



# PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

SANTA CLARA PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN

APRIL 14, 2025







# AGENDA

- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2 WHAT WE'VE LEARNED
- 3 PRELIMINARY GOALS & OBJECTIVES
- 4 COMMUNITY WORKSHOP
- 5 NEXT STEPS

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# **INTRODUCTION**

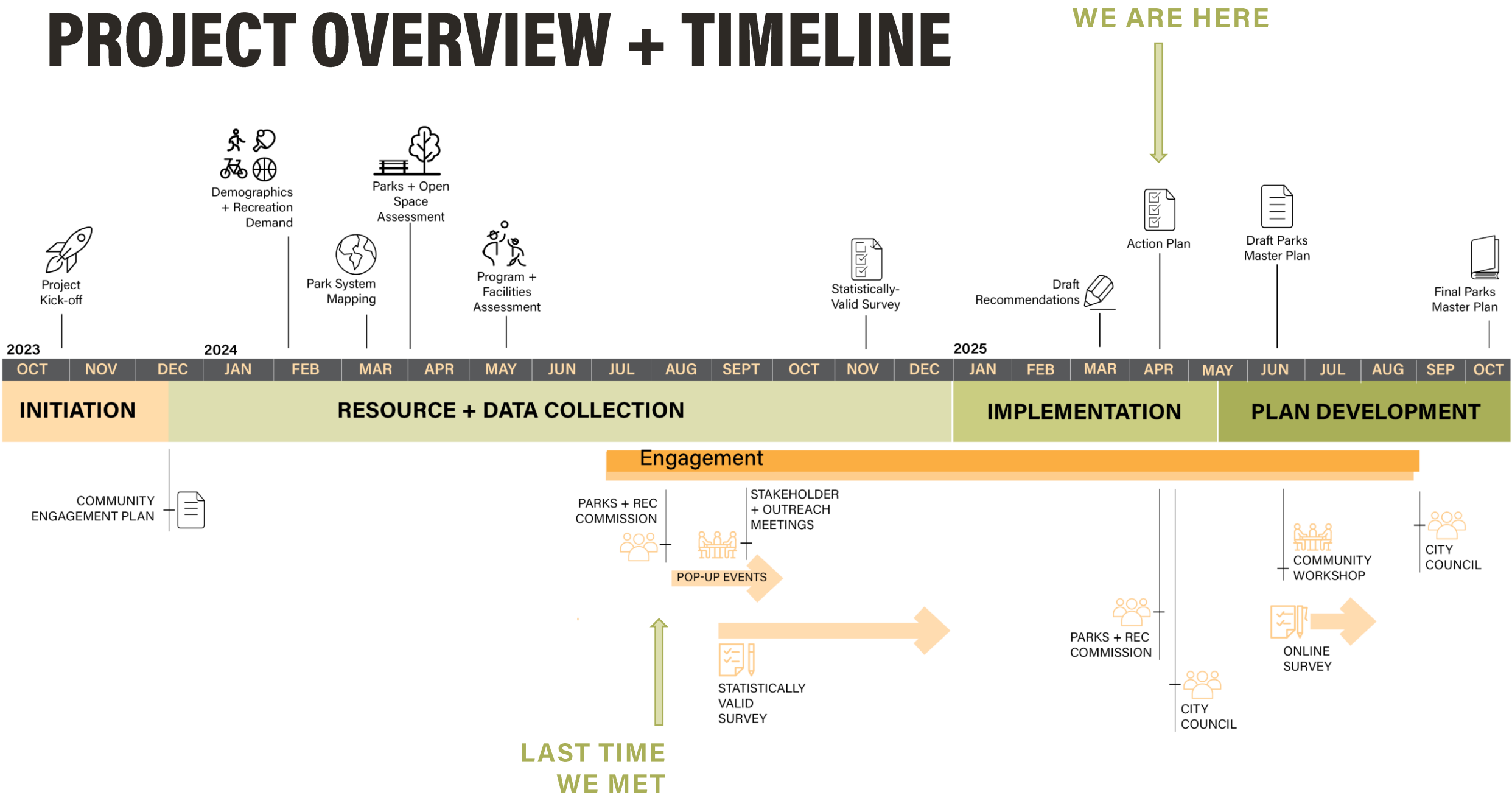




# WHY DO A PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN?

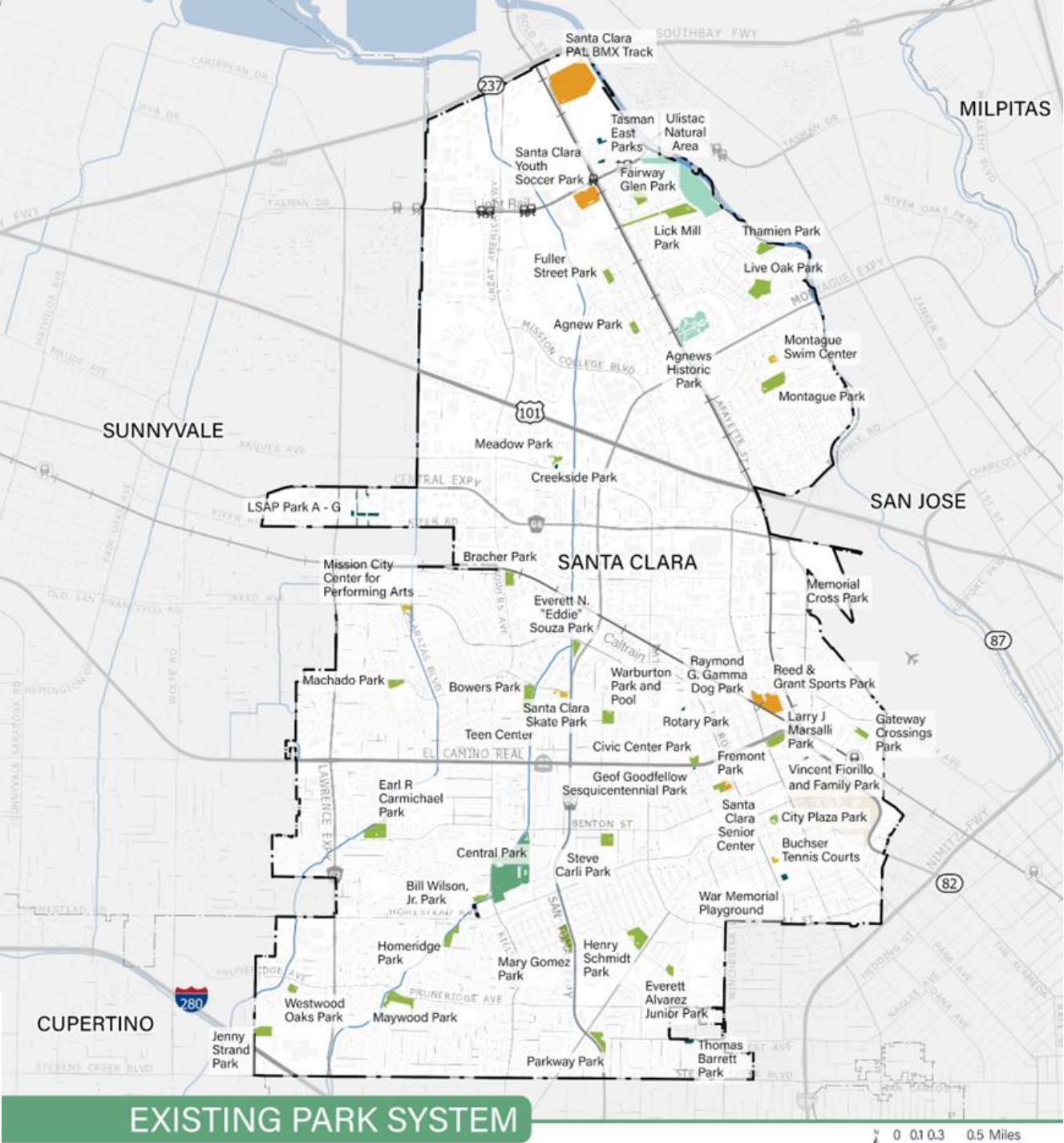
- Understand parks and recreation **needs and opportunities**
- Understand **community priorities** for new park amenities, programs
- Create roadmap for **improved operations + funding**
- Provide **policies + standards** based on best practices tailored to Santa Clara

# PROJECT OVERVIEW + TIMELINE





# SANTA CLARA PARK & RECREATION SYSTEM



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# **WHAT WE'VE LEARNED**

# NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

## EXISTING CONDITIONS



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

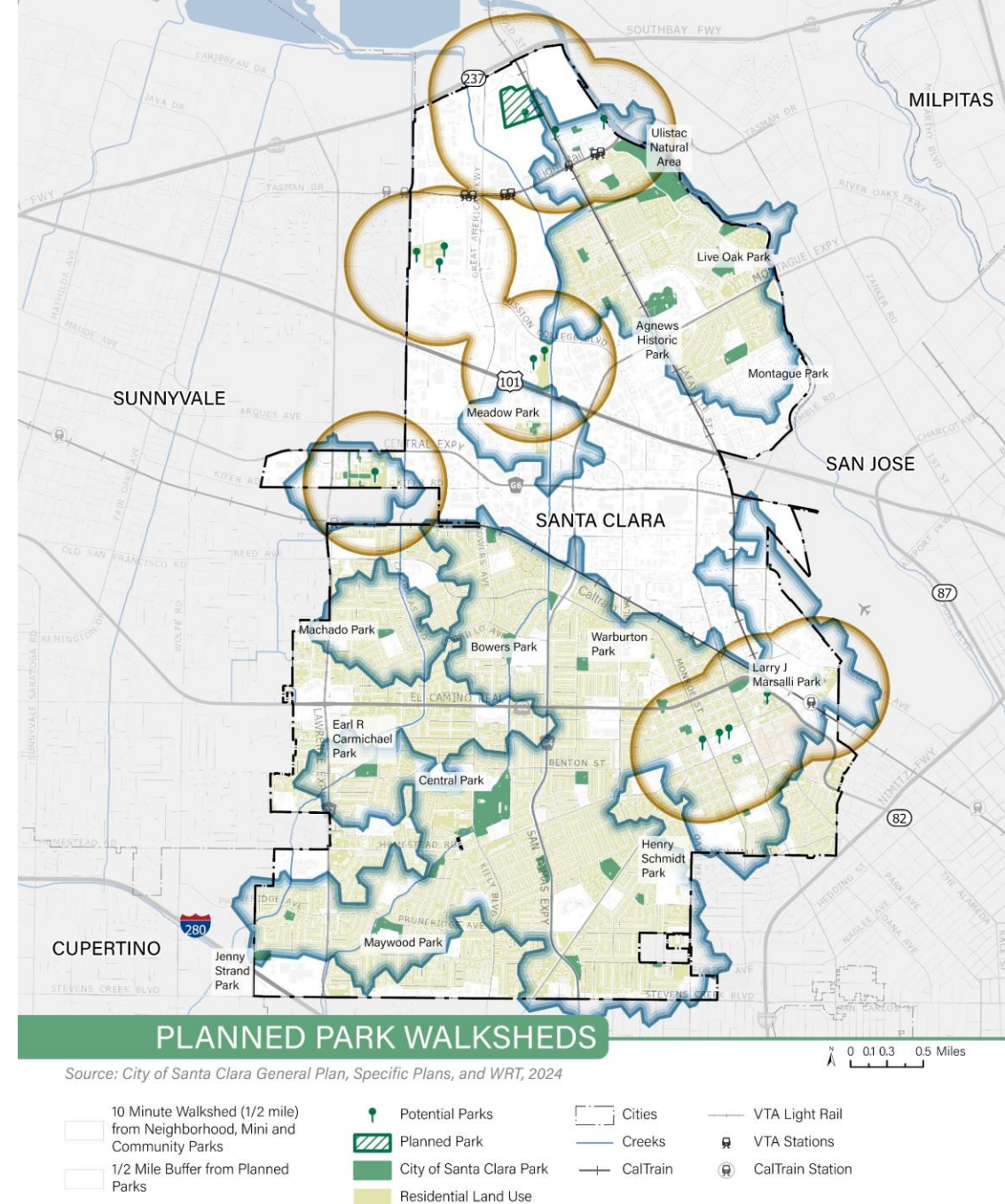


**NEEDS  
ASSESSMENT**



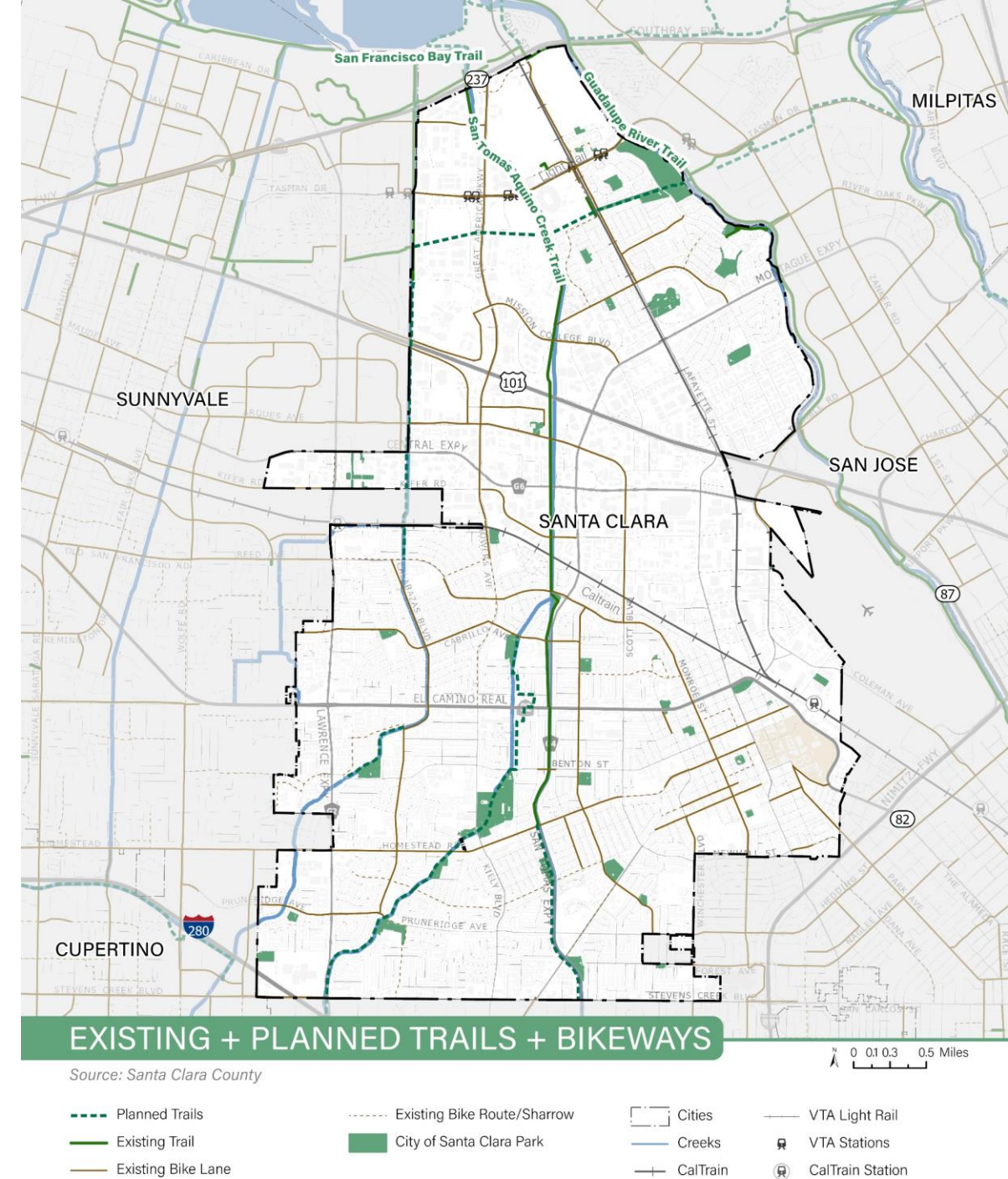
# PARKS

- **Parks are distributed unevenly** across Santa Clara—there is not equity in park access
- A need for **additional passive amenities**, such as **open spaces, conservation areas, trees, shade, and picnic areas and shelters**
- There is need for more sports courts, especially **multi-use and pickleball courts**. Sports groups expressed a need for additional **multi-purpose fields**
- The most common reason people visit parks is to **walk**
- There is demand for more **accessible and inclusive** recreational opportunities for various age groups and interests



# TRAILS

- Trails are a **high priority** for the community
- Santa Clara has an **extensive north-south trail system**
- There are opportunities for **improved trail connections** between the city's open spaces and parks, and for coordination with bike/ped planning
- **Walking loops** within parks can be added and improved
- **Relationship** between multiuse paths and parks can be improved to ensure good park experience





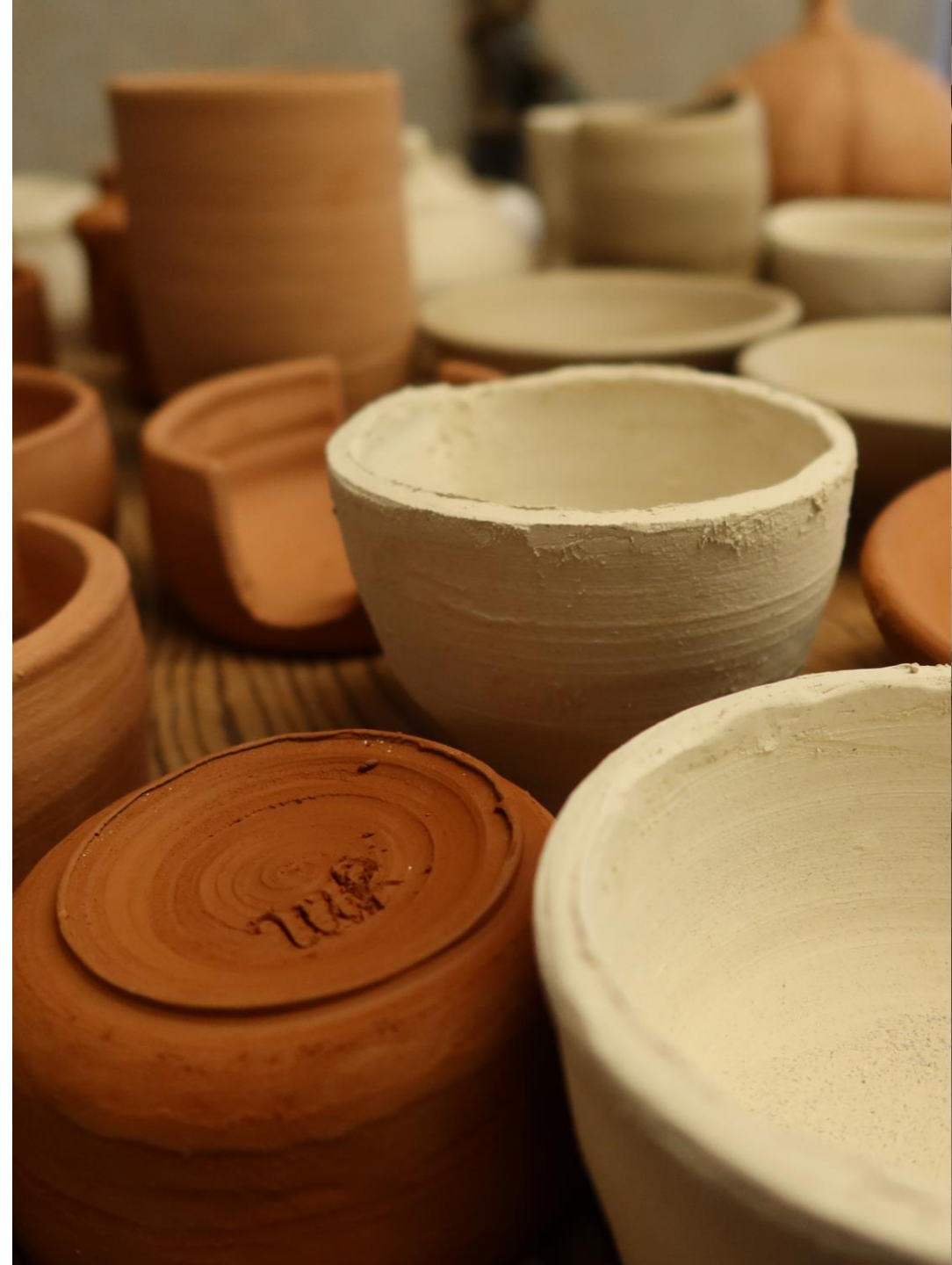
# MAINTENANCE/FUNDING

- A need for additional revenue streams to address **deferred maintenance and infrastructure**
- 55% of residents rated the condition of parks as "good". However, **only 9% responded that the condition of parks is "excellent"** which is well below the national average.
- Areas of greatest maintenance priority are **restrooms, paths/trails, graffiti/vandalism repair, litter/trash pickup**
- The department struggles with **hiring and retention of full-time staff**

2024 Importance-Satisfaction Rating Santa Clara, California <u>Maintenance</u>						
Category of Service	Most Important %	Most Important Rank	Satisfaction %	Satisfaction Rank	Importance-Satisfaction Rating	I-S Rating Rank
<u>High Priority (IS .10-.20)</u>						
Restroom maintenance	29%	2	36%	17	0.1858	1
Path/trail (paved) maintenance	34%	1	56%	5	0.1495	2
Graffiti removal/vandalism repair	27%	4	46%	11	0.1439	3
Trash/litter/waste pickup	27%	3	52%	7	0.1274	4
<u>Medium Priority (IS &lt;.10)</u>						
Community/recreation/senior center maintenance	17%	6	48%	10	0.0868	5
Playground safety & maintenance	21%	5	60%	2	0.0850	6
Pool/splash pad/spray ground maintenance	12%	15	32%	18	0.0805	7
Athletic field maintenance	13%	10	45%	13	0.0724	8
Waterways/rivers/streams	13%	11	44%	14	0.0719	9
Natural area/conservation area management	14%	7	51%	8	0.0695	10
Trail (non-paved) maintenance	13%	9	51%	9	0.0663	11
Athletic outdoor court maintenance	12%	13	45%	12	0.0655	12
Urban forest/tree maintenance	13%	12	54%	6	0.0583	13
Pavilion/picnic area maintenance	13%	8	57%	4	0.0580	14
Landscape care (flower beds)	12%	14	57%	3	0.0513	15
Dog park (off leash) maintenance & care	8%	17	40%	15	0.0501	16
Mowing	11%	16	60%	1	0.0442	17
Specialized facility maintenance	2%	18	38%	16	0.0131	18

# PROGRAMS/EVENTS

- **39% of households participated** in Santa Clara Parks and Recreation Department programs over the past 12 months which is **above the national benchmark** of 36%
- Of households that participated in programs, **74% rated the quality excellent/good** which is **below the national benchmark** combined rating of 85%.
- **Inconvenient program times** are the leading barrier to residents participating in programs, followed by **not knowing what is offered** and **program not offered**
- **Fitness and wellness programs, outdoor recreation, aquatic programs, community special events, and swim lessons** are high priorities for the community





# RECREATION FACILITIES

- A **community center**, an **indoor track**, and an **indoor gymnasium** are high and medium priorities for the community (statistically-valid survey)
- Many of the high and medium **program priorities cannot be accommodated in the existing facilities**
- Several existing facilities need **expansion or renovation**



# AQUATICS

- Swimming pools and aquatic programs are a **top priority** for the community
- Aquatics programs are struggling due to **limited availability of pools** and **outdated facilities**.
- The **ISC has been closed since January 2024**, severely limiting swimming opportunities. The City is working to resolve issues and reopen
- **Funding is a significant barrier** to maintaining and improving facilities

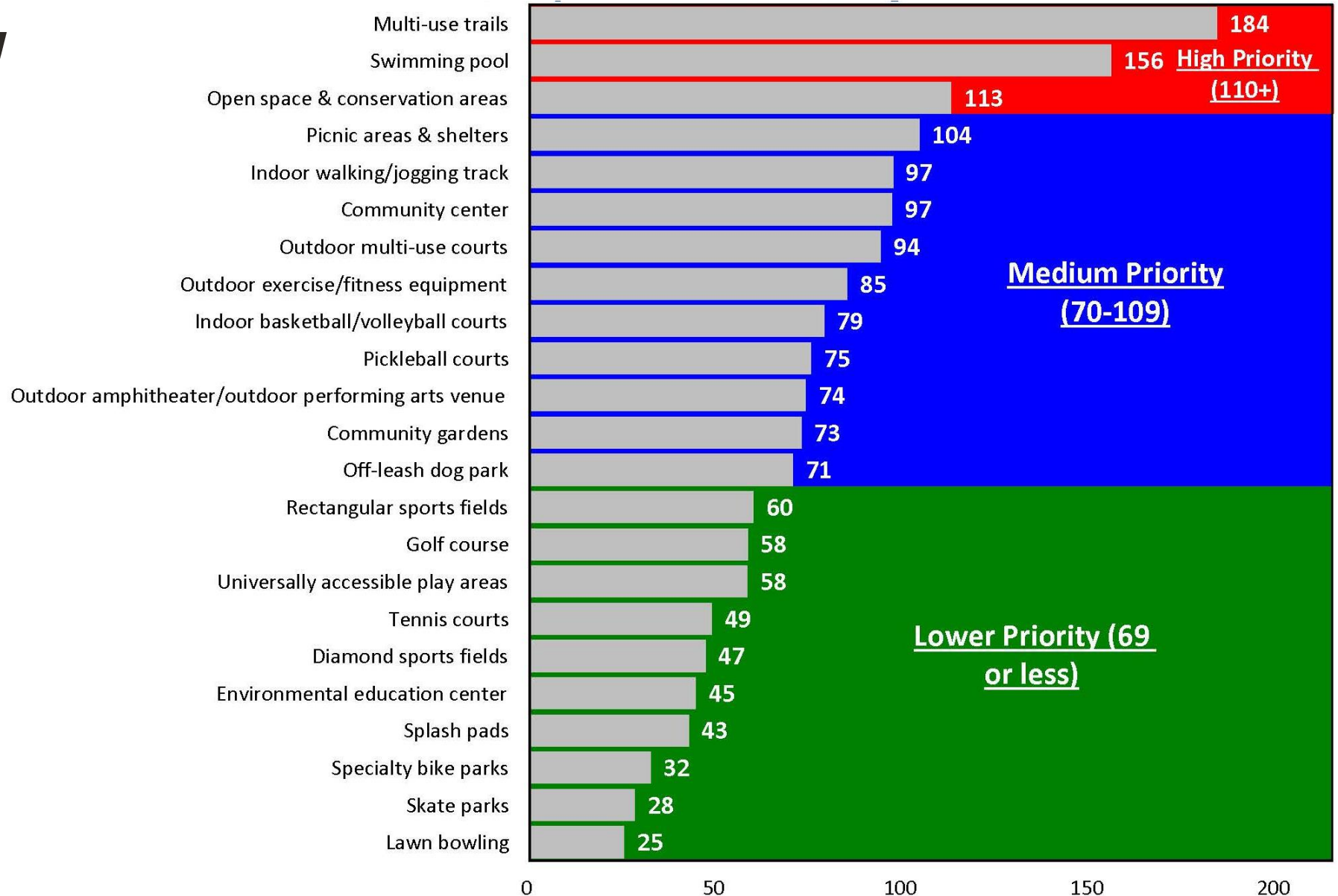




# TOP PRIORITIES FOR FACILITIES/ AMENITIES

Multi-use trails and swimming pool scored both high levels of unmet need and level of importance.

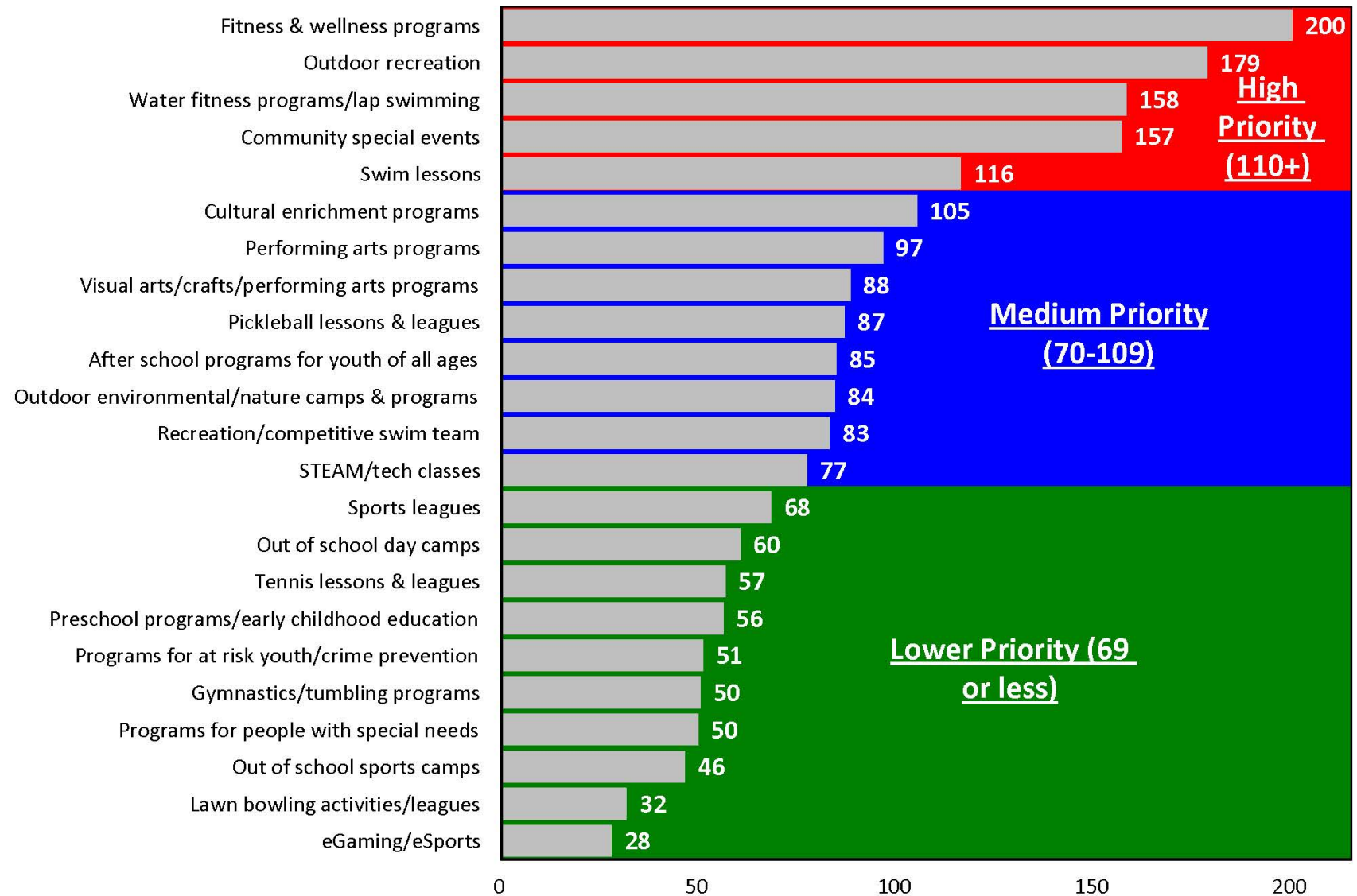
Open space & conservation areas scored lower on levels of unmet need, but high on importance.



# TOP PRIORITIES FOR PROGRAMS/ ACTIVITIES

All 5 program/activities deemed High Priority were in the top five on both the unmet needs ranking and importance ranking.

Fitness & wellness programs scored the highest level of unmet need and level of importance with a “perfect” score of 200—the maximum unmet need and importance.





# GUIDING THEMES



## TRAILS

**Walking and biking** are fundamental recreational activities..



## FUNCTIONAL & INCLUSIVE PARKS

Parks should provide **recreational value** for **all community members**.



## SPORTS COURTS

Additional **sports facilities**, particularly **multi-use and pickleball courts**.



## OPEN SPACE & CONSERVATION AREAS

**Green spaces and conservation areas** are important to the community.



## PARK COMFORT

More and better-maintained **restrooms, trees and shade, and picnic areas and seating**



## AQUATICS

**Aquatic facilities and programs** are high priority for residents and **outdated facilities** are inadequate.



## INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES

An indoor track, a community center, and indoor gymnasium are high-priority needs.



## PROGRAM PRIORITIES

**Fitness & wellness, outdoor recreation, and aquatic programs** are high priorities



## COMMUNITY EVENTS

Residents desire **new and expanded community events**



## FUNDING & MAINTENANCE

**Funding for maintenance and lifecycle improvements** has not kept up with need

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# **PRELIMINARY GOALS & OBJECTIVES**



# PRELIMINARY GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## PATHS & TRAILS

**Goal:** Create new paths and trails to support a robust pedestrian and bicycle network throughout Santa Clara, connecting residents to existing parks, trails, open spaces, and recreation facilities.

### Key Objectives:

- Provide **complete walking loops** or walking opportunities in all parks.
- Implement the city-wide planned **multi-use trail network** and ensure that trails are well-integrated into parks, supporting park access and recreation value, and minimizing disruption of green space and user conflicts.
- Provide **trailhead amenities at parks**, including bicycle parking, water fountains/refill stations, and wayfinding signage and maps.
- Identify priority locations near parks for **safe crossing and traffic calming** improvements. Work with public works to implement them.





# PRELIMINARY GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## FUNDING & MAINTENANCE

**Goal:** Maintain parks and facilities to the desired standard, with adequate staffing and funding.

### Key Objectives:

- Reevaluate and **establish sustainable funding sources** to adequately maintain and operate the parks and recreation system to the City's desired maintenance standard.
- Develop a **comprehensive maintenance management plan** with defined outcomes and maintenance standards for each park in the system utilizing this study as a resource for doing so.
- Develop a **formal marketing program** that aligns with how residents would most like to receive information.
- Develop a **formal partnership policy** and utilize this policy as a foundation for updating existing partnership agreements.





# PRELIMINARY GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## AQUATICS

**Goal:** Expand and improve aquatics to meet the community demand and increase accessibility, including recreational and competitive programs and facilities to support them.

### Key Objectives:

- Complete **planned improvements to the International Swim Center (ISC)** to serve both recreational and competitive aquatic needs.
- Develop an **aquatics strategy** that **considers adding a second aquatics complex** and transitioning neighborhood pools to other uses or make necessary improvements to existing neighborhood pools.



# PRELIMINARY GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## RECREATION FACILITIES

**Goal:** Provide adequate sports facilities to support recreational demand with additional courts and other amenities. Provide multi-purpose facilities to allow for flexibility and increased use.

### Key Objectives:

- Explore where and how to **create a new indoor recreation facility** to address the demand for indoor sports and activities, as well as the desire for a multi-purpose community center.
- Enhance the **Community Recreation Center**, the **Senior Center**, and the **Teen Center** to better serve the recreation needs of residents
- Seek opportunities **for increasing recreational access** and use through shared-use sites, including school and college recreation facilities.





# PRELIMINARY GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## PROGRAMS

**Goal:** Provide recreation programs for all ages and abilities to meet demand. Understand well what the unmet program needs are and address those gaps in service.

### Key Objectives:

- **Add new programs to address unmet needs**, particularly in fitness and wellness, outdoor recreation, and water fitness programs and swim lessons.
- Reevaluate the **schedule and timing of offered programs** and adjust to best meet community needs.
- **Increase awareness** of offered programs, focusing on the City Activity Guide, City website, and email communications.
- Through ongoing data analysis, create strategies to **expand program participation** from all geographical areas.





# PRELIMINARY GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## FUNCTIONAL, INCLUSIVE, & COMFORTABLE PARKS

**Goal:** Provide adequate parkland to meet community needs and parks provide real recreational value and are inclusive, comfortable, and accessible for people of all ages and abilities.

### **Key Objectives:**

- **Create new parks** to address the shortage of parkland in Santa Clara, prioritizing park-deficient areas and as part of new development.
- Ensure that parks are of a shape and size that **supports recreational use** and have a **robust mix of relevant amenities**, following the standards provided in this plan.
- Increase park comfort by **providing adequate amenities** like restrooms, trees and shade, picnic and seating areas, drinking fountains, and trash receptacles, ensuring safe, accessible, and pleasant park experiences.
- Use **universal design principles** in the design of all park improvements.





# PRELIMINARY GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## OPEN SPACE & CONSERVATION AREAS

**Goal:** Incorporate environmental resiliency into all parks and open spaces with native plants, conservation, and other similar strategies to maximize ecological benefits. Continue to prioritize green spaces.

### Key Objectives:

- **Conserve and protect** habitat, riparian corridors, and heritage trees, and use native plants and wildlife-compatible plants for plantings in non-active areas of parks.
- **Reduce demand and consumption of water** and use permeable surfaces and landscaped areas to increase infiltration, filter runoff, and manage stormwater.
- Use trees and landscaping in parks to provide shade and **reduce the effects of extreme heat** and to sequester carbon.





# PRELIMINARY GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

**Goal:** Expand successful and establish new community events to highlight Santa Clara's unique character and culture.

### Key Objectives:

- Continue to provide and improve upon popular and successful **community events**.
- Continue to use park spaces for **event programming** to bring greater activation to the park system.
- **Add new community events based** on demand; implement and increase food events, entertainment, holiday celebrations, and cultural celebrations.





# DISCUSSION

- What questions and observations do you have about the Needs Assessment findings?
- Please provide feedback on the preliminary goals and objectives:
  - What do you especially like or not like?
  - Are we missing anything

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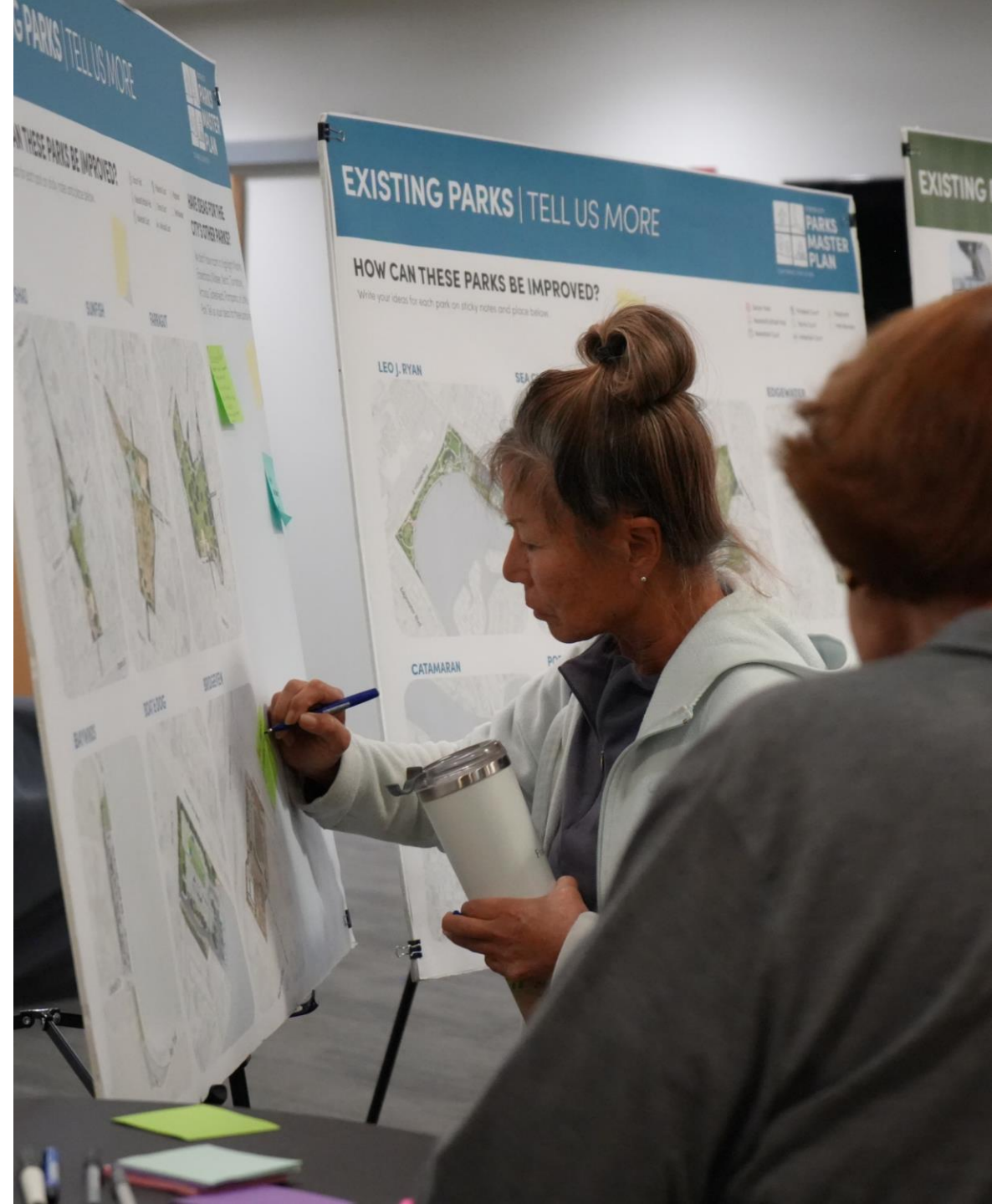
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# **COMMUNITY WORKSHOP**



# COMMUNITY WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

- Presentation (~20 minutes)
- Breakout Sessions – Small Table Groups
  - Discuss and hear feedback on preliminary goals and objectives, design standards and proposed improvements, in each topic area
    - Parks and Trails
    - Recreation, Aquatics, and Programming
- Group report back



# DISCUSSION

- What do you especially like, or not like, about the workshop format?
- Are we missing anything?
- Any other feedback?



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**NEXT STEPS**

# PROJECT SCHEDULE + NEXT STEPS

