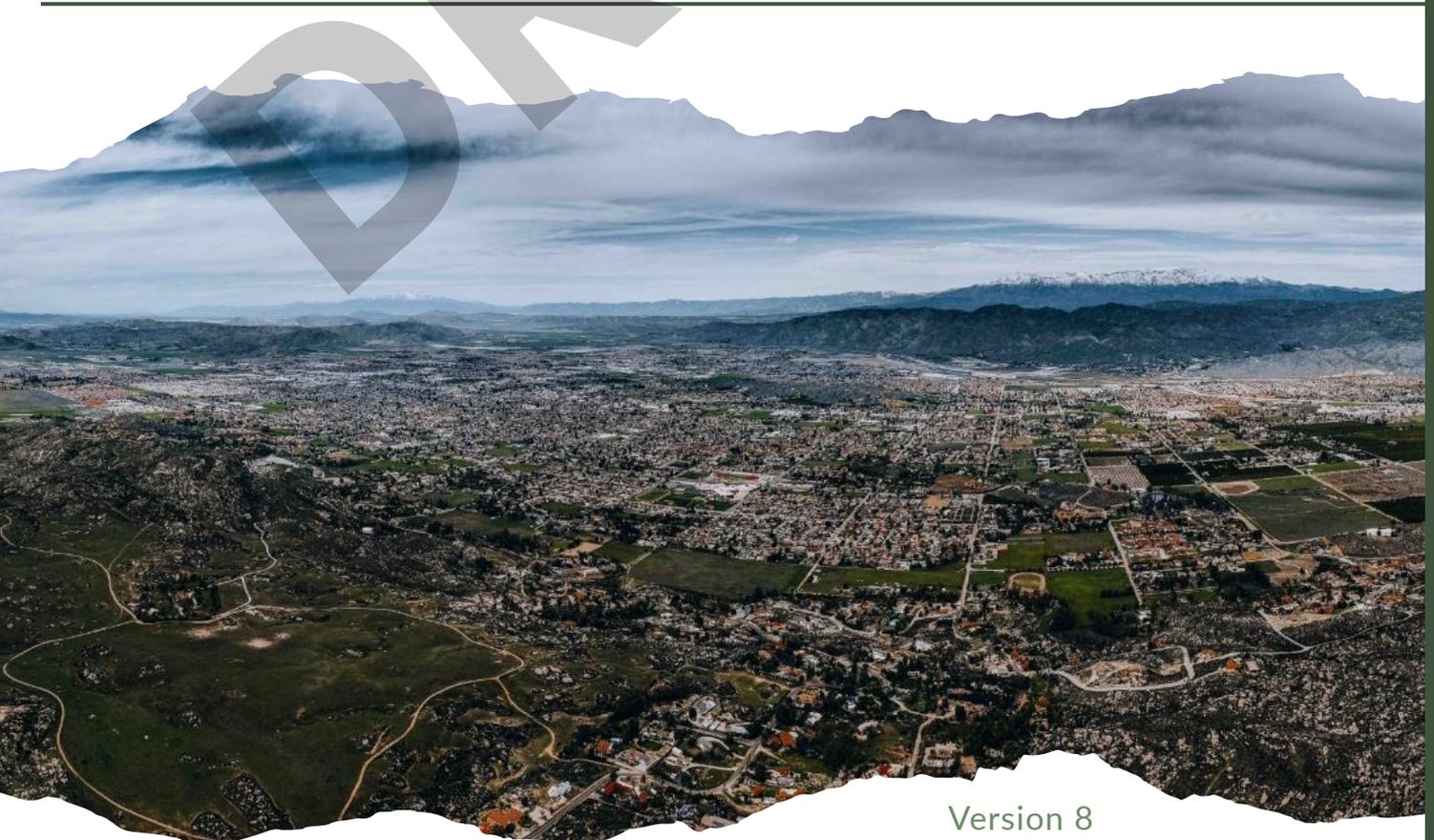




ELEVATE Simpson Park

A BOLD MODERNIZATION STRATEGY TO ENHANCE ACCESS, HONOR THE PARK'S UNIQUE CHARACTER, AND TRANSFORM SIMPSON PARK INTO A VIBRANT REGIONAL DESTINATION.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

City Council:

- Jackie Peterson, Mayor
- Linda Krupa, Mayor Pro Tem
- Joe Males, Council Member
- Tom Lodge, Council Member
- Connie Howard-Clark, Council Member

City Staff:

- Mark Prestwich, City Manager
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ABOUT SIMPSON PARK



Nestled high in the scenic Santa Rosa Hills, Simpson Park is one of Hemet's most breathtaking — yet undercelebrated — natural treasures. This 438-acre wilderness preserve offers a serene escape just minutes from the city, blending rugged terrain and expansive views with accessible recreation.

From an elevation of 2,500 feet, visitors enjoy sweeping panoramic views of the San Jacinto Valley, Diamond Valley Lake, and surrounding communities like Temecula and Menifee. The park's miles of hiking and biking trails, shaded picnic areas, botanical garden, horseshoe pit, and native plant habitats invite exploration, reflection, and connection to the land.

Dedicated to former Mayor James Simpson (1950–66), the park reflects Hemet's deep civic roots while offering endless potential for its future. Today, it remains a vital resource for outdoor adventure, environmental education, and wellness in nature.

As the City of Hemet evolves, so too must Simpson Park. The park was opened in 1989 and today is in need of renovation. A bold modernization effort is now underway to protect the park's natural beauty while expanding its accessibility, inclusivity, and community value.

33° 42' 14.1156" N 116° 54' 55.998" W



THE VISION

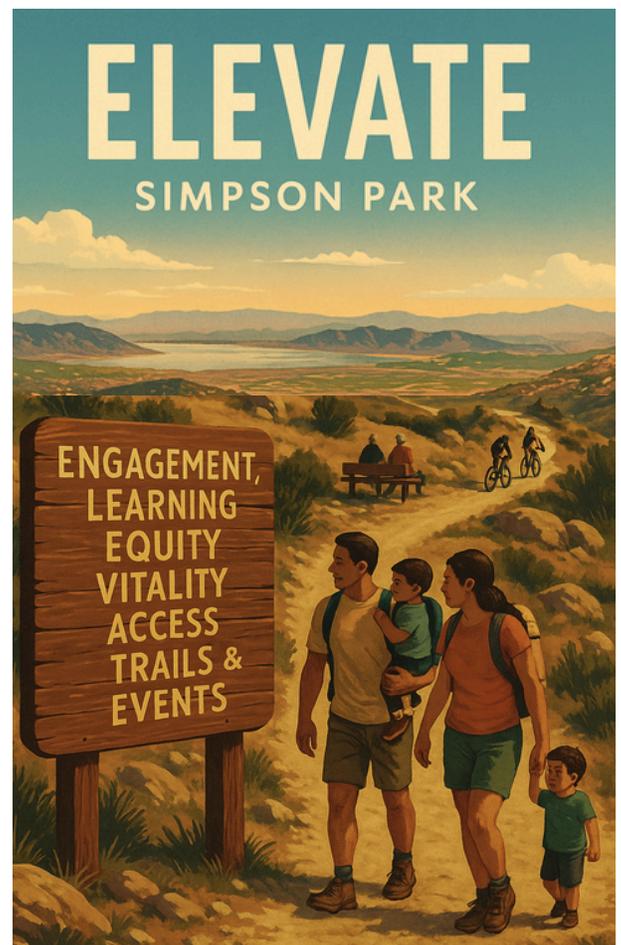
Imagine a place you've never been — just beyond the edges of town, where winding roads lead you into wild, open skies and quiet trails, and where something new is always waiting to be discovered. Welcome to the future of Simpson Park — a reimaged regional destination where nature, culture, and community come together, and where every visitor can find their own path.

Simpson Park is ready to become more than a local hiking spot — it is poised to be a regional gathering place for wellness, exploration, and connection. Whether you're a seasoned mountain biker, a first-time visitor, or a family looking for an adventure, Simpson Park will welcome all.

ELEVATE is a strategy that reimagines Simpson Park as a vibrant, inclusive outdoor destination where each element reflects core values:

- **Engagement** through community involvement and cultural experiences
- **Learning** with educational programs and interpretive signage
- **Equity** by ensuring access for all ages, abilities, and backgrounds
- **Vitality** through wellness activities and community health programs
- **Access** to nature, wellness activities, and outdoor exploration
- **Trails** designed for all skill levels, from beginner loops to advanced pathways
- **Events** that celebrate the diverse culture and vitality of Hemet

More than just words, the ELEVATE strategy is a blueprint for transforming Simpson Park into a space that invites wellness, tells local stories, incorporates art and culture and reflects the full character of Hemet's community and landscape. This is a vision built not just on infrastructure, but on values — access, health, heritage, and connection — achieved through a phased approach and meaningful improvements.



PHASE 1: FOUNDATION

Short-Term Improvements

Laying the groundwork for access, safety, and long-term transformation.

Every great journey begins with a solid foundation. This phase focuses on essential upgrades that make Simpson Park more accessible, welcoming, and secure — creating the conditions for deeper connection and future growth. Early improvements prioritize visitor safety, infrastructure, and visibility, while honoring the park's unique landscape and history.

- Completion of community engagement process and historical research
- Revitalize of existing trail segments and upgrade wayfinding signage
- Implement GPS-based trail mapping to support mobile app integration
- Add trail difficulty ratings to help users of all ages and abilities
- Install solar lighting, smart security cameras and other safety features
- Rehabilitate ~1.25 miles of internal roadways and parking lots
- Enhance butterfly garden and organize a community clean up event
- Explore expanding the roadway to include a walking/biking lane
- Refresh and upgrade key site features, including the entryway sign, front gate, main kiosk, restrooms, trash enclosures, gazebo, etc.



PHASE 2: ASCENT

Mid-Term Improvements

Igniting momentum and welcoming community in new ways.

With core improvements underway, this phase focuses on bringing Simpson Park to life by activating new spaces, launching inclusive programs, and deepening community engagement.

- Construction of an ADA-accessible loop with rest areas, as well as exploration of connections to longer trail route(s)
- Continuation of tree planting, habitat restoration, fire prevention measures
- Installation of interpretive, educational and historical signage
- Development of volunteer involvement, internships opportunities, youth workforce pathways, etc.
- Initiation of pilot events, such as outdoor movies, art, school fields trips, stargazing nights, bike days, wellness programs, etc.
- Addition of more ADA rest areas along easy trail(s), lighting and cameras to secondary areas, and trailhead kiosks and wayfinding signs as needed



PHASE 3: SUMMIT

Long-Term Improvements

Fulfilling the vision and elevating Simpson Park to its highest potential.

This long-term phase delivers the boldest elements of the plan — transformative investments that will shape Simpson Park into a regional destination for recreation, learning, and gathering.

- Development areas to accommodate additional parking spaces
- Implement volunteer opportunities and youth workforce pathways
- Establish core annual events, such as outdoor movies, stargazing nights, wellness programs and host a mountain biking competition
- Construction an amphitheater and stage area for concerts, storytelling, and public events
- Creation of a museum and/or community space for education, exhibits, and gatherings as well as explore a café or snack bar area to support events
- Initiating ongoing stewardship efforts, including trail care, fire prevention, infrastructure maintenance, and dedicated staff and funding
- Expand connections to regional trail networks and surrounding amenities



IMPLEMENTATION

Phased Project List

Phase 1: FOUNDATION "Short-Term"

- Perform geo-survey of road conditions and determine recommended repair methods
- Finalize strategy through active community engagement, incorporating feedback from focus group(s), town hall(s), and stakeholder meetings to ensure it reflects the needs and voices of the community.
- Investigate trail naming, important cultural landmarks and stories, engage local experts, etc.
- Upgrade and paint restrooms and install water bottle filling stations
- Repair, paint and restore the gazebo picnic area
- Replace the main entry sign and gate as well as install primary information kiosk
- Install new trash and animal-resistant recycling bins
- Launch trail signage upgrades and complete GPS mapping
- Conduct environmental review and initiate permitting process
- Launch native tree planting and habitat restoration in fire-impacted zones, while enhancing the butterfly garden and creating pollinator-friendly space(s) to support local wildlife and promote sustainably
- Install a smart security cameras and solar lighting at lower restroom, main entrance, etc.
- Rehab roadways and parking lots and explore widening opportunities

Phase 2: ASCENT "Mid-Term"

- Host pilot events, such as star gazing, yoga, school field trips, bike day, etc.
- Begin to develop volunteer, youth and internship opportunities
- Add additional cameras and lighting to secondary areas as needed
- Construct an ADA-accessible loop trail (~0.25 miles) and explore connection to longer trail
- Install interpretive signage (Indigenous history, ecology, geology, etc.)
- Add additional ADA rest areas along easy trail(s)
- Add additional trailhead kiosks and wayfinding signs as needed

Phase 3: SUMMIT "Long-Term"

- Construct Museum/Community Space (with potential cafe' or snack bar)
- Expand areas to accommodate and define additional parking spaces
- Explore regional connectivity opportunities that can preserve open space, extend the park's footprint, connect to networks, and conserve land for wildlife corridors and future recreational opportunities.
- Build an amphitheater with a stage using native stone seating in the meadow area
- Expand environmental education and school programs and launch ongoing events
- Establish community stewardship corps (volunteers, internships, schools, nonprofits, etc.)
- Create a dedicated trail and infrastructure maintenance fund including staffing costs

Phase 4: Ongoing Stewardship

- Perform regular maintenance of trails, roads, signage, and restrooms
- Manage landscaping and conduct fire prevention measures protect cultural sites and natural resources.
- Provide park ranger or volunteer staffing to support daily operations and events
- Implement long-term monitoring of ecological health (e.g., habitat restoration), infrastructure maintenance, and community engagement programs to ensure continued success and sustainability
- Coordinate ongoing partnership coordination with nonprofits, schools, and agencies to sustain events, stewardship, and community programs

****The transformation of Simpson Park will unfold in thoughtful, flexible phases — each one building momentum toward a more inclusive, resilient, and inspiring destination.***



Elevate the Journey. Expand the Vision.

In summary, Simpson Park has always offered views worth climbing. Now, with bold vision and shared commitment, it's poised to become a regional destination rooted in community, culture, and connection.

This modernization strategy lays out a thoughtful path forward: a phased, flexible roadmap that reimagines Simpson Park as a space where people of all ages and abilities can gather, explore, reflect, and belong. From trail enhancements and ADA access to educational spaces, tree planting, engaging events, upgraded infrastructure and cultural programming — every step elevates the experience.

Together, we can restore what's been lost, build what's been missing, and protect what makes this place extraordinary. Simpson Park is ready. Let's walk this path together, shaping a legacy rooted in nature, community, and shared vision — ELEVATING Simpson Park to new heights, for all to enjoy!

