

Engagement Report

Supplement A

What's Inside

Supplement A – Engagement Report

- p. 3** Engagement Stats
- p. 4** Engagement Overall Key Themes
- p. 5** Staff, Department Heads & City Council Planning Sessions
- p. 15** Community Focus Groups
- p. 27** Survey Summary
- p. 34** Pop Up Engagements
- p. 38** Open House

500+ Total Engagement Touchpoints

1392 Total Comments Received

89 Community Open House Attendees



**Your parks,
your voices.**



Engagement *Overall Key Themes*

Connection



The Merced community believe parks and recreation should provide community connection through the provision of services and public spaces.

Safety in parks



Respondents believe that addressing the safety in public spaces – especially the negative effects from the unhoused populations – should be a top priority.

Maintenance in parks



From fixing broken park amenities to more frequent restroom and trash bin cleanings, the community desires a higher level of maintenance standards.

Amenities



The community desires new and improved amenities including splashpads, playgrounds, picnic areas, trail connections, and fitness areas.

Most utilized services



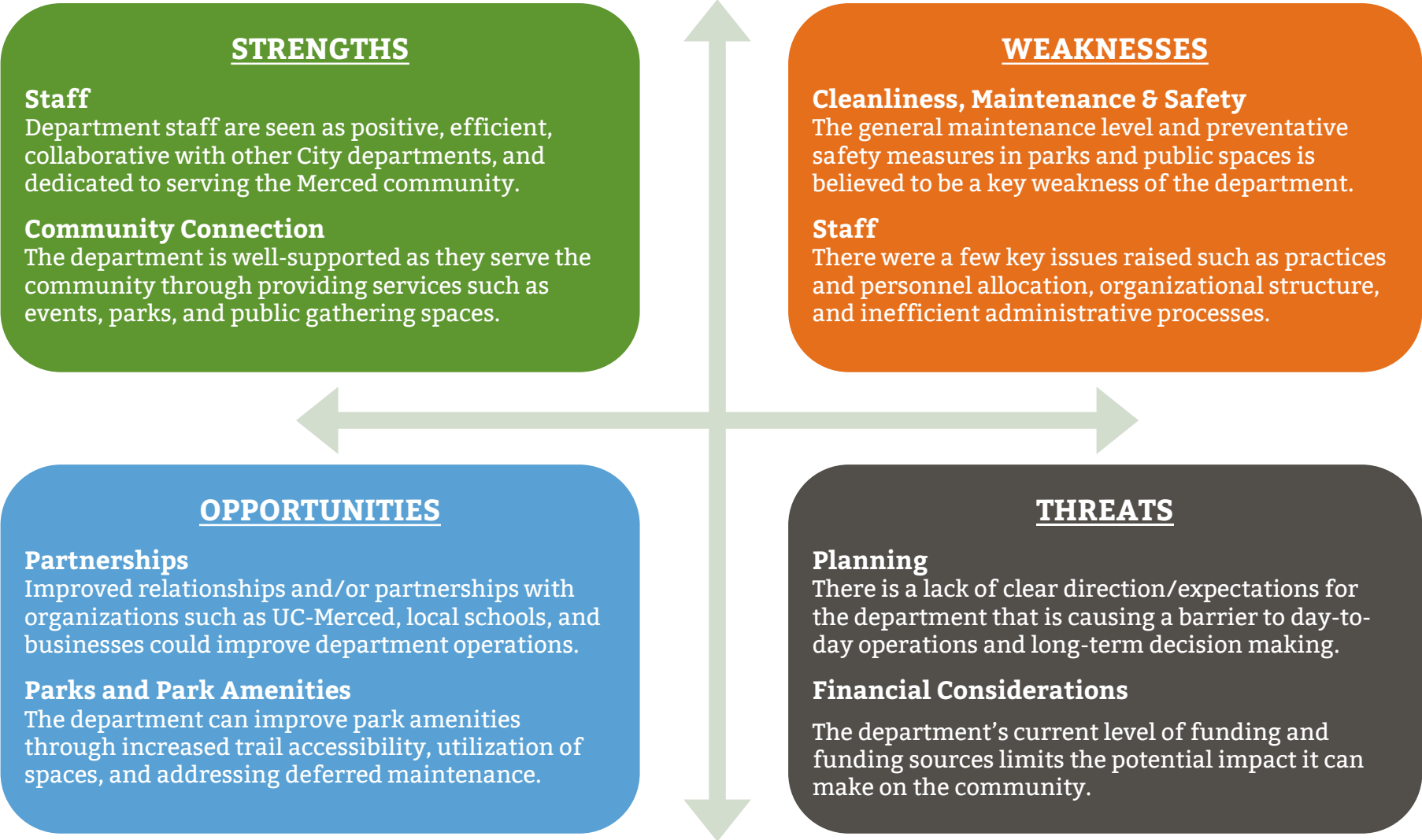
Most visited parks: Applegate Park and Zoo, Rahilly Park, and McNamara Park
Most utilized programs: special events, swim lessons, and youth baseball

Additional funding



There's a need for the City to secure additional/alternative funding sources to improve the Department's overall level of service.

SWOT Analysis *Staff, Department Heads & City Council*



SWOT Analysis *Staff, Department Heads & City Council*

1. What are the organization's strengths? What should be celebrated?

➤ Primary Themes

○ Staff

The most mentioned organizational strength was staff. Responses mentioned that the Department has positive and hard-working individuals that they are efficient, work well with other City staff, and are dedicated to the community.

○ Community Connection

Another primary strength was overall community connection. The department is supported by residents and helps provide a sense of community such as providing events and gathering spaces.

➤ Secondary Themes

○ Work Distribution

The workload distribution (contracted, Public Works support) is seen as an overall strength.

○ Planning

The current planning work of both the department and City-wide is providing positive momentum and energy.

2. What could be improved?

➤ Primary Themes

○ Cleanliness, Maintenance & Safety

The most mentioned organizational area for improvement was the maintenance and safety at department parks, facilities, and services. Specific concerns include lack of preventative safety measures (e.g., lighting and surveillance) and the maintenance of park restrooms.

○ Staff

Staff related issues were voiced such as organizational growth, contracted employees, reorganization of the Parks Division, and improved administrative processes.

SWOT Analysis *Staff, Department Heads & City Council*

➤ Secondary Themes

○ Programs and Services

One secondary theme were issues related to department programs and services. Specific concerns included start times of programs and the lack of services for all community members (such as 40+ families).

○ Interdepartmental Relations

There were a couple of comments calling for improved working relationships between the Parks and Recreation Department and the Planning Division.

○ Financial Considerations

Another secondary theme was a call for increased funding to support department operations.

3. What opportunities exist?

➤ Primary Themes

○ Partnerships

One primary theme identified were partnerships and collaborations. Potential partnerships included the University of California Merced, local schools, implementing an “Adopt-a-Park” program, and with local businesses.

○ Parks and Park Amenities

Improving the department’s parks and park amenities was another key theme heard from participants. Ideas included addressing deferred maintenance and unfinished projects, improving use of green spaces, decreasing maintenance areas, and improving trail accessibility.

➤ Secondary Themes

○ Financial Considerations

An important but less mentioned theme that was identified was funding and measures for capital improvement projects.

SWOT Analysis *Staff, Department Heads & City Council*

- **Cleanliness, Maintenance & Safety**

Some respondents believe that improved safety in parks and public spaces is an area for the department to improve.

- **Operational Efficiencies**

There were a couple of comments for general operational efficiencies specific to parks maintenance practices.

4. What gets in the way?

➤ Primary Themes

- **Planning**

A key area identified were related to the direction and planning of the department. There seems to be a general lack of clear expectations, not enough foresight in decision making, and weighing of financial allocation of maintenance versus development.

- **Staff and Council**

There were quite a few comments related to staff and Council issues ranging from the department's organizational structure to the decision making (and responsiveness) of staff and Council.

- **Financial Considerations**

The final primary theme was the lack of funding allocated to the department.

➤ Secondary Themes

- **Administrative**

A couple of secondary comments stated that general administrative practices and current department agreements are barriers.

- **Unhoused Population**

A secondary theme was the issue of the unhoused population, specifically how they are brought to the City and aren't provided a path forward.

SWOT Analysis *Staff, Department Heads & City Council*

5. What's happening to which the organization should pay attention to?

➤ Primary Themes

○ Planning

The top theme that surfaced were planning-related comments. There is a strong call for department goals and priorities to be established.

○ Financial Considerations

Another primary theme for the department to address are financial considerations such as improving funding, developing strategies to best utilize current tax base, commitment to cost recovery efforts, and better serve low income residents.

➤ Secondary Themes

○ Staffing

Addressing staffing deficits, and the tension that comes with that, was an area identified for the department to pay attention to.

6. Given what's happening, what should be prioritized with attention and/or resources?

➤ Primary Themes

○ Cleanliness, Maintenance & Safety

One of the top priorities identified was the ongoing maintenance in department parks and public spaces and improving the level of service to the community.

○ Financial Considerations

An equally mentioned priority was addressing the department's funding and resource allocation. Areas discussed included securing alternative funding opportunities, the inequity of the general fund's allocation to the department, and maximizing the current budget.

○ Planning

Another key priority was improving department planning efforts from the Parks, Recreation & Open Spaces Master Plan to improving parks maintenance and capital improvement plans

SWOT Analysis *Staff, Department Heads & City Council*

➤ Secondary Themes

- **University of California Merced**

A secondary theme was a call for the department to better support the local University and its students.

- **Cleanliness, Maintenance & Safety**

Another secondary theme was in regard to the maintenance and safety of department parks. One impactful response stated that repeating cycle of vandalism and addressing it can be tough on staff morale.

7. Is there anything else as it relates to the department or master planning process you would like to share?

➤ Primary Themes

- **Cleanliness, Maintenance & Safety**

Many of these comments were related to the department addressing safety in parks and public spaces through improved maintenance and preventative safety measures to improve the experience for residents.

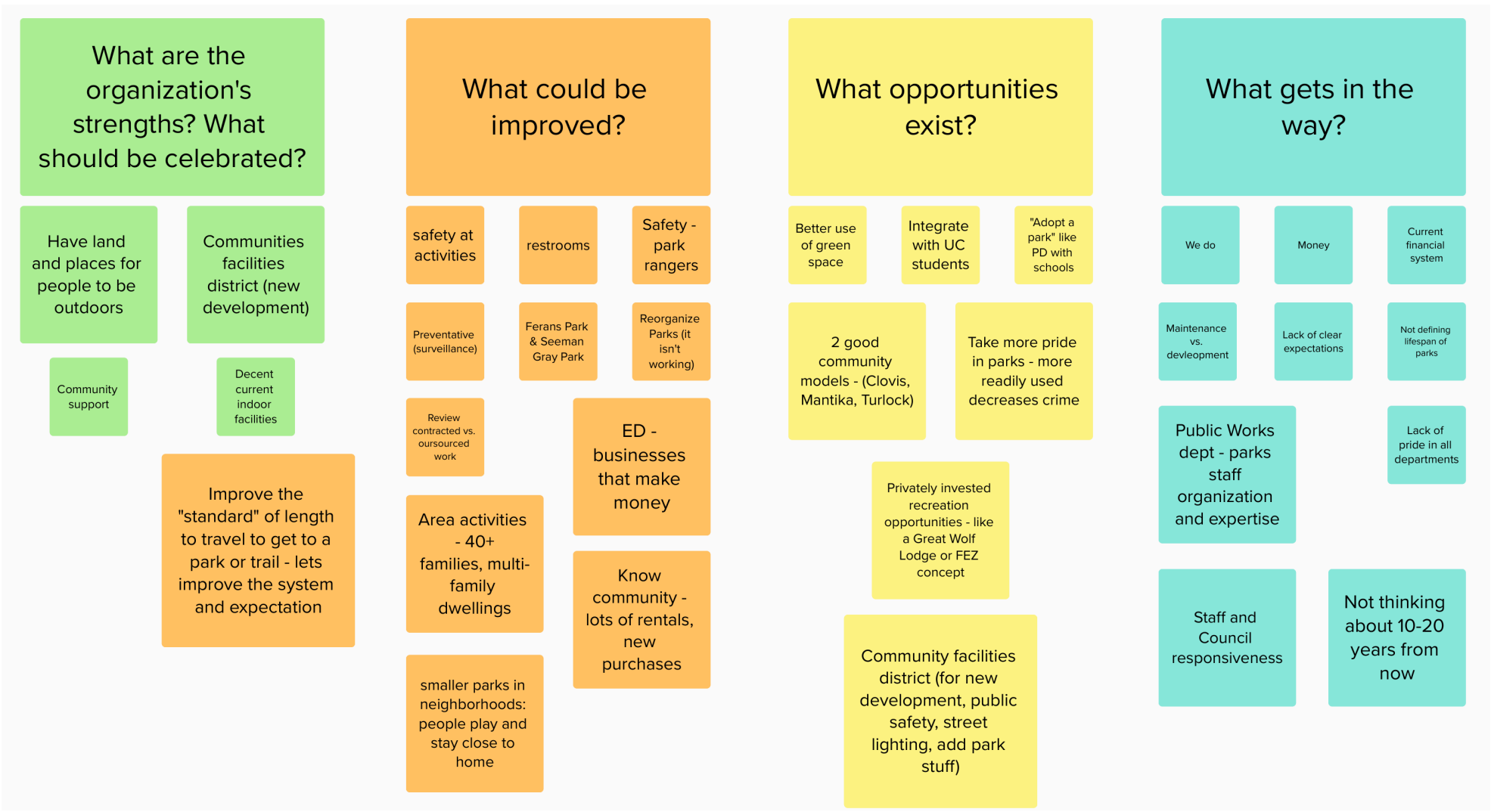
- **Financial Considerations**

There were a number of responses reinforcing the desire for increased funding and the financial sustainability of the department.

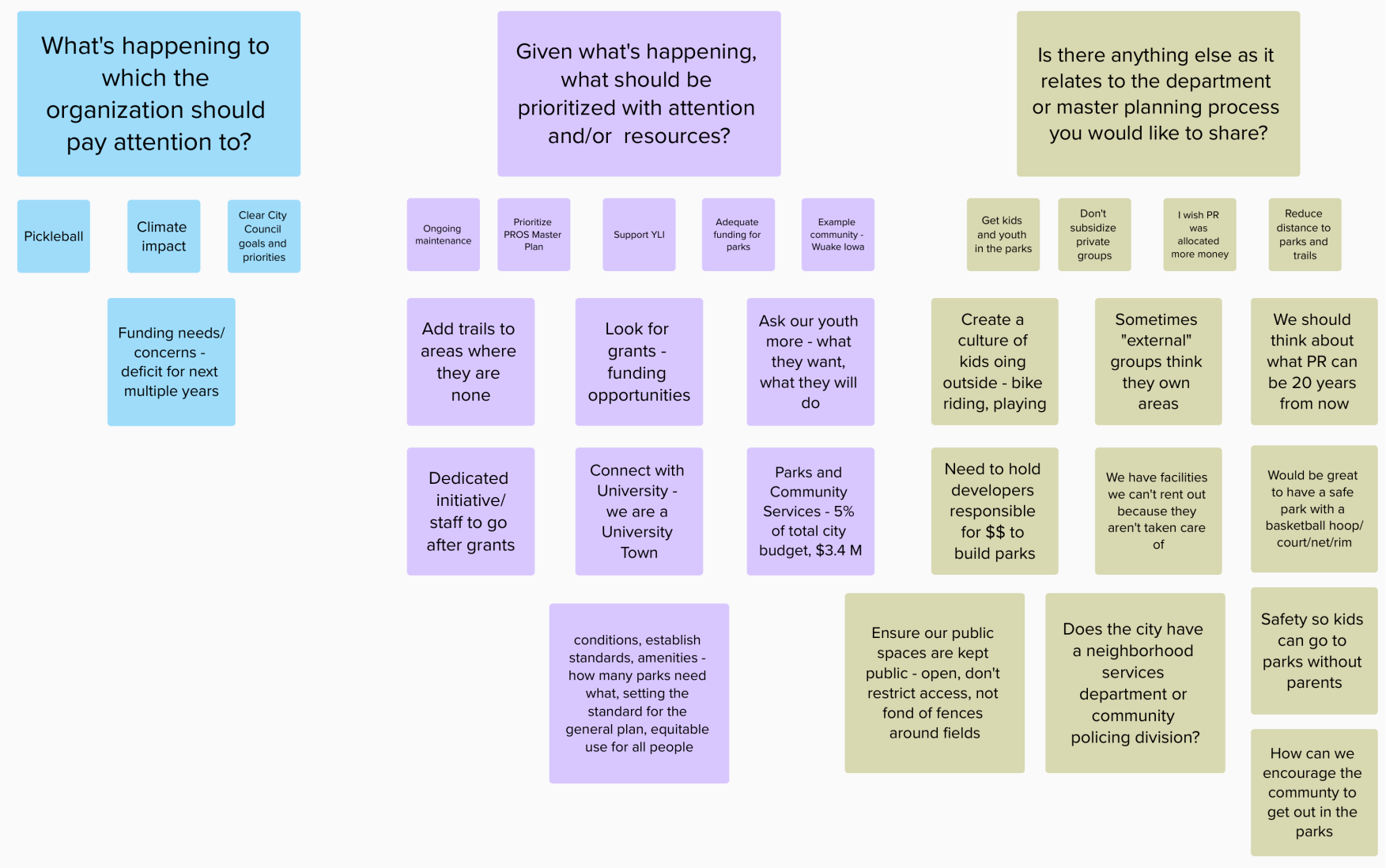
- **Planning**

Another key theme was calling for staff to be keyed into various planning efforts for the longevity of the department. Specific examples included CR 42 and equitable responsibilities with developers.

SWOT Analysis Staff & City Council - Mural Board



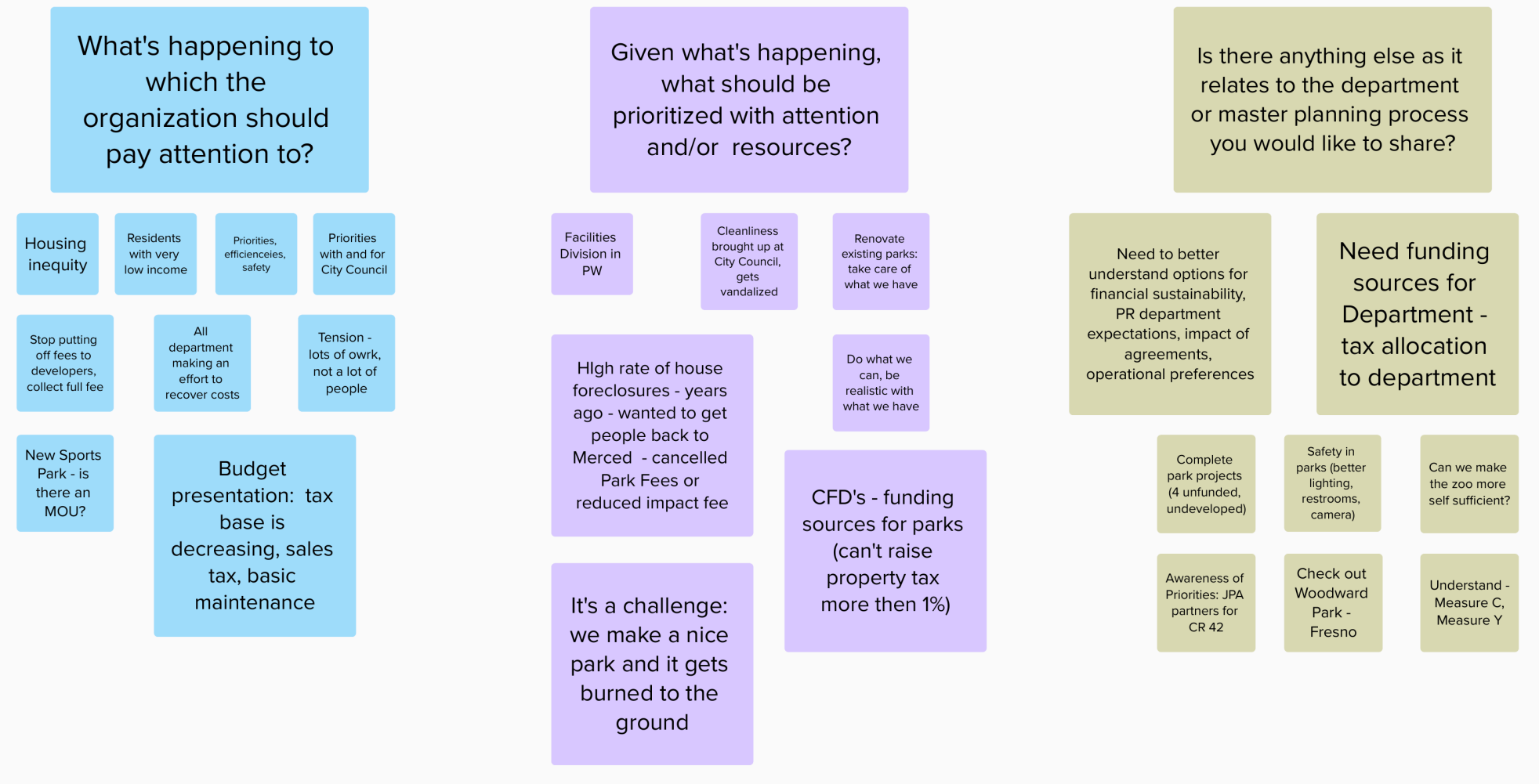
SWOT Analysis Staff & City Council - Mural Board



SWOT Analysis *Department Heads - Mural Board*

What are the organization's strengths? What should be celebrated?	What could be improved?	What opportunities exist?	What gets in the way?
People oriented Do a lot with few staff Mowing is contracted Work funky hours Staff want to be there Positive, pull people in Sense of community Public Safety Approach Knowing we have a lot of potential People who grew up in Merced Desire to make an impact in the community Plan, then budget, then implement Great about going out and doing events in community We have open spaces, green spaces Good relationships with Public Safety PW responsible for (we have staff we have - 7 FTE, 2 temp) Staff responsible for trees, irrigation, trash pick-up, restrooms Event set up, bathrooms, trash (litter contract - loose litter) Love working for Merced - tons of plans happenign right now	More money Restrooms (outdated) Park maintenance Growth (staff, budget) General plan (chapter for PR) More art work - defere graffiti Safety in parks - ranger program? Holding devleopers accountable Parks needs a planner - better continuity Safety - lights in tunnels that are vandal resistant Could use \$\$ better (eg reuse supplies), end of year purchases Administratively, follow procedures - paperwork Planning and parks need to work together Keep restrooms maintained (locked vs open) Times of programming - people working, trying to get to things, summer camp We do so much bringing people up, they don't see outside	Partnerships More presence in parks spaces Find funding Finishing parks Provide a safe place for families Fruit trees, use herbs Connect trails Zoo renovation CDBG funds/ opportunities Decrease maintenance areas Improve safety Connect to University School partnerships Measure to get parks built People want to walk and bike Create a multigenerational center (2 buildings become one) Turf tank - painting machine (example of increasing efficiencies) When we have activities, less vandalism Bike paths, rock paths, lights at night Can we automate park restroom bathrooms	Money Current agreements? Staff and money and Council decisions Administrative - could be much more efficient Lots of dedicated park space that isn't developed Regional site for homeless/ addiction, people are brought to Merced and don't have anywhere go to

SWOT Analysis *Department Heads - Mural Board*



Focus Groups *Community Representatives*

1. When you hear “Merced Parks and Recreation” what immediately comes to mind?



2. Do you currently use any services offered by the department? If so what services? If not, why?

➤ **Yes**

- Youth and Adult Sports Programs & Services
- Parks (general)

Focus Groups *Community Representatives*

➤ No

○ **Communication, Marketing & Outreach**

The top reason why focus group members cited not using department services were related to this. Specific answers included not understanding offerings and the registration system, inconsistent communication by staff, and too heavy of reliance on digital efforts versus traditional marketing practices (e.g., flyers).

3. What do you believe will be the most important community wide issues the greater Merced area and region will face in the next 3-5 years?

➤ **Primary Themes**

○ **Unhoused Population**

The top identified community wide issue was the unhoused population.

○ **Cleanliness, Maintenance & Safety**

The other primary theme was the general maintenance and safety in parks and public spaces. Specific issues included issues relating to the unhoused population, public drug and alcohol use, and lack of preventative safety measures.

➤ **Secondary Themes**

○ **Accessibility**

Some focus group members cited accessibility issues and the desire for more equitable distribution of department services.

○ **Parks & Park Amenities**

Another secondary theme was a lack of park amenities such as shade structures, playgrounds, seating, and sports amenities.

4. In what ways do you believe the department can influence and/or impact these issues?

Focus Groups *Community Representatives*

➤ Primary Themes

○ **Cleanliness, Maintenance & Safety**

The most mentioned primary theme that the department can influence was improving its maintenance and preventative safety measures in parks and public spaces. From more frequent trash and bathroom clean ups to adding cameras, lighting, and increased police presence in parks to improve safety, the department has a lot of ways to impact this issue.

○ **Parks & Park Amenities**

There were a variety of responses for park amenities that were suggested that included shade structures, water fountains, seating, and sports amenities

➤ Secondary Themes

○ **Programs & Services**

One of the secondary themes identified was enhanced services specifically targeting Merced's youth.

○ **Partnerships**

Another secondary theme was through community partnerships.

5. In your opinion, how should the department invest resources (including taxpayer dollars) in order to have the greatest impact on the greater community?

➤ Primary Themes

○ **Cleanliness, Maintenance & Safety**

Improving maintenance and preventative safety measures in parks and public spaces was by far the most mentioned way for the department to have the greatest impact on the greater community. The most commented on ideas included increased staff presence, security measures (e.g., lighting and cameras), and timely maintenance practices to park amenities.

Focus Groups *Community Representatives*

➤ Secondary Themes

- **Parks & Park Amenities**

Some respondents called for park amenities such as splash pads, shade structures, seating, and sports amenities.

- **Programs & Services**

There were a couple of responses requesting greater department investment in affordable programs and services for kids.

6. Are there any barriers (if any) you believe prevent people from participating in services offered by the department?

➤ Primary Themes

- **Communication, Marketing & Outreach**

The top barrier to participation was due to the department's current communication, marketing and outreach practices. Many cited a general lack of knowledge of provided services and a desire for consistent channels of communication.

- **Cleanliness, Maintenance & Safety**

Another primary deterrent of participation was safety and security concerns.

➤ Secondary Themes

- **Parks & Park Amenities**

The lack of desired park amenities was a secondary barrier identified by focus group members.

7. What opportunities exist for the department to partner with other community organizations?

- **Utilization of Parks**

The only repeated opportunity for partnerships was working with community organizations to host collaborative events in Merced's parks and public spaces.

- **Spanish-Speaking Outreach**

While not a suggestion for community organizations, some responses indicated a desire for increased Spanish usage in department communications to ensure inclusivity.

Focus Groups *Community Representatives*

8. Is there anything else as it relates to the department or master planning process you would like to share?

➤ Primary Themes

- **Communication, Marketing & Outreach**

There were a few additional comments regarding the need for improved communication with the community to improve participation and involvement.

- **Programs & Services**

There was a call for a wider variety of programs and services for the older population and more affordable offerings for families.

- **Cleanliness, Maintenance & Safety**

The importance for improved safety and maintenance in parks was reiterated in these comments.

Focus Groups *Adults - Mural Board*

When you hear “Merced Parks and Recreation” what immediately comes to mind?

Fun
Cool events

Activities
Parks

Do you currently use any services offered by the department? If so what services? If not, why?

Adult softball
Did not know things are offered

Jr Giants
Soccer

What do you believe will be the most important community wide issues the greater Merced area and region will face in the next 3-5 years?

Homeless

Cleanliness - homeless make it less welcoming

In what ways do you believe the department can influence and/or impact these issues?

More accountability around cleaning

More accountability of staff

Acknowledge that the homeless are there and ensure that when events are happening it does not interfere

In your opinion, how should the department invest resources (including taxpayer dollars) in order to have the greatest impact on the greater community?

Janitorial & Security

Are there any barriers (if any) you believe prevent people from participating in services offered by the department?

Lack of knowledge of what is being provided

More outreach

What opportunities exist for the department to partner with other community organizations?

They have a ton of knowledge and expertise, and know what is needed partnerships would be good

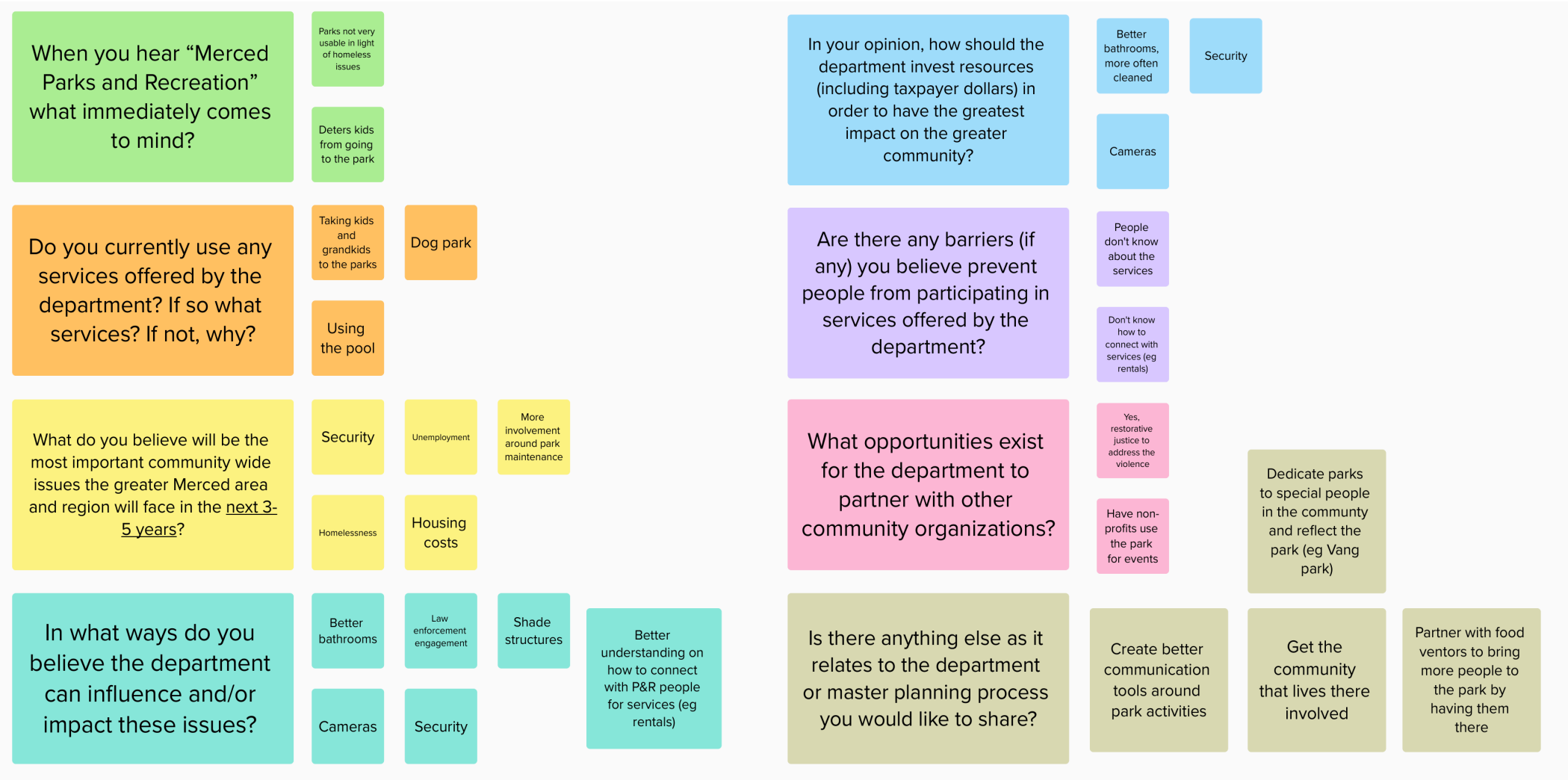
Is there anything else as it relates to the department or master planning process you would like to share?

Awareness of what the community needs and wants

Safety in parks

Not all parks should be the same, you need to know what the community needs.

Focus Groups *Community - Mural Board*



Focus Groups *Older Adults - Mural Board*

When you hear “Merced Parks and Recreation” what immediately comes to mind?

Fun

Parks

Applegate Park - homelessness, lack of cleanliness, litter and not safe

Relaxation

Trees

Do you currently use any services offered by the department? If so what services? If not, why?

Not sure how to reserve a park

Nobody answers the phone

Social media - older people don't use it like that. Flyers, etc. are needed

Don't know what is available

What do you believe will be the most important community wide issues the greater Merced area and region will face in the next 3-5 years?

Poverty

Even as an unhoused individual, she did not use the parks because she doesn't think they are safe

Homelessness

In what ways do you believe the department can influence and/or impact these issues?

More staff and security needed

Add cameras

Staff need to walk the parks to see it in action

In your opinion, how should the department invest resources (including taxpayer dollars) in order to have the greatest impact on the greater community?

More splashpads

Fun days for kids

More free kids activities

Shade structures parks and dog park

Are there any barriers (if any) you believe prevent people from participating in services offered by the department?

Quarterly mailout with activities

Accessibility for disabled people both kids and adults

People did not know about the many activities, but want to know more

What opportunities exist for the department to partner with other community organizations?

Applegate Park is used for collaborative events, but other parks need to have them

Senior center being used of senior programs, some of these could be in parks

Also recognize that parks are not just for kids, but many adults need parks as well

Is there anything else as it relates to the department or master planning process you would like to share?

Some programs are too expensive for families

More things need to be done, but it is difficult for working parents to get their kids there

Activities in the park for older people (e.g. low impact exercise)

Focus Groups Youth - Mural Board

When you hear “Merced Parks and Recreation” what immediately comes to mind?	Too hot, not enough shade	Parks should be cleaner
	Love the swings	They are fun
Do you currently use any services offered by the department? If so what services? If not, why?	They do games in the park: soccer, basketball, tag, softball, football, baseball	
What do you believe will be the most important community wide issues the greater Merced area and region will face in the <u>next 3-5 years</u> ?		
In what ways do you believe the department can influence and/or impact these issues?	Too much trash	Too many homeless
	Not fixed fast enough	Bugs
		Aggressive dogs
		Water fountains
In your opinion, how should the department invest resources (including taxpayer dollars) in order to have the greatest impact on the greater community?	Clean the parks more often	Keep it clean
	Clean the bathroom	
	Fix things that are broken	New parks with playgrounds, no graffiti
	Keep aggressive dogs out of the parks	
Are there any barriers (if any) you believe prevent people from participating in services offered by the department?	Dangerous dogs and poop	Broken things
	Too hot, not enough shade	
	Strangers	Bad writing
What opportunities exist for the department to partner with other community organizations?	More painted areas	Partner with groups who can help make it more beautiful
	Security	
Is there anything else as it relates to the department or master planning process you would like to share?	More splashpads	
	We, the people do! (Help run the parks)	
		Less adults hanging around the playground

Focus Groups *Spanish Speakers – Translated Summary*

1. When you hear “Merced Parks and Recreation” what immediately comes to mind?

- **Satisfaction:** A majority of respondents expressed positive sentiments toward the quality and accessibility of parks, emphasizing the importance of maintaining clean, safe, and well-equipped facilities.
- **Top-of-Mind Concerns:** Overall, key perceptions centered on safety, maintenance, and the presence (or absence) of specific amenities.

2. Do you currently use any services offered by the department? If so what services? If not, why?

➤ Yes

- McNamara Park
- Soccer fields (general)
- Baseball fields (general)

➤ No

- Cleanliness (general)

3. What do you believe will be the most important community wide issues the greater Merced area and region will face in the next 3-5 years?

- ✓ **Homelessness:** A prevalent concern across nearly all groups was the presence of homeless individuals in parks, with associated issues of public disruption.
- ✓ **Drug Use:** Relatedly, drug use and associated issues (e.g., public intoxication) were cited as significant problems.
- ✓ **Lack of Safety/Security:** Many respondents felt parks lacked adequate security measures, contributing to feelings of unease.
- ✓ **Maintenance/Cleanliness:** Issues such as trash, unhygienic bathrooms, and general disrepair were frequently mentioned as detracting from park enjoyment.
- ✓ **Lack of Amenities:** Some identified a need for additional amenities such as shade, seating, sports facilities, and playgrounds.
- ✓ **Accessibility:** Accessibility issues (geographic and programmatic) were identified, pointing to a need for more equitable distribution of resources.

Focus Groups *Spanish Speakers – Translated Summary*

- **Partnerships:** Collaboration with community organizations to leverage resources and expertise.
- **Address Homelessness:** Providing resources or facilities to connect homeless individuals with support services.

4. In what ways do you believe the department can influence and/or impact these issues?

- **Increased Security/Police Presence:** Many suggested increased police patrols and/or security personnel to deter crime and ensure a safe environment.
- **Maintenance/Cleanliness:** Suggestions included cleaning, repairing, and renovating facilities, especially bathrooms.
- **Facility Improvements:** Recommendations included adding shade, seating, playgrounds, and sports facilities.
- **Programming:** Expanded community programming and youth engagement to foster community cohesion.
- **Partnerships:** Collaboration with community organizations to leverage resources and expertise.
- **Address Homelessness:** Providing resources or facilities to connect homeless individuals with support services.

5. In your opinion, how should the department invest resources (including taxpayer dollars) in order to have the greatest impact on the greater community?

- **Security:** Allocate funds to enhance park security, including increased patrols and lighting.
- **Maintenance:** Dedicate resources to improving cleanliness and upkeep of existing facilities, especially bathrooms and play areas.
- **Amenities:** Prioritize funding for new and improved amenities, such as shade structures, seating, and sports equipment.
- **Programming:** Support community and youth programs to enhance park usage and community involvement.

6. Are there any barriers (if any) you believe prevent people from participating in services offered by the department?

- **Safety/Security Concerns:** This was a prominent deterrent, especially regarding concerns about homeless individuals and drug use.
- **Cleanliness:** Concerns about the cleanliness and upkeep of parks detracted from the willingness to visit.
- **Lack of Amenities:** Lack of desired amenities limited the appeal for some residents.

Focus Groups *Spanish Speakers – Translated Summary*

7. What opportunities exist for the department to partner with other community organizations?

- **Community Organizations:** Partnering with local organizations was seen as beneficial for leveraging resources and expertise.
- **Spanish-Speaking Outreach:** Several respondents emphasized the importance of communicating with Spanish-speaking residents in their native language to ensure inclusivity.

8. Is there anything else as it relates to the department or master planning process you would like to share?

- **Youth Sports Complex:** Concerns about safety and the need for better facilities (fields, bathrooms), and ensuring a clean environment. Desire for more organized events and activities for families.
- **McNamara Park:** This location was associated with safety concerns (homelessness, alcohol), maintenance issues, and lack of amenities. Suggestions included better security, improved bathroom facilities, and shade.
- **Downtown Focus Group:** Issues related to safety, drug use, and homelessness in parks. The need for increased police presence and community involvement.

Survey Summary

1. What should parks and recreation do for your community?

➤ Primary Themes

○ **Community Connection**

The most common theme that respondents believe parks and recreation should do for their community was to provide community connection through programs/services and parks, facilities, trails, and open space. Answers ranged from putting on events and programs for the whole community to providing public spaces for the community to gather.

○ **Cleanliness, Maintenance & Safety**

Another primary theme from respondents was a call for safe and well-maintained public spaces, parks, and facilities. Specific responses included cleaner and more accessible public restrooms, providing additional resources for the Department to increase their level of service, more security measures to promote safe experiences, and improved maintenance of playground equipment and areas.

○ **Youth Programs & Spaces**

One of the most frequently mentioned themes was to better serve the community's youth population through structured programs and services and areas. Specific responses included the addition of a youth center/areas and after school programs to help keep the youth engaged and choosing positive options.

○ **Accessibility & Inclusion**

Another common theme was requests for accessible, adaptive, and inclusive spaces for those with special needs and disabilities. Specific responses included sensor-friendly and gated playgrounds for those with autism, general improved wheelchair access, and more safety signage in parks and facilities.

➤ Secondary Themes

○ **Sports Programs & Facilities**

Responses included more youth and adult sports programs, pickleball courts, and baseball/softball fields.

○ **Water Features**

Responses included a call for more splash pads, water parks, and drinking fountains.

Survey Summary

- **Environmental Considerations**

Responses included general environmentally friendly practices, preservation of green space, and to increase planting of trees and native plants.

- **Financial Considerations**

Responses included affordability, funding for capital improvement.

- **Unhoused Population**

Responses included addressing the public safety issues that come with the unhoused population in parks and public spaces, and establishing partnerships to serve the unhoused population.

2. What problems in the community can parks and recreation help with?

- **Primary Themes**

- **Cleanliness, Maintenance & Safety**

The most common theme that respondents believe is a problem that parks and recreation can help with was that public spaces, parks, and facilities could see improvements to safety, maintenance, and cleanliness. Specific responses included increased cleanliness of restrooms, fixing broken park amenities, trail maintenance, and improved trash and graffiti clean-up.

- **Unhoused Population**

Related to the most common primary theme, there are concerns around the community's unhoused population and the public safety issues that they present. Specific responses included the negative effects of public drug and alcohol use, trash, negative interactions, and decreased use of parks and public spaces due to perceived lack of public safety.

- **Youth Programs & Spaces**

Related to the most common primary theme, there are concerns around the community's unhoused population and the public safety issues that they present. Specific responses included the negative effects of public drug and alcohol use, trash, negative interactions, and decreased use of parks and public spaces due to perceived lack of public safety.

Survey Summary

- **Mental Health**
Another common theme was that parks and recreation can help reduce mental and emotional health issues (e.g., loneliness, isolation, depression, anxiety) of community members by providing programs, services, and public spaces.

➤ **Secondary Themes**

- **Accessibility & Inclusion**
Responses included providing adaptive and inclusive playground equipment to better serve those with special needs and disabilities.
- **Environmental Considerations**
Responses included improved planting strategies, increased shaded areas, and environmentally sustainable park planning.
- **Communication, Marketing & Outreach**
Responses included improved communication efforts with the public to increase awareness of offerings and parks.

3. Which City of Merced recreation programs have you or a family member participated in? Select all that apply.

Recreation Program	# of respondents	Recreation Program	# of respondents
Community Special Events	72	Martial Arts	11
Swimming Lessons	27	Senior Activities	8
Youth Baseball	25	Open Gym Pickleball	7
Youth Basketball	24	Stargazing Nights	7
Health and Wellness	23	Senior Health and Wellness	5
Adult Basketball	22	Youth Tennis	5
Adult Softball	19	Youth Hockey	4
Dance Classes	16	Open Gym Badminton	3
Youth Football	13	Senior Dance	3
Summer Camps	12	Youth Pickleball	2
Other	12	Hunting at WWTP	1

Survey Summary

- Notable “Other” responses *included specific City of Merced Community Events and park amenities (i.e. Disc Golf course), and external provider programs and services (wrestling and McSwain Union Elementary School District youth soccer).*

4. Which parks or trails in the City of Merced do you visit? Select all that apply.

Park	# of respondents	Park	# of respondents
Applegate Park	73	Stephen Gray Park	7
Merced Applegate Zoo	62	Dwight Amey Park	6
Rahilly Park	58	Other	5
McNamara Park	54	Hansen Park	4
Joe Herb Park	38	Benjamin Banneker Memorial Park	3
Fahrens Park	37	Frank Gasper Park	3
Bernasconi Park	31	Brooks Park	2
Youth Sports Complex	25	Carol Gabriault Park	2
Merced Dog Park	24	Childs & B Street Park	2
Black Rascal Creek Bike Way Park	22	Dennis Chavez Park	2
Bob Carpenter Park	22	Diego Rivera Park	2
Fahrens Park Old & Bike Path	22	Flanagan Park	2
Burbank Park	18	Frederick Douglass Park	2
Davenport Park	17	Gilbert Macias Park	2
Elmer Murchie Park	17	Santa Fe Strip Park	2
Ada Givens Park	12	William Lloyd Garrison Park	2
Merced Senior Community Center	11	Charles Richard Drew Park	1
Neighborhood Park	11	Harriet Tubman Park	1
Rudolph Joseph Merino Park	11	Little Angels Park	1
Stephen Loveland Park	8	MacReady Park	1

Survey Summary

- Notable “Other” responses *included City of Merced’s Bear Creek Bicycle Path, Merced County parks (i.e., Lake Yosemite), and other municipalities parks (i.e., City of Planada).*

5. Why do you choose these parks?

➤ Primary Themes

- **Proximity**

The most mentioned reason that respondents visit certain City of Merced parks was proximity to where they live and that they are easily accessible to get to.

- **Cleanliness, Maintenance & Safety**

Another primary theme from respondents was that these parks are clean and safe. Specific responses included that they felt safe, are visibly well maintained, and have no/less unhoused populations present.

- **Amenities**

The amenities present in parks was a highly cited reason for visiting certain parks. Specific responses included age-appropriate playgrounds, accessible restrooms, gardens and natural areas, sports fields and courts, the Applegate Zoo, and shaded areas.

- **Programs and Services**

The last primary theme was that there were scheduled programs and services at those parks. Specific responses included youth sports games and practices, and community events.

➤ Secondary Themes

- **Familiarity**

Responses included the general familiarity and having grown up at certain parks.

- **Social Considerations**

Responses included extended family and social gatherings occurring at certain parks.

Survey Summary

6. What parks or trails in the City of Merced do you tend to avoid? Select all that apply.

Park	# of respondents	Park	# of respondents
McNamara Park	22	Davenport Park	5
Applegate Park	20	Santa Fe Strip Park	5
Joe Herb Park	16	Charles Richard Drew Park	4
Fahrens Park	15	Dennis Chavez Park	4
Fahrens Park Old & Bike Path	15	Diego Rivera Park	4
Black Rascal Creek Bike Way Park	13	Harriet Tubman Park	4
Burbank Park	12	Merced Applegate Zoo	4
Merced Dog Park	12	Rudolph Joseph Merino Park	4
Stephen Loveland Park	9	The Love Veasley Family Park	4
Stephen Gray Park	8	William Lloyd Garrison Park	4
Ada Givens Park	7	Dwight Amey Park	3
Bernasconi Park	7	Elmer Murchie Park	3
Bob Carpenter Park	7	Frank Gasper Park	3
Carol Gabriault Park	7	Frederick Douglass Park	3
Childs & B Street Park	7	Gilbert Macias Park	3
Rahilly Park	7	Little Angels Park	3
Benjamin Banneker Memorial Park	6	Hansen Park	2
Flanagan Park	6	MacReady Park	2
Youth Sports Complex	6	Neighborhood Park	2
Other	6	Merced Senior Community Center	1
Brooks Park	5		

➤ “Other” responses *included cited reasons for avoiding parks.*

Survey Summary

7. What kinds of improvements to these parks would encourage you to visit them?

➤ Primary Themes

○ **Cleanliness, Maintenance & Safety**

Again, the cleanliness, maintenance, and safety of parks is of the utmost concern among respondents. Specific responses cite the unclean and closed restrooms, desire for increased police and law enforcement, general improved maintenance and upkeep of parks, trails, and facilities.

○ **Unhoused Population**

Related to the most common primary theme, addressing the community's unhoused population and the public safety issues that they present would encourage respondents to visit the parks they tend to avoid. Specific responses included public drug and alcohol use, encampments near playgrounds and trails, and calls to action for broader community housing solutions.

○ **Amenities**

Improvements to park amenities was another primary theme identified by respondents. Specific responses included the City of Merced provide additional natural and structured shaded areas, lighting, picnic tables, sports fields and courts, gardens, playgrounds, and a pump track.

➤ Secondary Themes

○ **Transportation**

Responses included improved public transportation options to parks.

○ **Accessibility & Inclusion**

Responses included providing adaptive and inclusive playground equipment to better serve those with special needs and disabilities.

○ **Water Features**

Responses included a call for more splash pads, water fountains, and other water features to combat the heat.

○ **Partnerships**

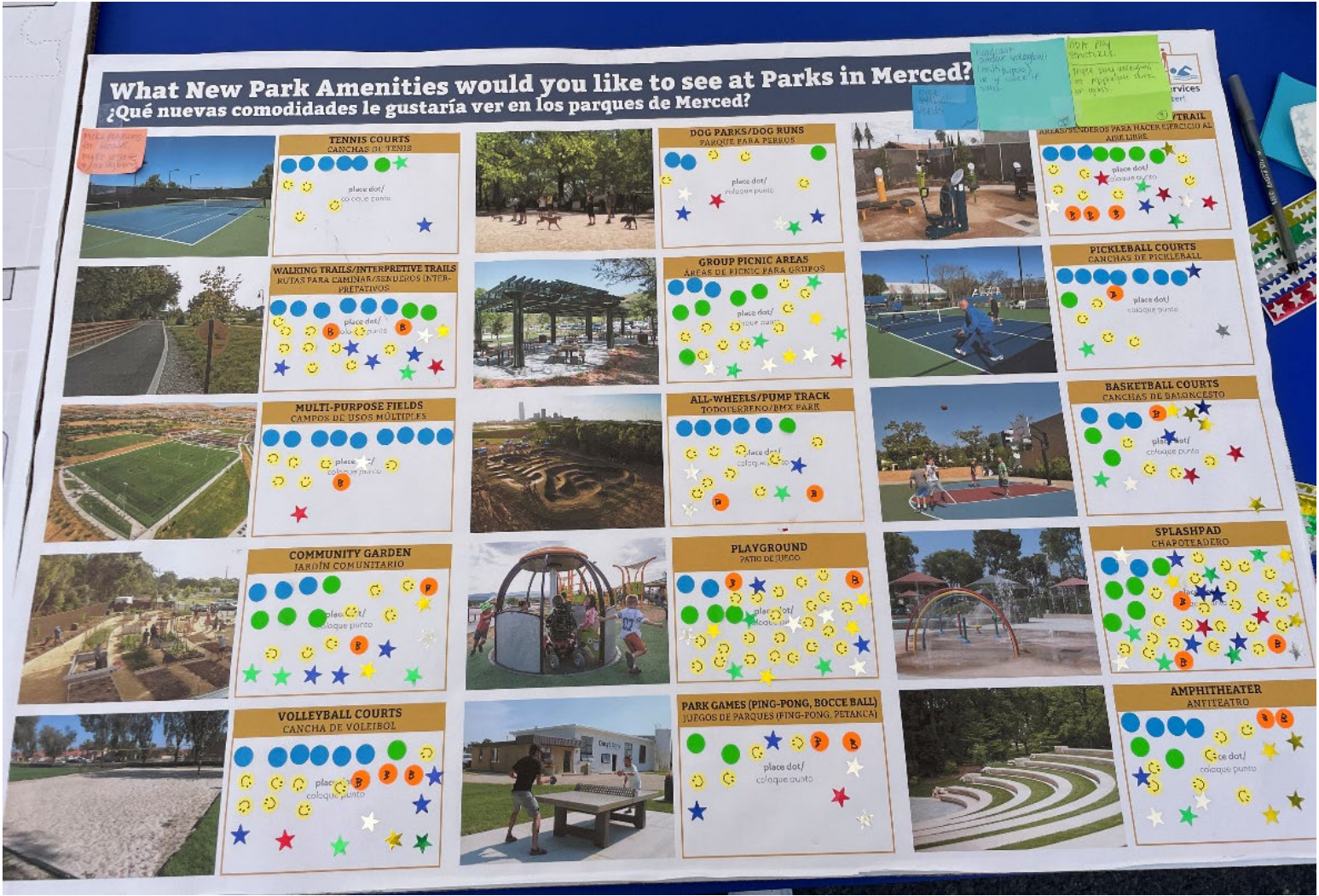
Responses included “Adopt-a-Park”, volunteer maintenance events, and partnerships with local schools and nonprofit organizations.

Pop Up Engagements

1. What New Park Amenities would you like to see at Parks in Merced?

Rank	Amenities	Total Votes	Pop-Up 1 (Adult COED Softball at John Herb Park)	Pop-Up 2 (Merced Senior Community Center)	Pop-Up 3 (Movies in the Park at the Merced Theater)	Pop-Up 4 (Ride with the Mayor at Applegate Park)	Pop-Up 5 (Lao New Year on Main Street)
1	Splashpads	51	2	5	22	3	19
2	Playground	42	2	3	22	2	13
3 (tie)	Group Picnic Areas	28	3	5	10	0	10
3 (tie)	Walking Trails/Interpretive Trails	28	6	2	10	2	8
5 (tie)	Outdoor Fitness Areas/Trails	26	3	4	7	3	9
5 (tie)	Volleyball Courts	26	6	1	8	3	8
7	Community Garden	25	3	4	7	2	9
8	Amphitheater	23	4	2	7	2	8
9	All-Wheels Pump Track	21	5	1	9	2	4
10	Basketball Courts	20	3	2	4	1	10
11	Multi-purpose Fields	18	9	0	6	1	2
12	Pickleball Courts	16	7	1	4	1	3
13	Dog Parks/Dog Runs	13	2	1	4	0	6
14	Park Games (Ping-pong, Bocce Ball)	13	0	2	4	2	5
15	Tennis Courts	12	5	1	4	0	2

Pop Up Engagements



Pop Up Engagements

Written Comments

Accessibility to the parks (ex. Walkers). Truncated domes, ramps, etc.	For people with disabilities, need accessible, good sidewalks, and trails.	Possibility to have an indoor aquatic facility for swim and water polo year-round. [Look up Henderson Park in Snelling, CA]	Aquatic Center low fencing is concerning at McNamara.	Would be nice to have a fitness center even if it's small.	Splash pads.	People play volleyball at Applegate Park on grass.	ADA play structures.	Fitness equipment should be located along trails and not just in one area.	Bike parking and signage needed all around parks, medical, library, etc.
Parks aren't too frequented near Black Rascal Creek Strip Park.	Very important park. All of it deserves to be improved.	Revamp of this facility and fields.	Softball turf improvements.	Dirty, maintenance, activities that shouldn't be happening.	It would be nice to have more [??] for picnicking.	Nicely upgraded. Lots of school kids. Would be nice to have a splashpad.	No shade, nice park, but nowhere to sit with shade.	Multicultural Center - Merced Theater in Downtown.	Need a bikeway, told to ride sidewalks.
Volunteer days for fields. Large homeless and graffiti and trash, broken fencing.	Lots of aging infrastructure (lights, fencing, picnic tables).	Clean restrooms are needed at all parks.	Need to improve the restrooms.	Lawn maintenance.	More recreation programming for adult women and for youth.	More senior recreation programs. Senior soccer, senior runs (safe areas to run).	More programs for seniors.	More services and opportunities for the youth.	Bad pavement on bike path.
Joe Herb Park has a lot of holes on the ground. Lights are broken (she almost fell last year).	Resurface pool table.	Renovate parts, columns. Better circulation for parking.	Lots of homeless. Basketball courts need updates. Lots of vandalism. Upgrade splashpad.	Restroom vandalized and swimming pad very damaged.	Senior field trips. Low/free since they are fixed-income.	Need more activities for the active seniors. 55-75 still active and moving.	Counselors they can trust. Nurses they can trust at the aging program.	More programming for younger children.	Citywide cleanliness. Uncomfortable encounters with homeless.
				For people with disabilities, need good and clean restrooms.	Future senior center needs to have several ADA stalls.	Facility near senior living centers. Facility location where building burned down.			

Pop Up Engagements

Written Comments

Bike lockers at important areas (i.e., mall, employment areas). Covered bike parking	Trail pavement maintain. Trail restoration. Bike paths stop and asphalt starts, bad for riding.	Senior center with improved restrooms. Increased accessibility.	Longtime residents, the seniors, are emotionally connected to this facility more important than high-speed rail.	Larger senior center with outdoor space, like park (combine the two existing senior centers).	Basketball improvements needed.	Northern Merced needs sports fields.	Enhance/add more amenities to the southern portion of the city.	More restrooms at parks and benches to rest (applicable to trails).	Add a splash pad.
High speed street needs bikeway	Redo Yosemite Ave and add bikeways.	Cricket pitch very unique.	Recommendation, proximity to an empty lot that could be used for soccer/football (multipurpose field)	More softball fields	Hardcourt outdoor volleyball (multi-purpose) or with cover if sand court.	Respect for players. Put money back into sports fields.	More teenager programming that's affordable.	Need north and south corridors to connect to existing trails.	Monkeybars at Applegate Park and all parks.
Road unsafe due to pavement.	Broken glass, trash, people sleeping on benches. Discouraging especially for kids.	More fields at other parks.	Utilization of fields. Softball [2 ??]	Lower monkey bars.	Hand washing stations.	Nice fields and Park	Basketball for seniors. Zumba for seniors. More active programming for seniors 60+.	We avoid parks with no cover over playground during summer and rainy days	Bear Creek and all paths. Dirty, unwanted activities, sad seeing trash and plants torn down, and trail pavement.
Connectivity to UC Merced campus. Biking to the lake.	Place to ride bikes.	Community would like more softball fields. Southern Merced should be a focus area for improvements.	Bigger zoo and skate park maintenance.	Dog Park	Parks are unsafe with no lighting	More diversity in sports amenities (i.e., pickleball, tennis, and diamond field).	Lots of nursing and assisted living homes, more recreation facility near them (i.e., Olive and M).	Splash pad desired.	Homeless issues and encampments. Clean-ups needed.
				Continued improvements to the bocce ball courts by the dog park.	Restrooms need maintenance. Seem to be locked a lot of the times.				

Open House

1. Goals, Objectives, and Priorities Comments

➤ Maintenance

- **Enhance the existing amenities in aging community parks with modern amenities**
 - Shade
 - Cleanliness, Maintenance & Safety
 - Playgrounds
 - Trails & Connectivity
- **Establish guidelines and standards to maintain existing recreation facilities**
 - Cleanliness, Maintenance & Safety
- **Establish a trail maintenance program to encourage use**
 - Cleanliness, Maintenance & Safety
 - Overall connectivity in Merced

➤ Park Infrastructure

- **Explore the equitable distribution of future park opportunities to strengthen community character**
 - Investment in South Merced
 - Trails & Connectivity
- **Establish new indoor recreation facilities that meet the demands of the community**
 - Public Wi-Fi
 - Indoor sports courts
- **Enhance internal and external communication about division activities, events, and services**
 - Social media
 - Multi-lingual efforts
 - In-person outreach

Open House

➤ Connectivity

- **Provide complete streets that include walkable and bike-friendly networks throughout the city for safe and equitable access to parks**
 - Separation of bike and pedestrian use
 - North-South connectivity
 - Cleanliness, Maintenance & Safety
- **Update plans and policies to meet the needs of current city of Merced residents and to align with future growth rates**
 - General improvements
- **Encourage open communication and coordination among city departments and pertinent regional, state, federal agencies**
 - Public transit

➤ Park Infrastructure

- **Enhance current and future parks with sustainable design that encourages safety and creates accessibility for users of all ages and abilities**
 - Trails & Connectivity
- **Identify park functions and redesigns that address the complex issue of homelessness and its impact on park use**
 - Unhoused population
- **Create safe and accessible outdoor spaces to promote public health and wellness**
 - No cell towers
 - Cleanliness, Maintenance & Safety
 - Shade

Open House

Create A Safe and Inclusive Park and Trail Environment for All Users

Crear un entorno de parque y senderos seguro e inclusivo para todos los usuarios

Enhance current and future parks with sustainable design that encourages safety and creates accessibility for users of all ages and abilities.

Mejorar los parques actuales y futuros con un diseño sustentable que fomente la seguridad y cree accesibilidad para usuarios.

Identify park functions and redesigns that address the complex issue of homelessness and its impact on park use.

Identificar las funciones y los rediseños del parque que aborden el complejo problema de las personas sin hogar y su impacto en el uso del parque.

Create safe and accessible outdoor spaces to promote public health and wellness.

Crear espacios al aire libre seguros y accesibles para promover la salud y el bienestar públicos.

Parks and open spaces should maintain clear sight lines into parks from public streets and nearby buildings to encourage eyes on the streets to deter undesirable activities.

Activate park edges with landscaping and public art to create a welcoming environment while maintaining visible ingress and egress.

The Lake to the Trail is an expensive for public space. Healthy behaviors are the goal, not just the space.

Know where there are old people, old people are more likely to be high risk of becoming a victim of a crime.

Work on the ground as well as the air. Please fix the ground. That the ground on the road.

Get a sign that says "No one here". Thank you!

Public space is a shared space.

Incorporate the voices of artists in the community. Any way that design can.

S. Merced needs more benches + public lighting.

More parks needed in S. Merced.

Keep trees and healthy and make them. In the city, we have a lot of trees and a lot of people who love them.

Public space is a shared space. It's not just for the people who live there.

Dedicated space for the homeless to rest, work, and live.

Coordinate with social services and local organizations to assist people of all housing statuses residing in parks who are seeking more permanent shelter and resources.

Explore natural surveillance options to deter unwanted and unsafe activities, to promote public safety and to increase park use.

Whether accessible to single users in all parks.

Games for older adults.

Invest in public spaces that allow for safe environments.

Public space is a shared space. It's not just for the people who live there.

Design all public space to be inclusive and accessible.

Public space is a shared space. It's not just for the people who live there.

Use of technology to monitor and manage park use.

Partner partnership with UC Merced to expand community education programs on healthy eating habits and lifestyles.

Art history in the park.

Do not put people in the park. Put people in the park.

Promote and increase summer programming opportunities for the youth in a joint effort with schools.

Trail Day.

Make them smoke-free.

Things that happen in the park.

Do Not Put cell towers in our park.

"Outdoor gyms".

Public space is a shared space. It's not just for the people who live there.

Programs and events should be planned.

Keep up the good work.

Don't build a park in a bad place.

More sun. More shade. More shade.

Public space is a shared space. It's not just for the people who live there.

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S. Merced needs more security measures.

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Parks & Community Services
Parks Make Life Better!

Open House

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Open House

Strengthen Connectivity to Parks, Facilities, and Trails for Bicyclists and Pedestrians

Fortalecer la conexión con parques, instalaciones y senderos para ciclistas y peatones

Provide complete streets that include walkable and bike-friendly networks throughout the City for safe and equitable access to parks.

Provide complete streets that include walkable and bike-friendly networks throughout the City for safe and equitable access to parks.

Update plans and policies to meet the needs of current City of Merced residents and to align with future growth rates.

Actualizar los planes y políticas para satisfacer las necesidades de los residentes actuales de la ciudad de Merced y alinearlos con las tasas de crecimiento futuras.

Encourage open communication and coordination among City departments and pertinent regional, state, and federal agencies.

Fomentar la comunicación abierta y la coordinación entre los departamentos de la ciudad y las agencias regionales, estatales y federales pertinentes.

Encourage the construction of new trails within new developments

more dedicated bike paths and lanes

more rest installations to keep away street people and drug use

Design and install additional bike facilities to connect to parks located in southern Merced

Improve San Joaquin Hills Trail

Large San Joaquin Sports Aquatics Complex Center

Provide signage, lighting, and other amenities to make trails more accessible and safe

Consider Complete Streets policies to support the implementation of appropriate bicycle, pedestrian, transit, and placemarking elements.

Update the City of Merced's 2013 Bicycle Transportation Plan to an Active Transportation Plan

More bike lanes, bike paths, and bike racks

More bike racks and bike repair stations

That has already been done, but the current plan is outdated

Trees that are not just for shade, but also for air quality and aesthetic appeal

More trees, more shade, more green space

More bike racks and bike repair stations

More bike racks and bike repair stations

Coordinate with the State agencies to enhance freeway and railroad crossings for pedestrians and bicyclists

Coordinate with the Merced County Association of Governments (MCOAG) to connect Project Stations to bike paths via on-street bike infrastructure

More bike racks and bike repair stations

More bike racks and bike repair stations

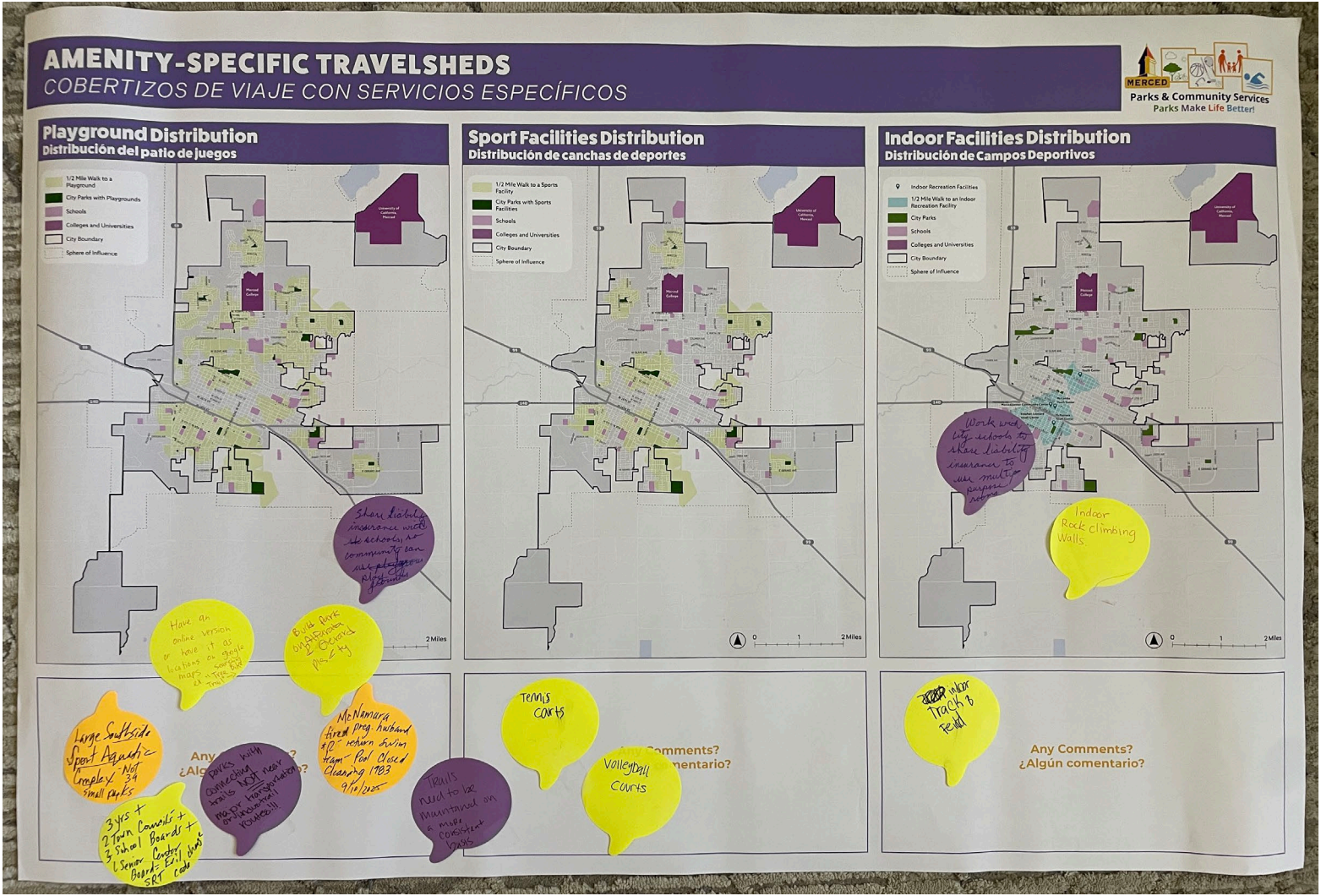
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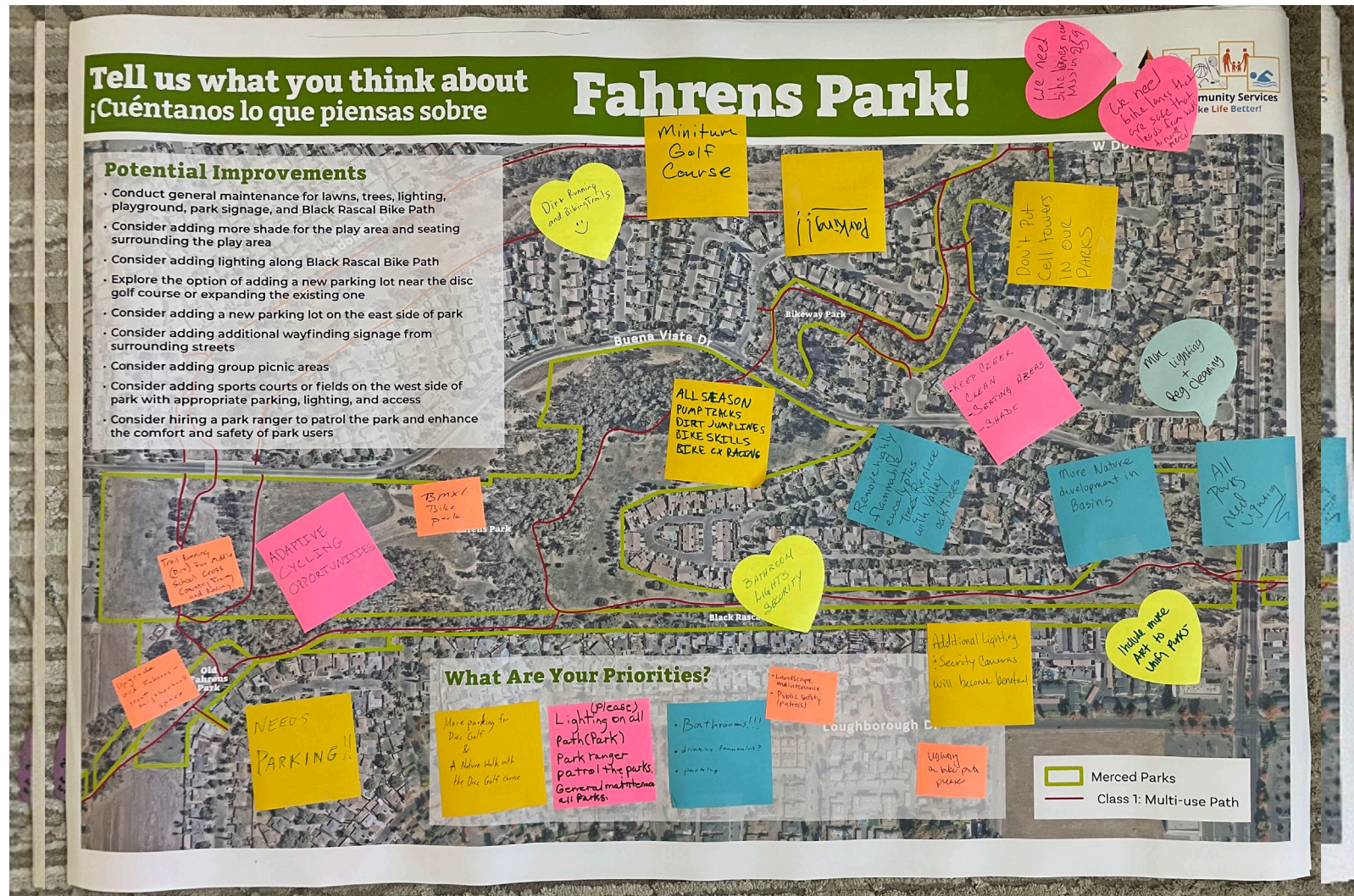
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Parks & Community Services
Parks Make Life Better!

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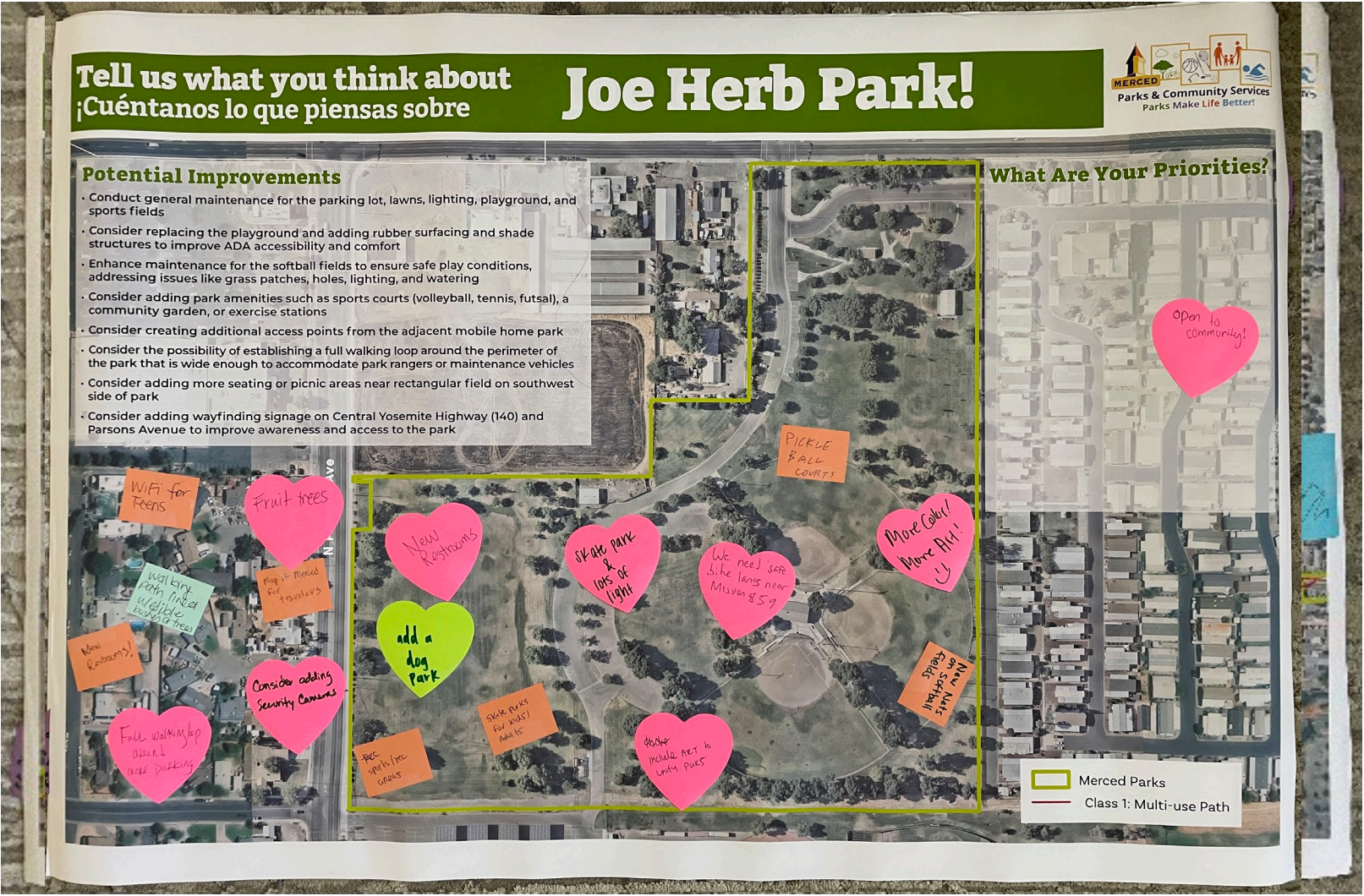
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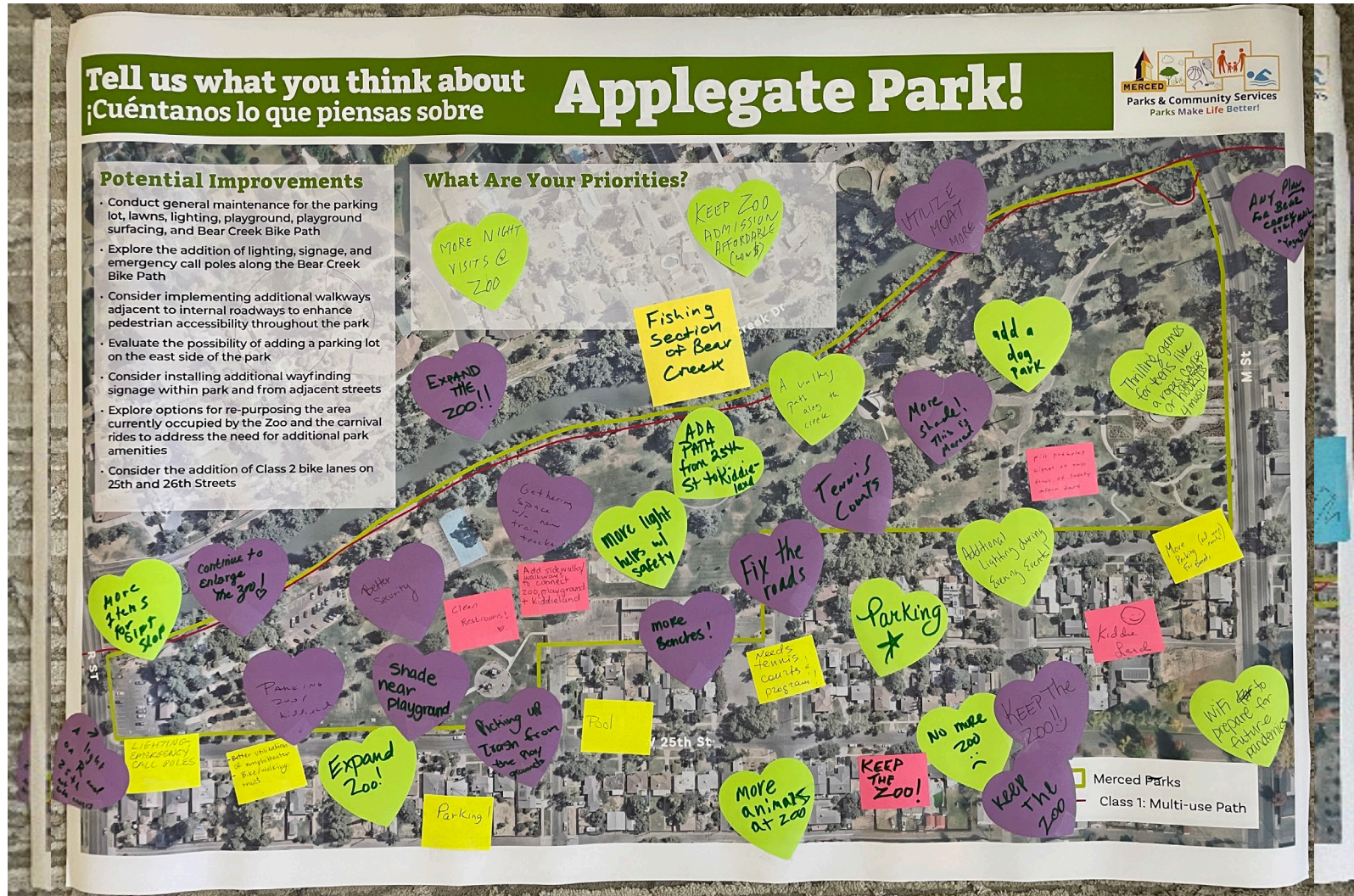
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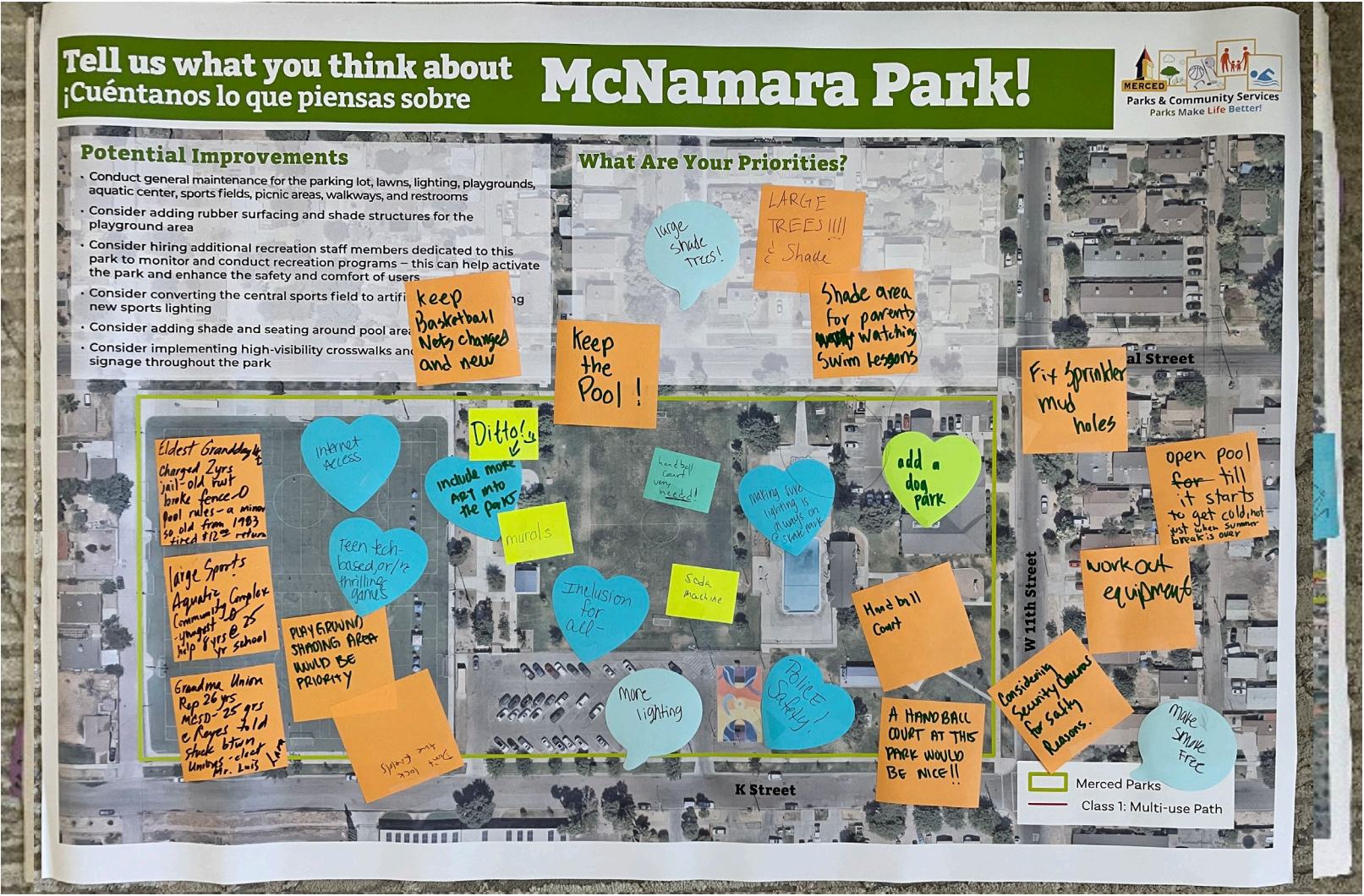
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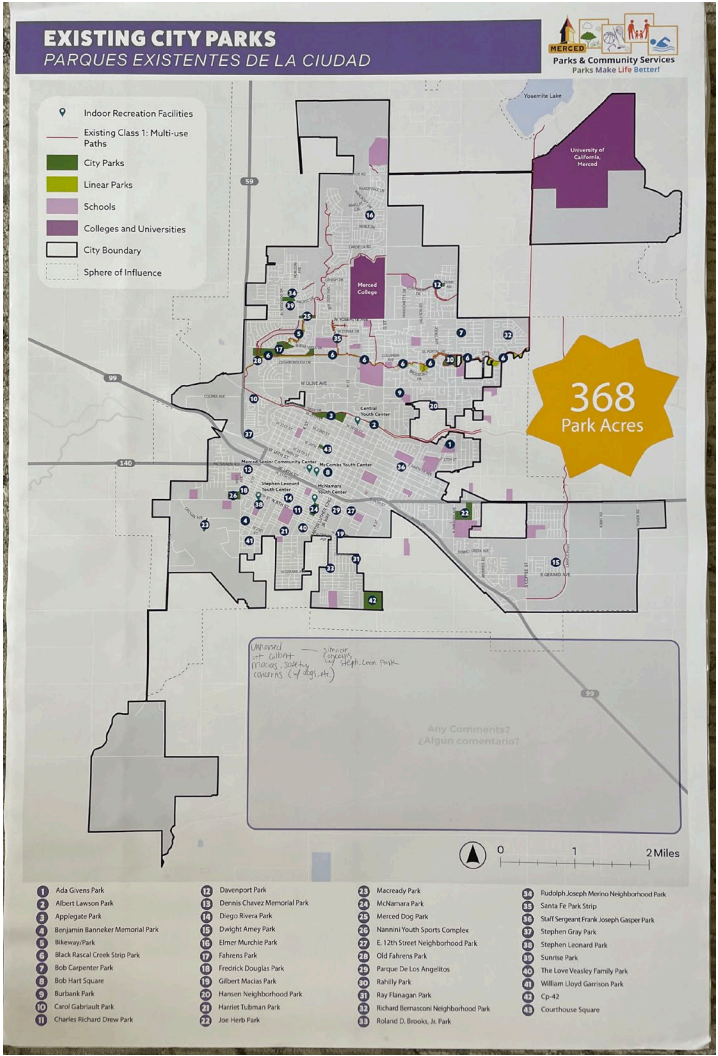
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