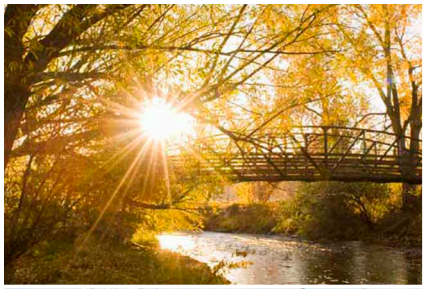
City of Wheat Ridge
Parks and Recreation

Parks & Recreation Master Plan

April 2015



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The citizens of the City of Wheat Ridge place high value on their parks, open space, recreation facilities, and programs. They recognize the importance of these services as a major contributor to property values, mental and physical health, and to the quality of life of the community. This community value is embodied in the Department's inventory of well-maintained and heavily used parks, open space, and recreation facilities.

The City of Wheat Ridge City Council has taken a leadership role in the community's economic development, community improvement, and improved quality of life efforts. This has included improving infrastructure to serve city residents, encouraging existing businesses to expand, and attracting future businesses and resident families. Through careful development of a number of community and strategic plans in recent years, Council has set direction for the future of the City. As a result of those planning efforts (and the resulting development of assets), a diverse and well maintained system of Park and Recreation facilities has proven to be a major reason that people move to, and stay in, the City of Wheat Ridge.

Purpose of the Master Plan

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan is based on a comprehensive planning process that took place from September 2014 through March 2015 and involved extensive staff and community input as well as research and analysis of the existing parks and recreation system in Wheat Ridge. It includes key findings and information gathered from the demographic and trend analysis; a public input process; a statically-valid resident survey; and inventory and analysis of existing Wheat Ridge's parks, open space, and facilities. The project also incorporated a review of the Parks and Recreation Department's programs and general financial resources. Based on this analysis, recommended goals and strategies have been crafted to address the key issues identified in the needs assessment and findings phase of the project.

This summary report (the **City of Wheat Ridge Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2015**) contains key findings and information gathered from the recently completed demographic and trend analysis; public meetings; and a comprehensive inventory and analysis of existing parks, facilities, recreation programs, and maintenance operations. The GreenPlay, LLC, consultant team worked closely with department staff from July 2014 – January 2015. During the Findings phase of the master planning process, findings and recommendations were reviewed with the Parks and Recreation Commission. This **Executive Summary** of the information collected, analysis conducted, and key findings begins the Master Plan followed by greater detail regarding demographics and relevant trends, operational analysis, and financial reviews. **The Master Plan concludes with specific recommendations regarding facilities, programs, parks, maintenance, and finances.**

Community Needs Assessment

Engaging the public with sufficient and meaningful mechanisms for input creates open discussions about the current state (as well as the future) of parks and recreation services. The public input process for this Master Plan included:

- Multiple focus group/stakeholder meetings – (October 2014)
    - City Council Interviews
    - Department staff
    - Executive management team
    - Two general community group sessions
    - Parks and Recreation Commission
- Public meetings – (November 2014 and January 2015)
- Mail survey – (October – November 2014)
- Opportunities to provide online input via Website

Focus Group/Public Meeting Summary

Generally, these focus group and public meetings participants, which totaled 22 community members and 21 staff, agreed that facilities, programs, and services offered by the Wheat Ridge Parks and Recreation Department provide a high quality and meaningful variety of recreation opportunities. However, they also agree that indoor recreation facilities at the Recreation Center and several park sites are in need of updating and expansion to meet increasing public demands, and that there is significant interest in additional trails and connectivity of the trail system within the City of Wheat Ridge.

Other recurring themes from these focus groups and public meetings included:

- High level of satisfaction with current services
- Current operations primarily focused on sustaining and maintaining; taking care of what we have
- A need for updating an aging park inventory
- Greenbelt access, preservation, and improvements
- Expanding communications and marketing regarding facilities and programs
- Altering and improving hours of operation at recreation facilities
- Capacity constraints including
    - Resources for additional staffing
    - Facilities (Active Adult Center and Wheat Ridge Recreation Center)
    - Funding of essential department services

Statistically Valid Survey

In addition to interviews with focus groups and stakeholders, Master Plan research also included a statistically valid survey that was distributed to 3,000 Wheat Ridge residents (including renters) in October of 2014. A response rate of 10 percent or better provides valid results, and 340 of the distributed surveys (11.3%) were returned. Survey results were generally very favorable regarding current Parks and Recreation services, and a significant amount of information was collected to provide guidance for current and future operations. Survey results are referenced throughout this report, and a full copy of the survey and responses has been provided to Department staff.

Sustainable Growth

A key component of the Master Plan research and recommendations is the City's commitment to growth at a sustainable rate; to ensure that development does not outstrip the City's ability to generate resources required to operate and maintain the park and recreation system. Recommendations contained herein are intended to comply with existing City approved sustainable growth policies. The current City policy is designed to "meet the needs of the present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs" (Wheat Ridge Sustainability Policy and Plan, 2014).

Demographics

Although the future of population growth cannot be predicted with certainty, it is helpful to make limited assumptions for planning purposes. ***Table 1*** contains **2014** population estimates based on the **2010** U.S. Census for the City of Wheat Ridge which calculated a **2010 population of 30,166.**

Table 1: Summary Demographics for the City of Wheat Ridge – 2014

Summary Demographics	
Population	30,780
Number of Households	14,489
Avg. Household Size	2.09
Median Age	44.6
Median Household Income	$44,265

Source: 2010 U.S Census, ESRI Business Analyst estimates for 2014

Table 2 illustrates the projected population growth trends for Wheat Ridge. The city's population is predicted to increase by an annual rate of .64 percent to 31,785 from 2014 to 2019. This number approaches a full return to the City's former population of 32,700 in 2000. (From 2000 to 2010, the City's population decreased by .8 percent to 30,166). The predicted annual growth rate for Wheat Ridge from 2014 through 2019 at .64 percent remains low. By comparison, the annual growth rate for the State of Colorado from 2014 to 2019 is predicted to be 1.26 percent, and .73 percent for the United States as a whole

Table 2: Population Projections for Wheat Ridge

U.S. Census (2000 and 2010) and ESRI Projections	
2000 Population	32,700
2010 Population	30,166
2014 Estimated	30,780
2019 Projected	31,785

Source: U.S. Census and ESRI Business Information Solutions.

Key demographic trends were identified in the research and are helpful reference for future park and recreation planning efforts in Wheat Ridge. According to the Environmental Systems Research Institute (Esri) Business Information Solutions (based on the 2010 U.S. Census),

- The estimated median household income for Wheat Ridge residents was $44,265 in 2014
- The Wheat Ridge population declined from 32,700 in 2000 to 30,166 in 2010, but is predicted to increase slightly to 31,785 by 2019.
- The median age for the City in 2014 was 44.6, higher than the median age for the United States (37.3). Wheat Ridge's median age has risen from 35 in 2000, indicating that the percentages in older age groups are increasing, and that aging residents are not leaving the City in any significant numbers. By comparison the median age in Denver metro area is 31.7, and 32.8 percent of the population is between the ages of 35 and 50.

Trends

The Master Plan process identified local, state, and national recreation trends that help to define what City residents are seeking in the provision of park and recreation services. Current trends that apply to the Wheat Ridge community are identified in detail in the body of this report. In a very general summary, **those current trends most likely to be impacting City services include:**

- A focus on walking, hiking and biking in an outdoor setting,
- Participation in fitness and wellness programs (generally indoor)
- Recreation activity and programs for an increasing population of "Baby Boomers"
- Swimming and aquatic based activity
- Special events and community fairs
- Increased participation by younger generations in adventure sports
- Need to program for diversity and multicultural interests

Facilities, Level of Service and Program Analysis

A key component of the Master Plan process was a thorough analysis of existing programs, facilities, parks, trails, and open lands. This analysis was completed by inspecting documents, visiting facilities and parks, a review of budgets and capital expenses, review of program brochures, operational procedures manuals, and a field inventory of parks and their general condition. The process also involved extensive discussion and facility tours with staff to gain a better understanding of past, present, and possible future operations.

Areas of Focus for Recommendations

When the collection of information, community input, and analysis is completed, the Master Plan begins to put together a picture of the nature of recreation and park services that residents currently demand, and more importantly, a picture of the future needs for those services.

The result of the process is a series of identified issues and formal recommendations provided in greater detail in the closing pages of this report; recommendations that summarize how continued positive attention by the Parks and Recreation Department can best address those issues. The **Plan Recommendations** sections at the end of this report specifically addresses the following categories and recommendations:

- ***Recreation Program Analysis***
    - Provide additional fitness and senior programs at recreation center
    - Modify programming at the recreation center to better suit working families
    - Improve program communications/marketing, including access to website
    - Consider adding expanded special events to community programming
    - Evaluate teen programs and create a teen council
    - Develop a more detailed cost recovery policy
- ***Inventory of Existing Facilities and Level of Service Analysis***
    - Expand the existing Wheat Ridge Recreation Center
    - Redevelop of Anderson and Prospect parks
    - Provide improved and/or additional facilities for Active Adult programs
    - Complete a Master Plan to determine future use and improvements of the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt
    - Maintain and improve existing facilities
- ***Maintenance analysis***
    - Expand and modernize maintenance operations center
    - Develop design standards for updating existing and construction of new parks and open space
    - Create a system-wide capital repair and replacement program to fund improvements to existing park sites
    - Analyze cost associated with maintenance of urban tree canopy and right of way ordinance
    - Expand and update maintenance procedures and standards
- ***Financial analysis***
    - Evaluate and determine funding source for future improvements and capital repair needs
    - Develop financial plan to address decreasing reserves for recreation center maintenance/operations
    - Focus improvement and implementation efforts on sustainability; cost recovery

Goals are grouped when appropriate, and action items are labeled as one of the following:

- ***Ongoing*** *– Action is already taking place and should continue.*
- ***Immediate priority*** *– Some action should be taken within the next year.*
- ***Short-term priority*** *– Some action should be taken within the next one to two years.*
- ***Mid-term priority*** *– Some action should be taken within the next three to five years.*
- ***Long-term priority*** *– Some action should be taken within five years or beyond.*

Before proceeding into the analysis and specific recommendations, it is important to spend some time documenting the Planning Context which helps to explain the influencing factors that produce the recommendations contained herein.

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I. PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE: THE PLANNING CONTEXT

A. Mission and Vision

The current Mission statement for the City of Wheat Ridge's Parks and Recreation Department is:

To create and offer services that foster sustainability, as well as to partner with the community to provide exceptional programs, parks, open space, and facilities that enhance opportunities for personal growth, well-being, and healthy lifestyles.

Vision

The department vision, as stated in its strategic plan, is:

To be a dynamic city department by creating community connections to health, wellness, and vitality through parks, recreation, and open spaces.

Various other department and city-wide documents provide additional visioning and goals statements currently guiding the City and the department, including the following.

Parks and Recreation Department Strategic Plan

The Parks and Recreation Department Director and staff update the department Strategic Plan annually, which includes internal strategies for accomplishing facility, programming, marketing, and accreditation goals.

City Council Five Year Goals (City-wide)

The most recent City-wide Strategic plan contains this vision statement, "*Wheat Ridge is a beautiful city and a community for families. Wheat Ridge has great neighborhoods, vibrant commercial centers, and multi-modal transportation and is committed to environmental stewardship. Wheat Ridge residents enjoy an active, healthy life style, and hometown feeling and pride. Wheat Ridge – A Great Place to Live!*"

Several very specific roles for the Parks and Recreation Department are outlined in that plan to help achieve the City vision. The Parks and Recreation Department strives to provide **desirable, diverse, and connected neighborhoods and a healthy, attractive, and well-maintained community.**

B. Purpose of the Master Plan

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan is based on a comprehensive planning process that took place from September 2014 through March 2015 and involved extensive staff and community input as well as research and analysis of the existing parks and recreation system in Wheat Ridge. Based on this analysis, recommended goals and strategies have been crafted to address the key issues identified in the needs assessment and findings phase of the project.

C. Methodology of This Planning Process

This project has been guided by the Parks and Recreation Director and key staff, as well as by a public input process. Department representatives met with the consultant team, led by GreenPlay, LLC, and provided input throughout the process. This collaborative effort fully utilizes the consultant's expertise and incorporates local knowledge and institutional history. The project consisted of the following specific tasks.

Community Survey and Public Involvement:

- Review of previous planning efforts and department historical information.
- Extensive community involvement including focus groups, meetings with key stakeholders and staff, community-wide public meetings, and results from a formal survey instrument.
- Research of recreation trends and statistics to help guide the efforts of programming staff.
- Utilization of an online community engagement tool, to broaden the public involvement scope.

Inventory:

- Interviews with department staff to provide information about parks, recreation, and services, along with insight into the current practices and experiences of the department in serving residents and visitors.
- Inventory of parks, facilities, and surrounding areas using existing mapping, staff interviews, and on-site visits to verify amenities and assess their condition.
- Identification of relevant alternative providers.
- Analysis of access to and service area for key parks and facilities.

Assessment and Analysis of Programs:

- Assessment and analysis of current recreation programs offerings and fees/charges practices.
- Review of program and facility brochures.

Initial Findings Documents

- Identification of strengths and weakness.
- Determination of key issues requiring attention.
- Definition of areas of focus for future planning and funding.

Recommendations and action plans

- Definition of formal goals and objectives to address key issues.
- Formulation of action plans.

D. Timeline for Completing the Master Plan

Start-up	August 2014
Information Gathering/Community Meetings/Survey	September – November 2014
Inventory and Assessment of Existing Facilities	October 2014
Presentation of Findings	December 2014
Presentation of Draft Report	April 2015
Adoption Final Report	April 2015

E. Related Past Planning Efforts

The demographics and needs of the community will change over time, and it is critical to note the importance of continued update and coordination of all related planning efforts. The Wheat Ridge City Council has adopted several guiding documents over the years that include principles and recommendations for the provision of parks and recreation, and this plan (where appropriate) provides a connection to past planning efforts. This 2015 Parks and Recreation Master Plan will serve as the guiding document for providing parks and recreation facilities within the City of Wheat Ridge. It builds upon previously adopted plans, and will coexist with and complement recommendations from a number of other plans adopted by the City. In the case of potentially conflicting information, this plan supersedes information in the previous documents regarding parks and recreation related topics. Recent relevant plans include:

2006 City of Wheat Ridge Parks and Recreation Master Plan

This plan outlined park and recreation needs and future development as a result of community surveys and a detailed inventory of facilities existing at that time. The current 2014-2015 planning effort is designed to update the 2006 plan and provide additional guidance for future growth. **Major recommendations completed as a result of the 2006 planning effort include:**

- 44th and Kendall Neighborhood Park (Hopper Hollow) – Construction completed
- Einarsen Property Park (Discovery Park) – Construction completed
- Johnson Park – Converted to trailhead, amenities removed
- Active Adult Center – Expansion feasibility study completed
- Creekside Park – Permanent restroom added, drainage improvements completed
- Fruitdale Park – Playground expanded and replaced, dog park amenity constructed
- Panorama Park – Artwork deaccessioned, dugouts/benches replaced, playground replaced
- Paramount Park – New dugouts and benches, playground replaced
- Randall Park – Playground replaced
- Stites Park – Playground replaced
- Happiness Gardens – Shelter and improved walkways, raised plots and parking added

2002 City of Wheat Ridge Open Space Management Plan

The City of Wheat Ridge Open Space Management Plan established a framework for setting priorities and providing specific management direction for natural, scenic, and recreational resources within the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt, Lewis Meadows, and future open space acquisitions. Implementation of the plan is intended to assist the Wheat Ridge Parks and Recreation Department in efforts to preserve and enhance these areas for present and future generations.

City of Wheat Ridge Open Space Wildfire Management Plan 2003

The City of Wheat Ridge Open Space Wildfire Management Plan provides a framework for integrating fire management with other resource management activities, as outlined in the City of Wheat Ridge Open Space Management Plan.

City of Wheat Ridge Open Space Weed Management Plan 2003

The City of Wheat Ridge Open Space Weed Management Plan provides a framework for integrating weed management with other resource management activities, as outlined in the City Of Wheat Ridge Open Space Management Plan.

Envision Wheat Ridge Comprehensive Plan 2009

This is the most current City-wide comprehensive plan for the development and future growth of the City. It contains specific goals and objectives and is designed to guide City policy, land use, economic, and quality of life decisions for the next 20 years. The plan contains specific recommendations regarding park and recreation services and those recommendations have been accounted for in this Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Wheat Ridge Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan

The City of Wheat Ridge has completed an inventory of all existing pedestrian and bicycle routes within the City. A community-scale pedestrian and bicycle map has been developed, indicating potential future locations for both off-street and on-street pedestrian and bicycle trails, lanes, and routes. Expansion and completion of the Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan is among the recommendations in this 2015 Master Plan.

Repositioning Wheat Ridge – Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (NRS) 2005

The NRS is a planning document outlining strategies to strengthen and revitalize the community. The NRS identified Parks and Open Space as a strong Wheat Ridge asset. Strategy #8 in the NRS recommended that visibility, accessibility, and attractiveness of Open Space continue to be enhanced.

Sub-Area Plans

The City of Wheat Ridge has developed sub-area plans for several distinct areas of the city – the Northwest Area, the Wadsworth Corridor, the Orchard District, and the 38th Avenue Corridor. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan coordinates with each of these plans accordingly, and each separate plan should independently address parks and recreation services as an integral component of the sub-area planning process.

Public Art Management Plan

In response to Ordinance3 NO. 1257, July 2002, the City has developed a Public Art Management Plan that provides guidelines and policies for the funding, acquisition, placement, and maintenance of public art within the City.

Note: Copies of these reports are on file with the City of Wheat Ridge Parks and Recreation Department and can be found on the City website www.ci.wheatridge.co.us

F. Government Structure

In 1977, residents of Wheat Ridge adopted a home rule charter. In 1996, the charter was amended to provide for a council-manager structure of government. The Mayor, City Clerk, and City Treasurer are elected to four-year terms, and there are eight City Council members. The City Council, acting as the legislative body of the City, retains all typical legislative powers and functions of a municipal government. The City Council also appoints a City Manager to manage the City's daily affairs, be responsible for implementing City Council decisions, and to oversee the administration of the City.

G. History

Wheat Ridge was founded as a community in 1859. During that year, a small group of farmers, some coming to Colorado in search of gold and silver, founded a rural village in this location. By the late 1800s, fertile soils and plentiful water led to the development of a vibrant small farming community. The farming community flourished for a number of years, survived the Great Depression, and flourished again post WWII. The City was fully incorporated in 1969 as a statutory city in response to the possibility of annexation by surrounding cities. As of 2014, there are approximately 30,513 people and 14,028 households, with an average household size of 2.14 people in the City of Wheat Ridge.

Parks and Recreation History

Prior to the 1969 incorporation as a City, and establishment of a parks and recreation department, the Wheat Ridge Recreation District was responsible for the acquisition and development of several parks in Wheat Ridge. The District identified Clear Creek, which runs through the City, as a unique community resource and an ideal location for a system of parks and greenbelt trails. Through time, and using the City's appropriated share of Open Space funds, Jefferson County Open Space grant funds, and a Great Outdoors Colorado Legacy Grant, Wheat Ridge was able to acquire large tracts of land along the creek to be preserved as open space. With the incorporation of the City in 1969, several recreation facilities (once owned and operated by the Prospect Recreation District) were also acquired by the City. The Prospect Recreation District continues to serve nearby residents in unincorporated Jefferson County.

Wheat Ridge was one of the first cities in Colorado to be awarded the "Tree City USA" designation based on extensive tree planting performed by the City in the late 1970s, as well as the development of a tree ordinance and an arborist board. In 1982, the City was also designated a "Green Survival City" by the American Association of Nurserymen for its achievements in city arbor management.

In November 1998, the City began construction of a 70,000-square foot recreation center, which opened in early 2000. Today, Wheat Ridge encompasses approximately 10 square miles of area, with approximately 173 acres of developed parklands and an additional 300 acres of open space. Wheat Ridge is also currently home to three National Historical Sites and one Colorado State Historical Site. The Wheat Ridge Historical Society, in cooperation with the City of Wheat Ridge, operates the Wheat Ridge Historical Park, which includes the Wheat Ridge Sod House, Brick Museum, 1st Post Office, and Johnson Cabin, along with the Baugh House. The Colorado Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) also makes its home in the historic Richards-Hart Estate, owned, operated, and maintained by the City of Wheat Ridge and Parks and Recreation Department.

II. WHAT WHEAT RIDGE WANTS: OUR COMMUNITY AND IDENTIFIED NEEDS

Engaging the public with sufficient and meaningful mechanisms for public comment creates open discussions about the current state and the future of parks and recreation. To gain valuable insight into the needs and interests of the community, the Master Plan public input process included:

- Focus group/stakeholder meetings – (September 24, 2014)
- City Council interviews
- Park Commissioners interviews
- Two public meetings – (November 17, 2014 & January 21, 2015)
- Mail survey – (October – November, 2014)
- Opportunities to provide input online via online community engagement
- Management team and department staff input

Attendance at focus groups and public meetings included 22 community members, including Park Commission members and 21 City staff members. The sample size for the statistically valid survey totaled 340 respondents.

A. Community and Stakeholder Input

The following is an overview of community opinions with regard to strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for Wheat Ridge parks and recreation facilities, programs, and services.

Focus group, stakeholder, and public meeting participants were asked a variety of questions regarding Wheat Ridge parks, recreation facilities, programs, and services. Responses to questions about current strengths and issues/needs/problems that the Wheat Ridge Parks and Recreation Department can address through this planning process are summarized below. ***A full list of comments has been provided to Department staff.***

Strengths

- Wheat Ridge Recreation Center
- Variety and diversity of parks in the City
- Well maintained facilities
- Greenbelt
- Facilities draw people from outside the City
- Great youth and senior programs
- Great multi-generational opportunities
- Good price/value ratio for programs and facilities
- Discovery Park

Weaknesses/Challenges

- Limited connectivity to Greenbelt
- Over-crowding at the Recreation Center
- Better marketing for less visible (street presence) parks
- Smoking in parks (There are posted signs that smoking in parks is prohibited, but it is a rule not a City ordinance)
- Inadequate athletic fields for youth sports
- Web site is hard to navigate
- Locker rooms at outdoor pool need to be renovated
- Not enough programming for working adults

Other questions asked of the focus group participants were:

- Do you have any specific ideas about what you would like to see happen (or not happen) with the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt?
- What do you believe to be the most essential (of critical importance) public parks, open space, trails, and recreation service in the community? Why do you see it/them as essential?
- What improvements or changes would you make in the parks, open space, trails, and recreation facilities, programs, and services in the City of Wheat Ridge today?; in 5 years?; in 10 Years?
- How can the City of Wheat Ridge work to responsibly address these improvements or changes given its resources? What opportunities exist?
- Are there potential partnerships that the City of Wheat Ridge should consider working with in the future?
- How effective is the Department in seeking feedback from the community and users on improving its performance?

Highlights from those responses are summarized in the boxes below:

Specific Ideas about what residents feel should happen to the Greenbelt

- Commercial opportunities like kayaking, special events, etc.
- Mountain biking/free riding course
- Improve access
- Control heavy bike traffic that can be dangerous for walkers
- Better signage
  - Bike rules
  - Directional
  - Educational/Interpretive
- More benches and trash cans
- Increased police presence (increase in issues after twilight)

Improvements You Would Like to See Today

- Improved Web Site
- Smart phone friendly program guide
- Improved marketing of programs
- Grant writer on staff
- Water conservation practices
- Ability of find new revenue sources i.e. sponsorships, advertising in program guide
- Improved park identification signage
- Extended hours at outdoor pool

Critical Importance Areas

- Park system is very important to the marketing of the City
- Recreation Center – appeals to a wide range of users
- Maintaining what we have is essential
- Trails – Connecting with places
- Revitalizing Anderson Park/Prospect Park

Desired Improvements in 5-10 Years

- Outdoor pool improvements
- Improved athletic fields
- Bike Park (freeriding, BMX, etc.)
- Improved street landscaping
- Public art in traffic calming areas
- Recreation Center expansion (fitness/classrooms)
- Kayak/tubing park
- New senior (active adult) facility
- Safer way to cross Wadsworth and Kipling

Partnership Opportunities

- Jefferson County Schools
- Local businesses (sponsorships, advertising revenue)
- Biking community
- Active Transportation Advisory Team
- Lutheran Medical Center
- Boys & Girls Club

How Can These Improvements Be Addressed

- Future sales tax initiative
- Pursuit of grants
- Increased use of school facilities
- Better utilization of social media
- Keep asking the community what should be the priorities
- Find funding source to cover recreation center subsidy

Increasing Effective Department Feedback Performance

- Press releases
- Director Reports to Council
- Community Feedback forms
- Centralized communication tool
- Improved Website
- Additional Surveys

Focus Group/Public Meeting Summary

The Wheat Ridge Parks and Recreation Department provides facilities, programs, and services to Wheat Ridge residents and non-residents from neighboring communities. Citizens recognize that Parks and Recreation Department staff works hard to bring a well maintained and quality park system, a high level of customer service, and program offerings to a variety of interests and age groups. On the other hand, the Recreation Center's popularity means that it is frequently overcrowded during peak times.

Generally, focus group and public meeting participants agree that park maintenance is good and a source of pride within the community. However, they also feel that that park facilities are in need of updating, and overall programs and services need better marketing, especially in the area of general interests and recreation variety for both working adults and teen populations. Improvements to the outdoor pool and the development of a bike park were also identified as needs.

There was a wide variety of opinions about what should and should not be done to the Greenbelt. Some participants would like to see development of activities on Clear Creek like kayaking and tubing, off trail biking features, special events and improved access. Other participants express concern about overuse and loss of it natural beauty. There was also lot of concern about bicycle traffic and the dangers it imposes on pedestrian traffic, off leash dogs creating safety issues, and also concern over basic safety and security issues on the Greenbelt.

B. Online Community Engagement

This project included creating an online community engagement site. This tool was designed to enhance community involvement, and obtain additional feedback from people who may not necessarily attend meetings. The average age of those that participated was 49 years old, and the majority were females.

While there was quite a bit of traffic generated on the site with **1,227** page views through December 17, 2014, there was not a significant amount of ideas generated beyond what was heard at public meetings and focus groups. The ideas that were generated focused around more close-in parking at the recreation center and the ability to safely cross Kipling and other major thoroughfares in the City.

C. Statistically Valid Survey

Methodology

The purpose of this survey was to gather public feedback on City of Wheat Ridge parks and recreation facilities, programs, and services. This survey research effort and subsequent analysis were designed to assist the City of Wheat Ridge in the creation of recommendations for possible future enhancements, facilities, and services.

The survey was conducted using three primary methods: 1) a mail-back survey, 2) an online, invitation-only web survey to further encourage response from those residents already within the defined invitation sample, and 3) an open-link online survey for members of the public who were not part of the invitation sample. The analysis herein primarily focuses on responses from the invitation sample unless otherwise noted.

A total of 3,000 surveys were mailed to a random sample of Wheat Ridge residents in October 2014. The final sample size for this statistically valid survey was 340, resulting in a margin of error of approximately +/- 5.3 percentage points calculated for questions at 50 percent response.

The underlying data were weighted by age to ensure appropriate representation of Wheat Ridge residents across different demographic cohorts in the sample. Due to variable response rates by some segments of the population, the underlying results, while weighted to best match the overall demographics of residents, may not be completely representative of some sub-groups of the population, including those in the Latino community. The complete survey report has been provided to Department staff as a separate document.

Demographic Profile of Responses

The following describes the respondent and household demographics of the invitation sample.

- Gender. Most invitation sample respondents are female (66%), while approximately a third of respondents are male (34%).

- Age. The invitation sample respondents have a broad age distribution, with 23 percent under age 35, 15 percent aged 35 to 44, 18 percent aged 45 to 54, 19 percent aged 55 to 64, 12 percent aged 65 to 74, and 13 percent age 75 or older.

- Household Profile. Households with children at home accounted for the largest share of invitation sample respondents (33%), followed by empty nesters (27%), couples without children (21%), and singles without children (19%). A majority of respondents reported being in a couple, either with or without children (65%), while a smaller proportion are single, either with or without children (35%).

- Household Income. Annual household incomes of less than $100,000 per year were common among invitation sample households (65%), with most of those respondents earning between $50,000 and $100,000 per year (36%). An additional 21 percent of respondents reported a household income between $100,000 and $150,000, while 11 percent reported earnings of $150,000 or more per year.

- Years in Wheat Ridge Area. Invitation sample respondents reported having lived in the area for 16.9 years on average, with a wide range of length of residency reported. Seven percent have lived in Wheat Ridge less than a year, 42 percent for 1-10 years, 21 percent for 11-20 years, and 30 percent for 21 or more years.

- Own or Rent. Most invitation sample respondents own their residence (82%), while a smaller share classify themselves as renters (18%).

- Voter Registration Status. Fully 96 percent of invitation sample respondents identified themselves as registered voters.

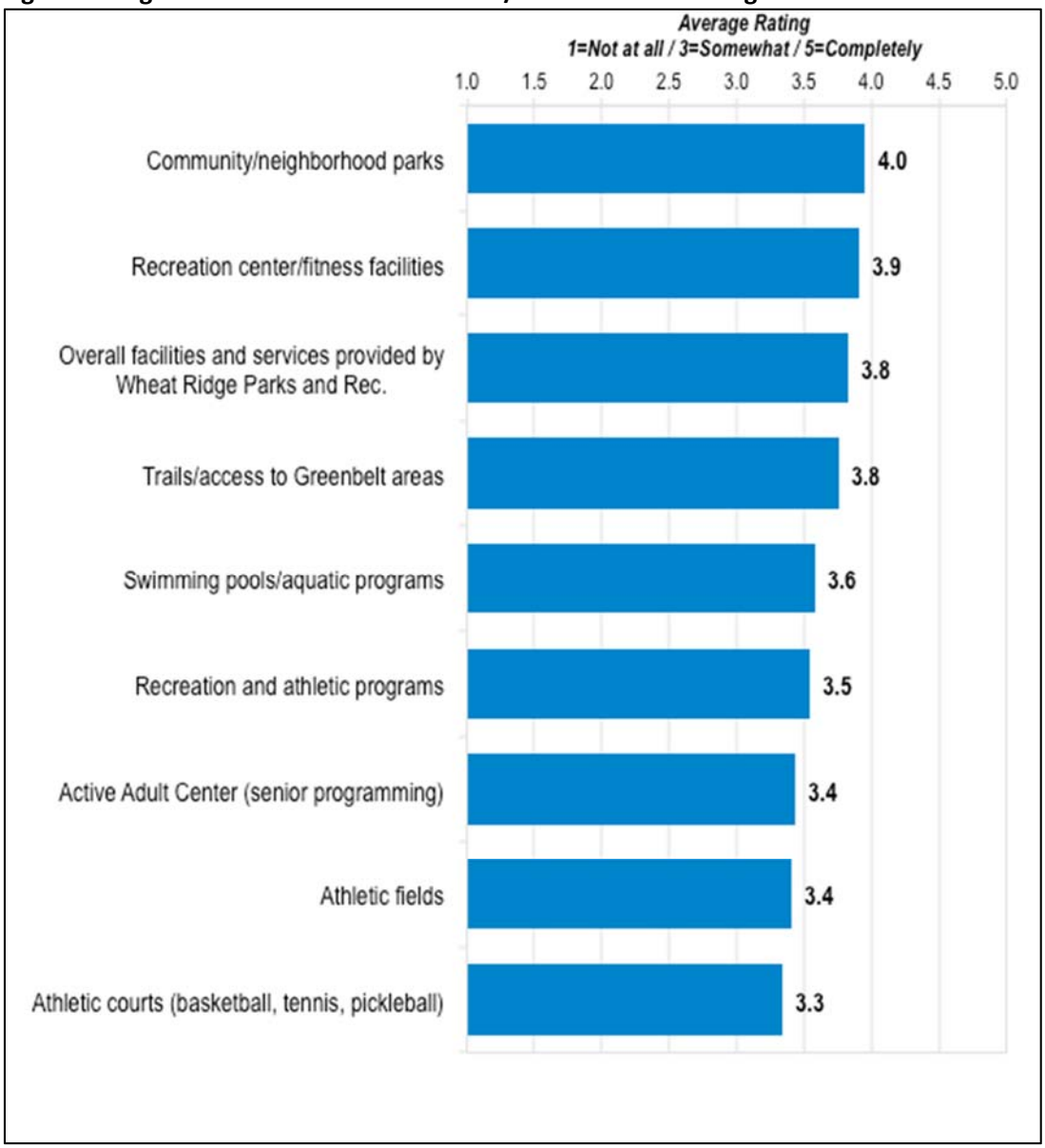
Degree to Which Facilities and Services are Meeting Household Needs

Respondents rated the degree to which their household needs are met by current Wheat Ridge Parks and Recreation facilities and services, using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning "not at all" and 5 meaning "completely."

Figure 1 shows the percentage of "4" and "5" ratings (indicating that the household's needs are met) versus the share of "1" and "2" ratings (suggesting that the household's needs are unmet) among invitation respondents. The following had the most frequently reported "4" or "5" ratings and highest averages:

- Community/neighborhood parks (with an average rating of 4.0, 79 percent of respondents provided a rating of 4 or 5)
- Recreation center/fitness facilities (3.9 average; 70 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Overall facilities/services provided by WRPRD (3.8 average; 72 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Trails/access to Greenbelt areas (3.8 average; 67 percent rated 4 or 5)

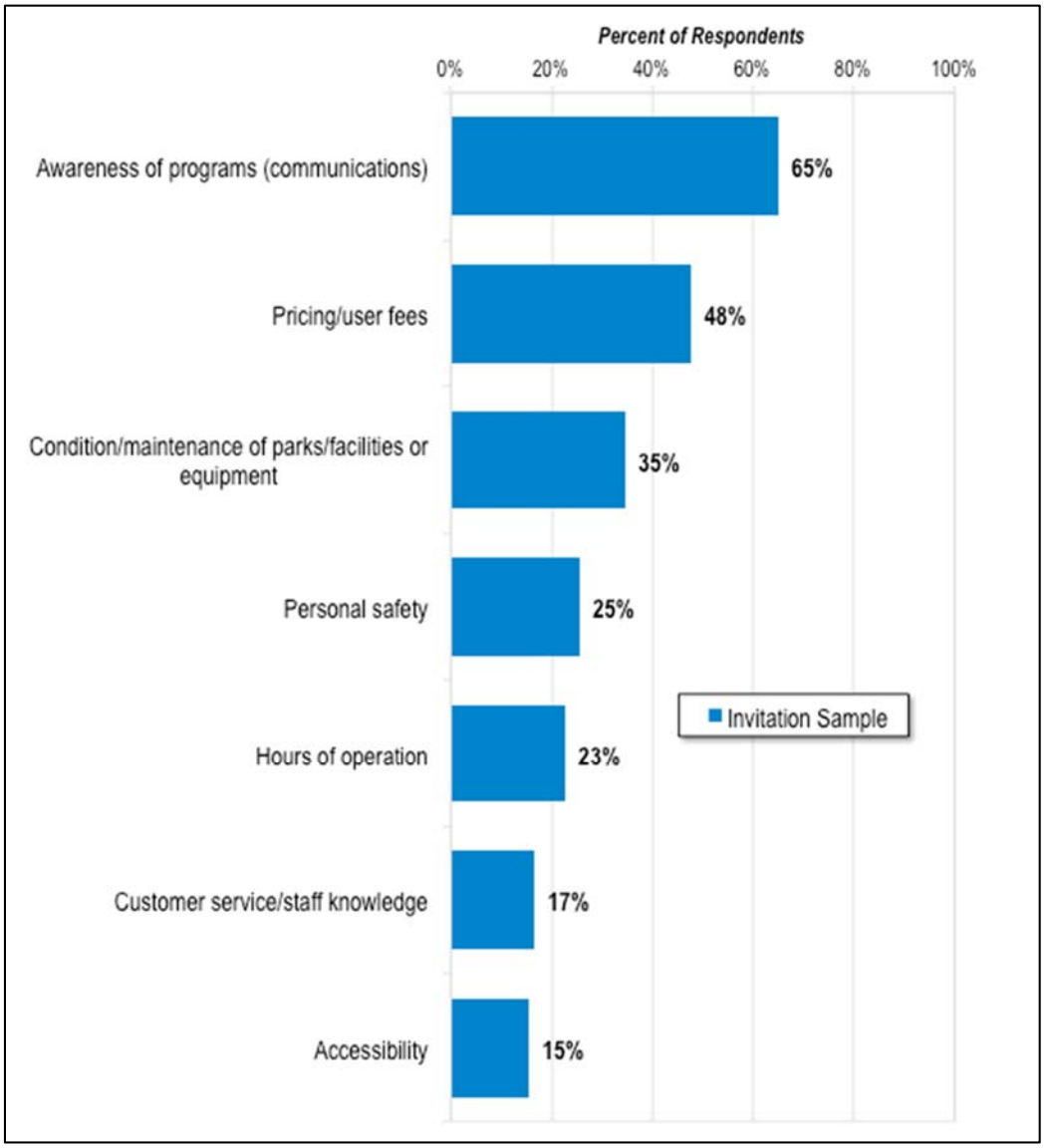
Figure 1: Degree to Which WRPRD Facilities/Services are Meeting Household Needs



Improvements that Would Increase Use of Facilities

Respondents were asked to select the three most important areas that, if addressed by the City, would increase their use of parks and recreation facilities. ***Figure 2*** to follow shows the percentage of invitation sample respondents who selected each area as one of their three choices. *The responses clearly indicate that attention to program awareness and pricing/fees would likely result in increased use.*

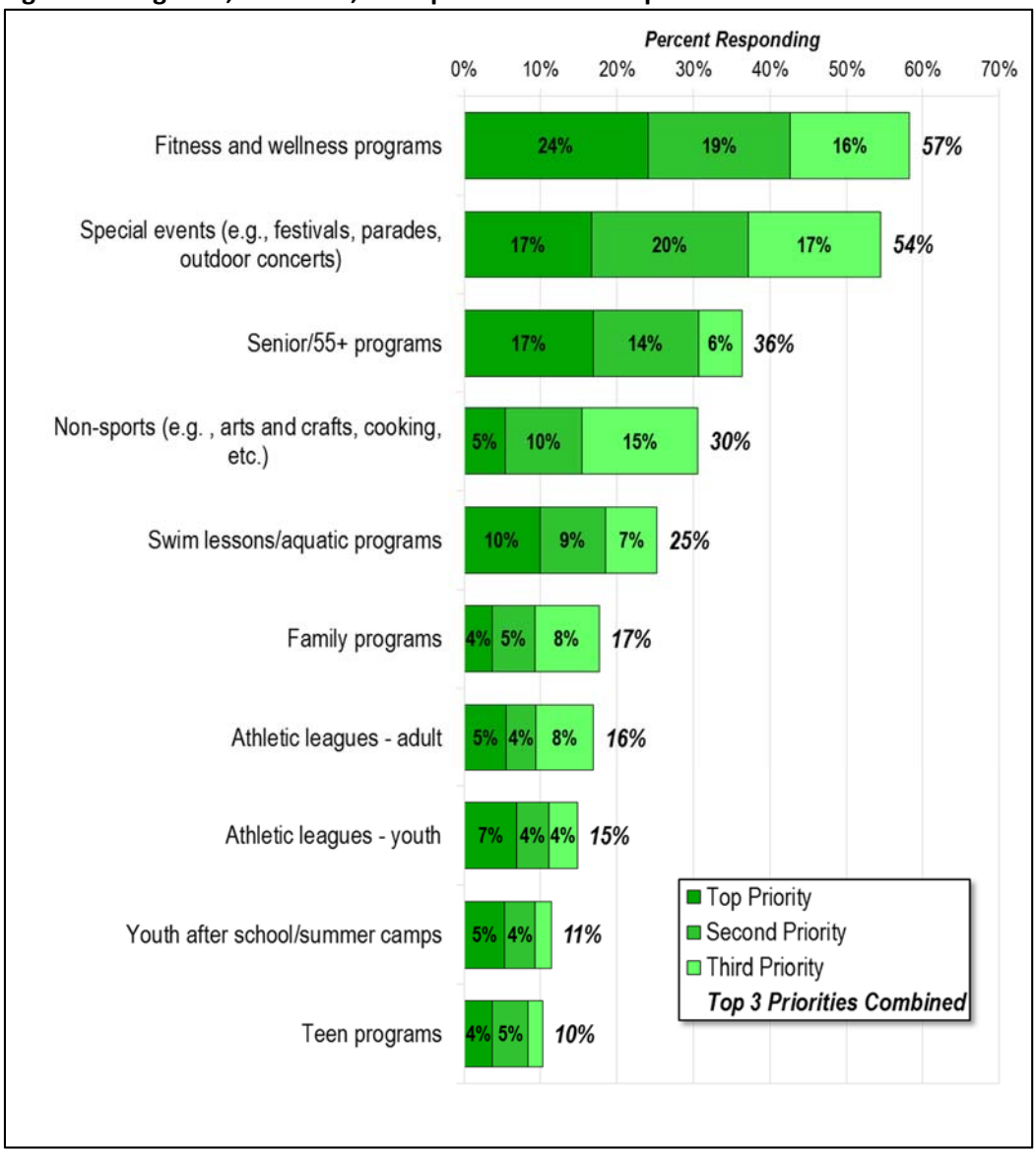
Figure 2: Three Most Important Areas That (if Addressed by City) Would Increase Use of WRPRD Facilities



Top Priorities for Additions, Expansions, or Improvements of Programs, Activities and Special Events

Respondents were asked to indicate their top three priorities for additions, expansions, or improvements of parks and recreation **programs and events**. ***Figure 3*** shows the percentage of invitation respondents who reported each program as a first, second, or third priority. ***Figure 3*** also shows the combined ranking of each value—in other words, the percentage of respondents who included the category as one of their top three priorities. *This information can help guide funding and program offering decisions for the future, and indicates a meaningful level of interest in adding fitness/wellness and special events to program offerings.*

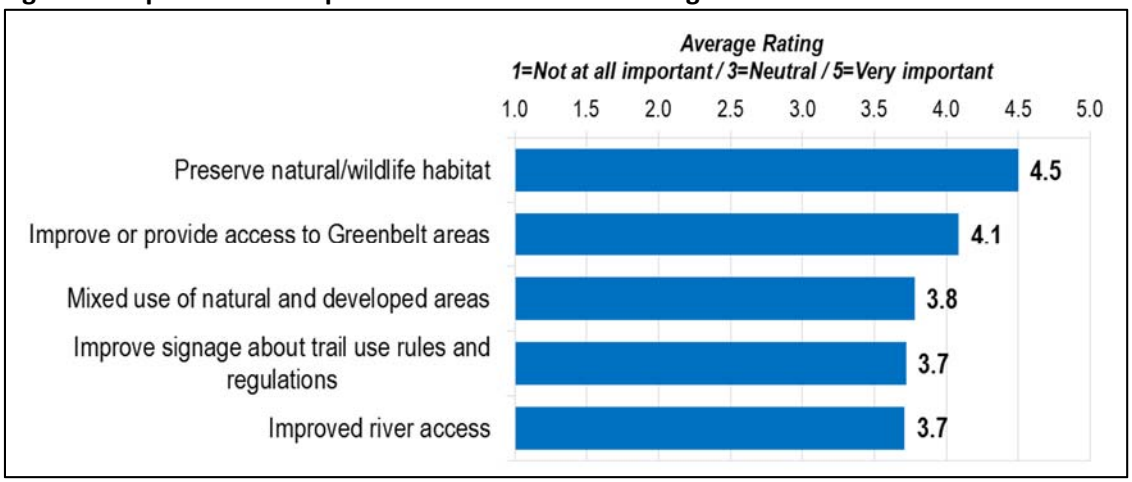
Figure 3: Programs, Activities, and Special Events – Top Three Priorities



Wheat Ridge Greenbelt

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of potential improvements to the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 meaning "not at all important" and 5 meaning "very important." ***Figure 4*** shows the percent of "4" and "5" ratings and average ratings respectively for each attribute. All attributes were rated to be highly important, with over half of respondents indicating high importance with a "4" and "5" rating for each one. The most important improvement to the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt, according to respondents, was to preserve natural/wildlife habitat, with an average rating of 4.5 and 87 percent of respondents providing a rating of "4" or "5." Improving/providing access to Greenbelt areas was also rated as highly important, with a 4.1 average rating and 72 percent rating 4 or 5.

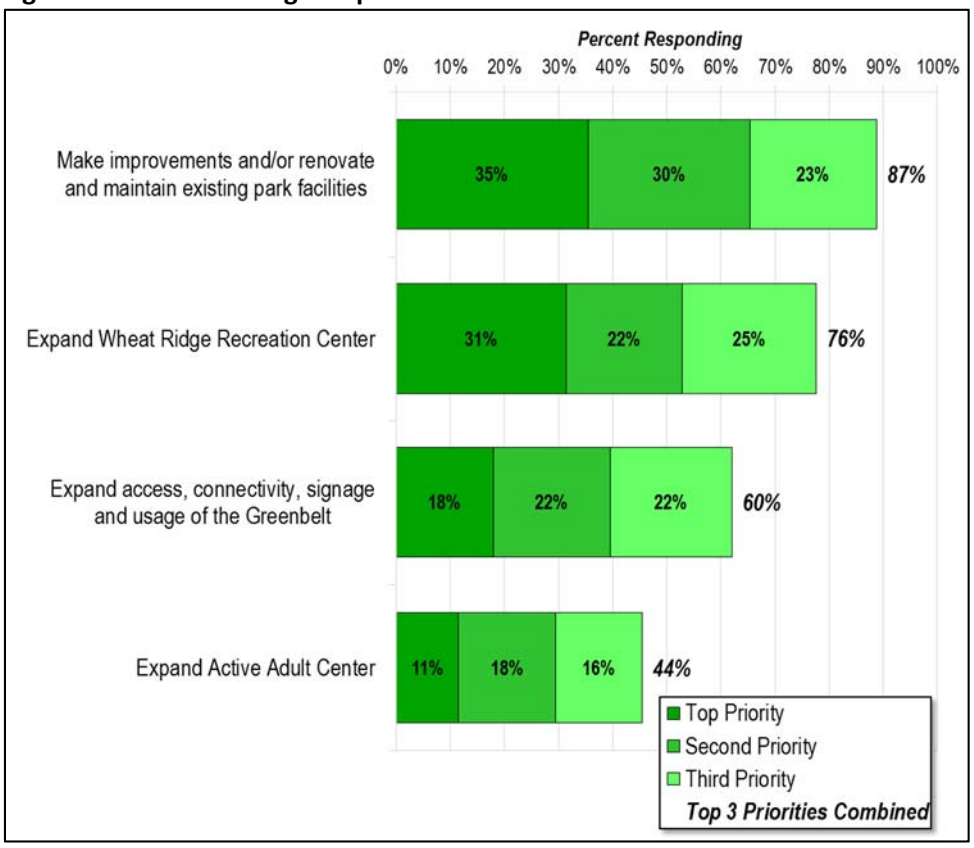
Figure 4: Importance of Improvements to the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt



Priorities for Future Funding

Respondents were asked to indicate their top three priorities where future funding for improvements should be spent. ***Figure 5*** shows the percentage of invitation respondents who reported each value as a first, second, or third priority. It also shows the combined ranking of each value—in other words, the percentage of respondents who included the category as one of their top three priorities. This provides the opportunity to see how respondents prioritize various values in relation to one another. As shown, the highest priority was to make improvements and/or renovate and maintain existing park facilities, with 87 percent of respondents placing this in one of their top three priority spots. Park improvements and renovations also had the largest share of respondents reporting this as their top priority (35%). Expanding the Wheat Ridge Recreation Center was also considered to be a high priority, with 76 percent of respondents identifying this as one of their top priorities and 31 percent ranking recreation center expansion as their top priority. Somewhat smaller shares of respondents ranked expanding access/connectivity/signage/usage of the Greenbelt (60%) and expanding the Active Adult Center (44%) in their top three priorities.

Figure 5: Future Funding – Top Three Priorities



Summary of All Public Input

The public input process and community survey produced a large volume of data and a number of key findings that include the following:

- The most important Park and Recreation issues on which the City should focus are: maintaining and improving/expanding existing facilities (Recreation Center, Active Adult Center), improving access to (and use of) the Greenbelt, and improving communication and marketing of facilities programs and services.
- Current parks and facilities are of high importance to the community and accomplish good to excellent results in satisfying the City's needs. However, there is significant expressed desire to implement improvements to selected parks and facilities (Anderson, Prospect, Recreation Center, and Active Adult Center) all of which are experiencing capacity pressures or beginning to show age/wear from heavy use.
- The main reasons respondents indicated that they would increase their use of facilities or programs were: 1) improved communication about programs or facilities, and 2) price/user fees.
- The Greenbelt has been identified as a significant and valuable asset to the community. While protecting and preserving the Greenbelt's natural features is deemed important, gaining additional access points and the development of expanded uses such as access to Clear Creek and some potential commercial development are also desired.

D. Wheat Ridge Community Demographics

The City of Wheat Ridge encompasses approximately nine square miles and is home to about 31,000 residents. The City's Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the management of 21 parks, 300 acres of open space, 3 recreation centers, and one outdoor pool. Popular amenities in the City include a 70,000 square foot recreation center with a variety of programs and activities, and the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt, which connects to the Clear Creek Trail.

The demographics provided below for the city are provided by Environmental Services Research institute, (ESRI,) Business Analyst Forecasts based on the 2010 US Census Bureau Data with estimates for 2014.

Table 3: Summary Demographics for the City of Wheat Ridge – 2014

Summary Demographics	
Population	30,780
Number of Households	14,489
Avg. Household Size	2.09
Median Age	44.6
Median Household Income	$44,265

Source: 2010 U.S Census, ESRI Business Analyst estimates for 2014

Population Projections

Table 4 illustrates the population growth trends for Wheat Ridge. The City's population is predicted to increase by an annual rate of .64 percent to 31,785 from 2014 to 2019, approaching its population of 32,700 in 2000 (from 2000 to 2010, the city's population shrank by .8 percent to 30,166). By comparison, the annual growth rate for the State of Colorado from 2014 to 2019 is predicted to be 1.26 percent, and .73 percent for the United States as a whole.

Table 4: Population Projections for Wheat Ridge

US Census (2000 and 2010) and ESRI Projections	
2000 Population	32,700
2010 Population	30,166
2014 Estimated	30,780
2019 Projected	31,785

Source: U.S. Census and ESRI Business Information Solutions.

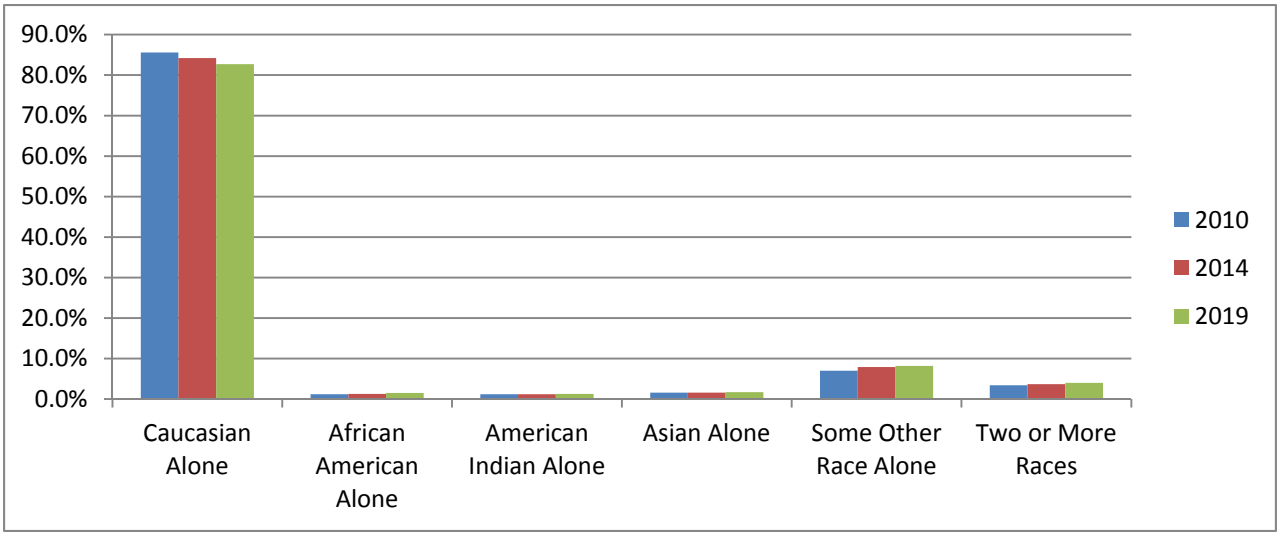
Race/Ethnicity

Figure 6 reflects the racial/ethnic population distribution for the City of Wheat Ridge. The city has a significant Caucasian population at 84.2 percent in 2014. This population has declined slightly from 2010 (85.6%) and is expected to continue a slight decline to 82.7 percent by 2019.

- Hispanic origin can be viewed as the heritage, nationality, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person's parents or ancestors before arriving in the United States. People who identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be any race.
- Hispanic origin provides a separate look at the population, irrespective of race. The Hispanic origin population in Wheat Ridge (calculated as a percentage across all race categories) is significant (23.3 percent in 2014 and expected to grow to 26 percent in 2019).
- The African American, American Indian, and Asian populations in Wheat Ridge are each under 2 percent of the total population and are not expected to grow significantly by 2019.
- The census data indicates the presence of a variety of ethnicities/racial origins in Wheat Ridge (Some Other Race Alone and Two or More Races) and that this diversity is expected to grow slightly into 2019 (from 10.4 percent in 2010 to 12.2 percent in 2019).

Influencing Trend
Multiculturalism
Our country is becoming increasingly racially and ethnically diverse. In May 2012, the U.S. Census Bureau announced that non-white babies now account for the majority of births in the United States. As the recreation field continues to function within a more diverse society, race and ethnicity will become increasingly important in every aspect of the profession requiring understanding of cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds.

Figure 6: Ethnicity Statistics (2010 - 2019)

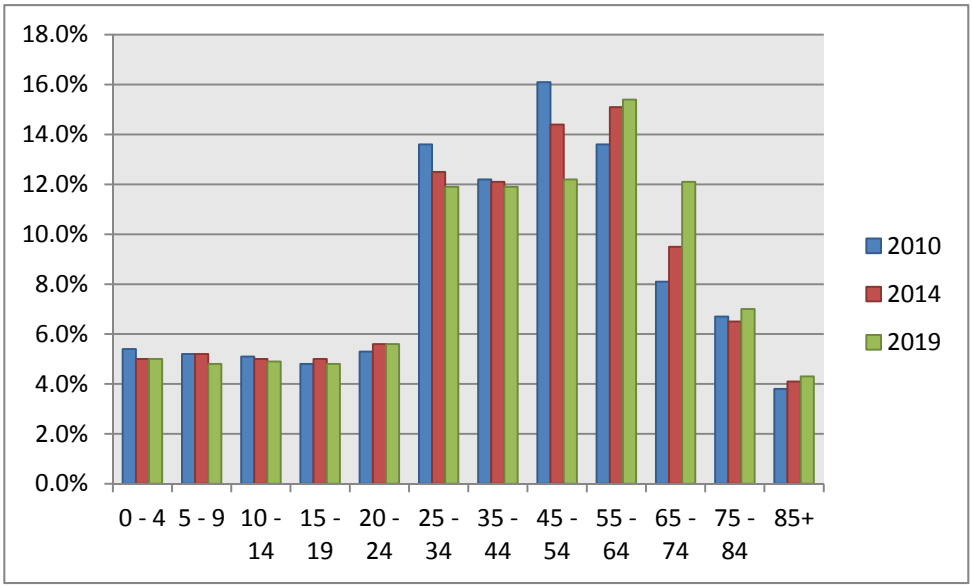


Source: 2010 U.S. Census; 2014 estimates and 2019 forecast provided by ESRI Business Information Solutions.

Age Distribution

A comparison of the estimated population break down by age for Wheat Ridge from 2010 to 2019 is shown in ***Figure 7.***

Figure 7: Breakdown by Age for the Years 2010, 2014, and 2019



Source: 2010 U.S. Census; 2014 estimates and 2019 forecast provided by ESRI Business Information Solution.

In general, from 2010 to 2019, the 25-54 age cohort is expected to shrink significantly, and the senior population is expected to grow significantly.

- The 25-54 age cohort is predicted to continue the decline reported since 2010, resulting in a 6% drop in percentage of population from 2010-2019, from 41.9% to 36% of the Wheat Ridge population. At the same time, the City's senior population is predicted to continue to increase by close to seven percent for the same time period (from 32.2% to 38.8% of the population), with the greatest growth in the 55-74 age cohort at a 5.8% growth rate to 27.5% of the Wheat Ridge population.

Influencing Trend

Adult – The Baby Boomers - Planning for the Demographic Shift

Baby Boomers are defined as individuals born between 1946 and 1964, as stated in Leisure Programming for Baby Boomers. They are a generation that consists of nearly 76 million Americans. In 2011, this influential population began its transition out of the workforce. As Baby Boomers enter retirement, they will be looking for opportunities in fitness, sports, outdoors, arts and cultural events, and other activities that suit their lifestyles. With their varied life experiences, values, and expectations, Baby Boomers are predicted to redefine the meaning of recreation and leisure programming for mature adults.

Household Information

As reflected in ***Table 5,*** in 2014 Wheat Ridge has 15,223 housing units with a 47.2% percent owner-occupied housing rate, compared to a 48 percent renter-occupied rate. (The lesser number of households reflected in previous graph is equal to the total housing units less the vacancy rate.)

Table 5: City of Wheat Ridge Housing Statistics

	2000	2010	2014	2019
Total housing units	14,849	14,868	15,223	15,772
Percent owner occupied	53.2%	51.3%	47.2%	47.3%
Percent renter occupied	44.3%	42.7%	48.0%	48.5%
Percent vacant	2.5%	6.0%	4.8%	4.2%

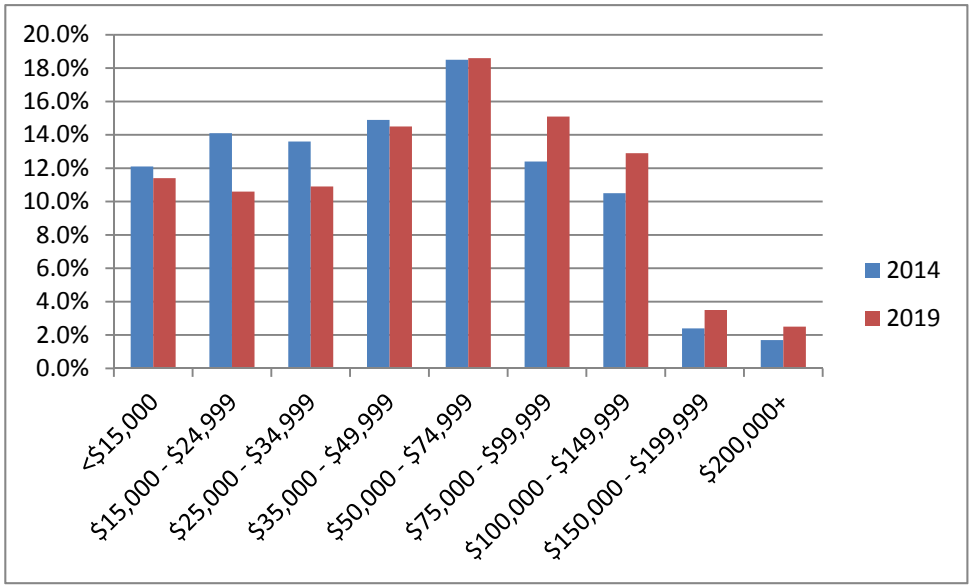
Source: 2010 U.S. Census; 2014 estimates and 2019 forecasts provided by ESRI Business Information Solutions.

Household Income

The estimated 2014 median household income for Wheat Ridge residents is $44,265, and it is expected to grow to $52,443 by 2019. ***Figure 8*** illustrates the full income distribution estimated for the City in 2014 and projected for 2019.

- Eighteen-point-five percent (18.5%) of residents have an income in the $50,000 – $74,990 range followed by 14.9% at $35,000 – $49,000, and 14.1% in the $15,000 to $24,999 range
- Resident income levels in the $75,000 – $149,999 range are predicted to jump from 23% to 28% in 2019.

Figure 8: Annual Household Income Distribution Comparison (2014 - 2019)



Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions, 2014.

Demographic Trends in Recreation

Adult – The Baby Boomers: Planning for the Demographic Shift
Baby Boomers are defined as individuals born between 1946 and 1964, as stated in Leisure Programming for Baby Boomers. In the NPRA July 2012 issue of *Parks and Recreation* magazine, Emilyn Sheffield, Professor of Recreation and Parks Management at the California State University, at Chico, wrote an article titled, "Five Trends Shaping Tomorrow Today." This article indicated that Baby Boomers are driving the aging of America with Boomers and seniors over 65 composing about 39 percent of the nation's population.[1]

> The Wheat Ridge demographic profile indicates that 29.5% of the current population falls within the Baby Boomer age range (those approximately 45-64 years of age).

As Boomers matured and moved into the workplace, they took their desire for exercise and fitness with them. Now as the oldest Boomers are nearing 65, park and recreation professionals are faced with new approaches to provide both passive and active programming for older adults. Boomers are second only to Gen Y/Millennials (born between 1980 and 1999) in participation in fitness and outdoor sports.[2]

Jeffrey Ziegler, a past president of the Arizona Parks and Recreation Association identified "Boomer Basics" in his article, "*Recreating retirement: how will baby boomers reshape leisure in their 60s*?" Highlights are summarized below.

Boomer Basics:
Boomers are known to work hard, play hard, and spend hard. Boomers typically respond that they feel 10 years younger than their chronological age. Their nostalgic mindset keeps Boomers returning to the sights and sounds of their 1960s youth culture. Because Boomers in general have a high education level, they will likely continue to pursue education as adults and into retirement.

Boomers will look to recreation professionals to give them opportunities to enjoy many life-long hobbies and sports. When programming for this age group, a customized experience to cater to the need for self-fulfillment, healthy pleasure, nostalgic youthfulness, and individual escapes will be important.

Boomers will reinvent what being a 65-year-old means. Parks and recreation agencies that do not plan for Boomers carrying on in retirement with the same hectic pace they have lived during their years in employment will be left behind. Things to consider when planning for the demographic shift:

- Boomer characteristics
- What drives Boomers?
- Marketing to Boomers
- Arts and entertainment
- Passive and active fitness trends
- Outdoor recreation/adventure programs
- Travel programs

[1] Emilyn Sheffield, "Five Trends Shaping Tomorrow Today," *Parks and Recreation*, July 2012 p. 16-17.
[2] 2012 Participation Report, Physical Activity Council, 2012.

Youth – Planning for the Future
Emilyn Sheffield also commented on future youth programming. As of the 2010 Census, the youth group under age 18 forms about a quarter of the U.S. population, and this percentage is at an all-time low. Nearly half of this population group is ethnically diverse, and 25 percent is Hispanic. Wheat Ridge youth demographics are very similar to national data.

Recreational Preferences among Ethnic/Racial Groups
Nation-wide participation in outdoor sports in 2012 was highest among Caucasians in all age groups and lowest among African-Americans, according to the 2013 "Outdoor Recreation Participation Report."

Multiculturalism
Our country is becoming increasingly racially and ethnically diverse. In May 2012, the U.S. Census Bureau announced that non-white babies now account for the majority of births in the United States. "This is an important tipping point," said William H. Frey the senior demographer at the Brookings Institution, describing the shift as a, "transformation from a mostly white Baby Boomer culture to the more globalized, multi-ethnic country that we are becoming." Cultural and ethnic diversity adds a unique flavor to communities expressed through distinct neighborhoods; multicultural learning environments; and restaurants, places of worship, museums, and nightlife.[3]

> The Wheat Ridge demographic profile indicates that more than 23 percent of the population is of Hispanic origin (any race), one percent is African-American, and one percent is Asian.

- ***Outdoor Participation Varies by Ethnicity:*** Participation in outdoor activities is higher among Caucasians than any other ethnicity and lowest among African Americans in nearly all age groups.
- ***Minority Youth – More Focused on School:*** Minority youth participants cite school work as the top reason they don't get out more often – a barrier they cite more prominently than Caucasian youth.
- ***Hispanics – Looking for Nearby Outdoor Recreation:*** Hispanic participants and nonparticipants alike cite a lack of access to nearby places to participate in outdoor activities as a barrier to participation more often than other ethnicities.

Multiculturalism and Marketing
Today the marketplace for consumers has dramatically evolved in the United States from a largely Anglo demographic, to the reality that the United States has shifted to a large minority consumer base known as "new majority."

The San Jose Group, a consortium of marketing communications companies specializing in reaching Hispanic and non-Hispanic markets of the United States, suggests that today's multicultural population of the United States, or the "new majority," is 107.6 million, which translates to about 35.1 percent of the country's total population. The United States' multicultural population alone could essentially be the 12th largest country in the world.[4] Parks and recreation trends in marketing leisure services continue to emerge and should be taken into consideration in all planning efforts, as different cultures respond differently to marketing techniques.

[3] Baldwin Ellis, "The Effects of Culture & Diversity on America," http://www.ehow.com/facts_5512569_effects-culture-diversity-america.html, accessed on Sept. 20, 2012.
[4] "SJG Multicultural Facts & Trends," San Jose Group, http://blog.thesanjosegroup.com/?p=275, posted October 25, 2010.

Demographic Trend Analysis Summary – Impacts on Wheat Ridge

Key demographic trends used in this plan, and to reference for future planning efforts of the City of Wheat Ridge Parks and Recreation Department, indicate that due to the "Baby Boomer" impact there is a need to continue to prepare for expanding adult and senior programming opportunities in the future. The need for youth programming will continue as younger families will eventually replace the older population, and multicultural needs will influence the nature and character of future programming. The process for determining the need for new facilities must also take into account these influencing trends.

The highest ranking age cohort in the City of Wheat Ridge is 55-64 (15.1% of the population) followed by the 45-54 (14.4%) and 25-34 (12.5%) cohorts. Additionally, the 65 -74 cohort is expected to grow from 8.1% in 2010 to 12.1% in 2019. Planning for the next ten years suggests a growing demand for programs and services for Baby Boomers and seniors and the need to program for multicultural interests.

E. Park and Recreation Services – Influencing Trends

It is a challenge for parks and recreation departments to continue to understand and respond to the changing recreation interests of serviced populations. In this fast-paced society, it is important to stay on top of current trends impacting outdoor and nature-based recreation. The following information highlights relevant local, regional, and national outdoor recreation trends from various sources that may influence the Wheat Ridge Parks and Recreation for the next ten years.

- There is an increasing trend toward indoor leisure and therapeutic pools. Additional amenities such as "spray or splash pads" are becoming increasingly popular as well.
- Some of the top ten athletic activities ranked by total participation include: exercise walking, swimming, exercising with equipment, camping, and bicycle riding.
- Nationally, rates of obesity continue to increase.
- Fitness, educational, and teen programs are listed at the top of the 10 programs that parks and recreation agencies are planning to add within the next three years.
- Mobile marketing (i.e. social networking) is a growing trend. Web-based niche marketing tools are becoming more popular for agencies to use as a means of marketing programs and services.
- A national trend in the delivery of parks and recreation systems reflects more partnerships and contractual agreements reaching out to the edges of the community to support specialized services.
- More agencies are creating and implementing cost recovery policies.
- The majority of Americans agree that preserving undeveloped land for outdoor recreation is important. A large percentage of outdoor participants also believe that developing local parks and hiking and walking trails is important and that there should be more outdoor education and activities during the school day.

Facilities Trends

According to *Recreation Management* magazine's "2014 State of the Industry Report,"[5] national trends show an increased user-base of recreation facilities (private and public). Additionally, parks and recreation providers responding to the survey indicated an average age of 23.8 years for their community recreation facilities. To meet that growing need, a majority of the parks and recreation survey respondents (69%) reported that they have plans to build new facilities or make additions or renovations to their existing facilities over the next three years. Of that group, 28.9 percent said they plan to add to their existing facilities. More than half (52.2%) are planning renovations to existing facilities.

The current national trend is toward "one-stop" indoor recreation facilities to serve all ages. Large, multi-purpose regional centers help increase cost recovery, promote retention, and encourage cross-use. Agencies across the U.S. are increasing revenue production and cost recovery. Multi-use facilities verses specialized space is a trend, offering programming opportunities as well as free-play opportunities. "One stop" facilities attract young families, teens, and adults of all ages. The most commonly found features include splash play areas, trails, dog parks, park structures (shelters and restroom buildings); playgrounds; disc golf courses, open spaces (gardens, natural areas), synthetic turf sports fields; and concession areas.

Aquatics/Water Recreation Trends

According to the National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA), swimming ranked third nation-wide in terms of participation in 2012.Swimming for fitness is the top aspirational activity for "inactives" in six of eight age categories in the SFIA "2013 Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report," representing a significant opportunity to engage inactive populations. Nationally, there is an increasing trend toward indoor leisure and therapeutic pools. Additional indoor and outdoor amenities like "spray or splash pads" are becoming increasingly popular as well. In some cities and counties, these spray and splash pads are popular in the summer months and are converted into ice rinks in the winter.

Fitness Programming

There have been many changes in fitness programs in the last fifteen years. What clients wanted in 2000 is not necessarily what they want today. The American College of Sports Medicine's (ACSM's) *Health and Fitness Journal* has conducted an annual survey since 2007 to determine trends that would help create a standard for health and fitness programming. ***Table 6*** shows survey results that focus on trends in the commercial, corporate, clinical, and community health and fitness industry. Some trends first identified in 2007 have stayed near the top of the list year after year, while others came and went in popularity. Zumba made a brief appearance on the top 10 in 2012, but has fallen off of the top 20 in 2014. Body weight training appeared as a developing trend in 2014 and is projected to stay strong in 2015, as is high-intensity interval training. Yoga is regaining popularity after falling out of the top 20 in 2009 and staying out of the top 10 until 2014. Fitness programs for older adults will remain strong in 2014 and 2015.

[5] Emily Tipping, "2014 State of the Industry Report, State of the Managed Recreation Industry," *Recreation Management*, June 2014.

Table 6: Top 10 Worldwide Fitness Trends for 2007 and Predicted Trends for 2015

2007	Trends for 2015
1. Children and obesity	1. Body weight training
2. Special fitness programs for older adults	2. High-intensity interval training
3. Educated and experienced fitness professionals	3. Educated and experienced fitness professionals
4. Functional fitness	4. Strength training
5. Core training	5. Personal training
6. Strength training	6. Exercise and weight loss
7. Personal training	7. Yoga
8. Mind/Body Exercise	8. Fitness programs for older adults
9. Exercise and weight loss	9. Functional fitness
10. Outcome measurements	10. Group personal training

Source: American College of Sport Medicine

General Programming

One of the most common concerns in the recreation industry is creating innovative programming to draw participants into facilities and services. Once in, participants recognize that the benefits are endless. According to *Recreation Management* magazine's "2014 State of the Industry Report," the most common programs, offered by survey respondents, include holiday events and other special events (78.1%), youth sports teams (69.1%), day camps and summer camps (64.7%), fitness programs (61.4%) adult sports teams (61.3%), arts and crafts (60.9%), educational programs (60.5%), sports tournaments and races (56.8%), programs for active older adults (55.2%), and festivals and concerts (53.2%).

The report also suggested more than 3 in 10 (35.7%) respondents indicated that they are planning to *add* additional programs at their facilities over the next three years. The most common types of programming they are planning to add include:

1. Programming for active older adults (up from No. 5 on the 2013 survey)
2. Fitness programs (up from No. 3)
3. Teen programming (down from No. 2)
4. Adult sports teams (did not appear in 2013)
5. Holiday events and other special events (up from No. 6)
6. Mind-body/balance programs – yoga, tai chi, Pilates or martial arts (up from No. 7)
7. Environmental education (down from No. 1)
8. Educational programs (down from No. 4)
9. Festivals and concerts (up from No. 10)
10. Sports tournaments or races (down from No. 8)

Note: 8 of the top 10 programs scored high in the Wheat Ridge mailed survey.

Festivals and Events

In the context of urban development, from the early 1980s, there has been a process that can be characterized as "festivalization," which has been linked to the economic restructuring of towns and cities, and the drive to develop communities as large-scale platforms for the creation and consumption of "cultural experience."

The success rate for festivals should not be evaluated simplistically solely on the basis of profit (sales), prestige (media profile), size (numbers of events), etc. Research by the European Festival Research Project (EFRP)[6] indicates that there is evidence of local and city government supporting and even initiating and managing particular festivals themselves to achieve local or regional economic objectives, often defined very narrowly (sales, jobs, and tourists). There are also a growing number of smaller more local community-based festivals and events in communities, most often supported by local councils that have been spawned partly as a reaction to larger festivals that have become prime economic-drivers. These community-based festivals often will re-claim cultural ground based on their social, educational, and participative value. For more information on the values of festivals and events, see the CRC Sustainable Tourism research guide on this topic.

[6] EFRP is an international consortium seeking to understand the current explosion of festivals and its implications and perspective, http://www.efa-aef.eu/en/activities/efrp/, accessed October 2012.

In 2014, festivals are growing in popularity as economic drivers and urban brand builders. Chad Kaydo describes the phenomenon in the January 2014 issues of *Governing* magazine: "Municipal officials and entrepreneurs see the power of cultural festivals, innovation-focused business conferences and the like as a way to spur short-term tourism while shaping an image of the host city as a cool, dynamic location where companies and citizens in modern, creative industries can thrive." Examples of successful festivals include:

- South by Southwest (SXSW) – this annual music, film, and digital conference and festival in Austin, Texas, is a leading example. Launched in 1987, the festival's economic impact has grown steadily over recent years. In 2007, it netted $95 million for Austin's economy. In 2013, the event topped $218 million.
- Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in California – this two-week cultural event draws big-name bands, music fans, and marketers, attracting 80,000 people per day.
- First City Festival in Monterey, California – Private producer, *Goldenvoice*, launched this smaller music event in August 2013 with marketing support from the Monterey County Convention and Visitors Bureau, drawing on the city's history as host of the Monterey Jazz Festival. Adding carnival rides and local art, furniture and clothing vendors to the live music performances, the event drew 11,000 attendees each of its two days.

Healthy Lifestyle

Statewide Trends: Health and Obesity

In an effort to educate Americans and encourage them to take steps toward a healthier future, the United Health Foundation (UHF) annually presents America's Health Rankings: A Call to Action for Individuals & Their Communities.

The UHF has tracked the health of the nation for the past 22 years, providing a unique, comprehensive perspective on how the nation (and each state) measures up. Recent editions of the Rankings suggest that our nation is extremely adept at treating illness and disease. However, Americans are struggling to change unhealthy behaviors such as smoking and obesity, which cause many of these diseases. Obesity continues to be one of the fastest growing health issues in our nation, and America is spending billions in direct health care costs associated with poor diet and physical inactivity.

Colorado, which has long claimed bragging rights as the leanest state in the nation, received some bad news in recent years. While, the adult obesity rate of 20 percent gives Colorado a number one ranking in the country for low obesity, the Colorado 2013 Health Report Card found that Colorado's obesity rate has doubled in less than 20 years.[7] It also found that childhood obesity levels in Colorado for children aged 10-17 has fallen from 14.2 percent in 2007 to 10.9 percent in 2012.[8] However, one third of Colorado children do not participate in regular physical activity, leading Colorado to a 24th ranking in the nation for childhood vigorous physical activity. Colorado's poor performance for this and other child health indicators (earning Colorado a 'C' rating for "Healthy Beginnings" and "Healthy Childhood") does not bode well for healthy adults in the future.

[7]http://www.coloradohealth.org/yellow.aspx?id=6562.

[8]http://www.coloradohealth.org/uploadedFiles/Publications/HealthReportCard2013/HRC%20Physical%20Activity_Behind%20the%20Numbers_Final.pdf.

The State of Colorado, along with non-profit partners such as the Colorado Health Foundation and Live Well Colorado, has invested in numerous programs aimed at countering the obesity epidemic. Efforts are directed at healthy eating and combating sedentary lifestyles. Policy makers want Colorado to be the first state in the country to start reducing obesity levels.

Natural Environments and Open Space

Nature Programming

Noted as early as 2003 in *Recreation Management* magazine, park agencies have been seeing an increase in interest in environmental-oriented "back to nature" programs. In 2007, the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) sent out a survey to member agencies in order to learn more about the programs and facilities that public park and recreation agencies provide to connect children and their families with nature.[9] A summary of the results follow:

- Sixty-eight percent (68%) of public parks and recreation agencies offer nature-based programming, and 61% have nature-based facilities.
- The most common programs include nature hikes, nature-oriented arts and crafts, fishing-related events, and nature-based education in cooperation with local schools.
- When asked to describe the elements that directly contribute to their most successful programs, agencies listed staff training as most important followed by program content and number of staff/staff training.
- When asked what resources would be needed most to expand programming, additional staff was most important followed by funding.
- Of the agencies that do not currently offer nature-based programming, 90 percent indicated that they want to in the future. Additional staff and funding were again the most important resources these agencies would need going forward.
- The most common facilities include: nature parks/preserves, self-guided nature trails, outdoor classrooms, and nature centers.
- When asked to describe the elements that directly contribute to their most successful facilities, agencies listed funding as most important followed by presence of wildlife and community support.

In his book Last Child in the Woods: Saving Children from Nature Deficit Disorder,[10] Richard Louv introduced the concept of the restorative qualities of being out in nature, for both children and adults. This concept, and research in support of it, has led to a growing movement promoting connections with nature in daily life. One manifestation of this is the development of Nature Explore Classrooms in parks. Nature Explore[11] is a collaborative program of the Arbor Day Foundation and the non-profit organization, Dimensions Educational Research Foundation, with a mission of helping children and families develop a profound engagement with the natural world, where nature is an integral, joyful part of children's daily learning. Nature Explore works to support efforts to connect children with nature.

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[9] National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), "NRPA Completes Agency Survey Regarding Children and Nature," http://www.narrp.org/assets/Library/Children_in_Nature/ nrpa_survey_regarding_children_and_nature_2007.pdf, April 2007.

[10] Richard Louv, Last Child in the Woods: Saving Children from Nature Deficit Disorder, Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 2005.

[11] "What is the Nature Explore Program," http://www.arborday.org/explore/documents/ NE_FAQ_002.pdf, accessed on August 12, 2012.

Economic and Health Benefits of Parks

There are numerous economic and health benefits of parks, including the following:

- Trails, parks, and playgrounds are among the five most important community amenities considered when selecting a home.
- Research from the University of Illinois shows that trees, parks, and green spaces have a profound impact on people's health and mental outlook.[12]
- U.S. Forest Service research indicates that when the economic benefits produced by trees are assessed, the total value can be two to six times the cost for tree planting and care.[13]
- Fifty percent of Americans regard outdoor activities as their main source of exercise.[14]

> *"There's a direct link between a lack of exposure to nature and higher rates of attention-deficit disorder, obesity, and depression. In essence, parks and recreation agencies can and are becoming the 'preferred provider' for offering this preventative healthcare."*
>
> – **Fran P. Mainella**, former director of the National Park Service and Instructor at Clemson University.

The Trust for Public Land has published a report titled: *"The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space."* The report makes the following observations about the health, economic, environmental, and social benefits of parks and open space[15]:

- Physical activity makes people healthier.
- Physical activity increases with access to parks.
- Contact with the natural world improves physical and physiological health.
- Residential and commercial property values increase.
- Value is added to community and economic development sustainability.
- Benefits of tourism are enhanced.
- Trees are effective in improving air quality and act as natural air conditioners.
- Trees assist with storm water control and erosion.
- Crime and juvenile delinquency are reduced.
- Recreational opportunities for all ages are provided.
- Stable neighborhoods and strong communities are created.

Riparian and Watershed Best Practices

The ability to detect trends and monitor attributes in watershed and/or riparian areas allows planners opportunities to evaluate the effectiveness of their management plan. By monitoring their own trends, Planners can also identify changes in resource conditions that are the result of pressures beyond their control. Trend detection requires a commitment to long-term monitoring of riparian areas and vegetation attributes.

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[12] F.E. Kuo, "Environment and Crime in the Inner City: Does Vegetation Reduce Crime?" *Environment and Behavior*, Volume 33, pp 343-367.

[13] Nowak, David J., "Benefits of Community Trees," (Brooklyn Trees, USDA Forest Service General Technical Report, in review).

[14] "Outdoor Recreation Participation Report 2010," Outdoor Foundation, 2010.

[15] Paul M. Sherer, *"The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space,"* The Trust for Public Land, San Francisco, CA, 2006.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency, (EPA) suggests the following steps to building an effective watershed management plan. See Water.epa.gov[16] for more information from the EPA.

- Build partnerships
- Characterize the watershed
- Set goals and identify solutions
- Design and implementation program
- Implement the watershed plan
- Measure progress and make adjustments

Trails and Health

That a connected system of trails increases the level of physical activity in a community has been scientifically demonstrated through the Trails for Health initiative of the CDC.[17] Trails can provide a wide variety of opportunities for being physically active, such as walking/running/hiking, rollerblading, wheelchair recreation, bicycling, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, fishing, hunting, and horseback riding. Recognizing that active use of trails for positive health outcomes is an excellent way to encourage people to adopt healthy lifestyle changes, American Trails has launched a "Health and Trails" resource section in its website: www/americantrails.org/resources/benefits/.

The health benefits are equally as high for trails in urban neighborhoods as for those in state or national parks. A trail in the neighborhood, creating a "linear park," makes it easier for people to incorporate exercise into their daily routines, whether for recreation or non-motorized transportation. Urban trails need to connect people to places they want to go, such as schools, transit centers, businesses, and neighborhoods.[18]

Sports and Recreation Trends

General Sports and Recreation Trends

The National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) survey on sports participation in 2012[19] found that the top five athletic activities ranked by total participation included: exercise walking, exercising with equipment, swimming, camping, and aerobic exercising. Additionally, the following active, organized, or skill development activities remain popular: hiking, running/jogging, bicycle riding, basketball, golf, and soccer. ***Table 7*** outlines the top twenty sports ranked by total participation in 2012.

[16]"Implement the Watershed Plan – Implement Management Strategies, US Environmental Protection Agency, http://water.epa.gov/type/watersheds/datait/watershedcentral/plan2.cfm

[17] "Guide to Community Preventive Services" Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), http://www.thecommunityguide.org/index.html

[18] "Health Community: What you should know about trail building," National Trails Training Partnership: Health and Fitness, http://www.americantrails.org/resources/health/healthcombuild.html, accessed on May 24, 2013.

[19] 2012 Sport/Recreation Activity Participation," National Sporting Goods Association, 2013, http://www.nsga.org.

Table 7: Top Twenty Sports Ranked by Total Participation (in millions) in 2012

Sport	Total
1. Exercise Walking	102.1
2. Exercising with Equipment	57.7
3. Swimming	48.6
4. Camping (vacation/overnight)	45.2
5. Aerobic Exercising	44.8
6. Hiking	42.2
7. Running/Jogging	40.0
8. Bicycle Riding	39.3
9. Bowling	35.5
10. Workout at Club	35.2
11. Weight Lifting	31.1
12. Fishing (Freshwater)	30.8
13. Wrestling	28.4
14. Basketball	25.6
15. Yoga	22.9
16. Billiards/Pool	21.8
17. Target Shooting	21.7
18. Golf	21.1
19. Hunting with Firearms	19.4
20. Boating, Motor/Power	17.0

Source: NSGA 2012

The Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) produces a yearly report on sports, fitness, and leisure activities in the US. The following findings were highlighted in the 2013 Report[20]:

- Overall participation in sports, fitness, and related physical activities remained relatively steady from 2011 to 2012.
- Fitness Sports had the largest increase in participation (2% increase to 61.1%).
- Racquet Sports participation also increased (1% increase to 12.8 %) but still remains below the 2008 peak rate of 14%.
- Both team (21.6%) and water sports (12.5%) participation increased slightly, while individual (36%) and winter sports (6.6%) participation decreased slightly.
- Outdoor Sports participation remained stable at around 49%.
- Spending on team sports at school and lessons/instruction/sports camp was expected to increase in 2013, as it did in 2011 and 2012.
- Twenty-eight percent (28%) of all Americans are inactive, while 33% are active to a healthy level (engaged in high calorie burning level sport/fitness activities in a frequent basis). Indiana was among the states with the highest activity levels (from 38% to 43.4%).

[20] "2012 Sports, Fitness and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report," Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (renamed Sports and Fitness Industry Association in 2012, http://www.sfia.org/reports/all/

The Ten-year History of Sports Participation Report published by NSGA shows national trends in team sports and individual sports. Overall participation trends indicate a general increase in 2011 for most team sports. However, softball and volleyball show a decrease in participation through 2011. Over the decade individual sports show a dramatic increase in aerobic exercising, exercise walking, exercising with equipment, hiking, kayaking, running/jogging, target shooting, and target shooting with an air gun, tennis, weightlifting and working out at a club.

Table 8 illustrates a ten year change in participation for selected activities including both team sports and individual sports.

Table 8: Ten-Year History of Sports Participation (in millions) 2001-2011

	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009	2011
Aerobic Exercising	24.3	28.0	33.7	34.8	33.2	42.0
Archery (Target)	4.7	3.9	6.8	6.6	7.1	6.3
Backpacking/Wilderness Camping	14.5	13.7	13.3	13.0	12.3	11.6
Baseball	14.9	14.6	14.6	14.0	11.5	12.3
Basketball	28.1	27.9	29.9	24.1	24.4	26.1
Bicycle Riding	39.0	36.3	43.1	37.4	38.1	39.1
Billiards/Pool	32.7	30.5	37.3	29.5	28.2	20.0
Boating, Motor/Power	22.6	24.2	27.5	31.9	24.0	16.7
Bowling	40.3	39.4	45.4	43.5	45.0	34.9
Camping	45.5	51.4	46.0	47.5	50.9	42.8
Dart Throwing	16.9	n/a	n/a	12.1	12.2	9.3
Exercise Walking	71.2	79.5	86.0	89.8	93.4	97.1
Exercising with Equipment	43.0	48.6	54.2	52.9	57.2	55.5
Fishing (Freshwater)	39.1	33.2	37.5	30.8	29.0	28.0
Football (tackle)	8.6	8.7	9.9	9.2	8.9	9.0
Golf	26.6	25.7	24.7	22.7	22.3	20.9
Hiking	26.1	25.0	29.8	28.6	34.0	39.1
Hockey (ice)	.2	1.8	2.4	2.1	3.1	3.0
Hunting w/Bow & Arrow	4.7	5.0	6.6	5.7	6.2	5.1
Hunting with Firearms	19.2	17.7	19.6	19.5	18.8	16.4
In-Line Roller Skating	19.2	16.0	13.1	10.7	7.9	6.1
Kayaking	3.5	4.7	7.6	5.9	4.9	7.1
Mountain Biking (off road)	6.3	8.2	9.2	9.3	8.4	6.0
Muzzle loading	3.0	3.1	4.1	3.6	3.8	3.1
Paintball Games	5.6	7.4	8.0	7.4	6.3	5.3
Running/Jogging	24.5	22.9	29.2	30.4	32.2	38.7
Skateboarding	9.6	9.0	12.0	10.1	8.4	6.6
Skiing (Alpine)	7.7	6.8	6.9	6.4	7.0	6.9
Skiing (Cross Country)	2.3	1.9	1.9	1.7	1.7	2.3
Snowboarding	5.3	6.3	6.0	5.1	6.2	5.1
Soccer	13.9	11.1	14.1	13.8	13.6	13.9
Softball	13.2	11.8	14.1	12.4	11.8	10.4
Swimming	54.8	47.0	58.0	52.3	50.2	46.0
Target Shooting	15.9	17.0	21.9	20.5	19.8	19.6
Target Shooting (Air gun)	2.9	3.8	6.7	6.6	5.2	5.3
Tennis	10.9	9.6	11.1	12.3	10.8	13.1
Volleyball	12.0	10.4	13.2	12.0	10.7	10.1
Water Skiing	5.5	5.5	6.7	5.3	5.2	4.3
Weight Lifting	21.2	25.9	35.5	33.2	34.5	29.1
Workout at Club	26.5	29.5	34.7	36.8	38.3	34.5
Wrestling	3.5	n/a	n/a	2.1	3.0	3.2

Note: Participated more than once (in millions), seven (7) years of age and older.

Source: NSGA 2012

Youth Sports

The 2013 SFIA sports participation report indicates that in 2012, youth (ages 6-12) participation was highest for outdoor (63.1%), team (53.1%), and individual sports (49.8%). Children in this age group have increased interest in camping, while young adults ages 18-24 are becoming more interested in running/jogging.

The NSGA Youth Sports Participation Report from 2001 – 2011 indicates that specific offerings for children's fitness are slowly increasing in health and fitness facilities. Facilities are offering more youth-specific exercise equipment. Individualized youth sports training opportunities are becoming more popular as well. In 2011, in-line roller skating experienced the largest percentage decrease in participation. For youth ages 7 to 17, exercise walking, exercising with equipment, and swimming, followed by overnight/vacation camping had the highest number of participants in 2011.

In 2009, an article in the *Wall Street Journal* observed that, in recent years lacrosse has become one of the country's fastest growing team sports. Participation in high school lacrosse has almost doubled this decade. An estimated 1.2 million Americans over the age of seven played lacrosse in 2009. A 2011 report, "U.S. Trends in Team Sports," finds that Lacrosse and other niche team sports and volleyball are continuing to experience strong growth for youth and adults.[21]

Outdoor Recreation

The Outdoor Foundation releases an annual "Participation in Outdoor Recreation" report. According to the 2013 report, while there continues to be fallout from the recent economic downturn, participation in outdoor recreation outings reached an all-time high in 2012. The foundation reports that the top outdoor activities in 2012 were running, fishing, bicycling, camping, and hiking. Bird watching is also among the favorite outdoor activities by frequency of participation.

The Outdoor Foundation's research brought the following key findings.

Participation in Outdoor Recreation

- ***Return to Nature:*** Nearly 50% of Americans ages six and older participated in outdoor recreation in 2012. That equates to a total of 141.9 million Americans and a net gain of one million outdoor participants.
- ***Top Five Biggest Participation Percentage Increase in Outdoor Activities in the Past three years (2014 Topline Report)****:* Adventure Racing, Triathlon (Off Road), Stand up paddle boarding, Kayak fishing, and Recreational Kayaking.

Youth Participation in Outdoor Recreation

- ***Participation Fairly Steady from 2011****:* However, participation rates dropped among teens ages 13 to 17 (particularly teenage girls) and rose among adults ages 25 to 44.
- ***The Influence of Family:*** Most youth are introduced to outdoor activities by parents, friends, family, and relatives.
- ***Physical education in schools****:* The importance cannot be understated. Among adults ages 18 and older who are current outdoor participants, 75% say they had PE in school between the ages of 6 and 12.

21 "2011 Preview: U.S. Trends in Team Sports, Fall 2011," SMGA, 2011.

Park and Recreation Services Trends – Impact on Wheat Ridge

The nation-wide and general trends outlined here, as well as trends in future years must be taken into account as existing facilities are expanded and improved, as new park sites are built, and as new programs are implemented within these facilities and parks. Specific items of note from the Master Plan research include:

- Current and growing interest in Pickleball.
- Overcrowding at the Wheat Ridge Recreation Center will likely require facility expansion in near future.
- Greenbelt area is a valuable outdoor asset and program resource to meet future needs for connectivity and preservation of natural resources.

- Trend for more walking, running and cycling opportunities will impact future development of trails and facilities.
- Multicultural interests and use trends will need to be taken into account for future facility and program development.
- Continued demand for youth sports will require high level of field maintenance and periodic development of new fields to meet demand.
- Increasing demand for special events and festivals will require time and resources.

Role and Response of Local Government

Collectively, these trends have created profound implications for the way local governments conduct business. Some local governments are now accepting the role of providing preventative health care through parks and recreation services. The following concepts are from the International County/County Management Association.

- Parks and Recreation departments should take the lead in developing communities conducive to active living.
- There is growing support for recreation programs that encourage active living within their community.
- One of the highest priorities is a cohesive system of parks and trails and accessible neighborhood parks.

In summary, the United States of America, its states, and its communities share the enormous task of reducing the health and economic burden of obesity. While numerous programs, policies, and products have been designed to address the problem, there is no magic bullet to make it go away. The role of public parks and recreation as a health promotion and prevention agency has come of age. What matters is refocusing its efforts to insure the health, well-being, and economic prosperity of communities and citizens.

Administration Trends for Recreation and Parks

Municipal parks and recreation structures and delivery systems have changed, and more alternative methods of delivering services are emerging. Certain services are being contracted out, and cooperative agreements with non-profit groups and other public institutions are being developed. Newer partners include the health system, social services, justice system, education, the corporate sector, and community service agencies. These partnerships reflect both a broader interpretation of the mandate of parks and recreation agencies and the increased willingness of other sectors to work together to address community issues. The relationship with health agencies is vital in promoting wellness.

The traditional relationship with education and the sharing of facilities through joint-use agreements is evolving into cooperative planning and programming aimed at addressing youth inactivity levels and community needs.

Listed below are additional administrative national trends:

- Level of subsidy for programs is lessening and more "enterprise" activities are being developed, thereby allowing subsidy to be used where deemed appropriate.
- Information technology allows for better tracking and reporting.
- Pricing is often determined by peak, off-peak, and off-season rates.
- More agencies are partnering with private, public, and non-profit groups.

Agency Accreditation

Parks and Recreation agencies are affirming their competencies and value through accreditation. This is achieved by an agency's commitment to 150 standards.

There are currently 116 agencies around the nation that have received the **Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) accreditation.**

Additional benefits of CAPRA accreditation include:

- Boosts staff morale
- Encourages collaboration
- Improves program outcomes
- Identifies agency and cost efficiencies
- Builds high trust with the public
    - Demonstrates promise of quality
    - Identifies best management practices

Accreditation is a distinguished mark of excellence that affords external recognition of an organization's commitment to quality and improvement.

Accreditation has two fundamental purposes; to ensure quality and to ensure improvement.

The National Recreation and Parks Association administratively sponsors two distinct accreditation programs. The Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Related Professions (COAPRT) approves Academic institutions and ***Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) approves agencies. It*** *is the only national accreditation of parks and recreation agencies, and is a valuable measure of an agency's overall quality of operations, management, and service to the community.*

The Wheat Ridge Parks and Recreation Department is currently and appropriately in the process of pursuing this accreditation.

Funding
According to *Recreation Management* magazine's "2014 State of the Industry Report," survey respondents from parks and recreation departments/districts reporting about their revenues from 2011 through 2013 reveals the beginning of a recovery from the impact of the recession of 2008. From 2011 to 2012, 82.6 percent of respondents reported that their revenues had either stabilized or had increased. This number grew to 84.8 percent of respondents when reporting on the 2012 to 2013 time frame and, by 2015, 95 percent of parks and recreation department respondents are expecting revenues to either increase (49.7%) or remain stable (45.4%).

Marketing by Parks and Recreation Providers
Niche marketing trends have experienced change more frequently than ever before as technology affects the way the public receives information. Web 2.0 tools and now Web 3.0 tools are a trend for agencies to use as a means of marketing programs and services. Popular social media marketing tools include:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- You Tube
- Pinterest
- Instagram
- LinkedIn

Mobile marketing is a trend of the future. Young adults engage in mobile data applications at much higher rates than adults in age brackets 30 and older. Usage rates of mobile applications demonstrate that chronologically across four major age cohorts, Millennials tend to get information more frequently using mobile devices such as smart phones. For example, 95 percent of 18-to-29-year-old cell phone owners send and receive text messages, compared to 82 percent of 30-to-49-year-olds, 57 percent of 50-to-64-year-olds, and 19 percent of 65 and older.

It is also a fact that minority Americans lead the way when it comes to mobile internet access. Nearly two-thirds of African-Americans (64%) and Latinos (63%) are wireless internet users, and minority Americans are significantly more likely to own a cell phone than are their white counterparts (87 percent of Blacks and Hispanics own a cell phone, compared with 80 percent of whites). By 2015, mobile internet penetration is forecast to grow to 71.1 percent for Hispanics compared to 58.8 percent for whites.

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III. WHEAT RIDGE ASSET INVENTORY CONDITION AND LEVEL OF SERVICE ANALYSIS

The purpose of this Level of Service (LOS) analysis is to evaluate how facilities and parks in the Wheat Ridge Study Area serve the community. This analysis may be used as a tool to benchmark current level of service and to direct future planning efforts. Combined with other findings, including survey results focus group and stakeholder feedback, it also indicates the level of service anticipated by the community.

A. Inventory and Assessment

Why Level of Service?

Level of Service for a community parks and recreation system is indicative of the ability of people to pursue active lifestyles. LOS can have implications with regard to health and wellness, the local economy, and quality of life. LOS also tends to reflect community values. It is emblematic of the manner and extent to which people are connected to their communities.

Creating the Inventory

A detailed inventory of public and semi-public physical assets available for recreational use by the Wheat Ridge community was assembled and can be used in a number of ways. It can be used for a variety of planning and operations tasks, such as land acquisition and asset management, as well as future strategic and master plans. The assets inventory currently includes public parks, recreation areas, and trails managed by Wheat Ridge Parks and Recreation. Alternative providers such as Jefferson County Open Space, the City of Lakewood, the City of Arvada, and school facilities in the study area were included. Parks within one-half mile of the city boundary were also located and assessed for components using aerial photography.

Asset Assessment

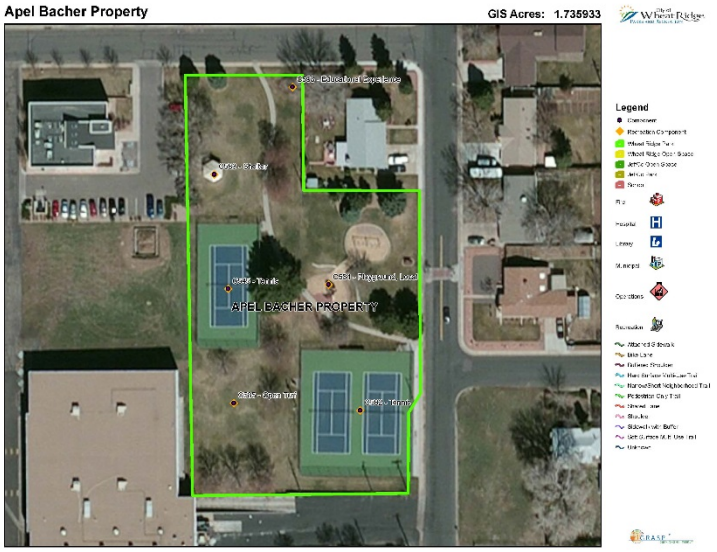
In planning for the delivery of parks and recreation services it is useful to think of parks, trails, indoor facilities, and other public spaces as parts of an infrastructure. This infrastructure allows people to exercise, socialize, and maintain a healthy physical, mental, and social wellbeing. The infrastructure is made up of ***components*** that support this goal. Components include playgrounds, picnic shelters, courts, fields, indoor facilities, and other similar elements that allow the system to meet recreational needs of a community. A component is a feature that people go to a park or recreation center to use, such as a tennis court to play a game of tennis, which gives users reason to visit and serve as an intended destination. A full list of standard GRASP® components and definitions is listed on the following two pages.

In the inventory of assets, the following information is collected:

- Component type and location
- Evaluation of component functionality
- Evaluation of associated comfort and convenience features at a location
- Evaluation of general design and ambience at a location
- Site photos
- General comments

The immediate surroundings of a component affect how well it functions, so in addition to assessing components, each park site or indoor facility was evaluated for its comfort, convenience, and ambient qualities. This includes traits such as the availability of restrooms, drinking water, shade, scenery, etc. These ***modifiers*** are attributed to any component at a given location and serve to enhance all components and locations in general.

An inventory atlas has been compiled. The atlas includes an aerial map showing current GIS boundary and approximate location of available components within each park. A data page listing all components and available comfort and convenience elements also corresponds to each park listing. Below is an example of an aerial map and data page. The inventory atlas is provided as a staff level document. This document also serves as a valuable in reviewing existing GIS data. Several discrepancies were identified during the review process. It is recommended that Staff work with the City GIS department to rectify conflicting data.



GRASP® Atlas

Apel Bacher Park

Owner:	WR
Class:	Pocket

Modifiers

Drinking Fountains	Yes	Shade	Yes
Seating	Yes	Trail Connection	No
BBQ Grills	Yes	Park Access	Yes
Dog Pick-Up Station	Yes	Parking	No
Security Lighting	No	Seasonal Plantings	Yes
Bike Parking	No	Ornamental Plantings	No
Restrooms	No	Picnic Tables	Yes

General Comments

Nice neighborhood park with 3 tennis courts, playground and shelter.

Components

MAPID	Component	Quantity	Lights	Comments
C310	PARCEL	1		
C593	Educational Experience	1		
C585	Open Turf	1		
C584	Playground, Local	1		Nice. Newer with EWF and curb wall swings
C583	Shelter	1		
C582	Tennis	2		All have been resurfaced recently
C545	Tennis	1		Does a neighborhood park really need three tennis courts? One of these or the other two be converted to pickleball or otherwise repurposed.

Outdoor Component List

Design Concepts

Component	COMPONENT AND DEFINITION
Amusement Ride	Amusement Ride - Train, go carts, etc.
Aqua Feat, Pool	Aquatic feature, Pool (Outdoor Pool) – Consists of a single lap pool. has restricted access and lifeguards.
Aqua Feat, Spray	Aquatic feature, Spray (Destination Sprayground) – Consists of many and varied spray features. Does not have standing water, but is large and varied enough to attract users from outside the immediate neighborhood.
Aqua Feat, Complex	Aquatic feature, Complex (Aquatic Park) – A facility that has at least one lap pool and one separate spray ground or feature.
Archery Range	Archery Range – A designated area for practice and/or competitive archery activities. Meets safety requirements and has appropriate targets and shelters.
Backstop, Practice	Backstop, Practice – Describes any size of grassy area with a practice backstop, used for practice or pee-wee games.
Ballfield	Ballfield – Describes softball and baseball fields of all kinds. Not specific to size or age-appropriateness.
Ballfield, Complex	Ballfield, Complex - 4 or more ballfields of similar size in used for tournaments.
Basketball	Basketball – Describes a stand-alone full sized outdoor court with two goals. Half courts scored as (.5). Not counted if included in Multiuse Court.
Batting Cage	Batting Cage – A stand-alone facility that has pitching machines and restricted entry.
Blueway	Blueway – River, Stream or canal, that is used for aquatic recreation.
BMX Course	BMX Course – A designated area for non-motorized Bicycle Motocross. Can be constructed of concrete or compacted earth.
Bocce Ball	Bocce Ball - Outdoor courts designed for bocce ball. Counted per court.
Concessions	Concessions - A separate structure used for the selling of concessions at ballfields, pools, etc.
Concessions with Restroom	Concessions with Restroom - A separate structure used for the selling of concessions at ballfields, pools, etc. with restroom faciilty included.
Disk Golf	Disk Golf – Describes a designated area that is used for disk golf. Includes permanent basket goals and tees. Scored per 18 holes.
Dog Park	Dog Park – Also known as "a park for people with dogs" or "canine off-leash area". An area designed specifically as an off-leash area for dogs and their guardians.
Driving Range	Driving Range - An area designated for golf practice or lessons.
Educational Experience	Educational Experience - Signs, structures or historic features that provide an educational, cultural or historic experience.
Equestrian Facilities	Equestrian Facilities - designed area for equestrian use.
Event Space	Event Space - A designated area or facility for outdoor performances, classrooms or special events, including amphitheaters, band shell, stages, etc.
Fitness Course	Fitness course – Consists of an outdoor path that contains stations that provide instructions and basic equipment for strength training.
Garden, Community	Garden, Community (vegetable) – Describes any garden area that provides community members a place to have personal vegetable/flower gardens.
Garden, Display	Garden, Display – Describes any garden area that is designed and maintained to provide a focal point in a park. Examples include: rose garden, fern garden, native plant garden, wildlife garden, arboretum, etc.
Golf	Golf – Counted per 18 holes. (18 hole course = 1 and 9 hole course = .5)
Handball	Handball – Outdoor courts designed for handball.
Hockey, Inline	Hockey, In-line - Regulation size outdoor rink built specifically for league in-line hockey games and practice.
Hockey, Ice	Hockey, Ice – Regulation size outdoor rink built specifically for league ice hockey games and practice.
Horseshoes	Horseshoes – A designated area for the game of horseshoes. Including permanent pits of regulation length. Counted per court.
Horseshoes, Complex	Horseshoes, Complex - Several regulation courts in single location used for tournaments.
Loop Walk	Loop Walk – Any sidewalk or path that is configured to make a complete loop around a park or feature and that is sizeable enough to use as a exercise route (min. ¼ mile - 1320 ft.- in length)
Miniature Golf	Miniature Golf - Outdoor miniature golf course.
MP Field, Small	Multi-purpose field, Small – Describes a specific field large enough to host at least one youth field sport game. Minimum field size is 45' x 90' (15 x 30 yards). Possible sports may include, but are not limited to: soccer, football, lacrosse, rugby, and field 1 hockey. Field may have goals and lining specific to a certain sport that may change with permitted use. Neighborhood or community component
MP Field, Medium	Multi-purpose field, Medium - Describes a specific field large enough to host at least one youth/adult field sport game. Minimum field size is 90' x 180' (30 x 60 yards). Possible sports may include, but are not limited to: soccer, football, lacrosse, rugby, and field 1 hockey. Field may have goals and lining specific to a certain sport that may change with permitted use. Used with MP Field Complex component only.
MP Field, Large	Multi-purpose field, Large – Describes a specific field large enough to host at least one adult field sport game. Minimum field size is 180' x 300' (60 x 100 yards). Possible sports may include, but are not limited to: soccer, football, lacrosse, rugby, and field hockey. Field may have goals and lining specific to a certain sport that may change with permitted use. Neighborhood or community component
MP Field, Multiple	Multi-purpose field, Multiple – Describes an area large enough to host a minimum of one adult game and one youth game simultaneously. This category describes a large open grassy area that can be arranged in any manner of configurations for any number of field sports. Minimum field size is 224' x 468' (75 x 156 yards). Possible sports may include, but are not limited to: soccer, football, lacrosse, rugby, and field hockey. Field may have goals and lining specific to a certain sport that may change with permitted use. Neighborhood or community component
MP Field, Complex	MP Field, Complex - Several fields in single location used for tournaments

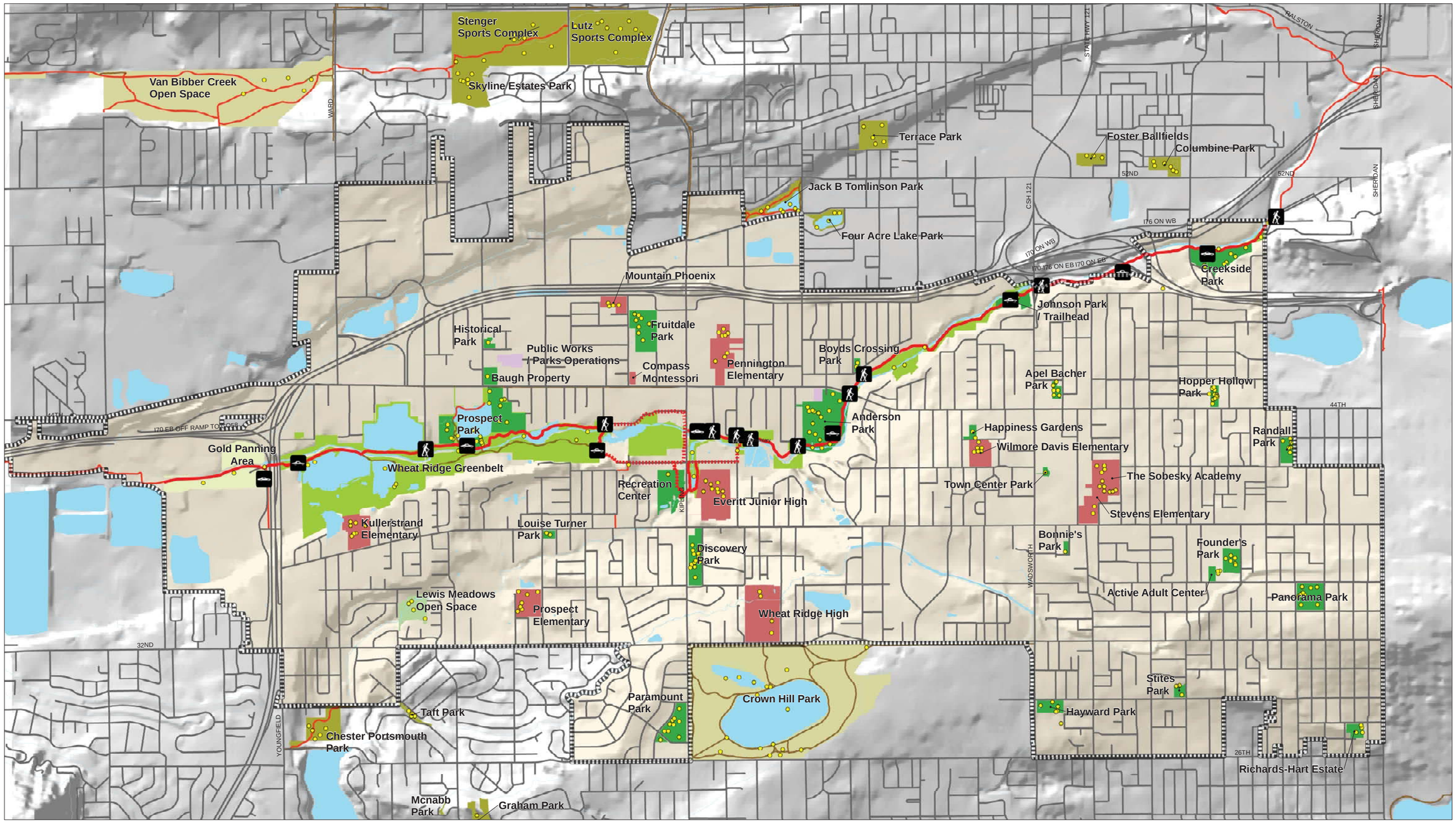
Outdoor Component List

Design Concepts

Component	COMPONENT AND DEFINITION
Multiuse Court	Multiuse Court - A paved area that is painted with games such as hopscotch, 4 square, basketball, etc. Often found in school yards. Note the quantity of basketball hoops in comment section.
Natural Area	Natural area – Describes an area in a park that contains plants and landforms that are remnants of or replicate undisturbed native areas of the local ecology. Can include grasslands, woodlands and wetlands.
Nordic/Ski Area	Designated area specifically for skiing, cross-country, or other winter sports.
Open Turf	Open Turf – A grassy area that is not suitable for programmed field sports due to size, slope, location or physical obstructions. Primary uses include walking, picnicking, Frisbee, and other informal play and uses that require an open grassy area.
Open Water	Open Water – A body of water such as a pond, stream, river, wetland with open water, lake, or reservoir.
Other-Active	Active component that does not fall under any other component definition. If passive, consider passive node.
Passive Node	Passive Node - A place that is designed to create a pause or special focus within a park, includes seating areas, passive areas, plazas, overlooks, etc.
Picnic Grounds	Picnic Grounds - A designated area with several, separate picnic tables.
Playground, Destination	Playground - Destination – Playground that serves as a destination for families from the entire community, has restrooms and parking on-site. May include special features like a climbing wall, spray feature, or adventure play.
Playground, Local	Playground - local–Playground that is intended to serve the needs of the surrounding neighborhood. Generally doesn't have restrooms or on-site parking.
Public Art	Public Art – Any art installation on public property.
Racquetball	Racquetball – Outdoor courts designed for racquetball.
Restroom	Restroom - A separate structure that may or may not have plumbing. Does not receive a neighborhood or community score. This is scored in the Comfort and Convenience section.
Ropes Course	Ropes Course - An area designed for rope climbing, swinging, etc.
Shelter, Group	Shelter – Large/Group– A shade shelter with picnic tables, large enough to accommodate a group picnic or other event for at least 25 persons with seating for a minimum of 12.
Shelter, Shade	Shelter – Shade– A shade shelter with seating but without picnic tables. Seating up to 4 people.
Shelter	Shelter – Small/Individual– A shade shelter with picnic tables, large enough to accommodate a family picnic or other event for approximately 4-12 persons with seating for a minimum of 4 .
Shooting Range	Shooting Range– A designated area for practice and competitive firearms shooting activities. Meets safety requirements and has appropriate targets and shelters.
Shuffleboard	Shuffleboard - Outdoor courts designed for shuffleboard.
Skate Feature	Skate Feature – A stand-alone feature in a park. May be associated with a playground but is not considered a part of it.
Skate Park	Skate park – An area set aside specifically for skateboarding, in-line skating, or free-style biking. May be specific to one user group or allow for several user types. Can accommodate multiple users of varying abilities. Usually has a variety of concrete features and has a community draw.
Sledding Hill	Sledding Hill - An area designated for sledding use that is free from obstacles or street encroachment.
Structure	Structure - A separate structure used for maintenance, storage, etc. Does not receive a Neighborhood or Community score.
Tennis	Tennis courts –One regulation court that is fenced and has nets.
Tennis Complex	Tennis Complex –Regulation courts that are fenced and have nets. Placed in a group of 8 or more courts.
Track, Competition	Track, competition – A multi-lane, regulation sized track appropriate for competitive track and field events and available for public use. Community component.
Trails, Primitive	Trails - primitive– Trails, unpaved, that is located within a park or natural area. That provides recreational opportunities or connections to users. Measured per each if quantity available.
Trails, Multi-use	Trails-multi-use– Trails, paved or unpaved, that are separated from the road and provide recreational opportunities or connections to walkers, bikers, roller bladers and equestrian users. Located within a dedicated ROW. May run though a park or parks but is not wholly contained within a single park. Can be a component of a park if it goes beyond the park boundaries, or can be its own park type. Measured in miles.
Trailhead	Marker, post, sign or map indicating location, intersection, beginning or end of trail.
Volleyball	Volleyball court - One full-sized court. Surface may be grass, sand, or asphalt. May have permanent or portable posts and nets.
Water Feature	Water feature – A passive water-based amenity that provides a visual focal point. Includes fountains, and waterfalls
Water Access, Developed	Water Access - Developed - Includes docks, piers, boat ramps, fishing facilities, etc. Receives quantity for each pier, dock, etc.
Water Access, General	Water Access - General - Measures a pedestrian's general ability to have contact or an experience with the water. Usually receives quantity of one for each park.

Continued from previous page.

Wheat Ridge: System Map



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Miles

Legend

- Identified Recreation Component
- Neighborhood Access
- Trailhead
- Road
- City Boundary
- Wheat Ridge Park
- Wheat Ridge Greenbelt
- Wheat Ridge Open Space
- Alternative Provider Park
- Alternative Provider Open Space
- Undeveloped County Land
- School
- Parks Operations and Maintenance
- Clear CreekTrail in Wheat Ridge Greenbelt
- *Alternative Trail Connections*

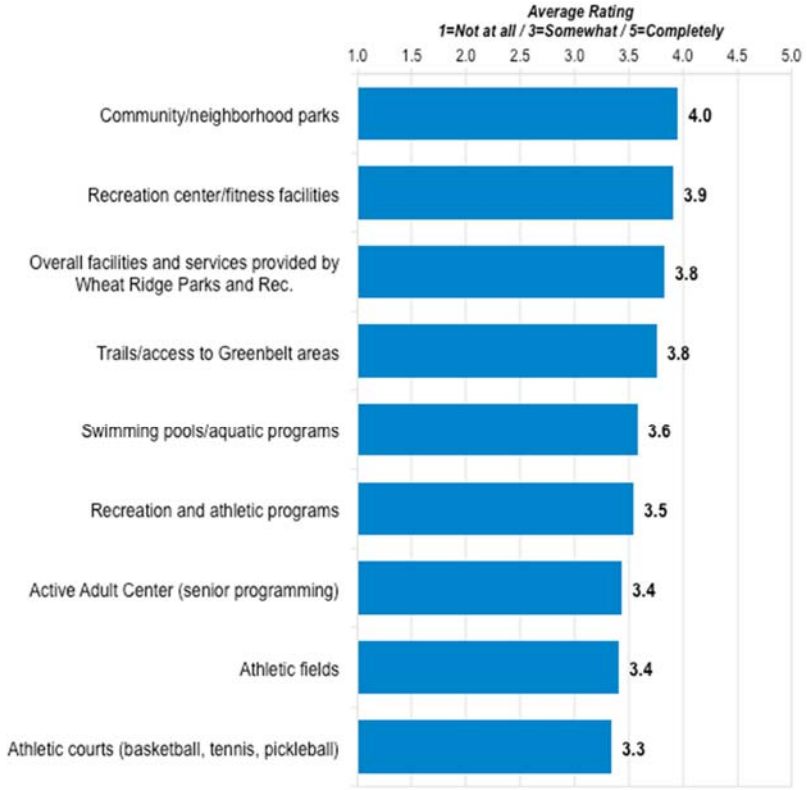
Other Trails

- Hard Surface Multi-Use Trail
- Narrow/Short Neighborhood Trail
- Pedestrian-Only Trail
- Sidewalk with Buffer
- Soft Surface Multi-Use Trail

Inventory Summary

The tables on the following pages depict a system-wide evaluation at the number of components provided to the community, first by Wheat Ridge Parks and Recreation, and then by all alternative providers. A ratio of component per 1,000 people is calculated for the 2014 population. Using this ratio, the number of new components that would be needed in year 2019 can be determined. Because the population is expected to increase by approximately 1,000 residents, and based on the current ratio of park land per 1,000 residents, there is a need for an additional 15 acres of park land and open space lands, one playground, and one shelter to be added to the system. It should be noted that this analysis assumes that the current level of service ratio by the current components are meeting the needs of the citizens. Cross referencing this to the citizen survey and needs assessment may be valuable in assessing this ratio. Based on the input from the most recent survey, components such as swimming pools, athletic fields, and athletic courts were shown with an average rating of between 3.3 and 3.6. Many variables may influence these ratings including current condition and total number of these types of components, but these scores indicate the need to continue to monitor citizen needs and demands for these components and possible future additions.

Figure 9: Degree to Which WRPRD Facilities/Services are Meeting Household Needs



If one includes all of the resources available to residents (within one-half mile of the city limits) including alternative providers and schools we see a slightly different picture. By including all of these other lands and components in the calculation, approximately 37 acres per 1,000 residents, we see the need for an additional 37 acres in the next five years. It should be noted that the additional 22 acres would likely need to be provided by alternative providers and may not necessarily be within Wheat Ridge city limits.

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Capacities Level of Service for Community Components

Wheat Ridge, CO | **Draft: February 2015**

		2014 GIS Acres *	Aquatic Complex	Splash Pad	Backstop, Practice	Ballfield	Complex, Ballfield	Basketball	Batting Cage	Concessions	Dog Park	Educational Experience	Fitness Course	Garden, Community	Garden, Display	Horseshoes	Loop Walk	MP Field, All Sizes	Multiuse Court	Natural Area	Open Turf	Open Water	Passive Node	Picnic Grounds	Playground, All Sizes	Public Art	Restroom	Shelter, All Sizes	Skate Park	Tennis	Track, Competition	Trailhead	Water Access, Developed	Water Access, General	Water Feature
INVENTORY																																			
Wheat Ridge Parks		173	1	1		11		7.5	2		1	3	1	1	2	6	9	10		3	12	4	2	1	16	2	12	18	1	7		4	2	3	3
Wheat Ridge Open Space		300										1						1		4		6	1				1					8	3	1	
Wheat Ridge Total		**473**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**11**	**0**	**7.5**	**2**	**0**	**1**	**4**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**6**	**9**	**11**	**0**	**7**	**12**	**10**	**3**	**1**	**16**	**2**	**13**	**18**	**1**	**7**	**0**	**12**	**5**	**4**	**3**
Alternative Provider Parks		200				11	1	1.5		1		1	1				8	5		3	7	8	4	1	9		6	4	2	5		2	3	2	
Alternative Provider Open Space		363										1					1			2	1	3			1		1					1		2	
School		109			3	8		18		1			1	1			1	14	7		5		2		10		1			8	1				
Total including Alternative Providers		**1145**	**1**	**1**	**3**	**30**	**1**	**27**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**6**	**3**	**2**	**2**	**6**	**19**	**30**	**7**	**12**	**25**	**21**	**9**	**2**	**36**	**2**	**21**	**22**	**3**	**20**	**1**	**15**	**8**	**8**	**3**
CURRENT RATIO PER POPULATION																																			
CURRENT POPULATION 2014(Wheat Ridge Only)	**30,780**																																		
Current Ratio per 1000 Population (Wheat Ridge)		15.37	0.03	0.03	0.00	0.36	0.00	0.24	0.06	0.00	0.03	0.13	0.03	0.03	0.06	0.19	0.29	0.36	0.00	0.23	0.39	0.32	0.10	0.03	0.52	0.06	0.42	0.58	0.03	0.23	0.00	0.39	0.16	0.13	0.10
Population per Wheat Ridge component		65	30,780	30,780	NA	2,798	NA	4,104	15,390	NA	30,780	7,695	30,780	30,780	15,390	5,130	3,420	2,798	NA	4,397	2,565	3,078	10,260	30,780	1,924	15,390	2,368	1,710	30,780	4,397	NA	2,565	6,156	7,695	10,260
Current Ratio per 1000 Population (Area)		37.20	0.03	0.03	0.10	0.97	0.03	0.88	0.06	0.06	0.03	0.19	0.10	0.06	0.06	0.19	0.62	0.97	0.23	0.39	0.81	0.68	0.29	0.06	1.17	0.06	0.68	0.71	0.10	0.65	0.03	0.49	0.26	0.26	0.10
Population per Area component		27	30,780	30,780	10,260	1,026	30,780	1,140	15,390	15,390	30,780	5,130	10,260	15,390	15,390	5,130	1,620	1,026	4,397	2,565	1,231	1,466	3,420	15,390	855	15,390	1,466	1,399	10,260	1,539	30,780	2,052	3,848	3,848	10,260
PROJECTED POPULATION - 2019(Wheat Ridge Only)	**31,785**																																		
Total # needed to maintain current ratio of all existing facilities at projected population		**488**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**11**	**0**	**8**	**2**	**0**	**1**	**4**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**6**	**9**	**11**	**0**	**7**	**12**	**10**	**3**	**1**	**17**	**2**	**13**	**19**	**1**	**7**	**0**	**12**	**5**	**4**	**3**
Number that should be added to achieve current ratio at projected population		*15*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Total # needed to maintain current ratio of all existing facilities at projected population (Only includes Wheat Ridge Population)		1,182	1	1	3	31	1	28	2	2	1	6	3	2	2	6	20	31	7	12	26	22	9	2	37	2	22	23	3	21	1	15	8	8	3
Number that should be added to achieve current ratio at projected population (Only includes Wheat Ridge Population)		37	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

** GIS acres often do not reflect actual published park acreage and are included for reference*

Wheat Ridge Component Capacity table.

Park Component Matrix:

The following table represents the quantity of each component found at each park during the site visits.

Wheat Ridge Outdoor Facilities:

LOCATION	OWNER	Aquatic Complex	Splash Pad	Ballfield	Bandstand	Basketball	Batting Cage	Concessions	Dog Park	Educational Experience	Garden, Community	Garden, Display	Horseshoes	Loop Walk	MP Field, All Sizes	Natural Area	Open Turf	Open Water	Passive Node	Picnic Grounds	Playground, All Sizes	Public Art	Restroom	Shelter, All Sizes	Skate Park	Tennis	Trailhead	Water Access, Developed	Water Access, General	Water Feature
Anderson Park	Wheat Ridge	1		1		1		1							1	1	2	1			1		1	2			1		1	
Apel Bacher Park	Wheat Ridge									1							1				1			1		3				
Baugh Property	Wheat Ridge									1																				
Bonnies Park	Wheat Ridge																				1									
Boyds Crossing Park	Wheat Ridge																1				1									
Creekside Park	Wheat Ridge			2										1	1	1					1		1	1			1			
Discovery Park	Wheat Ridge		1											1	1		2				1	1	2	4	1					1
Founders Park	Wheat Ridge									1				1		1						1	1	1						
Fruitdale Park	Wheat Ridge					1			1					1		1	1				1		1	1						
Happiness Gardens	Wheat Ridge										1													1						
Hayward Park	Wheat Ridge				1					1				1			1				1									1
Historical Park	Wheat Ridge									1																				
Hopper Hollow Park	Wheat Ridge					1								1	1		1		2	1	1	1	1	2						
Johnson Park Trailhead	Wheat Ridge															1		1									1	1		
Louise Turner Park	Wheat Ridge																1				1									
Panorama Park	Wheat Ridge			2		1							1		3						1		1	1		4				
Paramount Park	Wheat Ridge			1		1							1		3		1				1		1	1						
Prospect Park	Wheat Ridge			2		0.5	2						4	1	1	1	2	1			2		2	2		1	1	1	1	
Randall Park	Wheat Ridge			2		2															1		1	1						
Recreation Center	Wheat Ridge														1															
Richards Hart Estate	Wheat Ridge									1		1					1				1									
Stites Park	Wheat Ridge			1		1															1									
Town Center Park	Wheat Ridge																													1
Wheat Ridge Greenbelt	Wheat Ridge Greenbelt									2						5		8	1				1				8	3	3	
Lewis Meadows Open Sp	Wheat Ridge Open Space													1		1		1											1	
Totals:		1	1	11	1	8.5	2	1	1	8	1	1	6	8	12	12	14	12	3	1	17	3	13	18	1	8	12	5	6	3

Wheat Ridge Park Component Summary Matrix by Park.

Other Outdoor Facilities within ½ mile of City Boundary:

Note: Inventory for the majority of these facilities was conducted using aerial photography and GIS rather than actual site visits.

LOCATION	OWNER	Ballfield	Basketball	Complex, Ballfield	Concessions	Educational Experience	Fitness Course	Garden, Display	Loop Walk	MP Field, All Sizes	Natural Area	Open Turf	Open Water	Other-Active	Other-Passive	Passive Node	Picnic Grounds	Playground, All Sizes	Restroom	Shelter, All Sizes	Skate Park	Tennis	Trailhead	Water Access, Developed	Water Access, General
Active Adult Center	Alternative Provider Park						1	1	1																
Chester Portsmouth	Alternative Provider Park								1			1						1	1	1					
Columbine Park	Alternative Provider Park		0.5						1			1					1	1				2			
Foster Ballfields	Alternative Provider Park	2								1															
Four Acre Lake Park	Alternative Provider Park								1				1					1						1	
Graham Park	Alternative Provider Park										1											1			
Hilltop Park	Alternative Provider Park											1						1							
Jack B Tomlinson Park	Alternative Provider Park						1		1				1			1		1					1		1
Lutz Sports Complex	Alternative Provider Park	8		1									1						2		1				
Mcnabb Park	Alternative Provider Park																								
Skyline Estates Park	Alternative Provider Park								1		1	2				1		1	1		1				
Stenger Sports Complex	Alternative Provider Park				1					4			2					1	1			2			
Taft Park	Alternative Provider Park											1	1					1		1					
Terrace Park	Alternative Provider Park	1	1						1			1						1							
Crown Hill Park	Alternative Provider Open Space					1			2		1		2	1	1	2			1	2			1	2	1
Van Bibber Creek OS	Alternative Provider Open Space								1		1		1						1				1		
Totals:		11	1.5	1	1	1	2	1	10	5	4	7	9	1	1	4	1	9	7	4	2	5	3	3	2

Other Providers Park Component Summary Matrix by Park.

School Facilities

LOCATION	OWNER	Ballfield	Basketball	Concessions	Fitness Course	Garden, Community	Loop Walk	MP Field, All Sizes	Multiuse Court	Open Turf	Passive Node	Playground, All Sizes	Tennis	Track, Competition
Everitt Junior High	School	1	2	1			1	1		1			6	
Mountain Phoenix	School		1							1	1	1		
Kullerstrand Elementary	School	2	2					2	1			1		
Pennington Elementary	School	1	4					1	2	1		3		
Prospect Elementary	School	2	2			1		2	2			1		
Stevens Elementary	School	2	5		1			5	1	1	1	1	2	
The Sobesky Academy	School													
Wheat Ridge High School	School							3						1
Wilmore Davis Elemenentary	School	2	2					3	1			1		
Totals:		10	18	1	1	1	1	17	7	4	2	8	8	1

School Component Summary Matrix by School.

Summary of Wheat Ridge Park Assessments

- Wheat Ridge parks are generally **well distributed and well maintained.**
- Most of the parks provide a **variety of amenities.**
- The current system consists of mostly active parks, but there are some more passive areas and **opportunities for other passive type amenities.**
- **GIS Parcel data is incomplete or incorrect** in many locations based on comparison between current GIS data and field observations.
- Several parks including Signature Parks are **dated or poorly functioning:**
    - Over the years, components have been added without regard for overall park function.
- **Historic facilities** lack outdoor recreation opportunities or passive amenities (passive nodes, interpretation opportunities).
- While **ADA access** is being addressed, it is limited in many of the parks.
- Schools vary greatly in **quality** of components and perceived neighborhood **access.**

Park Classifications

The following section considered maps of each park, creating a list of all components and modifiers for each, by classification. Currently, Wheat Ridge classifies the system into the following.

- Neighborhood Parks – neighborhood-scale parks that are intended to serve residents in the neighborhoods surrounding the park.
- Pocket Parks – smaller versions of neighborhood parks with fewer amenities, serving a smaller radius of homes.
- Community Parks – larger multi-purpose parks that serve the entire community.
- Sports Complexes – parks dedicated to specialized sports that serve the entire community, often associated with community parks.
- Special Purpose Parks – parks that serve a singular or focused community need, such as an environmental education center or historical park.
- Undeveloped Parkland – land that is owned by the city and reserved for future park development.
- Natural Areas – lands that place emphasis on protection of natural values.
- Regional Open Space – lands that protect large areas with natural resource values of communitywide significance, and provide opportunities for nature oriented outdoor recreation.
- Visual Green Space – lands that are strategically-located visual amenities or buffers not associated with drainage ways.

Based on current uses, the parks in the inventory fall into the following classifications:

Community Parks
Anderson Park
Discovery Park (Previously in Undeveloped Parkland)
Prospect Park

Neighborhood Parks
Founders' Park
Fruitdale Park
Hayward Park
Hopper Hollow Park (Previously in Undeveloped Parkland)
Panorama Park
Paramount Park
Randall Park

Pocket Parks
Apel Bacher Park
Bonnie's Park
Boyd's Crossing Park
Louise Turner Park
Stites Park
Town Center Park

Sports Complexes
Creekside Park

Regional Open Space
Wheat Ridge Greenbelt

Special Purpose Parks
Happiness Gardens (Previously in Pocket Park)
Historical Park
Baugh House
Richards-Hart Estate
Recreation Center

Natural Area/Corridor
Johnson Park (Previously in Neighborhood Park)
Lewis Meadows Open Space

Other Lands or Facilities
Parks Admin. Offices
Public Works/Parks Operations (Not previously included)

Alternative Providers

There are a number of other parks and facilities that, due to their location within the City boundary or in relative close proximity, likely provide some level of recreation opportunities to residents of Wheat Ridge.

Schools
Compass Montessori
Everitt Junior High School
Mountain Phoenix
Kullerstrand Elementary
Martensen Elementary
Pennington Elementary
Prospect Elementary
St. Peter and Paul School
Stevens Elementary
Wheat Ridge Christian
Wheat Ridge High School
The Sobesky Academy
Wilmore Davis Elementary

Alternative Provider Parks and Facilities: (City of Arvada, City of Lakewood, Jefferson County, or Others)
Active Adult Center (Not previously included)
Chester Portsmouth Park
Columbine Park
Foster Ball fields
Four Acre Lake Park
Graham Park
Hilltop Park
Jack B Tomlinson Park
Lutz Sports Complex
McNabb Park
Skyline Estates park
Stenger Sports Complex
Taft Park

Alternative Provider Open Space: (Jefferson County)
Crown Hill Park
Van Bibber Creek Open Space

Further detail and information gathered during site visits and assessment can be found in the inventory Atlas provided to staff. This information includes a map of each location based on current GIS data and a data sheet.

Catchment Areas

People use a variety of transit modes to reach a recreation destination: on foot, on a bike, in a car, via public transportation or utilizing any combination of these or other alternatives. The mode is often determined, at least in part, by the distance to be travelled.

A catchment area on a map, also called a buffer, is a specific distance drawn around each park. This is called a ***service area***.

The GRASP® methodology typically applies two different catchment area distances to examine a recreation system:

1. General Access to Recreation
2. Walkable Access to Recreation

General Access analysis applies a primary catchment distance of one mile. This is considered a suitable distance for a bike ride or a short drive in a car. This one-mile catchment is intended to include recreation users travelling from home or elsewhere to a park or facility by way of bike, bus, or automobile.

Walkable Access analysis uses a smaller catchment distance to include users within walking distance of recreation facilities. This distance can range from as short as one-fourth of a mile to as long as one half mile depending on the study area. For the Wheat Ridge Study Area, a one-third mile catchment buffer was used. This a typical catchment distance used in GRASP® studies, as it represents a ten-minute walk for most users, based on the average walking speed of three miles per hour.

A one-third mile catchment accounts for the fact that walking distances are often further than one-third of a mile due a gridded street pattern and obstacles in the built or natural environment. This serves to ensure a walking travel time of ten minutes or less for most people.

B. Level of Service Analysis and Findings

Level of Service Analysis

Maps and data quantifications produced using the GRASP® methodology are known as ***perspectives***. Each perspective is a model of how service is being provided across the study area. Maps are utilized along with tables and charts to provide benchmarks a community may use to determine its success providing services.

The following sections discuss the inventory, analysis, and findings from the Wheat Ridge Study Area Level of Service Analysis.

General Level of Service

This perspective indicates general access to recreation in the Wheat Ridge Study Area by any means illustrated by one-mile catchment buffers placed around each developed park. This represents a convenient travel distance by normal means such as driving, or perhaps bicycling.

General Level of Service Perspective Maps are displayed in ***Map 2*** in the Appendix in ***Map B: Park Access – 1 Mile***.

Map 2 suggests that the study area has good distribution of facilities and good general access to developed park facilities.

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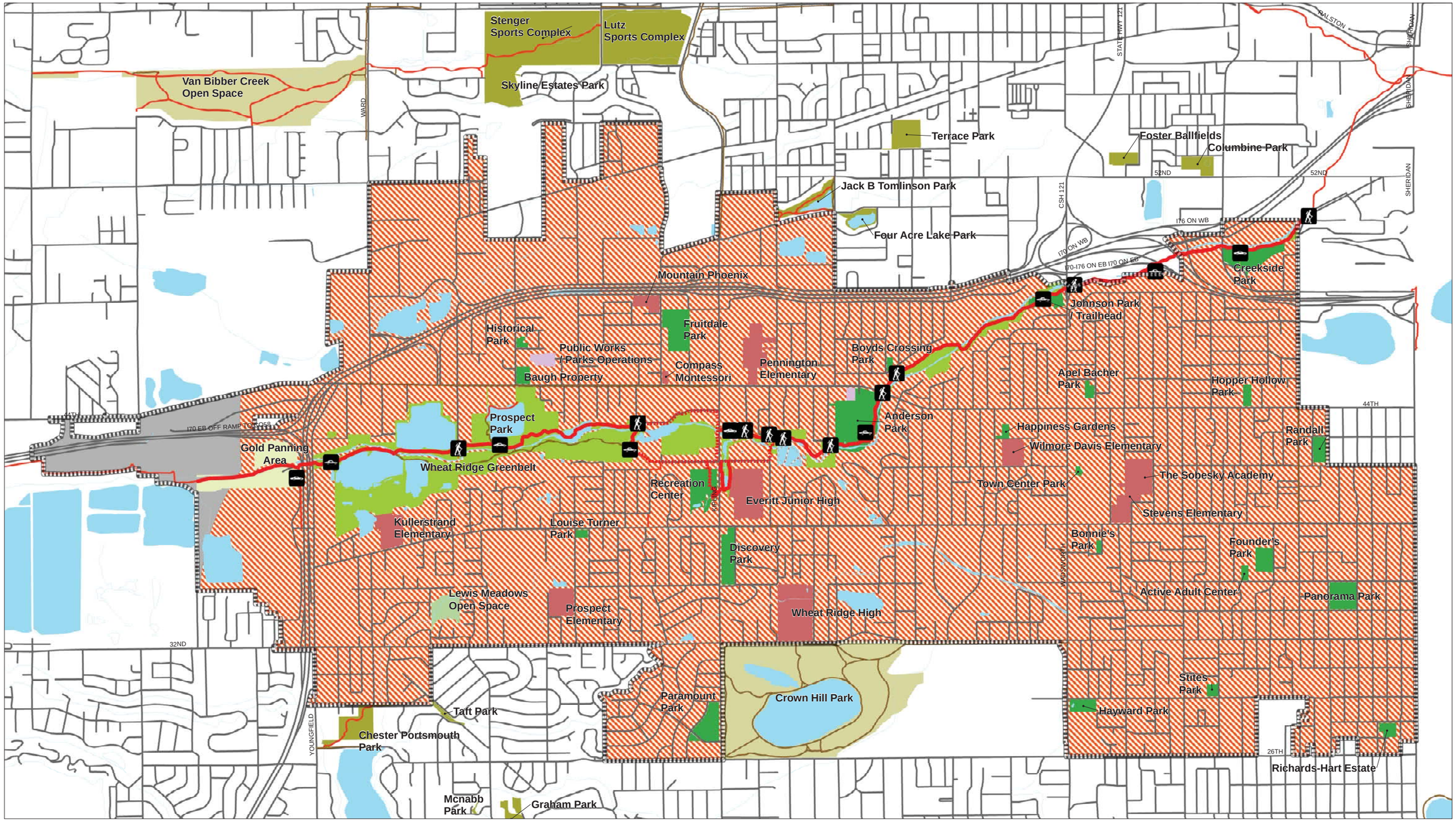
Wheat Ridge: Park Access - 1 Mile



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Miles

Legend

- 1 Mile Access to Wheat Ridge Park
- Greater than 1 Mile
- Neighborhood Access
- Trailhead
- City Boundary
- Road
- Wheat Ridge Park
- Wheat Ridge Greenbelt
- Wheat Ridge Open Space
- Alternative Provider Park
- Alternative Provider Open Space
- Undeveloped County Land
- School
- Parks Operations and Maintenance
- Wheat Ridge Greenbelt Trail
- *Alternative Trail Connections*

Other Trails

- Hard Surface Multi-Use Trail
- Narrow/Short Neighborhood Trail
- Pedestrian-Only Trail
- Sidewalk with Buffer
- Soft Surface Multi-Use Trail

Demographic Analysis
An examination of the demographic profile of that area currently served by one mile access to parks can be useful in measuring current level of service and also in prioritizing future planning efforts.

Through the use of additional ESRI software and demographic tools, 100 percent of Wheat Ridge residents were identified to have access to a developed park within a one mile radius of their home. The only underserved area is shown in gray and outlined with the red oval. Currently, there are no homes adjacent to this area. This land is owned by either private owners or by Jefferson County.

Walkable Level of Service

The majority of analysis for Wheat Ridge focuses on Walkable Level of Service. Walkability is a measure of how user-friendly an area is to people travelling on foot. A walkable environment has benefits for public health, the local economy, and quality of life. Many factors influence walkability. These include presence or absence and quality of footpaths, sidewalks or other pedestrian rights-of-way, traffic and road conditions, land use patterns, and safety considerations among others. Perhaps the most significant factor affecting walkability in a study area is barriers.

For the Wheat Ridge Study Area walkable level of service perspective analysis, ***barriers*** were determined and used to clip the service coverage. These typically include major streets, waterways, or railroad tracks that restrict pedestrian or bicycle movement and pose a potential risk to public safety. This accounts for these obstacles as deterrents to active transportation that serves to limit access to recreation without using a car.

Walkable Access to Recreation
This perspective models access to recreation by walking or other active transportation modes such as bicycles or skateboards. A one-third mile catchment distance is used exclusively. This represents a distance from which convenient access to the component can be achieved by an average person within a ten minute walk. Unlike the general access perspective, this analysis does not recognize any service across a ***barrier***. One-third mile catchment buffers for all parks are truncated at each barrier.

Walkable level of service for the Wheat Ridge Study Area is displayed in ***Map 3***

The data shown in this map provides the basis for additional analyses that follow.

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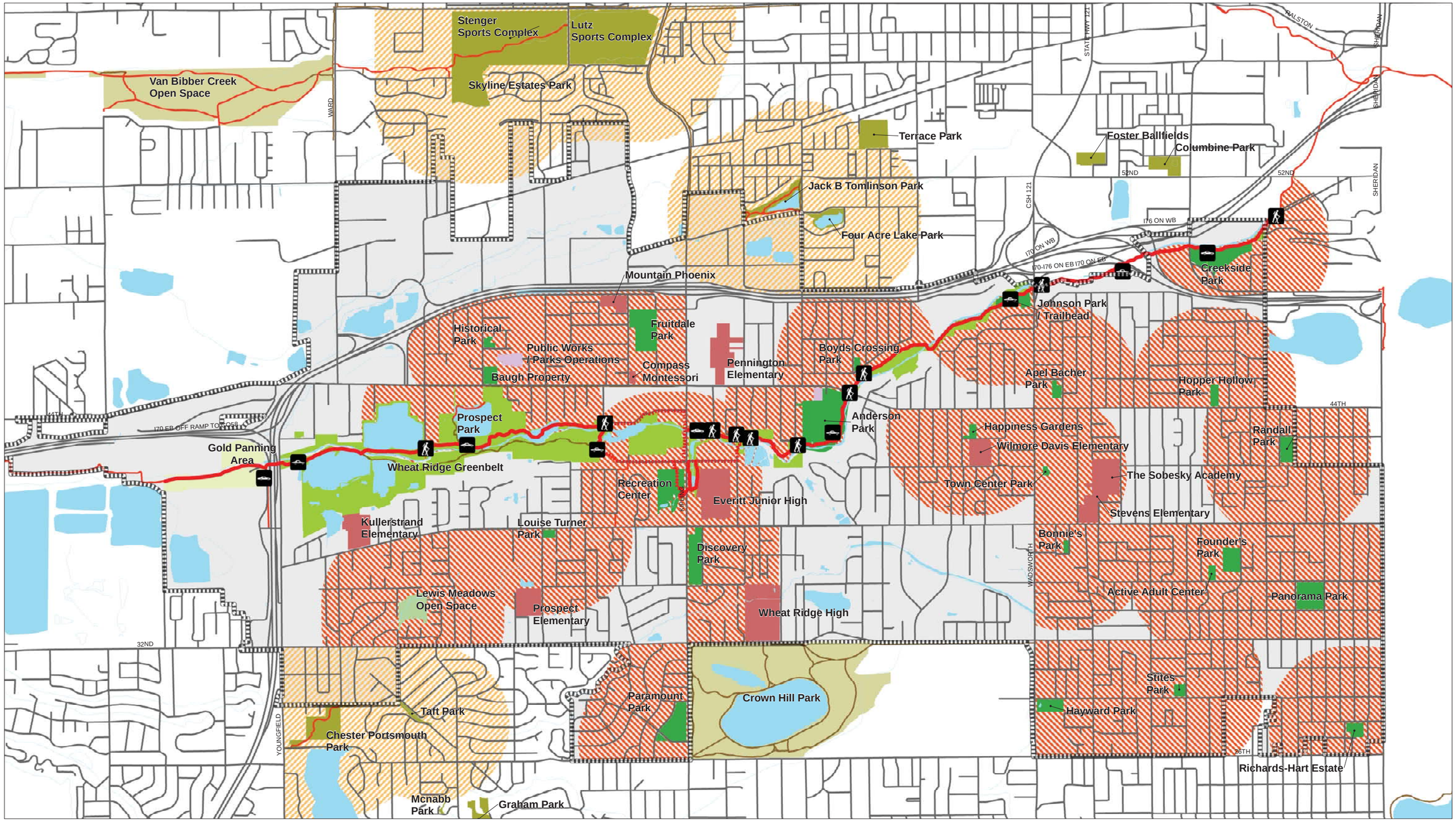
Wheat Ridge: Park Access - 10 Minute Walk



In summary, this map shows that parks in Wheat Ridge are generally **well distributed** across the City and are located close to where people live. It should also be noted that neighborhood access to parks is often limited by major pedestrian barriers such as busy streets or lack of formal sidewalks based on a 10 minute walk (1/3 mile). For the purposes of this study, the "walkability" is generalized and not meant to ensure sidewalk availability or the quality of the walkable access. Further investigation and action may be required to ensure neighborhood walkability in specific areas without sidewalks.

Demographic Analysis

An examination of the demographic profile of the area currently served by walkable access to parks can be useful in measuring current level of service and also in prioritizing future planning efforts.

Through the use of additional ESRI software and demographic tools, the percentage of resident access can be determined using this same ten minute walk catchment area.

Table 9: ESRI population estimates for residents within 10 minute walk of existing park

	2014 Population	2019 Population
10 min Walking Access	23,614	24,197
Greater than 10 min Walking Access	9,380	9,887
Total Estimated Population	32,994	34,084

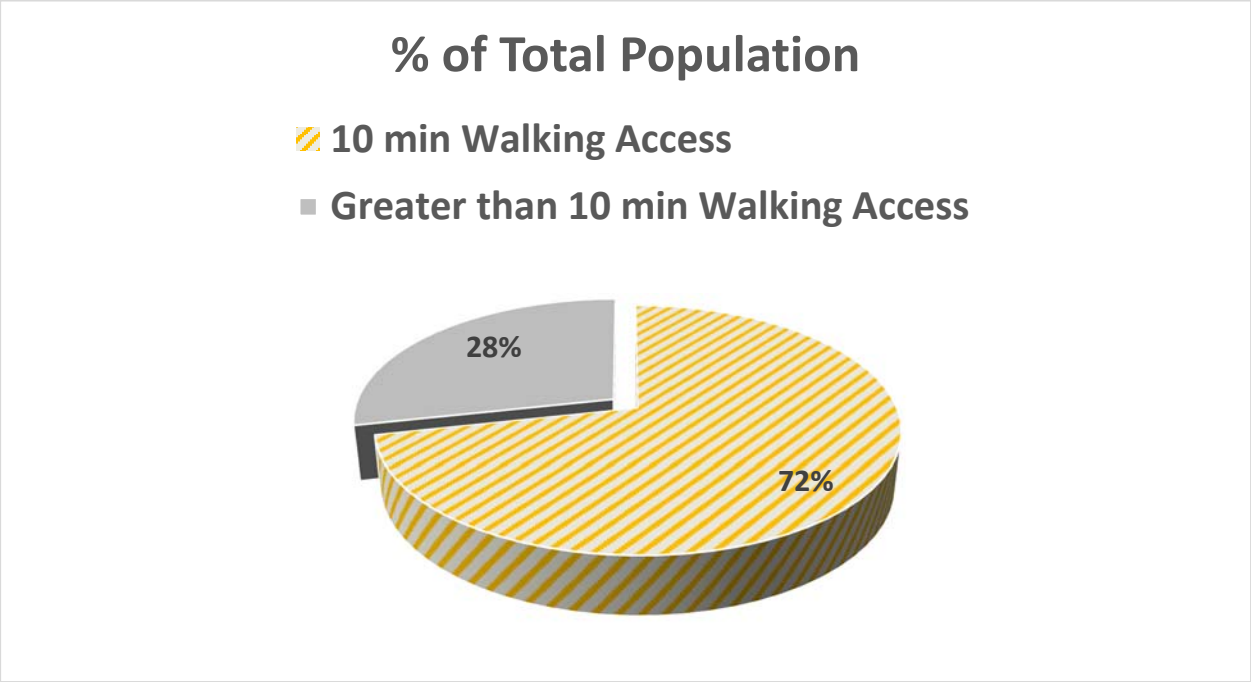
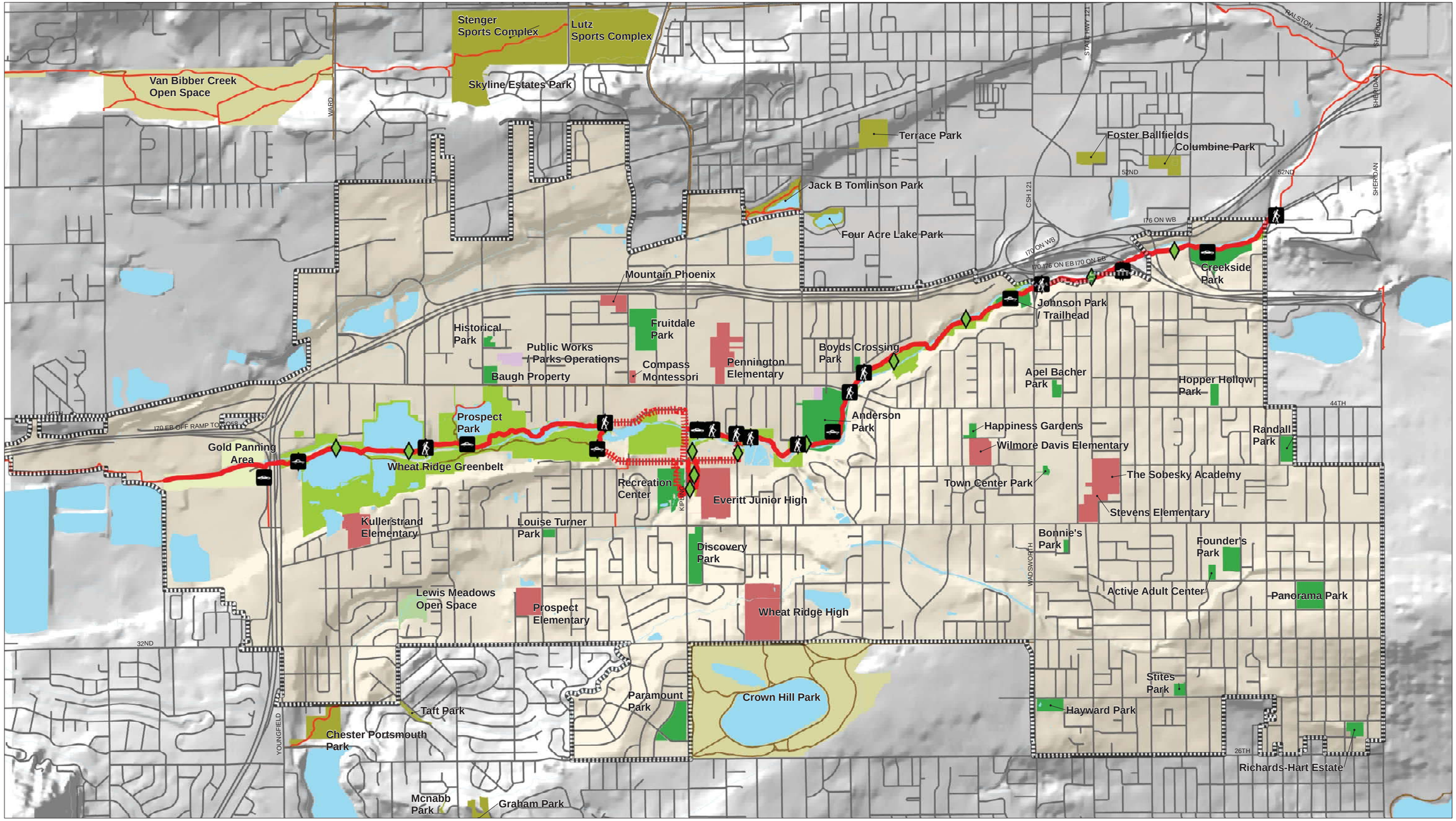


Chart 1: Shows that an estimated 72% of current residents have walkable access to an existing Wheat Ridge Park.

C. Wheat Ridge Greenbelt Assessment

Wheat Ridge: Greenbelt



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Miles

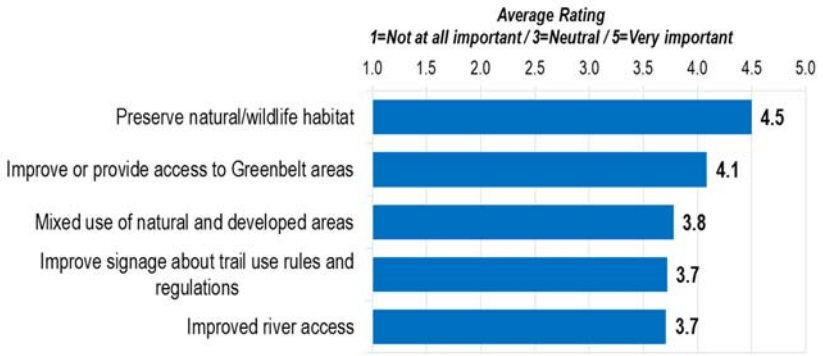
Legend

- Green Belt Component
- Neighborhood Access
- Trailhead
- Road
- City Boundary
- Wheat Ridge Park
- Wheat Ridge Greenbelt
- Wheat Ridge Open Space
- Alternative Provider Park
- Alternative Provider Open Space
- Undeveloped County Land
- School
- Parks Operations and Maintenance
- Wheat Ridge Greenbelt Trail
- *Alternative Trail Connections*

Other Trails

- Hard Surface Multi-Use Trail
- Narrow/Short Neighborhood Trail
- Pedestrian-Only Trail
- Sidewalk with Buffer
- Soft Surface Multi-Use Trail

Based on the public focus groups and survey, the Greenbelt ranked very high in importance.



Therefore, during the inventory and assessment process, special attention was paid to the Greenbelt, including a bicycle tour from the 41st and Youngfield Trailhead to the eastern most street connection at W. 51st Ave and N. Harlan St. Photographs, GIS routes, and points were collected to show current conditions and existing amenities along the trail.

The following list is a summary of those findings:

- Trailheads are typically underdeveloped or have inconsistent amenities.
- Two (2) signature parks, three (3) other parks, and open space are directly accessible from the trail.

- The Recreation Center is not directly accessible from the Clear Creek trail when west of Kipling. It is possible to navigate residential streets and pathways or sidewalks to reach the Recreation Center. The current Kipling underpass connects the Recreation Center to a short section of trail on the east side of Kipling, but again, users must navigate residential streets or sidewalks to get back to the Clear Creek trail in the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt. There is not a trail named the greenbelt trail; the Clear Creek trail travels in front of the recreation center.
- Waysides along the trail are scattered and inconsistent and often are not ideally located. The following photos represent two types of waysides that were identified during the site visit.

- Currently, interpretation is limited to trail kiosks at access points.

- Mileage markers and way finding could be improved.

- Minimal infrastructure is available for nature based programming.

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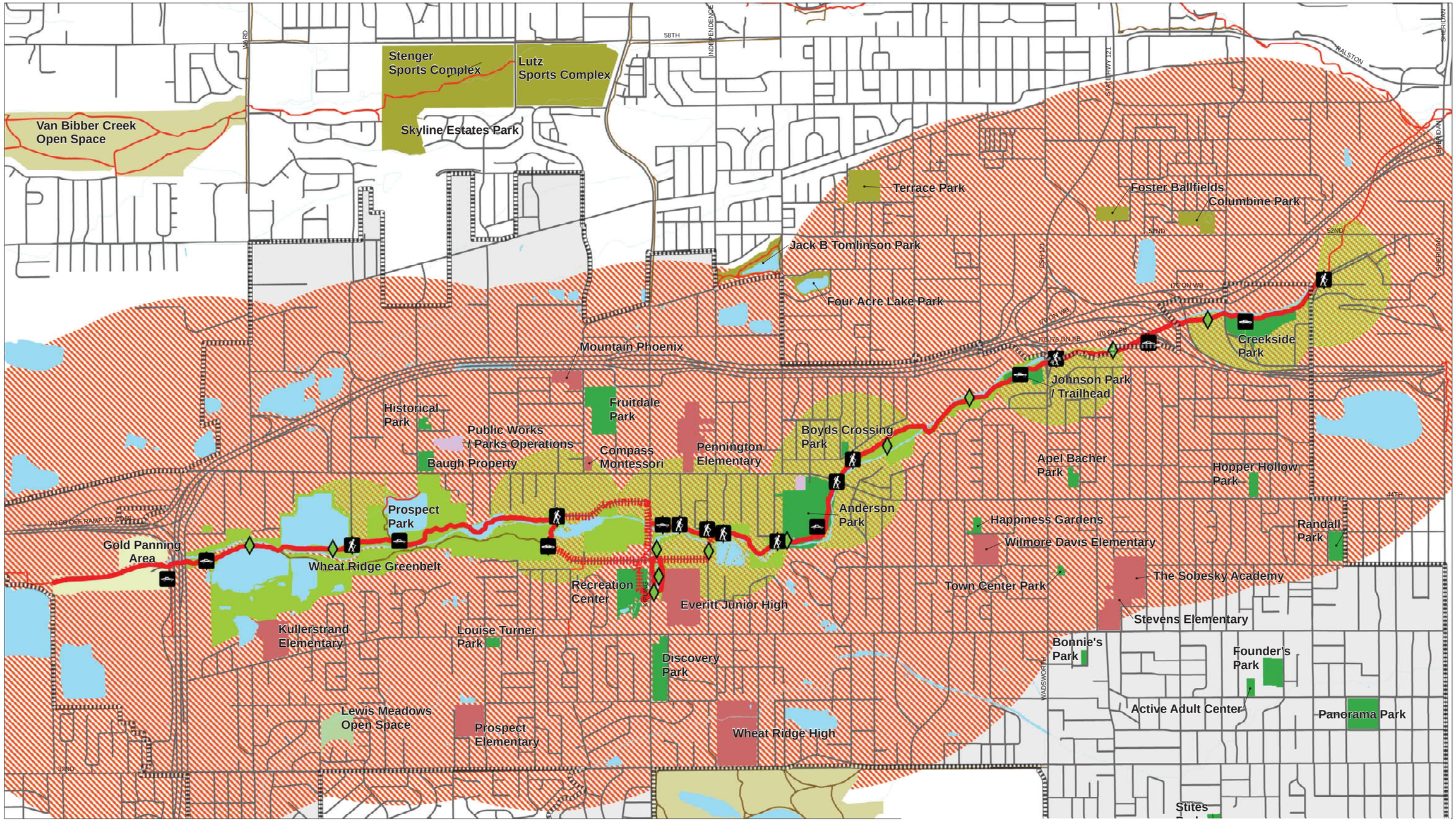
Wheat Ridge: Greenbelt Access



Current access is well distributed along the Greenbelt trail considering one mile access to parking trailheads as shown in the orange areas. Pedestrian access to the Greenbelt is better on the north side than on the south side based on a quarter-mile mile proximity, as shown in the yellow service areas. This is primarily due to geographic barriers and private property contingent to the open space.

In summary, Wheat Ridge should move forward with a Greenbelt Feasibility Study and Master Plan that addresses the following key elements:

- Consistently developed Greenbelt Trailheads. This is a great opportunity to connect with the greater area and to neighborhoods and can be done appropriately for each location.
- Safety and security along the length of the system.
- Methods of enhancing the experience of a variety of different types of users and the conflicts that currently arise between these users.
- Potential gap areas to add additional pedestrian and car access opportunities.
- Nature based programming opportunities.
- Strategic waysides and trail amenities.
- Historic, nature, or environmental interpretation opportunities.
- Commercial or mixed use opportunities on adjacent or nearby properties that capitalize on the Greenbelt's significance and popularity.

Recreational Connectivity

In addition to the Clear Creek trail in the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt, non-motorized access to recreation has become a priority for communities nationwide in recent years. As a result, the importance of trails in a recreation system cannot be overstated. Trails have a positive impact on public health, local economy, quality of life, and the environment. Today in the United States, one-third of the population cannot drive due to a variety of factors such as age, financial limitations, or visual impairment. A well planned trail system creates a viable alternative to getting in the car. Trails are becoming ever more essential infrastructure that define a community, particularly in the State of Colorado where people enjoy active lifestyles unlike anywhere else in the country.

With the Greenbelt Trails, the Wheat Ridge community has some exceptional opportunities for non-motorized access to different parts of the Study Area. However, as trail connections beyond these major trail corridors are still rather limited, room exists for improvement. The following discussion includes a description of several aspects of successful trail systems.

Where to Start?

A ***trail*** may be loosely defined as a route for pedestrians, bicyclists, equestrians, and other active users. Trails can be off-street or on-street, paved or unpaved, dedicated or shared. Any trail improves the ability of people to safely reach a destination without use of a motorized vehicle. ***Active transportation*** refers to getting from place to place under non-motorized power be it on foot, on a bicycle, on a skateboard, on a horse, on a unicycle, on a scooter, etc.

Trails make any mode of active transportation possible but are most commonly used for walking and cycling. ***Walkability*** is a measure of how user-friendly an area is to people travelling on foot. Many factors influence walkability. These include presence or absence and quality of footpaths, sidewalks, or other pedestrian rights-of-way, traffic and road conditions, land use patterns, building accessibility, and public safety considerations among others. ***Bikeability***, similar to walkability, refers to the extent to which a community accommodates bicycle travel. Infrastructure for bicycle use can differ substantially from pedestrian infrastructure. Often a bicycle route or lane is integrated with a roadway. As compared to a sidewalk or other off-street trail, this type of amenity is often easier and less expensive to build, as it is subject to fewer limitations in regard to right-of-way, upfront costs, and private land ownership.

Both walkability and bikeability are important aspects of ***recreational connectivity***, the extent to which community recreational resources are physically linked to allow for easy and enjoyable travel between them. As people today are more inclined to integrate recreational opportunities into their daily lives, aspects of the built environment are more important than they were in the past. This includes infrastructural elements such as trails and crossings. The infrastructure available to get active people to and from destinations is of greater importance than ever before, as more and more people prefer a leisurely walk or bike ride to a trip in the car.

Barriers are any limitations to free and easy pedestrian and bicycle movement within a community. These are typically major infrastructural features such as roadways, waterways, or railroad tracks that impede active transportation and often pose a potential risk to public safety. The need to cross such obstacles serves to limit access to recreation facilities. Barriers may also involve other types of physical obstacles, topography, or exposure to the elements as well as perceived obstacles like crime risks or a lack of familiarity with an area. People increasingly expect that such barriers will be addressed and that parks, recreation centers, and other community resources be easy to access for a variety of users employing a variety of travel modes.

Recreational connectivity in most American communities usually starts with trails, but includes other infrastructural elements such as street/railroad crossings, sidewalk landscaping, lighting, and drainage, as well as services such as public transit options or bike-share and car-share availability. A ***trail system*** refers to all trails and associated infrastructure that serve active transportation users in a community. This may include trails of varying scale intended to serve users within a park, throughout a community, or across a region. It may include various types of trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, equestrians, or other active users.

As a trail system matures, the need emerges to address barriers such as roadways, waterways, and railroad crossings that separate distinct trail networks in order to create a truly connected trail system. A ***trail network*** is a part of a trail system within which major barrier crossings have been addressed and all trails are connected. Trail networks within a trail system are typically separated from each other by such barriers or by missing trail connections. Signaled crosswalks, pedestrian underpasses, and bridges can be used to help users navigate barriers. New trails may be added to link trail networks and improve overall connectivity. Most communities have several trail networks that connect users to common destinations such as schools, shops, restaurants, and civic and religious institutions, in addition to parks and recreation facilities. The more integrated these networks, the more connected a community.

Building a trail system involves many considerations beyond the control of park and recreation managers. Vacant lands, utility easements, street right-of-ways, and existing social trails may be worth exploring for trail feasibility and to determine how trail development in these areas might impact overall connectivity. However, other departments and agencies will need to be consulted and partnered with to address issues such as land acquisition, street crossings, and utility maintenance. To complicate matters, the distinction between a recreational trail and a transportation trail can be hazy. On-street connections via usable, comfortable bicycle lanes and routes are also critical to establishing good recreational connectivity. Though invaluable to community infrastructure, additional trails connections can introduce a diverse variety of users and many complications. The types of collaboration necessary to build a trail system are not without their challenges, yet can yield lasting partnerships that benefit the community.

Trails Hierarchy

It is helpful to recognize that trails may be developed at a variety of scales. Many trails serve only park users, while others are of community-wide or regional extent. Also, people with a destination in mind tend to take the most direct route, while recreationists often enjoy going the long way around. An exemplary trail system will provide multiple opportunities to utilize trail segments to access different parts of a community directly or enjoy recreational loops or circuit trails of various size. A hierarchy of trails allows users to choose from several options to reach a destination directly or spend time simply enjoying the journey. Three distinct tiers may be distinguished that relate to a trail system:

1. Park Trails
2. Community Trails
3. Regional Trails

Park Trails

A trail system typically starts with within parks. Such interior trail assets, once established, provide a good point of departure to plan new trails outside park boundaries. Trails within parks are assets as valuable as other types of park facilities or amenities such as a playground, a ball field, or a picnic table. Loop trails within a park are particularly suited for exercise or recreational use.

Community Trails

With internal park trails established, the next step is to focus on connecting these park assets to each other and to various places within the community. This involves capitalizing on existing opportunities to create strategic off-street and on-street pedestrian and bicycle links between popular recreation locations. Wide, under-utilized street corridors are good options for creating pedestrian trails and bicycle routes within developed parts of a community. With these critical pedestrian and bicycle arteries established, focus may then shift to developing spurs along these routes to other parks, schools, civic, commercial, and religious centers. Strategies to retrofit developed areas to meet the need for safe active transportation routes may be found in the Urban Street Design Guide released the in 2013 by the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO, www.nacto.org). This valuable resource provides a full explanation of complete streets based on successful strategies employed in various North American cities.

Regional Trails
Regional trails typically provide connections to access nearby communities, and often link existing trail systems together. Development of regional trails usually involves extensive coordination with county offices, private land owners, and/or government entities such as the Colorado Department of Transportation.

Trails Typology
In the Wheat Ridge Study Area, the process of building a trail system is well underway. Trail opportunities exist at all levels of this hierarchy, and existing park assets are fairly well distributed. The existing infrastructure lends itself well to future trail development.

In addition to the park, community, regional trail hierarchy already discussed, it is also useful to employ a trails typology in planning efforts. A new "trail" may actually involve a variety of infrastructural improvements. The primary consideration is how to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle users travelling along the same route. A basic trail typology of three different types is recommended. Each trail type refers to a distinct strategy for connecting one place to another:

1. Urban Trail
2. Bicycle Lane/Route
3. Open Space Trail

An urban trail, an off-street trail wide enough to accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists, is an ideal solution. This requires a street right-of-way that allows for a fully detached 10-12' multi-use trail, preferably with landscaping or other physical separation from the roadway. This type of shared-use trail is paved with separate lane designations for pedestrians and bicyclists.

An alternative to this is a bicycle lane or route. Along existing roads where space in the right-of-way is limited or a lower cost option is preferred, this alternative involves routing cyclists along a dedicated, on-street bicycle only lane with a pedestrian sidewalk along the roadside. If the street cross section is so narrow as to prohibit full time dedicated bicycle lanes, an advisory bicycle lane may be an option. The City of Minneapolis provides a good description of advisory bicycles lanes: http://www.minneapolismn.gov/bicycles/advisory-bike-lane.

In some instances a particular street is simply designated as a safe, preferred bicycle route, typically with signage but with no actual lane striping. This is a good option for low speed, low volume, and residential, or rural road conditions.

Finally, the traditional open space trail provides users with an off-street connection for shared-use intended for pedestrians, bicyclists, and occasionally, equestrian users. These types of trails typically travel through open space areas or parks, along greenways, or through trail or conservation easements. This is often considered the ideal trail type, yet the land dedication needed for an open space trail may make it impractical or impossible in an established community. For this reason, open space trails are usually located on the periphery of developed areas.

Three trail types to consider in developing a trail system in an established community. Pedestrian and bicycle users are accommodated in different ways in each trail type. Selection for each is largely driven by the surrounding built environment. Colors apply as follows: Blue for urban trails, Green for bike lanes/routes (shown here with street sidewalks), and Red for open space trail connections through less developed areas.

Making Connections

Development of a trails system is all about creating a network of connections. Here is a common sense way to think about the process.

Connect Stakeholders
Even the most well-planned, extensive trail system has to start somewhere. Developing a trail system takes time and careful planning. The scope of creating and maintaining such a network is a substantial undertaking that involves many players. This often includes school districts, user groups, county offices, state entities, federal agencies, and/or private land owners among others. Other potential partners can include utility companies, law enforcement, public works departments, and public transit operators as well as parks and recreation colleagues.

It is important to convince stakeholders that their cooperation is critical to the public good. It can be helpful to remind them of the economic boost that often results from investment in recreational infrastructure like a trail system. Of course, not all players stand to gain from trail development. It is essential that land managers and planners be aware of all possible implications inherent in their efforts. Here are a few general strategies to use in coordinating planning efforts in establishing a trail system:

- Work with a variety of departments, offices, agencies, and entities to build consensus and create advocates in planning trail future connections.
- Create connections that allow safe, comfortable routes between parks, schools, homes, and commercial areas.
- Look at existing infrastructure for areas such as utility easements, drainages, and detention ponds that may support a trails and improve connectivity.
- Consider ways in which various stakeholders may share cost burdens.
- For greatest economic impact, develop a trail system that clearly links recreation with commercial opportunities.
- Remember that the demand for trails is greater than ever—remind stakeholders that investment of time and resources will yield quality of life dividends and boost the local economy.

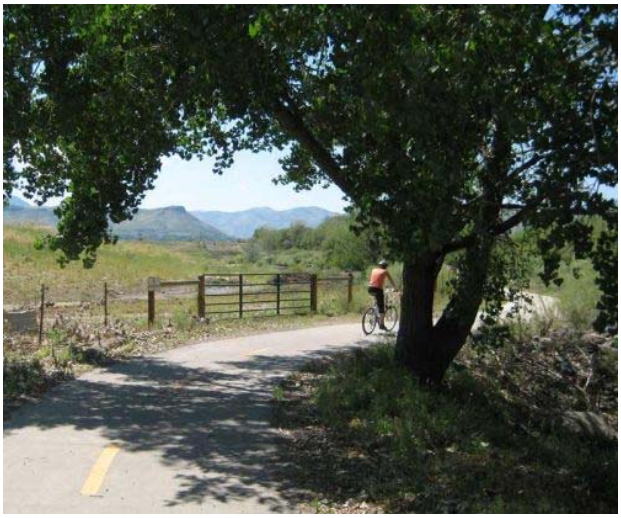
Connect Places
Trail development should start with a list of destinations. These may be parks, schools, civic institutions, commercial areas, neighborhood nodes, or other important locations. As such destinations also serve as points of origin, a comprehensive list will provide a blueprint for trail planning efforts. Trails may be prioritized based on the importance of the locations they access within the community.

Connect Trails
A trails system is nothing more than an assembly of trail connections that works together in a cohesive manner. The process of building a trail system takes time. Patience is essential. As the “low hanging fruit” is picked, those trails with more complicated politics or more substantial price tags become focal points. There may be more than one way to link two trails, however, and sometimes alternative solutions are perfectly viable. Flexibility and creativity can come in handy.

Connect People
As the Wheat Ridge trail system continues to develop, additional resources will be desirable to support users. Signage and way finding strategies, trailheads and access points, public trail maps, and smartphone applications can be successful to connect people to trails and provide a positive user experience.

Signage and Way-finding
Signage and way-finding strategies are employed to enhance a trail system by promoting ease of use and improved access to recreational resources. An important aspect of effective signage and way finding markers is branding. An easily identifiable hierarchy of signage for different types of users assists residents and visitors alike as they navigate between recreation destinations. Further, a strong brand can imply investment and commitment to active transportation which can positively impact community identity and open up economic opportunities.

Trailheads & Access Points
An essential, yet often overlooked aspect of a trail system, is the need to provide users with access to trails. There are two ways to approach this, with a trailhead or with an access point. First, a formal trailhead may include various amenities such as a parking area, bicycle racks, signage, restrooms, drinking water, a trail map, and an information kiosk. A trailhead provides access to trails that typically serve a higher volume of users with parking and a staging area for their visit.



The second approach involves simply providing a trail access point, usually without the extensive amenities found at a trailhead. Trail access points are more appropriate in residential or commercial areas where users are more likely to walk or ride a bicycle to reach the trail. They may also be commonly found along spur trails or secondary trails that serve to access a more heavily used primary trail.

Map & App Resources
By making trail maps available, users may enjoy trails in Wheat Ridge with greater confidence and with a better understanding of distances, access points, amenities, and the system as a whole. Even with a developing trail system, a trail map can provide valuable information to users. In addition to showing streets with bicycle paths and safe on-street bike routes, the maps may also include information about trail ownership, which is helpful, as it displays some trails within easements or even on private land with use agreements.

Another way to provide trail mapping to users is through web based smartphone or tablet mobile technologies. Maps made available on this type of platform are more dynamic, always on hand, and can be easily updated as a trail system evolves. Though this type of resource requires upfront investment and may be cost prohibitive, it is likely, as technologies advance, these costs will become more manageable in the future, making web based maps more viable long term planning solution.

Public Transportation
A final consideration in regard to recreational connectivity is public transportation. Though this falls outside the realm of parks and recreation, many recreational users enjoy the convenience that public transit affords. Partnership with the Regional Transportation District (RTD) is recommended to ensure that future public transit planning in Wheat Ridge considers access to park lands, trails, and common destinations such as schools and recreation centers to best serve the community.

Additional Resources
The National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA) recently compiled summaries of current research and best practices on active transportation and safe routes to parks. These and other valuable resources may be found on the NRPA website:http://www.nrpa.org/research-papers/

In summary, the Clear Creek trail system is well developed within the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt. Access to trails from residential and commercial areas is available in many places. Access points such as these are provided to eliminate the need for users to pass through private property to reach an off-street trail. New trails should be planned to accommodate access points whenever possible. A simple spur trail from a street sidewalk to a primary trail will usually suffice.

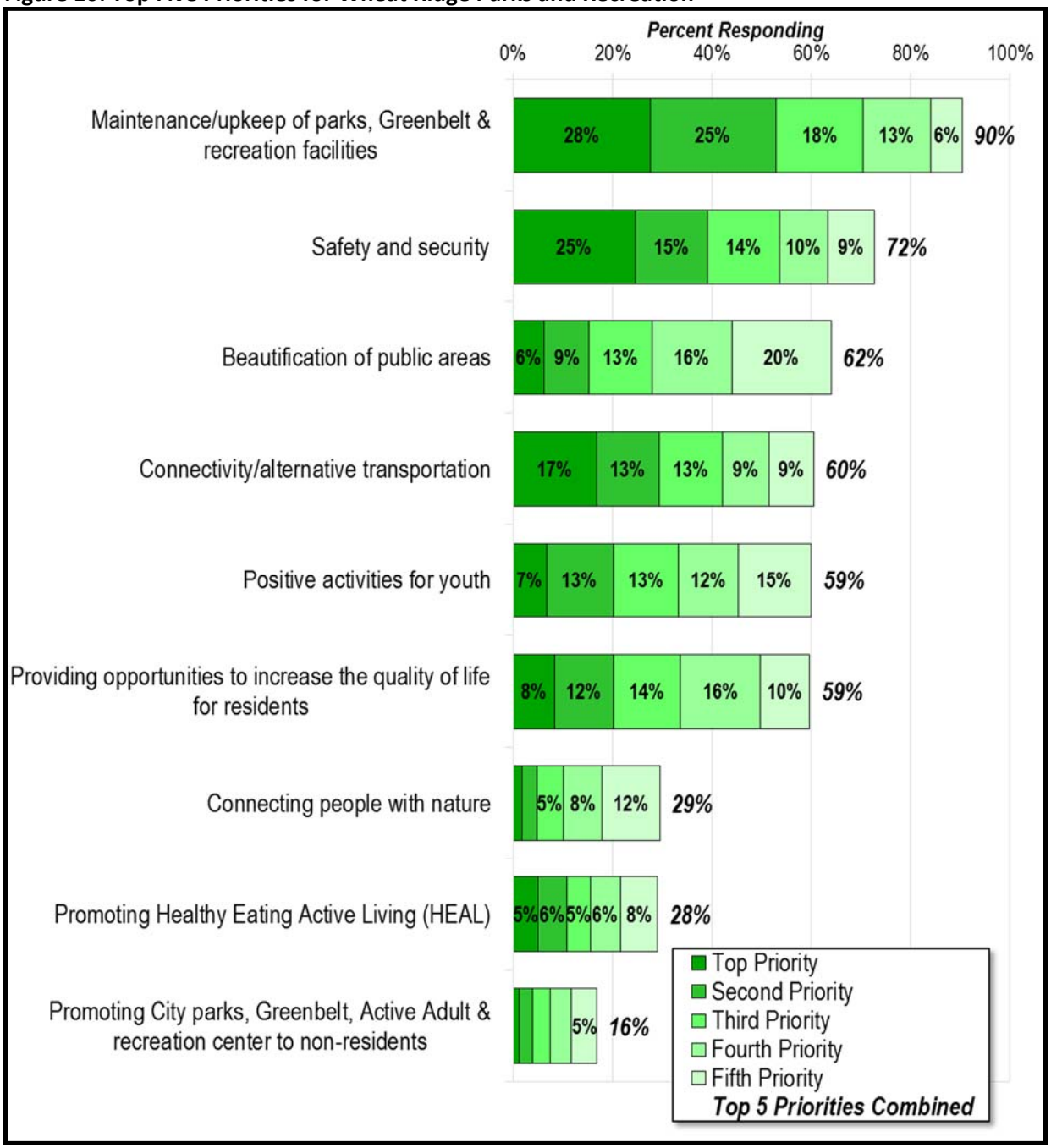
D. Level of Service Recommendations

- Community Parks should serve as a **"Signature"** to the overall system**.**
- Consider survey input for growing need for new or trending components or facilities.
- Ensure **ADA** access throughout park system.
- Continue to **upgrade playgrounds** on regular basis.
- Consider repurposing underutilized components or adding new components to meeting **new trends or growing needs**.
- Consider **Programming** needs when upgrading, repurposing, or adding to existing parks.
- **Capitalize** on the Greenbelt as an important community resource and asset**.**

The following sections provide a discussion of recommendations in greater detail. The first section on **Level Of Service Improvements** illustrates a few different options to improve Level of Service in the Wheat Ridge Study Area, informed by the site assessments and the statistically valid survey. This includes explanation of strategies that address maintenance, upkeep, and improvement of existing parks and facilities, high demand components, and school partnerships. The second section on the **Wheat Ridge Greenbelt** discusses the value of this important resource and asset. The third section on **Recreational Connectivity** discusses the value of a recreational trails system and outlines essential concepts as a reference for future trails planning.

Top Parks and Recreation Community Improvement Priorities
Survey respondents were asked to indicate their top five priorities for City of Wheat Ridge parks and recreational services. ***Figure 10*** shows the percentage of invitation respondents who reported each value as a first, second, third, fourth, or fifth priority and allows the opportunity to see how respondents prioritize various values in relation to one another. Maintenance/upkeep of parks, the Greenbelt, and recreation facilities is the top priority among invitation respondents, with 90 percent of respondents including this category as one of their top five priorities. Maintenance/upkeep of recreational facilities also had the highest share of respondents indicating this to be their top priority (28%). Other highly-ranked priorities include safety and security (72%) and beautification of public areas (62%).

Figure 10: Top Five Priorities for Wheat Ridge Parks and Recreation



Level of Service Improvements

Findings of LOS analysis, along with responses from the statistically-valid community survey, provide some guidance toward improving recreation in the Wheat Ridge Study Area. Although land acquisition and large-scale capital investment is sometimes needed, there are alternatives. This section discusses recommendations to enhance level of service through improvement of existing sites, development of new facilities, and potential partnerships.

Maintenance and Upkeep of Existing Parks
Frequent monitoring and assessment of park facilities and components is key to maintenance and upkeep of existing parks. The department should develop a methodology or system of routinely assessing component condition. This may be similar to the current strategy for replacing playgrounds within the system.

Strategies for Addressing Low-Functioning Components
The inventory process for the master plan included rating components throughout the system on their functionality. Components whose functionality is below expectations were identified. A list of these can easily be extracted from the inventory dataset.

By improving a component you are also raising the Level of Service in your community. A strategy for addressing the repair/refurbishment/replacement or re-purposing of low-functioning components should begin with the following steps.

- Determine why the component is functioning below expectations. Was it poorly conceived in the first place? Is it something that was not needed to begin with? Is it the wrong size, type, or configuration? Is it poorly placed, or located in a way that conflicts with other uses or detracts from its use? Have the needs changed in a way that the component is now outdated, obsolete, or no longer needed? Has it been damaged? Or, has the maintenance of the component simply been deferred or neglected to the point where it no longer functions as intended?
- Depending on the answers from the first step, a strategy can be selected for addressing the low-functioning component:
    - If the need for that type of component in its current location still exists, then the component should be repaired or replaced to match its original condition as much as possible. Example: playground.
    - If the need for that type of component has changed to the point where the original one is no longer suitable, then it should be replaced with a new one that fits the current needs. Example: larger picnic shelter.
    - If a component is poorly located, or was poorly designed to start with, consideration should be given to relocating, redesigning, or otherwise modifying it. Example: redesign to provide screening from traffic noise.
    - If a component is no longer needed because of changing demands, then it should be removed unless it can be maintained in good condition without excessive expense, or unless it has historic or sentimental value. It is possible that through ongoing public input, and as needs and trends evolve, new needs will be identified for existing parks. If there is no room in an existing park to address new needs, the decision may be made to remove or re-purpose an existing component, even if it is quite functional. Example: re-purpose seldom used tennis courts.

Trends to keep an eye on while deciding what to do with low-functioning facilities, or determining how to make existing parks serve the needs of residents as highly as possible, include (but are not limited to):

- Dog parks continue to grow in popularity. Dog parks are an important form of socializing for people who enjoy the company of other dog owners at the dog park, and for singles, a dog park is a good place to meet people.
- Skateboarding and other wheel sports continue to grow in popularity. Making neighborhood parks "skateable" and distributing skating features throughout the community provides greater access to this activity for younger people who cannot drive to a larger centralized skate park.
- A desire for locally-grown food and concerns about health, sustainability, and other issues is leading to the development of community food gardens in parks and other public spaces.
- Events in parks, from a neighborhood "movie in the park" to large festivals in regional parks, are growing in popularity as a way to build a sense of community and generate revenues.
- Spray parks are growing rapidly in popularity, even in cooler climates. A wide and growing selection of products for these facilities is raising the bar on expectations and offering new possibilities for creative facilities.
- New types of playgrounds are emerging, including discovery play, nature play, adventure play, and even inter-generational play. Some of these rely upon movable parts, supervised play areas, and other variations that are different from the standard fixed "post and platform" playgrounds found in the typical park across America.
- Integrating nature into parks by creating natural areas is a trend for a number of reasons. These include a desire to make parks more sustainable and introduce people of all ages to the natural environment. An educational aspect is an important part of these areas.

One Wheat Ridge example of repurposing an existing component in the current system might be the Creek Side Port-o-let shelter. This could become a small picnic shelter near the playground.

Another example to meet the needs of a growing number of Pickleball players is to convert existing underutilized areas to Pickleball courts. For example, this might be accomplished at either Apel Bacher's 3rd tennis court, or the Randall basketball court, but would allow only one court per site.

Master Planning and Park Renovation

In addition to low functioning components, several parks in the system are in need of site master planning and renovation. The statistically-valid survey asked respondents to rank facilities by importance based on those they felt needed to be added, expanded, or improved. These ***high demand components*** should be considered in any efforts to add new components in the Wheat Ridge Study Area. Many of these needs may be addressed within the existing system by upgrading facilities, developing new facilities, or by establishing or strengthening partnerships. These include:

- Prospect Park and Anderson Park (should be master planned and evaluated for current vs. future use)
- Anderson pool and locker rooms

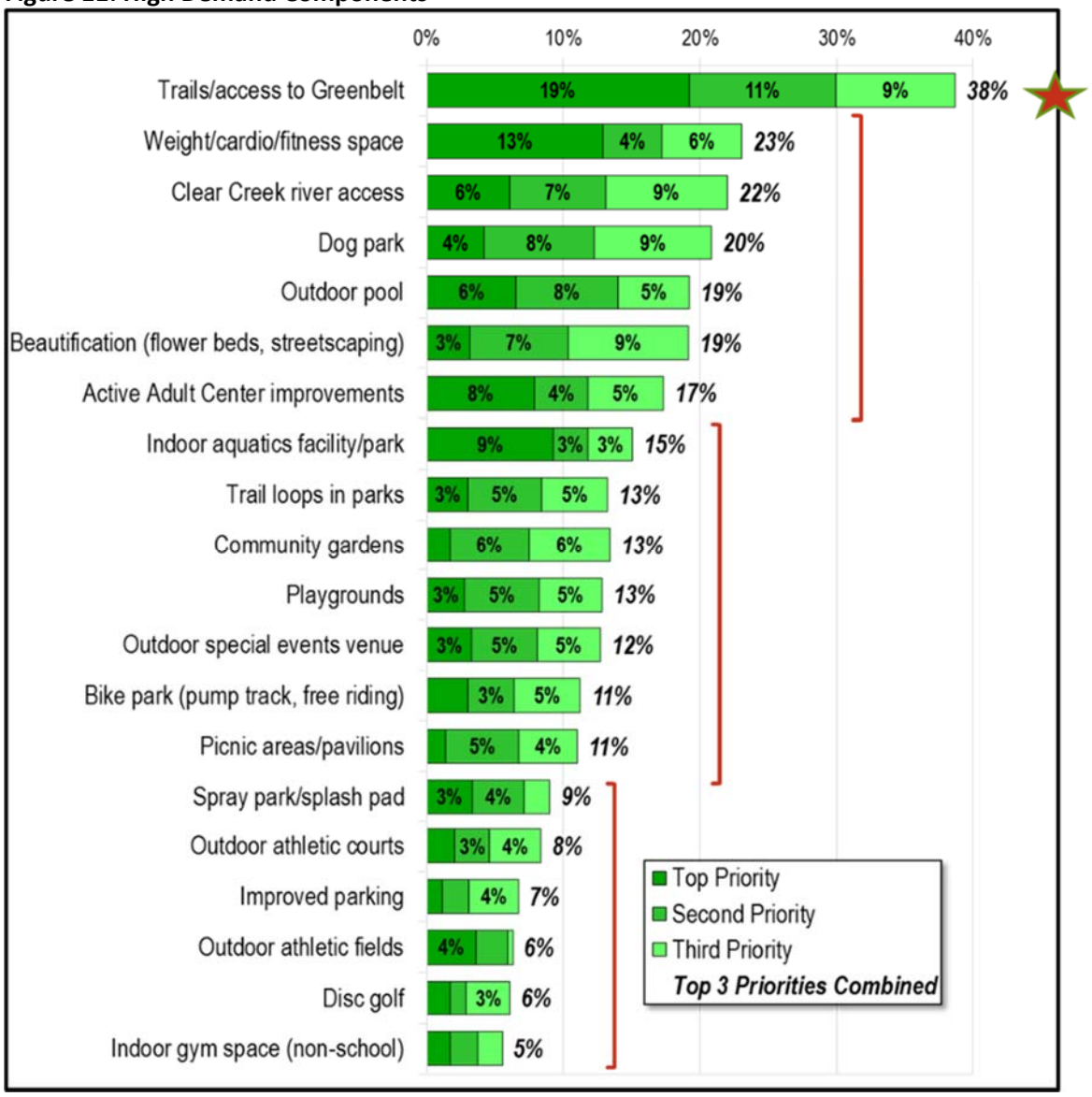
ADA Transition Plan and Compliance
According to the ADA.gov website, "Access to civic life by people with disabilities is a fundamental goal of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). To ensure that this goal is met, Title II of the ADA requires State and local governments to make their programs and services accessible to persons with disabilities." One important way to ensure that Title II's requirements are being met in cities of all sizes is through self-evaluation, which is required by the ADA regulations. Ongoing self-evaluation and development of a comprehensive transition plan are also ADA mandates and must be a priority of the Park and Recreation Department.

On September 14, 2010 the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) issued an amended regulation implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA 2010 Standards). On March 15, 2011, the amended Act became effective, and for the first time in history, includes recreation environment design requirements. Covered entities (City of Wheat Ridge) were to be compliant with design and construction requirements and the development of three-year transition plan by March 15, 2012. Implementation of the three-year transition plan must be complete by March 15, 2015. The City of Wheat Ridge has developed a transition plan and implementation of that plan is in progress. A number of park facilities remain out of compliance with ADA requirements pending adequate funding for required improvements.

High Demand Components for Additions, Expansions, or Improvements of Facilities

Respondents were asked to indicate their top three priorities for additions, expansions, or improvements of parks and recreation **facilities*. Figure 11*** depicts the percentage of invitation respondents who reported each facility as a first, second, or third priority. These ***high demand components*** should be considered in any efforts to add new components in the Wheat Ridge Study Area. Many of these needs may be addressed within the existing system by upgrading facilities, developing new facilities, or by establishing or strengthening partnerships.

Figure 11: High Demand Components



The highest demand facilities based on survey responses are the Greenbelt and the Recreation Center. The Greenbelt is significant, and a detailed master plan with focus as presented earlier is warranted.

Paved recreational paths and soft surface trails were indicated as a high priority, as was greater connectivity between existing trails and pathways. The Clear Creek Trail is an excellent resource that will serve well as the "backbone" to further develop the Wheat Ridge trail system. Further discussion on best practices, with some specific recommendations, may be found in the following section on **Recreational Connectivity**.

“Dog Park” was cited as a top priority in the survey, even though the City currently has a dog park at Fruitdale Park. This demand could be associated with the actual location of the existing dog park or its condition. It could also be lack of knowledge or awareness by a segment of the population. Dog parks are a growing trend in parks and recreation, and the demand may simply be that one dog park is not enough to meet the needs of Wheat Ridge residents.

The survey indicates a need for community events location. The City should look for existing park locations that can accommodate these types of events. The proposed site master plans for Prospect Park and Anderson Park should be considered as possible locations due to their size and central locations.

Historical facilities could be expanded to include more interpretation and passive use. Currently, both the Baugh Property and the Historical Park have limited outdoor components. Passive components in the form of passive nodes, interpretative signage, and exhibits would enhance the recreational experience of these locations and increase their overall level of service.

Some discussion also addressed the condition and access to athletic fields. While the current number of fields may be adequate to meet the needs of the community, the condition of the fields appears to suffer due to lack of rest time for turf. The **addition of more fields** would allow for adequate rest of existing fields and improve overall field condition and safety. In addition, many of the existing fields are often located in neighborhood parks. While important to the neighborhood level of service, programming of these fields may result in neighborhood conflict. Users are often forced to park on neighborhood streets for example. The addition of sports fields to complement the Creekside Sports Complex could greatly improve the level of service for this user group. Another possibility that could be explored to meet the need for additional athletic fields may be partnerships with local schools. Public access to existing school facilities and improvement of those facilities might help serve this need and allow for investment in other priorities. Further discussion may be found in the following section on **School Partnerships**.

Other components could also be added to existing parks either as replacement or repurposing of existing components no longer in high demand or as additional components where space allows. Courts, especially Pickleball courts, are trending nationwide and were addressed as a topic in the Wheat Ridge focus groups. Fitness and wellness demands and needs can be partially addressed through the addition of measured loop walks at existing parks. Supplementing these loops of longer trail segments with fitness stations further enhances the fitness and wellness aspect of these components.

School Partnerships

Despite the fact that school facilities are quality alternatives that supplement parks and other public recreational resources, residents are often less likely to visit and use them. As recreation facilities on school grounds are only available during non-school hours and on weekends, this limited accessibility can make nearby users wary. One way to address this issue is to partner with schools to promote use of school facilities by the community. Environmental cues and on-site community programming and can make these assets more inviting and thus improve public access.

Partnership between a public recreation provider, such as Wheat Ridge Parks and Recreation and local schools, can bolster level of service by creating additional recreational opportunities. Neighbors may simply need to be informed that use of school facilities is welcome. Site features such as welcome signage or an entry gateway can make school grounds more inviting. A clear message about school hours and time limits to public access can be helpful to those planning a visit. Volunteer adult supervision can also encourage use of school playgrounds or other facilities. Organized events or drop-in sessions are also helpful in creating awareness of school grounds as community assets.

An informative summary of public use of school grounds may be found here:
http://publichealthlawcenter.org/topics/healthy-eating/shared-use-school-property

One program, called Learning Landscapes, has had great success making school resources inviting to the nearby community. This approach engages the local community to envision, plan, build, and maintain custom playgrounds at neighborhood schools. The intention is to extend learning opportunities beyond the school walls and into the community. Developed by faculty and students at the University of Colorado at Denver this initiative is a proven low cost way to foster a greater connection between local residents and neighborhood schools.

Under the Learning Landscapes program, redeveloped school grounds typically include demonstration gardens, yard games, art, shade features, and outdoor classroom facilities as well as play equipment. Volunteers are put to work in the planning and construction of these new facilities alongside emerging professionals and school personnel. The result is a sense of community investment and ownership in these assets such that they better serve nearby residents. This program serves to bolster ties between schools and neighbors by strengthening lines of communication and a commitment to shared resources. Learning Landscapes has had a positive impact on the role that school ground facilities play in neighbors' daily lives, and as such elevate the level of service for the area.

More information on Learning Landscapes may be found here:
http://www.learninglandscapes.org/

School partnerships can be valuable to provide additional options for public recreation. The Parks and Recreation Department currently partners with the School District on joint use of fields and facilities through an existing Inter governmental agreement.

The following table represents a summary of recommendations identified during site assessments and includes components that were identified as failing to meet expectations compared to similar components in the system and additional components or improvements that would increase the level of service offered by each park.

Note: Component numbers in parenthesis, for example Playground (C540) refer to specific components identified during the assessment. See Inventory Atlas (separate document) for more information.		
Location	Assessment	Recommendations
Anderson Park	A park of this stature needs to be a signature park with appropriate amenities and design. Great street frontage and connection to the greenbelt offers numerous opportunities. Park serves as a trailhead but amenities are scattered throughout park. Dated locker rooms impact the pool facility.	Make improvements needed to create a signature park with appropriate amenities and design. Develop a site master plan that considers optimizing available space for current community needs. Upgrade locker rooms at the Aquatic Complex (C530).
Apel Bacher Park	This pocket park has 3 tennis courts (C545 & C582).	Investigate use patterns of the 3 tennis courts. Consider repurposing at least 1 court as a Pickleball court.
Baugh Property	Historic cabin w/Victorian house built around it. Operated by Wheat Ridge Historical Society and owned and maintained by Parks Division. Opportunities exist to increase the level of service provided by this parcel as a passive or educational park.	Consider working with the Historical Society to add passive and educational components to this parcel.
Bonnie's Park	While the playground (C544) equipment appears in decent shape, safety surfacing is pea gravel with plastic curbing. A portion of rubberized surfacing is in poor condition. GIS boundary inaccurate.	Upgrade playground (C544) surfacing to ADA accessible surfacing such as engineered wood fiber. Staff should work with GIS section to correct park boundary.
Boyd's Crossing Park	This small neighborhood park is in a higher density housing area and has easy access to the Clear Creek Trail and the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt. The playground (C540) is dated and has pea gravel surfacing.	Upgrade playground (C540) and replace safety surfacing to meet ADA requirements. Consider other upgrades or additional components to increase positive neighborhood impact.
Creekside Park	Located along the Green Belt, this park functions largely as a sports complex. Shelter (C380) appears to be former port-o-let enclosure that could be adapted to small picnic shelter.	Add tables to increase the functionality of the shade shelter at playground.

Location	Assessment	Recommendations
Discovery Park	Newly developed Community Park with many unique features. This park is very popular, but shade is limited even though there are several shade shelters.	Consider adding additional shade at the playground.
Founders' Park	Nice passive park with native landscape.	Consider additional interpretative (C357) signs to highlight City Founders. Signs could also be added to educate users on the characteristics and benefits of the native plantings.
Fruitdale Park	Very popular park with school age kids. Current home to Wheat Ridge's only dog park (C365).	Consider adding shade shelter at dog park. This park might also be a good opportunity to add additional preteen/teen activities or programming due to adjacency to school and multi-family housing. Consider adding fitness stations to existing loop walk.
Happiness Gardens	ADA accessible community gardens include a small parking lot and extensive garden plots adjacent to school.	No significant needs identified at this time.
Hayward Park	Nice park adjacent to City Hall. Park has both active and passive components. Current GIS boundary does not include the playground (C600).	No significant needs identified at this time. Staff should work with GIS section to correct GIS boundary. Fitness stations or fitness course might be appropriate at this location.
Historical Park	This park has no typical park amenities but could offer some passive components to utilize nice grounds. WR Historical Society operates and Parks Division maintains this property.	Consider adding components such as a shade shelter, benches and picnic tables in addition to interpretative signage to outdoor exhibits.
Hopper Hollow Park	New park under construction during assessment. GIS boundary appears to be inaccurate.	No significant needs identified at this time. Staff should work with GIS section to correct GIS boundary.

Location	Assessment	Recommendations
Johnson Park /Trailhead	This park is primarily a trailhead, but amenities are inconsistent as compared to other vehicle access trailheads. Vehicular access is often not available due to weather conditions. The majority of this location is in the floodplain which limits development or amenities.	This property should be evaluated as part of the Greenbelt Master Plan.
Lewis Meadows Open Space	This property is managed as open space, not a developed park. Lena Gulch runs through this property and the City owns all easements. A local trail in park has no connections outside of the property and a social trail completes the loop (C604) within this parcel.	Improvement and expansion of soft trail surface should be considered to formally complete a loop walk. Formal water access could provide nature based programming (C377).
Louise Turner Park	This small neighborhood park is located adjacent to multi-family housing. The playground was updated in 2006 and included ADA accessibility.	No significant needs identified at this time other than general maintenance. Consider a small shade structure close to the playground.
Panorama Park	This popular park offers a variety of activities and features great street access but has some limited ADA access throughout park. While the ballfields lack outfield fencing they do have adequate seating and dugouts. (C534 & C546). Seniors heavily utilize tennis courts (C387) but the courts lack seating and shade.	Consider upgrading tennis to post tension surfacing due to expansive soil conditions. Also consider adding benches and small shade structure at tennis courts. Park could be a good candidate for loop walk and should be a high priority for ADA upgrades.
Paramount Park	The south park parcel is considered part of this park but feels isolated from rest of park. There is some concern regarding conflict between multi-purpose field use and adjacent busy street.	Consider adding park identification sign to south parcel. Investigate ways such as fencing or plantings to reduce soccer balls from entering street on east boundary of multi-purpose fields.

Location	Assessment	Recommendations
Prospect Park	This park has great potential, but it feels rather disconnected and could stand to be improved. It fails to capitalize on good street frontage along 44th, and the placement of the tennis court (C457) impedes a sense of entry into park. The pond is a nice feature but is not well integrated into the rest of the park. The ballfields (C456 &C533) have drainage issues and are not up to the standard developed at Creekside Park. The south field outfield is also used as a multi-purpose field.	Park should be master planned and updated as signature park. Consider additional developed water access near park entry to create focal point and park integration. Ballfield (C456 &C533) drainage issues should be addressed. Relocate tennis court (C457) near other active components. Consider ways to visually or physically connect playground (C461) and shelter (C459) to the rest of the park without creating additional conflicts with Clear Creek trail users. Evaluate functionality of Berbert House.
Randall Park	This park has a large fenced concrete pad with two basketball hoops (C310), but a significant amount of the pad is unused. Several components in this park are not ADA accessible.	Consider repurposing underutilized portion of basketball court as a Pickleball court. Park should be considered as a priority for ADA upgrades and may be a candidate for an added loop walk.
Recreation Center	The outdoor portion of the Recreation Center has a single multi-purpose field as well as parking and a portion of trail.	No significant improvements were identified for this location. Staff should confirm and coordinate with GIS section that GIS boundary is correct.
Richards-Hart Estate	This facility and grounds are available for rental for weddings, etc. The estate is on the National Register of Historic Places. Also offers a playground and lots of passive area.	No significant improvements were identified for this location. Staff should confirm and coordinate with GIS section that GIS boundary is correct.
Stites Park	Playground (C467) is dated and has pea gravel with some rubberized safety surfacing. Trees along ballfield (C541) appear to overhang field. GIS boundary appears inaccurate.	Upgrade playground and surfacing. Annual maintenance should include tree trimming at ballfield. Staff should work with GIS section to update park boundary to include all components.

Location	Assessment	Recommendations
Town Center Park	Located in a shopping plaza, this park is not visually accessible from the street. The only component, an elaborate water feature (C543), is not currently operational.	Determine ultimate usefulness of this park as a community resource. Upgrade water feature or redesign area if this park remains in system.
Wheat Ridge Greenbelt	A tremendous community asset that sometimes lacks consistent and appropriate active and passive recreation components or opportunities. User conflicts, safety concerns, and access have also been identified as consistent issues.	Wheat Ridge should move forward with a Greenbelt Feasibility Study and Master Plan that addresses the following key elements: Trailheads and access points, safety and security along the length of the system, enhancing the experience of a variety of different types of users, nature based programming opportunities, strategic waysides and trail amenities, historical, nature, or environmental interpretation opportunities, and commercial or mixed use opportunities on adjacent or nearby properties.

E. Level of Service Implementation Plan

Goal: Establish Strategies to Maintain and Improve Level of Service and Assets within City Parks and Trails Inventory.

OBJECTIVE: Conduct studies, develop plans, and define funding to preserve and enhance existing levels of service within existing and future inventory of facilities.			
Actions	**Primary Dept. Responsibility/ Support**	**Resource Impact/Budget Requirement**	**Timeframe to Complete**
1. Conduct a feasibility study to develop plans and goals for the preservation, expansion, and improvement of the Greenbelt area.	Parks and Recreation Department	Staff Time plus independent consultant to conduct feasibility study at estimated cost of $30,000 to $40,000	Short-Term
2. Improve and repurpose Anderson and Prospect parks through the creation of redevelopment plans for both sites.	Parks Recreation Department	Staff Time plus landscape design consultant to assess current conditions and prepare new site Master Plan. Estimated design Master Plan cost is $50,000 to $60,000.	Mid-Term
3. Continue to evaluate current trail system, implement existing pedestrian/bicycle plan, and consider use of consultant to develop a comprehensive, City-wide implementation plan for trails and system connectivity.	Parks and Recreation Department	Staff Time plus consultant time at undetermined cost.	Mid-Term
4. Upgrade, improve, or repurpose existing community, neighborhood, and pocket parks by creating and funding a system-wide capital repair/replacement program.	Parks and Recreation Department	Staff time plus consultant time at undetermined cost	Long-Term
5. Review and update Parks mapping and GIS mapping information to eliminate conflicts and correct data errors in current system.	Parks and Recreation Department and Planning Department	Staff time and possible software expense	Short-Term

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IV. HOW WE MANAGE – ANALYSIS OF PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

A. Recreation Program Analysis

Summary of Recreation Program Analysis
The intent of the Program Analysis is to assist the Parks and Recreation Department in assessing the current program offerings, identifying the program gaps, and in researching needs within the community. Information gathered is used to help determine future program offerings and improve overall communication with City residents.

Throughout the program analysis process, user survey, and public process, four (4) main areas of interest within the City of Wheat Ridge's recreational programming came to the forefront:

- Fitness/Health and Wellness
- Teen Programming
- Seniors/active adults
- Special Events.

The majority of surveyed households indicated they had a need for the following programs, activities, and special events:

- Fitness and wellness programs have the highest share of respondents reporting this as their top priority (24%).
- Special events followed closely behind, with 17 percent identifying this as their top priority, and 54 percent of respondents reporting special events as one of their top three priorities.
- Senior/55+ programs (36%), non-sports programs (30%), and swim lesson/aquatic programs (25%) also ranked relatively high on the list.
- Positive activities for youth (including teens) was identified by 59 percent of respondents as a priority.

Existing programs are popular and well attended. Many of the items noted below are programming functions already successfully performed by the Department. The analysis below provides comments on existing and possible improvement to existing programs.

Fitness/Health and Wellness
While the City of Wheat Ridge Fitness and Wellness programming is very robust, survey and focus group data indicates some shortcomings in marketing and promotion of programs. This appears to have a noticeable limiting effect on program participation, and may create a perception that there is a need for additional programming. Some capacity constraints exist in that the current Recreation Center and Active Adult Center are operating at or near capacity, thus space for expanding programs is not readily available.

Teens
The majority of nation-wide Teen programming centers on technology and technology education, which is likely of limited interest with today's youth who are largely proficient in these areas.

It is necessary for the Department to continue to communicate with teenage users directly to learn about their ideas and gauge their interests in the development of teen programming. One way to accomplish that is to create a Teen Programming Council in conjunction with local middle and high schools to directly connect programmers with the teen demographic. Additionally, programmers could develop partnerships within the local schools to offer teen programming at school site(s) improving awareness through on-site marketing.

Seniors/Active Adults
Wheat Ridge's aging population makes this a prime target area for expanded programs, though facility and space constraints may limit the ability to expand. A wide range of existing program offerings are of interest to active adults, with a focus moving toward active, outdoor programs.

Special Events

Increase in Special Events was one of two most frequent responses to the city-wide survey. Adjacent municipalities have developed a number of successful special events, and it appears that Wheat Ridge residents would like to see more similar events in their City. It is suggested that the City pursue increased partnership with business and non-profit communities to develop special events at appropriate locations, with the goal of building city identity and creating positive financial impact. Increased community events in addition to those currently held at the Rec Center could help cross promote the department/facilities/programs.

In order to ensure the long-term sustainability of festival offerings in The City of Wheat Ridge, and to ensure that all special events are working together to support overall City goals, an ongoing evaluation of special events should address the following areas:

- ***Content*** – Review the inventory of events offered by the City and outside agencies to determine if there is a duplication of events, or a gap in types of events. If duplications are present, the City should look at cooperative efforts to combine offerings. The City could also explore combining several independent events into one longer event as a means to maximize resources within the city, including the use of sponsorships.
- ***Demographic*** – Analyze what population is benefiting from the events and to what degree they should be supported financially or by other City resources
- ***Geographic*** – Evaluate where events are held in consideration of appropriateness, capacity issues, and sustainability of the physical resource. Map location of event inventory potential to ensure services go beyond the downtown area and do not exceed the physical resource capacity of the downtown area.

Program Development
Constant review of methods in place for the delivery of parks and recreation services will allow the Parks and Recreation Department to improve upon current practice where needed, while developing strategies to assist in the delivery of expanded services. The basis of determining core services should come from the vision and mission developed by the City, and regular dialogue with users and residents, recognizing what brings the greatest community benefit. Services must also remain in balance with the resources of the department and understanding of the competitive market.

Program staff are the most qualified to be charged with program research and development guided by trends, by comparison with other agencies, changing demographics, and cost recovery philosophy.

The Department should continue current efforts of program development around the priorities identified by customer feedback, program evaluation process, and research. These following criteria should be examined when developing new programs.

- **Need:** outgrowth of a current popular program, or enough demonstrated demand to successfully support a minimal start (one class for instance).
- **Budget:** accounting for all costs and anticipated (conservative) revenues; should meet cost recovery target established by the department.
- **Location:** appropriate, available, and within budget.
- **Instructor:** qualified, available, and within budget.
- **Materials and supplies:** available and within budget.
- **Marketing effort:** adequate and timely opportunity to reach intended market; (either existing marketing budget or as part of new program budget).

New leisure and recreation trends may drive different needs. Starting new programs, based on community demand and or trends, can be risky due to the inability to predict their success, yet are important to the vitality of the department. If the program interest seems great, as with those identified in the citizen survey, then the programs should be expanded. Lack of available space may hinder new or expanded opportunities in some cases.

Program Evaluation
Qualified program staff must be assigned to periodically review selected programs in order to ensure consistent program character, instructor qualifications, training and evaluation, instructor pay scales, and fees.

All programs should be evaluated annually to determine if they should be continued, changed (market segment focus, time/day offered, etc.), or discontinued. A few simple questions should be asked about each program that includes:

- Is participation increasing or decreasing?
- Is there information contained in user feedback that can be used to improve the program?
- Are cost recovery goals being met? If not, can fees be realistically increased or costs reduced?
- Can the program be offered by a more suitable or more qualified provider?
- Is this program taking up facility space that could be used for expansion of more popular programs or new programs in demand by the community?

Financial Sustainability
The City must continue a resource allocation and pricing philosophy that reflects the City's financial goals and commitment to sustainability. This philosophy will be especially important as the City moves forward in the development of new programs and additional or expanded facilities. Refining the subsidy and cost recovery philosophy is important as the City works to sustain services in both the short and long term.

Marketing
From the user survey it is apparent the most frequently mentioned reasons for residents not making use of Department programs or facilities are:

- Sixty-five percent (65%) of those responding to the survey indicated that communication and expanded awareness of programs is the most important area that, if addressed by the City, would increase use of facilities.
- On-line registration pages were described as difficult to navigate for information on program offerings.

The Department should continue current efforts to improve internal production of published materials (including website and on-line registration). This should improve communication with residents about program/event offerings and general Department information. Potential additional efforts might include:

- Identify a Department staff liaison to work directly with the City's IT Department to coordinate and improve on-line registration processes and marketing opportunities.
- Develop other electronic based methods to improve communication including e-mail blasts and newsletters.
- Look at incorporating smart phone app offerings like that of the GoStrive App which can help:
    - Build a stronger, healthier community through activities and programs.
    - Cultivate an interactive link between agencies and participating individuals.
    - Optimize programs with powerful analytics to reduce costs and generate revenue.
    - NRPA members can join the "Go Strive. Go Play" campaign – it's free!
- Continue existing promotional practices and incorporate other efforts to better promote the Department and its facilities and programs such as:
    - **Continue to Participate in Booths & Community Event Presence –** When other events take place in the community, provide a booth to show people what is offered. If possible, bring a laptop to show what programs and provide the opportunity to register on the spot.
    - **Early Bird Registration & Pricing –** Continue to encourage people to sign up early with early bird registration. For example, open registration online one week earlier than offline to encourage people to visit your online portal.
    - **Free passes –** Offer a free pass program. Allow patrons to try the rec center for free for one visit, one week, or any other time period that seems appropriate. Another way to offer free passes would be to set up a buddy pass where members get two free passes per month, for example, so they can bring their friends along.
    - **Groupon –** Groupon, LivingSocial, Amazon Local, or other group discount programs can bring results ranging from dangerous to impressive. If you use one of these campaigns, first be sure to understand your pricing structure for the deal; and understand that coupons may be attracting bargain hunters more than potential repeat customers.

- **Open House –** Continue to host an open house event and promote it around town. Provide tours, set up booths, and create an experience for people interested in what is offered. Hand out flyers to those who are not ready to register that day and be ready to register others on the spot with mobile tablets and registration stations.
- **Sibling Discounts –** Family is a core pillar for parks and recreation organizations. To get more families into the center continue to offer, sibling discounts. For example, a basketball league could cost $50 for the one child or $80 for two.

B. Programming Recommendations Implementation Plan

Goal: Continue to Improve and/or Develop New Approaches to Recreation Programming.

Objectives: Expand program offerings in key areas, add new programs and events for targeted patrons, and maintain sustainability through appropriate cost recovery.			
Actions	**Primary Dept. Responsibility/ Support**	**Resource Impact/Budget Requirement**	**Timeframe to Complete**
1. Formalize process for evaluation, recommendations, and implementation for strategic programming, targeting fitness, wellness, and senior/active adults programs.	Parks and Recreation Department	Staff Time	Short-Term
2. Continue current efforts to improve external communication and website user-friendly upgrades, including liaison with City IT department.	Parks and Recreation Department IT Department	Staff Time	On-going
3. Consider adding and supporting, through volunteers, one or two community wide special events to existing program offerings. Due to cost and staff time, proceed with caution.	Parks and Recreation Department	Staff Time	Short-Term
4. Make an attempt to connect with area youth to provide or expand teen programming. Create a teen council to help with selecting program options and promoting participation.	Parks and Recreation Department	Staff time	Short-Term
5. Enhance current cost recovery strategy by developing a more comprehensive cost recovery policy (see financial goal also).	Parks and Recreation Department	Staff time	Short-Term

C. Financial Analysis

The City of Wheat Ridge incorporates a priority based approach to its budgeting process. Priority Based Budgeting is a resource alignment prioritization methodology that the City has adopted to measure its financial health and wellness. The process is designed to produce results that will include:

- Safe community
- Economic vitality
- Desirable, diverse, and connected neighborhoods
- Healthy, attractive, and well maintained community
- Effective transportation and mobility options
- Good governance

Recreation Center Fund

The Recreation Center Fund is a sinking fund established with the initial voter approved financing for the Recreation Center. This fund covers the approximate subsidy of $225,000 annually required for the Wheat Ridge Recreation Center. This fund is expected to be depleted within three to four years. Future funding for the operating subsidy will need to come from either the General Fund, Open Space Fund, Conservation Trust Fund, increased fees and charges, new revenue sources, or a combination of all options.

Public Art Fund

The Public Art Fund receives revenues from the following:

- One percent of the fees received from plan reviews, building permit fees, and use tax on private construction costs of $100,000 or greater.
- One percent of budgets of the City and State of Colorado capital constructions projects of $50,000 or more, located within any urban renewal area of the City.

Revenues generated for the fund are reliant on the building and development that goes on within the City limits in any given year. For instance, the fund generated $4,867 in 2012 and a projected $24,108 in 2014. Currently, the fund has a projected balance of approximately $61,000. There have not been any expenditures from this fund (art acquisition) since 2011.

Open Space Fund

The Open Space Fund receives revenues from a half-cent sales tax (per capita allotment, directly distributed) through Jefferson County Open Space for the purpose of acquiring, developing, and maintaining open space properties within the City of Wheat Ridge. Open Space tax revenues generate approximately $875,000 annually. The funds are currently used for maintenance and construction of parks, open space, and trails facilities within the City.

Conservation Trust Fund

The Conservation Trust Fund receives 40 percent of the net proceeds of the Colorado Lottery. The revenues are distributed to municipalities, counties, and other eligible entities for parks, recreation, and open space purposes. Wheat Ridge's distribution is used for new projects as well as maintenance projects. Conservation Trust Fund revenues generate approximately $300,000 annually for the City.

Department Cost Recovery

Outside of the funds listed above, revenue for the Parks and Recreation Department comes from two primary sources, the City's General Fund and the Recreation Center Fund. The current total Department cost recovery level, including the recreation center, is approximately 42 percent. Excluding the recreation center, the remainder of the services offered by the Department have a cost recovery of 17 percent. Cost recovery for the recreation center by itself is approximately 88 percent as shown in ***Table 10.***

Table 10: Wheat Ridge Parks & Recreation Cost Recovery

Wheat Ridge Parks and Recreation Cost Recovery Analysis 2014	Including Rec Center Fund	Recreation Center Only (Fund Subsidy Not Included)
General Fund Expenses	$4,216,453	
Recreation Center Expenses	$2,307,355	$2,307,355
Total Expenses	**$6,498,765**	**$2,307,355**
Recreation Center Revenues	$2,044,000	$2,044,000
Services Revenues (Programs, Rentals, etc.)	$ 725,286	
Total Revenues	**$2,769,286**	**$2,044,000**
Cost Recovery	**42%**	**88%**

Fee Philosophy

The Department utilizes the following formula for developing fees for programming:

> **Direct cost plus 30% to cover utilities, activities guide publication, janitorial work, and building maintenance.**

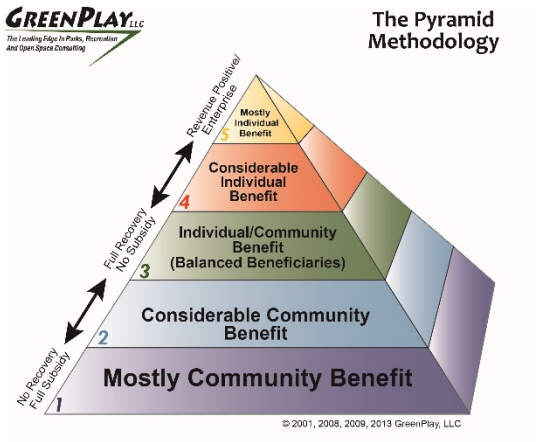
The Parks and Recreation annual budget is structured to meet the fee philosophy outlined, and expenses beyond those covered by fees are funded through General Fund revenues of the City. The Recreation Center annual budget is structured in a special fund and is not directly subsidized by the General Fund revenues.

There are nationally recognized methodologies and best practices that should be implemented in the future to help decision makers and staff operate using consistent guidelines and cost recovery targets for categories of service, even within individual divisions. This is not to promote inter-departmental comparisons (as parks, trails, and open space will naturally always have a lower cost recovery expectation than recreation due to the nature of the services). It is to provide each fund with standard and consistent definitions of cost of service provision to benchmark against itself over time, based on City leadership direction, the department's mission and vision, and community values and goals. This methodology can also be examined based on community input regarding "willingness to pay" and demand for additional services and facilities.

The Parks and Recreation Department seeks to achieve fair and equitable cost recovery levels. The Department should periodically revisit these levels to ensure that they are moving in a direction that seeks to sustain the quality of facilities, programs, and services now and into the future.

The Pyramid Methodology – A Potential Management Tool

Refining the subsidy and cost recovery philosophy is important as the City works to sustain services in both the short and long term. The ***Pyramid Methodology*** is an effective management tool currently being utilized by agencies across the country as a way to develop and articulate a subsidy and cost recovery philosophy.



The creation of a cost recovery and subsidy allocation philosophy and policy is a key component to maintaining an agency's financial control, equitably pricing offerings, and helping to identify core services including programs and facilities. Critical to this philosophical undertaking is the support and buy-in of elected officials and advisory boards, staff, and ultimately, citizens. Whether or not significant changes are called for, the agency should be certain that it philosophically aligns with its constituents. The development of a financial resource allocation philosophy and policy is built upon a very logical foundation, based upon the theory that those who benefit from parks and recreation services ultimately pay for services. **Additional information on the *Pyramid Methodology* was provided as a staff resource document, along with information on the *Public Sector Service Assessment***, which identifies optional provision strategies for all services in relation to what is happening in the market, the financial capacity of the service, and the agency's strength or weakness in the market.

This methodology develops and implements a refined cost recovery philosophy and pricing policy based on current "best practices" as determined by the mission of the agency and each program's perceived benefit to the community and/or individual. The identification of core programs and development of a cost recovery policy is built on a very logical foundation; using the understanding of who is benefitting from recreation services to determine how the costs for that service should be offset.

In the process, recreation programs and services are sorted along a continuum of what delivers the greatest community benefit to what delivers the greatest individual benefit. The percentage of cost recovery for each tier level of the pyramid, and category within each tier (not necessarily each individual program) is then determined to create an overall cost recovery policy.

Developing effective ongoing systems that help measure success in reaching cost recovery goals and anticipate potential pitfalls are dependent on the following:

- Understanding of current revenue streams and their sustainability.
- Tracking all expenses and revenues for programs, facilities, and services to understand their contributions to overall department cost recovery.
- Analyzing who is benefiting from programs, facilities, and services and to what degree they should be subsidized.
- Acknowledging the full cost of each program (those direct and indirect costs associated with program delivery) and where the program fits on the continuum of who benefits from the program or service, to determine appropriate cost recovery targets.
- Defining direct costs as those that typically exist purely because of the program.
- Defining in-direct costs as those that are typically costs that would exist anyway (like some full-time staff, utilities, administration, debt service etc.).
- Program fees should not be based on ability to pay, but an objective program should be in place that allows for easy access for lower income participants, through availability of scholarships and/or discounts. In many instances qualification for scholarships and/or discounts can mirror requirements for free or reduced-cost lunch in schools.

D. Financial Recommendations Implementation Plan

Goal: Determine Appropriate Strategies to Fund the Recreation Center Subsidy in Advance of Depletion of the Recreation Center Fund.

Objective: To identify and secure funding sources for continued funding or replacement of Recreation Center sinking fund.			
	Primary Department responsibility	Resource impact/budget requirement	Timeframe for Completion
1. Explore and identify alternate funding available in current City budget (if any).	Parks and Recreation Department Finance Department	Staff time Re-allocation of funds from other uses	2015
2. Evaluate feasibility of surcharge to replenish fund.	Parks and Recreation Department Finance Department	Staff time Additional revenue	2015
3. Evaluate feasibility of fee or tax increases to generate funds to cover cost of a capital repair fund for existing parks and facilities.	Parks and Recreation Department Finance Department	Staff time and new revenue source	Short-Term

Goal: Sustain the Quality Services to Which Citizens Have Become Accustomed Through the Renovation and Expansion of Current Facilities.

Objective: Conduct multiple Feasibility Studies to determine specific facility needs, understand future capital and operational funding, and estimate revenue generation potential.			
Actions	**Primary Dept. Responsibility/ Support**	**Resource Impact/Budget Requirement**	**Timeframe to Complete**
1. Conduct a feasibility study for the expansion of the Wheat Ridge Recreation Center with a focus on expanding general fitness and wellness spaces and space for active adult programming.	Parks and Recreation Department	Staff time/ Consultant Fees ($30,000 to $40,000) *Note: Construction and Ongoing Operational Costs Will be Determined as part of the Feasibility Study*	Short-Term
2. Conduct a Feasibility Study for the renovation of the Anderson Park locker rooms, activity room, and gymnasium.	Parks and Recreation Department	Staff time/ Consultant Fees ($30,000 to $40,000) *Note: Construction and Ongoing Operational Costs Will be Determined as part of the Feasibility Study*	Short -Term
3. Consider alternatives for preservation and improvements to existing Active Adults Center.	Parks and Recreation Department	Staff time plus possible consultant assistance.	Short-Term

E. Maintenance Analysis

The Parks, Open Space, and Forestry Division operates and maintains an extensive system of developed parks, the Greenbelt, athletic fields, natural areas, and trails. The system consists of:

- 300 acres of Open Space
- 6.5 miles of Hard Surface Trail
- 173 acres of Park Land
- 3.5 acres of City Landscapes (Buildings, Plazas)
- 21 Parks (1 Dog Park, 1 Skate Park)
- 11 Diamond Ball Fields
- 7 Rectangular Fields
- 7 Tennis Courts
- 72 landscaped Traffic Calming Islands.
- Community Gardens

Park maintenance tasks include general maintenance all developed parks, sports and athletic fields, playgrounds, picnic shelters, tennis courts, trails and trail corridors, and other City landscapes such as the municipal building, medians, and traffic calming features. Additionally, staff is responsible for special event set up and tear down (i.e. Carnation Festival, Holiday Lighting, and National Night Out).

Operating Budget and Staffing

In 2014, the projected operations budget for parks, open space, and forestry was $1,994,997. A breakdown of the budget by percentage is as follows:

- Parks – 67%
- Open Space – 19%
- Forestry – 14%

Staffing for the Division has remained fairly consistent over the last several years and today consists of a total of 23 full-time employees (Parks – 17, Open Space – 3, Forestry – 3). In addition to full-time staff, the Division utilizes part-time seasonal staff. There is some fluctuation in the number of annual seasonal hours from year to year, but seasonal workforce averages out to be around 17,700 regular hours and 376 overtime hours annually.

Contracted Services

The Division contracts out several services that include tree trimming, mosquito/insect control, janitorial and burglar alarm (historical facilities), Mile High Youth Corps (mulching, fuel load reduction on the Greenbelt), and bridge inspections. Approximate cost of contracted services is $162,000 annually.

Applied Level of Service

It is the Park, Open Space, and Forestry Division's goal to maintain a consistent level of service throughout the system in terms of the maintenance needs of each property. For instance, properties such as the Wheat Ridge Municipal Building, Wheat Ridge Recreation Center, Active Adult Center, and the Richards-Hart Estate are more visible and highly used by the public and receive a higher level of service (increased frequency of tasks) than other properties. Open space lands such as the Greenbelt require a higher level of service for some areas and lower for others. Parks with multiple amenities, such as Discovery Park, require a higher level of service and attention than parks with fewer amenities.

Citizen Complaints

Maintenance staff identified the primary community complaints regarding maintenance of park, trails, and open space, and they are consistent with what was expressed during the public focus group meetings. Primary complaints included:

- Number of (lack of) restrooms on the Greenbelt Trail
- Lack of mileage markers on trails
- Dog and goose droppings
- Athletic fields conditions, turf wear
- Irrigation running when it's raining
- Park damage and maintenance issues from metal detecting, geocaching, and gold panning

Parks and Open Space Maintenance Staff Input

During the focus group discussions maintenance staff was asked to identify areas of concern and improvements that could be made. The following are staff responses to this question.

- New maintenance facility – The current facility is too small and outdated to properly support the Maintenance Division.
- ADA compliance issues – Maintenance staff supports the need to improve in this area.
- Aging infrastructure in some parks; need for capital repairs and replacement.
- Many trees are reaching the end of their life cycle, and there is not currently funding to implement the tree replacement program.

Areas of Focus/Improvement

The following areas of focus were developed after taking public and staff comments into account:

- Establish maintenance categories to create park and open space maintenance priorities based on locations, use, and importance. Due to the diversity of amenities and variety of vegetation, the levels of maintenance will vary within each park and open space to a little or great degree. To provide consistency and budget management for the Division, maintenance levels should be divided into three of four levels separately for parks and open space. Once the varying levels of maintenance are determined, then practical standards for each level should be developed consistent with resources, policies, and community expectations (a sample of suggested maintenance levels and standards has been shared with Wheat Ridge maintenance staff).
- Develop a park amenities replacement program based on inventory findings of this Master Plan.
- Improve and continue to monitor ADA compliance.
- Plan for the renovation of existing park, open space, and forestry maintenance facility.
- Respond to public input regarding sustainability of operations including use of native plants, water conservation, and proper mix between turf and natural areas.

F. Maintenance Recommendations Implementation Plan

Goal: Adjust and Improve Maintenance Assets and Programs to Provide Resources to Continue High Level of Service.

Objective: Create proper policies, and provide resources to allow maintenance division to perform at a high level of effectiveness. Extend or improve current levels of service.			
Actions	**Primary Dept. Responsibility/ Support**	**Resource Impact/Budget Requirement**	**Timeframe to Complete**
1. Complete expansion and relocation plans for new Maintenance Center and secure budget funds for construction. Complete drawings and prepare estimate of probable cost.	Parks and Recreation Department Public Works Department Finance Department	Staff Time/ Budget Impact to be determined by proposed cost estimate	Short-Term
2. Determine maintenance categories and set service standards for irrigation, mowing, inspections, trash removal, fertilizer, weed control, tree maintenance, playgrounds, courts, general safety inspections, etc.	Parks Recreation Department	Staff Time/ GreenPlay has provided samples for implementation	Short-Term
3. Capital replacement program. Determine methodology and implement program and funding for capital repair/replacement of parks components.	Parks and Recreation Department and Finance Department	Staff Time/may require assistance from outside consultant	Mid-Term
4. Evaluate, assess costs, and present recommendations associated with Forestry Management Plan for trees located in public Right of Way.	Parks Department and Forestry staff	Staff Time/budget impact to be determined by evaluation outcome	Short-Term