

# Town of Marana Bond Proposal



## Regional Heritage and Cultural Park

### **Scope:**

Planning of site, including drainage and archeological studies, public input, design and feasibility studies, on parcels recently purchased by the Town of Marana for regional preservation. The 90-acre park is slated to contain an Equestrian Facility, including the Marana Mounted Police Patrol, a Heritage Museum, facilities for civic organizations, Community Gardens, Amphitheaters, Ethnobotanical Gardens, Farmers Market, Agricultural Exhibits, Re-Constructed Historical Buildings and Regional Heritage Artifacts and Displays.

### **Location:**

Located in the Town of Marana, where the Town has filed with the federal government for the designation of the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area, off the Santa Cruz River Linear Park, South of Gladden Farms Subdivision in North Marana.

### **Benefit:**

The Town of Marana has committed itself through its Council Actions, Policies and voter adopted General Plan, to grow smarter in more cost-effective and environmentally sensitive ways. As the Northwest area continues to grow, it is incumbent upon all of us to preserve as much of the natural and rural character that exist in the Valley. This 90-acre Heritage Park is considered one way to tell the story of the areas past, and to celebrate, honor and interpret the community's history and culture.

### **Estimated Timeline:**

2 years for first phase completion; 5 years until last phase completion

### **Requested Funds:**

- \$1 Million Dollars for Planning, Public Involvement and Studies.
- \$1 Million Dollars for Historical Preservation and Construction.
- All other funds will come from Private Donors, General Fund and Bonds

SEE ATTACHED PLAN AND MATERIALS

# Marana Heritage Park Master Plan

Phase One  
Report & Preliminary Concept Plan

Prepared for:  
The Town of Marana

Prepared by:  
Aspen Consulting Engineers  
Encore Planning Group  
Von Blanc, Inc.

September 2003



# HISTORY

sense of place

## **INTRODUCTION**

With the recent adoption and ratification of the Marana General Plan Update, the Town of Marana has demonstrated its commitment to guide future growth and development and to “grow smarter” in more cost-effective and environmentally sensitive ways. While Town leaders are preparing for the construction of a new municipal complex, they are also looking at Marana’s past and rich cultural heritage.

The Marana Heritage Park is being considered as one way to tell the story of Marana’s past, and to celebrate, honor, and interpret the community’s history and culture.

In addition to a heritage museum and outdoor exhibit areas, Town leaders have initially identified a variety of users, including the Marana Arts Council and the Chamber of Commerce. The agricultural heritage theme is supported by existing on-site and adjacent rural landscape features, such as cotton fields, irrigation ditches, farm buildings, silos, and farm equipment. New heritage park features may include interactive exhibits, farmers market, an agri-pond, relocated or reconstructed historic buildings, and other amenities intended for recreational and educational use by the people of the town and visitors.

The site that is proposed for the new Marana Heritage Park was chosen for several reasons. It is easily accessible now from Tangerine Road via Sandario Road, and will benefit from future transportation improvements that will increase its physical and visual accessibility. It is primarily undeveloped, and includes disturbed areas that can be reclaimed and restored for water resources, recreation, and other uses. The site includes and is adjacent to productive farmland, an important element of Marana’s recent history. The site will soon be adjacent to the new residential and commercial development of Gladden Farms and this new neighborhood will provide patrons for the cultural, educational, and recreational amenities proposed for the heritage park. The subject site is close to the Santa Cruz River and the river park trail, assuring that on-site recreation will be integrated with the regional trails system. Finally, the site is available for Town acquisition.

### ***Purpose of the Study***

The preliminary concept plan was prepared for the Town of Marana by Aspen Consulting Engineers and Encore Planning Group to:

- assess the suitability of the project site for heritage park development
- begin programmatic planning for the heritage park
- integrate program elements with a preliminary concept plan

This study is intended to be a starting point for the heritage park master planning process. Although limited in scope to a cursory site analysis and preliminary planning and conceptual design, the study will identify key issues and opportunities and suggest future actions. Based on this initial professional assessment, the Town will be able to gather

public support and participation, and proceed through subsequent phases of a full master planning process.

The results of Phase One will provide the Town of Marana with a professional assessment of the suitability of the subject site for the Marana Heritage Park. The conceptual site plan will illustrate (in diagrammatic form) the variety of park programmatic elements and facilities. The brief project report (and brochure) will describe the program elements and proposed tenants in the context of Marana's community vision and General Plan.

## ***Methodology***

In order to develop a preliminary concept plan for a heritage park, the study focused on existing and future site conditions and issues that were deemed most relevant for initial assessment and design. The consultant team relied on the invaluable input of Town elected officials and staff to help inform and define the vision, program, and concept design.

### **Data Collection and Review**

The study considered a number of factors as part of data collection and review, including physical site characteristics, such as topography and hydrology, land use, zoning, transportation, recreation, and cultural resources. The methods for addressing these and other factors were limited to collection and evaluation of available data, cursory site analysis, and consultation with Town staff and key community leaders. This section of the report concludes with a checklist of site opportunities.

### **Development of Heritage Park Program**

The study approach for programmatic planning is built on the Town's adopted plans, policies, and community vision; discussions with key Town staff and elected officials; and a review of comparable heritage park facilities. This section of the report includes a proposed mission statement, vision, and key objectives, and concludes with recommendations on proposed park tenants, target users, and possible program components.

### **Concept Plan**

The process of preliminary site planning and design was integrated with programmatic planning for proposed uses, buildings, recreation areas and other facilities. There were several design sessions involving all consultant team members and a formal review session of the draft concept plan by Marana Town staff and key community stakeholders. Following the review session, a final concept plan was prepared and incorporated in the final Phase One report and draft brochure. It was understood by the Town and the consultant team that as the first-phase study evolves into a more comprehensive planning

and design process for the Town, in-depth engineering and master planning, as well as public participation and review, would be required.

## **DATA COLLECTION AND REVIEW**

### ***Site Location***

The subject site is approximately 91 acres and is located just north of the Santa Cruz River, in portions of Sections 33 and 34, T11SR11E. (See *Exhibit 1: Location Map*). The site straddles Sandario Road and this road currently provides access to the site from the north. The closest major east-west roads are Tangerine and Moore Roads. Interstate 10 (I-10) is approximately two miles to the east. As seen in the context of Marana's future town limits, the site is conveniently located to future development that will occur between the Santa Cruz River and I-10. The site is relatively close to existing schools and the future Town municipal complex, and is strategically located adjacent to an area planned for residential growth. (See *Exhibit 2: Ultimate Limits*).

### ***Existing Land Use and Zoning***

The western 25.5 acres of the site has an existing structure (farm house), stable/barn, and ramada. The balance of the site is under cultivation. The eastern portion of the site has been heavily disturbed from prior farming, road access, and construction activities related to the Santa Cruz River levee. The Honea Heights subdivision is located to the northwest of the site. Other than this residential enclave, the site is surrounded by farmland.

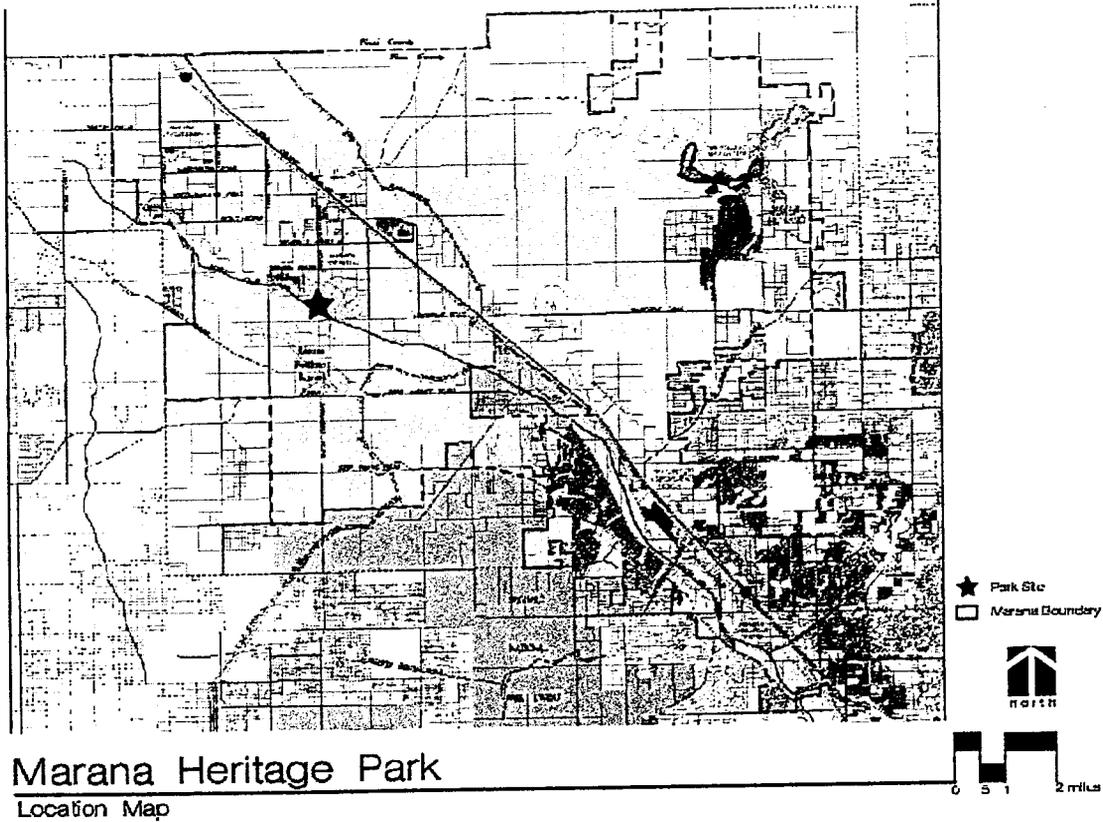
The site and much of the surrounding area is currently Marana Zone A--Small Lot Zone. (See *Exhibit 3 and Exhibit 4* for zoning and subdivision mapped data). This zone allows a variety of residential, commercial, industrial, and quasi-public land uses so long as each such land use is conducted on a lot no larger than 2.5 acres. Although the Town of Marana may be zoning exempt, and therefore would not be subject to this lot size restriction, it would be advisable for the Town to initiate a public notice process of a significant land use change. Based on the results of this notice process and public support for the heritage park public use, a change to a zoning district more conducive to the intended public recreational and open space use may not be required.

### ***Planned Land Use***

The Future Development Plan in the 2002 Update of the Marana General Plan designates the project site for Recreation/Open Space. The areas immediately adjacent to the site on the north are planned for Medium Density Residential. The Gladden Farms subdivision has received preliminary approval from the Town consistent with this General Plan designation. (See *Exhibit 5: Future Development Plan*).

Site photographs are included following *Exhibit 6*.

**Exhibit 1: Location Map**



## ***Transportation***

Currently, the site is accessed from the north by Sandario Road but this condition is subject to change as the Gladden Farms project is developed. With approval of the subdivision plat, Sandario Road will be abandoned and an extension of Tangerine Road (Tangerine Farms Road) will loop through the southern portion of the subdivision. A smaller collector loop road that would directly access the subject property is also proposed. Although the timing and the road cross-sections have yet to be determined, once these improvements are made, they will clearly benefit the subject site by providing more direct access from the east via Tangerine Road. (See *Exhibit 6: Circulation/2025 Transportation Forecast* from the *Marana General Plan*).

## ***Utilities***

All utilities (including sewer) will be available to the site by the time of heritage park development. Currently, there is a well on-site capable of irrigation. The timing for utilities, like the timing for the road improvements, is dependent on the Gladden Farms development. Prior to build out of the Gladden Farms development, if the site and existing farm house are used by the Town for an interim use, such as for the Marana Arts Council, current utilities on-site (water, septic, electric) are available and will suffice.

## ***Environmental Resources***

### **Environmental Overview**

The western 25.5-acre parcel includes a farm house, stable, and accessory structures, but this parcel is primarily under cultivation. In addition to the fields, there are several pecan trees near the farm house. The portion of the site east of Sandario Road is highly disturbed. There are isolated salt cedar on this portion of the subject property, but most of the property is denuded. The other significant physical features are man-made: flood control improvements (the levee and outflow channel) and the existing silos.

Although the site may have limited natural resources on the ground, its proximity to the Santa Cruz River, and its visual resources are remarkable. Because of its location in the largely agricultural landscape of low-growing crops, there are unobstructed mountain views to the north, east and west, and views to the south of the broad valley of the Santa Cruz River. Based on planned land use and approved or pending subdivisions, this situation will change, as residential development (and commercial uses directly to the east) will replace cropland. However, with customary setbacks and height restrictions, the proposed heritage park site should still retain distant mountain views to the northeast. A planned Non-Potable Detention and Agricultural Storage Basin (NPD & ASB) that will cover approximately 8 to 10 acres in the southern portion of the site, west of the silos, will create a natural buffer and transition to the Santa Cruz River. Further discussion of the NPD & ASB is included later in this report.



Exhibit 9  
**PARK, TRAIL AND OPEN SPACE SYSTEM**

Legend

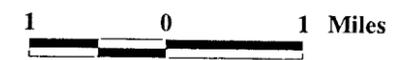
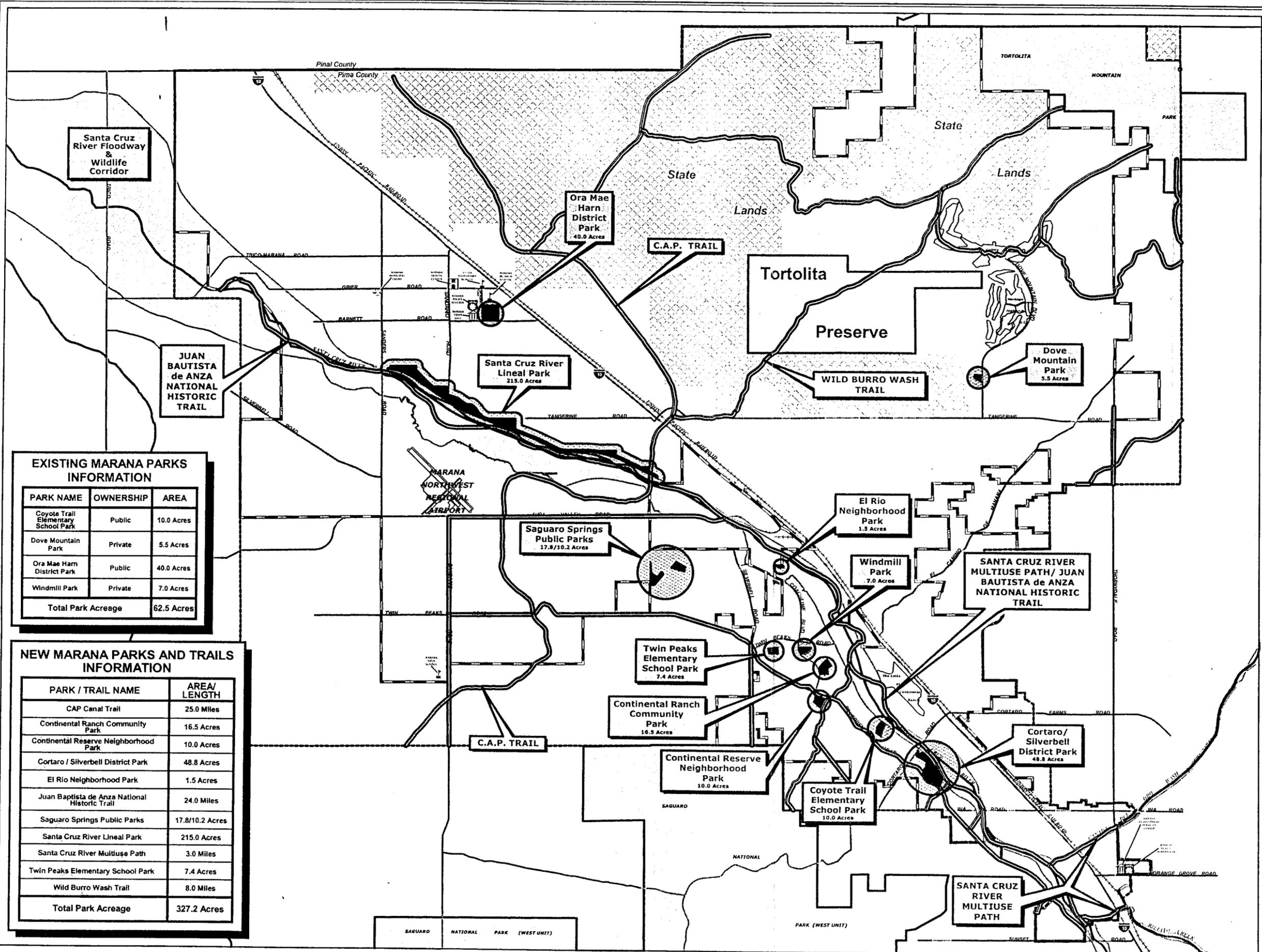
- PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY
- EXISTING AND FUTURE PARKS AND TRAILS
- EXISTING PARKS (LABELED)
- FUTURE PARKS (LABELED)
- TRAILS
- Marana Town Limits

**EXISTING MARANA PARKS INFORMATION**

PARK NAME	OWNERSHIP	AREA
Coyote Trail Elementary School Park	Public	10.0 Acres
Dove Mountain Park	Private	5.5 Acres
Ora Mae Ham District Park	Public	40.0 Acres
Windmill Park	Private	7.0 Acres
<b>Total Park Acreage</b>		<b>62.5 Acres</b>

**NEW MARANA PARKS AND TRAILS INFORMATION**

PARK / TRAIL NAME	AREA/ LENGTH
CAP Canal Trail	25.0 Miles
Continental Ranch Community Park	16.5 Acres
Continental Reserve Neighborhood Park	10.0 Acres
Cortaro / Silverbell District Park	48.8 Acres
El Rio Neighborhood Park	1.5 Acres
Juan Baptista de Anza National Historic Trail	24.0 Miles
Saguaro Springs Public Parks	17.8/10.2 Acres
Santa Cruz River Lineal Park	215.0 Acres
Santa Cruz River Multiuse Path	3.0 Miles
Twin Peaks Elementary School Park	7.4 Acres
Wild Burro Wash Trail	8.0 Miles
<b>Total Park Acreage</b>	<b>327.2 Acres</b>



## SUMMARY OF SITE OPPORTUNITIES

Data collection for phase one of the master plan has focused on selected site characteristics and issues that are relevant to an assessment of the subject property's potential for use as a heritage or cultural park. Although this is a cursory site analysis, a review of site characteristics suggests that the site provides many opportunities for the intended use.

### *Opportunities*

- **Location:** The site proposed for the Marana Heritage Park is in a convenient and accessible location. It is close enough to I-10 and the Tangerine Road exit to be convenient as a heritage tourism destination for out-of-town visitors. As new residential subdivisions are constructed in the immediate vicinity, and infrastructure improvements are made, the heritage park site will be a convenient local and neighborhood destination as well. Its location north of the Santa Cruz River provides opportunities for connections to river park trails and other recreation.
- **Size and Physical Characteristics:** The site is physically suitable for the variety of uses and users discussed thus far. The existing farmhouse can be an interim home for the Marana Arts Council. The horse barn stalls will be used by the Marana Police Equine Patrol. The existing fields can be retained to support the agricultural heritage theme, and there will be ample space for outdoor exhibits, farmers markets, and cultural, arts, and entertainment uses. The proposed agri-pond, Gladden Farms park site, and river park linear park can be easily integrated with the heritage park facility.
- **Environmental:** The site appears to have low habitat value and no significant environmental resources, although further site-specific assessment will be required. Based on the Tres Rios del Norte study, there are opportunities for habitat restoration that would involve substantial federal cost-sharing. The low-flow channel may offer an appropriate site for riparian restoration, while upland areas could be revegetated for habitat value and to support recreational or other park amenities.
- **Utilities:** Utilities are available for the immediate, short-term intended uses, and sewer will be available with the Gladden Farms development.
- **Cultural Resources:** Much of the site has been disturbed by farming activities, or in constructing the Santa Cruz River levee. If further archaeological surveys are required, survey work could add to the cost of heritage park development. However, if significant resources are documented or excavated, there may be opportunities for interpretive exhibits on-site, as part of the heritage theme. In this way, the landscape and its evolution can be part of the park program. Based

on the earlier discussion of cultural landscape features and the “agricultural theme,” the site offers an opportunity to interpret existing features (silos, field patterns, farm implements) as well as to develop an innovative program for evoking and celebrating Marana’s past. This program could include a full range of interactive exhibits, building reconstructions, and “living museum” experiences that would reflect the area’s multi-cultural heritage.

- Phasing: Development of the site can be phased to respond to the immediate needs for a home for the Marana Arts Council and reconstructed Producers Cotton Oil Company building, as well as long-term improvements that will coincide with (and be supported by) adjacent development opportunities (Gladden Farms).

## **DEVELOPMENT OF THE HERITAGE PARK PROGRAM**

This section of the Phase One Report summarizes the heritage park mission, vision, objectives, and program. Later phases in the master planning process will further expand upon this overall conceptual framework. It is important to emphasize at this point that the vision and preliminary program planning for the heritage park is built on the Town’s General Plan and policies, community vision, and heritage park objectives as described by the Town’s elected officials, community leaders, and staff.

### **MISSION**

The Town of Marana embraces the challenges and opportunities of the future while celebrating and honoring the achievements of the past. The Town’s mission with regard to heritage and cultural resources is to preserve and appreciate the cultures and history of the Marana area. The more specific mission of the Marana Heritage Park is to showcase the contributions of the many peoples and cultures in the Marana area, particularly as shown in the evolution of the rural landscape through living history, interactive exhibits, and special educational, arts, and recreational events. Where feasible, environmental restoration and revegetation will be integrated with the cultural heritage program and related recreational amenities.

### **VISION**

The Marana Heritage Park supports the General Plan themes of Community Values, Orderly Growth, and Economic Opportunity. Marana’s commitment to future growth and prosperity goes hand in hand with an appreciation of its agricultural heritage and small town roots.

The Marana Heritage Park will provide an opportunity for the public to gain a better understanding and appreciation of the community’s cultures and history. Located along the Santa Cruz River, the park will highlight the role of agriculture in the arid southwest from prehistory through modern farming and agri-business. Residents and visitors alike will be able to explore the evolution of the rural landscape through an imaginative blend of educational programs, arts events, interactive exhibits, living history, performances

and recreation. Creative partnerships will be forged and business opportunities will be pursued in an effort to create a sustainable and self-sufficient heritage center.

## **OBJECTIVES**

1. To enhance public awareness and understanding of the history and cultural diversity of the Marana area, thereby strengthening the community's sense of place and shared heritage.
2. To create a heritage park that celebrates and honors the achievements of the early settlers of the area, including native peoples who farmed along the Santa Cruz River, Spanish and Mexican ranchers, and early farmers in the post-American period.
3. To showcase the evolution of the rural landscape and rural and agricultural lifestyles by maintaining and developing a collection of agricultural artifacts, archives, programs, interactive exhibits, living history, performances and recreation, and historic buildings and exhibits to professional standards for a living history museum.
4. To provide a home for the Marana Arts Council, and a venue for community arts festivals and other art-related activities, thereby supporting local artists and contemporary art.
5. To integrate active and passive recreation areas with the heritage and arts themes in a multi-purpose park complex.
6. To create a unique destination that is economically viable and operated and managed on a financially sustainable basis.
7. To market the facility successfully through broad community support and by creating a strong customer orientation in all facets of the operation.
8. To develop partnerships, sponsorships and a dynamic volunteer program that will enhance the attraction and strengthen the financial viability of the heritage park.

## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

Based on initial discussions with Town staff and stakeholders, proposed program elements and key tenants may include:

- Heritage Museum, possibly housed in the reconstructed Cotton Producers Building
- Offices and exhibit space for the Marana Arts Council
- Special art exhibits, events and attractions, including "art in the park"
- Community life exhibits and possible facility and space for the Chamber of Commerce, Heritage Society, and Marana Mounted Patrol
- Agricultural exhibits, agricultural crop plots, ethnobotanical garden, and farmers market
- Water resource exhibits, integrated with the Non-Potable Detention and Agricultural Storage Basin, and related environmental and habitat restoration
- Wildlife viewing areas

- Other passive recreation areas, including picnic areas, group gathering areas, and open space, with connections to the Gladden Farms park and regional trail system
- Active recreation areas for sports fields
- Equestrian facilities, with a staging area to the Santa Cruz River trail
- A collection of antique farm equipment, heritage buildings and rural life artifacts
- Historical interpretation by costumed staff
- Education programs for school children
- Group tours
- Rental facilities for weddings, trade shows, business meetings, parties and celebrations

## PHASE ONE CONCEPT PLAN

The heritage park concept plan was the result of integrating proposed program elements, users, and tenants with the opportunities and constraints presented by the site. The concept plan developed as part of Phase One identifies key program elements and shows the general location of activity zones.



As shown in the above schematic on activity zones, there are six major activity zones planned for the Heritage Park.

1. Heritage - orange
2. Arts/Entertainment - red
3. Agriculture - green
4. Recreation (Passive and Active) - purple
5. Equestrian - beige
6. Habitat Restoration – dark green

These zones could include a variety of specific uses and activities such as:

**Heritage Activity Zone**

- Local Historical Exhibits
- Heritage Museum Building
- Group Meeting Area
- Interpretive/Educational Activities

**Arts/Entertainment Activity Zone**

- Arts Council Facility
- Sculpture Gardens
- Music in the Park, Arts, Crafts Fairs
- Events Area (Weddings in the Park, etc.)

**Agricultural Activity Zone**

- Farmers Market/Community Garden
- Antique – Modern Farm Implements
- Interactive Activities
- Ethnobotanical Exhibits

**Equestrian Activity Zone**

- Stable, Corral, Pens
- Rentals
- Show Arena

**Passive Recreation Zone:**

- Low-key Arts/Entertainment
- Open Fields – Kite Flying, Frisbee...
- Memorial Garden
- Nature Study/Interpretive Area
- Wildlife Viewing
- Horseshoes

**Active Recreation Zone**

- Train and Rides
- Playground
- Water Play Area with Splash Pad
- Dog Park
- Group Ramadas and Picnic Areas

**Habitat Restoration Activity Zone**

- Revegetation (in coordination with Tres Rios del Norte Study)
- Low-flow Channel
- Adjacent Wildlife Viewing

*Exhibit 10: Marana Heritage Park Concept Plan* shows a more detailed illustration of these activity zones, including vehicular and pedestrian circulation, parking, specific uses and park tenants.

The concept and site planning process included several design sessions involving all consultant team members, as well as review sessions of the draft concept plan by Marana Town staff and key community stakeholders. Following the review session with stakeholders, a final concept plan and informational and marketing brochure were prepared. It was understood by the Town and the consultant team that as the Phase One study evolves into a more comprehensive planning and design process for the Town, in-depth engineering and master planning, as well as public participation and review, will be required.

## **FUTURE STEPS**

Following the completion of preliminary Phase One planning, future actions as part of a comprehensive master planning process could be phased as follows:

### ***Phase Two—Public Review and Comment***

This phase will include public and elected official review (and authorization to proceed), concept plan revisions, assessment of costs based on revised program elements, and potential funding sources.

### ***Phase Three—Master Plan***

This phase will further refine the Marana Heritage Park program, facilities, and services and will include the full architectural program and cost estimates. A site plan at a detailed site-specific (development plan) scale will clearly illustrate all park features.