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Park Access and Quality in the Mountain West

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PARK ACCESS AND QUALITY IN THE MOUNTAIN WEST

Environment Fact Sheet No. 2 | July 2020

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PURPOSE:

This Fact Sheet synthesizes data presented in The Trust for Public Land ParkScore® Index.¹ This document presents data for urban parks in the 15 Mountain West municipalities that rank in the top 100 cities nationwide. This document also describes the park amenity rankings for the 4 Nevada municipalities that rank in the top 100 nationwide.

ABOUT THE DATA:

Park score percentiles are determined by the Trust for Public Land’s comprehensive ParkScore® index² database. This index measures how well the 100 largest U.S. cities are meeting the needs of residents in their communities. Cities are awarded points based on the analysis of four important characteristics of an effective park system: acreage, investment, amenities, and access.³ Cities can earn a maximum ParkScore® rating of 100.

KEY TERMS:

Park Score	Index rating that is calculated by regional access, acreage, investment, and amenities.
Municipalities	A city or town that has a single administrative division and powers of the local jurisdiction.
Percentile	A percentile is a measure used to indicate the value below which a given percentage of observations in a group of observations falls.
Parks and Recreation	Parks and recreation are resources and services provided for the purposes of leisure, entertainment, and recreational pursuits.

KEY FINDINGS:

1. The Mountain West municipality with the highest ParkScore® ranking is Boise, ID at #21; the municipality with the lowest ParkScore® ranking is Mesa, AZ at #96.
2. Of the 15 Mountain West municipalities in the top 100, 5 have a percentage of land used for Parks & Recreation that meets or exceeds the national median of 15%.
3. In Nevada, Henderson has the highest ParkScore® ranking at #27, followed by Las Vegas at #42, North Las Vegas at #60, and Reno at #68.
4. The City of Las Vegas has the largest total number of parks (357), followed by Reno (145), Henderson (118), and North Las Vegas (64).
5. Nevada’s parks differ in percentile rankings for various amenities: basketball hoops, dog parks, playgrounds, bathrooms, recreation and senior centers, and splash pads.

¹ See The Trust for Public Land, “2020 ParkScore® rankings,” 2020 (<https://www.tpl.org/parkscore>)

² The data in the ParkScore® index is also influenced by the U.S. Census 2010 Places geospatial data set, and population estimates derived from ESRI’s 2018 Demographic Forecasts.

³ See The Trust for Public Land, “About, Methodology, and FAQ,” 2020 (<https://www.tpl.org/parkscore/about>)

Table 1 displays the city park rankings for the 15 Mountain West municipalities that are a part of the list of the 100 largest cities in the nation. These 100 largest cities were then ranked based on park quality (determined by analyzing access, acreage, investment, and amenities) by the Trust for Public Land.⁴

Table 1: City Park Rankings of the 15 Largest Mountain West Municipalities

Ranking	Mountain West Municipality	State	Park Access	Park Acreage	Park Investment	Park Amenities	% of Land Used for Parks & Recreation
21	Boise	ID	53/100	57/100	98/100	61/100	9%
22	Denver	CO	86/100	51/100	72/100	59/100	8%
24	Aurora	CO	82/100	64/100	84/100	31/100	11%
27	Henderson	NV	38/100	60/100	78/100	80/100	13%
35	Albuquerque	NM	81/100	69/100	30/100	61/100	23%
42	Las Vegas	NV	62/100	53/100	43/100	56/100	20%
44	Scottsdale	AZ	9/100	100/100	59/100	43/100	27%
53	Colorado Springs	CO	61/100	52/100	41/100	39/100	9%
56	Phoenix	AZ	22/100	88/100	47/100	28/100	15%
60	North Las Vegas	NV	45/100	83/100	24/100	47/100	26%
65	Chandler	AZ	43/100	46/100	38/100	46/100	4%
68	Reno	NV	63/100	35/100	23/100	50/100	5%
74	Glendale	AZ	62/100	33/100	18/100	51/100	6%
84	Tucson	AZ	44/100	30/100	24/100	50/100	3%
96	Mesa	AZ	48/100	20/100	32/100	16/100	4%

*Adapted from original source: The Trust for Public Land, “2020 ParkScore rankings,” 2020 (<https://www.tpl.org/parkscore>)

Table 2 displays the amenity rankings for the four Nevada municipalities. These percentile rankings indicate how much the municipalities of Henderson, Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, and Reno have invested in specific amenities in comparison to the other top 100 largest cities in the nation.

Table 2: Park Amenity Type Rankings of the Four Largest Nevada Municipalities

Nevada Municipality	Basketball Hoops	Dog Parks	Playgrounds	Bathrooms	Recreation and Senior Centers	Splash Pads
Henderson	93 rd Percentile	97 th Percentile	58 th Percentile	96 th Percentile	27 th Percentile	91 st Percentile
Las Vegas	5 th Percentile	93 rd Percentile	66 th Percentile	32 nd Percentile	45 th Percentile	90 th Percentile
North Las Vegas	20 th Percentile	35 th Percentile	21 st Percentile	22 nd Percentile	3 rd Percentile	63 rd Percentile
Reno	59 th Percentile	49 th Percentile	29 th Percentile	61 st Percentile	11 th Percentile	77 th Percentile

*Adapted from original source: The Trust for Public Land, “2020 ParkScore® rankings,” 2020 (<https://www.tpl.org/parkscore>)

⁴ See The Trust for Public Land, “2020 ParkScore® rankings,” 2020 (<https://www.tpl.org/parkscore>)