Benchmark Report
# Business Operations Bureau

November 2011



Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District
Riverside, California

**Benchmarking Analysis**

"Benchmarking Analysis" is an important element in the Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District (RivCoParks) July 2011 Strategic Plan Report. Benchmarking is essentially a yardstick. By looking at who we are and what we do, benchmarking attempts to measure key aspects of our makeup as a park district and the results of our efforts in program, budget, and administrative areas.

Benchmarking data was compiled for:

> ➢ Population/Demographics
> ➢ Size of agency (acres/sq. miles)
> ➢ Funding/Staffing
> ➢ Programming/Marketing

For analysis, this information is further broken down into a variety of graphs and charts. In these, we have looked at RivCoParks and *comparable* county park systems in California and an accredited, gold medal winner in Michigan, thereby measuring, or "benchmarking," ourselves against similar agencies. Making such comparisons is a complex proposition, as each agency compiles data in somewhat different ways (some counties, for instance, have separate program budgets; others do not). Despite this, the analysis of the metrics is illustrative of salient issues.
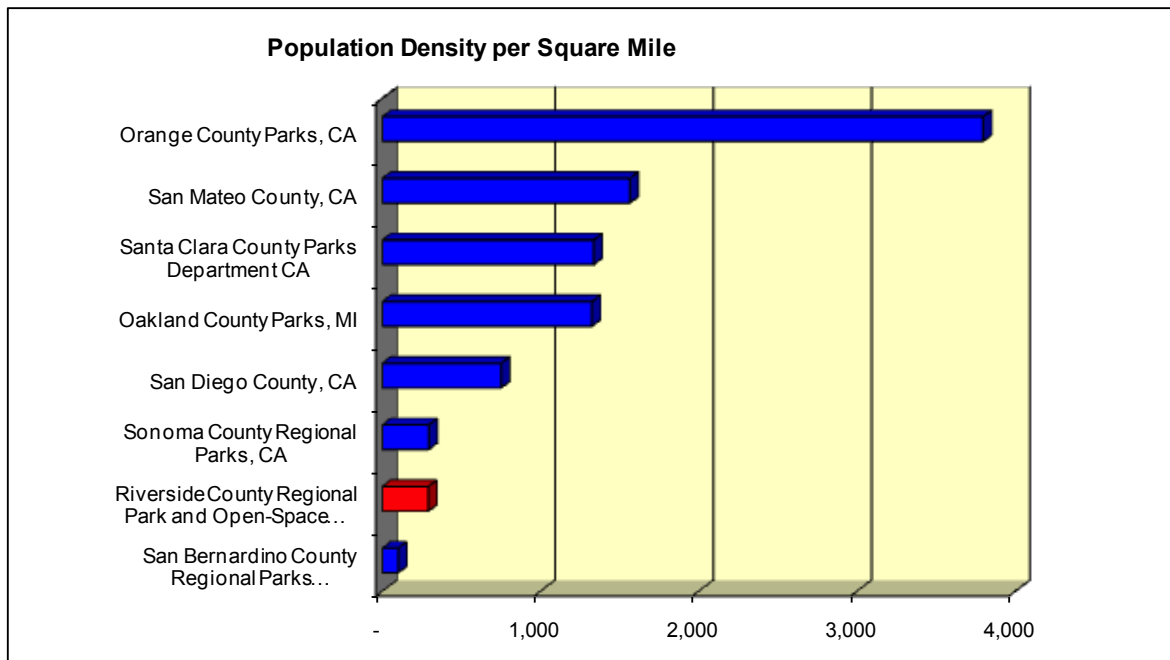


**Population Density Per Square Mile**

| Agency | City Area (Sq.Miles) | Estimated Population | Pop. per Square Mile | Total Park Acres | Parks | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Total Developed Acres Maintained | Total Lineal Trail Miles | Total Park Acres Per 1,000 Pop. | Total Developed Maintained Acres Per 1,000 Pop. |
| Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District, CA | 7,207 | 2,100,516 | 291 | 71,356 | 7,437 | 150 | 33.97 | 3.54 |
| Oakland County Parks, MI | 910 | 1,205,508 | 1,325 | 6,700 | 6,700 | 64 | 5.56 | 5.56 |
| Orange County Parks, CA | 789 | 2,997,033 | 3,797 | 57,263 | 2,145 | 402 | 19.11 | 0.72 |
| San Bernardino County Regional Parks Department, CA | 20,106 | 2,017,673 | 100 | 8,668 | 2,690 | 46 | 4.30 | 1.33 |
| San Diego County, CA | 4,261 | 3,200,000 | 751 | 45,000 | 10,000 | 326 | 14.06 | 3.13 |
| San Mateo County, CA | 450 | 703,730 | 1,565 | 15,700 | 2,574 | 151 | 22.31 | 3.66 |
| Santa Clara County Parks Department CA | 1,291 | 1,723,927 | 1,336 | 46,423 | 2,250 | 313 | 26.93 | 1.31 |
| Sonoma County Regional Parks, CA | 1,576 | 462,290 | 293 | 8,880 | 523 | 125 | 19.21 | 1.13 |

**Comparative Park Statistics**

| City/State | Total Annual Parks and Recreation Budgets | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | City Area (Square Miles) | Estimated Population | Population per Square Mile | Total Budget |
| Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District, CA | 7,207 | 2,100,516 | 291 | $ 11,382,384 |
| Oakland County Parks, MI | 910 | 1,205,508 | 1,325 | $ 21,635,000 |
| Orange County Parks, CA | 789 | 2,997,033 | 3,797 | $ 92,694,000 |
| San Bernardino County Regional Parks Department, CA | 20,106 | 2,017,673 | 100 | $ 9,605,131 |
| San Diego County, CA | 4,261 | 3,200,000 | 751 | $ 32,949,142 |
| San Mateo County, CA | 450 | 703,730 | 1,565 | $ 8,166,984 |
| Santa Clara County Parks Department CA | 1,291 | 1,723,927 | 1,336 | $ 35,397,019 |
| Sonoma County Regional Parks, CA | 1,576 | 462,290 | 293 | $ 14,411,000 |

**Total Parks and Recreation Budgets**

**Per Capita Budget,
Parks and Recreation Maintenance Budget**
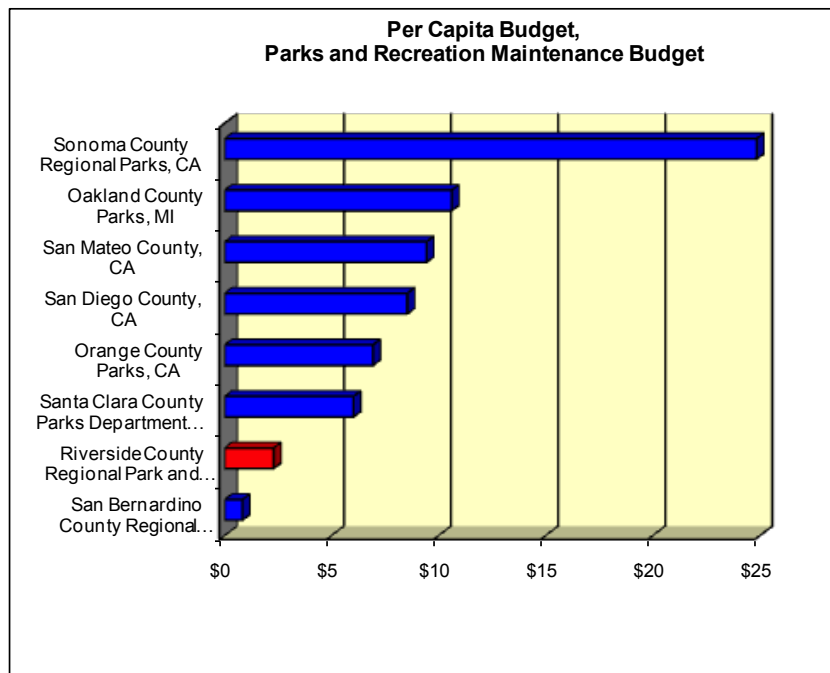
**Annual Maintenance Budgets Per Capita**



**Percentage of Revenues Less Taxes and Non-General Fund
Transfers to Total Parks and Recreation Budget**
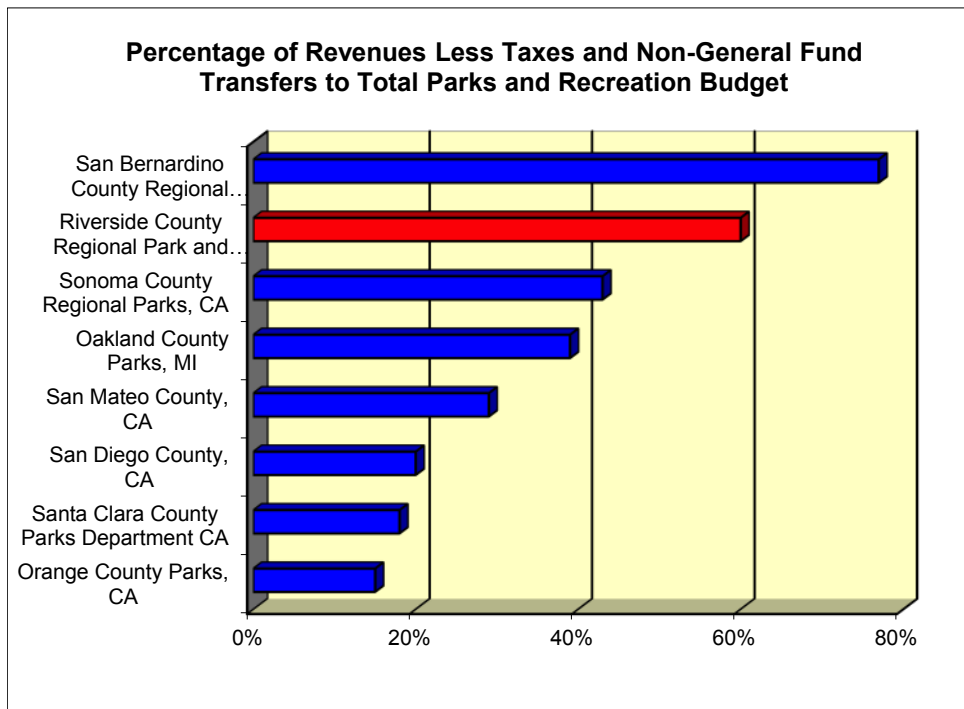
**Percentage of Revenues from Earned Income and Non-General Fund**

**What does the "Benchmarking Analysis" tell us?**

To summarize:

> ➢ **We are a large and diverse park agency** with multiple programs and enormous potential. In terms of Total Park Acres and Developed Acres, 71,356 and 7,437 respectively, we are huge in comparison to our benchmark agencies.

> ➢ We manage a sprawling system and deliver services with a **high level of cost recovery (60%) and prudent budget management**. Our total budget expenditures, $11,382,384, rank us second lowest among comparables.

> ➢ **Our spending on maintenance suggests that we have competitive advantage**. A telling figure of under $5 per person is where we stand in Per Capita Budget, Parks and Recreation Maintenance Budget. Yet, our visitor satisfaction surveys remain high in the areas of park appearance and maintenance. Further review and analysis of budget versus results is needed in this area to chart or redirect our actions.

> ➢ Inherent within the Park District's size and resources is **the power of potential**: the potential of encounter and education in our open spaces and parks, the potential to serve a growing and changing population, and the potential for growth with that population as we work together to enhance traditional opportunities and blend them with more active recreation choices. With a strategic approach to potential and making life better, RivCoParks is aware of the possibilities before it and positioned to lead in conservation, education, and community recreation.

**Benchmarking and Driving Improvements**

The benchmarking effort suggests several ideas for driving improvements in service and results:

> ➢ A cost of service study is needed to better understand our overall underlying costs and specific issues such as maintenance spending.

> ➢ User surveys and program evaluations need to be planned for, developed, and used.

> ➢ As part of the Comprehensive Plan, a set of overlay maps need to be developed that depict:
>   ▪ County population densities with designated demographic subsets plotted in where feasible
>   ▪ Locations and acres of park lands, developed and undeveloped
>   ▪ Trail systems, existing and proposed
>   ▪ Open-space locations and acreages
>   ▪ Other--they may be other maps that would prove useful as we consider park enhancements, expansions, or new development