements may be in the form of temporary installations and activities or longer-term art pieces. Hosting performing arts along with visual arts can be a welcome addition.
- Incorporate art in functional elements such as seating, trashcans, paving, fencing, and bike racks. Incorporate unique and artful play elements in lieu of standard manufactured play equipment, as functional focal elements.
- Provide features that appeal to the users' imaginations and invite creative and interactive recreation experiences.
- Design each park as unique and identifiable, integrating the environmental qualities, and the culture, history, and identity of its surrounding community. Incorporate unique elements such as creative play elements or distinct site



Off-leash Dog Parks

furnishings, to make each park identifiable and memorable, and reflective of Soledad's character.

3.6 Natural & Historic Features

Celebrate Soledad's natural features, such as heritage trees, views to the surrounding foothills and mountains, and adjacency to rivers and drainages.

- Provide opportunities for nature play and places to celebrate nature within park infrastructure.
- Celebrate community, history, and culture within parks and facilities with interpretive elements, programming, and events that highlight and share these features. Storytelling, performances, signage, and other visuals are all possible ways to enhance the community's connection to history and the variety of cultures in the city.

3.7 Dogs

Dogs are popular companions in the Soledad community, and should be allowed in the parks as long as they do not adversely impact the environment or enjoyment of the parks.

- Update the overall dog policies as needed to ensure positive inclusion.
- Allow on-leash dogs in picnic areas, on walking paths and other open community areas where their presence is not in conflict with other activities.
- Develop opportunities for additional off-leash dog areas in appropriate parks and open space areas throughout the city.
- Where dogs are allowed, provide dog waste stations, water fountains, and adequate trash receptacles.



D. Goal 4 – Sustainable, Resilient & Well-Maintained

4.1 Environmentally Sustainable

Promote environmental sustainability and resource management by employing best practices and using sustainable materials, and by adopting the eight principles for regenerative landscapes shown in the graphic on this page.

- Establish sustainability guidelines to direct landscape practices, efficient management of facilities and resource use in the park system. These guidelines may include reducing underutilized lawn areas and lawn in small pocket areas and replacing with native plantings to increase habitat for birds and insects, reduce water use and increase naturalized areas that are more drought tolerant.
- Consider adopting the ReScape California certification and regenerative landscaping practices.

4.2 Infrastructure for Resilience

Recognize and actualize parks' and facilities' role in mitigating the effects of climate change and its impacts on the community, particularly related to heat and flooding.

- Where feasible, use green stormwater infrastructure to manage stormwater and limit flooding.
- Increase the extent of native and adaptive landscapes to help cool the environment



ReScape 8 Principles

and provide relief from prolonged heat waves, and to better thrive through drought conditions.

- Develop and maintain natural and constructed approaches to reduce wind impacts on parks and community use.
- Evaluate and implement improvements at park locations and other City-maintained green spaces that can be enhanced to reduce flood risks, wildfire, and extreme heat.



Alternative Energy Sources

4.3 Conserve Energy & Resilience

Incorporate energy-efficient features in parks and facilities, which can not only conserve energy and create cost savings but can also be educational or artistic features.

- Conserve energy in indoor and outdoor lighting by incorporating motion-activated lighting, dual-level fixtures, self-powered lighting (e.g. integrated solar panels), and energy-efficient technologies such as LED.
- Identify sites where alternative energy sources (e.g. solar panels on roof structures or covering parking areas, and other such measures) can be incorporated into park and facility design.
- Install high efficiency air conditioning in the Community Center so that it can be used as a community cooling center during extreme heat events. Ideally pair this with the installation of solar panels and energy storage to reduce long-term costs.
- Use the Community Center as a self-sufficient power bank, and a community cooling center.

4.4 Conserve Water

Improve water management and efficiency.

- Continue to update all irrigation systems to high-efficiency systems including “smart” controllers, pursuant to the City’s Water Efficient Landscape Design Requirements (Soledad Ordinance Title 15, Chapter 15).
- Continue to conserve water by using low-water use landscape elements, reducing ornamental and underused areas of turf, and watering fields and lawns at non-peak times.
- Expand use of reclaimed water for irrigation where it is available. Consider the use of greywater systems and rainwater catchment systems to supplement irrigation.



Outdoor Environmental Education Programs

4.5 Tree & Soil Management

Develop and implement a comprehensive Tree Management policy to actively manage and replace park trees that have died or been cut down, and to strategically plant new trees to provide wind protection and shade.

- When planting new trees, manage and amend the soil to ensure that it is healthy and will adequately support tree growth.
- Implement policies and trash receptacles that encourage composting. Use the recycled compost for new and existing trees and vegetation.
- Consider developing a tree nursery to grow Soledad-friendly trees and species to ease replacement time and costs. Implement a community stewardship or internship program to manage the trees in the nursery.
- Consider partnering with Soledad schools and Hartnell College for an internship program to teach students arboriculture and nursery management.

4.6 Education

Increase environmental education and awareness in parks through signage, programs, and design.

- Use creative signage and displays to describe and interpret environmental and sustainable features such as demonstration gardens with native habitat, stormwater treatment, water conservation measures, and alternative energy sources.
- Increase programs that promote sustainability, teach residents about the role of parks and nature in resilience, and to encourage overall stewardship of the environment.

4.7 Celebrating Nature

Improve visual and physical access to nature and enjoyment of open spaces and parks by establishing accessible view areas, wind-protected walks, and designated pathways near the river and drainage channel and in open space areas.

- Improve habitat values in parks by using diverse plant palettes emphasizing native plants, reducing use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and nurturing the soil.



Irrigation and Landscaping Training Program

- Consider demonstration gardens highlighting the native ecology.
- Develop programs and partner with the Park Service to take community members to enjoy Pinnacles National Park and surrounding areas, as well as to teach wilderness skills.
- Develop or engage youth programs such as Junior Rangers, internships, and California Conservation Corps to steward and improve Soledad's parks and future trails.

4.8 Well-Maintained

Maintaining and caring for the City's parks and facilities is critical to their longevity, function, and ability to serve the community's needs. Understanding and supporting maintenance requirements for training, replacement costs, and overall staff is essential.

- In considering proposed improvements, identify ongoing funding sources to ensure that they can continue to be maintained at the highest quality.
- Ensure that parks maintenance costs are included in the cost estimation for new parks or facilities and are funded to ensure a standard and consistent level of care.
- Ensure that maintenance staff are trained on how to maintain and care for native and non-traditional regenerative landscapes, to manage low water irrigation systems, and other innovations and systems employed in the parks.



E. Goal 5 – Resources & Partnerships

5.1 Fiscally Sustainable

In managing the City's Implementation Priorities and its Capital Improvement Program (CIP), evaluate all proposed projects based on the Master Plan goals, implementation criteria, and current needs.

- Ensure the City has the funds to properly maintain, program, and operate new facilities before committing to development. Evaluate new parks and facilities considering ongoing operational and maintenance costs, and establish a sustainable ongoing funding strategy prior to construction.
- Determine appropriate fees and cost recovery goals for park and recreation facilities that support events, rentals, and special activities for programs, allowing for affordable access and feasible management, and for offsetting maintenance and operation costs. See Chapter 7, Implementation, for more detailed criteria and considerations.
- In order to ensure that the Department is continuing to adapt to current needs and opportunities, adopt an annual, holistic assessment of park and recreation system operations that considers impacts, opportunities, and efficiencies related to staffing models, program delivery, fees, hours of operation, and a user-friendly and comprehensive website. This assessment

should also consider customer and employee satisfaction, cost recovery, accessibility, and affordability.

- Continue to seek and utilize a variety of funding sources for capital and operational expenses, such as income streams from cell towers or wind turbines in appropriate locations in the parks. See Chapter 7, Implementation for further discussion of potential funding sources.

5.2 Prioritize Soledad Residents

Prioritize Soledad residents and community members for use and rentals of Soledad's facilities, sports fields and park gathering spaces, ensuring that the community gets priority in scheduling the limited facility and park space.

- Optimize scheduling of recreational facilities to maximize the use time and value for community members.
- Limit the number of non-community meetings in recreational spaces, including other City department uses.



Community Partnerships

5.3 Partnerships

Leverage and solidify partnerships with other parks and recreation providers, other departments and agencies such as the Soledad Police Department and CalFire, the school district, businesses, and organizations to increase service and manage resources.

- Coordinating with the City Manager, formalize and monitor agreements with the Soledad Unified School District and the Soledad-Mission Recreation District to enable joint use of facilities, leveraging resources, and better serving the community.
- Engage existing partners to reassess and improve relationships and establish more formal agreements for the ongoing joint use of facilities, including maintenance and scheduling.
- Strategically consider new partnerships with non-profits, foundations, and governmental agencies, such as Hartnell College, Pinnacles National Park and the Gateway Partners Association, Western Rivers Conservancy, the Arts Council for Monterey County, and others to expand parks and program offerings.
- Work with partners to attract new programs and activities to Soledad,

leveraging the City's facilities. Coordinate efforts between providers to build capacity and availability of offerings. Work closely with the Hartnell Community College, School District, Soledad-Mission Recreation District, and other youth providers, as well as Soledad's police and fire departments, to coordinate and support youth engagement, programs, and activities. Consider a combined recreation pass for the Parks and Recreation Department and the Soledad-Mission Recreation District facilitated by on-line tracking of usage.

5.4 Community Support

Continue to encourage public/private partnerships with local community groups, churches, and businesses to provide expanded recreational opportunities for Soledad residents.

- Continue and expand sponsorship opportunities to fund and enable greater recreation services.
- Partner with local businesses to hold community events that both engage new businesses and increase park usage.



Soledad Community Center Gym Floor

5.6 Facility & Park Use Policies

Strengthen enforcement of the City's policies to protect and manage the parks and facilities more effectively.

- Strengthen the ban and associated consequences on alcohol use in parks, particularly during large sports events. If alcohol is allowed with rental activities in City facilities, ensure that insurance and liability waivers are sufficient to cover any potential damage.
- Preserve and protect Community Center assets by developing policies such as requiring floor covering for event rentals in the gymnasium, restricting rental hours to keep the gym open for community and youth programming, and tightening alcohol permitting requirements for rental events.
- Prioritize community program use over rentals to focus on community benefits and provide positive outlets for community activity and engagement.



6. Recommendations & Standards

A circular inset image on the left side of the page shows a person from behind, running on a treadmill in a gym. The person is wearing a black hoodie, a blue skirt, black leggings, and black sneakers. They are also wearing large headphones. The treadmill is a modern, silver and black model. In the background, other gym equipment and a window are visible.

6. Recommendations

The recommendations in this chapter are based on community input and the Needs Assessment and identify specific improvements and projects for parks and recreation facilities. As the City moves to implement recommendations at various parks, connecting with the neighbors and working with them to refine the final plans is important. The recommendations in this chapter should be reviewed annually, to gauge progress and to reflect changing circumstances and new opportunities. The recommendations matrix should be updated annually to reflect the changes.

The recommendations are divided into:

- Citywide Projects & Improvements
- Park Development Standards
- Park-Specific Recommendations
- Future Sites & Opportunities
- Programming Recommendations are addressed in Chapter 7.



A. Citywide Recommendations

The map on the following page, Figure 14, depicts citywide big ideas and recommendations and where in the city they are envisioned. Some of the big ideas include:

- Creating a community hub downtown, connecting to the farmers market and downtown businesses,
- Connecting the city through a series of walking and biking trails (blue lines) connecting to the existing paths (orange lines),
- Creating a designated Teen Zone in parks,
- Adding parks to the southeast area of the city, in or around the Industrial, Commercial and Undeveloped areas,
- Continuing to expand and offer active sports and provide community spaces near the Community Center.

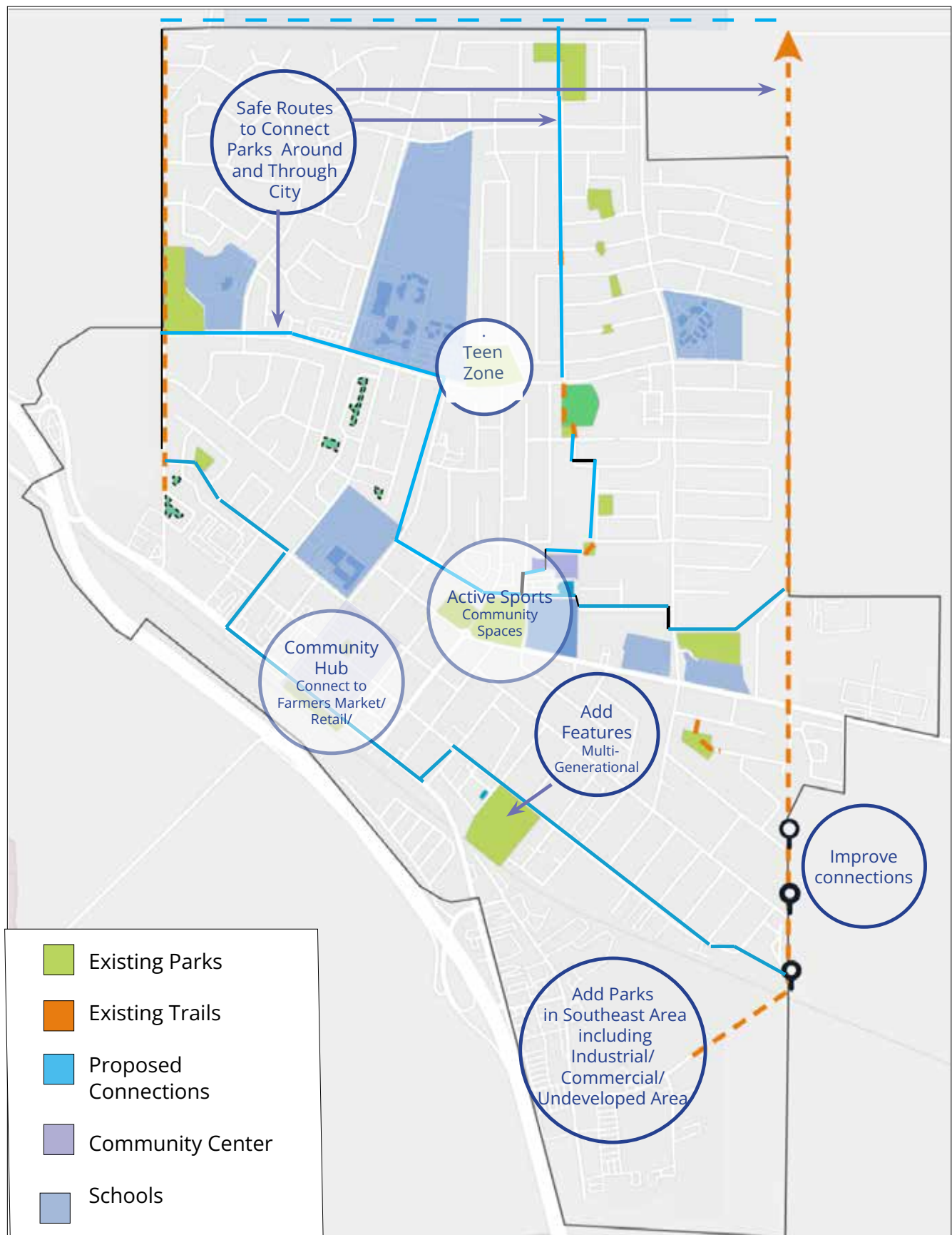


Figure 14. Citywide Big Ideas



Community Hub

Vision: Create a central location that is inviting and welcoming allowing Soledad residents to socialize and connect.

Desired Amenities

- Coordinate improvements in and around Cesar Chavez Park to create a fully integrated and activated Community Hub in Soledad's downtown.
- Emphasize connections between the Park, the Container Village, the local retail, and the Farmers' Market.
- Include seating areas with movable furniture.
- Provide areas protected from the wind and buffered from the railroad.
- Build a stage area/gazebo for music and performances.
- Install game tables to provide additional activities.

Size & Location

Integrate the 0.45 Cesar Chavez Park into the larger vision for the Container Park, Front Street, and the commercial area.

Other Considerations & Connections

In designing the Community Hub careful consideration must be given to its integration into the community fabric, and evaluation of potential impacts to the neighborhoods including traffic/circulation, noise, lighting, and maintenance.

Wind protection with trees or other constructed barriers is essential. A safety barrier between the area and the railway is critical.

Community Hub Conceptual Ideas



Community Gathering Space



Farmers Market



Area for Performances



Community Events



Places to Sit



Activities for the Community



City Loop Trail System

Vision: Establish a citywide walking/running trail that loops the City with connectors to parks throughout.

Desired Amenities

- Complete a walking loop path around the entire city, building on the San Vicente Road/PG&E Easement trail along Soledad's western city limits.
- Explore formalizing a walking and biking trail along the Bryant Canyon drainage and Bryant Canyon Road.
- Pursue collaboration with the County, water agency, and with the Western Rivers Conservancy to extend the trail along the eastern edge of the city and south from Los Coches Road along the Salinas River to the Water Reclamation Facility, and potentially east toward Greenfield.
- As an interim alternative, ensure that Orchard Lane functions as a primary bicycle and pedestrian route.
- Where possible, create connections between parks, schools and other community destinations, such as the path between Calle Valverde Park (Parcel F) and the Community Center, or a possible path between Vosti Park and downtown Soledad.
- Ensure that existing and proposed trails connect with future trail alignments in the Miramonte development.
- Develop internal walking paths that are connected to each park to allow residents to easily and safely walk or bike to each park, and to enjoy walking or jogging for fitness within community parks.
- Improve and expand trails and pathways as recreational assets, with mileage markers, benches, shade and signage. (See Figure 16. Citywide Big Ideas)



Teen Zones

Vision: Establish teen-focused areas that welcome groups of kids in noisy and active spaces.

Desired Amenities

- Create at least one or more teen area in the outdoors where they can gather, hang out and spend time together.
- Add lighting and comfortable seating to enable enjoyment in the early evening and in the winter hours.
- Activity elements may include skate or BMX features, basketball, adult size play equipment, challenge structures such as climbing walls, multi-use courts or game tables.
- Where possible, connect to food service or ensure that food and drink is allowed.

Locations

Emphasize areas that are accessible and used by teens, such as Blas Santana Park, Cesar Chavez Park, the Community Center, Chester Aaroe Park, Vosti Park, and Orchard Park.

Other Considerations & Connections

Consider wi-fi zones, and wi-fi free zones. Without compromising visibility and security, create some areas that provide a sense of privacy.

Teen Zone Conceptual Ideas



BMX areas



Interactive Games



Movable Furniture



Challenge Structures



Informal Pick-up Games



Multi-use Court



Wind Protection and Shade

Vision: Provide areas for the community to be protected from the high winds and hot sun, allowing for more outdoor recreation.

Desired Amenities

- Plant trees as windbreaks to increase usability and comfort in parks.
- Construct wind shelters and shade structures at picnic and gathering areas, playgrounds, and other use areas.
- Provide sheltered benches to encourage seniors to use paths and parks.
- Care should be taken to maintain adequate sight lines for visibility and park safety.

Size & Location

Provide wind and shade protection at all parks. Locations could range from an individual bench, to a group picnic area, to a park boundary.



Wind Protection Conceptual Ideas



Windbreak Trees



Picnic Windbreaks



Wind Shelter with Picnic Tables



Windbreak Seating Area



Wind Shelter



Windbreak Benches



Parks in Underserved Areas

Vision: Develop parks, play spaces or park pop-ups to provide recreation access to underserved areas, such as the southern part of the city, and some areas of northern Soledad.

Explore opportunities to add parks or play spaces in the underserved areas of Soledad.

- Evaluate undeveloped parcels for suitability for park features. Explore creative use of open spaces, streets, and undeveloped areas for park and recreation uses as either temporary or long term play or activity spaces.
- Work with commercial shopping centers to provide community gathering and activity space, like that shown in the image above, that can also attract retail users and increase shoppers' lingering time.
- Consider temporary street closures to provide play opportunities in underserved residential neighborhoods and designating "play streets" in strategic locations in neighborhoods that lack active parks. Setting specific hours that a street will be closed off for play, adding storage areas for

equipment, and painting play area space on the street can help to operationalize the play street concept.

- When staffing levels allow, expand the mobile recreation program to provide more frequent pop-ups and serve more locations including potential street closure areas.



Road Closures



Park System Upgrades: Site Furnishings and Playgrounds

Vision: Maintain a basic level of park amenities and features to optimize use of parks and enhance maintenance efficiencies.

In many of Soledad's Parks, features are lacking that would improve the usability and attractiveness of the parks, and enhance maintenance. Some of these features should be considered essential in all parks, and others apply to all parks with particular amenities such as restrooms or playgrounds. These critical features and actions include the following:

- Perimeter landscaping with native and climate adapted, drought tolerant, low maintenance plants, and trees for wind protection
- Replacement of dead and damaged trees
- Water fountains/drink stations, trash and recycling receptacles at picnic and entry areas, dog waste stations, and bike racks
- Parent seating and shade at playgrounds
- Adequate shaded, wind protected seating, especially for seniors
- In community parks, or other parks where visitors spend extended periods of time, durable and lockable restrooms with stainless steel fixtures
- Establishment of lifecycle replacement schedules for replacing and upgrading play equipment, including replacement of shredded rubber surfacing with poured-in-place surfacing.

Site Furnishing and Playgrounds Conceptual Ideas



Native Planting Area



Sheltered Picnic Areas



Trash and Recycling Receptacles



Shaded and Wind Protected Seating



Fitness Stations



Scheduled Playground Upgrades



B. Soledad Community Center

Vision: Multi-use Community Center fostering community gatherings, fitness, learning, and wellness.

Description: Built 1993 as a YMCA, the Community Center was renovated and opened as City facility in 2021. The Center has multiple rentable spaces ranging from a small meeting room to a large gym.

The gym contains full courts for basketball and volleyball, a concession window, and new audience bleachers. It currently has a shallow stage, which is not ideal for theatrical performances due to undersized backstage facilities, and poorly positioned lighting tracks but is actively working on upgrades. The gym space is frequently rented out for large gatherings and events, such as quinceañeras, weddings, and baptisms.

The facility also contains large and small multipurpose rooms, a recently renovated computer lab, and a fitness room with exercise equipment. The commercial kitchen will be remodeled to expand usable space and allow for cooking programs.

In the back of the center, there is a spacious outdoor patio with a large barbeque and somewhat protected paved space. Wind and access issues have limited outdoor use, due to fire access requirements and lack of access control for rental events.

ARPA funds have been identified for recommended kitchen improvements

described in the current CIP, and a capital campaign has been launched for the CIP's described Community Center improvements.

Recommendations

- Renovate the back patio to be more usable, adding wind and sun protection. Consider developing or renovating space to provide direct outdoor access to optimize its use.
- To allow for increased use of outdoor areas, address access control with features such as movable bollards or movable areas that can still be used in an emergency.
- Enhance the policy, regulations and use of the gym floor covering to protect it during non-sporting events. This may require increased fees and compliance efforts.
- Install a new lift to access the stage and bring doors into ADA compliance.
- Provide comfortable seating in the lobby and hall areas for community members to wait for kids, socialize, and as a teen hangout space.
- Consider creating a maker space for youth projects, potentially connected to the outdoor patio.

- Develop a protected outdoor classroom space in the front of the Community Center to expand usable, programmable space.
- Remodel the Community Center kitchen per the current CIP to be brought up to current building codes, including updating the kitchen area, structural upgrades, ranges, ovens, ice machine, hoods, prep tabletop, casework, electrical, plumbing and mechanical.
- Upgrade the Community Center per the current CIP, including gym upgrades, ADA upgrades to the site and building, plumbing and mechanical for restrooms, electrical and fire alarm load calculations and single line diagram, generator design for emergency center electrical distribution, power plans, lighting plans, parking lot lighting, EV parking provisions, and provisions for data system, telephone system, and security system.
- Increase the overall resilience of the community by transitioning the Community Center into a Resilience Hub. This process may occur over time but would enable the community to utilize the Center as a shelter and gathering space during an emergency. A Community Resilience Center would incorporate solar panels and energy storage, provide air purifiers to reduce the impacts of poor air quality, and offer communications and clean water. It could also serve as a cooling center during extreme heat events.
- Develop facility rental policies that maximize the Community Center's ability to provide programs and recreation for the community. Consider restricting gym rentals to Saturday nights and Sundays from 4 to 10 pm only. Deprioritize meeting rentals to outside organizations to maximize room availability for community programs.
- Ensure that rental fees cover true facility expenses, including staffing, insurance, and maintenance. If alcohol is allowed to be served at rental events, ensure that there is adequate insurance coverage for any potential damage.

Community Center Conceptual Ideas



Outdoor Fitness Space



Lobby Seating



Community Resilience Hub



EV Chargers



Protected Outdoor Program Space



Outdoor Maker Spaces



C. Park Standards & Classifications

Purpose

The ideal park system is composed of different types of parks, each offering unique recreational opportunities. Separately, each type of park may serve only one function, but collectively the park system will serve the entire range of community needs and offer a variety of benefits. By classifying parks by their function, the City of Soledad can provide a more efficient, cost-effective and usable park and recreation system that meets the City's goals. These goals include:

1. Support physical and mental health by building awareness and encouraging an active lifestyle and a strong community.
2. Connect people to parks and recreation through a network of safe and convenient routes and pathways.
3. Provide a comprehensive system of parks and affordable recreation programs that welcome all, and celebrate art, culture, diversity, and history.
4. Ensure that current and future parks and facilities are sustainably designed and well maintained.

Soledad's parks are organized into ten park classifications: pocket park, neighborhood park, neighborhood/school park, community park, recreational open space, trails/linear park, sports park, detention basin park, special

use park, and special use facility. These park types are defined below.

General Park Standards:

Park standards shall be addressed in the design and development of each new park and recreation facility to ensure that the City's goals meet the needs of the overall community and the neighborhoods they serve. The following standards shall apply as defined in the sections below.

1. Parks shall be the focus of the neighborhood for providing recreational opportunities and social connection.
2. Parks shall be designed with unique character and aesthetics that is complementary to the surrounding community. Parks shall support opportunities for art, interpretive education, and place making. Signage and wayfinding shall be consistent with City standards.
3. All programs, amenities and features within a park shall be accessible and be compliant with all federal, state and local rules and regulations. All facilities and playgrounds shall consider universal access to the maximum extent feasible.
4. Parks shall be resilient and sustainable. Focus shall be made on selecting plant material that is native and adapted to the local climate and environmental conditions,

and which creates a diverse vegetative ecosystem. Programming and amenities shall not conflict with environmentally sensitive habitat; park designs shall incorporate ecological, biological, and hydrologic features into the identity of the park.

5. Park design, access, and circulation shall incorporate the requirements of the governing safety departments. The design and selection of park materials, plants, and features shall facilitate standard City maintenance practices and operations. All utilities and infrastructure shall conform to City standards and design guidelines.

Park Classifications:

The following classifications are intended to clarify the City of Soledad's requirements for the design and development of new parks and recreation facilities within new subdivisions or where proposed. The classifications are intended to provide design guidance for the type of facilities that are appropriate for each park.

Pocket Park

Pocket parks are the smallest park within the classification system and address limited recreation needs. Pocket parks serve as social spaces, focal spaces, and community front yards. Pocket parks should be designed for passive recreation only and provide visual value by adding green space into the urban setting. Pocket parks can be located adjacent to park system components such as recreational trails.

Existing Parks:

- Calle Valverde Park (0.36 acres)
- Estrella Landscape Area (0.22 acres)
- Santa Ynez Landscape area (0.22 acres)
- Serra Lane Park (0.36 acres)

Size: Less than 1/2 acre.

Service Area: Walking Distance, within 1/4 mile or 5 minutes for the park users.

Intended Service Groups: Neighborhood residents.

Pocket Park Programming to Consist of the Following:

- **Grass Area:** Informal grass play areas to have a minimum of 800 square feet. Grass area can be natural turf with irrigation or synthetic turf. Natural turf to be a blend of grasses that are suitable for foot traffic, with high recovery potential (i.e. 90/10 blend of fescue and rye).
- **Landscape:** Planting and irrigation that focus on native or adapted plant material. Trees to be selected for wind tolerance and shade potential. Irrigation design to be per City of Soledad standards and equipment selection to be reviewed by City park maintenance staff.
- **Lighting:** Lighting is not required at Pocket Parks.
- **Pathways:** All pathways to be accessible per local and state codes. Concrete is the preferred material. Stabilized decomposed granite and asphalt to be used sparingly.
- **Playground:** Small playground for 2-5 year olds. Playground area to have a minimum of 2,000 square feet with benches and seating for caretakers adjacent to the playground. Playground equipment to meet all requirements for accessibility per state and local codes. Shade by either tree or structure to be provided for designated playground seating areas.
- **Signage:** All Pocket Parks are to have the City standard park name sign and City standard regulatory signage.
- **Site Furnishings:** Appropriate furnishings include benches, picnic tables, a minimum

of (2) trash receptacles, (1) drinking fountain, (1) pet litter station, and (1) bicycle rack. All park site furnishings to meet requirements for accessibility per state and local codes. Site furnishing models and manufacturers to be consistent with City standards and guidelines.

Neighborhood Park

Neighborhood Parks are the basic unit of the park system and serve as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Neighborhood Parks should serve as extensions of the residential fabric, allowing for recreation and social activities that cannot be accommodated in residential yards due to size and density limitations. Neighborhood Parks should be designed for both active and passive recreation activities and be tailored to the specific needs of the neighborhood. They should address the needs of all groups and abilities. The park design should create a sense of place that enhances the neighborhood and community identity. Neighborhood park features that create a community-wide 'destination' should not be included in a neighborhood park. Restrooms, off-street parking, on-site parking and illuminated sports facilities would not be considered for neighborhood parks because they encourage park use beyond their intended service area. Design of each neighborhood park should include a master planning process with neighborhood involvement. Specific features for each park should be based on the needs and desires of the neighborhood residents.

Existing Parks:

- Albert Bill Ramus Park (0.45 acres)
- Aurelio N. Ramirez Park (1.25 acres)
- Joe O. Ledesma Park (0.6 acres)
- Lum Memorial Park (2.64 acres)
- Peverini Park (2.90 acres)

- San Antonio Park (0.45 acres)
- Santa Barbara Park (1.08)
- Tomasini Street Park (0.5 acres)

Size: ½–3 acres.

Service Area: Walking Distance, within ½ mile or 10 minutes for the park users.

Intended Service Groups: Neighborhood residents.

Neighborhood Park Programming to Consist of the Following:

- Active Sports: Hard surface sports courts such as basketball, bocce ball, futsal, multi-use games area courts, and volleyball are to be prioritized in the programming of the park.
- Grass Area: Grass play areas to be sized to allow for flexible programming use. Size of grass area to allow for the programming of youth soccer leagues, baseball practice, and informal sports play. Grass area can be natural turf with irrigation or synthetic turf. Natural turf to be a blend of grasses that are suitable for foot traffic, with high recovery potential (i.e. 90/10 blend of fescue and rye).
- Landscape: Planting and irrigation that focus on native or adapted plant material. Trees to be selected for wind tolerance and shade potential. Irrigation design to be per City of Soledad standards and equipment selection to be reviewed by City park maintenance staff.
- Lighting: Pedestrian lighting of pathways and entries should be considered at Neighborhood Parks. Lighting of grass area and active sports areas are not required or preferable.
- Pathways: All pathways to be accessible per local and state codes. Minimum pathway width to be 6 feet wide. Concrete is the preferred material. Stabilized decomposed

granite and asphalt to be used sparingly.

- **Playground:** Playgrounds shall have equipment for both the 2–5 year olds and 5–12 year olds. Playground area to be a minimum of 4,000 square feet with benches and seating for caretakers adjacent to the playground. Playground equipment to meet all requirements for accessibility per state and local codes. Shade by either tree or structure to be provided for designated playground seating areas.
- **Picnic Areas:** A minimum of (2) picnic areas are to be included within the park programming. Picnic areas shall have a maximum capacity of (10) people and include (1) BBQ , (2) picnic tables and (1) trash receptacle. Small picnic shelters or shade trees are appropriate for neighborhood parks. All picnic area furnishings to meet requirements for accessibility per state and local codes. Surfacing at picnic areas shall be appropriate for high volume use; concrete paving is preferred.
- **Signage:** All Neighborhood Parks are to have the City standard park name sign and City standard regulatory signage.
- **Site Furnishings:** Appropriate furnishings include benches, picnic tables, a minimum of (4) trash receptacles, (1) drinking fountain, (2) pet litter stations and (1) bicycle rack. All park site furnishings to meet requirements for accessibility per state and local codes. Site furnishing models and manufacturers to be consistent with City standards and guidelines.

Neighborhood/School Park

The Neighborhood/School Park is similar in size and functions to a Neighborhood Park, but is located immediately adjacent to a school. Some of the recreational facilities can be combined with the school site, such as hard surface courts, sports fields, and play areas,

to maximize efficient use of resources. As a part of the park master planning process, scheduling and use allocations need to be determined to minimize scheduling conflicts between the school and the neighborhood use of facilities.

Size: ½–3 acres.

Service Area: Walking distance, within ½ mile or 10 minutes for the park users.

Intended Service Groups: Neighborhood residents and school students.

Neighborhood/School Park programming should be the same as for Neighborhood Parks.

Community Park

Community parks focus on meeting the recreational needs of the community-at-large. They allow for group activities and other recreational pursuits that are not recommended at neighborhood parks. Community parks meet the needs of neighborhoods; frequently, community parks are ‘destination’ parks with special facilities, such as illuminated sports fields, amphitheaters, community centers, etc., that serve the entire community. Restrooms, onsite parking, off-street parking, night lighting of facilities, and other active recreation facilities are typical park elements that encourage higher levels of public use and longer user-days when compared to neighborhood parks. Community parks may have unique landscape features that enhance community identity. Design of each community park should include a master planning process with community involvement. Specific features of each community park will depend on how the park is anticipated to meet community recreation needs.

Existing Parks:

- Blas Santana Memorial Park (4.2 acres)

- Chester Aaroe Park (2.8 acres)
- Jesse Gallardo Park (4 acres)
- Orchard Lane Park (3.5 acres)
- Veterans Memorial Park (4 acres)
- Vosti Park (6.4 acres)

Size: 3–7 acres.

Service Area: Citywide.

Intended Service Groups: All City residents including community and school groups; may also serve neighborhood park function for surrounding residents; may attract regional residents.

Community Park Programming to Consist of the Following:

- The same features as Neighborhood Parks plus:
- Community Gardens: Community gardens are to be provided within a fenced enclosure with a gated entry point. The minimum community garden size is 500 square feet with accessible pathways throughout the space. It is preferable to locate the beds next to the parking facilities. Garden beds are to be raised and a minimum of 10'x10' in size. All beds to be installed with a hose bib.
- Parking: Onsite parking is preferable with designated spaces for accessible parking as required by local and state codes. Parking quantity is to be based on the program amenities and to be reviewed and approved by City staff. Parking lighting shall be provided to accommodate nighttime use of sports fields and courts.
- Picnic Areas: A minimum of (2) family-sized picnic areas and (1) large group picnic area is to be included within the park programming. Family-sized picnic areas shall each have a maximum capacity of (10) people and include (1) BBQ, (2) picnic tables, and (1) trash receptacle. Shade at family picnic areas can be through the use of trees or small shade structures. Large group picnic areas shall each have a maximum capacity of (75) people and include (2) group BBQs, (8) picnic tables, and (2) trash receptacles. Shade at large group picnic areas shall be provided by built structure. All picnic area furnishings to meet requirements for accessibility per state and local codes. Surfacing at picnic areas shall be appropriate for high volume use; concrete paving is preferred.
- Restrooms: A minimum of (2) accessible, non-gendered restroom stalls are to be provided at all Community Parks. Restrooms shall provide baby changing tables and electric hand dryers as well as a designated maintenance chase for storage and access to infrastructure. Restroom structures are to be designed to meet all building and accessibility codes per local and state ordinances. Restroom finishes, colors, and facades are to be consistent with City standards and are to be reviewed and approved by City staff.
- Specialty Amenities: Dependent on space and public demand, amenities such as dog parks, fitness course, bike parks, skate parks, spraygrounds, and amphitheaters are appropriate recreation uses for community parks.
- Sports Fields and Courts: The type and quantity of the sports field programming shall be determined by the available space and the review and approval of City staff. Selection of surfacing such as natural grass or synthetic turf shall be approved by City staff. Lighting at fields and courts to facilitate nighttime use shall be at the review and approval of City Staff. Supporting amenities for sports fields and courts, such as concession stands and scoreboards, shall all be considered

based on the anticipated user group and programming.

Recreational Open Space

The primary purpose of recreational open space is to preserve and protect unique natural resources while providing for compatible limited public recreation use. Passive recreational uses such as hiking, nature appreciation, picnicking, etc. that are not in conflict with the intended resource protection are encouraged. Natural resource open space areas that are not intended to allow for compatible public recreation use would not qualify as recreational open space and would not be included in the park classification system.

Size: No minimum or maximum size; depends on resource to be preserved.

Service Area: Citywide, may have regional value.

Intended Service Groups: All City residents; may attract regional residents.

Recreational Open Space Programming to Consist of the Following:

- **Signage:** All Open Space and Trailheads are to have the City standard park name sign and City standard regulatory signage. Interpretive and educational signage shall be considered for [or “at”] open space parks.
- **Site Furnishings:** Appropriate furnishings include benches, picnic tables, a minimum of (1) trash receptacle, (1) pet litter station, and (1) bicycle rack shall be placed at all trail staging areas and trailheads. All park site furnishings to meet requirements for accessibility per state and local codes. Site furnishing models and manufacturers to be consistent with City standards and guidelines.

- **Staging & Trailhead Areas:** These areas shall include designated onsite and off-site parking, kiosks, and restrooms. Restrooms to be designed as outlined in the Community Park section. Inclusion of restrooms at staging areas and trailheads shall be considered where resources (water, sanitary, sewer, and electrical) are available. City staff shall provide review and approval for permanent restrooms, compostable restrooms, and/or potable restrooms.
- **Trails:** Hiking, biking, and equestrian trails. Trail design and user group shall be per the review and approval of staff. Accessible trail loops shall be prioritized where feasible.

Trails/Linear Park

Trails and linear parks enhance connectivity within the parks and recreation system, providing accessible pathways for walking, biking, and commuting. They also promote community health, environmental conservation, and economic development by linking neighborhoods to natural and recreational spaces. Trails should be grade-separated for pedestrian and/or bicycle use. Some trails may be appropriate for equestrian use. Trails should connect various areas of the City, as well as parks, recreational open spaces, and other community facilities such as schools. Trails may serve as part of a regional trails network. They should connect to the City’s on-street bicycle route system for recreational use as well as providing a means of alternative transportation. City trails should be coordinate with County or Regional Trails Master Plans. A Citywide Bicycle Master Plan should indicate both the on-street bicycle route and the Class I off-street bicycle trail system. Walking trails with a park or recreational open space would not be classified separately as trail/linear parkway, except that major connection trails in parks and open spaces would include trail route identification and

would be included in City trail mile calculations.

Size: No minimum or maximum length.

Service Area: Citywide.

Intended Service Groups: All City residents; may attract regional residents.

Trail/Linear Park programming to consist of the following:

- The same features as Recreational Open Space plus:
- Landscape: Planting and irrigation that focus on native or adapted plant material. Trees to be selected for wind tolerance and shade potential. Irrigation design to be per City of Soledad standards and equipment selection to be reviewed by City park maintenance staff.
- Lighting: Pedestrian lighting of pathways and entries should be considered at Linear Parks.
- Picnic Areas: Designated picnic areas shall have a maximum capacity of (10) people and include (1) BBQ , (2) picnic tables, and (1) trash receptacle. Small picnic shelters or shade trees are appropriate for neighborhood parks. All picnic area furnishings to meet requirements for accessibility per state and local codes. Surfacing at picnic areas shall be appropriate for high volume use; concrete paving is preferred.

Sports Park

Sports Parks focus on active recreational facilities, especially for organized sports. Consolidation of multiple sports fields at one location allows for efficiency and scheduling. With a focus on active sports, sports parks do not have all of the amenities of Community Parks.

Size: 3–20 acres.

Service Area: Citywide.

Intended Service Groups: All residents, community-based sports organizations, and school groups; may serve limited non-resident sports participants for tournament and regional play.

Sports Park Programming to Consist of the Following:

- Parking: Onsite parking is preferable with designated spaces for accessible parking as required by local and state codes. Parking quantity is to be based on the program amenities and to be reviewed and approved by City staff. Parking lighting shall be provided to accommodate nighttime use of fields and courts.
- Restrooms: A minimum of (4) accessible, non-gendered restroom stalls are to be provided at all Sports Parks. Restrooms shall provide baby changing tables and electric hand dryers as well as a designated maintenance chase for storage and access to infrastructure. Restroom structures are to be designed to meet all building and accessibility codes per local and state ordinances. Restroom finishes, colors, and facades are to be consistent with City standards and are to be reviewed and approved by City staff.
- Sports Fields and Courts: The type and quantity of the sports field programming shall be determined by the available space and the review and approval of City staff. Selection of surfacing such as natural grass or synthetic turf shall be approved by City staff. Lighting at fields and courts to facilitate nighttime use shall be at the review and approval of City Staff. Supporting amenities for sports field and courts such as concession stands, maintenance and storage facilities, and scoreboards shall all be considered based on the anticipated user group and programming.

- Supplemental Programming: Picnic areas, playgrounds, and site furnishings may be included at Sport Parks dependent on park size and feasibility. For standards, refer to the Community Park section.

Detention Basin Park

Detention basin parks serve to control stormwater runoff while complementing recreational use. The relative amounts of upland area and flat area significantly influence the choice of possible recreational facilities. All areas of the basin must be planted with either turf or no-mow native fescue.

Size: Depends on park or facility.

Service Area: Citywide.

Intended Service Groups: All City residents; may attract regional residents.

Detention Basin Park programming shall be consistent with Neighborhood Parks or Community Parks dependent on park size.

Special Use Park

Special use parks are designed for a single specialized recreational activity of purpose. The unique use of the park caters to a specific interest group or activity. Special use parks may include recreation facilities not found elsewhere within the park system.

Existing Parks:

- Cesar Chavez Park (0.45 acres)
- San Vincente Road PG&E Easement (3 acres)

Size: Depends on park programming.

Service Area: Citywide.

Intended Service Groups: All City residents; may attract regional residents.

Special Use Park programming to consist of the following:

- Disc-golf course
- Dog park
- Onsite parking
- Off-site parking
- Park signage including a park name sign and regulatory signage
- Restroom and concession buildings
- Skate park
- Shooting range
- Tennis/pickleball facility
- Urban plazas

Special Use Facility

Special use facilities meet Citywide recreational needs and are not necessarily located in parks. Multi-purpose uses should be encouraged, provided that additional uses do not conflict with the intended special use.

Size: Depends on park or facility.

Service Area: Citywide.

Intended Service Groups: All City residents, designated community user groups, school groups, and some non-residents.

Special Use Facility Programming to Consist of the Following:

- Aquatic Center
- Community Center
- Cultural Arts Facility
- Historical Structures and grounds
- Multi-purpose Recreation Center
- Onsite parking
- Off-site parking

- Senior Center
- Storage and concession buildings
- Youth Center

Further, the Recommendations offer citywide initiatives, recreation programming enhancements, and address potential new park sites. They include clear Standards to be followed in developing new parks or renovating existing parks.

Implementation

The Community Vision is a picture of what Soledad's parks and recreation system can be in the future. The PRMP's recommendations are intended to be implemented over a 20-year time horizon and is not intended to be a short-term action plan. For funding, staff capacity, and logistical reasons, the PRMP actions need to be sequenced over time. The pace of implementation will depend on the availability of resources, not only capital and operating dollars but also the workload capacity of City staff.

To assist the City in prioritizing improvements, an implementation framework has been incorporated into the plan, outlined on the adjacent page, categorizing recommendations based on the level of need allowing for flexibility and optimization of potential future opportunities.



D. Park Specific Recommendations

Park Development Standards

Pocket Parks

Neighborhood Parks

Community Parks

Special Use Parks

New Parks

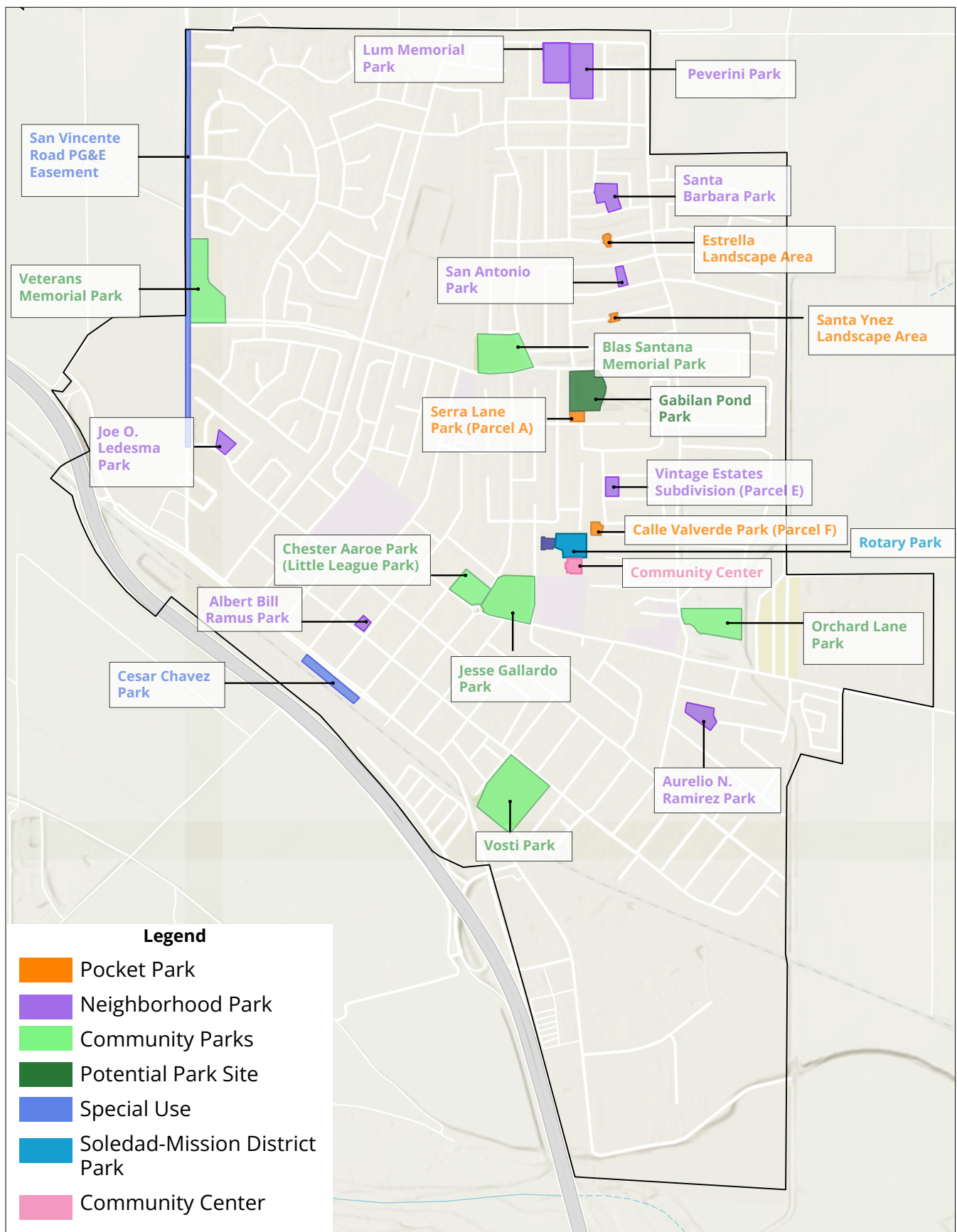


Figure 15. Park Classification Map



Pocket Parks

Vision: "Backyard" Parks

Description: There are four pocket parks located throughout Soledad. They are located on the following streets: Estrella, Santa Ynez, Calle Valverde, and Serra. Estrella and Santa Ynez Landscape Areas serve primarily as pedestrian connections between the cul-de-sacs where they are located. Visually blending with adjacent front yards, they are small landscaped areas with trees and lawns, and no amenities. Residents have set up a basketball hoop and court striping in the Estrella cul-de-sac. Calle Valverde (Parcel F) and Serra Lane (Parcel A) Parks are slightly larger pocket parks, and function as retention basins during the wet season. Calle Valverde Park is in the Legacy Homes subdivision. Serra Lane Park is also located in the Legacy Homes subdivision with a pathway that will connect to Gabilan Pond Park. These small parks offer an opportunity for relaxation, as green space within the neighborhoods.

Recommendations

- Maintain detention basin lawn areas for informal play and passive use during the dry season.
- Transition to a more natural, sustainable native, climate adapted and low maintenance planting palette for smaller areas.
- Add seating and picnic tables in the upland areas.
- Add play features such as game tables in the upland areas.
- Consider offering mobile recreation activities at these sites to activate and engage the neighborhood.
- Survey the neighborhoods to determine what amenities and activities they would like.
- Use the pocket parks as anchors for expanding programming into the streets for their use as play streets.



Albert Bill Ramus Park

Vision: Neighborhood and Community Gathering, Farmer's Market Connection, and Downtown Activation

Description: Albert Bill Ramus Park is located near Soledad's downtown and City Hall, adjacent to a City-owned daycare building. This park is a neighborhood and community-serving passive park with a group picnic area that is shaded by large mature trees. Perimeter hedges create enclosure and a paved pathway leads into and across the park, connecting to the central planter and shuffleboard. Residents, workers, and community organizations enjoy the park for picnics, gatherings, and fundraising events. This park is in a central downtown location that allows the opportunity to connect the community and bring people together.

The park will likely be removed in the coming years, as part of the planned Civic Center redevelopment, therefore extensive renovations are not recommended. However, this space can be leveraged in the interim to serve an important community need.

Recommendations

- Provide additional seating.
- Connect to Farmers Market with additional seating areas and potential music, and encourage people to use the park to gather and eat during Farmer's Markets.
- Provide crosswalks across Monterey Street.
- Add art and sustainable native and climate adapted, low maintenance planting.





Aurelio N. Ramirez Park

Vision: Comfortable Neighborhood Park with Activities for All Ages.

Description: Aurelio N. Ramirez Park is a small park tucked into the neighborhood, with street frontage access at the end of the Munras Street cul-de-sac and additional pedestrian access from Vineyard Drive via an unsigned asphalt path. A paved pathway divides a lawn area with minimal amenities. The park is primarily used by neighbors for relaxation, dog walking and informal play. The playground has a bench and picnic table. Surrounding homes' backyard fencing encloses the park. Aurelio N. Ramirez Park is one of the only parks in the southern part of the city.

Recommendations:

- Add a half-basketball or multi-use court.
 - Add a sheltered picnic area with BBQ.
 - Add amenities including a drinking fountain and trash cans.
 - Plant trees around the park perimeter to increase wind protection and overall visual interest.
 - Increase seating and shade at the playground and throughout the park.
 - Replace the playground's shredded rubber with poured in place surfacing.
 - Install park signage at the Vineyard Drive entry point and enhance access point.
- Consult with the neighbors to gather ideas to enhance the park, considering adding fitness stations, multi-use court, art, or other activities to activate and serve a range of interests for this otherwise under-served neighborhood.
 - Prioritize this park for updates as the area is older, and there are limited park/open space opportunities.





Joe O. Ledesma Park

Vision: Neighborhood Park with Active Spaces and Nature

Description: Joe O. Ledesma Park is a neighborhood pocket park that was recently upgraded with new play equipment for ages 2-5 and 5-12. The park includes a multi-use lawn with a paved pathway, a low wall for parent seating, and two small picnic areas with barbecues. The edges are lightly landscaped with wood chips and there is a walking path around the park. The park serves a small-lot single family neighborhood and adjacent multi-family affordable housing. The multi-family housing also provides small playlots and a half basketball court for residents' use. This park can offer an escape from tight living spaces, and places to gather.

Recommendations:

- Add shade at the play area and picnic areas, and shaded seating.
- Replace the playground's chips with poured in place surfacing.
- Plant additional trees at the park perimeter for shade and wind protection.
- Add art or sustainable native and climate adapted, low maintenance planting for visual interest.
- Consider a community garden.

Community Gardening



Added Art & Landscaping





Lum Memorial Park/Peverini Park

Vision: Neighborhood Parks as a Robust Community Sports Park

Description: Lum Memorial Park, dedicated to Assistant Fire Chief Donald Lum and all Soledad firefighters, is contiguous to Peverini Park. It has several active recreation areas, including a full basketball court and a multi-use lawn that is used for youth soccer, flag football, and cheer practice. It has a large group picnic area, and a playground. The use areas are connected by a paved pathway. Much of the park is dominated by the adjacent water tanks which are surrounded by a chain link fence topped with barbed wire. With no on-site parking, the heavy use of this neighborhood park can create parking issues.

Peverini Park is contiguous to Lum Memorial Park. Its restroom building serves both parks. It is a well-used and active park, with a multi-use turf area that accommodates youth soccer, flag football and youth baseball. The crushed rock perimeter path around the turf area is lined with multiple benches. Group picnic areas at either end of the park serve families in the neighborhood and those who come for the youth sports. Near the picnic area at the west end is a playground for young children. The park is heavily used for organized youth sports, and without on-site parking, parking in the neighborhood can be difficult.

Lum Memorial and Peverini Park serve as a large community asset, with organized youth sports and the opportunity to foster gathering and multi-generational use.

Recommendations:

- Plan and design the parks as a single park to improve function and use of spaces.
- Add park signage on Terraza Street frontage.
- Upgrade the playground at Lum with new equipment, surfacing, and low fencing.
- Reconfigure the large group picnic area at Lum, adding tables, shade, and a group BBQ.
- Create murals on the water tanks, or screen them with fencing or tall trees.
- Convert the basketball court into a multi-use court, including futsal and basketball.
- Add fitness stations at Peverini for adult exercise.
- Close Peverini lawn as needed for field rest and renovation.
- Add play elements to the small playground at Peverini.
- Add sun and wind protection to the picnic areas.
- Replace the playgrounds' shredded rubber with poured in place surfacing.
- Landscape park perimeters with sustainable native and climate adapted, low maintenance planting.
- Use planting at street frontages to provide buffers from cars.

Lum Memorial Park/ Peverini Park

Shaded Picnic



Street Barrier



Multi-use Court



Add Water
Tank Murals



Fitness Stations



Play Elements





San Antonio Park

Vision: Neighborhood Park with Comfortable Spaces to Play and Gather

Description: San Antonio Park is a small neighborhood serving park in northeastern Soledad, with access from both San Antonio and La Colina Streets. The park is primarily a passive park, with a multi-use lawn usable for informal play, relaxation, or peewee soccer practice. There is a paved perimeter walking path, with benches, trash cans and a drinking fountain. There are no picnic tables or play equipment. San Antonio Park can serve as an area for passive recreation and relaxation, and dog walking.

Recommendations:

- Add a picnic area and small footprint play elements.
- Add trees and sustainable native and climate adapted, low maintenance planting around the park's edges.
- Add functional art elements and unique seating spaces.

Sustainable
Natural Plantings



Playful & Artful
Seating





Santa Barbara Park

Vision: Neighborhood Park that Allows for Play and Relaxation

Description: Santa Barbara Park is a primarily passive-use, neighborhood-serving park. Its central feature is the multi-use turf that is used for informal play and for peewee soccer practice. Walking, relaxing, and dog walking are popular activities. The perimeter walking path is lined with benches and there are two group picnic areas with four and five picnic tables (with some ADA accessible tables) and drinking fountains. Trees along the edge of the park fence provide some shade and enclosure. This park supports passive and informal active recreation, and has room for installation of additional active use amenities.

Recommendations:

- Replace missing trees and add trees and sustainable native and climate adapted, low maintenance plantings at the park's edges.
- Add a small play feature at the park's northeast corner.
- Add fitness equipment stations.

Play Feature





Vintage Estates Subdivision Park (Parcel E)

Vision: Build Community and Activity in this Neighborhood Park

Description: Vintage Estates Subdivision Park (Parcel E) is a new neighborhood park. It will serve the neighborhood well with several picnic areas, a playground with parent seating and cornhole pitch, a lawn for informal play, and a walking path around the park. The park has lighting for evening use and visibility, and the trees are located to provide shade for gathering areas. There is perimeter planting.

Recommendations:

- Continue to maintain the park.
- Add wind shelter to picnic areas if their location adjacent to neighbor fencing does not mitigate the afternoon winds.
- Replace the playground's shredded rubber with poured in place surfacing.
- Add programming and events to bring neighbors together.





Blas Santana Park

Vision: Multi-use Community Park with Dedicated Space for Teens

Description: Blas Santana is a community park adjacent to the High School. Its detention basin is heavily used as a soccer and football field when dry, especially when the Vosti Park fields are resting. Maintaining the field is hampered by the difficulty of fencing it off for rest. There are concrete bleachers set into the basin slope, and there is field lighting. The park offers several additional active areas, including a full basketball court, a sand volleyball court, and a playground. There is a small restroom building. As most of the park lacks shade, users sit on the grass under the trees. The basin provides some wind protection and has been used as an amphitheater at times. There is what appears to be a concrete foundation at the southeast corner of the park, its use is unknown.

Recommendations:

- Redesign and update the northern section of the park to enhance the amenities and activate the park:
 - A teen activity hub should be added to offer hang out and activity space for teens at the adjacent school. Creating a dedicated space can help to direct teen use and limit impacts on other areas of the park.
 - Improve the volleyball court or replace it with challenge equipment such as a climbing wall or other elements to engage teens.
- Add wind protection surrounding the play area and seating areas, and around the top of the basin area.
- Consider fencing and converting the basketball court to a multi-use court to accommodate futsal and other activities.
- Improve field maintenance and usability. Temporary perimeter fencing at the top of the basin could allow the field to be rested periodically. Ideally, field rest should be coordinated with the Vosti Park field rest periods to minimize soccer disruption.
- Add a walking trail around the park, with occasional benches for viewing the activity on the field or sitting in the shade.
- Improve pedestrian safety and access to the park from the high school and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Enlarge the restrooms to accommodate the large events, soccer games, and gatherings that occur at this park.
- Add trash cans at gathering areas.
- Replace the playground's shredded rubber with poured in place surfacing.

Blas Santana Park

Multi-use Court



Additional Seating



Potential Teen Space



Walking Path





Chester Aaroe Little League Park

Vision: Multi-generational Active Park with a Range of Activities and Amenities

Description: The primary feature of this park is its Little League game field, with player benches, skinned infield, lighting, scoreboard, bleachers, a Little League concession building, Little League storage. The park also has restrooms and a City concession building. The restroom serves both Chester Aaroe Park and Jesse Gallardo Park across the street, as does the playground. There is a group picnic area with a shade shelter, but no wind protection. Along the Ticino Street frontage are two full basketball courts, a small former skate park and batting cages that are now unused, and a large wedge of unused space at the park's northern corner.

Recommendations:

- Community engagement revealed strong support for replacing the underused skate park and batting cages with a flexible sport court. Consider the space as a teen/adult playground.
- Add welcoming gathering spaces for people to watch and socialize.
- Strong community support was also indicated for converting unused space at the park's corner to a fenced, off-leash dog park which can be used for temporary overflow parking if needed.
- Provide wind shelter at picnic areas.
- Consider lighting and covering the basketball courts.
- Replace the playground's chips with poured in place surfacing.

Chester Aaroe Little League Park

Outdoor Multi-use Court



Covered Basketball Court



Off-leash Dog Park/Parking for Events



Movable Chairs & Seating



Redevelop Space





Jesse Gallardo Park

Vision: Community Sports Park

Description: Jesse Gallardo Park is primarily an active park. It has been recently renovated with a Little League baseball field and 2 softball fields. The fields are fenced and lighted, with skinned infields, scoreboards, player benches, bullpens and bleachers. Equipment storage containers are on the wide walkway between the softball fields. There are 2 fenced tennis courts, which are sometimes used for futsal. Lawn areas provide space for gathering and informal play, and there is a picnic table in the shaded area near the tennis court. At the northwestern corner of the park, there is a deteriorating mural depicting Soledad's historic women. Gallardo forms a complex with Aaroe Park, which is across the street. Gallardo Park users must cross Andalusia Drive to access restrooms, the playground or concessions.

Recommendations:

- Improve crossing safety to restrooms and playground at Chester Aaroe Little League Park.
- Add shaded and wind-protected picnic areas with BBQ's.
- Provide wi-fi connections to enable wi-fi operation of field entry gates.
- Repair the Soledad history mural.

Jesse Gallardo Park

Repair Mural



Shaded & BBQ Areas



Increase Crossing Safety





Veterans Memorial Park

Vision: Multi-generational Community Park

Description: Veterans Memorial Park is enhanced by views of the surrounding mountains and agricultural fields. The park contains several use areas. An upper soccer field, surrounded by benches, serves younger kids. The upper area of the park has a restroom and drinking fountains, and a large group picnic area with barbecues. Below the picnic area is a playground. The lower level is a dual use detention basin which is used most of the year for youth soccer practice and games. Benches along the sidewalk overlook the lower field. There is a rough perimeter walking path around the park.

Some of the recommended park improvements have been developed and vetted with the community. Funding is currently being sought.

Recommendations:

- Improve the playground with parent seating, shade, low fencing and stroller/ wheelchair ADA access.
- Replace the playground's shredded rubber with poured in place surfacing.
- Provide shade and wind protection for seating and activities. Develop a wind break with trees adjacent to the main road, and additional trees in the park to help reduce wind.
- Landscape the empty planting areas adjacent to the streets with sustainable native and climate adaptive planting.
- Improve the group picnic area with flexible table arrangements and shade.
- Repair/improve park pathways for a walking circuit.
- Add fitness equipment stations.
- Add a Veterans Memorial monument.
- Add park signage.

Veterans Memorial Park



Flexible Seating



ADA Access



Fitness Equipment



Windbreaks





Vosti Park

Vision: Dynamic Soccer and Community Serving Park

Description: Vosti Park is the city's largest park, marked by Soledad's iconic water tower. Previously, it has been used as the location for major community events, such as Fiesta Days. Soccer is the primary use of this park, with 2 lighted turf fields that can accommodate adult games. Street parking is generally sufficient to accommodate the busy game periods. There are two playgrounds for ages 2-5 and 5-12. There is a group picnic area near the larger playground, and one table near the smaller playground. The perimeter walking path around the park is popular. The volleyball court is no longer used. The restrooms are well maintained, although during heavy use periods, there is demand for additional facilities. The park is fully fenced. Restrooms, fences, walls and ball netting have often been subject to vandalism and graffiti.

Recommendations:

- Add fitness equipment. Maintain and enhance the walking track with the addition of an outdoor fitness space near the entrance area. Install signage to indicate length of walk, and ensure that the surface is level and comfortable to walk on.
- Increase activity spaces and amenities for the non-soccer community.
- Replace tables or game spaces that were removed.
- Add more shaded and wind protected gathering spaces.
- Increase shade around picnic and playground areas.
- Replace the playgrounds' shredded rubber with poured in place surfacing.
- Install BBQs at picnic areas
- Repair volleyball court and install netting, or replace with climbing wall, other challenge element, or small footprint games
- Consider open hours when the community can use the fields without a reservation.
- Seek funding for installation of synthetic turf fields to reduce maintenance needs and increase usable playing time.

Game Tables



Mile Signage



Outdoor Volleyball



Fitness Equipment





Description: Orchard Lane Park is Soledad's newest community park. It exemplifies many of the community goals that guide this PRMP. Designed with community input, it contains a range of features for all ages and abilities. The park includes a skate park, a dog park, a spray park, a playground, fitness equipment, large and small picnic areas and gathering spaces (some with shelter), a multi-use turf area with a stage, and restrooms. There is also green infrastructure for stormwater management, a nature walk, and a butterfly garden. There is on-site parking.

- Continue to maintain the park.
- Continue to explore a connection to the trail along the Bryant Canyon drainage.
- Coordinate with Hartnell College for joint events at the park.





Cesar Chavez Park

Vision: Downtown Gathering and Community Hub

Description: Cesar Chavez Park is leased from Southern Pacific Railroad. Formerly named Front Street Park, in 2007, the City Council renamed the park in honor of the farmworker organizer, Cesar Chavez. The park, centrally located in downtown Soledad, is visible from Hwy. 101. It is a popular lunch spot in the downtown area. It serves as a community gathering space and location for community events such as the Easter Egg Hunt. It is also a buffer between the downtown and the adjacent railroad tracks. Soledad Gateway Center, including some city offices, is located at the park. Historic and interpretive signage, picnic tables, benches, and an iconic clock are features of the park. Street trees provide shade, and additional shade trees are on a currently undeveloped area of the property. A restroom has recently been installed.

Cesar Chavez Park is adjacent to the site designated for the Container Village, and will be a key part of the planned downtown Community Hub.

Recommendations:

- Activate this park to become an integral part of the Community Hub that engages the area and provides a place for the community to gather.
- Encourage use during the Farmer's Market
- Add wind protection and buffer from the railroad tracks.
- Increase seating and community gathering options, as well as more picnic areas.
- Provide small-footprint games such as bocce ball, cornhole or horseshoes.
- Develop a stage area or gazebo for music and events.

Cesar Chavez Park

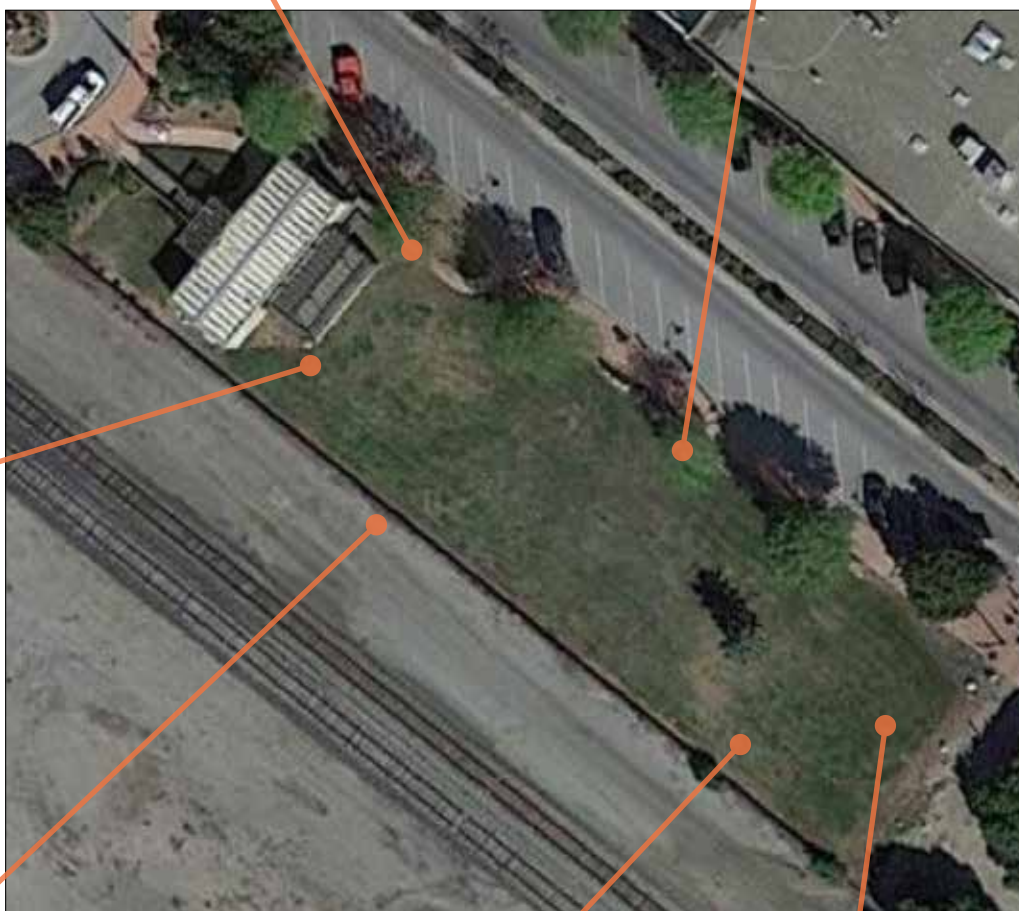
Horseshoes, Small
Foot-print Games



Movable Seating



Community
Gathering Areas



Windbreaks



Community Events in
the Park



Music Performance
Areas



San Vicente Road PG&E Easement Trail

Vision: Connect to City Trail

Description: A meandering concrete walk runs almost a mile along San Vicente Road in the PG&E easement owned by the City. It is a well-used walking path with views over the valley and to the surrounding mountains. It is an important portion of a future walking circuit around the city.

Recommendation:

- Use the trail as a central link for the city trail mentioned above.
- Replace lawns with sustainable native and climate adapted, low maintenance and drought tolerant landscaping.
- Provide occasional benches or seating areas along the walkway.
- Explore the possibility of adding fitness elements and shade.



Native Plantings



E. Future Sites and Opportunities



Gabilan Pond Park

Vision: Create a Community Park with new and unique amenities to serve the Community.

Description: Former detention basin is slated to be developed with features to serve the community. It connects to the pocket park directly south on Serra Lane. As it is a basin, the topography provides some potential for decent wind protection. A childcare facility may be developed adjacent to the future park site.

A first round of community engagement, an on-line survey, generated 430 responses,. The elements most favored by the respondents were (in order of popularity):

- Walking track
- Outdoor gym
- Disc golf
- Pump track
- Playground
- Picnic tables
- Amphitheater
- Dog park

Other Notable Responses Included:

- Multi-use court
- Basketball
- Volleyball

Accounting for duplication, the results of the banner survey are shown in Figure 18.

Recommendations:

- Continue to engage the community to refine preferred uses and name for the future park.
- Leverage the natural topography to protect future activities from the wind and consider uses that are not available in other locations, and uses that are well suited to the distinctive elements of the site.
- Prepare an RFP for planning, concepts, and final PS&E's for construction of the park.

What kind of park do you want here?

Scan the QR Code and tell us what you think!

Soledad Parks and Recreation Master Plan
Plan Maestro de Parques y Recreación de Soledad

¿Qué tipo de parque quieres aquí?

¡Escanee el código QR y dínos lo que piensas!

visit our website: www.soledadparksandrecplan.com

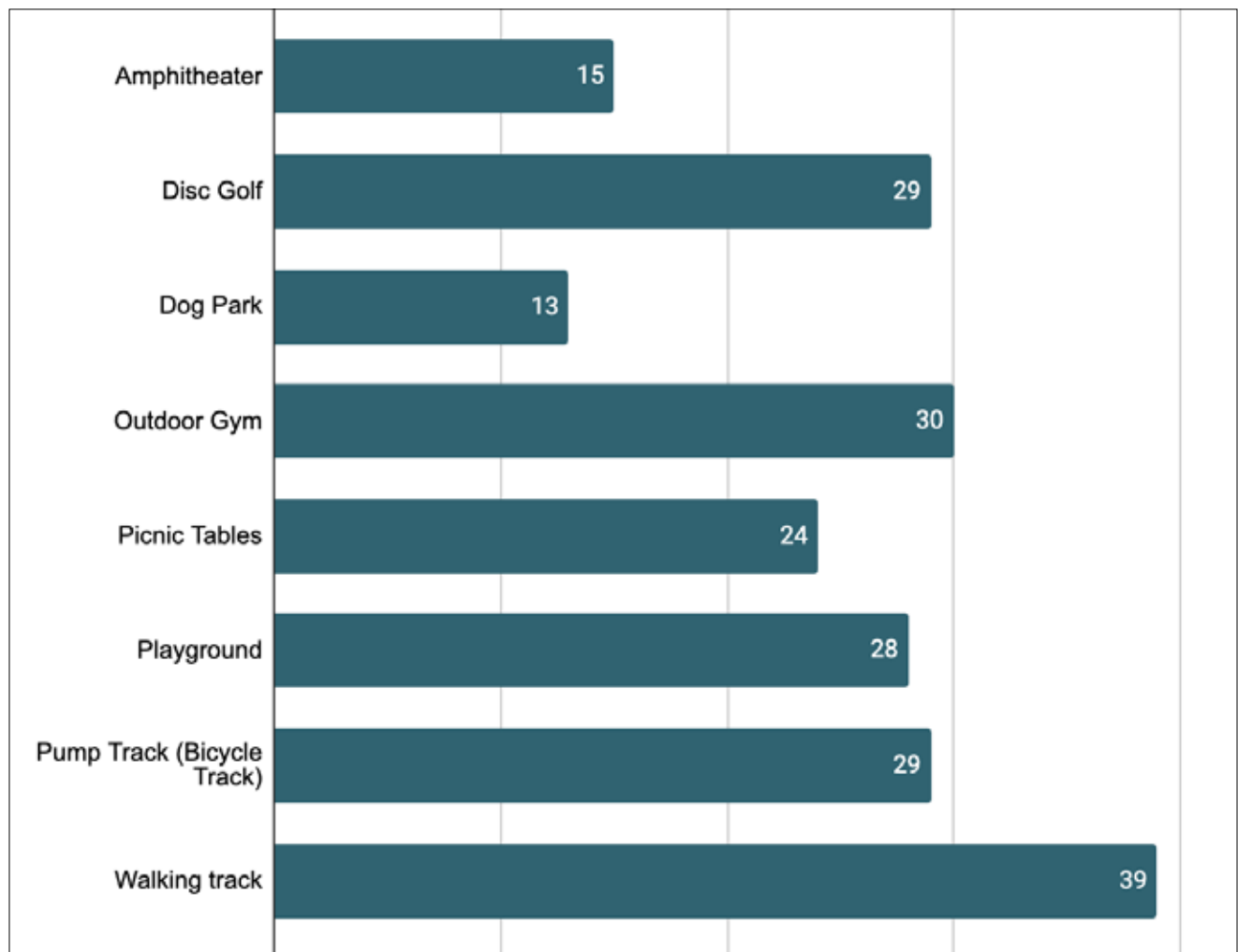


Figure 16. Banner Responses



Los Coches Adobe

Vision: Restore this historic landmark to serve as a community and tourist destination.

Description: The focal point of this site is the Los Coches Adobe, a California Historical Landmark (aka Richardson Adobe), built in 1843, with subsequent additions through the 1860's. The adobe is being protected for future restoration and is not accessible to the public at this time. The lower part of the site includes some mature trees, beautiful views and a sense of access to nature.

Recommendations:

- Continue to proactively protect the historic structures to prevent deterioration and damage.
- Seek federal funding for protection of this historic landmark.
- Pursue funding for a phased Master Plan for the historic structures and immediate grounds. A Master Plan for the historic structures will guide a phased approach to preservation and restoration, and will enable and facilitate fundraising to support the project. Possible future use as an event space could provide community benefit, invite tourists and visitors, and generate income to support operations.
- Provide historic interpretive signage. Consider creating walking paths, picnic areas and wedding and formal rental spots if the grounds are developed into a park. This historic landmark should be designed as a destination park with special spaces and activities that enable a longer stay, if feasible given agricultural buffer requirements.



Landfill Site

Vision: Develop the site for multiple functions, sports uses, and walking and biking trails.

Description: This large former landfill site is a discontinuous parcel in the Gabilan foothills, north of the city core. The site has expansive views in all directions, of the Salinas Valley, the Coastal Range and the Gabilan Range. It has space for walking and/or biking trails. The site's southern portion is relatively flat. Current users include two long distance shooting ranges. The shooting ranges have a 20 year lease, and their use of the property poses potential safety conflicts.



Adult Soccer Fields

Recommendations:

- Explore the potential for active uses along the southern boundary of the site, particularly the development of multiple adult soccer fields.
- Determine what, if any, engineering studies might be required to evaluate suitability for recreation uses.
- Extended city bike routes and walking paths to the site and consider the addition of water stations and bathrooms to provide a good end point if only limited use is possible.
- As recreation use becomes possible, develop hiking and biking trails through the area.



Water Reclamation Facility/Riverwalk

Vision: Create a wetland park for primarily passive recreational uses and enhanced habitat, connected to greater Soledad via a recreational trail along the Salinas River.

Description: The City's wastewater treatment site includes former rapid infiltration basins. These basins have been the subject of a 2022 study evaluating the conversion of the basins to wetlands with associated recreational uses. The study examines two alternatives on approximately 12 acres of the treatment plant site.

The wastewater treatment plant is adjacent to the Salinas River. A preliminary concept for a recreational path with interpretive elements along the river has been proposed by the Western Rivers Conservancy. The path would be accessed from Nestles Road and would run to the treatment plant. The Conservancy proposes to partner with the City for development of this park, including negotiations with the private property owners and the County Agricultural Commissioner. Monterey County has also expressed an interest the possibility of developing a park along the Salinas River going eastward toward Greenfield.

Recommendations:

- Continue to evaluate and consider the proposed alternatives for conversion of a portion of the wastewater treatment plant to wetlands with recreational amenities.
- Continue to explore a partnership with the Western Rivers Conservancy to develop a recreational and interpretive path along the Salinas River. Explore the possibility of partnering with Monterey County to create an extended park/trail that continues eastward along the river.



Miramonte

Vision: Complete an integrated park and trail system that complements and connects with Soledad's existing parks.

Description: The Miramonte Specific Plan identifies seven neighborhood parks, two recreation/sport parks, a community park, a picnic park, linear park, and an open space trail system to serve plan area residents. The Specific Plan provides a variety of passive and active recreational and open space amenities. Development of the Miramonte park system should be coordinated and considered in conjunction with Soledad's existing park system, to ensure that the elements included in Miramonte's parks complement the existing parks and create a balanced and equitable overall system.

Recommendations:

- Work with Miramonte's developers to ensure that elements included in the new parks - particularly the community park and the recreation/sport park - complement and integrate with Soledad's existing parks and facilities for a system with a complete and equitable distribution of features, amenities, and activities.
- Ensure that pedestrian/bicycle connectivity and access to the hillside open space area trail network is integrated and maximized for all of Soledad's residents.





Lions Club Building

Vision: Expand the City's indoor recreation and meeting spaces, either in the existing building, or a new community recreation facility on this or the adjacent City owned site.

Description: This is a City-owned building across the street from Vosti Park, currently leased to the Lions Club. The building has a social hall which could function as an activity, class, or meeting space. It also has a kitchen and large group BBQ's. This location is a potential future housing site but would be replaced with a similar community area.

Recommendations:

- Explore the possibility of partnering with the Lions Club to create a satellite community center or teen center.
- If the site is developed as housing, include a community space to serve as a satellite community center.



Teen Center

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7. Recreation Programming



A. Recreation Programming Recommendations

Overall Programming

With the funding from Measure Y and Measure S, the City has a sustained level of funding to support recreation programming, however it is not enough to fully realize the potential and need identified in this plan. The Department will need to **continue to be strategic, agile, and opportunistic** in its development of services, focusing on the highest and greatest needs. Further, the City and the Department will need to continue to determine the appropriate level fees for programs and what percentage of costs they need to cover to maintain high quality programs.

Unlike facilities planning, program planning is much more **changeable and requires seasonal adjustments**, which in turn allows flexibility and time to adjust to new trends and

ideas. The following recommendations are general strategies that the department should employ over time and strive for as it grows and establishes great participation and reach.

Recreation programming is a critical tool to **bolster the usage** of the parks, community buildings as well as **improve safety** by activating otherwise underutilized areas. By thoughtfully developing and operating a diverse range of programs, the City can begin to **address the needs of all residents, enhance overall community wellness and connections** and help the parks function better and be fully utilized. Well-designed programs can be a cost-effective way to serve the community, provide flexible and relevant activities with the potential to become self-sustaining, improve community health and wellbeing and offer a welcoming



Teen Movie and Game Nights



Adult Dance Classes

user experience for residents who may not otherwise go to a park.

According to the 2023 NRPA Agency Performance Review, 94% of park and recreation agencies nationwide provide recreation programming. Of those agencies providing programming, the most prevalent types include special events, social events, team sports and fitness and health programming.

Further recreation programming can be a tool to help engage and serve two critical audiences: seniors and teens. Developing programs for active seniors as well as those who are looking for community and connection is critical. For teens, programs can help redirect their energy to more positive activities, nurture new skills, create stronger ties, and improve their desire to care for parks.

The City began programming in 2021, focused on the Community Center. That experience and ongoing growth is helping to enrich and expand the opportunities within the community. Building the staff, partners, and active participation of the community for future will be essential for the overall success of the Department.

To that end, the City should continue to explore programs and activities at the

Community Center and expand its presence in the city's parks to serve and engage the Soledad community.

Programming Focus Areas

Continue to explore a range of programs to serve all of the Soledad community, targeting hard to reach teens and adults. Offer programs on a pilot basis and build on successes.

Examples include:

- The community expressed the desire for additional fitness programs, and emphasized teaching kids how to stay active at a young age.
- Expand and enhance health and wellness-focused programming such as gymnastics and tumbling, fitness classes, walking clubs, exercise and dance, to engage and keep residents active.
- Various formats for teen programs, including Friday Night programs, movie nights and events, games, hands on science classes and programs, bike workshops, and dedicated space for arts and music.
- Weekend adult programs including fitness classes, community music, food and cultural events, fitness walks, nature outings, and the like.

- Programs for seniors, including computer education, crafts, dance, exercise, social time, trips, and games.
- Health focused programs such as culinary and healthy eating programs that foster healthy eating habits and decrease food insecurity, as well as affordable fitness, weight training, and yoga.
- Continue to partner with the Monterey County Food Bank to provide fresh produce to the community, and Meals on Wheels to deliver food to homebound residents.
- Both sports and non-sport programming that will engage girls, allowing for socializing with friends and freedom to be creative.
- Consider expanding programming and events that bring community art into public spaces, such as street chalk painting, community mural painting, or similar community art projects.
- Offer childcare to support participation.

Staffing

In order to effectively expand and continue high quality programming, staffing needs to be increased and maintained to meet the demands. Due to the city's location, the availability of experienced professionals is more limited, and the City has focused on increasing the skills of younger people to help build the Department. It will require a number of strategies to address this issue, including:

- Increasing funding to expand staff and maintain parks and facilities at the highest standard, and to meet community expectations.
- Exploring the possibility of developing intern programs with Hartnell College to increase recreation staffing. Reach out to Monterey County Arts Council for potential instructors for arts classes or community mural projects.
- Supporting the development of staff skills and capacity with increased access to professional training related to programming and serving a diverse community.
- Continuing to partner with other providers within the Salinas Valley to offer programs.
- Establishing an economically viable and



Outdoor Classroom Programs

attractive contract services program where individuals or other program specialists who are interested in offering services in Soledad can fill various gaps in programming.

- Exploring the possibility of a volunteer coordinator who could help to manage community volunteers to provide basic support to the Department.
- Creating a formal program with Hartnell College to work with students in arts, theater and other disciplines to provide programs for the City.
- Increasing the budget for the Department in order to provide more attractive salary packages to draw professionals to the Department.

Operations & Awareness

As the Department's role and efforts grow, additional operational elements will need to be addressed and expanded.

- Pursue grants and reach out to businesses and non-profits to support specific programs and improvements, and initiate focused capital campaigns, such as the current campaign for Community Center improvements, to generate funding.
- Continue to develop the Parks and Recreation Department's website as a user friendly and comprehensive website which facilitates the scheduling process.
- Build a consistent network and audience via social media and partners such as the school district, Hartnell Community College and more.
- Conduct regular surveys of users and non-users to adjust and manage program offerings.
- Evaluate expanding reservations for parks and picnic areas.

- Explore and expand coordination with the Soledad-Mission Recreation District to provide aquatic programming during the winter season.
- Prioritize Soledad residents and recreation programs over non-resident rentals and rentals that interfere with the availability of community programs and activities.
- Routinely evaluate classes and programs to ensure they are serving the full range of community members. Programs should be evaluated on a regular basis and should be updated based on trends and community demographics. This may include tailoring programs, fees, and their delivery to best serve community members.
- Strive to make programming that is affordable and accessible to all, considering those on a strict budget.
- Ensure equitable services by providing access to recreation programs throughout the city, utilizing parks and partner facilities.
- Continue to bring recreation to residents through a mobile recreation center that brings games, equipment, and activities to all areas of the city on a rotating schedule.



Community Art Programs



B. Programming in Parks

Recommendations

Currently, the majority of programming is within the community center. As the Department grows and as a strategy to help activate parks, adding a range of programs in the parks will increase overall park use and services to the community. Following are some of the key elements to consider expanding as the Department moves forward:

- Activate parks with programming and enhanced design to ensure they are welcoming and safe for all. Inviting users with engaging programs and unique features brings more eyes on the park.
- Promote picnic and park rentals in Orchard Park and expand rental opportunities to other parks. As sheltered gathering spaces are added to the parks, make them available on a rental basis with a user-friendly reservation system.
- Continue to produce and support community events in the parks, as community engagement revealed this to be a high priority.
- Community engagement indicated that walking paths are also a high priority in Soledad. Support this activity by organizing group walks with staff or volunteer group leaders. Create online and printed walking/ biking maps for residents to explore new routes and fun walks around the city.
- Expand summer camps as City staffing allows, or in partnership coordination with Hartnell College.
- Explore new adult recreation programs and classes in parks, such as futsal, yoga, exercise, and volleyball, as well as arts and cultural programs desired by the community.
- Develop a system for outside providers to use city park spaces for activities such as cross-fit, martial arts, or yoga in the parks. Consider options for renting park space for private classes or partnering to co-promote classes on a fee sharing basis.
- Provide additional recreational opportunities at neighborhood parks. Expand the mobile recreation vehicle's schedule to loan equipment and games at various locations, and schedule play days with recreation staff in various neighborhoods. Where parks are limited, such as in the southeast part of Soledad, consider temporary block closures to create play spaces.
- Explore collaboration with a school or interested organization for an opportunity to plant and maintain community fruit trees or a community garden.

Park Programming Conceptual Ideas



Park Party Rentals



Community Events in the Park



Youth Activities



Rent-able Sheltered Picnic Areas



Walking Groups



Fitness Programs in the Park



C. Programming Cost Recovery & Fees

The programs and services of Soledad's Parks and Recreation Department are provided at varying levels of subsidy and cost recovery. The fees and costs for programs and services should be evaluated through the lenses of core community values and the extent and level of community benefit provided. Further, cost recovery objectives should be reviewed in the context of affordability and inclusion.

Following is a framework based on the Cost Recovery Pyramid shown below, from which to assess program offerings and to help determine where the City should focus resources.

This framework is also a tool to prioritize allocation of subsidies and resources, and to determine programs and services that should recover full costs or be provided in partnership with or by the private sector. Creating a balance of programs along the pyramid can help serve a range of audiences but also create a means to increase overall funds to offset some community benefit programs.

A key element is the assessment of who benefits

from the programs and services - those with the widest community benefits form the foundation of the Department's core services, and more specialized services should be considered as resources allow. By categorizing each program and service according to how it relates to community values and departmental mission, and how widespread is the benefit, allocation of public funds can be rationally determined.

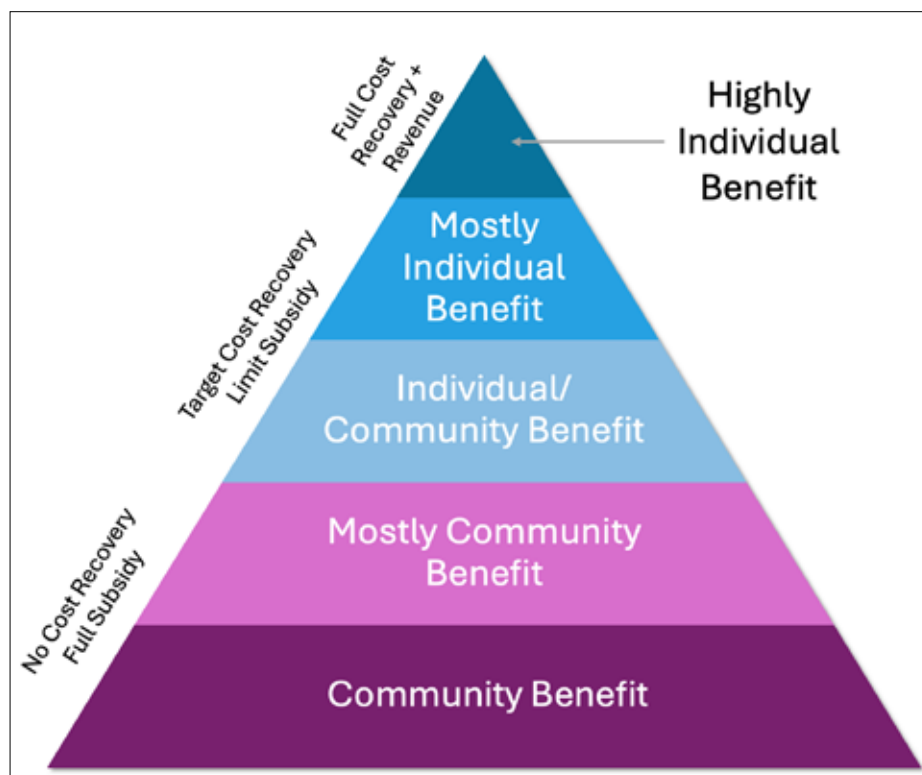


Figure 17. Recreation Fees Pyramid

Community Benefit

Services which carry out multiple aspects of the Department's mission and mostly benefit the community as a whole are core services. Core programs and services should generally be offered at no or minimal cost to the community. These might include:

- Continuing to provide parks in accordance with Soledad's acreage and access standards, as the city grows
- Expanding the scholarship program to reach more low-income children, youth and seniors, as well as adults
- Sponsoring community-wide events at the City's parks
- Expanding outreach to broaden participation in recreation programs
- Expanding the mobile recreation unit program to bring resources to the entire community
- Providing public art or cultural activities
- Meeting the needs of Soledad's underserved population

Mostly Community Benefit

Services which address multiple aspects of the Department's mission through opportunities for individual participation and basic skill development form the next level of services. Costs may be at least partially offset by participant fees, but the community benefit justifies significant subsidy. These might include:

- Classes and activities for seniors
- Early childhood programs
- Health and wellness classes
- Community gardens
- Beginning dance or music classes for

children and youth

Individual/Community Benefit

While these services do carry out elements of the Department's mission and provide community benefit, there is a higher level of individual benefit, as the focus is more specialized. Fees for these programs should recover a higher percentage of the costs than those in the previous categories. These might include:

- Camps and excursions
- Youth and adult sports leagues

Mostly Individual Benefit

Specialized services appealing to a narrower group of participants should cover a high percentage, if not all, of direct and indirect costs. These might include:

- Activities requiring specialized equipment or supplies (e.g. ceramics)
- Adult enrichment classes
- Adult fitness classes, yoga, Pilates
- Specialized youth classes such as martial arts

Highly Individual Benefit

These are services which the Department is able to provide, but either fall outside the Department's mission, are also provided by private entities, or can generate revenue to support other programs and services. These might include:

- Facility rentals for private events
- Weddings, Quinceañeras

After determining where on the pyramid specific programs and services may be

classified, a cost recovery plan should be developed to support the City's delivery of programs and services.

Fees should be set at a rate that encourages repeat, on-going use with consideration given to the users ability to pay. Specific cost recovery goals and user fees should be continually monitored. A cost recovery plan will identify opportunities to offset maintenance and operations costs with user fees. The Department should prepare a plan that identifies appropriate user fees taking the following into consideration:

- Comparative analysis of fees of local private, non-profit and public providers of similar facilities
- Actual costs of operations and maintenance of facilities.



8. Implementation

8. Implementation

Prioritization

With limited funding and resources, the City of Soledad's Parks and Recreation Department must allocate their resources based on their mission and core values and on the needs of the community. The recommendations within this plan are designed to inform the City's efforts for next 20-years and this section for implementation helps to indicate the relative importance for each recommendation. The "Implementation Level" graphic on the following page details how to understand various recommendations and how important or urgent they may be.

Tables 5 - 7 on the following pages indicate Priorities of projects recommended in this PRMP, based on current needs, opportunities, resources and circumstances. Some key projects have emerged that should be implemented sooner than others, but a majority will be implemented over time based on how they meet the Vision and Goals of this plan. Additional future projects may arise from unforeseen opportunities or changing circumstances, and should be considered on their merits, alignment with the Vision and Goals, and funding and/or staffing availability. This plan provides an overarching framework for these decisions using the following categories to categorize each project.

Capital & Maintenance Projects

Within the overall park system, prioritization of individual projects is critical to achieving an integrated, high-quality park system. Resources, expenditures, and benefits must be carefully weighed, and the overall value of each project must be analyzed within the context of the City's Vision and Goals. Potential projects must also be evaluated based on available funding, resources and partnerships. Prioritization must consider the need, positive impacts on the community, and implications for maintenance and operations budgets and staffing, which all must be balanced with other critical City priorities.

The PRMP Goals provide the basis for prioritization and with the use of a simple checklist on the following page, the city can assess and evaluate proposed projects. By assigning a value to each element, a "+" for a benefit, "0" for neutral, or "-" for negative, the staff can assess how well a project may align with the plans goals. This criteria may evolve overtime.

Criteria		Benefit (+)	Neutral (0)	Negative (-)
1. Health and Wellness				
	Contributes to the health and wellness of all ages and abilities			
	Creates awareness and recognition of health benefits			
	Corrects conditions that are safety hazards or code violations (e.g. unsafe equipment, seismic upgrade)			
	Provides safety and security for the users and property (e.g. visibility, lighting, gate, etc.)			
2. Connectivity and Access				
	Improves park access in an underserved community (e.g. new park, partnership agreement)			
	Corrects ADA deficiencies			
	Improves connectivity to other parks or destinations			
	Serves the entire community			
	Improves parks located on accessible pedestrian / bicycle corridors			
	Adds new amenity to expand programming or events			
	Increases access via bike or walking			
3. Inclusive and Equitable				
	Improves or expands facilities for an underserved neighborhood			
	Significant community input has expressed the need for the project			
	Improves potential for programs and service for at-risk youth			
	Supports a park that is currently well used			
	Increases or supports affordable recreation opportunities			
	Improves the aesthetic and/or environmental quality of the city or neighborhood			
	Preserves, improves or enhances cultural, historical or natural resources			
4. Sustainable, Resilient and Well-Maintained				
	Preserves the integrity of the city's existing infrastructure			
	Provides major or minor repairs/renovations to an existing facility			
	Improves maintenance efficiencies or reduces ongoing maintenance costs			
	Generates revenues for offsets costs			
	Reduces wind, provides shade, or supports climate-friendly addition			
	Replaces less sustainable amenity or feature (i.e., native plantings for turf)			
	Preserves natural or historic settings, and educates			
5. Expand Resources and Partnerships				
	Funding is available			
	Provides opportunities for engagement or volunteerism			
	Leverages funding from another city project/initiative and/or with private or public entity			
	Joint use or collaboration is possible with outside public agencies (e.g. Hartnell College, Soledad-Mission Recreation Department)			
	Provides collaborative opportunities with non-profit organizations (e.g. Western Rivers Conservancy, Blue Zones)			
Overall Benefit?				

Figure 18. Park Improvement Criteria Evaluation Checklist

Implementation Levels

The PRMP's recommendations span a 20-year timeframe, enabling the city to prioritize the most necessary improvements for today and plan for future needs as funding and demand changes. Recommendations are identified as:



Critical Need: 0-2 years

Representing an immediate need, safety improvement or opportunity that should be acted upon within the next 2 years



General Need: 0-5 years

Not required immediately, but important to complete within the next 5 years



Ongoing Maintenance & Operations: *Ongoing*

Requiring ongoing maintenance and or change in policy or operation practices



Adds Community Benefit: *When possible*

Not time sensitive, but should be done if funds and resources allow



Meeting the Vision: 5-20 years

Not an immediate need, but aiming to achieve the vision in the timeline of this plan

The Soledad Parks and Recreation Master Plan is a living document. The Plan's Guidelines and Implementation criteria are designed to allow the City the flexibility to respond to changing circumstances and needs, such as opportunities that are unforeseen at the time of this document, and to provide nimble responses to unforeseen challenges that may arise.

Priorities & Phasing

The following tables prioritize identified projects that the City should undertake. On each of the following tables, projects identified by the City as highest priority are noted with the symbol **.

The planning level costs for the capital projects are based on recent Soledad project costs and the current Soledad CIP, as well as the consultants' experience with recent built projects. It should be noted that the costs do not include contingencies (typically estimated at 20%) or "soft costs" including project administration (typically estimated as 30% of base project costs). They are current costs, subject to inflation, which has averaged between 3% and 5% annually since 2011, with the exception of 2021 and 2022 when it rose to 8-12%. The table's costs should be adjusted on a regular basis.

Table 5. Capital Improvement Priorities



Capital Improvement Priorities		
** Indicates projects identified by City as highest priorities	Description	Cost
Critical (within 2 years)		
** Initiate Development of Gabilan Pond Park	Prepare RFP and hire consultant for development of concepts and PS&E's for construction of the park, with features desired by the community.	\$170,000
** Chester Aaroe Little League Park Renovations	Transition the area with the basketball courts, former skate park, and dirt lot into a viable recreational opportunity by working with the community to determine their priorities. Prepare plans and undertake construction.	\$1,025,000
** Vosti Park Improvements	Improve the park's walking path and add fitness/exercise equipment. Improve playground areas, including using poured in place surfacing.	\$730,000
** Aurelio N. Ramirez Park	Improve the playground, including using poured in place surfacing, add fitness stations.	\$610,000
** Jesse Gallardo Park	Resurface tennis courts.	\$15,000
** Blas Santana Park Improvement Plans	Initiate planning for improvements and upgrades, including removal of concrete structure, improved field maintenance, enlarged restrooms, and features desired by the community such as hangout spaces and challenge elements to create a teen hub.	\$75,000
Los Coches Adobe	Apply for federal funding to proactively protect the historic structures to prevent deterioration and damage.	\$500,000

Table 5. Capital Improvement Priorities (continued)

Capital Improvement Priorities		
** Indicates projects identified by City as highest priorities	Description	Cost
Additional Community Center improvements	Introduce phased renovations to the Community Center to improve and expand use areas, and developing the Center as a resilience hub.	\$1,370,000
Community Center outdoor spaces and lobby areas	Add furniture and welcoming amenities to lobby areas, improve outdoor spaces with wind protection for additional programs space.	\$300,000
Systemwide Basic Improvements	Ensure that parks have BBQs, picnic tables, benches, drinking fountain, bike racks, doggie bag stations, and trash and recycling receptacles.	\$135,000 annually
Trees and Wind Protection	Replace missing and dying trees for wind protection, shade, cooling and aesthetics. Plant windbreak trees or construct wind shelters at park gathering areas.	Varies by site
General (within 5 year as funding allows)		
** Construct Gabilan Pond Park	Construct park per PS&E's previously prepared.	\$4,158,000
** Blas Santana Park Improvements	Prepare PS&E's for improvements and upgrades, including removal of concrete structure, improved field maintenance, enlarged restrooms, and features desired by the community such as hangout spaces and challenge elements to create a teen hub.	\$1,310,000
Aurelio N. Ramirez Park	Upgrade, and add features to expand use, such as a half basketball or multi-use court, and a sheltered picnic area with BBQ.	\$650,000
Veterans Memorial Park	Update and improve access throughout the park by repairing and improving the park pathways, making the playground ADA accessible and adding fitness equipment and a Veterans' Memorial.	\$730,000
Community Hub/Cesar Chavez Park	Create a community hub in Soledad's downtown. Enhance Cesar Chavez Park with additional seating and gathering options, small footprint games, and an area for small performances and events.	\$500,000
Path and Trail Network	Continue to develop and expand safe routes around and through Soledad, and provide amenities to support trails as recreational assets.	TBD



Table 5. Capital Improvement Priorities (continued)

Capital Improvement Priorities		
** Indicates projects identified by City as highest priorities	Description	Cost
Adds Community Benefit (5+ years as funding allows)		
Joe O. Ledesma Park	Re-surface play area with poured in place	\$200,000
Vintage Estates Subdivision Park (Parcel E)	Re-surface play area with poured in place	\$50,000
Orchard Lane Park	No changes necessary	\$0
Lum Memorial Park/ Peverini Park	Upgrade, including recommended improvements such as improving large group picnic area, converting basketball to multi-use court, adding fitness equipment and creating murals on the adjacent water tanks.	\$1,050,000
San Antonio Park	Enhance park with small picnic area and small footprint play features.	\$100,000
Santa Barbara Park	Enhance with amenities such as a small playground and fitness stations.	\$100,000
Meeting the Vision (20-year time horizon)		
Additional Indoor Community Space	Identify an additional location for recreation programming and rentals, such as the Lions Club Building, or similar space within a new development.	TBD
Los Coches Adobe	Obtain funding and initiate a master planning process for phased restoration and improvements to the Los Coches buildings and property.	\$100,000
Water Reclamation Facility	Pursue funding for a recreational trail along the Salinas River, and conversion of water treatment ponds to recreational use.	TBD
Miramonte	Work with Miramonte's developers to ensure that elements included in the new parks - particularly the community park and the recreation/sport park - complement Soledad's existing parks.	TBD
Landfill Site	Initiate planning for future recreational uses.	\$170,000
Path and Trail Network	Complete a loop trail around the city, with a network of safe routes around and through Soledad, and amenities to support trails as recreational assets.	TBD



Table 6. Recreation Priorities



Recreation Priorities (** Indicated by the City as highest priorities)	
Critical (Initiate within 2 years)	
** Programming Partners	Continue to seek partnership opportunities to expand program capacities and offerings.
** Facility Use	Prioritize facility use capacities to ensure maximization of program offerings in available space and bandwidth.
** Programming Policies	Establish policies that ensure consistency, safety, and efficiency: emergency response, risk management, financial, etc.
** Programming Access	Continue to explore ways to provide recreational opportunities to the community at large, not just those that can access the Community Center
Reach Underserved Areas	Explore opportunities to add parks, play streets, or play spaces in the areas of the city lacking park access (See 10 minute walk map)
Increase Program Staffing and/or Contract Staff	Explore funding mechanisms and partnerships to help fund additional program staff.
General (within 5 year as funding allows)	
Cost Recovery and Fee Plan	As detailed in Program Recommendations, develop formal cost recovery and fee program to increase revenues and align mission and services.



Table 7. Maintenance Priorities



Maintenance Priorities (** Indicated by the City as highest priorities)	
Ongoing	
** Vosti Park Maintenance	Focus additional maintenance efforts to keep up with the use level of this popular park.
** Address Irrigation Issues	Prioritize staff focus on needed irrigation repairs.
Operations and Maintenance	Conduct baseline maintenance for all parks to address critical and functional issues.
Playgrounds	Develop lifecycle replacement schedules for upgrading play equipment. As playgrounds are renovated, replace shredded rubber surfacing with poured in place surfacing
Maintenance and Operations	Increase staffing funding to maintain parks and facilities at a high level.

Capital Improvement Program & Estimated Improvement Costs

The following costs are estimates based on current construction costs and should be used for order-of-magnitude, planning purposes only.

Table 8. Planning Level Improvement Costs

Improvement /Project	Description/Assumptions	Qty	Approx. Construction Costs	Construction + Contingency (20%)	Construction + Contingency + "soft costs" (30%)
Basic Park Improvements	Grading, drainage, utility connections, walkways, turf, trees, irrigation, lighting, benches, trash receptacles, bike rack	1 acre	\$1,100,000	\$1,320,000	\$1,716,000
Basic Improvements (per acre) - Large Parks	Grading, drainage, utility connections, walkways, turf, trees, irrigation, lighting, benches, trash receptacles, bike rack	1 acre	\$1,200,000	\$1,440,000	\$1,872,000
Play Area - basic	Grading, play equipment (2-5 years and 5-12 years), poured in place surfacing, seating, shade, trash receptacles	5,000 s.f.	\$850,000	\$1,020,000	\$1,326,000
Play Area - premium all abilities	Top of the line, completely accessible play area with accessible restroom	5,000 s.f.	\$3,500,000	\$4,200,000	\$5,460,000
Restroom - small	Prefabricated ADA restroom with 2 toilets and sinks, concrete foundation, storage, photo-sensor locks, drinking fountain, trash receptacles, planting	500 s.f.	\$500,000	\$600,000	\$780,000
Restroom/ Concession	1,700 s.f. ADA restroom/ concession/office, concrete foundation, 6 toilets, sinks, drinking fountain, trash receptacles, planting	2,000 s.f.	\$1,050,000	\$1,260,000	\$1,638,000
Gathering Space	Entry feature/signage, 4,000 sf gathering plaza, shade structure, enhanced planting	6,000 s.f.	\$400,000	\$480,000	\$624,000
Multi-Use Turf	Grading, natural turf, irrigation, drainage	1 acre	\$750,000	\$900,000	\$1,170,000

Table 8. Planning Level Improvement Costs (continued)

Improvement /Project	Description/Assumptions	Qty	Approx. Construction Costs	Construction + Contingency (20%)	Construction + Contingency + "soft costs" (30%)
Picnic Area - Small	Picnic tables (2), BBQ grills, 800 sf concrete paving, drinking fountain with spigot, trash receptacle, trees or structure for shade	3,000 s.f.	\$200,000	\$240,000	\$312,000
Group Picnic Area - Medium	Picnic tables (6), BBQ grills, 1,600 sf concrete paving, drinking fountain with spigot, trash receptacle, trees or structure for shade/wind	6,000 s.f.	\$350,000	\$420,000	\$546,000
Pump Track - Dirt	Dirt, fenced	9,000 s.f.	\$325,000	\$390,000	\$507,000
Pump Track - Asphalt	Asphalt, fenced	9,000 s.f.	\$425,000	\$510,000	\$663,000
Dog Park	Perimeter fencing for 0.5 acre park, water faucet, decomposed granite area, trash/doggy station, shade, signage	0.5 acre	\$650,000	\$780,000	\$1,014,000
Basketball Court - basic, lighted	Court paving, court surface and striping, basketball standards, trash receptacles, misc concrete paving, court lighting	8,000 s.f.	\$450,000	\$540,000	\$702,000
Fitness Stations	Exercise equipment installed in a group, or along a path	6 fitness stations	\$100,000	\$120,000	\$156,000
Natural Park/ Trail (per acre)	Grading, soil prep, hydroseed, decomposed granite paths, bench, trash receptacles, trees	1 acre	\$650,000	\$780,000	\$1,014,000
Poured in place rubber surfacing	Ag base, rubber mix, installation	1,000 s.f.	\$50,000	\$60,000	\$78,000
Trail/Walking Path	New 5' wide, natural materials	1 mile	\$100,000	\$120,000	\$156,000



A. Funding Mechanisms

City Funding Sources

Soledad receives the majority of its stable funding stream for parks and recreation from property taxes and sales taxes. Measure Y, a temporary measure passed in 2012 and extended through 2032, created an emergency 1% sales tax to preserve City services. About 7% of the funds it generates has supported parks and recreation through the General Fund. Measure S, a permanent half percent sales tax to fund quality of life services for the community, became effective in 2021, and allowed the City to create its own Recreation Department. As new development occurs, the City receives Park Development Impact Fees as well.

As Soledad continues to grow, the City could consider adopting an ordinance pursuant to California Government Code Section 66477, generally known as the Quimby Act. A Quimby Act ordinance would require the dedication of land or impose a requirement of the payment of fees in lieu thereof, or a combination of both, for park or recreational purposes as a condition to the approval of a tentative map or parcel map for new subdivision, if a number of specific requirements are met, as detailed in the Government Code. The Act's purpose is to ensure that new development will provide its share of at least 3 acres of park per 1,000 residents of the new subdivision.

In addition to the maintenance of parks funded by the City's General Fund, a number of parks are maintained by Special Maintenance and Benefit Assessment Districts. The City can create new special assessment districts, wherein property owners are assessed an annual amount dedicated to the upkeep of their parks and streetscapes. This type of

Benefits of parks & recreation:

- Improved physical health and mental health
- Places to relax and socialize
- Well maintained parks increase property values
- Attract non-residents to the area who spend money on local businesses
- Safe and interesting places to hang out and quality recreation programming positively impact youth and reduce delinquency
- Historic, artistic, and natural features can function as outdoor classrooms and provide inspiration
- Mitigate extreme heat and wind impacts
- Mitigate stormwater and flooding



Blue Zones

assessment must be approved by vote of the impacted property owners, which is a significant challenge. To successfully establish an assessment district, the City must actively involve its citizens and communicate the many and varied benefits they enjoy from their parks. The City must outreach to property owners and present a clear case for the benefits that the park system provides them, and the need for the requested funding.

Government & Foundation Grant Funding

Governmental grants have historically provided a substantial source of capital for park and recreation agencies. A number of private foundations and non-profit organizations also provide capital grants for park and recreation projects. Most grant programs have become extremely competitive. A strong grant-writing and grants management program is critical to identifying, making applications, and securing grant funding. With limited staff, the Department should be strategic about the grants it pursues.

While there are various grants available specifically for park and recreation projects, grant programs with other focus areas may also support park and recreation projects that provide multiple benefits, such as

environmental resilience and sustainability, health and wellness, habitat preservation or development, and open space protection. Recent federal legislation is allocating significant funding for projects that plan and design improved trail and greenways, use nature-based solutions to address stormwater management, create climate-smart rural communities, conserve public lands and restore ecosystems, and plant trees. Many potential Department projects can fulfill these goals and be competitive for funding. A number of governmental grants, such as Land and Water Conservation Fund grants, are administered through the State of California and include weighted criteria that consider whether a proposed project benefits a disadvantaged community. At the time of this report, the State's Community FactFinder website indicates that most of Soledad's parks are within a half mile of an identified disadvantaged community and/or a severely disadvantaged community, thus increasing the possibility of grant funding for projects at the City's parks and facilities.

Leverage Resources

Many grants have matching fund requirements. Leveraging resources made available through private fund raising or other sources will increase grant revenues that



Community Volunteers

would otherwise be unavailable. Examples of resource leveraging include public/private partnerships, and volunteerism. Phasing projects and making them manageable sometimes increases the opportunity to leverage resources. Development of a connected trail system around the city, or renovation of the Los Coches Adobe are examples of projects that could be phased to provide significant community benefit.

Volunteer Community Leadership

Volunteers may be engaged for park maintenance and operations. Although they cannot come close to compensating for the funds needed to provide professional park services, volunteer efforts can help to stretch existing revenues. Nonprofit clubs and organizations can provide further volunteer resources. An example of an active organization in the city is the Soledad Little League, which helps to maintain the Chester Aaroe Park ballfield.

A further benefit of involving the public in park stewardship is a strengthening of sense of community, and an increased awareness of the need for funds to maintain and operate parks. This can help to build the public support necessary to enact an assessment or

other revenue measure for park operations, as discussed above. A successful individual donor campaign typically requires strong, visible community leaders who will both “give and get.” These individuals can, with proper support, provide endorsement, access to wealth, and a sense of enthusiasm in an otherwise crowded fundraising marketplace.

Naming, Sponsorships, & Adopt-a-Park Programs

Another method of securing private funding is through sponsorship. Many events, facilities and programs lend themselves to business sponsorships that provide visibility and generate good will for the businesses concerned. The Department’s events such as the Easter event at Cesar Chavez Park, as well as other community-wide events are prime examples of sponsorship opportunities.

The City should create opportunities for residents to provide targeted funding for the maintenance, improvement, or addition to a specific park. This can be formalized by working with a Friends of the Parks group or establishing an adopt-a-park program. Programs whereby citizens may donate funds for installation of a bench, tree or other park improvement in recognition and commemoration of a person, event, group,



Commemoration Benches

or organization can enhance and inspire. These programs may not generate substantial funding but can provide a positive tool for engagement, stewardship of parks, and a sense of community. A “Friends of the Parks” organization can also provide the department with additional fundraising capacity for specific targeted projects, or for general support, whether by memberships, hosting fundraising events, or being a conduit for soliciting donations of funds, in-kind materials or equipment, or services.

Legacy giving is the number one form of giving in the U.S. Such a program may be an additional source of funding for the Recreation and Parks Department. Funds may be designated for operations as well as for capital projects.

Environmental Efficiencies & Rebates

The emphasis on energy-efficient systems and buildings with cost effective design is a major factor in the long-term sustainability of costs. However, these systems typically have greater initial costs and savings are leveraged over the life of the building and its systems. The City should continue to use cost-effective designs in all park and facility designs and renovations, and a LEED policy should be established. There

are local (such as PG&E), state, and federal rebates that are sometimes available to offset these costs. The City should take advantage of these opportunities as they are available.

Public & Private Partnerships

Partnership with private and public organizations, including users, and even some vendors, can generate resources for facility operations and improvements. The Department should expand and enhance partnerships with government entities, the county, agencies, non-profits, and other providers (and facility owners) to assist with offering programs, sharing maintenance efforts, or sharing facilities. Partners may include the Soledad Unified School District, Hartnell College, Blue Zones Project, the Soledad Historical Society, the Lions Club, Pinnacles National Park, the Pinnacles Gateway Partners Association, Monterey County Arts Council, and others. The City could explore income generating leases such as cell towers or wind turbine placement in appropriate park locations. Adding a concrete pad with power and water hookups could be a source of rental income from vendors who could set up to sell food or other goods and services at park facilities.



Mobile Health Clinics

Private Nonprofit Hospital Funding

Health and wellness is a primary focus of the Parks and Recreation Department. Private nonprofit hospitals within California must provide charitable care and other benefits to their communities in order to maintain tax exempt status. To fulfill this requirement, hospitals must work with public health agencies and other members of the community to create a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and develop a plan for addressing those needs. In 2022, the Monterey County Health Needs Collaborative was formed to create an overall assessment on behalf of all county hospitals, the County Health Department and United Way Monterey County. Soledad participants in the most recent CHNA included Soledad Chamber of Commerce, Soledad Community Health Care District, Soledad Medical Clinic, and Soledad School District.

Individual hospitals create their own implementation strategies. If expenditures on park infrastructure and recreational programming are needed to advance the health of the community, those expenditures can qualify as community benefit activities. For example, George L. Mee Memorial Hospital in King City states that it will address diabetes in the county by holding community workshops

and cooking demos to promote healthy eating habits, developing a local walking map to encourage community exercise, and partnering with local farmers and or local gymnasiums to promote the benefits of healthy eating and exercise. The City should explore working with local public health agencies, school district and community organizations to ensure that the hospitals such as Salinas Valley Memorial Hospital and George L. Mee Memorial Hospital are aware of the critical importance of recreational facilities and the community benefit of supporting those facilities, and work to include those under the umbrella of their community benefit obligations pursuant to state and federal requirements.

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9. Appendices

9. Appendices

A. Soledad Parks Tree List

The Soledad Parks Tree List identifies a variety of trees that meet certain basic criteria which make them appropriate for consideration in Soledad's Parks. The trees on the list are suitable for Soledad's climate zone (Sunset Zone 15). They are species that have been identified as being good windbreak trees or having a high wind tolerance, are medium or low water use, and that tolerate salinity in water - an indicator of their tolerance for recycled irrigation water. Exceptions are noted in the Comments column.

The "Planting Area" column indicates species that will grow in constrained areas such as parking strips, with minimal root damage. In this column, "Park" indicates that the species need a minimum of 7 to 10 feet of root space to avoid potential root damage. Care should be taken keep these trees at a suitable distance from pathways and paved areas. Sight lines into parks should be maintained by careful placement of trees, and by limbing low branches where they obstruct views.

Table 9. Soledad Parks Tree List

Botanical Name	Common Name	Deciduous or Evergreen	Maximum Height	Spread	Water	Planting Area	Inches Per Year	Comments
Large Trees								
Acer macrophyllum	Big Leaf Maple	D	80'	30'-50'	M	Park	36	High root damage potential
Broussonetia papyrifera	Paper Mulberry	D	50'	40'	L	5'-10'	24	Wet fruit litter - avoid planting near walkways
Calodendrus decurrens	Incense Cedar	E	90'	10'-15'	VL	5'-10'	12"-24	Slow growing at first, low salt tolerance
Celtis australis	European Hackberry	D	70'	30'-50'	M	Park	24-36	Low salt tolerance
Chamaecyperis lawsoniana	Port Orford Cedar	E	120'	15'-18'	M	Park	24	
Cinnamomum camphora	Camphor Tree	E	70'	50'-60'	M	Park	24	High root damage potential, avoid near walkways and garden beds
Cupressocyparis leylandii	Leyland Cypress	E	50'	15'-25'	L	Park	36	
Cupressus sempervirens	Italian Cypress	E	70'	10'-20'	M	Park	36	
Eucalyptus polyanthemos	Silver Dollar Eucalyptus	E	80'	15'-45'	L	Park	36	
Eucalyptus sideroxylon 'Rosea'	Red Ironbark Eucalyptus	E	90'	30'-60'	L	Park	36	High root damage potential, avoid near walkways
Fraxinus 'Fan West'	Fan West Ash	D	50'	30'-40'	M	Park	36	
Fraxinus oxycarpa 'Raywood'	Raywood Ash	D	50'	20'- 30'	M	Park	24	Wind tolerance not noted
Fraxinus velutino 'Rio Grande'	Fan-Tex Ash	D	50	30 to 40	M	Park	36	Salt tolerance unknown

Table 9. Soledad Parks Tree List (continued)

Botanical Name	Common Name	Deciduous or Evergreen	Maximum Height	Spread	Water	Planting Area	Inches Per Year	Comments
Ginkgo biloba	Maidenhair Tree	D	70'	25'	M	Park	12"-24	Male trees only - female has foul smelling fruit litter
Lagunaria patersonia	Primrose Tree	E	50'	20'	M	5'-10'	36	Can be irritant - fine hairs in seed capsules
Liquidambar styraciflua	American Sweet Gum	D	80'	40'	M	Park	24-36	Low salt tolerance; high root damage potential; wind tolerance not noted
Populus nigra 'Italica'	Lombardy Poplar	D	100'	15'-30'	M	Park	36	Good windbreak, but somewhat weak branching strength and high root damage potential - plant away from walkways
Pseudotsuga menziesii	Douglas Fir	E	200'	20'-30'	M	Park	24	
Quercus agrifolia	Coast Live Oak	E	70'	30'-70'	VL	Park	24	
Quercus chrysolepis	Canyon Live Oak	E	70'	30'	VL	Park	24	

Table 9. Soledad Parks Tree List (continued)

Botanical Name	Common Name	Deciduous or Evergreen	Maximum Height	Spread	Water	Planting Area	Inches Per Year	Comments
Schinus molle	California Pepper Tree	E	50'	25'-40'	L	Park	36	Good windbreak, but somewhat weak branching strength and high root damage potential - plant away from walkways
Sequoia sempervirens 'Los Altos'	Los Altos Coast Redwood	E	100'	15'-30'	M	Park	36	
MEDIUM TREES								
Acacia saligna	Blue-Leaf Wattle	E	30'	15'-20'	L	5'-10'	36	Good screen; multi-trunk tree or large shrub
Acer campestre	Hedge Maple	D	30'	30'	M	5'-10'	12	Slow growing, salt tolerance unknown
Arbutus 'Marina'	Marina Madrone	E	40'	30'	M	2' -4'	12"-24	Wet fruit litter - avoid planting near walkways
Casuarina stricta	Mountain She-Oak, Beefwood	E	35'	20'-35'	L	5'-10'	24-36	
Melaleuca quinquenervia	Cajeput Tree	E	40'	15'-25'	L	5'-10'	24	Low maintenance, but can be invasive
Nyssa silvatica	Tupelo; Sour Gum	D	50'	20'-30'	M	Park	12'-24	

Table 9. Soledad Parks Tree List (continued)

Botanical Name	Common Name	Deciduous or Evergreen	Maximum Height	Spread	Water	Planting Area	Inches Per Year	Comments
Olea europaea 'Swan Hill'	Swan Hill Olive	E	30'	25'-30'	L	5'-10'	12'-24	Moderate maintenance - suckers, pruning; 'Swan Hill' is a fruitless variety
Pistacia chinensis	Chinese Pistache	D	40'	25'-35'	L	5'-10'	24	Excellent fall color
Tamarix aphylla	Tamarisk (Athel Tree)	D	50'	25'-50'	L	Park	24	Invasive roots

Large Trees



Acer macrophyllum



Broussonetia papyrifera



Calocedrus decurrens



Celtis australis



Chamaecyparis lawsoniana



Cinnamomum camphora



Cupressocyparis leylandii



Cupressus sempervirens



Eucalyptus polyanthemus



Eucalyptus sideroxylon



Fraxinus Fan West



Fraxinus oxycarpa "Raywood"



Fraxinus velutina "Rio Grande"



Ginkgo biloba



Lagunaria patersonia



Liquidambar styraciflua



Populus nigra "Italica"



Pseudotsuga menziesii



Quercus agrifolia



Quercus chrysolepis



Schinus molle



Sequoia sempervirens "Los Altos"

Medium Trees



Acacia saligna



Acer campestre



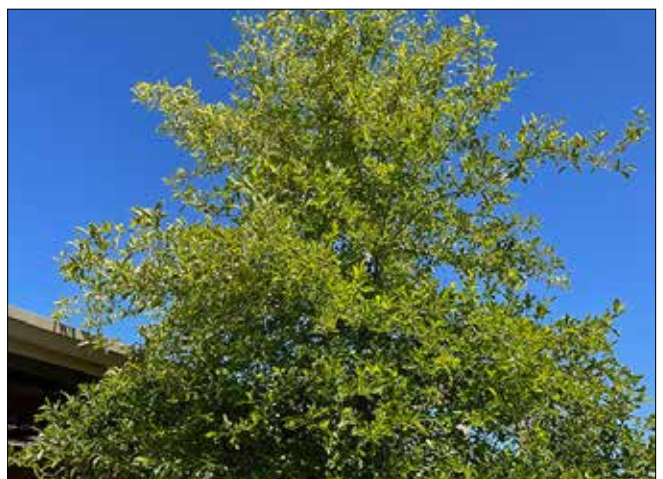
Arbutus marina



Casuarina stricta



Melaleuca quinquenervia



Nyssa sylvatica



Olea europaea "Swan Hill"



Pistacia chinensis



Tamarix aphylla



B. Park Inventory

Park Inventory

Calle Valverde Park (Parcel F)



Calle Valverde at Tomasini Street

1. Pocket Park

.36 Acres

Neighborhood or pocket park in Legacy Homes subdivision. Pathway connects to Rotary Park and Soledad Community Center. Opportunity to make more interesting - use of moveable furniture, games, or other activities.

Add picnic tables, or other elements of interest.

Park Inventory

Calle Valverde Park (Parcel F)

Feature	
Passive Lawn Excellent	Focus of the park area. During the wet season, it serves as a stormwater treatment area.
Paths and Walkways Excellent	Connects to Rotary Park and Community Center.

Park Inventory

Estrella Landscape Area

Between cul-de-sacs on Estrella Street and San Gabriel

1. Pocket Park

.22 Acres



Small open space with lawn and trees providing pedestrian connection between cul-de-sacs. Basketball hoop has been set up with court striping on the Estrella cul-de-sac.



Continue to maintain as green neighborhood connection.

Park Inventory

Estrella Landscape Area

Feature	
Basketball Court Fair	Informal half court area with a hoop.
Court - other Fair	Informal basketball standard with half-court striping on the street adjacent to the parklet.
Passive lawn Good	Obvious edge provided by trees, basketball court lines have been drawn in the street next to the park
Passive Lawn Excellent	Lawn area providing green pedestrian access between cul-de-sacs.
Passive Lawn Good	Focus of the park area
Paths and Walkways Good	Connects to housing

Park Inventory

Santa Ynez Landscape Area



Between cul-de-sacs on San Miguel and Santa Ynez

1. Pocket Park

.22 Acres

Small open space with lawn and trees providing pedestrian connection between cul-de-sacs, and emergency access.

Continue to maintain as green neighborhood connection.

Park Inventory

Santa Ynez Landscape Area

Feature	
Passive Lawn Excellent	
Passive Lawn Excellent	Focus of the park area
Paths and Walkways Good	Connects housing area

Park Inventory

Serra Lane Park (Parcel A)



Serra Lane at Camino Arroyo

1. Pocket Park

.36 Acres

Neighborhood or pocket park in Legacy Homes subdivision. Pathway connects to Toledo Basin future park. Currently there is a wall blocking access. It is a dual use stormwater treatment area.

Complete connection and add furnishings. Picnic areas and amenities should be added.

Park Inventory

Serra Lane Park (Parcel A)

Feature	
Passive Lawn Excellent	Open space available for informal ball games, picnics and play. A major part of the lawn is a stormwater treatment area during the wet season.
Paths and Walkways Excellent	Designed to connect through to Toledo Basin Park.

Park Inventory

Albert Bill Ramus Park



Corner of Monterey and Soledad Streets

2. Neighborhood Park

0.4 Acres

Near Soledad's downtown and City Hall, this park is a neighborhood and community-serving passive park. Residents and workers enjoy the park for picnics and gatherings. Community organizations use this park for fundraising events. The group picnic area is shaded by large mature trees. Perimeter hedges create enclosure, and paved pathways lead into and across the park, connecting to the central planter and shuffleboard court. A City-owned daycare building is adjacent to park.

Plans to expand the City's Civic Center will possibly eliminate Ramus Park within the time horizon of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan. If the park is closed, an alternative site should be identified, or the park's functions should be relocated to Cesar Chavez Park. Opportunity to connect to the City's Farmer's Market.

Park Inventory

Albert Bill Ramus Park

Feature	
Landscaping/Trees Excellent	Several large mature oak and eucalyptus trees, as well as the perimeter hedge, help to filter some wind. A central planter provides a focal point.
Path/Walkway Excellent	Paved walking paths converge in the center of the park, where there is a planter. The paths allow people to cut the corner of the block by walking through the park. Within the park, paths connect to picnic area and shuffleboard court.
Picnic Area Excellent	Group area with 6 large wooden picnic tables shaded by large mature trees. There is a large group BBQ, and multiple trash cans.
Shuffleboard Court Good	Concrete pad for shuffleboard.

Park Inventory

Aurelio N. Ramirez Park



End of Munras Street cul-de-sac

2. Neighborhood Park

1.2 Acres

This is a small park tucked into the neighborhood, with street frontage access at the end of the Munras Street cul-de-sac and additional pedestrian access from Vineyard Drive via an unsigned asphalt path. A paved pathway divides the lawn area. The park, with minimal amenities, is primarily used by neighbors for relaxation, dog walking and informal play. The playground has a bench and a picnic table, but lacks a BBQ, drinking fountain or permanent trash receptacle. Surrounding homes' backyard fencing encloses the park, some deteriorating and water-damaged, apparently from irrigation overspray/wind. The park generally lacks wind protection and shade.

Additional tree planting around the perimeter of the park would provide more interest, shade, and wind protection. This could be a pilot location for edible landscaping/fruit trees. Additional picnic tables would create a place for small neighborhood or family gatherings, especially with the addition of a barbecue, drinking fountain and shade.

Park Inventory

Aurelio N. Ramirez Park

Feature	
Lighting Fair	Two streetlight-style light standards, one at pedestrian entry path, the other mid-park at perimeter.
Multi-Use Turf Fair	Open park space on each side of the walking path, continuing behind play area. Turf is in good condition but there is no shade or wind protection.
Path/Walkway Fair	Paved path cuts across the lawn area through middle of park, connecting the Munras Street cul-de-sac and the Vineyard Drive pedestrian access.
Picnic Area Fair	One picnic table, no shade, wind protection, BBQ, water, or permanent trash receptacle.
Playground Fair	For ages 5-12, the play equipment appears functional but is generally worn. Swings are in relatively good condition. Surfacing is shredded rubber. There is one bench for parent seating, lacking shade.
Shade/Wind Protection Very Poor	There are backyard fences along the houses, some with tarps as windbreaks for the homes. The park has no wind breaks or shade along path or near play area, and generally lacks shade.
Signage Fair	Wooden park signage at cul-de sac, lacks signage at pedestrian path entry.
Site Amenities Poor /Fair	Temporary plastic trash receptacle chained to a pole. Dog bag dispenser at entry. No bike racks.

Park Inventory

Joe O. Ledesma Park



Market Street between Murietta and Amador Streets

2. Neighborhood Park

0.6 Acres

This neighborhood pocket park was recently upgraded with new play equipment for ages 2-5 and 5-12, and has a low wall for parent seating. The park includes a multi-use lawn with a paved pathway. There are two small picnic areas with barbeques. The park serves a small lot single family neighborhood and adjacent multi-family affordable housing. The multi-family housing also provides small playlots and a half basketball court for residents' use.



Additional planting could provide wind protection as well as shade and visual interest. This could potentially be a location for a pilot fruit tree project, if desired by the Assessment District residents.

Park Inventory

Joe O. Ledesma Park

Feature	
Landscaping/Trees Poor	Perimeter planting areas are primarily wood chips, barren of planting. Perimeter trees have been removed and not replaced. The few remaining trees do not provide wind protection or shade, and the occasional severely pruned shrubs provide no shade and minimal interest.
Lighting Fair	One streetlight at sidewalk.
Multi-Use Turf Fair	Lawn area in center of park is big enough for pick-up games but there is no barrier to the street.
Path/Walkway Excellent	Paved walking path around the perimeter of the park, connects with neighborhood sidewalk.
Picnic Areas Fair	Two picnic areas, each with two tables, one BBQ, and a trash can. Metal tables have been damaged by hot objects sitting on their surface.
Playground Good	Unique play structure elements, including a rope climbing structure and spinners. There is a ramp into play area from picnic area. Surfacing is wood chips. A seat wall provides seating around play area, and there is a drinking fountain. Some graffiti on play area, and spinner poles are damaged.
Shade/Wind Protection Very Poor	Very little shade or wind protection. There are only a few sizable trees around park perimeter, and no shade on play area or adjacent picnic area.
Signage Excellent	New park sign, highly visible and legible.
Site Amenities Good	Has drinking fountain and doggie bags. Lacks bike racks.

Park Inventory

Lum Memorial Park

Terraza Street, adjacent to Peverini Park

2. Neighborhood Park

2.6 Acres



Lum Memorial Park, dedicated to Assistant Fire Chief Donald Lum and all Soledad firefighters, is contiguous to Peverini Park. It has several active recreation areas, including a full basketball court and a multi-use lawn that is used for youth soccer, flag football, and cheer practice. It has a large group picnic area, and a playground. The use areas are connected by a paved pathway. Much of the park is dominated by the adjacent water tanks which are surrounded by a chain link fence topped with barbed wire. With no on-site parking, the heavy use of this neighborhood park can create parking issues.



The picnic area could better serve families and groups coming to Lum and Peverini Parks for sports, by adding a group BBQ, reconfiguring with new picnic tables, and adding a drinking fountain. Painting the adjacent water tanks and/or screening the fence would give the park a more inviting feel.

Park Inventory

Lum Memorial Park

Feature	
Basketball Court Good	Full basketball court. Some cracks but otherwise even surface. Lines are a little hard to see due to low contrast but generally good condition.
Multi-Use Turf Good	Large, flat grassy field is in good condition. It is used for youth soccer, flag football and cheer practice.
Path/Walkway Good	Paved pathways connecting use areas and concrete pads make the areas accessible.
Picnic Area Poor	Group picnic area has two long picnic tables on concrete paving, near the basketball court. The tables are in need of repair or replacement, but the benches are intact. There are 3 small BBQs and damaged trashcan mounts.
Playground Poor	Shredded rubber surfacing is bounded by a paved pathway. The paved access is a potential hazard due to its the location in relation to the play structure's stairs. The ground level concrete tube invites graffiti and vandalism. There are benches for parent seating and a drinking fountain, but no shade.
Signage Fair	Memorial sign dedicated to Asst. Chief Donald Lum and all Soledad firefighters is worn and beginning to deteriorate. There is no park identification signage at the street.
Wind Protection Very Poor	Trees are too sparse to act as an effective wind break or shade, and are only found on the boundaries with Peverini Park and the water tanks.

Park Inventory

Peverini Park



Between Terraza Street and Vida Street

2. Neighborhood Park

2.9 Acres

Peverini Park is contiguous to Lum Memorial Park. Its restroom building serves both parks. It is a well used and active park, with a multi-use turf area that accommodates youth soccer, flag football and youth baseball. The crushed rock perimeter path around the turf area is lined with multiple benches. Group picnic areas at either end of the park serve families in the neighborhood and those who come for the youth sports. Near the picnic area at the west end is a playground for young children. The park is heavily used for organized youth sports, and without on-site parking, parking in the neighborhood can be difficult.

There is space within the playground to add more play elements. Fitness equipment could be added along the wider parts of the perimeter pathway or near the playground. As there is no on-site parking, the heavy weekend use of the park can create parking issues in the neighborhood. If the City had more fields that could accommodate youth soccer games, this could be somewhat alleviated, and more space in the park could be dedicated to passive relaxation.

Park Inventory

Peaverini Park

Feature	
Benches Good	The metal benches lining the walking path and at the playground are in very good condition.
Landscaping/Trees Poor/Fair	Planting at the park perimeter is sparse and although there are trees throughout the park, most planting areas are bare ground covered with wood chips and there are multiple empty tree wells. Some trees provide partial shading for the picnic areas and playground.
Multi-Use Turf Good	This large turf space is well kept, and used for youth soccer, flag football (Pop Warner), and youth baseball/softball. Portable goals are used for soccer, and chain link backstops at either end serve youth baseball. There is no skinned infield.
Path/Walkway Fair	Crushed rock path is uneven in places, and may pose an accessibility issue.
Picnic Areas Fair	One picnic area is near the restrooms, one is near the playground. The picnic areas each contain 4 metal picnic tables on concrete pads, in good condition. There are small BBQs in both areas, and nearby drinking fountains. There is limited landscaping nearby, very little shade.
Playground Fair	Playground for ages 2-5. The large space bordered by a concrete curb is surfaced with shredded rubber, and could accommodate additional equipment pieces. One bench is nearby for parent seating.
Restrooms Good	Restrooms are clean and in good condition. Large enough to accommodate heavy use periods in both Lum and Peaverini parks. Mirrors lacking in men's restrooms.
Signage Excellent	The park's monument sign is in excellent shape and very legible.
Wind Protection Fair	A large fence at the top of slope to adjacent back yards may provide some protection from southeasterly winds. The trees in other areas of the park do not provide much wind protection.

Park Inventory

San Antonio Park



On San Antonio and La Colina Streets, between Toledo Street and Orchard Lane

2. Neighborhood Park

0.4 Acres

San Antonio Park is a small neighborhood serving park in northeastern Soledad, with access from both San Antonio and La Colina Streets. The park is primarily a passive park, with a multi-use lawn usable for informal play, relaxation, or pee-wee soccer practice. There is a paved perimeter walking path, with benches, trash cans and a drinking fountain. There are no picnic tables or play equipment.



The addition of picnic tables would support more small gatherings. Consider art, murals or other elements that increase connection to neighborhood. Additional planting at the park perimeter would provide interest.

Park Inventory

San Antonio Park

Feature	
Landscaping/Trees Fair	Young trees lining the perimeter of the park provide shade for the benches. There are two trees near the edge of the grassy area, but most of the open space is not shaded. There are wood chips but no ground level landscaping in the planting areas.
Lighting Fair	One street light at each end of the park.
Multi-Use Turf Good	Oval lawn is central feature of the park.
Path/Walkway Good	Paved pathway around the central lawn, connecting to the sidewalks.
Site Furnishings Good	Six benches line the perimeter pathway, along with a drinking fountain and trash receptacles.

Park Inventory

Santa Barbara Park



Santa Barbara Street, Between Vista Ave and Orchard Ln.

2. Neighborhood Park

1.0 Acres

This is a primarily passive use, neighborhood serving park. Its central feature is the multi-use turf that is used for informal play and for peewee soccer practice. Walking, relaxing, and dog walking are popular activities. The perimeter walking path is lined with benches. There are two group picnic areas with four and five picnic tables (with some ADA accessible tables), and drinking fountains. Trees along the edge of the wall provide some shade and enclosure.

Add BBQ's and trash receptables at the picnic areas. The large, empty crushed rock area in a corner of the park could accommodate an additional picnic area, a small play area, or fitness equipment. Many of the trees in the perimeter planting areas have been removed and should be replaced. New planting in the bare landscape areas would provide interest.

Park Inventory

Santa Barbara Park

Feature	
Benches Good	14 benches in the park, along the walking path.
Landscaping/Trees Poor	Around much of the perimeter planting areas, trees have been removed and have not been replaced, leaving empty tree planting wells. Aside from the sparse remaining trees, there is bare ground or weed cloth.
Multi-use Turf Good	The central lawn is the primary park feature, and is well kept. Trees planted at the lawn edges provide some shade. There is significant overspray from lawn irrigation.
Path/Walkway Poor	The perimeter path is partially paved and partially crushed rock. Additional rock and leveling are needed in some areas. There is a larger crushed rock area in the back corner that is part of the path; seems to be underutilized space.
Picnic Area Fair	Two picnic areas, one with four tables, one with five. Tables are on concrete pads and each has ADA accessible tables. Areas are in good condition but oddly placed in relation to the rest of the park. There are drinking fountains but no BBQs. Trash cans are located away from picnic areas.
Shade/Wind Protection Poor	There is very little to shade the park. A few trees remain around the lawn perimeter, and near the path.
Signage Good	Well kept and legible park signage.
Site Amenities Good	There are trash receptacles and a dog bag dispenser near the park entry.

Park Inventory

Village Estates Subdivision Park

Tomasini St and Camino Arroyo

2. Neighborhood Park

.5 Acres

This new park contains several picnic areas, a playground, an open lawn area, lighting, and perimeter landscaping.



Continue to maintain the park.

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Park Inventory

Blas Santana Memorial Park

Gabilan Drive at Prado Drive

3. Community Park

4.2 Acres



Blas Santana is a community park adjacent to the High School. Its detention basin is heavily used as a soccer and football field when dry, especially when the Vosti Park fields are resting. Maintaining the basin field is hampered by the difficulty of fencing it off for rest. There are concrete bleachers set into the basin slope, and field lighting is being installed. The park offers several additional active areas, including a full basketball court, a sand volleyball court, and a playground. There is a small restroom building. As most of the park lacks shade, users sit on the grass under the trees. The basin provides some wind protection, and has been used as an amphitheater at times. There is what appears to be a concrete foundation at the southeast corner of the park, use unknown.

Temporary perimeter fencing could allow the soccer field to be rested and better maintained. Additional tree planting around the top of the basin would improve wind protection. Maintenance of the volleyball court would make it usable. Shaded picnic spots, seating, or planting could be added along the Mirada Street frontage, to provide teens from the High School with places to relax and socialize. A group picnic area or fitness equipment could be added near the basketball court or at the southeastern corner of the park where the concrete foundation is now.

Park Inventory

Blas Santana Memorial Park

Feature	
Basketball Court Good	The surface is even. Striping is low contrast to the concrete but not faded. The court is not fenced.
Bleachers Good	Concrete bleachers built into side of bowl next to the soccer field. Some shade, but sparse. Wind protection from hill.
Landscaping/Trees Poor	Lawns are maintained, but there are large bare areas surrounding the use areas along the Mirada Street side of the park. There are some mature trees at the top of the basin and west end of the basketball court.
Lighting	Field lighting.
Other Concrete Structure Poor	Concrete structure partially built into the ground above the soccer field. Not sure of original use.
Playground Fair	Playground is enclosed by fencing and has parent seating. There are two areas with shredded rubber surfacing, one with swings and one with a 5-12 play structure. The play areas are bordered by a concrete path, with lawn. The entire area lacks shade, and equipment and fencing has been damaged.
Restrooms Fair	Restroom, in good condition, has only one stall each for men and women. Undersized for level of park use.
Soccer Field Good	Although slightly undersized, the field is used for adult as well as youth games. Lighting is being installed. The heavily used field is worn, and difficult to fence for field rest. The field is in a bowl, providing some wind protection.
Volleyball Court Poor	The sand volleyball court has no nets, no shade, no wind protection.

Park Inventory

Chester Aaroe Park (Little League)

North Street and Andalucia Drive

3. Community Park

2.8 Acres



The primary feature of this park is its Little League game field, with player benches, skinned infield, lighting, scoreboard, bleachers, a Little League concession bldg, Little League storage. The park also has restrooms and a City concession building. The restroom serves both Chester Aaroe Park and Jesse Gallardo Park across the street, as does the playground. There is a group picnic area with a shade shelter. Along the Ticino Street frontage are two full basketball courts, a small skate park, batting cages that are now unused, and a large wedge of unused space at the park's northern corner.



At the northern portion of the park which contains the batting cages, skate park, and undeveloped land, there is an opportunity to remove unused features and incorporate new uses such as an off leash dog area, a multi-use court for futsal, pickleball, or other activities, or a teen hangout area that is sheltered from the wind. Adding wind protection at the picnic shelter and shade at the playground would allow for increased use.

Park Inventory

Chester Aaroe Park (Little League Park)

Feature	
Baseball Field Good	Well maintained, fully fenced Little League field with chain link backstop, skinned infield and 250' foul line. It has sheltered players benches, and metal bleachers. Field lighting is coin operated.
Basketball Court Fair	Two full sized basketball courts with perimeter fencing. Courts are unlit. Surfacing is in good shape, with some cracking, but fencing and nets are damaged.
Batting Cages Poor	Batting cages are currently unused.
Concession Stands Good	Little League operates the newer concession stand near the restrooms. The older City concession stand is not currently used for concessions, but is used for storage.
Parking Good	There is a 10-car parking lot on site, in addition to street parking on three sides of the park.
Path/Walkway Good	A concrete walking path connects most use areas.
Picnic Areas Fair	Several picnic tables are on a concrete pad, under a shade structure. Users improvise wind protection attaching tarps to the shelter posts. An additional nearby picnic table on a separate concrete pad has a BBQ.
Playground Good	Play structures for ages 2-5 and 5-12 on wood chip surfacing, generally in good shape. Structures include artificial rocks for climbing. There are three benches for parent seating, no shade.
Restrooms Good	The restrooms serve both Chester Aaroe and Jesse Gallardo parks. They are well kept and have multiple stalls.
Shade/Wind Protection Fair/Poor	A tall wooden wall provides some wind protection to the infield and bleachers. Mature trees provide some shade along North Street, and the picnic area has a shade structure which does not address the wind issues. Wind protection is still poor throughout most of the park.
Skatepark Poor	Underused skate park has portable ramps and elements that are worn and damaged. It will likely be unused once Orchard Lane Park skate area is opened.
Storage Container Fair	A storage container holds the Little League's equipment and supplies.
Undeveloped Land Poor	An undeveloped area at the northwest corner of the park is an opportunity site.

Park Inventory

Jesse Gallardo Park



Metz Road and Andalucia Drive

3. Community Park

4 Acres

This is primarily an active park. It has been recently renovated with a Little League baseball field and 2 softball fields. The fields are fenced and lighted, with skinned infields, scoreboards, player benches, bullpens and bleachers. Equipment storage containers are on the wide walkway between the softball fields. There are 2 fenced tennis courts, which are sometimes used for futsal. Lawn areas provide space for gathering and informal play, and there is a picnic table in the shaded area near the tennis court. At the northwestern corner of the park, there is a mural depicting Soledad's historic women. Gallardo forms a complex with Chester Aaroe Park, which is across the street - Gallardo Park users must cross Andalucia Drive to access restrooms, playground or concessions.

- Install wi-fi operated gates to prevent unauthorized use of the fields, when wi-fi connections are provided.
- Additional measures should be added to improve crossing safety between Gallardo and Aaroe parks.
- The open lawn between the fields and the tennis courts could accommodate more picnic areas with shade and wind protection.
- The interpretive signage for the mural needs renovation as it is worn and illegible.

Park Inventory

Jesse Gallardo Park

Feature	
Landscape Areas / Trees Fair	There are some well maintained lawn areas, and a tree shading the picnic table, but the perimeter landscape areas are sparsely planted.
Mural Excellent	Very beautiful mural of influential women, but the interpretive signage is worn and illegible.
Path/Walkway Good	Crushed rock pathways throughout the park are in fine condition, as are the paved concrete access paths. The asphalt path along the northern boundary has some cracking and tripping hazards.
Pedestrian Access Poor	Connectivity to shared facilities in Aaroe Park (restrooms, playground, concessions) is across a busy street. Although it is marked by a crosswalk, additional safety measures should be installed.
Picnic Area Poor	Only one picnic table in the grass area between fields and tennis courts. Only a couple of trees- very little shade or wind protection.
Softball / Baseball Fields Excellent	The 1 youth baseball and 2 softball fields are fenced, lighted, and well maintained. They have skinned infields, scoreboards, player benches, bullpens and bleachers. Equipment storage containers are in the broad walkway between fields.
Tennis Courts Fair	Tennis courts with backboard for hitting / wind protection. Court surfacing shows significant wear, and is sometimes used for futsal.

Park Inventory

Orchard Lane Park



Orchard Lane Street near Metz Road

3. Community Park

3.5 Acres

Recently constructed, Orchard Lane Park includes multiple active and passive features as desired by the community and developed with community input. Features include an inclusive playground with universal access, off-leash dog area, a skate park, accessible pathways, a sprayground play area, multiple picnic areas, fitness stations, restroom, a nature walk and butterfly garden, and a large central multi-use lawn with an amphitheater stage, for gathering and events. There is on-site parking as well as pedestrian connections to the adjacent neighborhoods and Hartnell College Education Center.

Continue to maintain the park.

Park Inventory

Orchard Lane Park

Feature	
Dog Park Excellent	Off-leash dog park with separated areas for small and large dogs.
Fitness Equipment Excellent	Multiple fitness stations.
Landscape Areas / Trees Excellent	A nature walk, butterfly garden, and bioswales.
Multi-use Turf Excellent	Central feature, with an amphitheater stage for gathering and events.
Parking Excellent	Onsite parking.
Paths and Walkways Excellent	Nice walking pathways throughout park, and connecting to the adjacent neighborhoods and Hartnell College.
Picnic Areas Excellent	Multiple picnic and gathering spaces.
Playground Excellent	All abilities playground with innovative elements.
Restroom Excellent	
Skatepark Excellent	Skatepark with bowls, rails, and other features.
Spray Park Excellent	Water play feature.

Park Inventory

Veterans Memorial Park

Gabilan Drive, at San Vicente Road

3. Community Park

4 Acres



Veterans Memorial Park is enhanced by views of the surrounding mountains and agricultural fields. The park contains several use areas. An upper soccer field, surrounded by benches, serves younger kids. The upper area of the park has a restroom and drinking fountains, and a large group picnic area with barbecues. Below the picnic area is a playground. The lower level is a dual use detention basin which is used most of the year for youth soccer practice and games. Benches along the sidewalk overlook the lower field. There is a rough perimeter walking path around the park.



Additional trees around the park's perimeter could improve wind protection especially along the San Vicente Road edge. Shade and wind protection would make the picnic area more comfortable. Picnic tables could be re-configured to provide more flexible groupings. The playground should be improved with adequate access, shade, and parent seating. There is room to add fitness equipment along the path. The City is in the process of seeking funding for a Veterans Memorial, fitness equipment, and improvements to walking path – community meetings are scheduled. Joint use potential with adjacent Frank Ledesma Elementary School.

Park Inventory

Veterans Memorial Park

Feature	
Benches Mixed	Benches are in good condition. Multiple benches serve spectators on the upper field. Lower level field benches are far from field on the street side of the walking path at the top of the basin. There are two concrete pads with benches in the basin, and an additional pad that lacks a bench.
Landscape Areas / Trees Fair	Perimeter planting provides some enclosure and wind protection for the upper field. There are a few mature trees around the upper levels of the detention basin. There are several bare planting areas around the perimeter of the park and along the sidewalks.
Multi-Use Turf Good	The upper field has concrete mow band perimeter and round concrete pads that serve as a retaining wall and separate the field from the picnic area. The lower field is also a detention basin, so usability is limited during the wet season. Both serve as soccer practice fields, and youth soccer game fields.
Path/Walkway Fair	The perimeter walking path is crushed rock at the park's interior, and concrete walkways and sidewalks along the street edges. The unpaved portions are uneven and surface tree roots create tripping hazards. The walking path down to the field is in worse condition, narrower and with drops and potholes.
Picnic Areas Fair	The large group picnic area has nine metal picnic tables on concrete pads set in crushed rock, in good condition. There are several small BBQ's. There is no shade or wind protection.
Playground Fair	Colorful play equipment is in good shape, but tree roots create tripping hazards in the shredded rubber surfacing. A barrier is lacking between the play area and busy San Vicente Road. Access is inadequate for mobility challenged or strollers, and there is no parent seating or shade.
Restrooms Fair	Clean and functional. Mirrors and hand dryers could be added.

Park Inventory

Vosti Park



Park and Monterey Streets

3. Community Park

6.4 Acres

Vosti Park is the city's largest park, marked by the city's iconic water tower. Previously, it has been used as the location for major community events, such as Fiesta Days. Soccer is the primary use of this park, with 2 lighted turf fields that can accommodate adult games. Street parking is generally sufficient to accommodate the busy game periods. There are two playgrounds for ages 2-5 and 5-12. There is a group picnic area near the larger playground, and one table near the smaller playground. The perimeter walking path around the park is popular. The volleyball court is no longer used. The restrooms are well maintained, although during heavy use periods, there is demand for additional facilities. The park is fully fenced. Graffiti and vandalism have been continuing issues with the restrooms, fences, walls and ball netting.

Increasing gathering spaces while maintaining clear views into the park would allow for wider use. Shade around picnic areas and playgrounds would increase comfort. The perimeter walking path is popular, and fitness equipment could be added.

Park Inventory

Vosti Park

Feature	
Benches Good	Occasional benches throughout the park, in good shape.
Bleachers Good	Four sets of bleachers around the fields, generally in good condition.
Fencing Fair	Low fencing along the streets has been damaged and has holes. Field fencing is in better shape.
Field Lighting Good	Coin operated.
Landscape Areas / Trees Good/Fair	A tree grove shades a small portion of the park. Severely leaning trees have been removed. Street trees provide shade at the park edges, and there is some shade on the perimeter walking path.
Parking Good	Diagonal street parking is generally adequate for park usage.
Path/Walkway Good	Popular walking path around park perimeter. The path is concrete on the street sides, and dirt along the interior edges. The path is mostly shaded, and in good shape. Concrete paths provide access to picnic tables.
Picnic Areas Fair	The group picnic area near the larger playground has three picnic tables on concrete pads. They are worn and somewhat damaged but functional. A picnic table in the grove of trees on the north edge of the park was removed due to loitering issues. There are no BBQs.
Playground Fair	The playground for ages 2-5, on the north side of the park, has wood chip surfacing. There are two benches for parent seating. Trees provide some occasional shade.
Playground Good	The larger play area for ages 5-12 is on the eastern side of the park, with shredded rubber surfacing and five benches for parent seating. Benches and equipment are in fairly good shape, with minor damage. Lacks shade.
Restrooms Good	Well maintained. On heavy use days, more restrooms would be useful. Graffiti has to be cleaned regularly during summer.
Soccer Fields Good	Two adult size lighted turf fields. The fields, heavily every used Saturday and Sunday from April to November, are well maintained and rested during the winter.
Utility Lights Building Good	Coin operated field lights control building is functional and in ok condition.
Volleyball Court Poor	The once popular sand volleyball court is no longer used. There are benches at the court, but weeds are growing in the court surface and there is no net.
Water Tower Good	Soledad Landmark.
Wind Protection Fair	Coaches attach windscreens to fencing during soccer season. There is little wind protection for other use areas.

Park Inventory

Cesar Chavez Park



Front Street between Main and Soledad Streets

4. Special Use

0.4 Acres

Cesar Chavez Park is leased from Southern Pacific Railroad. Formerly named Front Street Park, in 2007, the City Council renamed the park in honor of the farmworker organizer, Cesar Chavez. The park, centrally located in downtown Soledad, is visible from Hwy. 101. It is a popular lunch spot in the downtown area. It serves as a community gathering space and location for community events such as the Easter Egg Hunt. It is also a buffer between the downtown and the adjacent railroad tracks. The park is located between the Soledad Gateway Center building and Soledad Street. Historic and interpretive plaques, picnic tables, and a restroom are features of the park. Street trees provide shade.

The City is exploring the possibility of developing a container park on a part of the property adjacent to the existing park. Small scale features such as checkerboard tables or fitness stations could be added to further enliven the park and the underused lawn area.

Park Inventory

Cesar Chavez Park

Feature	
Landscaping/Trees Good	Street trees have decorative lighting, and provide shade along eastern edge of park. The lawn is not shaded. New planting has been added along the street frontage. New planting along the boundary fencing will help buffer the park from the adjacent the railroad tracks.
Lighting Good	Decorative street lighting.
Parking Excellent	Diagonal street parking along Front Street frontage is augmented by an adjacent public parking lot serving the Gateway Center and downtown.
Picnic Areas Excellent	Concrete pads have recently been added for six picnic tables. Picnic tables have been a popular feature, heavily used during lunchtimes.
Planter Boxes Poor	Several wooden planter boxes along fence are unused and are not maintained.
Restroom Good	.A new restroom has been installed.
Signage Good	Historic plaques and monument park identification sign are in good condition.
Site Amenities Fair	There are ample trash cans along the street frontage.
Site Amenities Fair	There are dog bags, benches and a couple of bike racks along the street. There is a large storage container in the park that contains City files.

Park Inventory

San Vicente Road PG&E Easement

San Vicente Rd between Market Street and north City limits

4. Special Use

*3 Acres



Easement along the east side of San Vicente Road with a popular meandering concrete walking path and lawn.

Continue to maintain path and lawn/landscape areas. Would benefit from additional landscaping and shade where possible. Add occasional benches.

Park Inventory

San Vicente Road PG&E Easement

Feature	
Landscape Areas / Trees Fair	Lawn areas along portions of the path. Would benefit from additional landscaping and shade.
Paths and Walkways Good	Meandering concrete walkway along the western edge of the City. Approximately 0.85 mile in length. Lacks shade.

Park Inventory

Landfill Site



San Vicente Road

5. Potential Site

*12 Acres

This large former landfill site is in the Gabilan foothills, north of the City proper. Current users include two long distance shooting ranges. The site has expansive views in all directions, of the Salinas Valley, the Coastal Range and the Gabilan Range. It has space for walking and/or biking trails, and potential additional recreational uses on its southern end. The shooting ranges have a 20 year lease, and their use of the property poses potential safety conflicts.

Explore potential uses in the southern portion of the site. To help fill the need for tree replacements and windbreak creation, the site could be a location for a city tree nursery. Explore potential for additional sports fields and bike routes to the site.

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Park Inventory

Los Coches Adobe

Arroyo Seco Road at Hwy 101

5. Potential Site

9 Acres



This focal point of this site is the Los Coches Adobe, a California Historical Landmark (aka Richardson Adobe), built in 1843, with subsequent additions through the 1860's. The adobe is being protected for future restoration, and is not accessible to the public at this time. The lower part of the site includes some mature trees, beautiful views and a sense of access to nature.



Pursue funding for master planning and renovation of the historic buildings and immediate grounds. Include historic interpretive signage. Enhance protection of the adobe to maximize its preservation and support restoration particularly in the immediate area surrounding the Adobe. There is also an opportunity to create walking paths, picnic areas and wedding and formal rental spots if made into a park. Should be designed as a destination park with special spaces and activities that enable a longer stay due to access to the park.

Park Inventory

Los Coches Adobe

Feature	
Building Poor	Historic adobe
Building Poor	Multiple outbuildings that are in disrepair and likely need to be torn down.

Park Inventory

Rotary Park

**Walker Drive behind Soledad-Mission
Recreation Center**

5. Potential Site

4 Acres



Explore opportunities for partnerships or integration with the Soledad-Mission Recreation District to coordinate or consolidate recreation operations.

Park Inventory

Rotary Park

Feature	
Lighting Fair	Lighting is supplied on a reservation basis.
Multi-Use Turf Good	Multi-use lawn is the central feature of the park.
Path/Walkway Fair	Crushed rock pathway around the lawn.
Picnic Areas Fair	Multiple picnic tables.

Park Inventory

Salinas River Park

Nestles Road to Wastewater Treatment Plant

5. Potential Site

TB Acres

A preliminary concept for a recreational path with interpretive elements along the river has been proposed by the Western Rivers Conservancy. The path would be accessed from Nestles Road and would run to the treatment plant. The Conservancy proposes to partner with the city for development of this park, including negotiations with the private property owners and the County Agricultural Commissioner.

Continue to explore a partnership with the Western Rivers Conservancy to develop a recreational and interpretive path along the Salinas River.

Park Inventory

Water Treatment Facility Wetlands

34520 Morisoli Road

5. Potential Site

*12 Acres



Former rapid infiltration basins at the City's wastewater treatment site, adjacent to the Salinas River. The site has been the subject of a 2022 study proposing two alternatives on approximately 12 acres of the site.

Continue to evaluate and consider the proposed alternatives for conversion of this site to wetlands with recreational amenities.

Park Inventory

Gabilan Pond Park



Gabilan Drive at Toledo Street

5. Potential Site

3.7 Acres

Former detention basin is to be developed with features to serve the community. It connects to neighborhood park directly south on Serra Lane. As a basin, the topography provides some potential for decent wind protection.

Engage the community to determine preferred uses for the future park. Enhance wind protection.

Park Inventory

Gabilan Pond Park

Feature	
Undeveloped	Potential for: dog park, bike pump track, walking spiral path
Good	

Park Inventory

Lions Club Building

161 Park Street

Building

Acres

City-owned building currently leased to the Lions Club. Building has a social hall, kitchen, and large group BBQ's.



Explore possibilities of either terminating the lease or entering into an agreement with the Lions Club for joint use of the building.

Park Inventory

Lions Club Building

Feature	
Kitchen Fair	Not evaluated.
Large BBQ's Good	Large outdoor group BBQ's, no associated outdoor eating space. Used for event/benefit food prep.
Multi-purpose room Good	Large room suitable for social gatherings, events, classes or meetings.

Park Inventory

Soledad Community Center

560 Walker Drive

Building

Acres



Built 1993 as a YMCA, the Community Center was renovated and opened as City facility in 2021. The Center has multiple rentable spaces ranging from a small meeting room to a large gym. The gym contains full court basketball, volleyball, a concession window, and new bleachers. It has a shallow stage, which is not ideal for theatrical performances due to undersized backstage facilities, and poorly positioned lighting tracks. The gym space is frequently rented out for large gatherings and events, such as quincineras, weddings, and baptisms. The facility also contains large and small multipurpose rooms, a small meeting room or possible computer lab, and a weight room with exercise equipment. The kitchen will be remodeled to expand usable space, and allow for programs for smaller kids. The outdoor areas are mostly paved, with a large group barbeque on the west side. Wind and access issues have limited outdoor use, due to fire access requirements and lack of access control for rental events.



Increase opportunities for use of outdoor spaces by addressing wind protection and access issues. Pursue funding for kitchen improvements and computer room.

Park Inventory

Soledad Community Center

Feature	
Basketball Court Good	Indoor basketball gym with bleachers, and a stage.
Computer Room Good	Newly developed computer room with multiple stations for use by community members.
Kitchen Fair	Large commercial kitchen that is planned for a remodel.
Multipurpose Room Good	Two classroom/multipurpose spaces function for a variety of programs and rentals.
Offices Good	
Outdoor Patio Poor	Large outdoor area with a grill that is not well used.
Restroom Good	One set includes shower facilities.
Weight Room Fair	Weight room with a variety of weight machines and some treadmills and similar exercise machines. The room is small for the equipment, and the space gets crowded.
Wood Floor Fitness Room Good	Fitness room used mostly for rentals and some classes.