

RECREATION, PARKS, AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

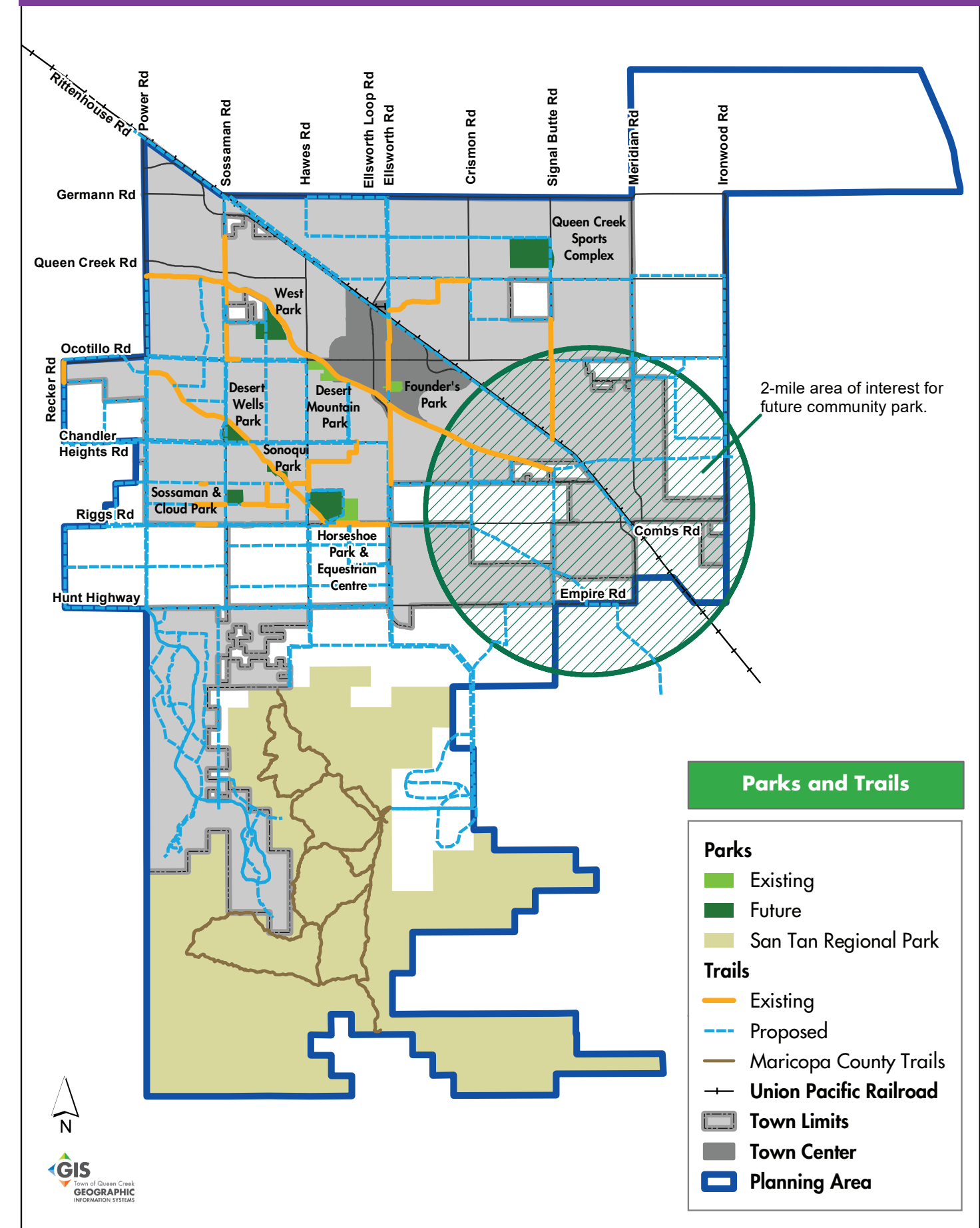
Queen Creek has 127 acres of developed parks and 17.5 miles of constructed trails, which include the Queen Creek and Sonoqui washes and trails constructed within private communities (see Figure 16: Parks and Trails Map). Town parks include:

- **Desert Mountain Park** (29 acres) includes 4 ball fields, 2 multi-purpose fields, volleyball courts, a small amphitheater, an equestrian trailhead with trailer parking, a Dino Dig, a shaded play area, and open spaces.
- **Founders' Park** (11 acres) includes a ball field, multi-use field, splash pad, skate park, basketball court, and ramadas.
- **Horseshoe Park & Equestrian Centre** (38 acres), this unique facility provides a community arena for the general public and an event center. The commercial event center hosts a variety of activities and includes a covered arena, three uncovered arenas, over 300 barn stalls, and 56 RV stalls equipped with water and electricity for other event competitors.
- **Pocket Park for Pups** (1 acre) is an off leash dog park located in Town Center.
- **West Park site** (48 acres plus 13 undeveloped acres) is planned to open in fall 2018. It will include 4 baseball fields, 2 multi-purpose fields, a splash pad, basketball and volleyball courts, ramadas, a play area, open space, a fishing lake, a fitness course, and an access point to the 11-mile loop trail along Queen Creek Wash.

The Town also owns 256 acres of undeveloped land planned for parks. This land includes the historic Desert Wells Stage Stop, land along the Sonoqui Wash, and land northwest of Queen Creek and Signal Butte roads.



Figure 16: Parks and Trails Map



Planning Considerations

Town population is increasing

Over the next 10 years, the population of the Town will increase 78%, which means the amount of parks and recreation facilities will have to double to meet the needs of new residents.

Town demographics are changing

Queen Creek’s current population has a larger percent of population under age 19 than all East Valley jurisdictions and Maricopa County. The next largest population group in Queen Creek is 40-64 year olds. The Town’s development patterns support a continued large youth population. Within the next 15 years, the 40-64 year old population will be over age 55. This population will need recreation programs and facilities that are different from what the Town currently provides.

The Town Lacks Recreation Facilities that Many Quality Towns with Over 40,000 Residents Have

Many quality Towns over 40,000 provide multi-generational recreation centers, pools or aquatic centers, and tennis courts. Queen Creek does not currently provide these amenities.

Renovation & repairs

In 2026, Desert Mountain Park will be 20 years old and Founders’ Park will be nearing 30 years old. The facilities in these parks will need to be updated, or in the case of Founders’ Park, potentially redesigned to better align with facilities provided at new parks.

Multi-use trails

Using trails and trail-based activities are the most popular recreation pursuits of Queen Creek residents, according to a 2016 Resident Recreation Preference Survey. Completing the 11-mile loop trail along the Queen Creek and Sonoqui washes and other trails to connect parks and other destinations in Town is important to residents and the quality of life in Queen Creek.

Park administration

As the number of parks and recreation facilities increase, administrative and maintenance responsibilities will also increase, requiring additional staff.

State land

Over 10 square miles of undeveloped State Trust Land is within the northeast portion of the Town Planning Area. As this land is developed, new parks, trails, and recreation facilities will be needed to serve these new residents.

Parks and Recreation Master Plan

The Town Parks and Recreation Master Plan is incorporated by reference into this Plan. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan includes detailed recommendations for parks and recreation facilities. These include:

- Completing the West Park site by fall 2018, and Sossaman and Cloud Park by FY2020
- Building a park at the East Park site by the time the Town population is 65,000.
- Building an aquatic center by the time the Town population is 100,000.
- Providing additional facilities in new parks to serve residents including, but not limited to, tennis, basketball, and volleyball courts, ball fields, multi-use fields, exercise courses, playgrounds, and ramadas.
- Reorganizing the Recreation Division into a Recreation Department that is combined with parks maintenance.
- Expanding recreation programs by leveraging existing and planned facilities, and providing more family based, senior, and adult inclusive programs.

Goals, Strategies, & Actions

GOAL 1:
DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE PARK SYSTEM TO PROVIDE OPEN SPACES AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES APPROPRIATE TO A COMMUNITY THE SIZE OF QUEEN CREEK.

Strategy 1.A: Implement the adopted Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Action 1.A.1: When updating the Capital Improvement Program, include in the update trails, parks, and recreation facilities identified in the plan for that year or period.

Action 1.A.2: Work with the Planning Department to ensure that as rezoning occurs, trails and parks continue to be included in new developments, and are connected to trails identified in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Action 1.A.3: When approving requests for development in southeast Queen Creek, consider all options to obtain land for a new 30+ acre park (See Figure 16: Parks and Trails Map). Options considered could include and not be limited to land swaps, dedications as a part of development, acquisition, and density transfers.

Action 1.A.4: As the State Land is planned, work closely with the State Land Department to ensure parks and recreation facilities, in keeping with the Level of Service in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, are provided as a part of all development.

Strategy 1.B: Complete the Town trail system as described in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and in Figure 16: Parks and Trails Map.

Action 1.B.1: As new roads are constructed, and as existing roads are improved, include trail segments identified in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan along those roads in roadway design.

Action 1.B.2: Require new development to complete trails adjacent to their developments as described in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and in Figure 16: Parks and Trails Map as a condition of rezoning.

Action 1.B.3: Apply the Trail Design Guidelines in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan to all public and private trails.

GOAL 2:
PROVIDE PARKS AND RECREATION PROGRAMS THAT REFLECT THE CULTURE AND CHARACTER OF QUEEN CREEK, AND THAT LEVERAGE EXISTING AND PLANNED RECREATION FACILITIES.

Strategy 2.A: Recognize Queen Creek and Sonoqui washes and San Tan Mountain Regional Park as recreation assets.

Action 2.A.1: Use the Queen Creek and Sonoqui washes for a variety of programs and events including races, outdoor education, and outdoor experience classes for all ages.

Action 2.A.2: Coordinate with the Maricopa County San Tan Mountain Regional Park Supervisor to offer outdoor education programs for Queen Creek residents.

Strategy 2.B: Consider partnering with the Queen Creek Unified School District to offer aquatic programs to build a clientele for a Town-owned aquatic facility.

Action 2.B.1: Develop an intergovernmental agreement with the Queen Creek School District to use their pool during the summer.

Strategy 2.C: Encourage the inclusion of features that reflect the culture and character of Queen Creek in private parks.

Action 2.C.1: During the rezoning process, and when possible and practical, request a description of cultural references that will be included in neighborhood and private parks and/or trails.

GOAL 3:
**LEVERAGE PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES
TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.**

Strategy 3.A: Promote the Town's parks, trails, and open spaces as a quality of life asset.

Action 3.A.1: Market parks, trails, and open spaces on the Town website, and in economic development and other Town informational material to recruit new employers and residents to the community.

Action 3.A.2: Use Town parks for events such as fairs and festivals when possible and practical. Use the rental and other revenues from these events to maintain and upgrade parks and recreation facilities.

GOAL 4:
**COORDINATE WITH OTHER JURISDICTIONS
AND PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ENTITIES TO
EXPAND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR
QUEEN CREEK RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.**

Strategy 4.A: Use partnerships to reduce park development and acquisition costs to the Town.

Action 4.A.1: Work with San Tan Mountain Regional Park to create a trailhead on the west side of the park that is accessible from Bell Road and the Box Canyon Master Planned Community. Discuss the option of providing space for a BMX park at this trailhead.

Action 4.A.2: Develop an IGA with the Flood Control District of Maricopa County to provide the grading (as indicated in the East Mesa Area Drainage Master Plan) for the East Park site.

Action 4.A.3: Coordinate with developers to incorporate neighborhood parks and recreational facilities including tennis courts, swimming pools, ball fields, and multi-use fields into their development.

Action 4.A.4: Apply the park design guidelines in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan to all public and private parks.

Action 4.A.5: When possible, incorporate the park attributes in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Appendix B: Park Types and Attributes to public and private parks. Update this table through the Minor General Plan Amendment Process as the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is updated.

Action 4.A.6: As the State Land is planned, work closely with the State Land Department to ensure parks and recreation facilities, in keeping with the Level of Service in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, are provided as a part of all development.

Action 4.A.7: Incorporate into developments private parks, trails, and/or open spaces that provide connectivity to the Town's existing and proposed parks, trails, and open spaces.

Strategy 4.B: Coordinate with Pinal County as it develops the San Tan Specific Area Plan and updates its General Plan.

Action 4.B.1: Meet regularly with Pinal County to ensure trails connect to Town trails, and parks planned for this area complement Town parks.

Action 4.B.2: Request copies of, and provide input on, site plan submittals and requests for General Plan Amendments in San Tan Valley to ensure that master planned communities and other developments are providing recreation facilities for residents.

GOAL 5:
DESIGN PARKS AND TRAILS THAT ARE SAFE.

Strategy 5.A: Prioritize trail crossings over traffic volumes when designing new or improving existing roads.

Action 5.A.1: Implement the crossing guidelines included in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Action 5.A.2: Coordinate roadway improvements and trail crossings identified in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Action 5.A.3: Ensure that state and county transportation facilities include safe, signalized or below or above grade trail crossings in their design and construction.

Action 5.A.4: Ensure trail connections are preserved with the expansion of SR 24 on the north border of the Town planning area.

