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



2026 REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

for the period July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026



The epic slide at Juan Tabo Hills Park

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Metropolitan Parks and Recreation Advisory Board remained committed to fulfilling its mission during the 2025–2026 fiscal year by advocating for stronger park programming, expanding community engagement, strengthening relationships with elected officials, and improving its effectiveness through increased membership and enhanced onboarding processes for new members.

Despite ongoing fiscal challenges, the Board continued to promote innovative solutions, support capital improvement projects, and encourage greater public participation in Albuquerque's parks and recreation system.

One significant accomplishment, after sustained efforts urging City Council and the Mayor's office to fund park programming and activation, was the successful addition of \$80,000 to the FY 2026-2027 city budget, by vote of City Council, for this purpose.

Looking ahead, the Board remains committed to working collaboratively with the Mayor, City Council, Parks and Recreation Department, and community partners to ensure that Albuquerque's parks are safe, vibrant, and accessible for all residents. By continuing to advocate for sustained funding for programming, expanded park activation, park maintenance, stronger public outreach, and timely board appointments, the MPRAB aims to build on this year's progress and help create a healthier, more connected community through an equitable and well-supported parks system.

This report was approved by unanimous vote of the MPRAB on July 7th, 2026 and was subsequently sent to the City Council and the Mayor's office as well as published for the general public.

Metropolitan Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Members:

Valerie Martínez (At-large)

Don Meaders (At-Large)

John Ajie (District 1)

Julie Radoslovich (Chair, District 2)

Mark Gering (District 3)

Shaun P. Hart (District 4)

Larry Lite (District 6)

Annie Montes (Vice Chair, District 7)



2026 Arbor Day Tree Planting with Students from Manzano Mesa Elementary

PRIORITIES FOR FY 2025-2026

As a result of the previous year's priorities and policy recommendations, the MPRAB identified several priorities for 2025-2026, namely:

- 1. Continue our advocacy for park activation/programming funds, especially for underutilized parks.** Currently, there are nearly 300 parks in the system. Some enjoy activity because they are situated next to community centers and/or benefit from baseball/softball fields and organized sports. Other parks remain inactive, including but not limited to Avalon Park and Silver Tree Park. Research shows that underutilized parks are vulnerable to illegal activity, crime and, as a result, disrepair. These often necessitate engagement by law enforcement and also result in increased maintenance costs. Park programming funds, especially those dedicated to underutilized parks, would help to 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;



Community mandala at Lavaland Elementary School, October 2025

2. **Continue to deepen our knowledge of city parks and their needs** via field trips, attendance at park events, and other activities;
3. **Promote community-led efforts to host park events** as well as potential funding sources to support these activities;
4. **Continue to monitor funding for PRD** via the NM state legislature or City of Albuquerque appropriations and advocate for increased funding, where necessary;
5. **Continue to advocate for full board membership** by encouraging city councilors to understand how MPRAB board members can be appointed and by encouraging a streamlined process;
6. **Continue to provide a space for public input regarding the parks system** and to facilitate robust, civil discussion about improving the system for all.

ACTIVITIES

In support of the above priorities, members of the MPRAB engaged in the following activities during the 2025-2026 fiscal year:

1. **Presented and made public comments to the City Council three times and initiated more frequent contact with both individual City Councilors and NM State legislators** to advocate for the park system and its needs;
2. **Advocated for the policy recommendations made in the [MPRAB 2025 report](#)**, especially a) the addition of **\$80,000 in the city budget to support a**

“Park Activation Program” within PRD and b) urging each City Councilor to earmark \$2,000 of their discretionary funding for park programming/activation;

3. Updated a **[“Guide for Hosting a Community Park Event”](#)** that serves as a toolkit for organizing park events and has been made available to the Office of Neighborhood Coordination (ONC) and the general public on MPRAB webpage;
4. Reviewed capital outlay requests from PRD to the New Mexico state legislature and advocated in support of projects via our respective legislators;
5. Completed an application to the New Mexico Department of Agriculture Healthy Soils Program on behalf of PRD to address erosion and trail accessibility at Pat Hurley Park as a result of Lavaland Elementary School which presented their research regarding erosion to the MPRAB;
6. Attended a field trip in which members visited 10 city parks in an annual effort to assess strengths and weaknesses of the city park system;
7. Attended and promoted various park/open space events;
8. 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;
9. Continued the process by which board members collaborate on key documents by utilizing shared files that encourage board members’ collective input, feedback, and revision;
10. Convened monthly meetings that were open to the public, including giving the appropriate public notice for monthly meetings and posting both agendas and minutes;
11. Prepared and approved the 2026 Annual Report.



Students visiting and learning at the PRD Greenhouse

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A significant accomplishment by the board, after sustained efforts urging City Council and the Mayor's office to fund park activation, was the successful addition of \$80,000 to the FY 2026-2027 city budget, by vote of the City Council. This sustained effort included the creation and dissemination of the MPRAB annual report; periodic presentations to City Council about the importance of park programming not only for purposes of community activation and engagement and promoting public health and well-being, but also for increased safety in parks due to activation; frequent contact with city councilors via in-person meetings and email and telephone communications, and more. We are grateful for the positive responses and advocacy on the part of various City Councilors in recognizing the gap in PRD funding for public programming. We look forward to effective utilization of the \$80,000 during the 2026-2027 fiscal year.



New pollinator garden at Quigley Park, with help from Zuni Elementary students

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the above activities, the MPRAB recommends the following for the 2026-2027 fiscal year:

PARK MAINTENANCE

- 1. Increase PRD funds for maintenance and operations.** Operating and maintenance funds for the Department have not kept up with the increasing cost of operating existing park and recreation facilities, nor with the new

responsibilities and costs associated with new/upgraded facilities, expanded parks/trails/open space, and entirely new parks. As the MPRAB has mentioned in previous reports, the City of Albuquerque and the New Mexico state legislature have made substantial capital investments in Albuquerque's park system over the past eight years. Park renovations, development of more acreage at existing parks, additional open space protection, more trail miles, and entirely new parks have improved Albuquerque's quality of life. Just within the past five years, PRD has added over 10 acres of new park, 15 new dog parks, 4 new splash pads, 10 miles of new trail, five restroom buildings, and several hundred acres of open space. At the same time, however, significant increases in labor/benefits and operating costs, which began during the COVID-19 pandemic and have been exacerbated by general inflationary conditions in the economy, have actually reduced the department's buying power and the portion of its operating budget that must cover supplies, materials, temporary labor, service contracts, etc. PRD has not received staff and budget increases to cover these increased costs and the costs of new capital projects coming on line. The City is proud to rank among the nation's leaders in park access. The Trust for Public Land ParkScore awarded Albuquerque 88 out of 100 points for park access, with 90% of residents living within a 10-minute walk of a park, trail, or open space. However, Albuquerque's lowest ParkScore rating is for investment—just 57 out of 100—highlighting a significant gap in funding for the maintenance and operation of neighborhood parks, pools, golf courses, recreation facilities, trails, and open space. The board recommends budgetary action for the 2027-2028 fiscal year to properly maintain and operate our priceless park system, which does so much for our City.

PARK PROGRAMMING / ACTIVATION

- 1. The MPRAB will advocate for recurring PRD funding for park programming and activation in each fiscal year budget.**

PARK PROMOTION

- 1. 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. **We have also asked for additional advanced notice for parks dedication ceremonies and other public events,** perhaps even a monthly calendar, so that board members may attend and contribute to promotion efforts. Board members are also willing to attend neighborhood association and coalition meetings to promote the work not only of the MPRAB but the department in general.
- 2. 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.

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 and 2025 reports](#), 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.
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.

MEMBERSHIP

From July of 2025 through June of 2026 MPRAB membership grew from 5 members to 8, a significant improvement and a result of the board’s concerted efforts to streamline and hasten the appointment process.

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

At-Large- Valerie Martinez and Don Meaders; **District 1**- John Ajie; **District 2**- Julie Radoslovich; **District 3**- Mark Gering; **District 4**- Shaun P. Hart ; **District 5**- Vacant; **District 6**- Larry Lite; **District 7**- Annie Montes; **District 8**- Vacant; **District 9**- Vacant.

Currently, Julie Radoslovich (District 2) is the Chair and Annie Montes (District 7) is the Vice Chair of the MPRAB.



Proposed plan for a new park: Crestview Bluffs

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.