
**CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE
METROPOLITAN PARKS AND RECREATION
ADVISORY BOARD (MPRAB)**



2025 REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

for the period July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025



MPRAB Board members at the Re-Opening of Phil Chacon Park, May 2025

PURPOSE, DUTIES, RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD

The Metropolitan Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (MPRAB) was established for the following purposes: (A) To keep itself informed of city parks and recreation needs; (B) to serve as a forum for public discussion; and (C) to encourage the

greatest use of parks and recreation programs including cooperation with other agencies and organizations which are involved in providing recreation services for the public good.

According to Ordinance [10-1-2-4](#), the duties and responsibilities of the MPRAB are the following:

- 1. The Board shall recommend to the Mayor policies** for overall development of the park system to include plans for additional parks and recreation facilities involving the joint-use concept with the Albuquerque Public School System and ways and means of financing improvements;
- 2. The Board shall meet at least quarterly**, and may hold additional meetings at its discretion;
- 3. The Board shall conduct open public meetings** and give reasonable notice of such meetings;
- 4. The Board may form such subcommittees** as are necessary from the public at large to make recommendations to the Board in order to carry out the assigned responsibilities of the Board;
- 5. The Board**, in order to fulfill its responsibilities, **can review:**
 - (a) The design and or plan for a project for a park and or a recreation facility;
 - (b) The system inventory of parks and recreation facilities; and
 - (c) The Master Plan for the park and recreation system.
- 6. The Board shall prepare and submit an annual report** of its activities to the Mayor and the Council at the end of each fiscal year.

The MPRAB - at full membership - consists of 11 members all of whom shall reside in the City of Albuquerque. When appointed there is one member of the Board from each City Council District and two members who serve at large. All members are volunteers.





2025 Re-Opening Celebration at Wells Park

MEMBERSHIP

From July of 2024 through June of 2025 MPRAB membership grew from 4 members to 8, a significant improvement and a result of the board's concerted efforts to streamline and hasten the appointment process.

The board's [2024 report](#) (delivered to the mayor's office and to city councilors) emphasized the need to process board applications more quickly and efficiently after they are received by city councilors, including forwarding nominations to the mayor's office and meeting the appointment deadlines outlined in [City Ordinance 10-1-2-3](#). The board was also in more frequent contact with city councilors as well as CABQ Boards and Commissions staff to encourage more efficient processing of applications and nominations. Finally, the Chair of the MPRAB made two presentations to the city council urging a more streamlined process and advising city council members about strategies for making this a reality.

As of the date of this report, MPRAB membership consists of the following:

At-Large- Tony Johnson, Valerie Martinez; **District 1**- Vacant; **District 2**- Julie Radoslovich; **District 3**- Vacant; **District 4**- Jim Souter; **District 5**- John Ajie; **District 6**- Larry Lite; **District 7**- Annie Montes; **District 8**- Vacant; **District 9**- Fredrica Bergquist

Currently, Valerie Martínez (at-large) is the Chair and Julie Radoslovich (District 2) is the Vice Chair of the MPRAB.



Mandala created by community members at a Pat Hurley Park Pop-Up Event, 2024

ACTIVITIES

During the report period, members of the MPRAB engaged in the following activities:

- 1. Advocated for the policy recommendations made in the [MPRAB 2024 report](#)**, especially funding in the city's annual budget dedicated to park programming and activation. Currently, the Parks and Recreation Department (PRD) receives no funding for park programming — specifically, funds that could be distributed to neighborhood groups to organize and host events in their local parks.
- 2. Advocated for use of opioid settlement money awarded to the City of Albuquerque** to fund park events that educate residents, especially youth, about opioid use, treatment, harm reduction, prevention, and recovery.
- 3. Completed a [“Guide for Hosting a Community Park Event”](#)** that serves as a toolkit for organizing park events and will be made available to the general public.

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4. **Administered three requests to change the name of three parks**, following the MPRAB [Park Name Change Policy](#), including review of public feedback (via phone calls, petitions, and emails) and facilitating three meetings in which robust public input took place. These name change requests generated comments by hundreds of Albuquerque residents who participated in the process either through in-person attendance or providing feedback via other means. For example, the name change request for High Desert Park generated over a thousand comments that were considered during the process and prior to a vote by the board. Readers may review the [minutes](#) of the three meetings in FY2024-2025 in which name change requests received a vote from the MPRAB. The name change requests were for Snow Park (September 24, 2024), Stardust Skies Park (January 7, 2025) and High Desert Park (April 1, 2025). The MRAB voted to rename one of these parks, from High Desert Park to “Dorothy Jensen Blanchard High Desert Park.”
 5. **Completed a revision of the MPRAB [Park Name Change Policy](#)** (May 2025) based on experience with the above process and requiring applicants to conduct more outreach to neighborhood associations and coalitions and provide evidence of significant neighborhood support for a name change.
 6. **Conducted a review of Public Relations practices** by the CABQ Parks and Recreation Department based on a 2021 [marketing report](#) published by the National Parks and Recreation Association. This served as a follow-up to recommendations in the [2024 report](#) which recommended that the department revamp its webpages to make them more user-friendly and effective in guiding residents and visitors to park activities, programs, amenities, and events. The board wishes to recognize the department for important changes that were made to the [PRD website](#) (and launched in October 2024) which addressed several of our concerns.
 7. **Viewed legislative and city capital outlay requests** (after they had been submitted by PRD) and advocated in support of projects via our respective legislators and city councilors;
 8. **Attended and promoted various park/open space events;**
 9. **Continued implementing a process to more effectively onboard new board members** utilizing documents that describe the mission and purpose of the MPRAB, the activities of subcommittees; and ongoing work and accomplishments of the MPRAB so that new members can more effectively and quickly integrate themselves into board work;
 10. **Continued the process by which board members collaborate on key documents** by utilizing shared files that encourage board members’ collective input, feedback, and revision;
 11. **Convened monthly meetings that were open to the public**, including giving the appropriate public notice for monthly meetings and posting both agendas and minutes;

12. Created and convened subcommittee meetings (including Board Development, Park Activation, Park Promotion, and ad hoc as necessary); and

13. Prepared this annual report.



Youth enjoying a seasonal creek in the Sandia Foothills in April 2025

PRIORITIES for FY 2025-2026

As a result of the above activities and the previous year's activities, the MPRAB identified several priorities in order to fulfill its mission, duties, and responsibilities during the report period:

- 1. Continue our advocacy for park activation/programming funds, especially for underutilized parks.** Currently, there are 288 parks in the system. Some enjoy activity because they are situated next to community centers and/or they benefit from baseball/softball fields and organized sports. But other parks remain inactive without the aforementioned structures and programs. Research shows that underutilized parks are vulnerable to illegal activity, crime and as a result, disrepair. These often necessitate engagement by law enforcement and increased maintenance costs. Park programming funds, especially those dedicated to underutilized parks, would activate these city properties, mitigate illegal activity, and cultivate use of these parks for the health, welfare, and enjoyment of residents who live nearby. Funding could also encourage

programs that would engage and educate youth and result in organized activities spearheaded by neighborhood groups in parks where such activities do not currently exist.

2. **Promote community-led efforts to host park events** via our [Organizing a Park Event Guide](#) . This guide provides step-by-step instructions for community groups who are interested in activating their local parks. The aforementioned funding would provide support for these efforts in the form of small grants that would support special events organized by neighborhood organizations, coalitions, and collaborations.
3. **Conduct an informal, board-led study of at least one underutilized city park** to determine reasons why parks are not being fully utilized by neighboring residents. The study would include research into the history of each park; outreach to relevant neighborhood associations, coalitions, and groups; interviews with residents who live close to the park, and other activities that will provide a snapshot of public use of these parks and produce recommendations for increased activation. We also believe the board would gain valuable information from this pilot study.
4. **Support current public relations efforts by the department and encourage promotion in languages other than English** that will encourage even more robust use of parks by Albuquerque’s diverse communities.
5. **Continue to provide a space for public input regarding the parks system** and to facilitate robust, civil discussion about improving the system for all.



June 16, 2023 Community Read Aloud Event at Bennie Hargrove Park

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the above activities and priorities, the MPRAB recommends the following for the 2026 fiscal year:

PARK PROGRAMMING/ACTIVATION

- 1. The Mayor’s annual budget should include recurring funding for Parks and Recreation operations (e.g., park maintenance and staff) and park activation (i.e., programming) in addition to capital outlay for new parks and renovations.**

Activation of parks is as important as construction of new parks and renovation of existing parks. Consistent funding for park activation (with an emphasis on underutilized parks) recognizes the fact that parks activation/programming promotes public safety, physical activity, youth engagement, grass-roots monitoring, and social cohesion. In addition, consistent care and maintenance of the parks system must be a funding priority. New and renovated parks, activated parks, demand regular and effective maintenance.

- 2. As a stopgap measure, the Mayor should immediately allocate \$80,000 for a FY 2025-2026 “Park Activation Program.”** The fund would be administered by PRD and support the activation of parks with a special emphasis on underutilized spaces. Funding would support staffing, events/activities, materials, food and beverage subsidies, collaborations and partnerships, security, promotion, and more. PRD would manage the funds and create clear and equitable criteria for allocating funds to parks in-need. This recommendation was made in the 2024 MPRAB report with no response nor supporting action by the Mayor’s office in FY2024-2025.
- 3. To complement the above stop-gap measure, we urge each City Councilor to earmark at least \$8,000 of their discretionary funding for park programming/activation.** Each Councilor would use his/her/their best judgment in allocating these funds, including support for special events, making grants available to neighborhood groups for organizing and hosting park events, educational activities, targeted funding for activating underutilized parks, etc. Because the park system currently includes 288 parks, this would result in a mere \$250 per park per year.

PARK PROMOTION

- 1. The Parks and Recreation Dept. (PRD) should continue to evaluate, maintain, and update its web pages** to make them as user-friendly as possible. As mentioned in the [2024 report](#), looking at exemplary examples of other cities’ websites can be both informational and inspiring in making Albuquerque’s even better.

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2. **PRD should do more to reach out to speakers of languages other than English**, especially Spanish, by expanding the number of translated materials (e.g., flyers, banners, brochures, social media posts) available to the public.
 3. **The PRD should continue to distribute outreach materials to schools** via Community School Coordinators and distribution platforms like [Peachjar](#).
 4. **The PRD should continue to collaborate with Bernalillo County to cross-promote city and county park/open space programs and activities.** This would include cross-promoting city/county events on social media accounts and via e-blasts as well as sharing links to park maps so that website users can locate a park whether it is city or county managed. Those searching for a park may not care whether it is under the purview of the city or county. Making it easy to find any park benefits all parks.
 5. **The PRD should utilize the MPRAB to assist with public relations efforts.** For example, board members have expressed their willingness to distribute outreach materials to libraries, community centers, and other public venues.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

In order to encourage consistent, full membership of the MPRAB, and to manage applications and applicants more effectively:

1. **City Councilors and the Mayor should strictly follow the guidelines set forth in Ordinance 10-1-2-3 to fill a vacancy on the MPRAB board** and do so within the time frames set out in the ordinance. The board also recommends attention to the following section of the [ordinance](#):

If a Councilor “fails to nominate two members to the Board or to reappoint a member to the Board within 30 days of receiving [notification of a vacancy], the Mayor may appoint a member to the Board to represent that Councilor’s District, subject to the advice and consent of the City Council.”

If a Councilor has received only one applicant for an MPRAB position and this applicant is someone who the Councilor deems worthy of serving, the Councilor should share the name of the person with the mayor.

2. In the wake of the MPRAB [2024 report](#), presentations by the MPRAB at city council meetings, and numerous emails to CABQ Board and Commissions, in FY 2025-2026 city councilors and the mayor’s office did a better job of moving applications through to appointment to the board. The board commends both city council and Board and Commissions for this effort and looks forward to continued progress with this effort.

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3. **City Councilors should acknowledge the receipt of an application for the MPRAB** within one week so the applicant knows that his/her/their application has been received. In addition, **City Councilors should provide all applicants with an update about the status of their application** for the MPRAB on a monthly or bi-monthly basis.



PRD Park Pop-Up Staff, 2023

CONCLUSION

The Metropolitan Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (MPRAB) continues to advocate for the overall development of the park system with an emphasis on funding for park programming/activation, especially for underutilized parks, improved promotion of Parks and Recreation Department activities and programs, in particular to residents and visitors who speak a language other than English, and a more efficient process of moving applications to the MPRAB through to appointments. The MPRAB is an active board, meeting monthly and via subcommittee work, administering park name change requests based on its existing policy, engaging with the public and listening to their needs and concerns, advocating for its policy recommendations, and producing annual reports and guides.

As a result of these activities, the **MPRAB strongly recommends [funding for park programs/activation](#)** via stopgap funding from the City of Albuquerque and discretionary funding from city councilors. Currently, such funding does not

exist in the city budget. Funding for park activation (with an emphasis on underutilized parks) promotes public safety, physical activity, youth engagement, grass-roots monitoring, park maintenance, and social cohesion. The board also recommends improved public relations outreach about Parks and Recreation activities and programs, especially in languages other than English and with an emphasis on Spanish language materials. Finally, the MPRAB continues to advocate for a more efficient and effective process of moving applications to the board forward to nominations and appointments, enabling the board to continue its active work on behalf of the community members of the City of Albuquerque and tourists and visitors.

Metropolitan Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Members:

Valerie Martínez (Chair, At-large)
Tony Johnson (At-Large)
Julie Radoslovich (Vice Chair, District 2)
Jim Souter (District 4)

John Ajie (District 5)
Larry Lite (District 6)
Annie Montes (District 7)
Fredrica “Rickie” Bergquist (District 9)

