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Park Access and Quality in Mountain West Cities, 2023

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PARK ACCESS AND QUALITY IN MOUNTAIN WEST CITIES, 2023

Environment Fact Sheet No. 17 | September 2023

Prepared by: Maryam Raja, Julia Salangsang, Vanessa M. Booth, Caitlin J. Saladino, and William E. Brown, Jr.

PURPOSE:

This fact sheet presents data from a 2023 publication from The Trust for Public Land ParkScore® Index¹ which provides data on public parks for the 100 largest cities in the United States. The fact sheet includes park scores for the cities in the Mountain West states of Nevada, Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico. This fact sheet expands upon a previously published fact sheet on park access and quality from 2020.²

ABOUT THE DATA:

This fact sheet includes the 2023 park score percentiles as determined by the Trust for Public Land's comprehensive ParkScore® Index database. Park scores percentiles assess how well the 100 largest cities in the United States meet the needs of city residents. From this data, the maximum score a city can receive is a ParkScore® of 100. According to the original report, the five measures of an effective park system are: acreage, investment, facilities, accessibility, and equity.

- Acreage is the median park size and percent of city area dedicated to parks.³
- Access accounts for the number of residents that are a 10-minute walk from a park.
- Investment includes the 3-year average of both public and private spending, as well as paid volunteer hours.
- Amenities include six popular park features included in Table 2.
- Equity, a new measurement added after 2020, is defined as a distribution of public and park space between neighborhoods by race and income.⁴ This category is an average of two metrics: the first scores the proximity of people of color in correlation to nearby parks and the second set measures the distribution of park space.⁵

KEY FINDINGS:

1. Among the 100 largest U.S. cities, Henderson, NV (19th), North Las Vegas, NV (37th), and Las Vegas, NV (48th) ranked within the top 50 U.S. cities park rankings.
2. Henderson, NV ranked 27th nationally in 2020 and 19th in 2023 in overall city park ranking.
3. The city of Gilbert, AZ did not qualify among the largest 100 cities in the United States in 2020, but appears as the 100th ranked city in the 2023 city park rankings.
4. Denver, CO was not ranked among the top 20 U.S. metros in 2020 yet achieved the highest city park ranking (13th) among Mountain West cities in 2023.
5. Evaluating for park amenities, two Nevada cities, Henderson and Las Vegas, received 100 out of 100 possible points for basketball hoops and for dog parks in 2023.

¹ See The Trust for Public Land, "2020 ParkScore® rankings," 2023, www.tpl.org/parkscore/about

² See Booth, V., Cheche, O. K., Saladino, C. J., Brown, W. E. (2020). Park Access and Quality in the Mountain West. *Environment Fact Sheet No. 2* 1-2. Available at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/bmw_lincy_env/2

³ See The Trust for Public Land, "2020 ParkScore® rankings," 2023, www.tpl.org/parkscore/about

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

Table 1 displays the city park rankings for the 15 Mountain West municipalities included in the 100 largest cities in the nation, ranked from highest to lowest national ranking and total ParkScore®. The 100 largest cities are ranked based on park quality (determined by analyzing access, acreage, investment, amenities, and equity) by the Trust for Public Land.

Table 1: City Park Rankings of the 15 Largest Mountain West Municipalities, 2023

Ranking	Mountain West Municipality	State	Park Access	Park Acreage	Park Investment	Park Amenities	Park Equity	Total ParkScore®
13 th	Denver	CO	89/100	51/100	75/100	62/100	69/100	69.3
19 th	Henderson	NV	62/100	43/100	81/100	74/100	61/100	63.9
23 rd	Albuquerque	NM	86/100	62/100	41/100	56/100	61/100	61.1
37 th	North Las Vegas	NV	38/100	82/100	54/100	39/100	66/100	55.8
42 nd	Aurora	CO	81/100	57/100	64/100	16/100	51/100	53.9
48 th	Las Vegas	NV	60/100	48/100	20/100	82/100	53/100	52.3
51 st	Colorado Springs	CO	67/100	54/100	42/100	35/100	60/100	51.5
61 st	Scottsdale	AZ	8/100	100/100	61/100	48/100	19/100	47.3
70 th	Reno	NV	63/100	31/100	16/100	54/100	45/100	41.8
73 rd	Chandler	AZ	42/100	44/100	24/100	38/100	55/100	40.5
76 th	Tucson	AZ	44/100	36/100	15/100	50/100	58/100	40.3
81 st	Glendale	AZ	61/100	30/100	20/100	34/100	48/100	38.6
85 th	Phoenix	AZ	22/100	89/100	35/100	19/100	24/100	37.6
96 th	Mesa	AZ	47/100	15/100	41/100	17/100	45/100	32.9
100 th	Gilbert	AZ	16/100	36/100	32/100	15/100	50/100	29.6

*Adapted from The Trust for Public Land, "2023 ParkScore® rankings," 2023, www.tpl.org/parkscore/about

Table 2 displays the amenity rankings for the four Nevada municipalities appearing in the original report. 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, 2023

Nevada Municipality	Basketball Hoops	Dog Parks	Playgrounds	Bathrooms	Recreation and Senior Centers	Splash Pads
Henderson	100 th percentile	100 th percentile	39 th percentile	82 nd percentile	21 st percentile	100 th percentile
Las Vegas	100 th percentile	100 th percentile	100 th percentile	52 nd percentile	38 th percentile	100 th percentile
North Las Vegas	78 th percentile	52 nd percentile	18 th percentile	27 th percentile	7 th percentile	53 rd percentile
Reno	38 th percentile	68 th percentile	40 th percentile	72 nd percentile	7 th percentile	100 th percentile

*Adapted from The Trust for Public Land, "2023 ParkScore® rankings," 2023, www.tpl.org/parkscore/about