

Parks Inventory & Analysis Report

Supplement B

What's Inside

Supplement B – Parks Inventory & Analysis Report

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Park Classifications

To better understand the park system in Merced, the PROS Master Plan categorizes the City's 43 total parks into six categories based on their size, amenities, and geographic area.

Mini Park (typical size: less than 2 acres)

Mini Parks are smaller parks that provide passive recreation opportunities and access to nature. They play an important role in providing outdoor access for high density neighborhoods and serve residents within a half mile radius. Open grassy areas, picnic tables, short walking paths, and playgrounds are typical park amenities.

Plazas (typical size: less than 1 acre)

Plazas are small public spaces found in urban areas, civic centers, and downtown districts, designed for social gatherings and pedestrians. Common features include seating areas, public art, and landscaping. Plazas often serve as a location for Merced's events and markets.

Neighborhood Park (typical size: 2 – 8 acres)

Neighborhood parks are medium-sized green spaces offering both passive and active recreation. These parks are designed to serve local residents within a half mile radius. They often feature amenities such as playgrounds, picnic areas, walking paths, and occasionally sports courts or practice fields, and should be centered around safe biking and walking access.

Community Park (typical size: 10 – 25 acres)

Community Parks are designed to serve the daily recreation needs of the larger community. They generally serve community members within a one to two mile radius. They typically contain amenities found in neighborhood parks but also larger park amenities such as sports fields, multiple sport courts, restrooms, and dedicated parking. Community centers and recreation centers are also often located within Community Parks.

Greenways (typical size: varies)

Greenways, also commonly referred to as linear parks, serve as a transportation corridor for non-motorized facilities such as walking and cycling. They may include trails, green streets and boulevards. Linear parks often provide safe pedestrian routes as well as recreation opportunities such as play areas, fitness stations, public art, and gathering spaces.

Park Classifications

Regional Park/Open Space (typical size: 25+ acres)
Regional parks and open space cater to both city-wide recreational needs and the broader local community. They typically feature a variety of amenities, including sports facilities capable of hosting regional tournaments. Nature-focused regional parks may also include designated natural areas and trails. Restroom facilities and dedicated parking are usually provided to users. Regional Parks are sometimes nature-oriented and will not contain sports facilities.

Each of Merced’s six park types provides standard and unique recreation opportunities. A summary of the existing park acres by park type is provided in Figure B.1. Merced also contains many Homeowners Associations (HOAs), many of which contain private park facilities such as pools, play areas, and courts. These facilities are not maintained by Merced. Therefore, they are not a part of the PROS Master Plan’s analysis.

As shown in Figure B.1 all 43 parks in Merced create a well-distributed park system. The largest clusters of parks are found on the north and south ends of the city. Merced's park system includes a total of 14 Mini Parks, 2 Plazas, 15 Neighborhood Parks, 4 Community Parks, 4 Greenways, and 4 Regional Parks, as detailed in Figure B.2.

Figure B.1: Existing Park Acreage by Park Type

PARK TYPE	ACRES	#	SIZE
Mini Park	9.53	14	Less than 2 acres
Plaza	5.53	2	Less than 1 acre
Neighborhood Park	74.33	15	Between 2-8 acres
Community Park	99.52	4	More than 8 acres
Greenway	92.43	4	Varies
Regional Park	85.88	4	Greater than 25 acres
Total	367.56		

Park Classifications

Figure B.2: Existing Parks, Acreage, and Park Type

ID	PARK NAME	ACRES	TYPE
1	Ada Givens Park	5.00	Neighborhood Park
2	Albert Lawson Park	4.21	Greenway
3	Applegate Park	26.46	Regional Park
4	Benjamin Banneker Memorial Park	0.96	Mini Park
5	Bikeway/Park	9.08	Greenway
6	Black Rascal Creek Strip Park (#1-7)	70.28	Greenway
7	Bob Carpenter Park	5.97	Neighborhood Park
8	Bob Hart Square	0.42	Plaza
9	Burbank Park	3.76	Neighborhood Park
10	Carol Gabriault Park	5.58	Neighborhood Park
11	Charles Richard Drew Park	0.52	Mini Park
12	Davenport Park	8.36	Neighborhood Park
13	Dennis Chavez Memorial Park	0.66	Mini Park
14	Diego Rivera Park	0.25	Mini Park

ID	PARK NAME	ACRES	TYPE
15	Dwight Amey Park	6.92	Neighborhood Park
16	Elmer Murchie Park	3.56	Neighborhood Park
17	Fahrens Park	47.62	Community Park
18	Fredrick Douglas Park	0.93	Mini Park
19	Gilbert Macias Park	4.91	Neighborhood Park
20	Hansen Neighborhood Park	0.21	Mini Park
21	Harriet Tubman Park	0.45	Mini Park
22	Joe Herb Park	26.47	Community Park
23	Macready Park	3.34	Mini Park
24	McNamara Park	8.70	Community Park
25	Merced Dog Park	7.11	Regional Park
26	Nannini Youth Sports Complex	13.02	Regional Park
27	E. 12th Street Neighborhood Park	0.39	Mini Park
28	Old Fahrens Park	2.41	Neighborhood Park

Park Classifications

Figure B.2 (cont.): Existing Parks, Acreage, and Park Type

ID	PARK NAME	ACRES	TYPE
29	Parque De Los Angelitos	0.17	Mini Park
30	Rahilly Park	16.74	Community Park
31	Ray Flanagan Park	3.96	Neighborhood Park
32	Richard Bernasconi Neighborhood Park	7.15	Neighborhood Park
33	Roland D. Brooks, Jr. Park	4.22	Neighborhood Park
34	Rudolph Joseph Merino Neighborhood Park	8.82	Neighborhood Park
35	Santa Fe Park Strip (#1-3)	8.86	Greenway
36	Staff Sergeant Frank Joseph Gasper Park	0.26	Mini Park

Merced continues to look towards the future and plan for additional parks, including the General Vang Pao Park, Charles Ogletree Park, Lester K. Yoshida Park, and Alfarata Park. Future park acreage and park type is shown in Figure B.3.

ID	PARK NAME	ACRES	TYPE
37	Stephen Gray Park	1.02	Neighborhood Park
38	Stephen Leonard Park	2.70	Neighborhood Park
39	Sunrise Park	0.53	Mini Park
40	The Love Veasley Family Park	0.17	Mini Park
41	William Lloyd Garrison Park	1.02	Mini Park
42	Merced Regional Sports Complex	39.29	Regional Park
43	Bob Heart Square	5.11	Plaza

Figure B.3: Future Parks, Acreage, and Park Type

ID	PARK NAME	ACRES	TYPE
A	E. 12th Street Neighborhood Park	9.06	Neighborhood Park
B	Old Fahrens Park	3.89	Neighborhood Park
C	Parque De Los Angelitos	3.68	Neighborhood Park
D	Rahilly Park	4.41	Neighborhood Park

Level of Service Analysis

A park Level of Service (LOS) is an analysis conducted for park systems utilizing three metrics that together make up the Parks+ Methodology. The three metrics are the Population LOS, Access LOS, and the Amenity LOS. Together, these metrics help evaluate how parks, open spaces, and facilities serve a community and identify opportunities for improvement. Each of the three metrics is calculated for the existing park conditions and park amenities using a base year population. Population growth projections, along with future planned projects, can also be used to inform and guide park planning efforts in the future. Feedback gathered throughout the duration of the outreach efforts from the community, stakeholders, and Merced staff, in conjunction with the LOS, provides an in-depth understanding of existing and future park needs for Merced.

Population LOS

The population LOS compares Merced's population to the total existing park acres of 321.35 to calculate the park acres per 1,000 residents. The total park acres used do not reflect the previously presented 367.56 acres because of the 50 percent reduction of linear park acreages due to their passive recreation uses.

The population LOS is compared to Merced's current goal to provide a total park acreage deficit or surplus which helps identify future opportunities. A population-based park acreage assessment demonstrates the extent to which Merced is meeting its goal of providing five acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents, as established in Merced's General Plan. Figure B.4 shows the existing LOS in Merced which is about 3.28 park acres per 1,000 residents, behind the established goal. For the approximately 98,039 current residents in Merced, an additional 168.85 park acres would be needed to meet its goal of 5 acres per 1,000 goal set in the City's General Plan. Figure B.4 also shows the LOS for the future projected population of 109,986 derived from the Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) 2018 Regional Transportation Plan for Merced County. The population of Merced is expected to increase steadily over the next 20 years. If Merced does not add additional parkland, the total acres in deficit may increase from 168.85 to 228.58 over the next two decades.

Level of Service Analysis

Figure B.4: Existing and Future Park Acreage LOS

	EXISTING 2025	FUTURE 2045
Existing Park Acreage <i>(includes only 50% of linear park acreage)</i>	321.35	321.35
Recommended Adopted Standard <i>(per 1,000 population)</i>	5.00	5.00
Acres <i>(per 1,000 population)</i>	3.28	2.92
Total Surplus/Deficit Acres <i>(per 1000 population)</i>	-1.72	-2.08
Acres in Deficit	168.85	228.58
Population	98,039	109,986
Acres <i>(per 1,000 population)</i>	98.04	109.99
Park acres needed (5 per 1,000 population)	490.20	549.93

Sources: California Department of Finance , Merced County of Association of Governments 2018 Regional Transportation Plan

Access LOS

An accessibility analysis was conducted to determine the geographic distribution and accessibility of Merced’s parks and recreation system. The analysis visualizes which community members currently have easy walking access to a park facility and which do not by showing areas within a 10-minute walking distance of a park facility. The analysis generates a “walkable service area” around each park by using routes based on the road network and park access points. This analysis draws opportunities to improve sidewalks, bicycle facilities, trails, and roads to increase park accessibility. Lastly, this analysis shows residential areas in Merced that are not within walking distance to a park facility, which can be used to prioritize certain areas for potential new parks.

Level of Service Analysis

- **Park Accessibility:** As depicted in Figure B.5, the majority of schools are within a half-mile walk to parks and other recreational facilities. Similarly, Figure B.6 shows the residential areas in addition to schools. The majority of residential areas are within a half-mile walkable area to parks. However, gaps considered park-access gaps are visible in the northernmost part of the city and near downtown Merced. This analysis can be used to identify improvements for sidewalks, bicycle facilities, trails, and roads to improve park accessibility, as well as help where to build new parks to address gaps.

- **Recreation Accessibility:** Figure B.7 displays the Indoor Recreation Park Facilities, the Merced Senior Community Center, Stephen Leonard Youth Center, McNamara Youth Center, McCombs Youth Center, and the Central Youth Center, all of which are located in downtown and southeast Merced. Although four schools are within a half-mile walk of an indoor recreation facility, people have to use another mode of transportation, such as public transit, bicycle, or motor vehicle. Exploring increasing the number of indoor recreation facilities may be an opportunity for Merced, particularly north of the city.

Figures B.5 & B.6: Half-Mile Walk to a Park; with Residential Areas

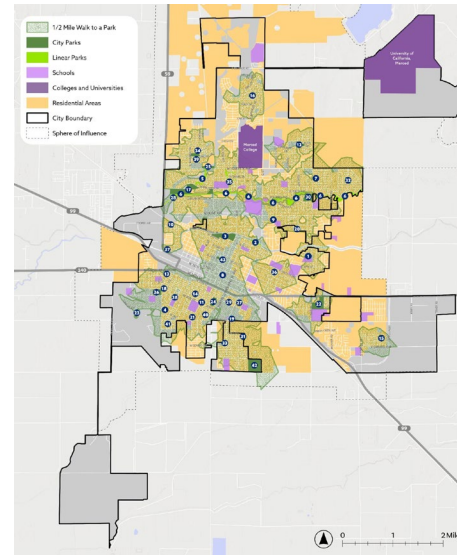
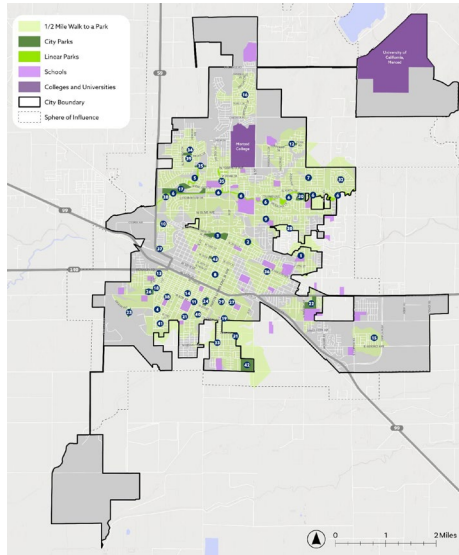
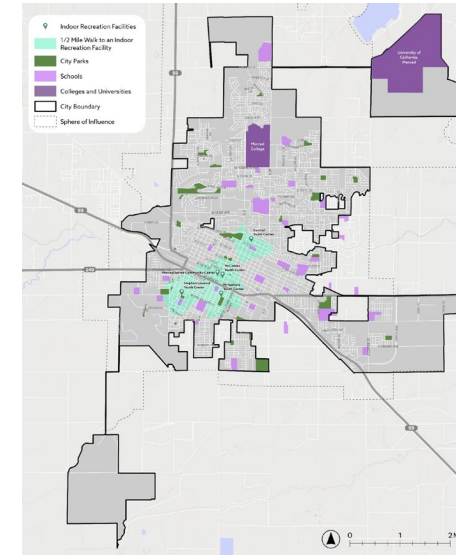


Figure B.7: Half-Mile Walk to an Indoor Recreation Facility



NOTE: Full page maps can be found in Supplement C: Park Maps

Level of Service Analysis

- **Trail Accessibility:** To further understand accessibility to Merced's parks and recreation system, an assessment of the existing trails within a half-mile of parks was conducted. As shown in Figure B.8, Merced's Class I Multi-use trails are primarily east-to-west connections that serve the central and northern parks and facilities. One of the largest north-to-south connections is Campus Parkway's Class I Multi-use trail, which connects to Bear Creek for pedestrians and bicyclists to travel to parks. However, the potential for more trail access routes to parks and facilities for residents in the south of Merced is evident and an opportunity to be explored. Additionally, Figure B.9 shows the entire bicycle network in Merced, the most extensive in the County, which includes Class II bicycle lanes and Class III bicycle routes. These types of bicycle facilities serve bicyclists who ride alongside motor vehicles. Bicyclists who are comfortable riding with traffic can use the existing north-south Class II bicycle lanes to access parks, when compared to Class I multi-use path users.

Figure B.8: Half-Mile Walk to a Multi-Use Trail

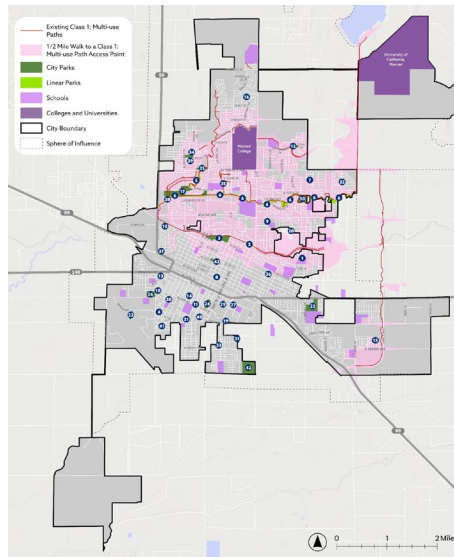
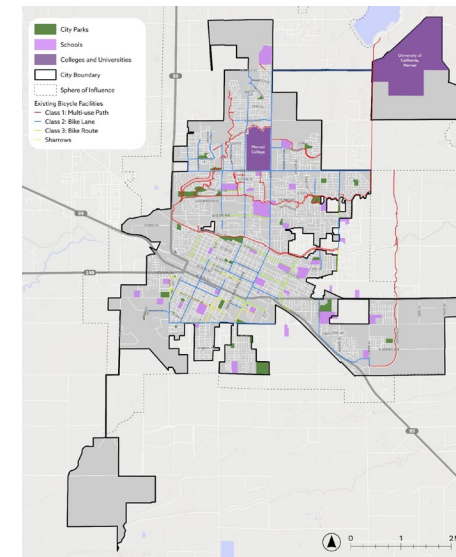


Figure B.9: Existing Bike Facilities



NOTE: Full page maps can be found in Supplement C: Park Maps

Level of Service Analysis

Amenity LOS

The amenity LOS is a comparative analysis of the collected park fieldwork data compared to the NRPA benchmark data. The NRPA database allows for a population-based amenity comparison relative to long-term state and city national averages, similar to Merced. The NRPA database and collected park fieldwork data together help determine the existing amenities for each of Merced's parks.

Amenity totals are included in Figure B.10 alongside recommended benchmark service levels based on the current population. Additionally, it shows Merced's existing amenities using future population projections to determine the future amenity level of service. As the population increases, deficits increase if no new amenities are added citywide.

The following colors correspond to a different amenity metric:

- **Green** meets/will meet the needs of the population
- **Orange** is on the cusp of meeting the needs
- **Red** does not/will not meet the needs of the population

While the amenity LOS analysis helps identify deficits, it should not be the only indicator for identifying amenity shortfalls. It is also important to consider regional trends, Merced's unique demographics, and the needs identified during the community engagement process.

Level of Service Analysis

Figure B.10: Existing and Future Amenity Level of Service

AMENITY LEVEL OF SERVICE (2025 current est. pop. = 98,039) (2045 future est. pop. = 109,986,000)		TOTAL EXISTING INVENTORY	NATIONAL GUIDELINE SERVICE LEVEL (1/# pop.)	RECOMMENDED CITY STANDARD (1/# pop.)	TOTAL FACILITIES NEEDED	TOTAL SURPLUS / DEFICIT	TOTAL FUTURE FACILITIES NEEDED	TOTAL FUTURE SURPLUS DEFICIT
Indoor Rec Facilities	Recreation Center	1.0	40,338	40,338	2.4	-1.4	2.7	-1.7
	Community Center	0.0	45,909	45,909	2.1	-2.1	2.4	-2.4
	Senior Center	1.0	67,836	67,836	1.4	-0.4	1.6	-0.6
	Teen Center	4.0	64,386	64,386	1.5	2.5	1.7	2.3
	Nature Center (Zoo)	1.0	65,817	65,817	1.5	-0.5	1.7	-0.7
Outdoor Park & Rec Facilities	Picnic Area (12+ People)	23.0	-	-	19.6	3.4	22.0	1.0
	Playground (ages 5-12)	41.0	5,616	5,616	17.5	23.5	19.6	21.4
	Playground/Tot Lot (ages 2-5)	1.0	17,562	17,562	5.6	-4.6	6.2	-5.2
	Restroom Facility	13.0	-	-	21.3	-8.3	23.9	-10.9
	Basketball	12.0	7,803	7,803	12.6	-0.6	14.1	-2.1
	Volleyball	2.0	-	-	9.8	-7.8	11.0	-9.0
	Tennis	0.0	5,448	5,448	18.2	-18.2	20.4	-20.4
	Pickleball	12.0	11,150	11,150	8.8	3.2	9.8	2.2
	Futsal	1.0	-	-	3.1	-2.1	3.4	-2.4
	Diamond Fields*	9.0	15,869	15,869	6.2	2.8	6.9	2.1
	Rectangular Soccer Fields	9.0	11,671	11,671	8.4	0.6	9.4	-0.4

Level of Service Analysis

Figure B.10 (cont.): Existing and Future Amenity Level of Service

AMENITY LEVEL OF SERVICE (2025 current est. pop. = 98,039) (2045 future est. pop. = 109,986,000)		TOTAL EXISTING INVENTORY	NATIONAL GUIDELINE SERVICE LEVEL (1/# pop.)	RECOMMENDED CITY STANDARD (1/# pop.)	TOTAL FACILITIES NEEDED	TOTAL SURPLUS / DEFICIT	TOTAL FUTURE FACILITIES NEEDED	TOTAL FUTURE SURPLUS DEFICIT
Outdoor Park & Rec Facilities	Football	0.0	38,516	38,500	2.5	-2.5	2.9	-2.9
	Multi-purpose Fields*	6.0	23,738	23,700	4.1	1.9	4.6	1.4
	Disc Golf	1.0	-	100,000	1.0	0.0	1.1	-0.1
	Splashpad/Sprayground	2.0	-	35,000	2.8	-0.8	3.1	-1.1
	Swimming Pool	2.0	61,784	61,800	1.6	0.4	1.8	0.2
	Skate Park	3.0	62,318	62,300	1.6	1.4	1.8	1.2
	Pump Track	0.0	-	106,000	0.9	-0.9	1.0	-1.0
	Stage (no built-in seating)	1.0	-	42,000	2.3	-1.3	2.6	-1.6
	Amphitheater (built in seating)	0.0	64,277	64,300	1.5	-1.5	1.7	-1.7
	Concession Stand	3.0	-	15,600	6.3	-3.3	7.1	-4.1
	Community Garden	0.0	41,804	41,800	2.3	-2.3	2.6	-2.6
Linear Recreation	Dog Park	1.0	51,417	51,400	1.9	-0.9	2.1	-1.1
	Walking Path	9.0	-	5,300	18.5	-9.5	20.8	-11.8
	Outdoor Exercise Area/Exercise Path	0.0	-	28,000	3.5	-3.5	3.9	-3.9

*Indicates amenity that may have a shared use (e.g., Diamond fields with dual uses for softball and youth baseball, Multi-purpose Fields with multiple uses for soccer, football, futsal)