

PRESS RELEASE

September 12, 2023

MARICOPA COUNTY PARKS RELEASE DRAFT PARKS VISION 2030 MASTER PLAN

The public is invited to review and comment on the draft plan

Planning efforts to protect and expand regional parks, trails, and open spaces have occurred for decades at the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department. The department recently completed the draft Parks Vision 2030 Strategic System Master Plan. The plan will define opportunities, challenges, and recommendations for the next ten years and beyond.

"The Parks Vision 2030 plan continues and strengthens on protecting connectivity and ensuring future generations have access to exceptional regional parks, trails, and nature-based experiences," stated Maricopa County Board of Supervisors Chairman Clint Hickman, District 4. "This plan builds on the 2009 System Master Plan and incorporates the legacy of the original 1965 Regional Parks Plan by focusing on how the County's growth has impacted our natural resources while also addressing the need to provide the community with access to nature and open spaces."

As highlighted in the 1965 Plan, there was a sense of urgency to plan for the future. While emergency response and infrastructure services are somewhat flexible and can be provided as a population grows, large regional parks and corridors connecting open spaces must be planned decades into the future. According to R.J. Cardin, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation director, "This still holds true as Maricopa County continues to be one of the fastest-growing counties in the country. In addition, the importance of parks, trails, open spaces, and their role in physical and mental health became even more evident during the past few years."

The Parks Vision 2030 plan reviews the existing county park system accomplishments since 2009 and provides an overview of the current system. In addition, the plan focuses on looking beyond the existing park system.



"Parks Vision 2030 makes an effort to protect important natural spaces and critical wildlife habitats as residential communities and industrial businesses continue to expand into areas once considered the *outskirts* of town," added Vice Chairman Supervisor Jack Sellers, District 1. "The plan recognizes that growth will continue and seeks to balance open space protection with economic development."

Over the past three years, extensive outreach has been conducted, including meetings with numerous stakeholder organizations. In addition, virtual public meetings were held, and an online public feedback form netted over 1,400 comments.

"Our departments are constantly looking towards the future to determine how to serve the community better. We are thankful for the natural beauty that exists in Maricopa County, and we are proud of the world-class trails and parks that we have protected and maintained here. These open spaces help promote healthy lifestyles for our residents and also attract tourists seeking an authentic Arizonan experience," added Supervisor Bill Gates, District 3.

"The Board realizes that to successfully plan for the future of our regional park system, we need to hear from all corners of the County, including those who reside in the unincorporated areas. Thankfully, staff was able to gather a lot of valuable feedback to prepare the plan using a variety of outreach efforts. We are looking forward to a similar outcome with the plan review," stated Supervisor Thomas Galvin, District 2.

The draft Parks Vision 2030 Plan will be available for a 30-day public comment period from **September 12 to October 10, 2023**. The draft plan can be found at <https://www.maricopacountyparks.net/about-us/parks-vision-2030-public-review/>.

Comments may be submitted via one of the following methods:

- An **electronic survey can be found** at www.surveymonkey.com/r/ParksVision2030PlanComments.
- **Email** comments to maricopacountyparks@maricopa.gov. To assist and expedite the process:
 - Include "Parks Vision 2030 Public Comments" in the subject line.
 - PDF or Word Documents may be attached up to 10 MB.
 - Please reference specific **page numbers** if the comment is regarding a particular plan section.
- **Mail comments to:**
 - Office of the Director, 41835 N Castle Hot Springs Rd. Morristown, AZ 85342

Information on Maricopa County's regional park system can be found at www.maricopa.gov/parks.

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