



WHERE WE ARE

02



// Great parks make great cities, and great cities have great parks! //

DEMOGRAPHICS

At a population of 41,980 in 2017, Queen Creek is a young community. More than half the Town’s population is under the age of 35, with 30% of the population under the age of 15. The large population of children exemplifies the need for parks and recreation opportunities in Queen Creek, as children benefit from exploring and playing in parks². Having places for families to gather and meet neighbors also provides the sense of hometown that Queen Creek has strived to maintain as it grows.

While the Town currently has a low portion of the 55 years of age and older population, that percentage will grow as residents age. The Queen Creek Citizen Survey, conducted by WestGroup Research in 2017, found that 87% of residents planned to stay in Queen Creek for at least the next five years. Additionally, the Town is diversifying housing options to meet the changing demographics and preference in housing. Recreation needs differ for various age groups, with programmed park space being a priority for youth, and passive park space and lifetime learning a larger focus for residents 55 years and older.

Queen Creek has a high median income at \$90,687, and a high level of education attainment with 39.8% of residents achieving a Bachelor’s degree or higher. College-educated residents with a high income have greater choice on where to

Figure 2.1: Queen Creek Demographics



live, which is why it is important for the Town to continue to offer facilities and programs that contribute to a high quality of life. Additionally, a survey revealed that 53% of respondents would choose a home within an easy walk to parks, playgrounds and recreation areas than one where driving to these amenities is required.³

1 Ed. McMahon, Senior Resident Fellow at the Washington-based Urban Land Institute
 2 Center for Disease Control 2016
 3 National Association of Realtors (NAR) 2013 National Community Preference Survey

Figure 2.2: The Role of Communities in Promoting Physical Activity



Figure 2.3: The Role of Parks and Recreation in Promoting Physical Activity

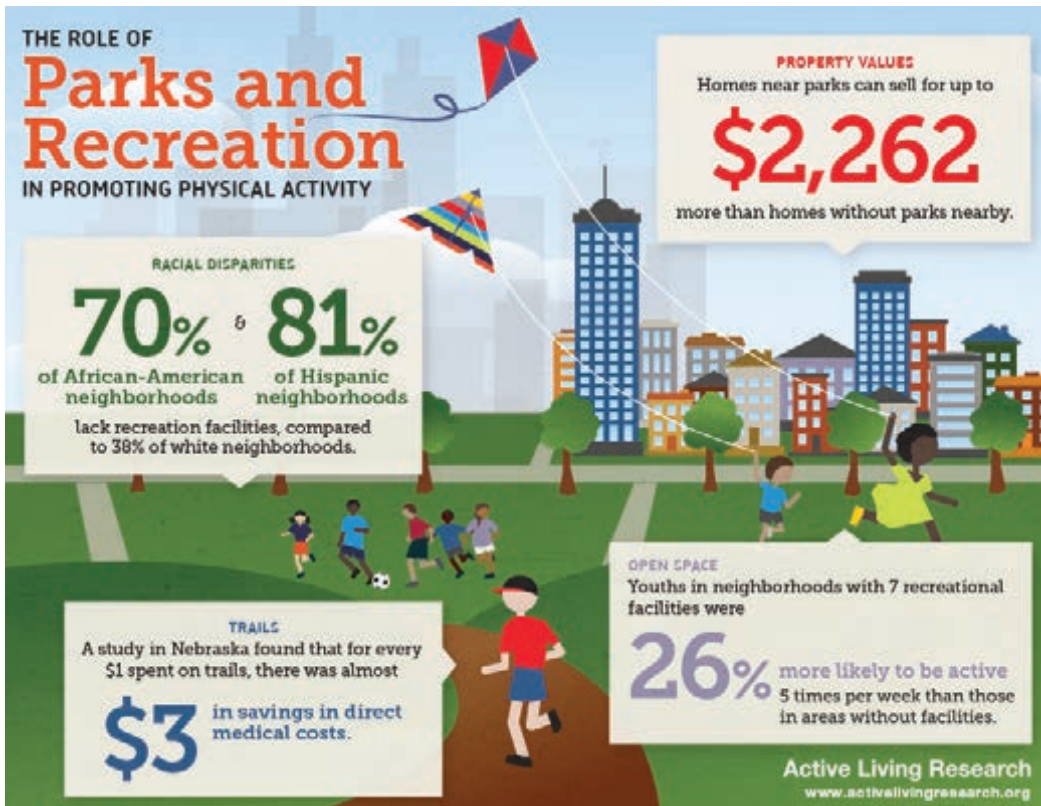


Figure 2.4: Children and Nature: Being Active in Nature Makes Kids Healthier



Source: www.neefusa.org/health

QUALITY OF LIFE

Providing a high quality of life is a key element of a successful, fiscally sustainable community, which is why it is one of the five strategic priorities identified in the Town of Queen Creek's Corporate Strategic Plan. Research consistently indicates that parks, open space and recreation opportunities increase quality of life, providing important physical and emotional health benefits, environmental benefits and economic benefits¹.

The 2017 Queen Creek Citizen Survey indicated an overall satisfaction with quality of life, particularly related to recreation and open space. Closely related to satisfaction with parks and recreation opportunities, residents consider Queen Creek a great place to raise children. Not only do parks provide free activities for families, they also foster social connections and creativity through play².

According to a recent study³ conducted by California State Parks, parks and recreation are among the most cost-effective public services. The benefits of parks and recreation programs extend far beyond the intended target. Indirect benefits of a recreation program addressing youth obesity can include increased self-esteem, reduction in substance abuse, increased family connectivity and promotion of volunteerism.

Beyond the health and social benefits, parks enhance quality of life through improving air quality, drinking water and the general aesthetics of how the community looks⁴. Communities with strong, vibrant public park systems benefit from improved health, a closer connection to nature and a greater sense of community⁵.



Bike Riding along Queen Creek Wash

Figure 2.5: **Benefits of Parks**



1 Urban Land Institute

2. National Park Service, 2017, www.nps.gov/planyourvisit/healthy-events.htm

3. American Planning Association, 2018, www.parks.ca.gov/pages/795/files/health_benefits_081505.pdf

4. American Planning Association, 2018, www.planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/legacy_resources/cityparks/briefingpapers/pdf/economicdevelopment.pdf

5. National Park and Recreation Association www.nrpa.org/contentassets/f568e0ca499743a08148e3593c860fc5/economic-impact-study-summary.pdf

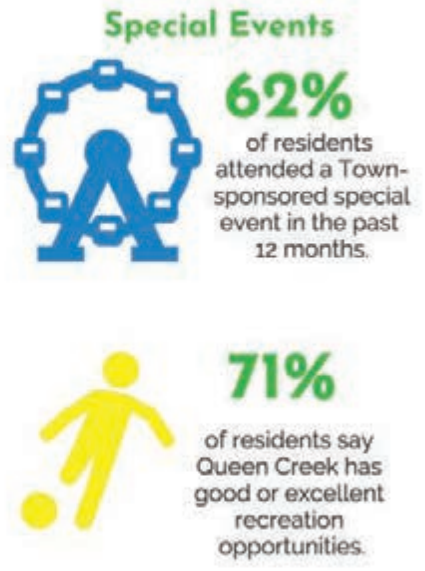
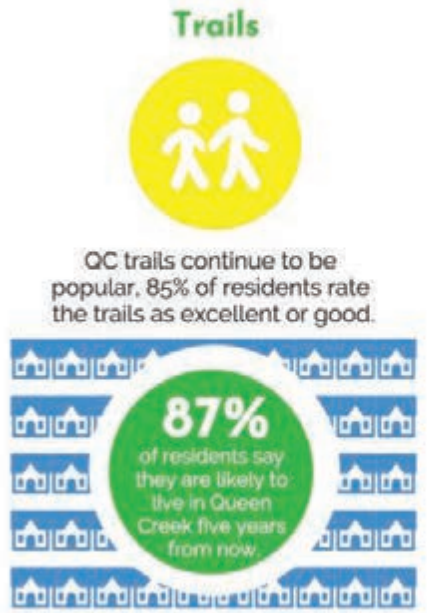
Figure 2.6: Citizen Survey Results

Citizen Survey

Residents love to live and play in the QC!



Parks, Trails and Events



2017 Citizen Survey conducted by WestGroup Research

INVENTORY

The Town of Queen Creek has four developed parks, and one currently under construction, encompassing 127 acres, as well as additional open spaces and trails along the Sonoqui and Queen Creek washes.

Founders' Park is located across from the municipal campus in Town Center. The 11-acre park includes a ballfield, multi-purpose field, splash pad, skate park, basketball courts, ramadas, shaded play area and open space. The Boys & Girls Clubs of the East Valley Queen Creek operates out of two buildings located on the western edge of the park.



Founders' Park



Desert Mountain Park Ramadas



Horseback Riding Along Sonoqui Wash Trail



Founders' Park



Splash Pad at Founders' Park



Skate Park at Founders' Park



Pocket Park for Pups

Desert Mountain Park is a 29-acre park that is often bustling with activities. The park includes four ballfields, two multi-purpose fields, volleyball and basketball courts, a small amphitheater, a multi-use trailhead accessing the Queen Creek Wash, equestrian trailer parking, a discovery dig, play area, ramadas and open spaces.

Horseshoe Park & Equestrian Centre is a unique 38-acre facility with a community arena for the public and an event center. The commercial event center hosts a variety of activities (equestrian and non-equestrian) and includes a covered arena, three uncovered arenas, more than 300 barn stalls, and 56 RV stalls equipped with water and electricity for event competitors.



Horseshoe Park & Equestrian Centre Arena One

Pocket Park For Pups is a temporary park located on the south side of Historic Town Hall in Town Center. The one-acre, fenced park includes two off-leash areas for dogs and sitting benches for pup owners.

Mansel Carter Oasis Park is currently under construction, planned to open in fall 2018. The first phase of the park, 48-acres, includes four ballfields, two multi-purpose fields, a splash pad, wheel-friendly skate park, basketball and volleyball courts, ramadas, play area, a fitness course, a multi-use trailhead accessing the Queen Creek Wash, fishing lake and open space.

There are 13 additional acres at Mansel Carter Oasis Park that will be developed in phase two.



Ballfields and lake under construction at Mansel Cater Oasis Park

TRAIL INVENTORY

The Town provides a robust multi-use trail system primarily located along the Queen Creek and Sonoqui washes. The trail system currently includes nine miles of paved multi-use paths and 10 miles of equestrian trails along the wash bottom. Wide, shared-use paths are also located along portions of Ellsworth, Hawes and Ocotillo roads. Identifying the importance of the trail system, the Town requires multi-use trails to be built along major roadways as part of development agreements. In addition, many subdivisions throughout the Town include trails within their neighborhoods.

In an effort to facilitate non-motorized transportation throughout the community, connecting a number of neighborhoods, the Town has identified an 11-mile loop trail that follows the Queen Creek and Sonoqui washes. The 11-mile loop trail serves as an important piece to the multi-modal transportation network, increases regional connectivity and impacts economic development by enhancing walkability—a key element in the Town Center Plan—and furthering a high quality of life by providing additional recreation opportunities. Until the loop is completed, on-street connections are available between the Sonoqui and Queen Creek washes at Ellsworth, Hawes, and Sossaman roads.

Queen Creek also builds multi-use paths along major arterial streets. The adoption of the Queen Creek Multimodal Master Transportation Plan (**Appendix B**) in 2016 identifies several street improvements that are included in the Town trail system. As these roads are improved, paved paths will be constructed in addition to the sidewalk component of these roadways.

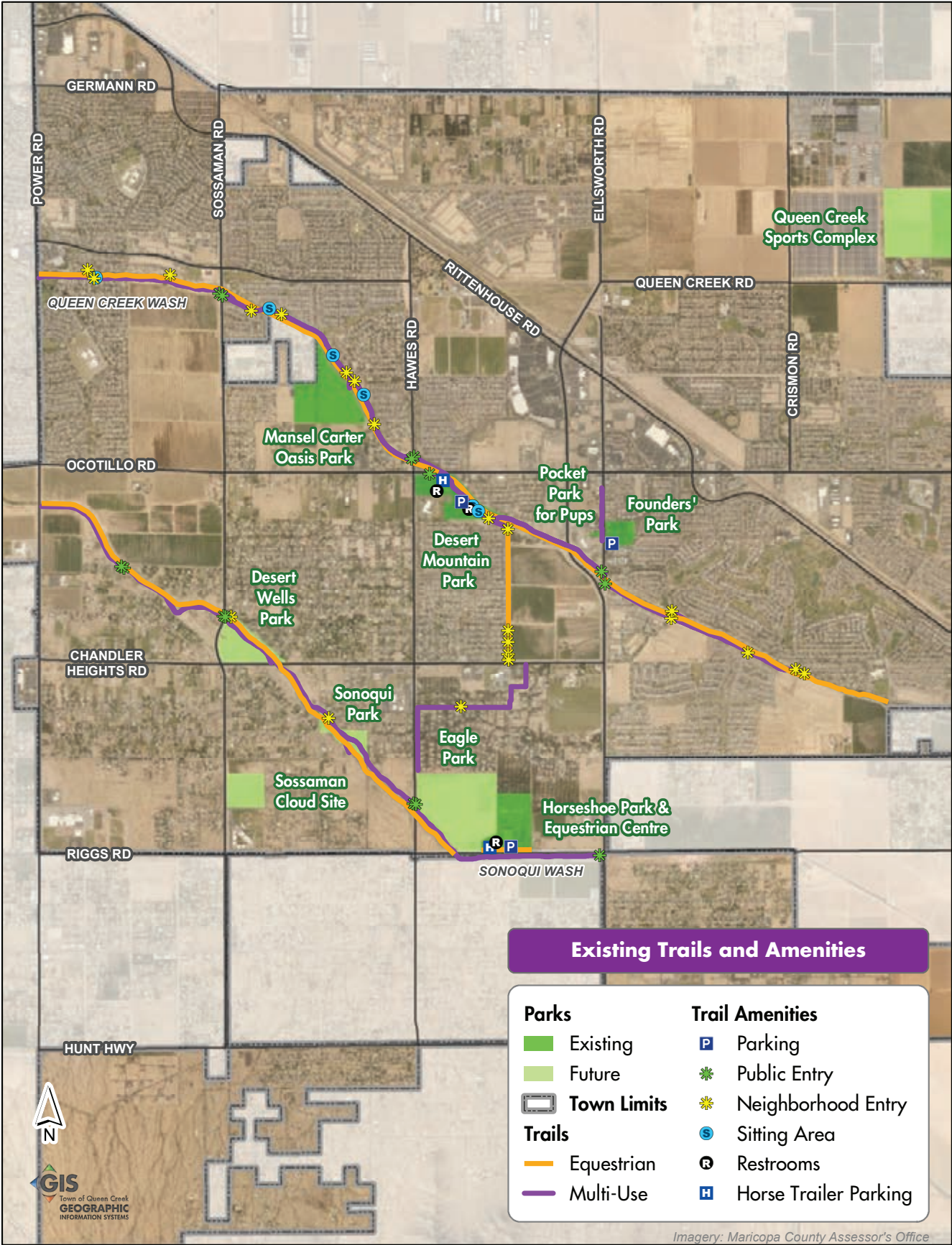


QC Wash Trail



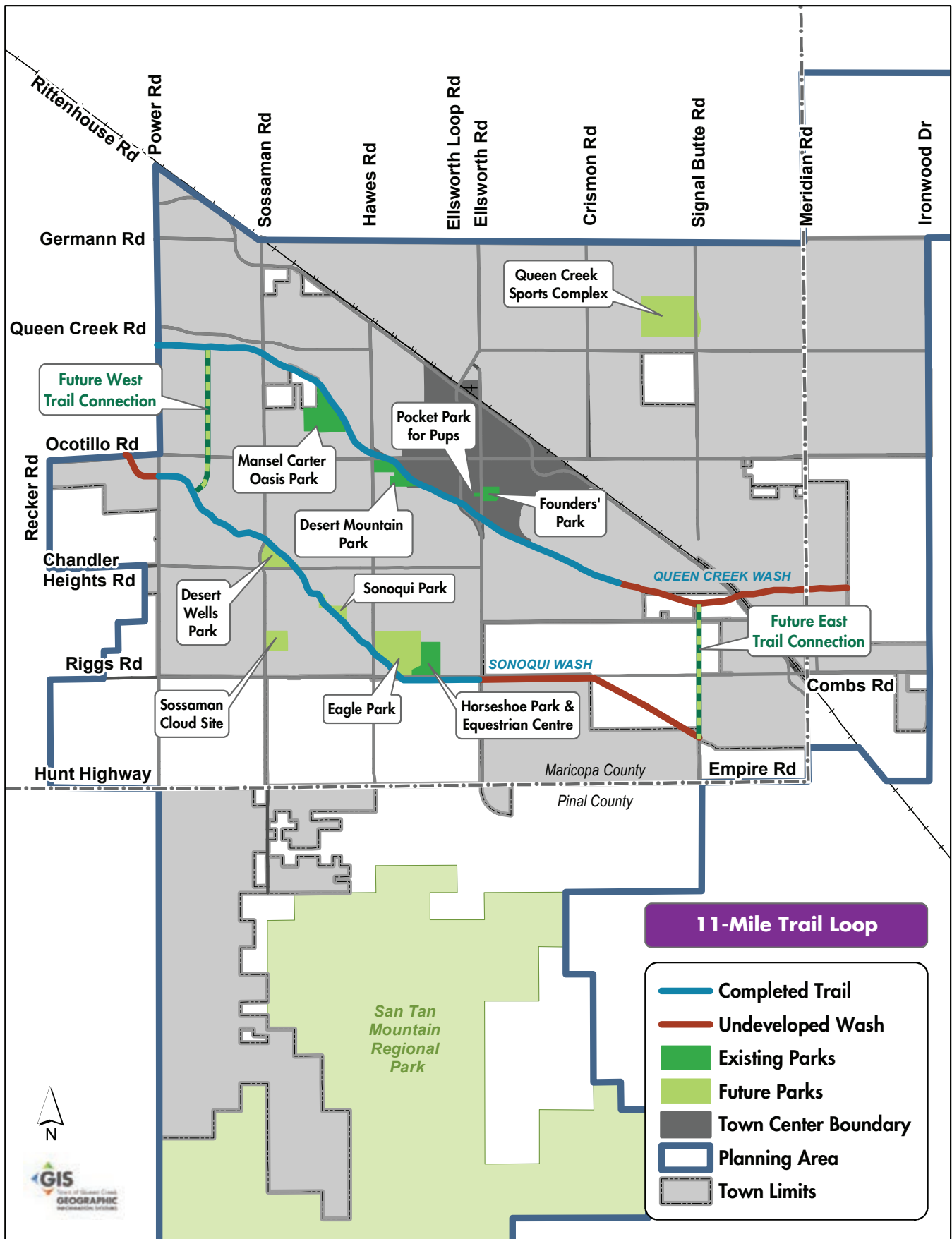
Sonoqui Wash Trail

Figure 2.7: Existing Trails and Amenities Map



2 WHERE WE ARE

Figure 2.8: 11-Mile Loop Trail Map



TRAIL TYPES

All trails require a maintained 12' vertical clearance.

T1: Detached Sidewalk - Detached sidewalks are a minimum of 6' wide and run along all arterial streets providing safe non-motorized transportation opportunities. A minimum of 7' buffer between curb and sidewalk is required. Buffer space between the roadway and sidewalk provides a higher quality user experience and is more visually appealing.

T2: Multi-Use Path - This trail type is a minimum of 10' wide and follows major arterial street corridors, connecting neighborhoods to local and regional destinations. The wider trail allows for a greater number and variety of users. The compacted, non-paved surface provides softer impact on joints.

T3: Combined Detached Sidewalk & Multi-Use Path - This combined trail provides the best overall non-motorized transportation. Intended mainly for use along major arterial roadways, the combination is the most effective way to provide multiple travel types and activity (walk, run, skate, rollerblade, bike and horse). Providing an easy and safe connection to destinations encourages families to be active together, and reduces the number of trips in a motorized vehicle. A minimum of 7' buffer between curb and sidewalk is required. The multi-use path, at a minimum of 10' wide, can be set anywhere between the sidewalk and the setback limit.



QC Wash Multi-Use Path



Bike Riding Along QC Wash Trail

T4: Paved Wash Trail -

Paved trails along the washes, at a minimum of 10' wide provide excellent opportunities to travel through Town safely and efficiently. The system was designed to minimize crossing roadways, with the use of bridges and trail crossing signals.

T5: Equestrian Wash Trail

- Typically located along the bottom of the washes, equestrian wash trails are areas where a minimum of 18" wide and 12' high clearance is kept in order for horseback riders to safely travel through Town. In almost all areas of the wash trails, equestrian users are able to travel under roadways, avoiding at-grade crossings. Where at-grade crossings exist, equestrian friendly crossing instruments (raised activation buttons) shall be included to ensure easy access and use.

In addition to Town trails, many neighborhoods in Queen Creek provide trails for their residents that are privately maintained. These trails connect to the Town trail system, including the Queen Creek and Sonoqui washes.

Figure 2.9: **Trail Types**

TYPE NAME	TRAIL TYPE	USE	WIDTH (MIN.)	SURFACE MATERIAL
T1	Detached Sidewalk	Shared	6'	Concrete
T2	Multi-Use Path	Shared	10'	Compacted ¼" minus decomposed granite
T3	Combined Detached Sidewalk & Multi-Use Path	Shared	6', 10'	Concrete sidewalks; compacted ¼" minus decomposed granite multi-use paths
T4	Paved Wash Trail	Shared	10'	Asphalt
T5	Equestrian Wash Trail	Equestrian only	18" min.	Native

REGIONAL TRAIL SYSTEMS

The Town of Queen Creek is located within both Maricopa and Pinal counties. Each county has their own trail master plan. The Town works closely with both entities to identify opportunities for future connectivity between the various trail systems.

Pinal County Open Space & Trails Master Plan (2007)

The Pinal County Master Plan identifies six planned/existing trails connecting Queen Creek to Pinal County from the east and south. From the east, a trail is located along Queen Creek Wash. Other trails are located on Germann and Ocotillo roads between the Central Arizona Project (CAP) and the county line. From the south, trails are planned from San Tan Mountain Regional Park into Box Canyon (Sossaman Road alignment), and trailheads at Skyline Drive and Ellsworth Road.

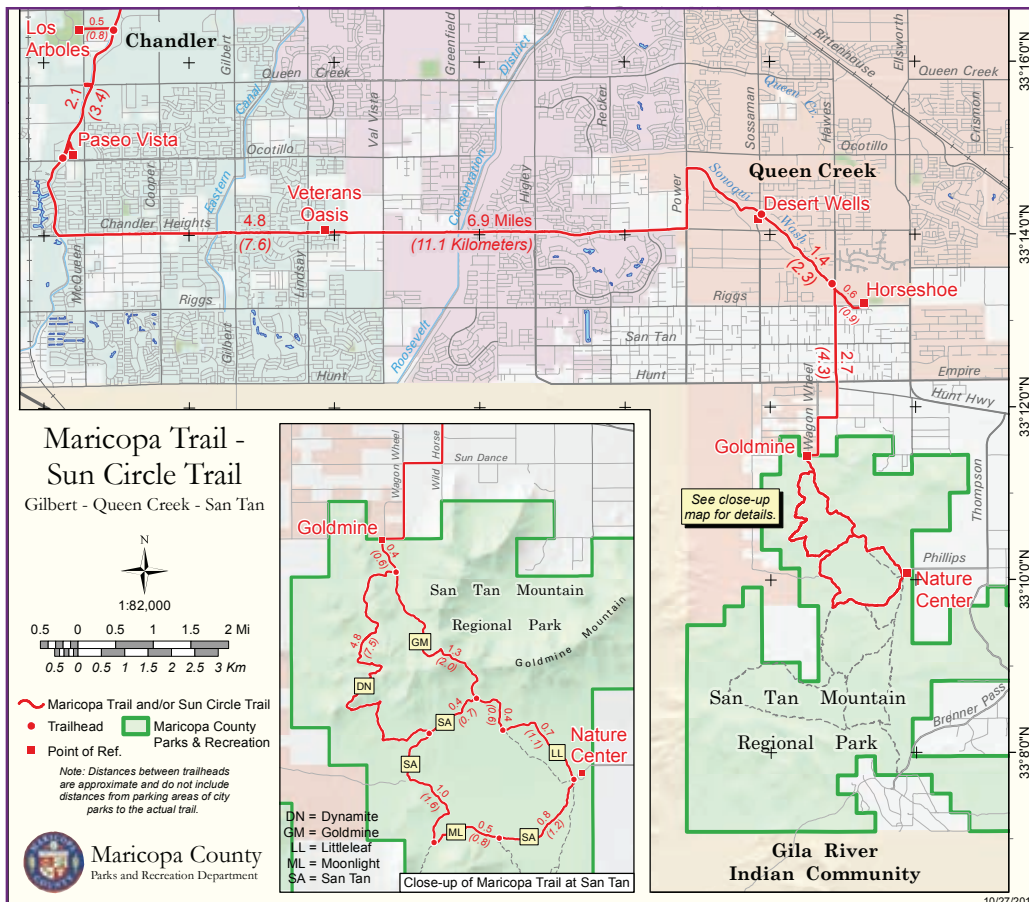
Maricopa County Regional Trail System Plan (2004)

The Maricopa County Regional Trail System (**Figure 2.10: Maricopa Trail Map**) is a 1,521-mile comprehensive system of non-motorized trail corridors that capitalizes on existing right-of-ways such as canals, parks, utility corridors, and flood control projects. The Trails System Plan establishes the 242-mile Maricopa Trail and the Sun Circle Trail as the highest priority trail projects.

Four segments of the Maricopa Trail are located in Queen Creek.

- **Segment Twenty-Nine (6 miles).** Sonoqui and Queen Creek wash corridors from the East Maricopa Floodway (EMF) in the Town of Gilbert to the Hawes Road corridor in the Town of Queen Creek.
- **Segment Thirty (4 miles).** Connects the Queen Creek Wash and Sonoqui Wash segments in the Town of Queen Creek to a proposed northern entrance to San Tan Mountain Regional Park.
- **Segment Fifty-Four (5 miles).** Along Queen Creek Wash southeast to the Maricopa County line. Queen Creek Wash intersects the CAP approximately five miles from the Maricopa County line. Segment Fifty-Four passes through unincorporated Pinal County until it reaches Queen Creek Town limits.
- **Segment Fifty-Five (4.25 miles).** Queen Creek Wash from the Maricopa County line west to its intersection with Ellsworth Road.

Figure 2.10: **Maricopa County Trail Map**



RECREATION PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS

The Town offers a wide range of recreation programs including special interest classes, youth sports, special events and the senior program. Interest in Queen Creek recreation programs continues to grow with participation numbers exceeding 33,000 in fiscal year (FY) 17.

Special Interest Classes

Special interest classes are held at the Queen Creek Recreation Annex, located on the east side of the Queen Creek Library in Town Center.

A variety of classes are offered through subcontracted instructors for all ages and interests including arts and crafts, pre-kindergarten classes, fitness classes, and more.

In FY17, attendance in special interest classes was 5,130, with the highest level of attendance in the youth category. The volume of special interest classes is nearing capacity, with all rooms at the Recreation Annex occupied during peak times, and most classes also at capacity.

Queen Creek residents are also able to use recreation facilities from providers not affiliated with the Town and located in adjacent communities. These providers include homeowners associations, churches, private fitness clubs, the Barney Family Sports Complex and the Copper Basin Family YMCA (located in San Tan Valley).



Lim Family Karate





Queen Creek Heat Softball

Youth Sports Partners

The Town partners with local nonprofit leagues to provide a variety of youth sports. These partnerships reduce the number of municipal staff required by the Recreation Division, as the partners provide the group leadership, coaches, referees, etc. Through these partnerships, the organizations receive discounted rental rates on Town fields with first access during the season. League partners rely on Town fields for games and school fields for practices. The Town's official partners for youth sports include:

- **Arizona Soccer Club** – Youth soccer
- **San Tan Youth Football League** – Youth football (flag and tackle)
- **Queen Creek Little League** – Youth baseball
- **Queen Creek Heat Little League Softball** – Youth softball



Ballet Class



Youth Soccer

Senior Program

The Queen Creek Senior Program offers activities and leisure opportunities that enhance the quality of life for people 50 years of age and older. The free program is held every Wednesday from 9 a.m. to noon at the Recreation Annex. In FY17, 3,640 participants attended the program, with a weekly average of 70.



Senior Program Volleyball



Senior Program Thanksgiving Potluck



Enjoying an Outdoor Festival

Special Events and Festivals

Events enhance the quality of life for residents by providing the opportunity to gather with family, friends and neighbors to enjoy fun activities and a variety of experiences. Events also improve the economic well-being of the community by drawing visitors from outside Queen Creek. A focus on providing high-quality events and festivals has resulted in Queen Creek becoming known as an event destination.

The Town produces four signature events throughout the year that continue to grow in attendance:

- **QC Block Party** – Held each spring, this free outdoor event is held in the heart of the community along Ellsworth Road. Designed to encourage residents to get to know one another, and showcase Queen Creek as a quality community, the event includes entertainment, food vendors, a kids zone and more.
- **Spring into QC** – Offering a hoppin' good time for attendees, this free community event is held a week before Easter. With live entertainment, a color splash and egg hunts, the event has something for everyone.

- **Founders' Day** – The free family-friendly community event is held every September to celebrate the Town's birthday and heritage. Offering entertainment, food and the Battle of the Badge competition between Queen Creek Fire & Medical and the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office District 6 – Queen Creek, the event is fun for all ages.
- **Trunk or Treat** – The free event offers a variety of activities including Trunk or Treat Street, entertainment, carnival games and pet costume contest. Held in the heart of the community on Ellsworth Road, Trunk or Treat provides a safe environment for families to enjoy an evening of fun.

The Town also supports community events including the Holiday Festival & Parade hosted by the Queen Creek Chamber of Commerce and Kiwanis Club, the Hometown Fourth of July event hosted by Schnepf Farms and Queen Creek Roots N' Boots hosted by Friends of Horseshoe Park & Equestrian Centre.



QC Block Party



Spring into QC Egg Hunt



Fun at Founders' Day



Queen Creek Trunk or Treat

Rentals / Facility Management

The Town offers a variety of indoor and outdoor facilities that are available to rent for birthdays, business meetings, family gatherings and special events. Available rental spaces include:

- Ramadas
- Athletic fields
- Meeting rooms

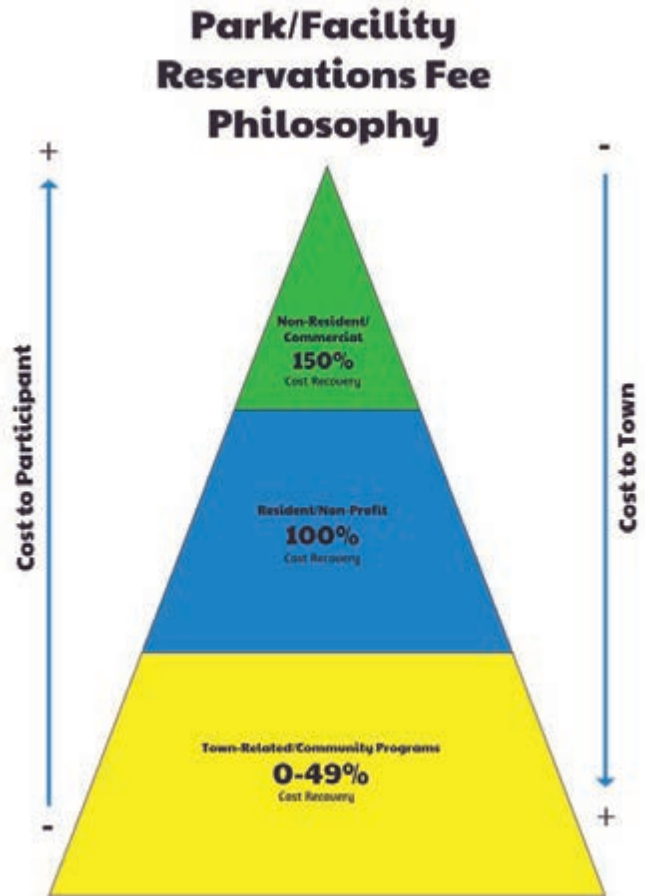


Ramada at Desert Mountain Park



Zane Grey Meeting Room

Figure 2.11: Fee Philosophy 1



QC Recreation Annex

Figure 2.12: **Fee Philosophy 2**

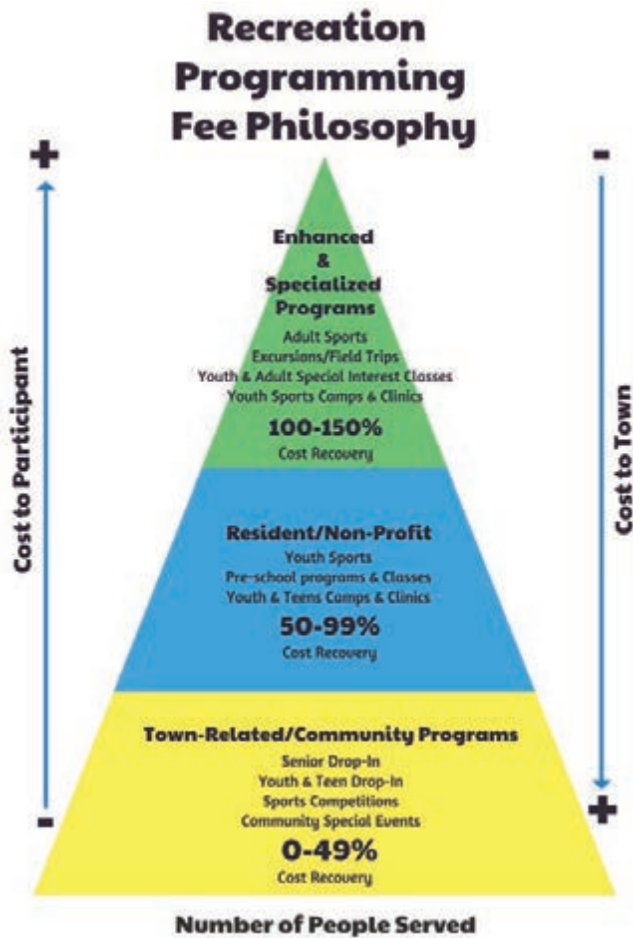
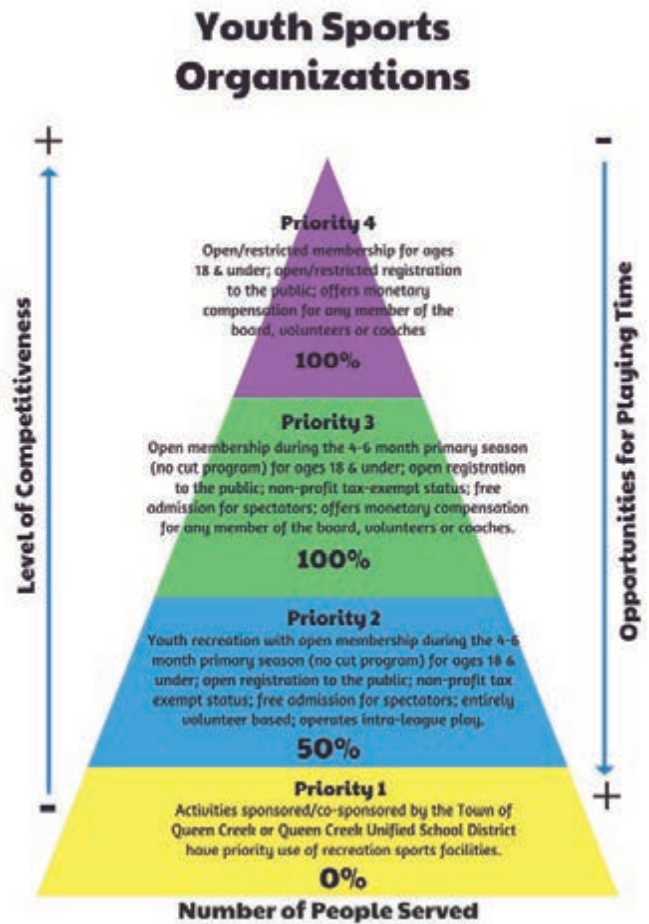


Figure 2.13: **Fee Philosophy 3**



Partnerships

In addition to Recreation Division programs, sports partners, and subcontracted instructors, the Town has developed partnerships to offer additional recreational opportunities right here in QC. These include:

- **The Boys & Girls Club of the East Valley** – Through a partnership with the Town, the Boys & Girls Club is located in buildings at Founders’ Park. The organization provides after-school and intersession programming, youth sports programs, teen leadership, and tutoring assistance.
- **Queen Creek Performing Arts Center** – This organization, operated by the Queen Creek Cultural Foundation, makes use of the performing arts center at Queen Creek High School. In addition to concerts, plays, musicals, and other cultural events, they also offer community theater classes and camps for those interested in the performing arts.

MAINTENANCE

Maintenance is at the heart of a quality park system; sustainable maintenance practices result in lower operational costs and fewer environmental impacts. Well-maintained facilities also invite the community to make use of parks, park facilities and recreation programs, which results in community support for facilities and programs that support residents' quality of life.

With the construction of the Mansel Carter Oasis Park, the Town maintains five public parks totaling approximately 127 acres, in addition to 433 acres of trails and other Town-owned property.

The Town developed maintenance levels of service for parks, trails, and recreation facilities that are based on standards set by the National Parks and Recreation Association, and adapted to meet the specific needs of Queen Creek. Service levels are resource-focused (parks, trails, washes, and public facilities), and reflect the climate and specific use patterns found in Queen Creek. There is a detailed level of service plan for developed parks, developed trails, and Town-owned right-of-way (appendix C). These services are based on the Town Council's commitment to a high-quality community, offering superior services to residents.

The Town conducts the majority of park and trail maintenance internally. During the 2008-2010 recession, the Town reduced its maintenance staff by 40%, and park and trail maintenance was substantially cut back. Currently, the Town maintains a level 2 for parks, Town-owned rights of way, and high visibility areas (such as the Law Enforcement/Community Chambers Building; less visible Town-owned properties are maintained at a level 3).

Figure 2.14: Levels of Service – Maintenance

Levels of Service Maintenance	
Parks	Trails
<p>This level represents a high level of maintenance associated with well-developed park areas with high visitations rates. Turf is cut 2-3 times per week with litter control conducted daily.</p>	<p>1 Highly-used and visible areas that require intense maintenance, daily monitoring.</p>
<p>This level represents a reasonably high level of maintenance associated with well-developed park areas with high visitations rates. Turf is cut less frequent, typically twice per week and litter control conducted daily.</p>	<p>2 Highly-used and visible areas that require high maintenance, monitoring at least every other day.</p>
<p>This is the lowest-expected service level for fully developed parks. Maintenance is accomplished, usually with longer service intervals, to keep the park safe and minimally serviceable to the community. Turf is typically cut at least every two weeks, with litter control conducted 1-2 times per week.</p>	<p>3 Monitoring and maintenance at least once a week.</p>
<p>This service level is minimal and designated for parks or open spaces with no facilities. The intent is to maintain safe grounds and a "natural" ambiance. Turf is typically cut at least every three weeks, with litter control conducted once per week.</p>	<p>4 Maintenance at least every three weeks, with monitoring more frequent.</p>
<p>This level consists of a minimal service to parks or open spaces with no facilities with the intent to maintain safe grounds and a "natural" ambiance. Generally, inspection services and litter control are conducted on an infrequent basis.</p>	<p>5 Maintenance completed on a quarterly basis, with monitoring completed as available.</p>

ADMINISTRATION

The current **Recreation Division** is within the Communications, Marketing, and Recreation Department. The Recreation Superintendent reports to a Department Director, who reports to the Town Manager. With 8.5 Full Time Employees (FT) and Full Time Equivalent Employees (FTEs) in 2017, this Division is the largest under this Department Director. The **Municipal Grounds Maintenance Division** is within the Public Works Department and includes 21.4 FT and FTEs. The Parks Superintendent reports to a Department Director, who also reports to the Town Manager.

Recreation Division

Recreation Superintendent (1)

This position is responsible for the management of the recreation division.

Recreation & Communications Analyst (1)

This position supports the Recreation Superintendent and is responsible for special projects and research.

Recreation Coordinator (2)

These positions support special interest classes, special events, sports, program partnerships and volunteer groups.

Recreation Technician (1.25)

These positions support the recreation coordinators.

Customer Service Coordinator (1)

This position works at the front desk of the Recreation Annex providing customer assistance and support.

Part-time/Seasonal (2.25)

These positions are filled on an as needed basis for a variety of tasks.

Municipal Grounds Maintenance Division

Grounds Superintendent (1)

This position is responsible for the management of the Parks Division.

M&O Supervisor (1)

Plans, coordinates and supervises the daily field operations of the division. Prioritizes, assigns and coordinates work projects. Schedules staff, monitors work flow, inspects work, and develops staff for efficient operation.

M&O Crew Leader (4)

Responsible for leadership of a specific work unit. Inspects and monitors work.

M&O Tech (7)

Performs the more complex of the semi-skilled grounds maintenance activities. Skilled in plant health and maintenance, irrigation system repairs, equipment operation, athletic field management, and typically has certifications such as Office of Pest Management (OPM) chemical applicators licensing.

M&O Specialist (1)

Performs journey level skilled activities. Performing the more difficult or complex tasks in assigned area. Typically has substantial experience, specialized training and holds certifications such as a CDL or OPM.

M&O Assistant (5.4)

Performs basic, routine grounds maintenance and general manual labor.

Park Ranger (2)

This position performs park security, patrolling Town parks and trails, ensuring rules, securing parks and Town-owned facilities, and providing general customer service in the field.