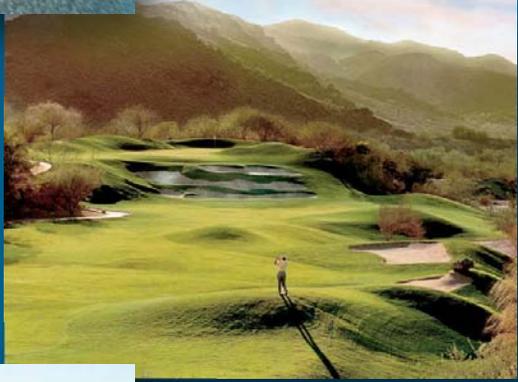


# CHAPTER 4: OPEN SPACE



# Open Space Element

Parks, Open Space and Trails are important components of a healthy and desirable City. Many of us enjoy the quiet solitude of our own private back yard where we can socialize with friends and neighbors or have time to ourselves. Other residents depend on property management companies to provide and maintain these outdoor spaces within apartment complexes, townhomes or other higher density neighborhoods. Our children enjoy active outdoor play areas at the local schools during their recess where they interact with coaches, teachers and other school children. The Open Space Element provides information about the existing parks, open spaces and trails as well as how these important community amenities will be planned for in the future.

## NATIONAL PARKS

The Casa Grande Ruins National Monument is uniquely located inside the existing City limits and attracts nearly 100,000 visitors per year. The City is



fortunate to have this pre-historic cultural treasure and the abundant open space that surrounds the Casa Grande Ruins. There is quite a contrast driving along the busy Arizona Boulevard retail corridor and entering the National Monument surrounded by the pristine beauty of the desert surrounding the ruins.

## REGIONAL PARKS

There are currently no regional parks in the Coolidge Planning Area Boundary that are maintained and operated by the City Parks and Recreation Department.



There may be other opportunities for regional park development within or just outside the Coolidge Planning Area Boundary that should be considered. One such area is located near the Picacho Reservoir which is famous for bird watching and has been considered as a recreational lake for the region.

## COMMUNITY PARKS

Community parks are intended to serve as a draw for the entire community and should be strategically located along a major trail corridor and when possible, next to a school site. A community park should be utilized as a unifying element within a community, providing a civic core, central amenity, social gathering spot, and



community destination. A community park should contain lighted fields for evening activity as well as daytime recreation. The **Parks Amenities Table** (Table 4b) describes the potential amenities that may be programmed into a community park. A desirable design for a community park would provide a minimum of three items from Category 1, four items from Category 2, and five items from Category 3 as listed in the **Parks Amenities Table**, but may include additional or alternative amenities to provide a comparable or enhanced set of amenities. These parks are usually 10 to 20 acres to accommodate the desired uses.

### NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Neighborhood parks varying in size from five acres to ten acres should be included within new development, serving as neighborhood cores within the residential parcels. All residents should be located within a quarter of a mile or a three to five minute walk from an open space amenity, creating a walkable neighborhood. The neighborhood parks are designed to provide both active and passive recreational activities, while also providing storage for storm water runoff in retention basins. These parks will provide opportunities for people of all ages with appropriately scaled amenities as well as shaded areas in each park. A



desirable design for a neighborhood park would provide a minimum of two items from Category 2 and two items from Category 3 listed in the **Park Amenities**

**Table**, but may include additional or alternative amenities to provide a comparable or enhanced set of amenities. Where physical structures have been proposed, site grading will elevate those structures above the bottom of the retention basin to minimize nuisance flows and to keep those facilities more accessible.

### TRAILS, PATHS AND LINEAR PARKS

A trail and/or path system should serve to physically and visually tie neighborhoods together. The internal multi-use paths and walkway network should be designed to provide safe and convenient connections to all open spaces, uses and neighborhoods. All walkways and paths should be constructed of concrete, asphalt, or other approved material.

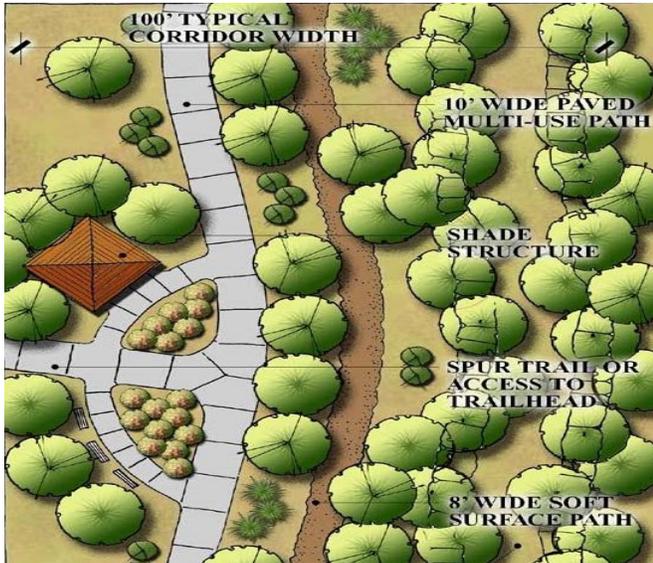


Major collector streets running through a project will include a 10 foot wide multi-use path on one side of the roadway located in a 20 foot wide landscape easement. In addition, there will be a 6 foot wide walkway on the opposite side of the street, also located in a 20 foot wide landscape easement. The two paths will serve as the connective backbone of the trail and pathway system through a project.

A 10 foot wide multi-use path will also be provided along arterial streets. Connectivity can be established through a trail provided in a linear park corridor, within an existing gas line easement, along or adjacent to

# Open Space Element

canals, or in other existing corridors. In addition, four foot wide sidewalks along the local streets will provide neighborhood and community links. This hierarchy of paths and trails will provide connectivity throughout a project, connecting residents with all land uses and promoting an active and social lifestyle.



## EXISTING PARKS

Coolidge currently has approximately 50 acres of existing City owned parks and open space (Table 4a). Privately (HOA) maintained parks and open space totaling roughly 112 acres also exist throughout Coolidge. The City plans to provide a uniform level of service and equal service for parks and recreation facilities throughout the City.

The City should consider a Parks and Recreation Master Plan and a Trails Master Plan to better address the Parks, Open Space and trails development needs to serve the residents of the City with accessible, equitable and quality recreational opportunities at the local and regional level. Residents of the City should be surveyed to determine the community needs and desires for recreation and establish a plan for the implementation of these improvements.

**Table 4a : City Owned Parks & Open Space**

Park	Address	Acreage
Adult Center	250 S. 3rd Street	2.1
East Park	301 N. Pacific Street	2.4
Hohokam Park	1795 N. Arizona Boulevard	3.5
Kenilworth Sports Complex	671 E. Coolidge Avenue	20.2
Landmark Field	800 W. Sunset Drive	3.4
Main Street Park	203 W. Coolidge Avenue	1.0
North Park	800 N. 3rd Street	2.4
Nutt Park	200 N. Washington Street	0.2
Palo Verde Park	146 W. Palo Verde Avenue	0.5
San Carlos Park	300 W. Central Avenue	4.2
Teen Center	660 S. Main Street	1.1
Walker Park	650 W. Vah Ki Inn Road	1.8
West Skate Park	811 W. Wilson Avenue	7.8

**Table 4b : Parks Amenities Table**

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
Swimming Pool Facility	Soccer Field	Benches (Minimum 2)
Recreation Center	Football Field	Umbrella and Table Set
Interactive Water Play	Baseball Field	BBQ / Trash Can (Minimum 2)
Aesthetic Water Feature	Softball Field	Tetherball
Amphitheater	Half Court Basketball	Sand Play Area
Gathering Plaza	Full Court Basketball	Horseshoes
Restroom	Sand Volleyball	Frisbee Golf
Recreation Lake	Tennis Court	Bocce Ball
Skate Park	Pickle Ball	Passive Turf Area
Parking Area	Interactive Garden	Pet Station
Lighting	Exercise Par Course	Outdoor Chess Game
	Group Picnic Area	Artwork
	Climbing Structure	Drinking Fountain
	Independent Play Structure (riders, panels, spring toys)	
	Boulder Play Area	
	Shaded Play Structure for 2-5 year olds	
	Shaded Play Structure for 5-12 year olds	
	Shaded Ramada / Gazebo with Picnic Tables	
	Play Structure with Swings, Slides, and Imaginative Play	

During the community meeting on the Open Space Element, the participants discussed several recreational opportunities for the area and ranked these in order of importance. A new pool/water park was listed as the most desired recreational opportunity followed by a YMCA/Boy’s and Girl’s Club and a new library.

The are approximately 2,160 acres of proposed parks, open space and trails identified on a number of Planned Area Developments that were reviewed and approved by the City during the housing boom. City residents in some of the constructed planned developments enjoy the benefits of these recreational facilities. Some subdivisions in the City failed to develop

as expected and there has been a lack of maintenance where these community assets were introduced. As residential construction picks up in these planned developments, the City will require the developer and/or homebuilder to improve these recreational amenities.

As a community, Coolidge places a high importance on its parks. Staff takes pride in providing clean, well-maintained parks and the community responds by using and appreciating the parks and recreation facilities. Impact fees for parks and recreation facilities will be collected to maintain the current level of service offered to residents of the City.

# Open Space Element

## OPEN SPACE

For the purposes of this plan, *natural open space* is defined as lands to be acquired and/or preserved in their current state or returned to a natural state. For the purposes of this plan, *open space* is defined as developed common and private open areas designed to provide functions such as recreation, aesthetics, and a balance to the built environment. Examples of open space would be lakes, landscaped tracts, parks, trails, plazas, sport fields, and cultural landmarks. In some cases open space may also include educational institutions or other public facilities, and corridors for public uses such as canals and power line easements. These lands should provide for low impact recreation that is compatible with resource protection goals. It is not uncommon for open space to be up to 30% or more of the land area set aside for new community parks. The open space areas tend to buffer the active recreation areas within the park from adjacent houses. The City is fortunate to have one of the best examples of preserved open space within the boundaries of the Casa Grande Ruins National Monument.



The City has several open space properties and corridors (Figure 4.1). The Gila River floodplain on the City's northern boundary has been identified as an area where aggregate resources are extracted and



future open space can be preserved due in part to the floodplain development limitations. This major wash corridor can serve as a separator and connector simultaneously. Linking open lands together creates a network of corridors that allow for the movement of wildlife and people along natural open space areas. The Gila River can link the City of Coolidge together with the Town of Florence while at the same time separating them to allow each community to keep its own identity. Natural open space corridors connecting the Gila River floodplain to the Casa Grande Ruins National Monument is very important to maintain migration of wildlife to and from these important open space preserves for future generations.



The area around Picacho reservoir offers a tremendous opportunity for open space and wildlife habitat. This area is one of the best locations in the State of Arizona for bird-watchers and wildlife photography. Open space corridors must be planned to connect this natural system with other systems as future development is planned.

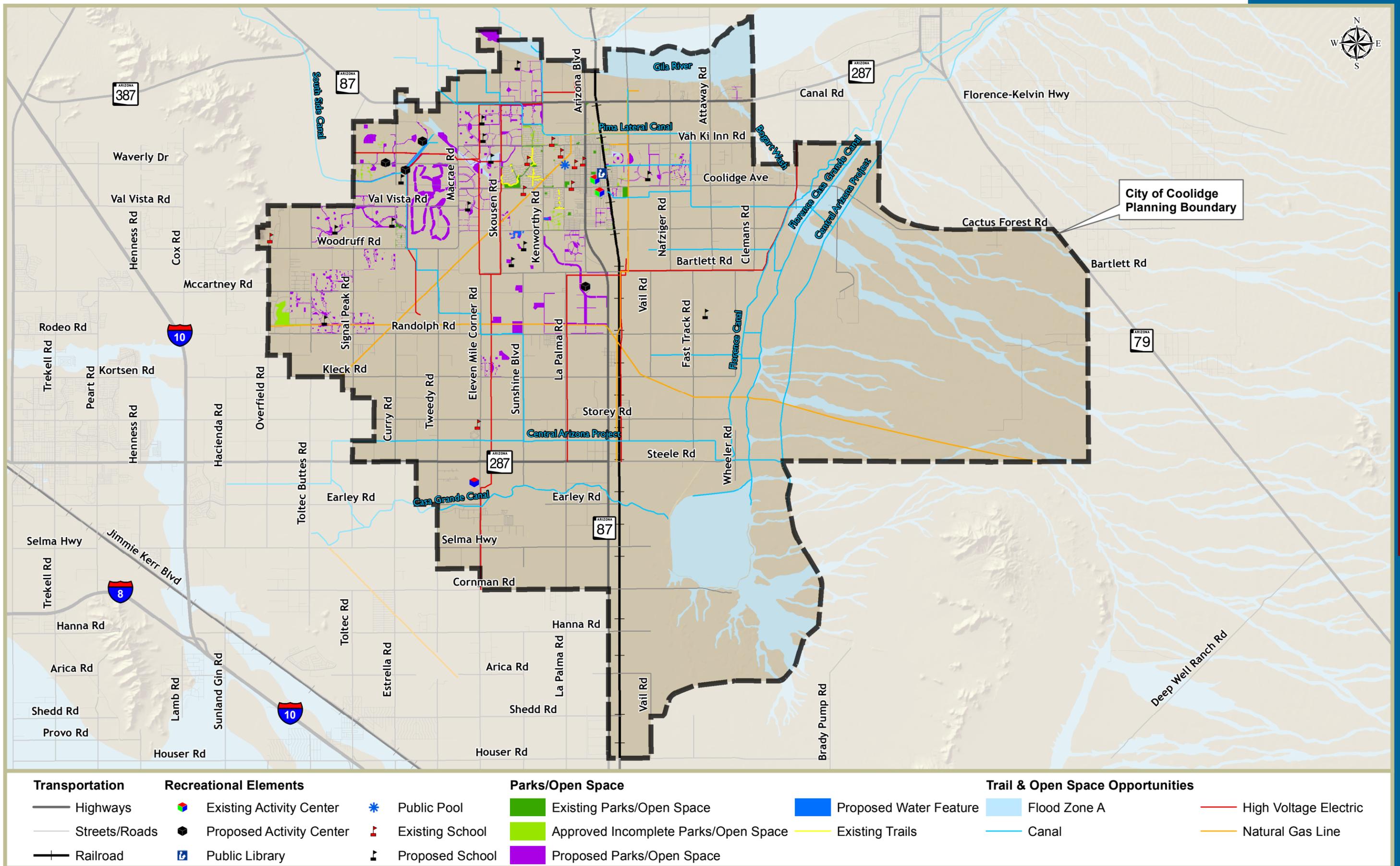


Figure 4.1 : Existing and Approved Open Space

*The structure will automatically provide the pattern  
for the action that follows.*

*-Donald Curtis*

## PARKS & OPEN SPACE DESIGN GUIDELINES

The City needs to establish parks and open space guidelines that can be used for new construction and to keep existing parks up to the same standards. The following guidelines should be used for addressing future development ordinances and in discussions regarding development requirements in Planned Area Developments (PAD's).

- A minimum of 15% open space shall be provided within the single family residential portions of a PAD.
- Of the required open space, 50% of the area shall be developed as usable for parks and trails. Usable open space does not include detention or retention areas unless approved by the City Parks & Recreation and Growth Management Departments. In each retention areas, a minimum of one operational drywell may be required and maintained in perpetuity. In addition, during construction, all subdivisions are required to comply with the Storm Water Prevention Protection Plan.
- Within the developed area, 25% shall be set aside for trail corridors (assuming a 25' ROW). The remainder of the usable open space shall be developed for recreational improvements subject to the requirements as it is written below.
- Generally, golf course do not fall into the open space category; however, a portion of golf courses in PAD's may be counted in open space figures, especially in age targeted or age restricted communities



### EXAMPLE:

Developer introduces a Planned Area Development to the City that is one square mile. As stated, the following acreages would apply:

Total PAD acreage = 640 acres

15% required open space = 96 acres

50% developed open space = 48 acres

25% trail dedication = 12 acres



When looked at in terms of linear feet of trail in the development it looks like this:

12 acres of 25' trail ROW = 12ac x 43,560 sf per acre = 522,720 sf / 25' width of trail = 20908.8 linear feet of trail. 20908.8 linear feet of trail / 5,280 ft per mile = 3.96 miles of trail which will create two, one-mile trails that run through the center of the PAD and 2 one-mile perimeter trails. As adjacent properties develop, it is assumed that the other perimeter trails adjacent to the property will be developed.

# Open Space Element

## TRAILS

A comprehensive connected network of trails should be planned as the City grows. Primary trails should follow along drainage ways, irrigation canals, gas line easements, and electrical transmission corridors. The Gila River floodplain will also serve as a primary corridor for trails. These trail systems can also follow along parkways, and major arterial streets if they are designed to provide an enjoyable recreational experience.

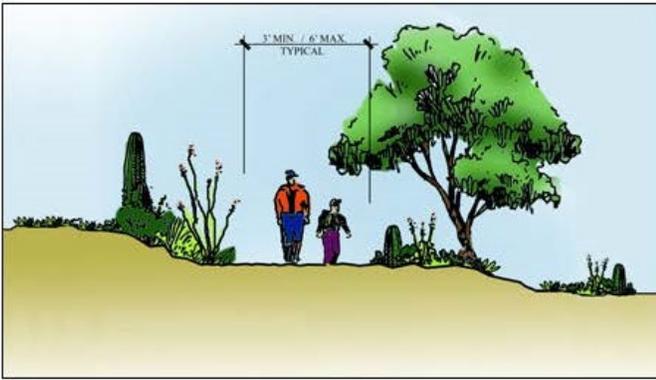


Primary trails incorporate landscaping and amenities along the way and ideally create a circuit and return to the starting point without having to backtrack. Primary trails are the backbone of this non-motorized trail system which links neighborhoods and schools and community parks together. Primary trails should be spaced no more than one mile apart and are generally constructed with concrete at least 10 feet wide. In some cases this width could be reduced to eight feet if an adjacent 3 foot crusher fines trail is incorporated which is sometimes preferred by runners and others who like having a choice of surfaces along a particular route. Primary trails are intended to be multi-use paths and should meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

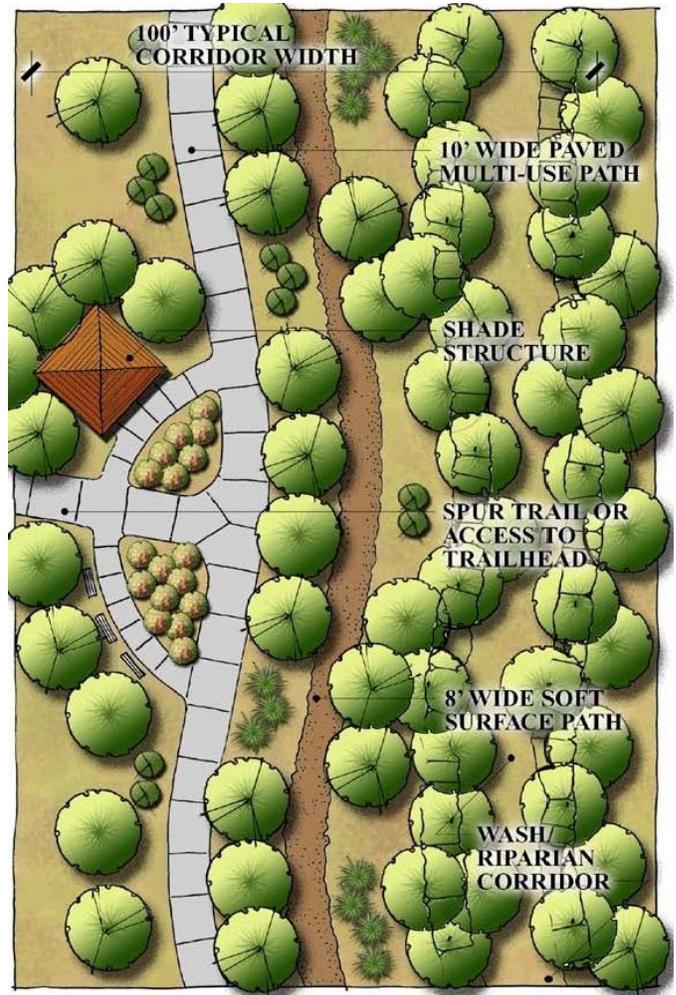


The City should work toward the development and adoption of a Regional Trails Master Plan that identifies opportunities for a comprehensive network of trails. The Master Plan would serve as a guiding document as the City works with developers of master planned communities to insure that neighborhoods are interconnected with an alternative to motorized transportation. Walking, jogging, cycling and horseback riding are activities that promote a healthy community and are one of the highest ranking public amenities that a developing city can offer to residents.

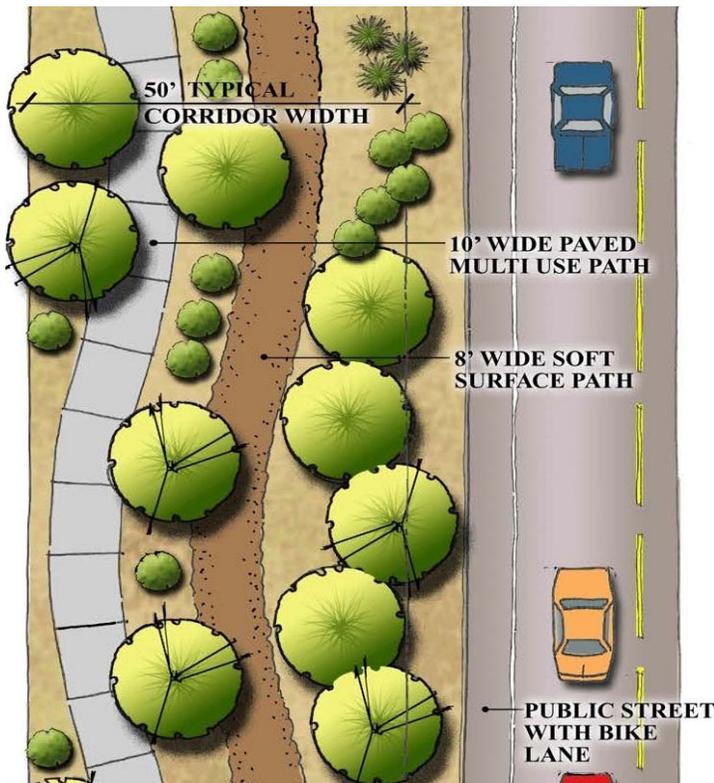




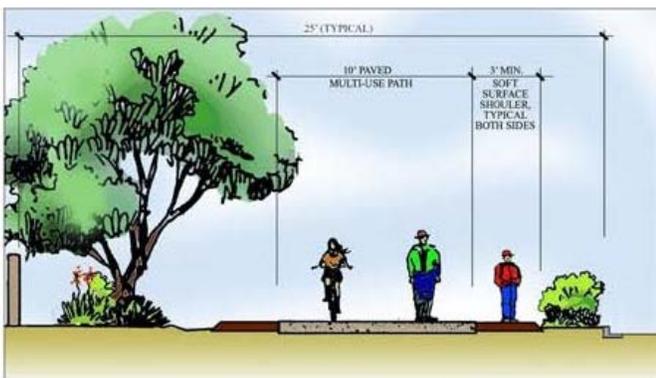
Primitive Trail Example



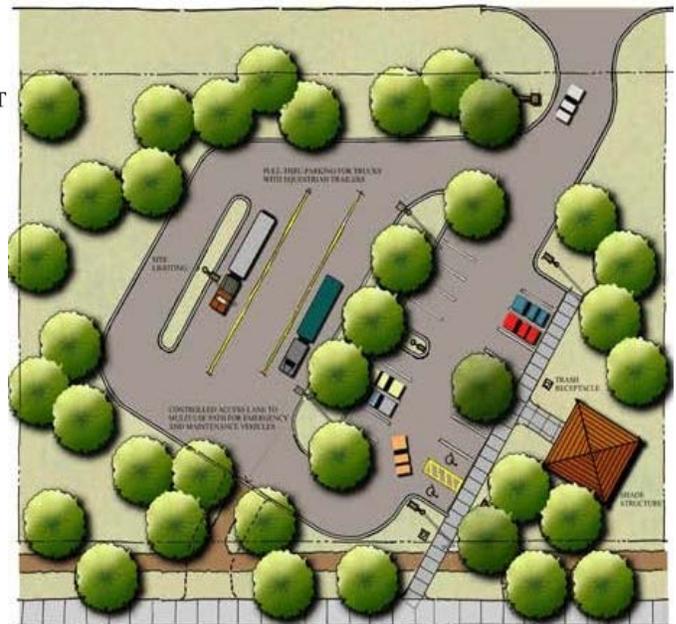
Linear Trail Example



Primary Trail Example



Primary Trail Example



Trailhead Example

OPEN SPACE

*It is better to look ahead and prepare than to look back and regret.*  
*-Jackie Joyner Kersee*