

PARKS AND RECREATION ELEMENT

DRAFT
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PARKS AND RECREATION ELEMENT

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Parks and Recreation Element is to review the current parks and recreation inventory in Douglas County and to identify issues and opportunities.

The Parks and Recreation Element concludes with Goals, Policies, and Actions to support development and maintenance of open space, parks, and recreation programs in Douglas County during the next five to ten years. Many of the Goals, Policies, and Actions in this Element are based on the County's 1996 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, as amended.

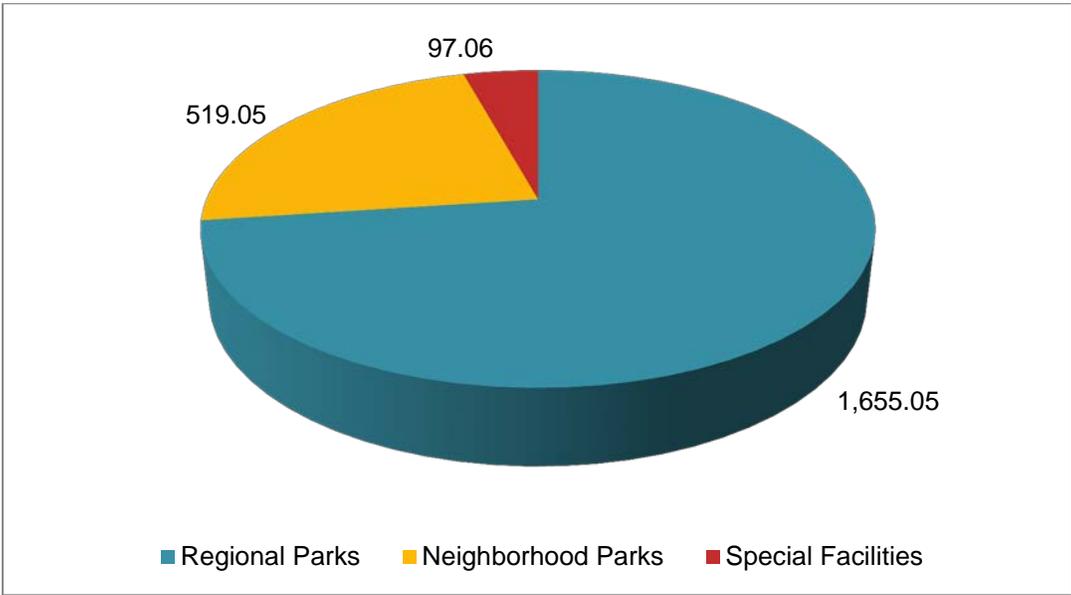
PARKS AND RECREATION IN DOUGLAS COUNTY

Douglas County contains significant open space, parks, and recreation resources, including almost 250,00 acres of federal public lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. There are multiple social, environmental, and economic benefits associated with the development of parks and recreation as well as many challenges in meeting different and sometimes conflicting interests between recreation stakeholders (e.g. equestrians vs. bicyclists).

PARKS AND RECREATION INVENTORY

The parks and recreation inventory in Douglas County includes regional, neighborhood, and special facilities located in all areas of the County. As shown in Figure 1, there are 1,655.05 acres of regional parks, 519.05 acres of neighborhood parks, and 97.06 acres of special facilities. Figure 1 does not include private recreation facilities, such as golf courses.

Figure 1
Park Acreage in Douglas County, by Type



Regional parks in Douglas County include Topaz Lake Regional Park, Van-Sickle Bi-State Park in Stateline, and Spooner Lake (Lake Tahoe State Park) in Glenbrook. River Fork Ranch in Genoa, which is owned by The Nature Conservancy, can also be considered a regional park. River Fork Ranch contains 805 acres and includes public trails adjacent to the west fork of the Carson River. Table 1 contains information on the size and development status of regional parks in Douglas County.

**Table 1
Regional Parks in Douglas County**

Name of Facility	Acreage	Owner	Status
Cave Rock	3.21	State of Nevada	Developed
Nevada Beach	57.45	U.S. Forest Service	Developed
Round Hill Pines Resort	124.88	U.S. Forest Service	Developed
River Fork Ranch	805.00	The Nature Conservancy	Developed
Spooner Lake	478.51	State of Nevada	Developed
Topaz Lake Regional Park	164.60	Douglas County	Partially Developed
Zephyr Cove Beach/Resort	16.78	U.S. Forest Service	Developed
Van-Sickle Bi-State Park	4.62	State of Nevada	Developed
Total	1,655.05		

**Figure 2
Topaz Lake Regional Park**



There are currently 519.05 acres of neighborhood and community parks in Douglas County, as shown in Table 2. Almost all of the parks listed in Table 2 are fully developed.

**Table 2
Neighborhood/Community Parks in Douglas County**

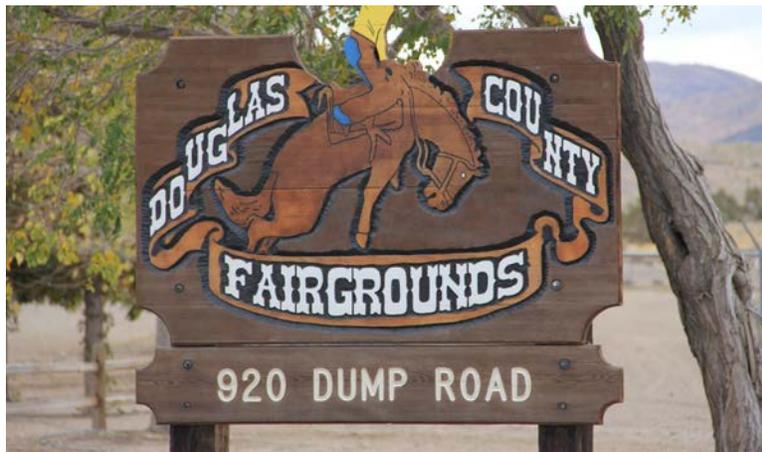
Name of Facility	Acreage	Owner	Status
Arbor Gardens Park	1.11	Town of Gardnerville	Developed
Blue Rock Park	1.56	Gardnerville Ranchos	Developed
Brautovich Park	4.60	Douglas County	Developed
Circle Park	1.08	Town of Gardnerville	Developed
Community Park	1.04	Town of Minden	Developed
Dresslerville Park	3.00	HOA	Developed
Genoa Town Park	1.04	Town of Genoa	Developed
Genoa Lane River Park (Willow Bend Park)	5.79	Douglas County	Undeveloped/ Received Q 1 Funds
Herbig Park	20.06	Douglas County	Developed
Heritage Park	3.95	Town of Gardnerville	Developed
James Lee Park	74.40	Indian Hills GID	Developed
Johnson Lane Park	74.24	Douglas County	Partially Developed
Kahle Park	17.53	Douglas County	Developed
Lampe Park	37.99	Douglas County	Developed
Minden Town Park	1.29	Town of Minden	Developed
Mitch Drive Park	20.76	Gardnerville Ranchos GID	Developed
Multi-Use Park	14.00	Douglas County	Developed
Rocky Bend Park	7.33	Douglas County	Undeveloped
Ranchos Aspen Park	20.03	Douglas County	Developed
Ranchos Birch Park	17.39	Gardnerville Ranchos GID	Undeveloped
Ranchos Conifer Park	11.55	Douglas County	Undeveloped
River Bend Park	3.68	Douglas County	Undeveloped Received Q1 Funds
Saratoga Springs Park	13.10	HOA	Partially Developed
School Site Park	2.39	Douglas County	Developed
Seeman Ranch	31.21	Douglas County	Undeveloped
Stodick Park	15.00	Douglas County	Developed
Sunridge North Park	2.35	Indian Hills GID	Developed
Sunridge South Park	2.62	Indian Hills GID	Developed
Jake's Wetland Park	7.45	Town of Minden	Developed
Topaz Ranch Estates Park	9.25	Douglas County	Developed
Westwood Village	2.30	Town of Minden	Developed
Wildhorse Park	3.04	HOA	Developed
Valley Vista Park	3.76	Indian Hills GID	Developed
Zephyr Cove Park	83.16	Douglas County	Developed
TOTAL	519.05		

As shown in Table 3, there are 97.06 acres of several special use facilities in Douglas County, including the Carson Valley Swim Center, Dangberg Home Ranch Historic Park, and Mormon Station.

**Table 3
Special Use Facilities in Douglas County**

Name of Facility	Acreage	Owner	Status
Bently Science Park	2.22	Bently Family	Developed
Carson Valley Swim Center	3.23	East Fork Swim District	Developed
Dangberg Home Ranch Historic Park	5.50	Douglas County	Developed
High School Tennis	2.00	Douglas County	Developed
Fairgrounds	35.40	Douglas County	Developed
Model Airplane Park	3.98	Douglas County	Developed
Mormon Station	2.38	State of Nevada	Developed
Shooting Range	39.35	Douglas County	Developed
Skate Park	3.00	Douglas County	Developed
Total	97.06		

**Figure 3
Douglas County Fairgrounds Sign**



The new Douglas County Community and Senior Center opened in December 2014. This 83,000 square foot facility has almost 1,000 visitors per day (as of September 2015) with 1,854 total memberships and 1,251 active annual memberships. The Community and Senior Center, which is located in Gardnerville across from Lampe Park, offers fitness and youth sports. The new Senior Center offers meals and activities and now offers an Adult Day Club to provide respite for caregivers. Table 4 provides information on the size and activities at each of the Community Centers in the County.

**Table 4
Community Centers**

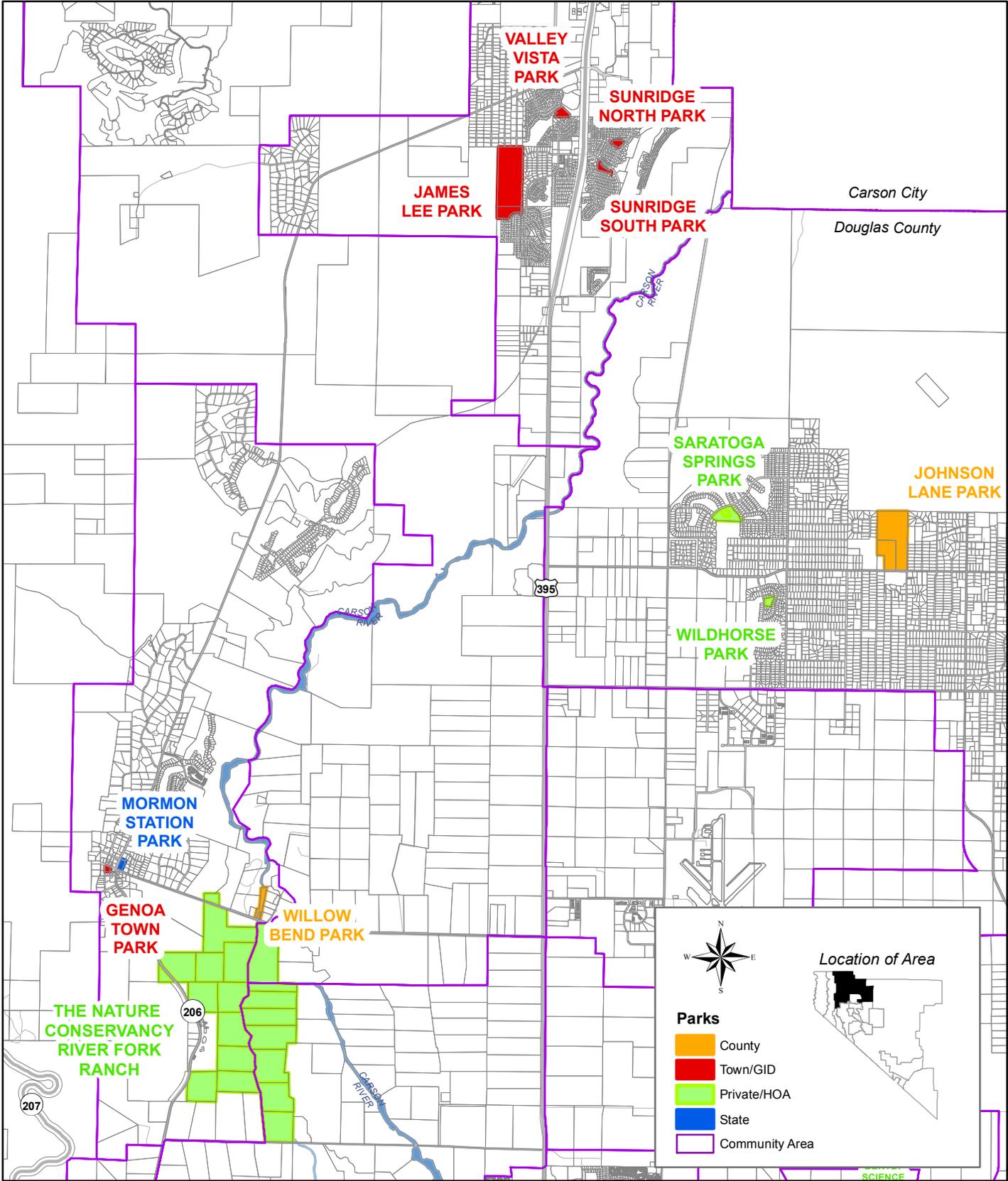
Name of Facility	Size (Square Feet)	Owner	Activities
Kahle Community Center	22,423	Douglas County	Gymnasium Kids Club Recreation Classes Sports Leagues
Community Center and Senior Center	83,000	Douglas County	Gymnasium Recreation Classes Sport Leagues Adult Day Club
Tahoe Senior Center	2,178	Douglas County	Volunteer Activities
Topaz Ranch Estates	3,603	Douglas County	Congregate Meals Neighborhood Activites
Total	111,204		

**Figure 4
Douglas County Community & Senior Center**

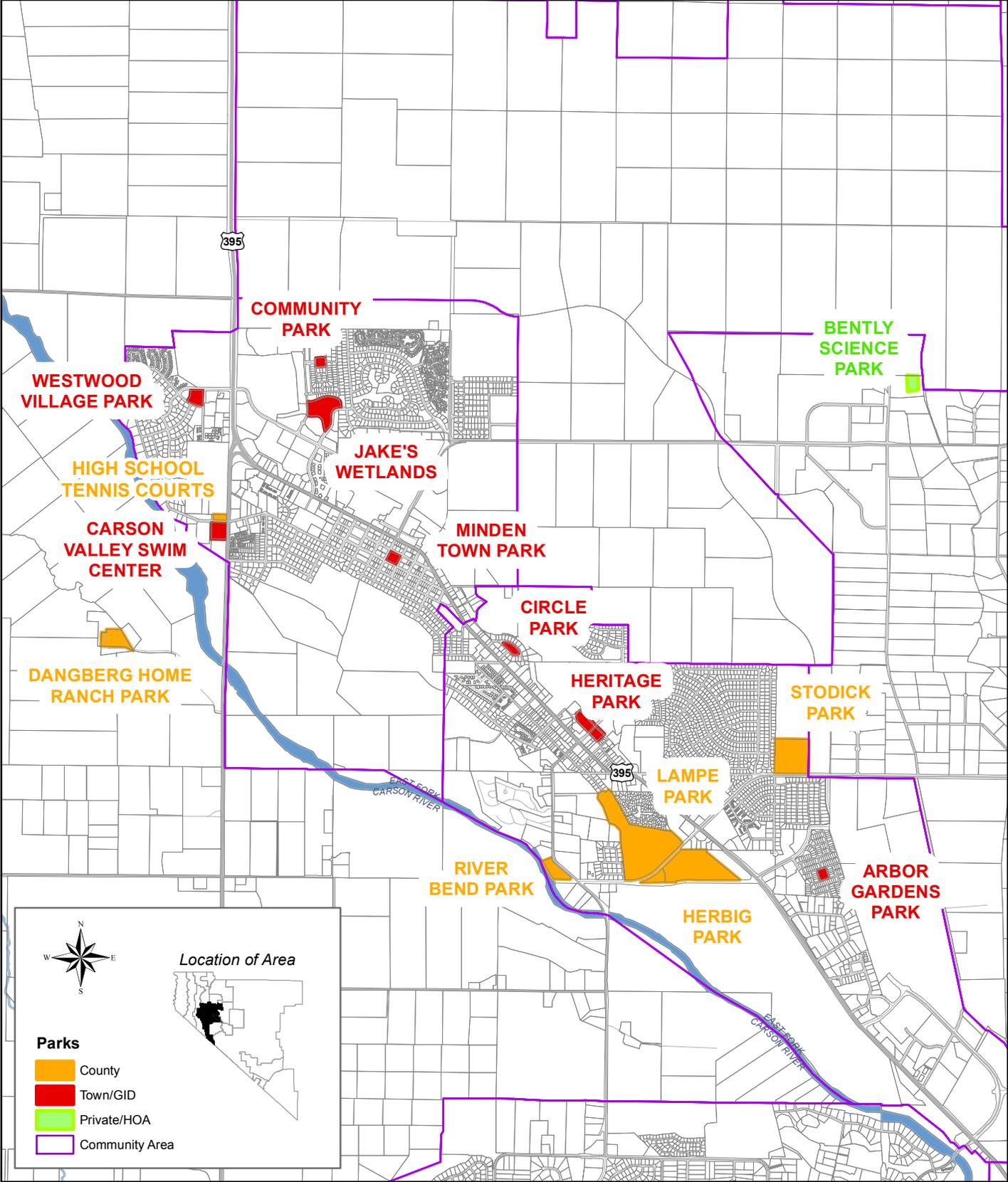


Maps 1-5 depict the locations of regional parks, neighborhood parks, and special facilities in Douglas County.

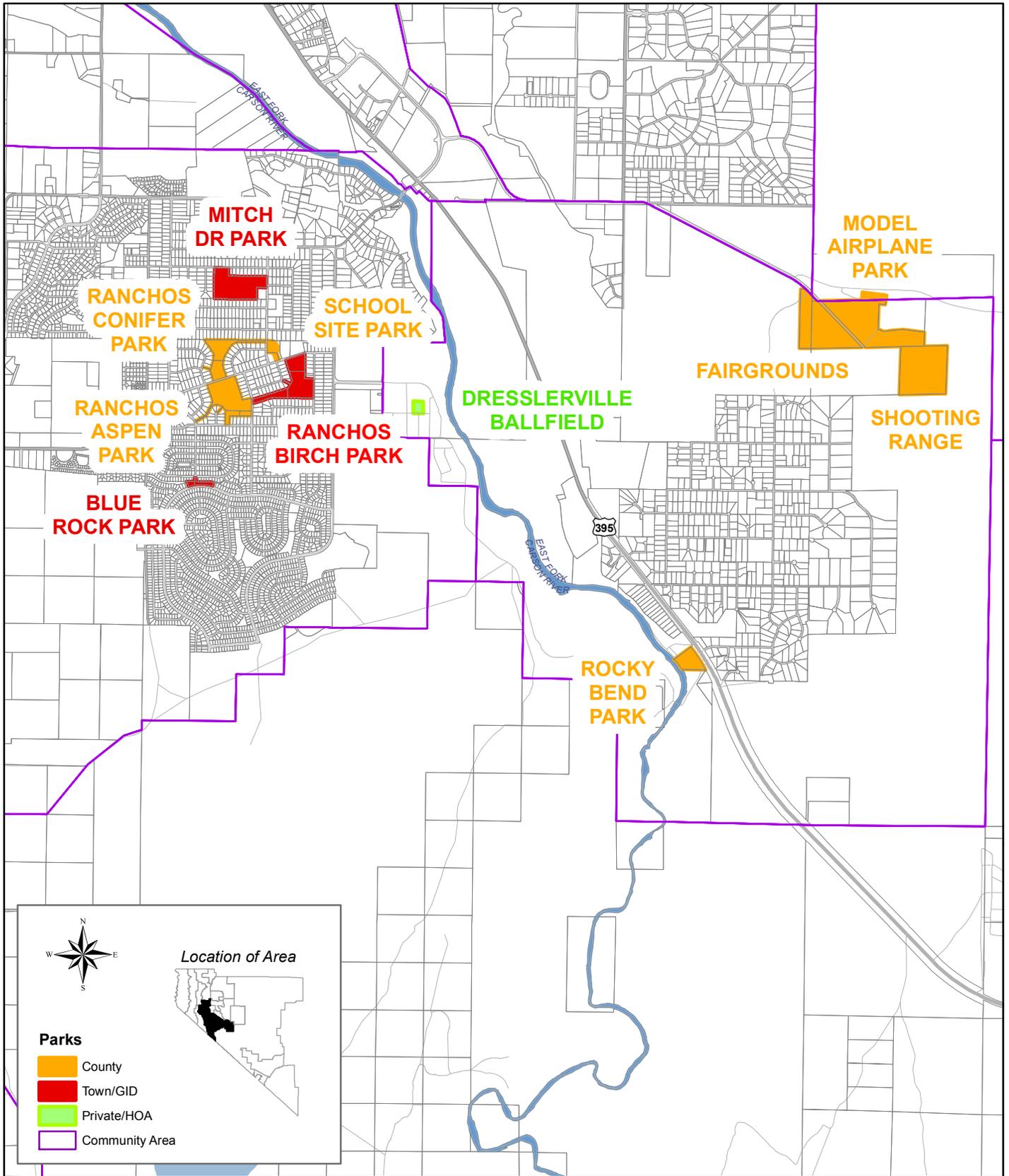
Map 1 Parks in North Douglas County



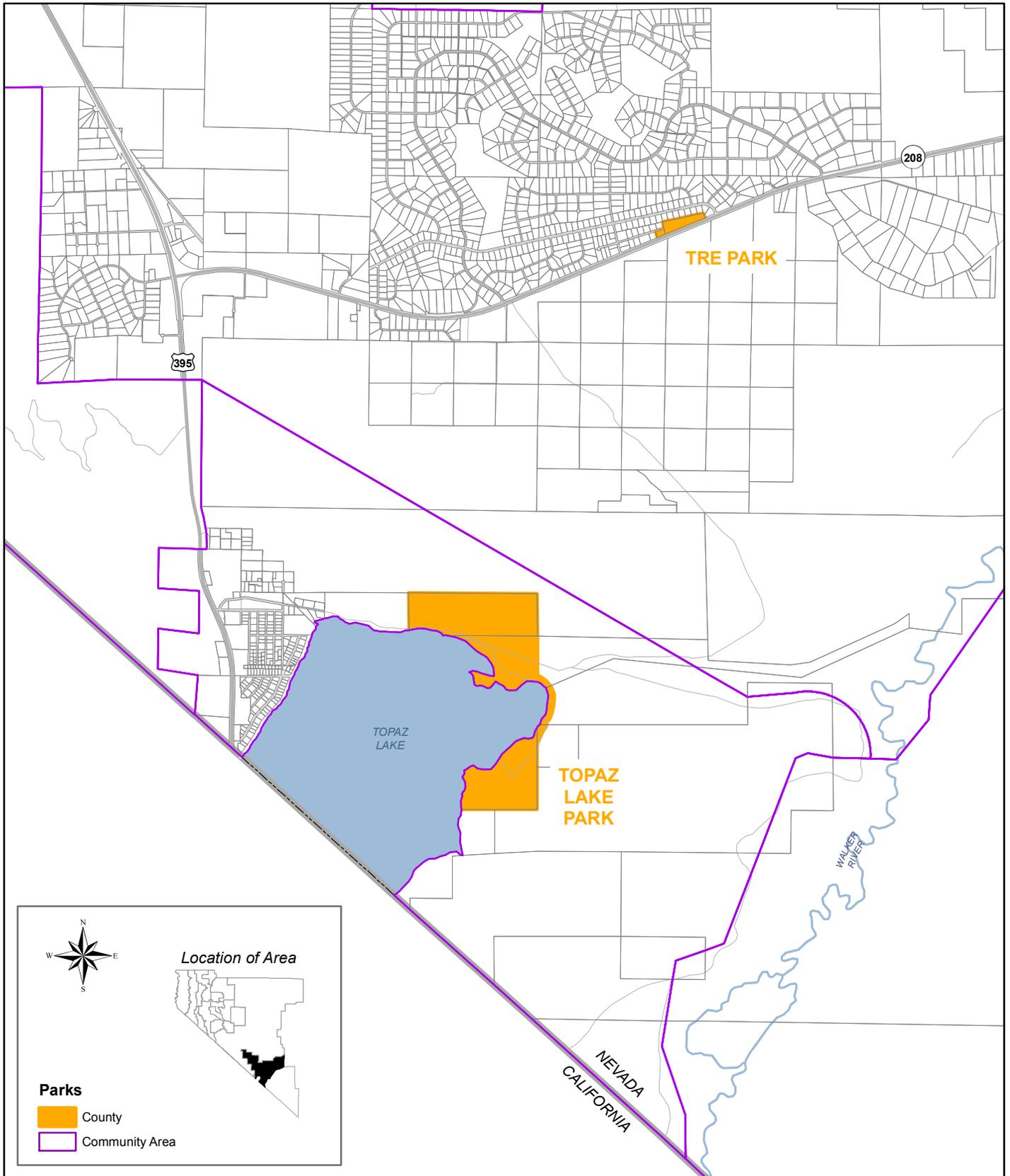
Map 2 Parks in Central Douglas County



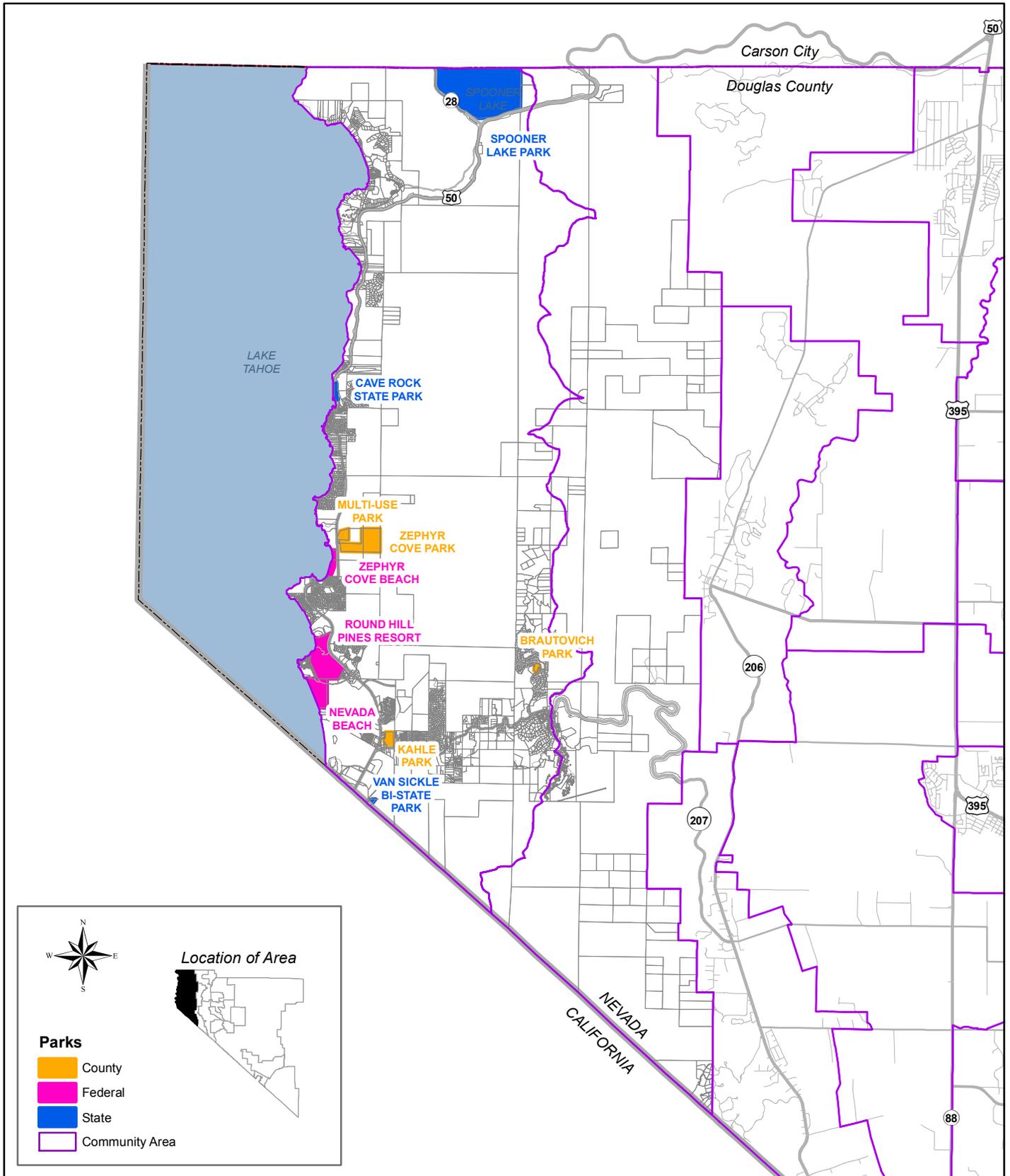
**Map 3
Parks in South Douglas County**



Map 4
Parks in Topaz Ranch Estates/Topaz Lake



Map 5 Parks in the Tahoe Basin



Location of Area

Parks

- County
- Federal
- State
- Community Area

PARKS AND RECREATION ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

2016 MASTER PLAN SURVEY

The 2016 Master Plan Survey asked respondents to indicate their degree of familiarity with the Douglas County Master Plan. Fifty-seven percent of the survey respondents stated they were very familiar or somewhat familiar with the Parks and Recreation Element of the Master Plan, which was the highest response rate of all of the Master Plan Elements. For Question 6 of the Master Plan Survey, people were asked to rank several different topics related to development and quality of life issues on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 ranked as the highest score. The Parks and Recreation topic received a score of 3.67.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION ZONING

Douglas County does not have a specific zoning district for public open space, parks, and recreation parcels. As shown in Table 5, there are three possible Master Plan land use designations for parks and open space: Recreation, Community Facility, and Forest and Range. Each land use designation permits specific zoning districts.

The first land use designation is Recreation and there is only one compatible zoning district: PR, or Private Recreation. The PR Zoning district is intended to provide commercially oriented recreational land uses on privately owned parcels, such as tennis clubs and golf clubs.

The second land use designation which is used for parks is Community Facility, which includes the PF (Public Facility) and AP (Airport) Zoning Districts. The PF zoning district includes a variety of public facility uses, including schools, fire stations, wastewater treatment facilities, wells, and government buildings.

The third land use designation is Forest and Range. The Forest and Range land use designation includes two zoning districts: FR-19 (Forest and Range-19 acre) and FR-40 (Forest and Range-40 acre). Most of the federal lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service are zoned as FR-40. Many private parcels, including inholdings, are zoned FR-19, however.

**Table 5
Existing Open Space and Park Land Uses and Zoning Districts**

Current Land Use Designation	Compatible Zoning Districts
Recreation	PR – Private Recreation
Community Facility	PF – Public Facility AP- Airport
Forest and Range	FR-40 FR-19

It may be appropriate to create a new zoning district for Open Space and Parks (OSP) to protect existing areas and to facilitate development of new open space and park areas.

CARSON RIVER AND WALKER RIVER OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION CORRIDORS

There are several opportunities to expand and develop open space and recreation activities along the Carson and Walker Rivers. The River Fork Ranch, which is owned and managed by The Nature Conservancy, provides an example of a project that provides access to the Carson River, protects the floodplain, and restores the health of the Carson River. The Bently-Kirman Trail, which is located north of Heybourne Road, is yet another example of a project that provides access to the Carson River while protecting the floodplain from development.

During 2017, the Nevada Legislature approved funding for the creation of the new Walker River State Recreation Area along 29 miles of the East Walker River in Lyon and Mineral Counties. This new recreation area was facilitated by the Walker Basin Conservancy and will eventually provide public access to the river corridor as well as camping facilities. There may be an opportunity to look at a similar recreation corridor along the West Walker River in Douglas County. In 2013 and 2014, the Nature Conservancy acquired conservation easements for the Fairfield Ranch (3,843 acres) and Wade Fernley (605 acres) properties along the West Walker River in Douglas County.

Under NRS Chapter 376A, counties are permitted to go to the voters to request a one-quarter of one percent sales tax to fund open space programs, provided an open space plan has been adopted by the governing body prior to the vote. According to NRS, open space includes preservation of land to conserve and enhance natural or scenic resources as well as the development of recreational sites.

Douglas County prepared the necessary Open Space Plan prior to a 2001 vote on the proposed open space sales tax. The 2001 vote was not successful, however. In 2007, the County prepared an updated [Open Space and Agricultural Lands Preservation Implementation Plan](#) for the purpose of returning to the voters for approval of an open space sales tax.

It should be noted that the NRS statute allowing the voter-approved quarter cent sales tax for open space acquisition appears to remove counties less than 100,000 population after September 29, 2029. Beginning on October 1, 2029, only counties with more than 100,000, but less than 700,000 population, are permitted to propose a quarter-cent sales tax for open space acquisition. Douglas County's current population (July 2016 Census Estimate) is 48,020. According to the Nevada State Demographer, the County is expected to reach a population of 51,103 by 2029.

It would be appropriate for the County to pursue the development of a River Corridor Open Space Plan for the different branches of the Carson and Walker Rivers.

DOUGLAS COUNTY TRAILS PLAN (2003)

The County continues to work with the Carson Valley Trails Association, the Tahoe Rim Trail Association, and the U.S. Forest Service to expand trails and improve trailheads throughout Douglas County.

The Douglas County Trails Plan was adopted in June 2003. Although there has been some success in expanding the trail network in Douglas County by approximately 50 miles since 2011, the absence of an updated Trails Plan makes it more and more difficult for the County to obtain land for trails during future development and does not allow the County to carry out an updated analysis of trail priorities and funding needs.

PARKS AND RECREATION GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTION

The Parks and Recreation Goals, Policies, and Actions set forth the broad vision for parks and recreation as well as related policies and specific actions to address open space issues in Douglas County.

PARKS & RECREATION GOAL 1

TO IMPLEMENT THE PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN.

Parks & Recreation Policy 1.1	To protect the natural, cultural, and scenic qualities of Douglas County, including open spaces, public lands, agricultural lands, wetlands, and waterways that are critical to the quality of life in our community. The Department will continue to plan for the needs and preserve the rights of current and future residents, and especially their access to public parks and recreation opportunities, while ensuring high standards of safety and public welfare.
Parks & Recreation Policy 1.2	To continue to make available to county residents and visitors alike a variety of active and passive park facilities and recreation programs that satisfy their needs and enhance their basic quality of life.
Parks & Recreation Policy 1.3	To provide recreation opportunities that enhance the physical and mental well-being of the community, which are deemed of critical importance.
Parks & Recreation Policy 1.4	To create an edifying and positive public image for the community through the appearance of the parks and publicly owned, landscaped areas maintained by the Department.
Parks & Recreation Policy 1.5	To foster an atmosphere in which members of the community can voice ideas and concerns, and know that they are being listened to, which is deemed highly important.
Parks & Recreation Policy 1.6	To accord priority to operating and maintaining indoor facilities that appeal to the recreational and social needs of citizens of all ages.
Parks & Recreation Policy 1.7	To continue to support the development of single-track trails, multi-use trails, bike lanes and trailheads that provide access connection between neighborhoods, recreation facilities, points of interest, and places of employment.
Parks & Recreation Policy 1.8	To continue development of adventure-related facilities, such as skateboard parks and BMX tracks, in appropriate areas of County- owned/managed properties.

Parks & Recreation Policy 1.9	To include special use areas for dog owners and their pets, whether on or off leash, in future park developments, as deemed appropriate.
Parks & Recreation Policy 1.10	To afford recreational access to the Carson River on public lands or on private lands, which continues to be a priority for the Department and the County.
Parks & Recreation Policy 1.11	To continue to acquire/develop facilities through joint ventures and agreements with other public and/or private entities including, but not limited to: Douglas County School District, Nevada Division of State Parks, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, Nevada Department of Transportation, and private enterprises.
Parks & Recreation Policy 1.12	To provide cost-effective stewardship for the County's park resources through careful management and conscientious maintenance.
Parks & Recreation Policy 1.13	Whenever possible, to construct or otherwise acquire facilities that can generate revenue, as well as meeting the needs of the community and promoting tourism.
Parks & Recreation Policy 1.14	To promote tourism and the use of self-sustaining parks and recreation opportunities by those visiting Douglas County.
Parks & Recreation Policy 1.15	To constantly seek out new sources of traditional, private, and alternative funding for facility construction and maintenance.
Parks & Recreation Policy 1.16	To develop and maintain clear and simple mechanisms by which the public can make donations for park and recreation improvements for park and programs.
Parks & Recreation Policy 1.17	To continually recruit and develop volunteer resources, which are deemed critical to the success of our recreational endeavors.
Parks & Recreation Policy 1.18	To continue to support the joint use agreement with the Douglas County School District which supports joint free use of County and school facilities.
Parks & Recreation Policy 1.19	To develop and maintain facilities which support the cultural and performing arts interests of our residents and visitors.

PARKS AND RECREATION GOAL 2

TO CREATE A SYSTEM OF OPEN SPACE AREAS AND LINKAGES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY THAT PROTECTS THE NATURAL AND VISUAL CHARACTER OF THE COUNTY, PROVIDES CONTIGUOUS WILDLIFE CORRIDORS, AND PROVIDES FOR APPROPRIATE ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RECREATIONAL USES.

Parks & Recreation Policy 2.1

The County should establish an open space acquisition program that identifies acquisition area priorities based on capital costs, operation and maintenance costs, accessibility, open space needs, resource preservation, ability to complete or enhance the existing open space linkage system and unique environmental features. Techniques for acquisition may include fee simple acquisition, acquisition of development rights, transfer of development rights, clustering, or other measures.

PARKS AND RECREATION GOAL 3

TO PRESERVE USFS, BLM, AND OTHER PUBLIC LANDS FOR THEIR HABITAT, RECREATIONAL, AND SCENIC VALUES.

Parks & Recreation Policy 3.1

The County shall work with other governmental entities to ensure that areas acquired as part of the Open Space System are developed, operated, and maintained to provide the county with a permanent, publicly accessible open space system.

Parks & Recreation Policy 3.2

Douglas County shall encourage and support land exchanges between private land owners, the U.S. Forest Service, and the BLM when such exchanges are consistent with the Master Plan, particularly the Land Use Element.