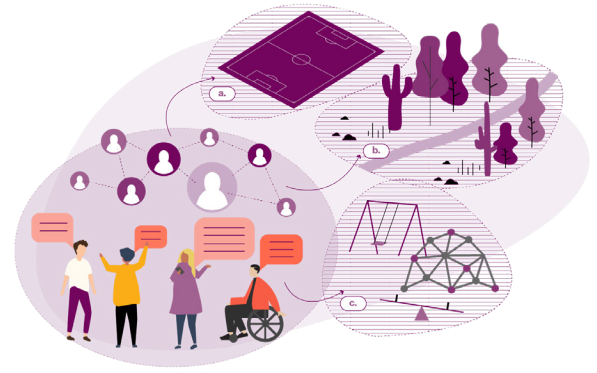


Prioritize equity



Why is Prioritizing Equity needed?

Research shows that systemic racial and economic disparity is at the heart of our nation's park and recreation equity gap.¹ Historic segregation practices from Tempe's founding and lack of investment in public infrastructure for some neighborhoods were obvious systemic policy decisions that impacted Indigenous Peoples, people of Mexican ancestry, Black, and others. Tempe's current parks and recreation provisions have been studied to understand what inequities emerge from facility access within walking distance of households, facility coverage and condition, history of facility investment spending, provision of facilities, frequency of crime, levels of use, and more. This analysis informs data-driven decision making about what type of park and recreation improvements are needed and where.

Prioritization of investments, program offerings, and maintenance standards, are selected through various means, but the overarching method is through the City's Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This plan, last updated in 2021, noted a need for this Equity Study to ensure that deeper investment occurs in areas with community members who have less resources. This was in part, because community input received for the 2021 Plan creation had under representative participation of minority groups and northern neighborhoods. This Equity Study also goes beyond examination of equal provision and includes consideration of fair provision to meet different needs, overcoming systemic barriers to park use, and participation in public investment prioritization processes. It serves as an addendum to supplement the 2021 Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Proactive planning for an equitable parks and recreation system means having data-driven findings and inclusive public input guide decision-making. Rather than ad-hoc commitments, political bargaining, or special interest groups directing focus, the future of parks and recreation provision is directed with evaluation tools informed by this Equity Study.

¹ Inequities in quality urban park systems: An environmental justice investigation of cities in the United States | US and Parks and an Equitable Recovery - Trust for Public Land (tpl.org) Forest Service Research and Development (usda.gov)