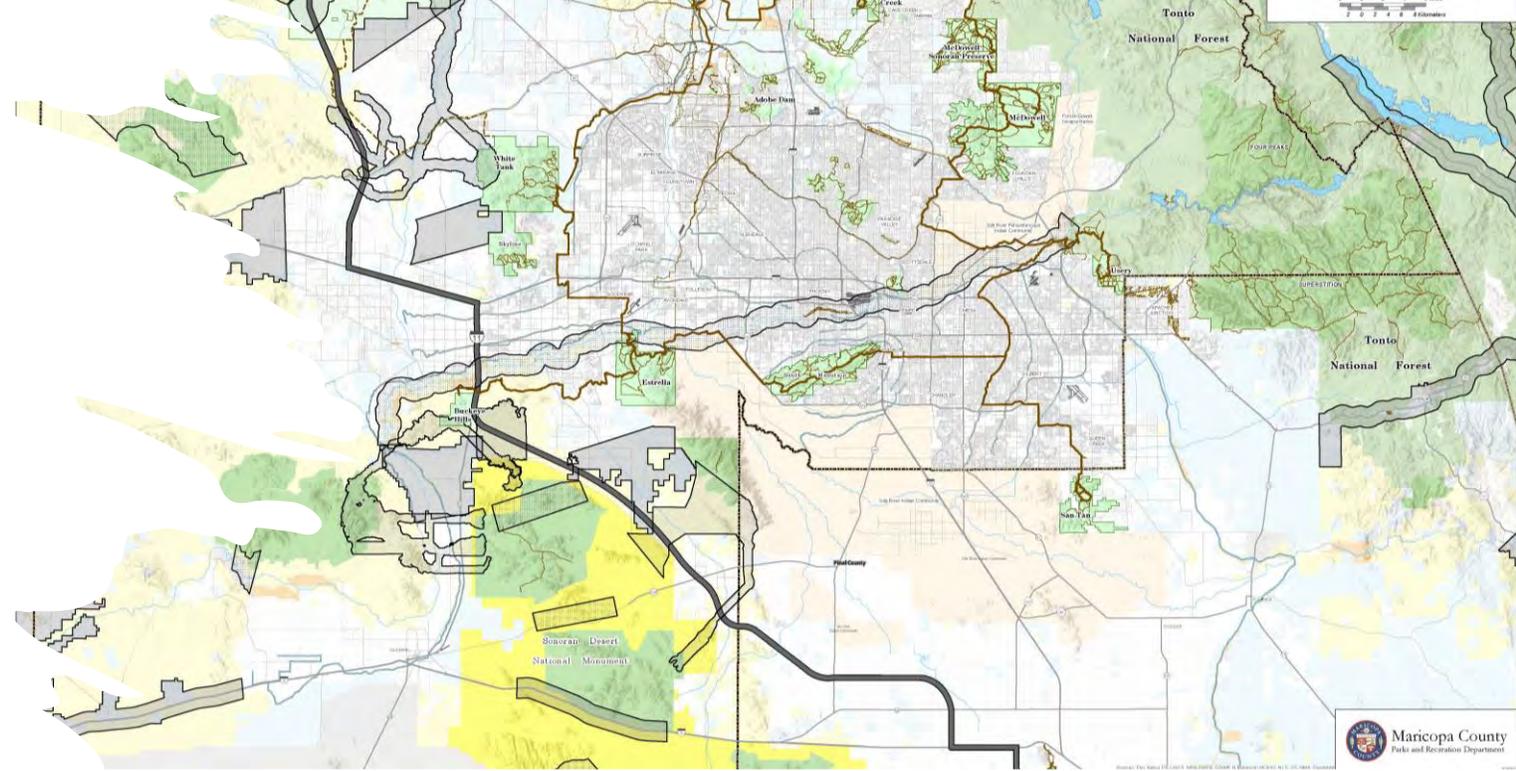


Wildlife Corridors



BLM Meeting Parks Vision 2030 Regional Concept

Vulture
Mountain

Buckeye
Hills

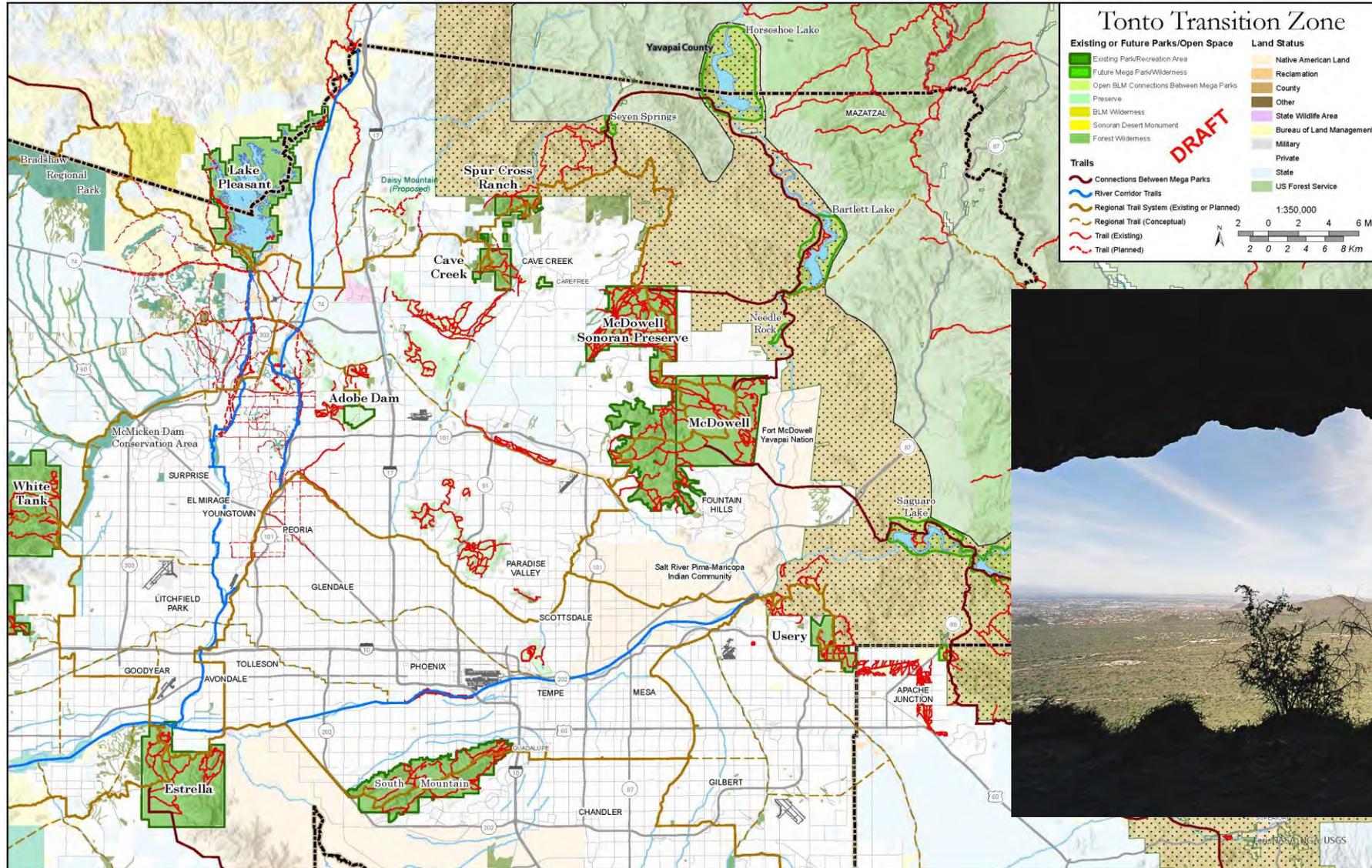
Table
Mesa Road





Tonto National Forest

Tonto National Forest Partnership

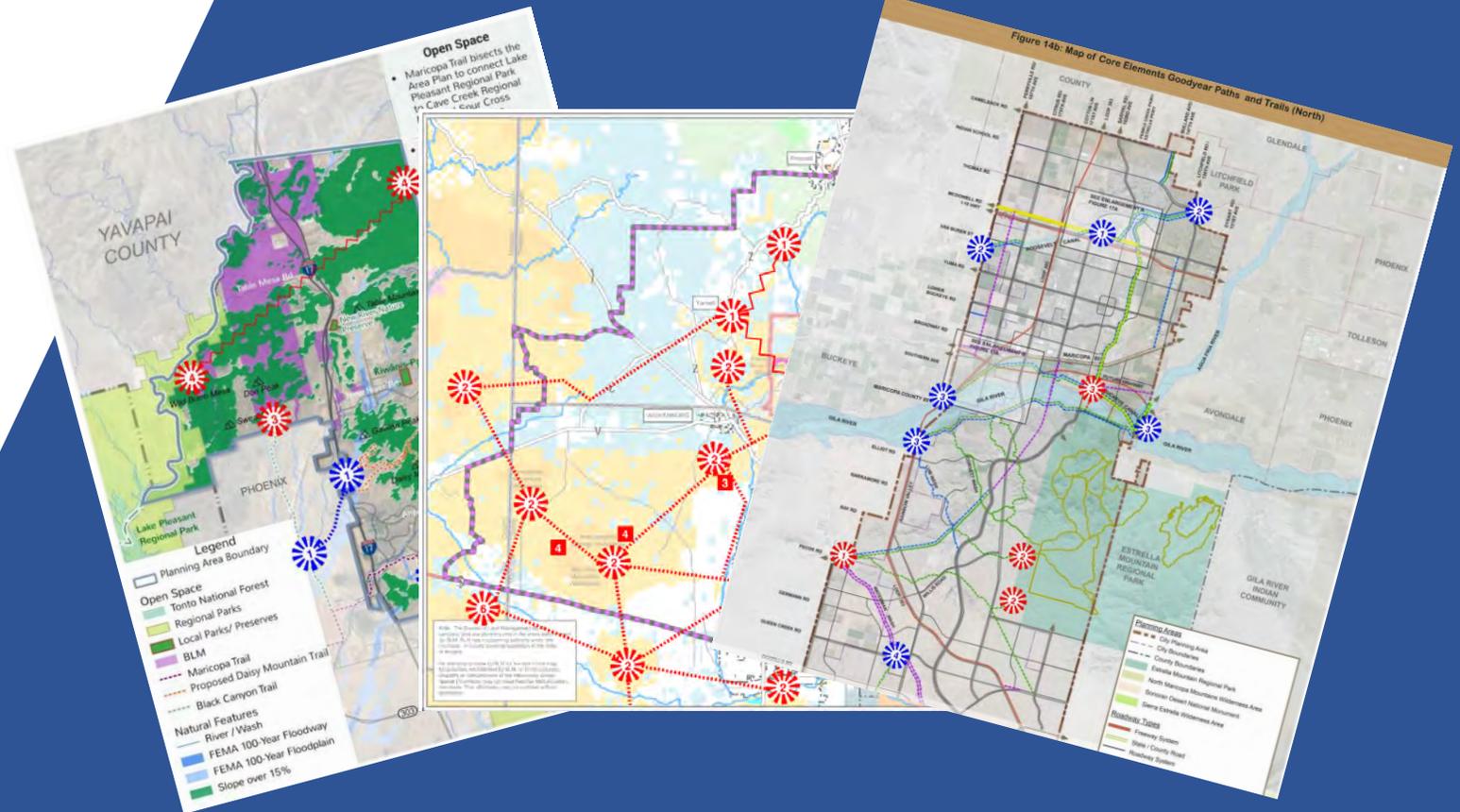


© 2010 USGS

REGIONAL PLANS OVERVIEW

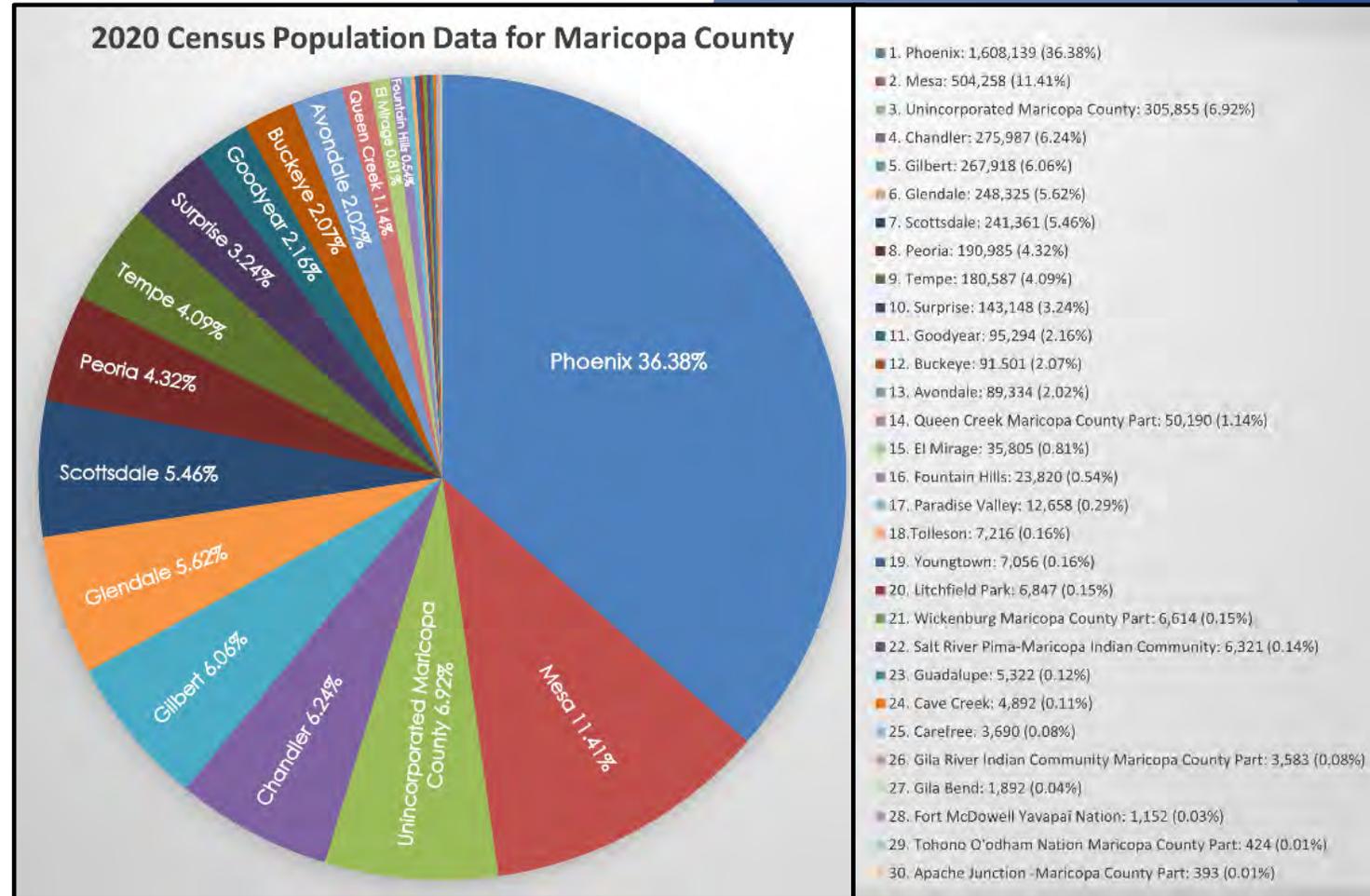
- Current and future Regional Park System
- Overview of planning documents
- Regional opportunities and system “gaps”

- Cities and Towns, State agencies, and Federal agencies

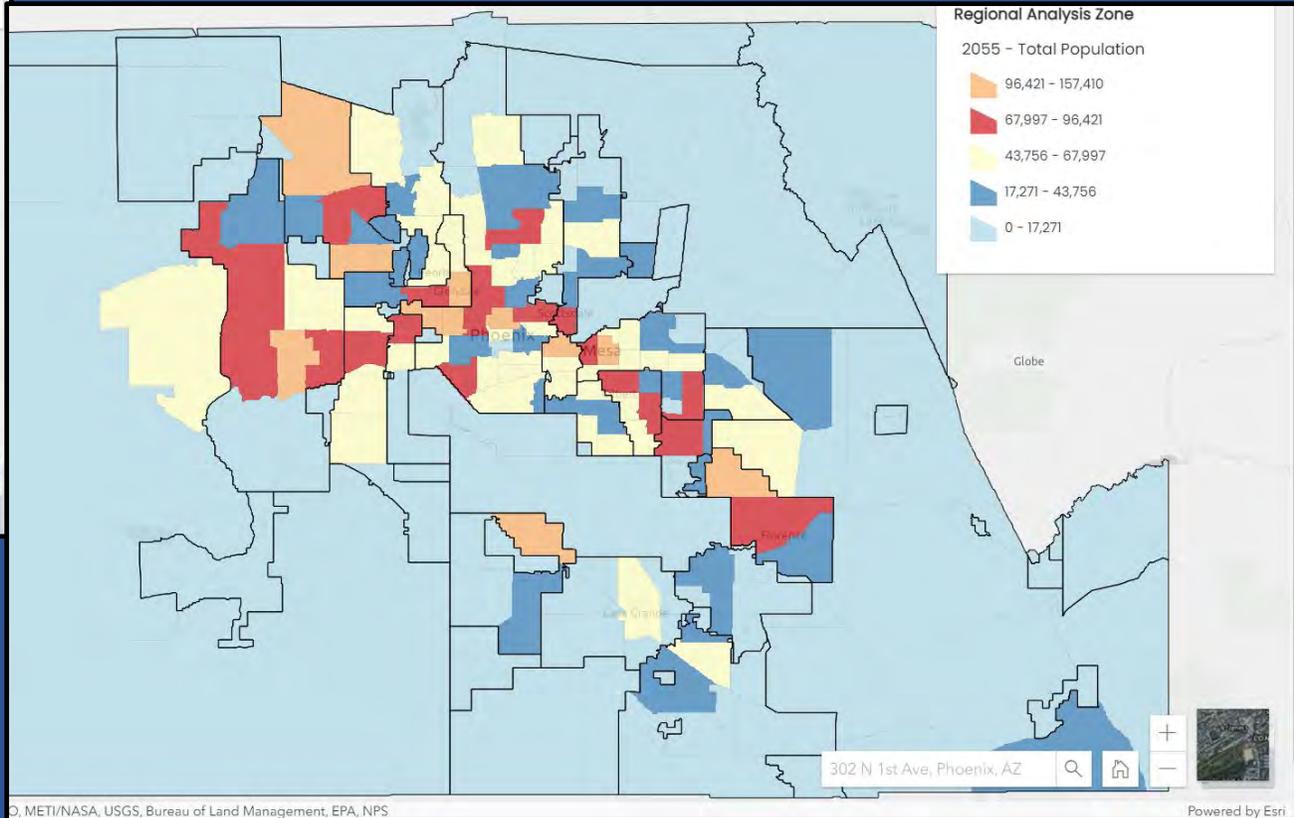
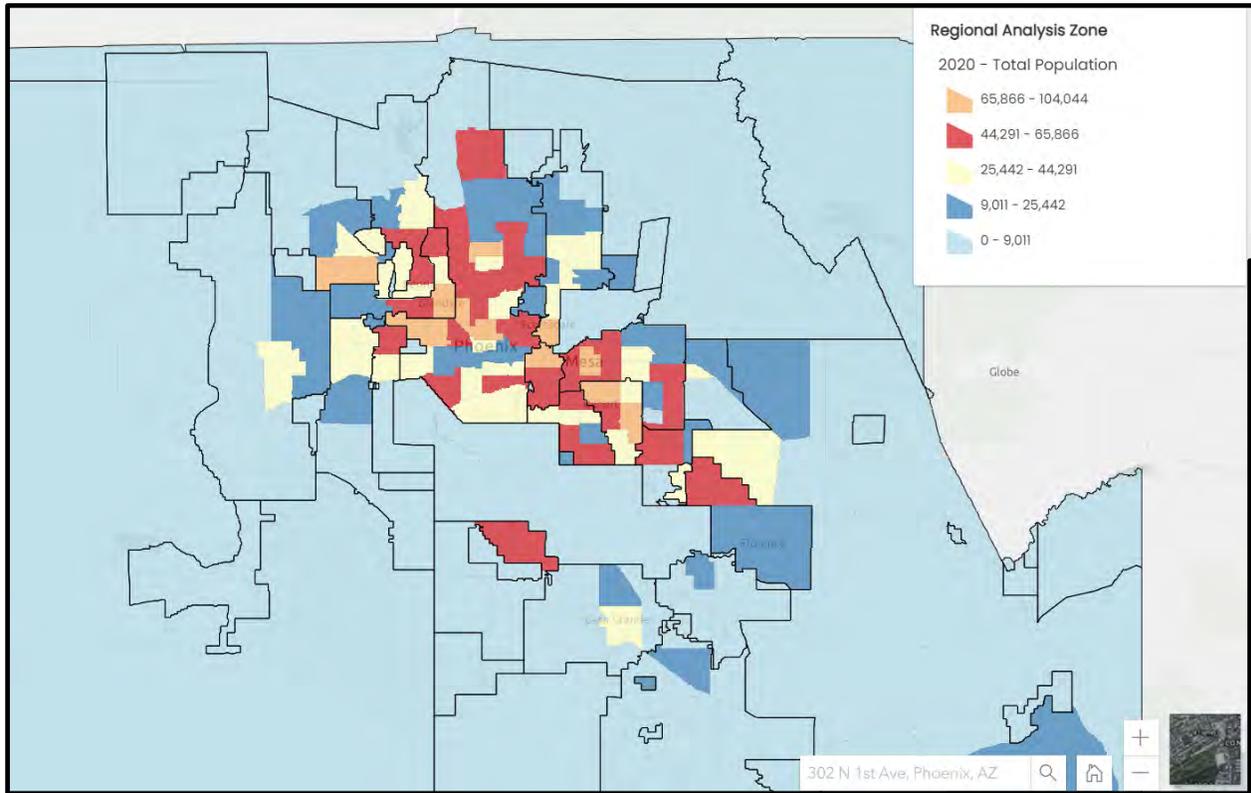


DEMOGRAPHICS: POPULATION

- Maricopa County 2020 Population: **4,420,568**
 - *increased 15.8% since 2010*
 - **61.8%** of Arizona residents live in Maricopa County
- Arizona 2020 Population: **7,151,502**



DEMOGRAPHICS: POPULATION



NATIONAL TRENDS 2019-2020

Physical activity **increased 3.6%** from 2019 to 2020.

Activity that increased the most: **Camping 28%**

- Hiking up 16.3%
- Road bicycling up 16.3%
- Trends indicated a larger percentage of non-white enthusiasts started camping.

Passive recreation

- Birdwatching up almost 19%
- RV camping up 15%

Aquatic Activities

- Kayaking up 14%
- Canoeing up almost 7%
- Fishing up 8.6%



2021 Sports, Fitness and Leisure Activities

Topline Participation Report



POST-COVID CHALLENGES

RETAINING COVID PARTICIPANTS

Research from Outdoor Industry Association indicated that about one-quarter of new participants say they don't want to continue their new outdoor activities, a number that may grow sharply as consumers return to pre-pandemic habits.

LACK OF DIVERSITY

Nearly three-quarters of outdoor participants in 2020 were White, versus roughly 60 percent of the U.S. population.

Participation rates:

- Declined 7 percent annually among Asians for the past three years
- Stagnated for the last three years among Blacks
- Grew among Hispanics but their rate remained well below Whites

DECLINING INTENSITY

There were fewer devoted outdoor participants but more casual ones. A decade ago, 24 percent of total participants reported participating more than twice a week, while in 2020 just 20 percent did. The same pattern occurred among children, young adults and adults.

FEWER OUTINGS

The average number of annual outings per participant continued a steady, long-term decline, falling from 87 in 2012 to just 71 in 2020.

STAGNANT FEMALE PARTICIPATION

Despite significant industry efforts to address gender disparities, for the last eight years females have represented just 46 percent of outdoor participants, even though 51 percent of Americans were female.

Collective action through philanthropy, marketing, and policies at the local, state and federal levels must address these challenges, help bring individuals and entire communities outside, and inspire them to build life-long relationships with the outdoors.

History indicates that adults who were not exposed to outdoor recreation as children are far less likely to become adult outdoor participants.

Bicycling, camping and fishing were the most popular outdoor activities for children ages 6 to 17, while running, hiking and bicycling topped the list among young adults 18 to 24.

Trends for Youth and Young Adults

PARTICIPATION IN OUTDOOR RECREATION AMONG ADULTS WITH CHILDREN

Households with children had much higher participation rates than those without children—60 percent versus 46 percent. Households with children ages 6 to 12 had the highest overall household participation rates at 62 percent.

Households with children continued to drive participation growth. Without families and young participants the outdoor industry risks losing ground.

HOUSEHOLDS (HH) WITH CHILDREN DRIVE PARTICIPATION GROWTH

	PARTICIPATION RATE	1-YEAR CHANGE	3-YEAR CHANGE
No children ages 1 to 17 in HH	46%	2%	3%
Children ages 1 to 17 in HH	60%	3%	3%
HH with children ages 1 to 5	60%	2%	3%
HH with children ages 6 to 12	62%	4%	4%
HH with children ages 13 to 17	58%	3%	4%

YOUTH (6 TO 17) MOST POPULAR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES*

The popularity of outdoor activities has been determined by those with the highest participation rates.



YOUNG ADULTS (18 TO 24) MOST POPULAR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES*

The popularity of outdoor activities has been determined by those with the highest participation rates.



American Planning Association 2022 Trend Report

- Health Equity and Nature
 - Physical and mental health
 - Healthy and Safe Communities
 - Policies, Systems, and Environmental Changes
 - Declining life expectancy
 - Worsening mental health
 - Pandemic cave syndrome
 - Nature-based solutions
 - Local food systems planning



The Neponset River Greenway in Boston gives residents a place to spend some time in nature. Photo by Anton Grassl.

Improving retention in outdoor recreation

WHAT CAN WE DO TO IMPROVE RETENTION OF NEW PARTICIPANTS?



Create more outdoor recreation opportunities close to home.

- Parks and open areas near where people live are a crucial part of growing participation. The pandemic has shown that there is a demand for close-to-home outdoor recreation opportunities (e.g., snowboard/skate/bike/paddle parks and nature centers).



Help new participants make their activities more social as restrictions lift.



Develop programs and services with the specific goal of diversifying the participant base.



Develop strategies for encouraging people to start small (e.g., walking, running, hiking, birdwatching).



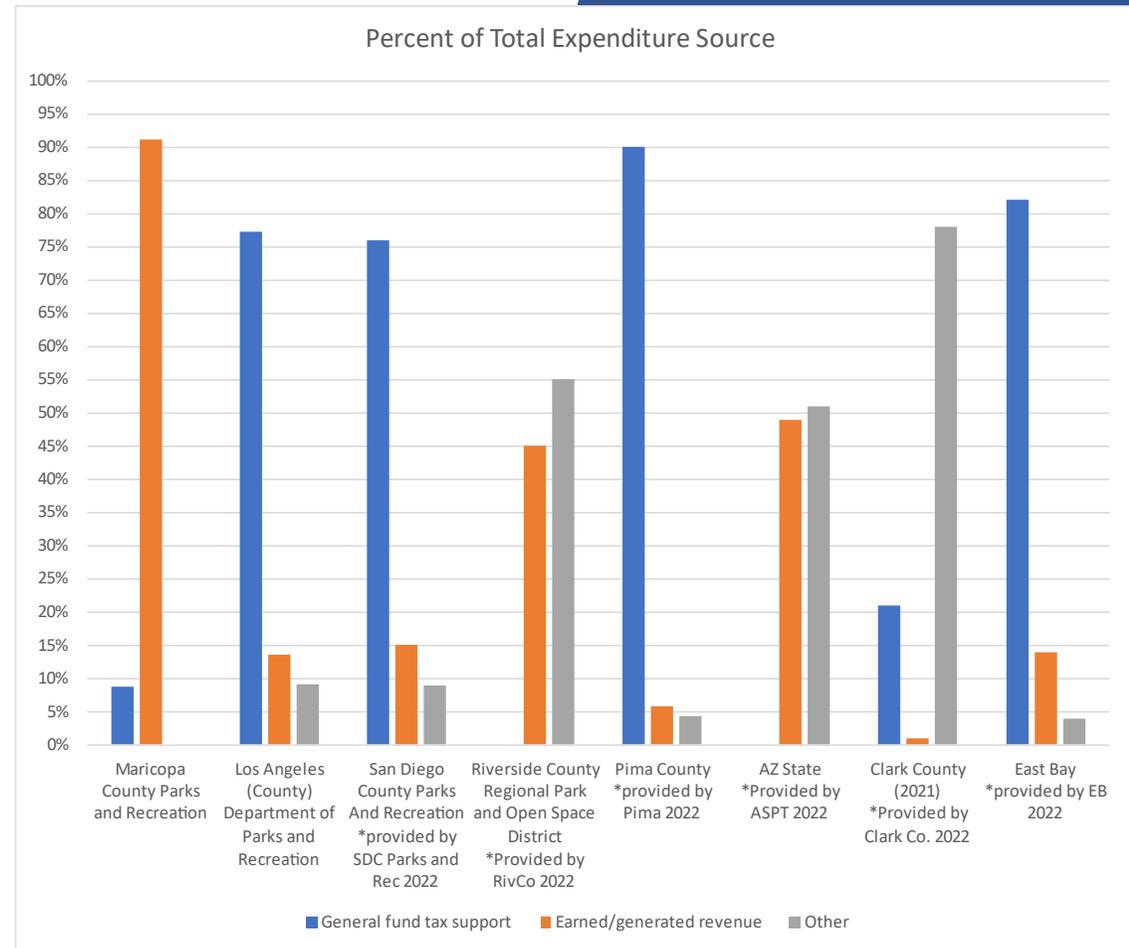
Position outdoor recreation as...

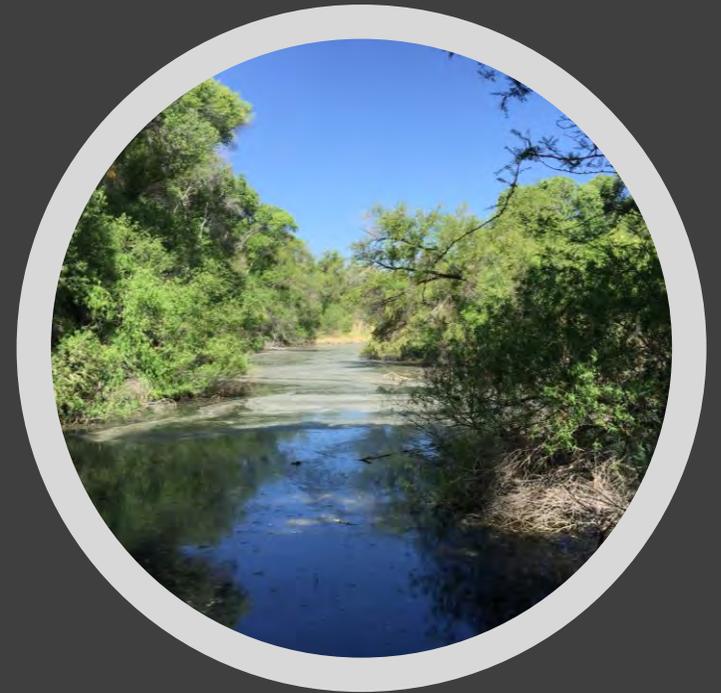
- An antidote to the mental health consequences of the pandemic.
- A way to get out from behind the screens that have dominated pandemic life.
- A method to maintain the focus on what is important in life.



BENCHMARKING

Agency	Total Number of Trails Miles	Trail miles per 10,000 pop.
Maricopa County Parks and Recreation	635	1.4
Los Angeles (County) Department of Parks and Recreation	233	0.2
San Diego County Parks and Recreation	381	1.1
Riverside County Regional Park and Open Space District	180	0.7
Pima County	411.8	3.9
AZ State Parks and Trails	140.3	0.2
Clark County	115 (unincorporated county only)	0.5
East Bay Regional Park Distict	1,330 (845 of unpaved)	4.7





Findings and Recommendations

1. A PRIMARY ROLE OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACE IS TO ENHANCE COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

- Spending time outdoors is important for physical health and mental well-being
- Visitors come to the parks for their scenic beauty, passive recreation, and hiking
- Revitalization of river corridors to bring nature to urban areas and low-income populations
- Engage and partner with nonprofit organizations that promote the importance of open space
- Expand opportunities for visitors seeking challenging mountain biking, hiking, and obstacle courses to increase fitness and endurance



2. REINVESTMENT IS A NEED AND A RESPONSIBILITY TO CONTINUE TO IMPROVE OUR EXISTING PARK SYSTEM

- Implement individual park master plans to expand capacity within the existing park properties and enhance the visitor experience
- Master plans checked against emerging trends and visitor and community needs
- Identify and budget for improving existing park facilities and infrastructure
- Additional park access points and trail connections are desired but should be balanced with protection of wildlife and conservation
- Promote volunteers as an important part of the park operations and park stewardship



3. ACQUIRE NEW PARK LANDS AND WILDLIFE CORRIDORS TO STAY AHEAD OF GROWTH

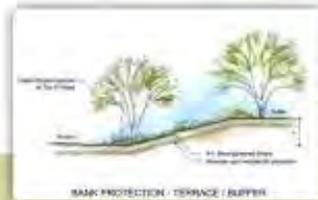
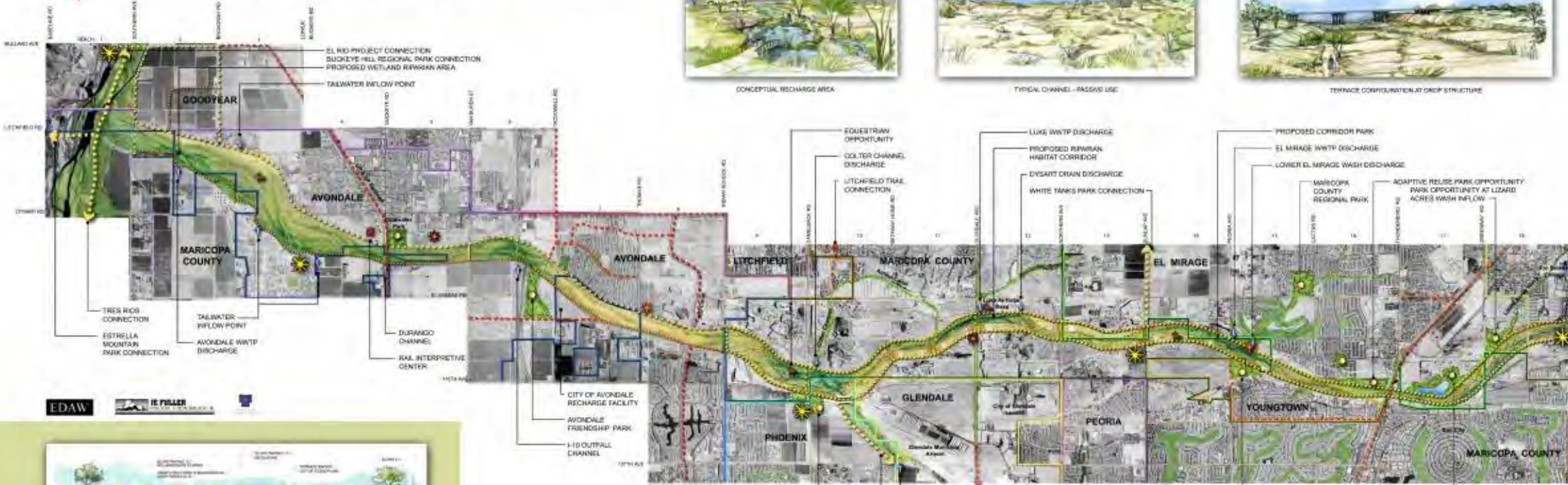
- Identify, prioritize and acquire critical natural landscape blocks and wildlife corridors ahead of development
- Plan and acquire new Regional Parks landscapes for future recreational needs
- Major river corridors present a unique opportunity to provide natural open space to traditionally underserved communities
- Protect regional park buffers through easements, acquisition and agreements
- Partner with Federal and State agencies to manage increase recreation that threaten natural and cultural resources



Agua Fria Watercourse Master Plan



AGUA FRIA WATERCOURSE MASTER PLAN - ADDENDUM CHANNELIZATION ALTERNATIVE: INDIAN SCHOOL TO CAP CANAL

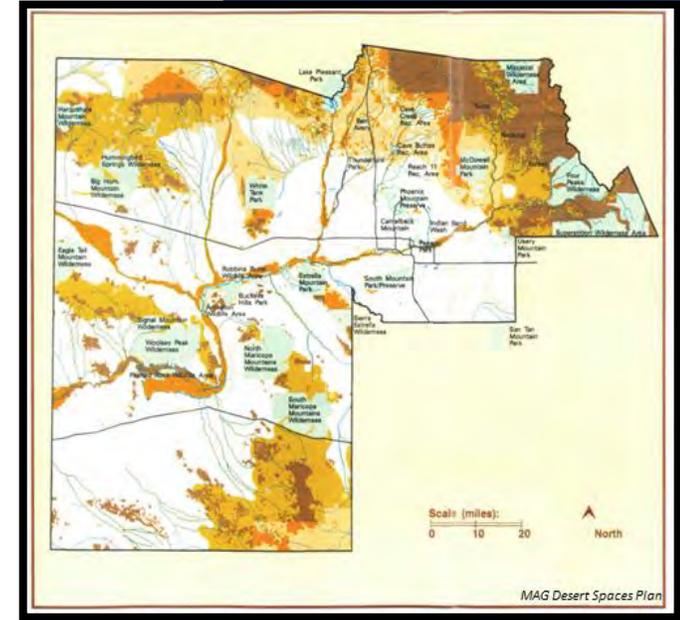


The Future Agua Fria River



4. LEADERSHIP IN CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION MATTER IN PROTECTING OUR WILDLANDS

- Maricopa County Parks to provide leadership in collaboration with others in the protection of open space and wildlife corridors, as well as river corridor restoration through facilitating agreements and partnerships with various cities and towns
- Partner with Federal and State agencies to protect a regional and statewide system of parks, open spaces and natural areas
- Maricopa Association of Governments is in a unique position to identify county and city parks, open spaces, trails and wildlife corridors to promote awareness and regional cooperation
- Develop a Regional Natural Resource Plan at a local and regional scale



5. DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE FUNDING IS CRITICAL FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE PARK SYSTEM

- Maintain and grow a diversity of revenue streams, including, fees, concessionaires, bonds, grants and other public funding
- Promote intergovernmental agreements and partnerships to enhance maintenance, expand stewardship and increase park programming
- Secure dedicated County General Funds for resource management, acquisition and protection of natural areas
- Enhance revenue through capacity building within existing parks, facilities, programs and concessionaires
- **Evaluate the County's parkland inventory to realize the highest and best use, including additional revenue sources**



Implementation

Acquire New Park Lands and Wildlife Corridors

- 2023-2030: Management Partnerships with Tonto USFS and BLM for Existing Recreation Areas.
- 2030-2050: Establish New Regional Parks and Promote Management Partnerships.
- 2030+ (next 50 years): Expanded Park and Open Space Connections to the Greater State Systems.

Partnerships

Tonto National Forest



- Lower Verde River Recreation Areas
- Joint management of areas that are within an urban interface zone

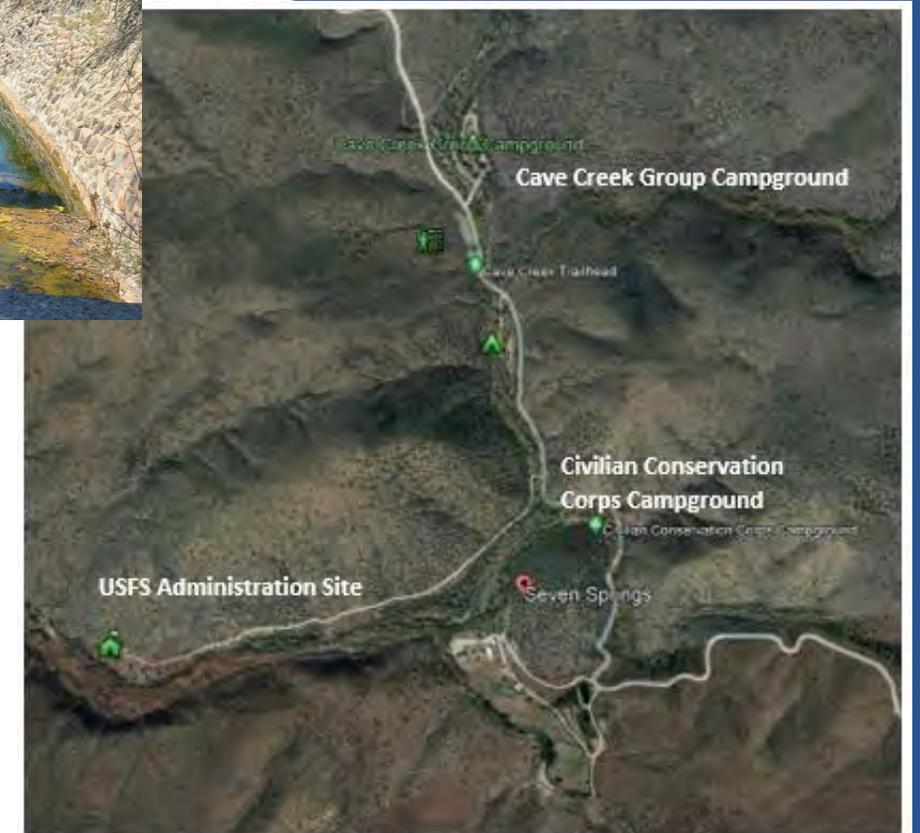
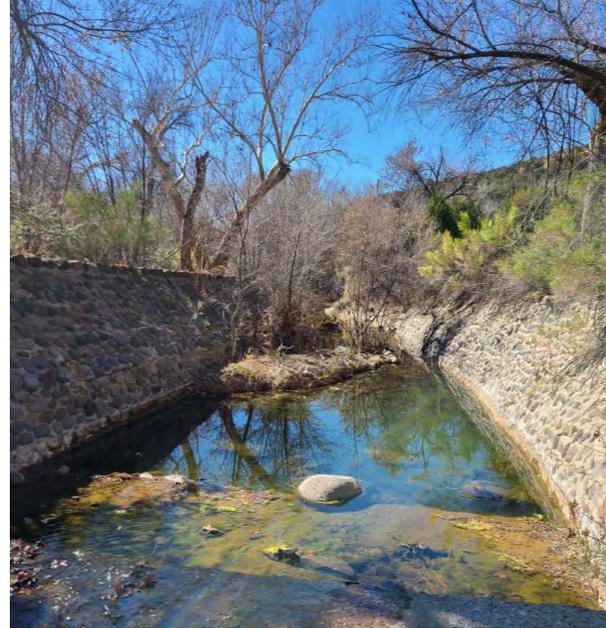


Lower Verde River Recreation Site

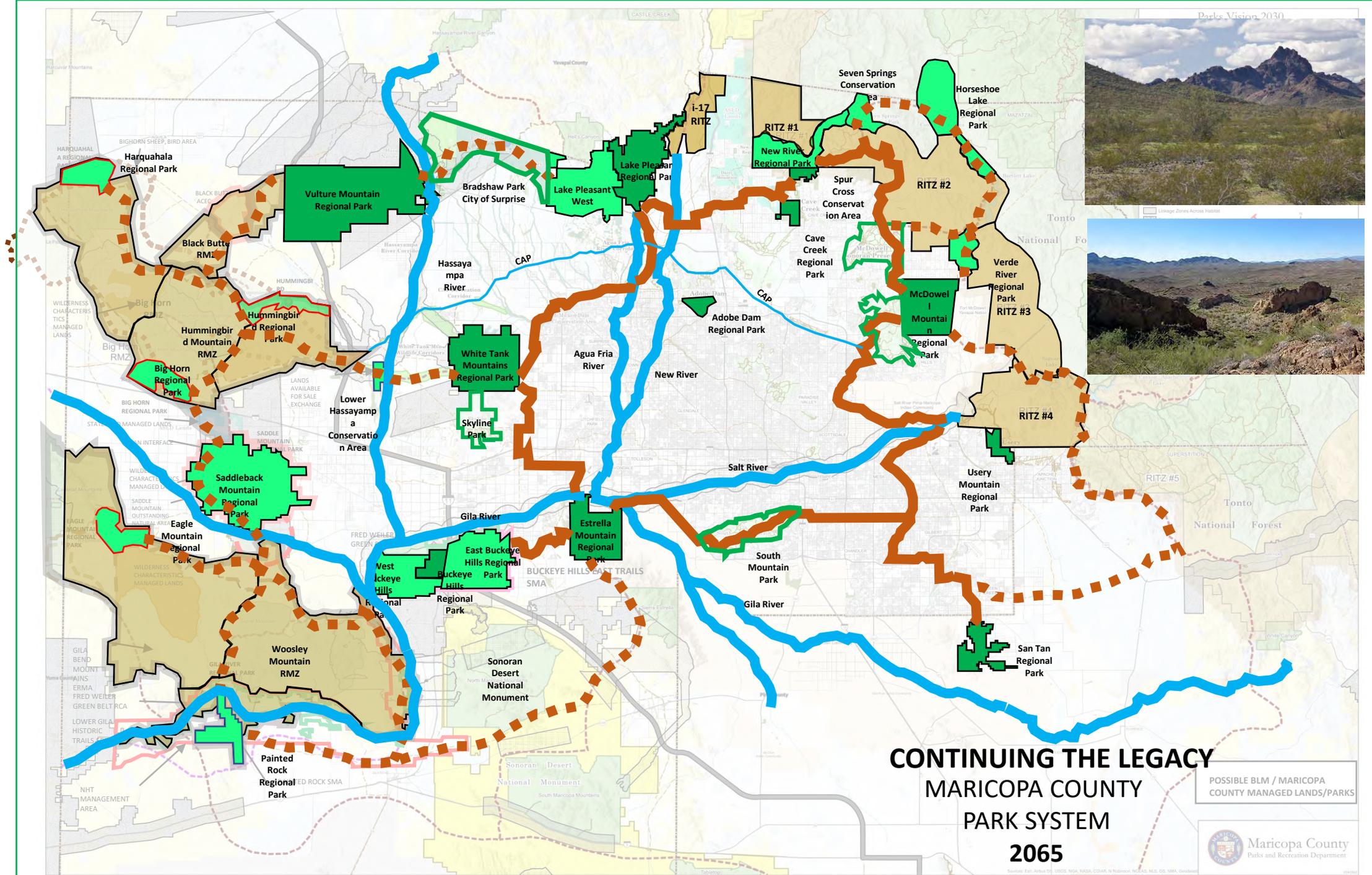
Partnerships

Tonto National Forest

- Seven Springs Conservation Area
- Opportunity to interpret, protect and preserve an important cultural destination



Potential Seven Springs Regional Park



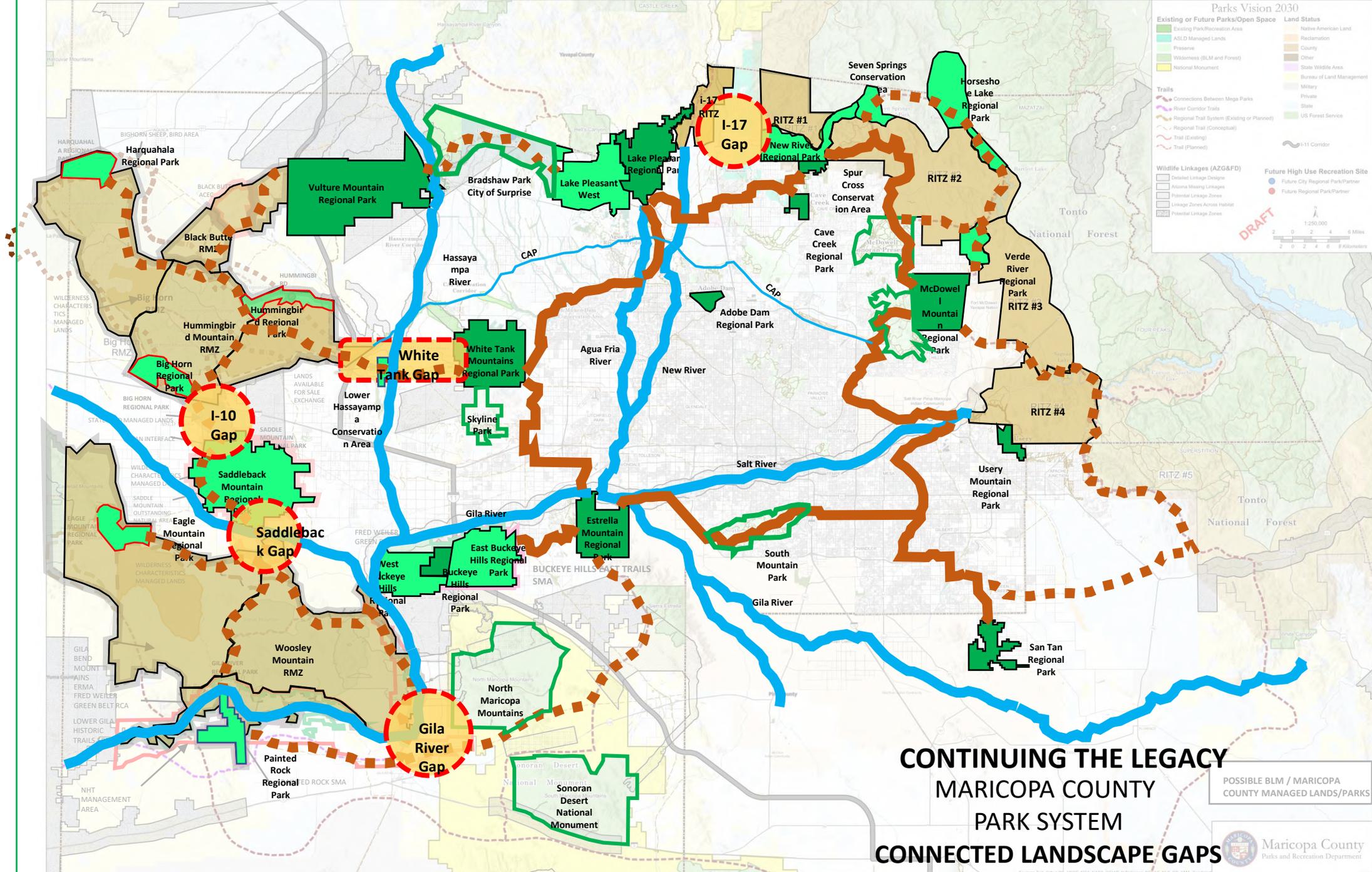
CONTINUING THE LEGACY
MARICOPA COUNTY
PARK SYSTEM
2065

POSSIBLE BLM / MARICOPA COUNTY MANAGED LANDS/PARKS



- Existing or Future Parks/Open Space**
 - Existing Parks/Recreation Areas
 - ASLD Managed Lands
 - Preserve
 - Wilderness (BLM and Forest)
 - National Monument
- Land Status**
 - Native American Land
 - Reclamation
 - County
 - Other
 - State Wildlife Area
 - Bureau of Land Management
 - Military
 - Private
 - State
 - US Forest Service
- Trails**
 - Connections Between Mega Parks
 - River Corridor Trails
 - Regional Trail System (Existing or Planned)
 - Regional Trail System (Conceptual)
 - Trail (Existing)
 - Trail (Planned)
- Wildlife Linkages (AZG&FD)**
 - Detailed Linkage Design
 - Arizona Missing Linkages
 - Potential Linkage Zones
 - Linkage Zones Across Habitat
 - Potential Linkage Zones
- Future High Use Recreation Site**
 - Future City Regional Park/Partner
 - Future Regional Park/Partner

DRAFT



CONTINUING THE LEGACY
MARICOPA COUNTY
PARK SYSTEM
CONNECTED LANDSCAPE GAPS

POSSIBLE BLM / MARICOPA COUNTY MANAGED LANDS/PARKS



PLAN ELEMENTS

Balancing People and Place

PEOPLE



PLACE



**COMMUNITY
HEALTH AND
WELL-BEING**

**PRESERVING
REGIONAL
NATURAL
HERITAGE**

**QUALITY OF
LIFE, AND THE
NEW ECONOMY**

**QUALITY
REGIONAL
SYSTEM OF
PARKS, OPEN
SPACES, AND
TRAILS**

**SUSTAINING
AND
MAINTAINING
PARK
RESOURCES**

**EXCEPTIONAL
VISITOR
EXPERIENCES**

**CONNECTED
LANDSCAPES
AND TRAILS**

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