

**Parks and Recreational Area Design Standards Manual
Town of Sahuarita**



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Table of Contents

Section 1: Introduction.....3
 A. The Recreation Area Plan (RAP) Submittal and Review Process.....4
 B. Submittal requirements for the RAP5
 C. Exceptions:6
Section 4: Recreation Area Definitions and Minimum Feature Guidelines.....6
 A. Neighborhood Parks6
 1. Neighborhood Parks Up to 1 Acre in Size6
 2. Neighborhood Parks 1.01-5 acres in Size.....7
 3. Neighborhood Parks From 5.01-10 acres in Size7
 B. Community Parks.....7
 C. District Parks7
 D. Regional Parks7
 E. Linear and River Parks/Greenways.....8
 F. Special Purpose Parks.....8
 G. Alternative Recreation Areas8
Section 5: Guidelines for Requesting Public Park Dedication9
Section 6: Trails-Related Requirements..... 10
Section 7: Landscaping Recommendations..... 10
Section 8: Residential Recreation Area In-lieu Fee Tables 10
 A. Important Provisions Related to the In-lieu Fee Tables..... 11
 B. How to Calculate Fees Based on the In-lieu Fee tables 12
Section 9: Contact Information 12

Section 1: Introduction

The Town of Sahuarita has created the Recreational Area Design Standards Manual to carry out the provisions of Ordinance 2005-04, adopted June 27, 2005. In 2005, the Town's population was estimated by the Town's Planning and Zoning Department at 12,818. Sahuarita has grown exponentially and reached almost 28,000 in 2016. This Ordinance was passed with the vision of ensuring adequate park space for the Town's growing population. As developers construct new housing in Sahuarita, it is desirable that they construct parks and recreation facilities as well as set aside adequate land for open space in order to meet the needs of future residents. This manual provides the information necessary for developers and their consultants to determine how much land to set aside and what facilities to construct on this land. The Town previously set standards at 8 acres per 1,000 populations and currently has approximately 4 acres of developed park space per 1,000 populations. Community surveys indicate that residents need more parks and recreation facilities. As a result, the Sahuarita Parks and Recreation Commission recommended an increase to 10 acres per 1,000. That amount was once a National Standard put out by the National Recreation and Park Association.

As an alternative to developing all of the required parkland themselves, developers also have the option of paying an in-lieu fee to the Town of Sahuarita. The minimum requirement for development is to be at least 60% of the standard, as long as the Town Council agrees to that amount.

When developers construct the park space and/or set aside open space prior to construction, the cost of building parks is dramatically reduced. In order to fund major park construction, the Town of Sahuarita has spent over 12 million of out of the General Fund as well as County Bond funds over the past 12 years. The 2015 Bond election did not pass, so this will delay the much needed pool and recreation center facility for Sahuarita. Quality of life measures such as safety, traffic congestion, air quality, public health, and neighborhood social interaction, will improve when recreational facilities meet the community's needs. By planning to meet park demand prior to development, the Town of Sahuarita aims to maintain resident's expectations for a higher quality of life.

Section 2: Summary of Important Requirements of the Parks and Recreational Area Design Standards Manual

1. Every subdivision development project must submit a Recreation Area Plan
 - a. This requirement may be waived for projects of 65 units or fewer. (equivalent to approximately 105-163 people) These projects may elect to pay an in-lieu fee per unit per the in-lieu fee in Section 8, Table 2.
 - b. Subdivisions of any size within 2 miles of an existing Town owned park with sufficient capacity to add new recreation facilities may apply to pay the full in-lieu fee.
2. For a single-family attached and detached residential subdivision, 1090 ft² of developed recreation space per residential unit is required. This is based on the multiplier of 2.5 people per unit.
3. For an apartment project, 353 ft² of developed recreation space per residential unit is required. This is based on a multiplier of 1.62 people per unit. A RAP needs to be submitted or payment per Section 8, Table 2.

4. Commercial and residential developments that include or lie adjacent to areas listed in the Pima Regional Trail System Master Plan, the Town of Sahuarita Master Trail Plan, the Pima County Original Greenways Plan, or are identified as important linkages during the development review process. The applicant/developer must also identify and provide a corridor to accommodate the trail; the applicant is also required to construct the trail to the specifications set forth in Section 6.
5. If sections of the Pima Regional Trail System Master Plan or the Pima County Regional Greenway System cross the project site or are adjacent to the project site, the developer's plan for developing these sites should be included in the Recreation Area Plan, per section 6.
 - a. Construction of trails and/or linear park or greenway segments may count up to 25% towards the ordinance's standard requirements.
6. Applicants and/or representatives of the property owner must meet with Planning and Zoning staff and Parks and Recreation staff, prior to the preparation of their Recreation Area Plan.
7. If a Recreation Area Plan is required, it will be submitted with the tentative plat or development plan package to Planning and Zoning, after RAP approval by the Parks and Recreation Commission and Parks and Recreation Department.
8. Developed park land must meet the standards described in this manual.
9. Recreational areas intended to be dedicated to the Town of Sahuarita after construction must meet the requirements set forth in Section 5 of this manual.
10. All recreation area improvements must be complete and functional by the subdivision project's 75% permit stage.

Section 3: Recreation Area Plan (RAP)

The Recreation Area Plan (RAP) is a development requirement. The developer/applicant must provide a detailed description/site plan of recreation facilities and/or trail construction for their proposed residential projects.

A. The Recreation Area Plan (RAP) Submittal and Review Process

1. Applicant and/or the applicant's representatives meet with Town Parks and Recreation and Planning and Zoning staff to discuss the proposed residential development project. Staff explains the applicant's options in accordance with the Residential Recreation Area In-Lieu Fee Tables (or the in-lieu fee alternative) and the requirements set forth in the Zoning Code, including the specific elements to be included in the RAP.
2. Requests for use of in-lieu fee option should be requested up front, prior to RAP submittal with the Tentative Plat.
3. Applicant prepares RAP consistent with all applicable Town Codes and Parks & Recreation Area Design Standards Manual.
4. Applicant submits the RAP with the Tentative Plat to the Planning and Zoning Division.
5. The first RAP review is submitted to the Parks and Recreation Commission for recommendation including any in-lieu fee requests that were approved by Town Manager and Town Council.
6. The Town Council will review requests for park or land dedications on a case-by-case basis. Transfer of facilities to the Town must be approved prior to the submittal of the applicant's Recreation Area Plan for review. The operational impact should be included.

No transfer will occur if public funding is not available or projected to be available for operation of the facility.

7. The Recreational Area Plan must be approved before the tentative plat is approved.

B. Submittal requirements for the RAP

The RAP may be produced in standard 8.5" by 11" format with all map exhibits at minimum 11"x17", and should contain the following information:

1. The total acreage of the subdivision and the total number of housing units.
2. A simple map of the subdivision and its location Town wide. Include any public parks within a 2-mile radius of the proposed subdivision.
3. A concept drawing of the proposed subdivision.
4. A demographic profile of the proposed subdivision. Describe in a short paragraph or less the target age group/demographics for the subdivision. This information will help the applicant and the Town determine appropriate recreation features for the project (i.e. age-appropriate infrastructure, recreation features, equipment, pathways, etc.)
5. For every 800 single family units (and/or 2,000 population) construction of a sports field is required as part of the RAP. Or, the developer can choose to turn over the equivalent amount of funds to the Town specifically towards construction of a sports field.
6. Identify the location of the recreation area(s) within the proposed subdivision, along with any trails that pass through or are located adjacent to the project.
7. Identify the dimensions of the recreation area(s), the size of the recreation area(s), and how the size of the recreation area was calculated (i.e. show the mathematical calculations).
8. Clearly identify the entity responsible for maintenance of the recreation area and its facilities. Construction drawings must be submitted for permitting by the Town.
9. Provide a graphic depiction of the recreation area concept drawing (plan view) with all recreation improvements to be provided as a part of the recreation area(s) including park access points and parking.
10. Indicate any Regional Trail System Master Plan and Town of Sahuarita-listed trails that cross or are located adjacent to the project site. If included in the project, trails and pathways should be constructed following the Pima Regional Trail System Master Plan Standards, or as may be approved by the Town Parks and Recreation Director. Please note that the subject project's recreation area should link with any trails that cross the site or are located in proximity to the site.
11. The park/recreation area site topography.
12. Shallow retention basins designed as multi-use facilities may be applied to the recreation area requirements if developed for recreation purposes on a case by case basis. Use of basins as recreation elements should comply with the standards established by the Pima County Flood Control District. Use of basins for recreation purposes will require approval from the following departments; Public Works and the Town Engineer, Planning & Zoning and Parks and Recreation.
13. Recreation areas should be designed so that subdivision residents of all ages and abilities have access to the recreation area.

14. Recreation areas must avoid known archeological and historical sites, if sites are uncovered during construction, the applicant must contact Town Staff and the State Historic Preservation Office.
15. Recreation area improvements should be constructed in an environmentally sensitive manner, by minimizing any disturbance of the site's natural vegetation and mitigating effects on adjacent upland areas, washes, wildlife corridors, and natural open space. The applicant is also encouraged to harvest plants prior to grading and transplant onsite.
16. Parking area requirements will comply with the current Town Code for parks and recreational facilities STC Chapter 18.75, Table 18.75-2.
17. Privately-owned recreation areas, recreation features and parking improvements shall be completed in accordance with the RAP. The areas should be 30% complete by the time 50% of the homes are complete and fully functional by the time 75% of the building permits have been issued.

C. *Exception:*

1. Subdivisions with 65 units or fewer may elect to pay the full per unit fee listed in table 2 instead of preparing a Recreation Area Plan.

Section 4: Recreation Area Definitions and Minimum Feature Guidelines

The following section describes the recreation areas commonly found in the local Tucson region that the Town of Sahuarita has adopted.

A. *Neighborhood Parks*

A neighborhood park is 10.0 acres or less in size. If the recreation area is constructed with the intention of transferring ownership and maintenance responsibility to the Town, it must be constructed to the standards of the Town Parks and Recreation Department. Examples of what may be included in neighborhood parks are cited below in each size category. There are many examples of this type of facility throughout the Home Owner Association (HOA) community of Rancho Sahuarita.

1. Neighborhood Parks Up to 1 Acre in Size

A neighborhood park of approximately one acre in size and is often described as a "pocket park." The infrastructure that MAY be included if necessary is water and electricity for drinking fountains, restrooms, irrigation and landscaping, and security lighting. Recreational amenities included should meet the needs of the residents intended to live near that park, such as a playground, picnic areas, and turfed areas.

2. Neighborhood Parks 1.01-5 acres in Size

Recreational amenities in these parks can include those in a pocket park, plus a restroom. A neighborhood park this size should offer more of a variety of recreational opportunities, including active facilities such as a playing field, basketball and/or tennis/pickle ball courts, fitness equipment, etc.

3. Neighborhood Parks From 5.01-10 acres in Size

A current example of a Town-owned neighborhood park-in this size category is Parque Los Arroyos in the Los Arroyos neighborhood. This park is seven acres and has a restroom and drinking fountain, three group ramadas, several small picnic ramadas along the pathway around the park, a full basketball court, two acres of turf, a covered playground area, parking at each end of the park, fencing, and security lighting.

B. Community Parks

A community park ranges from 10.01 to 40 acres in size. Examples of Town-owned parks of this size include Anamax Park at 35 acres, North Santa Cruz Park at 14 acres, Anza Trail Park at 11 acres, and Quail Creek-Veterans Municipal Park at 25 acres. Anza Trail Park is a joint-use school park in which the Town has an Intergovernmental Agreement to use after school hours. Each of these parks have a variety of amenities, including picnic areas, restrooms and concession stands, multiple lighted fields, off leash dog areas, basketball and tennis courts, restrooms, skate areas, pathways for walking or jogging, playgrounds, and parking. A small recreation center is also at Anamax Park.

C. District Parks

District parks are typically 40.01 acres to 100 acres in size. The Town does not currently have this size of park, but one is planned for in the future Sahuarita Farms Development. These parks are at a larger scale than the community parks and often include community recreation center, public swimming pool, a sports field complex, along with the amenities described in previous categories.

D. Regional Parks

The Town does not have a park of this size; however, one is planned in the future Sahuarita Farms Development. Regional parks exceed 100 acres in size. Regional parks may be urban parks, natural resource parks (i.e., natural open space parks with passive recreation features such as trails), or "hybrid" parks that contain both developed and natural features. Minimum features for parks in this size category include all District Park features, plus additional features identified by the developer and the Town of Sahuarita. A tract of high-quality natural open space (i.e., with significant natural resource values) could satisfy a part of the recreation area requirement.

E. Linear and River Parks/Greenways

The Town does not have this type of Park, but in the future Sahuarita Farms Specific Plan, the Santa Cruz River corridor has been identified as having this amenity on both sides of the River. Linear and River Parks/Greenways are regional parks or park-like features developed along watercourses (such as along the Santa Cruz River) and/or major road rights-of-way, and are intended to provide recreation and fitness opportunities, as well as alternate modes of transportation. These facilities are described in the Pima Regional Trail System Master Plan. Examples include the Rillito River Park and the Santa Cruz River Park.

Linear Park or Greenway segments constructed to fulfill the requirements of the code (in full or part) shall be constructed to the Pima Regional Trail System Master Plan or as approved by the Town Parks and Recreation Director. Completed Linear or River Park/Greenway segments that shall be public will need to be designed and constructed to Town standards.

Minimum features for parks in this size category can be found in the Pima Regional Trails Master Plan and include:

1. Paved pathways/trails, natural surface pathways and trails
2. Bridges and crossings (if necessary)
3. Landscaping (native species preferred)
4. Irrigation
5. Shade Structure (one structure every one mile); design to be approved by TOSPRD
6. Parking/Staging (public access facilities)
7. Water fountain (one fountain every one mile)
8. Fencing/railing/post-and-cable, or other vehicular barriers as appropriate
9. Signage (as appropriate, consistent with the Regional Greenways Plan)
10. Linkages to adjacent or nearby parks, trails, linear parks, greenways, etc.

Supporting elements for this size linear trail/greenway include park entry nodes/trail heads adjoining the corridor with turf and other recreation features including restrooms and parking areas for vehicles and equestrians.

F. Special Purpose Parks

Special Purpose Parks (SPPs) are developed to serve a particular community recreational need and can be included within a larger park. Sahuarita Lake Park is a good example for the Town. It is part of the Arizona Game and Fish Community Fishing Program and serves as a fishing and boating-only lake. Other examples include a skateboard park, a natural-resource based Trails Park, an equestrian center, a soccer complex, a dog park, an amphitheater or performing arts facility, or an off-highway vehicle park. SPPs can range in size from one half acre to 640 acres or more, depending on the special purpose. Regional Examples of SPPs include the BMX track Manzanita Park and Pima Motorsports Park.

G. Alternative Recreation Areas

These are recreation areas designed to complement and serve the special needs of a given residential subdivision project and/or its surrounding area. Examples of Alternative Recreation Areas include educational areas such as a cultural heritage or an archeological park with interpretive exhibits, constructed wetlands, water Resource Park, an adventure park or a special needs recreation area for physically challenged community members.

The Town of Sahuarita recognizes that new and unique types of recreation facilities may be created as time passes, and is willing to consider proposals that suggest alternative kinds of recreation facilities that may significantly benefit the community and its quality of life. Such proposals must provide value that is either equivalent or greater than the value of the standard requirements.

Section 5: Guidelines for Requesting Public Park Dedication

Recreation areas constructed pursuant to the subdivision ordinance and the Parks & Recreation Area Design Standards Manual may be transferred to the Town of Sahuarita upon their completion, with prior Town Council approval, provided they meet the following requirements.

- a. The recreation area must be a minimum of 10 acres in size.
- b. The recreation area must abut, and be served by, either a collector or arterial roadway.
- c. Plans for the recreation area must be reviewed and submitted to the Town for review, permits and improvement plans.
- d. Public participation must be a part of the park's design process. The Parks & Recreation Department will assist in determining the public process.
- e. Consistent with state standards, a minimum two-year warranty period must be provided by the developer for the subject recreation area and all of its facilities.
- f. A set of as-built plans for the recreation area must be provided to the Town Parks & Recreation Department upon completion of the project.
- g. The recreation area must be constructed according to the Town lighting code, other applicable Town building codes, and the standards of the Town of Sahuarita Parks & Recreation Department, which include but are not limited to:
 1. Musco Brand or comparable lighting must be installed for sport court lighting on all sports facilities (i.e. basketball, volleyball, tennis, skate parks, etc.).
 2. All turfed areas and newly landscaped areas must be irrigated with fixtures and equipment consistent with the town's current system.
 3. Security lighting must be installed at all parks.
 4. Shade structures must be constructed over all picnic and playground areas.
 5. All parks should be constructed with as much environmentally friendly conservation measures as possible (i.e. water harvesting, solar energy, etc.).
 6. Low water-use plant materials must be utilized in the project (per the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) plant list.
 7. Facilities should also be constructed with low-maintenance and vandalism-proof structures wherever possible, such as concrete walkways instead of asphalt.
 8. A restroom facility must be consistent with the size and planned use of the park.
 9. The park must have adequate emergency and maintenance vehicle access.
 10. The park must be surrounded by bollards and cable fencing or something similar to prevent unauthorized vehicle access.

Section 6: Trails-Related Requirements

- a. If a trail listed on the Pima Trail System Master Plan or Sahuarita's trail system passes through a residential or commercial project, the developer must provide a corridor for the trail and construct the segment of the trail within the development's area. This trail should be consistent with the Pima Trail System Master Plan or as directed by the Town Manager and/or Parks & Recreation Director. Location of the trail shall be indicated on the corresponding tentative plat or development plan.
- b. When a residential or commercial project abuts a trail listed on the Pima Trail System Master Plan, a trail the Town has planned, or a trail identified as a significant trail corridor the developer shall provide a connection to the trail from the subdivision's recreation area.
- c. Trail corridors and trails-related improvements may be credited against the standard requirements of the Ordinance at 2 acres per mile of constructed pathways/trails and capped at 25% of the total acreage requirement. These improvements must be completed to Town of Sahuarita Standards or Master Trails Plan Standards, whichever is most recently adopted. Bicycle lanes and sidewalks on or along roadways do not count towards this standard.

Section 7: Landscaping Recommendations

The plant materials used in the development of parks and recreation areas must be native and drought-tolerant and meet Town Code requirements. An excellent reference for water conservation and a comprehensive list of low water-use plants can be found at the Arizona Department of Water Resources web page:

<http://www.azwater.gov/azdwr/StatewidePlanning/Conservation2/LandscapePros/Default.htm>

Section 8: Residential Recreation Area In-Lieu Fee Tables 1 and 2

This in-lieu fee table is intended to serve as a flexible tool for developers to work with the Town to determine the most advantageous combination of developed park space and project fees. The amount of developed park space that is required is 1090 ft² per lot or approximately 10 acres per 1,000 populations. This developed park space does not include land reserved as no-build space, such as flood plains, steep slopes, washes, retention basins, utility easements, or road rights of way such as bike lanes and sidewalks.

Table 1 Single Family Unit (SFUs)

Acres/Money Ratio	Recreation Acreage per 1,000 people	Square Feet Per Lot	% Recreation Area in Acreage	In-Lieu Fee per Lot	% Recreation Are in Dollars
100/0%	10	1090	100%	\$0	0%
	9	981	90	\$200	10%
	8	872	80	\$400	20%
	7	763	70	\$600	30%
Minimum	6	654	60	\$800	40%
50/50%	5	545	50	\$1000	50%
	4	436	40	\$1200	60%
	3	327	30	\$1400	70%
	2	218	20	\$1600	80%
	1	109	10	\$1800	90%
0	0	0	0	\$2000.00	100%

Table 2 Apartment complexes (52.8% of SFUs subdivisions)

Acres/Money Ratio	Recreation Acreage per 1,000 people	Square Feet Per Dwelling Unit	% Recreation Area in Acreage	In-Lieu Fee per Dwelling Unit	% Recreation Are in Dollars
100/0%	5	353	100%	\$0	0%
	4.5	316	90	\$175	10%
	4	282	80	\$350	20%
	3.5	247	70	\$525	30%
Minimum	3	212	60	\$700	40%
50/50%	2.5	177	50	\$875	50%
	2	141	40	\$1050	60%
	1.5	106	30	\$1225	70%
	1	71	20	\$1400	80%
	.5	35	10	\$1575	90%
0	0	0	0	\$1750	100%

A. Important Provisions Related to the Requirements

1. If the applicant chooses to dedicate undeveloped land the Town of Sahuarita; that land must be within 2 miles of the subdivision, with the property being of equal or greater value than the development requirements. *Dedication of park land and in-lieu fee option is subject to approval from Town Council with recommendations from Planning and Zoning and Parks and Recreation.* The dedication proposal will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and the request must include a recent property appraisal.
2. The in-lieu fee must be paid to the Town of Sahuarita for each residential lot when building permits are issued.

3. Any in-lieu funds received by the Town will solely be used for park developments or improvements.

B. Calculation of Fees

The Town of Sahuarita has determined that the full demand or 100% of each single-family residential unit (SFU) is met by providing 1090 ft² of developed park land or 10 acres per 1,000 people. The equivalency is approximately 400 Single Family Units per 1,000 people. Any provision less than the 100% square footage requirement triggers an additional in-lieu fee to compensate for that shortage. The Town has determined the cost to construct parks with multiple recreational amenities including sports fields, be approximately \$200,000 per acre, **not including land acquisition**. Therefore the full development cost of 1090 ft² of raw land to be \$2,000 per unit and is based on the Town's past construction costs of its existing parks.

Section 9: Contact Information

The following Town contacts are available to provide you with additional information about the Parks & Recreation Area Design Standards Manual and related requirements.

Town of Sahuarita Parks & Recreation Department: (520) 822-8896

Town of Sahuarita Planning & Zoning Department: (520) 822-8852