





Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan Update 2016

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION & PLANNING CONTEXT

Purpose of this Master Plan

The purpose of this ***Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan*** is to provide an integrated, visionary plan to guide the development of the Town of Erie parks, recreation, open space, and trails facilities, programs, and services. The ***Master Plan*** reflects the vision and guiding principles of the *Erie Comprehensive Plan* and balances community needs and interests with current and potential funding sources. This Plan provides the Town with a vision and plan of action to meet community needs over the next five-to-ten years. This ***Master Plan*** should be reviewed and updated on a periodic basis to ensure continuing relevance and to reflect amendments to the *Erie Comprehensive Plan* and the *Municipal Code, Title 10*.

Chapter 1 Contents

- Purpose of this Master Plan
- Contents of the Plan
- Relationship to Other Plans
- Vision & Mission Statements
- Erie's Unique Setting, Character & Heritage
- Accomplishments since the 2010 Master Plan
- Methodology for this Master Plan
- Public Process & Timeline for the Master Plan

Contents of the Plan

This ***Master Plan*** is organized into the following sections:

- Chapter 1: Introduction & Planning Context
- Chapter 2: Master Plan Framework
- Chapter 3: Parks
- Chapter 4: Recreation
- Chapter 5: Open Space
- Chapter 6: Trails
- Chapter 7: Administration and Management
- Chapter 8: Implementation Plan

The first two chapters lay out the framework for the plan. Chapters 3-7 – Parks and Open Space, Recreation, Trails, and Administration and Management – focus on key findings and recommendations. The final section summarizes the recommendations from the five preceding chapters in an Implementation Plan table that identifies responsibility, financial implications, and timeframe.

Relationship to Other Plans

This ***Master Plan*** responds to, and builds on, the following Town planning documents.

- *Erie Comprehensive Plan* (2015, as amended)
- *Erie Municipal Code, Title 10* (2006, as amended)
- *Town of Erie Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan* (2010)
- *Transportation Master Plan* (2008, as amended)
- *Erie Impact Fee Study* (2016)

This ***Master Plan*** is a companion document to the *Erie Comprehensive Plan*. This Plan is an update to the *Town of Erie Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan* (2010) and was identified as a priority action in the *Comprehensive Plan* under both the "Parks, Recreation, and Trails" section and the "Open Space" section of the Action Plan in Chapter 7.

Another top priority action of the *Erie Comprehensive Plan* in the "Natural Resources and the Environment" section was to "maintain the Natural Areas Inventory." The *Natural Areas Inventory* was completed in 2008 and serves as a companion document to the *Erie Comprehensive Plan* and this ***Master Plan***. A current asset inventory, as of 2016, is included in this Plan.

This Plan also addresses any conflicts between relevant plans and includes recommendations to ensure consistency and integration.

This ***Master Plan*** should be reviewed and updated periodically to reflect changes in demographics and policies and to maintain consistency with other planning documents.

Vision & Mission Statements

The following Town vision and mission statements provide the foundation for this ***Master Plan***. These vision and mission statements affirm the central role that the Town's parks, recreation, open space, and trails system plays in contributing to the quality of life of the community.

Town of Erie Comprehensive Plan Vision

Erie is a community which recognizes the importance of conserving and enhancing its historic small town character, the roots from which it grew, preserving the natural environment in which it resides; a caring community which offers its residents an environment in which to seek a high quality of life; a balanced community with a diverse range of housing, employment, educational, shopping and recreational opportunities; and a vital community which provides financial and social support for quality of life programs.

Parks & Recreation Department

Vision

Elevate Your Experience, Erie Parks, and Recreation.

Mission

The Parks and Recreation Department builds community through the delivery of exceptional parks, open spaces, trails, facilities, programs, and services.

Values

The illustration on the following page (***Figure 1***) is the Department's Vision Map. This map shows how the Vison, Mission, and Values of the Department are intergrated to provide the highest quality of service to the community.

- *Stewardship*
- *Integrity*
- *Respect*
- *Service*
- *Pride*

Figure 1: Erie Parks and Recreation Department Vision Map



Open Space and Trails Advisory Board Mission

The Town of Erie's Open Space and Trails Advisory Board (OSTAB) advises the Board of Trustees on open space and trails-related issues. The mission of this seven member advisory board follows.

> *The mission of OSTAB is to conserve and protect open space lands and significant natural resources in and around Erie, and to provide for an extensive network of trails open to all types of non-motorized travel that link neighborhoods to other areas in the community and region.*

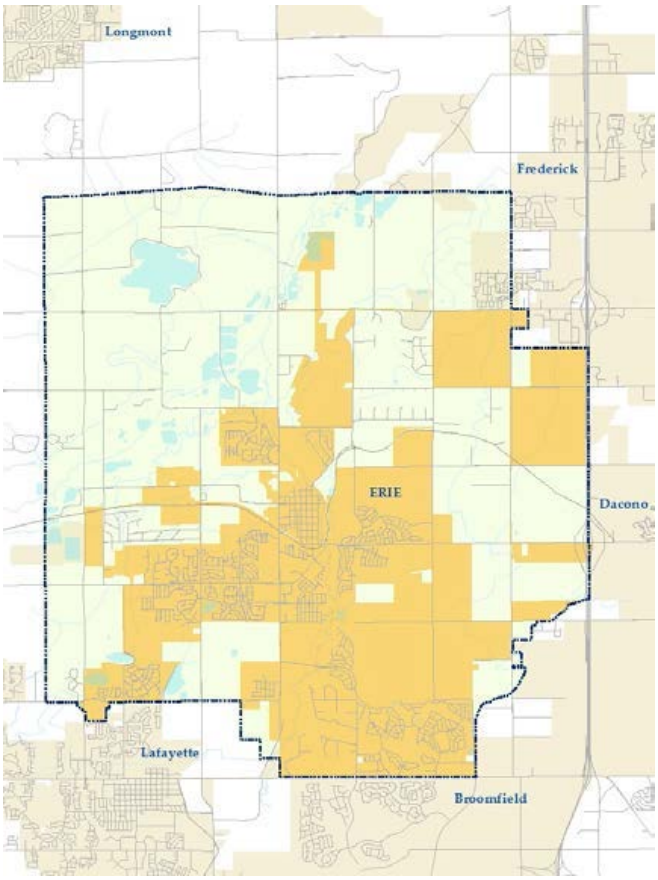
Erie's Unique Setting, Character, and Heritage

The original plat for Erie was filed in 1871, following establishment of the Briggs Mine, the first commercial mine in Weld County. Until that time, surface coal had been delivered to its customers by horse and wagon. It was also in 1871 that the Union Pacific Railroad extended a spur westward from Brighton on its main line between Denver and Cheyenne. Coal from the Erie deposits was needed to fuel their huge steam locomotives. The Boulder Valley Railroad, as it was called then, opened up the northern coal fields for development. Soon coal from Erie mines was being shipped by rail to markets in Denver and as far east as Kansas City. (Source: *Erie Comprehensive Plan*)

The Town of Erie was incorporated in 1874. The incorporated area now covers 19 square miles, while Erie's planning area is 48 square miles. With a population of approximately 22,000 in 2015, Erie is growing at a steady pace. The Town of Erie is split between Boulder and Weld Counties and is serviced by two school districts, Boulder Valley School District and St. Vrain Valley School District.

Figure 2 depicts the planning area for the Town of Erie.

Figure 2: Town of Erie Context Map from Comprehensive Plan

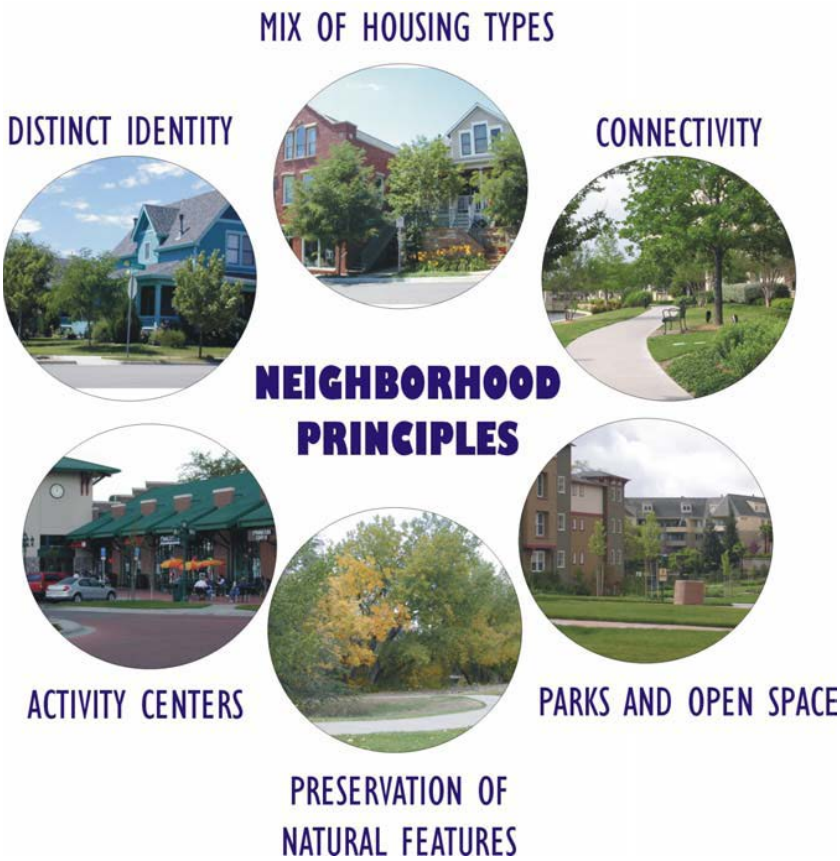


Erie's unique setting along Colorado's Front Range is characterized by significant features including the following:

- A historic small town character and atmosphere.
- An important heritage of mining, archeological areas, and architecture.
- Proximity to and views of the Rocky Mountains to the west.
- Coal Creek, Boulder Creek, and a series of ponds along a natural drainage way – the confluence of the creeks is located to the north and forms a corridor for riparian vegetation and wildlife.
- Open, rural, and agricultural land that surrounds the community and separates Erie from neighboring communities.
- A unique prairie cemetery.
- A vital and historic Old Town.

The community has a strong appreciation for these features and a desire to preserve the Town's character and heritage. This ***Master Plan*** is guided by neighborhood development principles set forth in the *Erie Comprehensive Plan* (as amended) that include an interconnected network of open space and trails, preservation of natural features, a clear activity center, and a distinct identity as illustrated in ***Figure 3***. This plan reinforces neighborhood principles and the central role that the parks, recreation, open space, and trails system plays in creating a healthy, vibrant community with a strong sense of place.

Figure 3: Town of Erie Comprehensive Plan Neighborhood Principles



Accomplishments Since the 2010 Master Plan

As the Parks & Recreation Department enters its second decade of existence, growth has driven the daily activities and contributed to the accomplishments of the last six years. Below are some highlights of these accomplishments.

- Achieved national accreditation through the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) for excellence in operation and service; providing assurance that the agency meets national standards of best practice.
- Received the 2013 National Parks & Recreation Associations Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management.
- Opened the Erie Community Skate Park.
- Installed shade structures over the bleachers in the Ballpark at Erie.
- Completed playground replacements/upgrades at two neighborhood parks.
- Completed the Coal Creek Trail, connecting with the regional Coal Creek/Rock Creek Trail System to provide trail access from Erie to Eldorado State Park.
- Completed local trail connections.
- Updated department pricing philosophy.
- Opened The Boneyard, Erie's first dog park.
- Purchased conservation easement on the Bryant Property.
- Purchased open space properties totaling 185 acres:
    1. King Property.
    2. Sunset.
    3. Schofield Farm.
    4. Strieby Property.
    5. Boele-Messersmith Property.
    6. Allan Farm.
- Developed Community Garden at Kenosha Farm.
- Received three grants:
    1. Home Depot Community Volunteer Grant to refurbish Coal Creek Park playground.
    2. Colorado Youth Corps Association and Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) for 2 weeks of work from Boulder Youth Corps.
    3. GOCO Planning grant for planning Star Meadows Neighborhood Park.
- Completed 4.75 miles of natural surface single track trails in conjunction with local volunteer nonprofit group (Erie Single Track Advocates).
- Updated neighborhood park development standards.
- Adopted new park impact fees.
- Updated Department Vision, Mission, and Values.
- Maximized facility spaces at Erie Community Center.

Methodology for this Master Plan

A project team, made up of key staff and consultants from GreenPlay and Design Concepts, and public input guided this planning effort. This collaborative effort created a Master Plan that incorporates industry best practices, local knowledge, and institutional history. The project consisted of the following tasks.

Needs Assessment and Public Involvement:

- Review of previous planning efforts and historical information:
  - Town of Erie Comprehensive Plan (2015).
  - 2015 National Citizen Survey.
  - 2014 Town of Erie Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Survey.
  - 2010 Town of Erie Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan.
  - Town of Erie Water Conservation Plan (2014).
  - 2008 Town of Erie Transportation Master Plan.
  - 2016 Tischler Bise Impact Fee Study.
- Consideration of the profile of the community and demographics, including anticipated population growth.
- Community involvement efforts including a community survey, focus groups, and community-wide public meetings (2014).
- Identification of alternative providers of recreation services, offering insight regarding partnership opportunities.
- Research of trends and statistics related to American lifestyles to guide the efforts of recreation planning and programming staff.

Inventory:

- Inventory of parks, open space, trails, and facilities using existing mapping, staff interviews, and on-site visits to verify amenities and to assess the condition of the amenities and surrounding areas.

Level of Service Analysis:

- Input from staff to provide information about existing and planned parks and recreation facilities and services, along with insight into the current practices and experiences in serving Erie residents.
- Analysis addressing parks, recreation, open space, trails, and related services.

Assessment and Analysis:

- Review and assessment of relevant plans including:
  - Measurement of the current delivery of service using the Geo-Referenced Amenities Standards Process (GRASP®) Level of Service Analysis, allowing for the determination of target levels of service that are both feasible and aligned with community needs. This analysis is also represented graphically through maps or *Perspectives.*
  - Assessment of current park maintenance practices and best practices.
  - Exploration of finance and funding mechanisms to support system development and sustainability.

Recommendations and Implementation Strategies:

- Identification and categorization of recommendations into goals and strategies for implementation.
- Development of an action plan for recommendations including financial implications and a timeframe to support the Plan's implementation.

Public Process and Timeline for the Master Plan

Start-up **May 2016**

- Kick-Off Meeting
- Refined project goals and work plan

Demographic and Trends Analysis and Projections **June – July**

- Reviewed Erie demographics and population projections
- Identified parks and recreation-related trends

Community & Stakeholder Input Process **June – July**

- Conducted public meetings and focus groups to validate survey findings
- Attended stakeholder meetings
- Gained input from staff members, including focus group and individual interviews

Analysis of Programs and Services **June – July**

- Reviewed Town of Erie program offerings and participation trends

Inventory and Assessment of Existing Facilities **July – August**

- Conducted inventory and analysis of Town of Erie Parks, open space, trails, and facilities

Assessment of Park Management and Maintenance **August – September**

- Analyzed current park maintenance practices

Statistically Valid Survey **2014/2015**

- Mailed survey to random sample of Erie residents
- In addition, provided open web-based survey to all Erie residents

Development of Draft Master Plan **October – December**

- Developed Draft Master Plan and recommendations, based on findings and analysis

Presentation of Draft Master Plan **January 2017**

- Suggested edits from the Town Board incorporated into the document

Adoption of Final Master Plan **February 2017**

- Master Plan adopted by the Town Board of Trustees

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CHAPTER 2: MASTER PLAN FRAMEWORK

The ***Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan*** is a supporting document to the 2015 *Erie Comprehensive Plan* (as amended). As such, it is intended to provide comprehensive analysis and recommendations on the future of parks, recreation, open space, and trails efforts in Erie. As a support document to the *Erie Comprehensive Plan*, this plan will further clarify and coordinate implementation of community development visions, goals, and policies as they relate to the overall park system.

Chapter 2 Contents

- Comprehensive Plan Policy Framework
- Municipal Code Title 10
- Demographics
- Trends
- Community Survey
- Other Stakeholder Input
- Benchmarking
- Parks and Facilities Inventory
- Level of Service Analysis

Comprehensive Plan Policy Framework

Guiding Principles

The 2015 *Erie Comprehensive Plan* (as amended) provides the policy framework for this plan. The Plan outlines the community vision and goals for the future to provide guidance for elected and appointed officials in making choices regarding long-range needs of the community. The *Erie Comprehensive Plan* contains the following eleven guiding principles. The most relevant principles to this plan are shown in **bold**.

- A Coordinated and Efficient Pattern of Growth
- Quality Design and Development
- Overall Economic Vitality
- Downtown Vitality
- A Comprehensive, Integrated Transportation System
- **Stewardship of the Natural Environment**
- **Trails, Parks, and Recreation Opportunities**
- **Protected Lands Program**
- Balanced Land Use Mix
- Stable, Cohesive Neighborhoods Offering a Variety of Housing Types
- Provide Infrastructure and Public Services Efficiently and Equitably

All of these principles are integrated into this ***Master Plan.*** The following specific principles taken from the *Erie Comprehensive Plan* are detailed below.

- **Stewardship of the Natural Environment**
  The Town will identify and conserve its natural, scenic, and environmentally sensitive areas including important wildlife habitat, waterways, and visually sensitive areas. Erie will strive to be a clean, sustainable, environmentally-friendly town.

- **Trails, Parks, and Recreation Opportunities**
  The Town will provide a diverse range of recreational opportunities to include facilities and programming for all ages and varying interests, both passive and active. Trails, parks, and recreation opportunities will be connected with and integrate open space into and between neighborhoods and other areas of the community.

- **Protected Lands Program**
  Lands that are permanently protected as open space will be used to maintain the small town atmosphere that has made Erie an attractive place:
    - *Buffering Erie from other towns and cities and shaping growth;*
    - *Creating view corridors to enable residents to see mountains, plains, and agricultural areas rather than uninterrupted housing and commercial development;*
    - *Preserving agricultural lands, keeping them in agricultural production;*
    - *Restoring riparian areas and other areas of natural habitat;*
    - *Protecting significant archeological and cultural resources;*
    - *Preserving native plant and animal habitat and travel corridors for wildlife;*
    - *Providing areas for passive recreation that emphasize enjoyment of nature; and*
    - *Distinguishing and linking neighborhoods and other activity areas within Erie through a system of continuous, connected open lands and trails.*

Principles Integrated into this Master Plan

While the vision and principles set out in the *Erie Comprehensive Plan* provide an overall direction for community development, the plan's goals and policies provide a much greater degree of focus and detail as to how the community will proceed to implement its vision. Of particular interest to the ***Master Plan*** are Chapter 6 – Natural Resources and Environment; Chapter 7 – Parks, Recreation, and Trails; Chapter 8 – Open Space; and Chapter 11 – Transportation and Mobility. Elements from other sections of the *Erie Comprehensive Plan* are woven into the analysis and recommendations and will be referenced as appropriate throughout this document. Following are chapters of the *Erie Comprehensive Plan* (denoted in italics) that provide a policy framework for this ***Master Plan***.

Natural Resources and Environment Policy Framework

The following Natural Resources and Environmental goals and policies are taken directly from the *Erie Comprehensive Plan*, Chapter 6, and provide a policy framework for this plan.

Goal #1: Protect Sensitive Areas

Preserve environmentally sensitive areas from development.

Erie contains a range of valuable natural resources that contribute to its visual quality and character, provide valuable wildlife habitat, and provide connections to other open space corridors in the region. Areas of primary significance include the Coal and Boulder Creek corridors; however, a thorough Natural Areas Inventory needs to be conducted to ensure that less visible areas are documented and preserved.

POLICIES:

NRE 1.1— CONDUCT A NATURAL AREAS INVENTORY

The Town will conduct a Natural Areas Inventory to identify environmentally sensitive areas located within the Planning Area. The inventory will serve as a guide for Town staff to identify priority areas for protection as development occurs.

NRE 1.2— CONSERVE MATURE TREES

Erie contains a large number of mature trees that add character to the community and provide habitat for wildlife. The Town supports the conservation of mature trees (i.e., trees greater than 4-inch caliper) and native species to the extent possible and encourages the incorporation of these features as amenities in future neighborhoods. Invasive species will not be preserved.

NRE 1.3—DISCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT IN SENSITIVE OR HAZARD AREAS

The Town will discourage developments where a significant risk to life and property exist, as in areas of floodplain, geologic hazard, unstable soils, undermined areas, and steep slopes in accordance with the recommendations of the Colorado Geologic Survey, FEMA, and the Office of Mined Lands.





(Top) Natural Area north of Hwy 52; (Bottom) Successful integration of existing mature trees into a new residential neighborhood.

Note: Text in italics is an excerpt from the *Erie Comprehensive Plan*.

Goal #2: Incorporate Natural Features

Encourage the incorporation of open space into new development in a variety of forms, including freestanding parcels, corridors, buffers, and linkages.

POLICIES:



NRE 2.1— MINIMIZE DISRUPTION TO NATURAL FEATURES

New development should be planned to have the least amount of disturbance to landforms and natural areas (i.e., areas that support the continued existence of geological, ecological, or other natural features). The Town will encourage setbacks and buffers between development and natural features.

NRE 2.2— MAINTAIN SIGNIFICANT VIEWS

The Town will seek to preserve the visual character of the community through the protection of important viewsheds within the community. Viewsheds should be identified as part of the site planning process and development organized to preserve them to the extent feasible. Key areas to be considered include, but should not be limited to, those areas that contain the most varied topography, such as major landforms and hilltops visible from community gateways and corridors.

Goal #3: Environmentally Sensitive Design

Promote environmentally sensitive design that minimizes the use of, and impacts to, renewable and non-renewable resources.

POLICIES:



NRE 3.1—ATTRACT CLEAN, NON-POLLUTING LAND USES

The Town will strive to attract clean and non-polluting land uses in the community.

NRE 3.2—DEVELOP WATER CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES

The Town will encourage conservation of water resources in the landscape through the use of xeriscape principles (i.e., where landscapes are designed with drought-tolerant plants in low water zones as well as fully irrigated zones) and the use of non-potable water for landscape irrigation.

(Top) Prominent views of the Front Range are visible in many areas of the community; (Bottom) one of many oil and gas wells located in Erie's Planning Area.

NRE 3.3—SETBACKS AND DESIGN OF OIL AND GAS WELLS

The Town will continue to ensure that new development is setback from oil and gas wells for safety reasons and will seek ways to make these buffered areas as attractive and useful as possible. The design (i.e., color, profile, and screening) of oil and gas wells will be subject to standards set forth by the Town.

Note: Text in italics is an excerpt from the *Erie Comprehensive Plan*.

NRE 3.4— MITIGATE RESOURCE EXTRACTION IMPACTS
The Town will continue to ensure that mineral resource extraction is adequately mitigated to reduce impacts on surrounding development and that reclaimed areas are designed to provide opportunities for recreation and wildlife habitat.

NRE 3.5—UNDERMINED AREAS
Development should not be permitted over undermined areas unless risks can be mitigated. Portions of the site deemed to be undevelopable due to the effects of undermining should be integrated as part of an overall open space network.

NRE 3.6—SUSTAINABLE DESIGN
The Town will encourage development that incorporates the principles of sustainable design and that reduces energy and resource consumption and impacts on the environment, by:

- *Minimizing resource consumption, energy use, and water use;*
- *Using renewable energy sources and locally produced materials;*
- *Minimizing use of toxic products, pesticides, herbicides, and chemicals; and*
- *Utilizing technological resources and standards such as LEED® (Leadership in Energy Efficiency and Design), BuiltGreen Colorado™, US Department of Energy's Building America program, and Energy Start and other standards for energy efficiency.*

The following Parks, Recreation, and Trails goals and policies are taken directly from the *Erie Comprehensive Plan*, Chapter 7, and provide the policy framework for this plan.

Parks, Recreation, and Trails Policy Framework

The Town should continue to build on the successes of its existing parks, recreation, and trails facilities and to expand the types of facilities and services it provides. A particular emphasis needs to be placed on providing a range of parks, recreation, and trail facilities that serve residents of all ages and abilities and that are accessible from a variety of locations within the community.

Goal #1: Balanced Parks and Recreation System
Provide strategically placed parks and recreation facilities to serve Erie residents and visitors.

POLICIES

PRT 1.1—PARK CHARACTERISTICS
Parks help provide opportunities for active and passive recreation within the community. They reinforce a sense of community by providing places for members of the community to gather and interact and they also enhance a community's image and quality of life.

A full list of pocket, neighborhood, and community parks is detailed in the inventory section of this chapter.

Note: Text in italics is an excerpt from the *Erie Comprehensive Plan*.

PRT 1.2— UPDATE PARKS, RECREATION, TRAILS, AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN
The Town will periodically update the existing Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan as an element of the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

This ***Master Plan*** meets this recommendation to update the previous plan and provide additional policies and direction to meet the Town's future parks, recreation, and trail needs.

PRT 1.3— PARK DEDICATION REQUIREMENTS
A minimum of 8.5 acres of park land per 1,000 residents should be provided in the form of pocket, neighborhood, and community parks. The distribution of this land should be as follows:

- *Pocket Parks – 0.5 acres per 1,000 residents – developed and maintained by the neighborhood.*
- *Neighborhood Parks – 3 acres per 1,000 residents.*
- *Community Parks – 5 acres per 1,000 residents.*

Where possible, parks should be developed as integral parts of other public facilities, such as schools, to avoid duplicating services.

PRT 1.4—VARIETY OF PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES
The Town will ensure that its parks and recreation facilities provide an adequate range of active and passive recreational opportunities to meet the needs of a wide array of citizens. Special emphasis should be placed on ensuring that residents have access to neighborhood parks within walking distance of their homes.

PRT 1.5—CENTRALLY LOCATED COMMUNITY FACILITIES
Centrally locate recreation centers and other facilities that serve large numbers of people on sites with visual and vehicular access from major roadways, direct trail connections, and provisions for future transit. Coordinate the location of parking trailheads with transportation master plans to ensure that they are provided in an adequate frequency to reduce driving distances. Size Neighborhood Parks adequately to accommodate use for practices by local youths.

PRT 1.6—CONNECTED COMMUNITY THROUGH THE PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION SYSTEM
Provide a community-wide primary trail system that connects major destinations and provides opportunities for trail loops with areas of interest along the route. Use road rights-of-way for trails only in the absence of other corridors. Connect Community Parks and major recreational facilities with a primary off-street trail system and open space corridors where feasible. Connect Neighborhood Parks to the primary trail system with on-street bike lanes, pedestrian walkways, and secondary off-street trails. Provide frequent pedestrian and bicycle trailhead access from adjacent neighborhoods.

Note: Text in italics is an excerpt from the *Erie Comprehensive Plan*.

Goal #2– Sustainable Parks, Trails, and Recreation System
Integrate the community's social, environmental, and economic goals within all aspects of the provision of parks, trails, and recreational services.

POLICIES:

PRT 2.1—ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS
Locate, design, construct, and maintain parks, trails, and recreational facilities in a manner that minimizes local, regional, and global environmental impacts. Examples include, but are not limited to, maintaining functioning hydrologic and ecologic systems; using salvaged or eco-friendly materials, renewable energy sources, and native or adapted, non-invasive plant species; and reducing energy use, water use, chemical use, material quantities, and transportation distances associated with materials. Mitigate impacts where feasible. Consider operations and maintenance costs during the design phase and shift financial resources forward to capital construction if long-term benefits are possible, or costs are reduced through environmentally responsible design.

PRT 2.2—SUPPORT THE LOCAL ECONOMY
Consider opportunities for local and regional companies to provide complementary services on public property to activate spaces and to integrate residents' daily routines into outdoor and indoor leisure-time activities. Examples include, but are not limited to, food and beverage vendors, recreational equipment rental, recreational instruction, entertainment, book sales, markets, and other uses that enhance the vibrancy of the public space and its intended use.

PRT 2.3—INTEGRATED PLANNING AND DESIGN
Design neighborhoods and projects that integrate parks, trails, and recreational facilities with land use, utility infrastructure, and transportation systems.

Goal #3 – Trail System
Provide for an extensive network of trails open to all types of non-motorized travel that links neighborhoods to other areas in the community and region.

POLICIES:

PRT 3.1—TRAIL CHARACTERISTICS
Trails provide off-road linkages for all types of non-motorized travel within and between the following: neighborhoods, businesses, community services, future mass transit stops, parks and open space, and publicly accessible open space and park areas. In addition, trails serve the following functions for the Town's residents:

- *Promote health and physical fitness.*
- *Provide leisure opportunities.*
- *Promote stress reduction.*
- *Increase awareness, understanding, and appreciation of open space values and functions.*

Note: Text in italics is an excerpt from the *Erie Comprehensive Plan*.

PRT 3.2—COORDINATION OF REGIONAL TRAILS NETWORK
The Town will continue to coordinate with Boulder and Weld Counties and nearby jurisdictions to plan and develop a regional trail network.

PRT 3.3—CONNECTIVITY OF TOWN TRAILS SYSTEM
The Town will encourage and facilitate the development of an interconnected network of trails that serves the entire community and provides connections to regional trail systems, such as the Colorado Front Range Trail.

PRT 3.4—TRAIL LOCATION & DESIGN CRITERIA
The Town will use the following criteria when evaluating potential trail facilities:

- *Location—To the extent possible, trails should be located, configured, and set back from natural creeks or water bodies so that recreational use will not significantly impact native plant and animal habitat.*
- *Alignment—Trails should be generally sinuous in nature, avoiding overly long and straight runs greater than 300 feet.*
- *Width—Spaces used to accommodate trails should generally be no less than 3 times the width of the trail and shall accommodate development of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant trails.*

Open Space Policy Framework

The following text is from the Open Space Chapter Eight of the *Erie Comprehensive Plan* and provides the policy framework for this *Master Plan*.

Background and Intent

Open Space is defined as:

Protected lands of significant value include those that are conserved in their natural state, restored, or improved, with appropriate native landscaping, to retain a natural or natural-appearing condition, or to conserve quality agriculture.

Broad views and rolling agricultural lands are abundant and contribute significantly to Erie's character; however, many of these lands are planned for future development in the Comprehensive Plan. In addition to parks, recreation, and trails, open space should be seen as a means to help direct growth, maintain rural character, and provide opportunities for education, wildlife protection and observation, hiking, and other passive and recreation activities for existing and future Erie residents.



Conservation of key open space lands in and around Erie will help protect the community's rural character.

Note: Text in italics is an excerpt from the *Erie Comprehensive Plan*.

The benefits of preserving and enhancing open space areas are many. Maintaining functioning ecological systems, protecting scarce natural or cultural resources, and providing high quality experiences within a natural environment are accomplished through protection of open space areas. Breaks between urban environments may also form edges to neighborhoods or communities, provide places for local agriculture to continue, preserve long distance views, and contribute to Erie's rural character. This land will ensure Erie's open and rural intent, as set forth in this document, for the near and distant future.

Interactions with other people, physical activity, understanding history and culture, and experiences in the outdoor natural environment are essential to human health and well-being. Open space (along with parks, trails and recreational facilities, which are addressed in the previous Chapter) provide critical settings for these experiences to occur.

Goal #1 – Establish an Open Space Program

Conserve and maintain important open space lands in and around Erie.

POLICIES:

OS 1.1— UPDATE OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

The Town will periodically update the existing Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan and develop a Master Plan for Open Space that considers natural areas that are inventoried and that is integrated as an element of the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

OS 1.2—FOCUS THE PURPOSE OF THE TOWN OF ERIE'S OPEN SPACE PROGRAM ON THE PROTECTION, MAINTENANCE, AND MANAGEMENT OF OPEN SPACE THAT HAS SIGNIFICANT VALUE

Protect open space that fits the classifications and standards that are adopted by the Town. Only accept ownership and/or maintenance of open space properties that function as important community resources or that preserve significant historic, cultural, archaeological, natural, or agricultural lands or other features.





Open space may serve a variety of functions ranging from rural/agricultural land preservation to the preservation of wetlands and riparian habitats.

Note: Text in italics is an excerpt from the *Erie Comprehensive Plan*.

OS 1.3—CONTINUOUS, PERMANENT SYSTEM OF OPEN SPACE

The Town will use a variety of methods (both public and private) to facilitate the creation of a continuous, permanent system of open space using natural features and manmade features such as preserved open space areas, drainages, streams, and irrigation canals, to the extent possible. The Coal and Boulder Creek corridors will serve as key elements of the Town's open space and trails network, along with their tributary drainage channels and the many irrigation ditches (Lower Boulder, FRICO, Community Ditch, etc.) located within the Planning Area. Additional open space of significant value should be identified and preserved during the subdivision or planned unit development process and through the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan. Privately developed and maintained development common area may be provided as an amenity to residents, and should be designed to provide linkages within and between non-contiguous parks, environmentally sensitive and preserved open space areas, and neighborhoods and other development areas. Development of common areas is not considered open space of significant value unless it meets the criteria in the UDC as determined by the Town.

The current width and shape and other features of a naturally occurring corridor (such as a drainage way) should be preserved in order to maintain their environmental integrity and avoid creating an "engineered" appearance. Link natural areas and habitat in corridors of adequate width to protect sensitive species and that allow for genetic diversity through species movement. Avoid creating island habitats that are inaccessible by both people and wildlife. Base decisions regarding land protection on defensible ecological, hydrological, hazards, cultural/historical resources, and visual analysis data and mapping.

OS 1.4— CHARACTERISTICS OF OPEN SPACE

Open space is characterized as undeveloped land that is permanently committed to being maintained in a natural or agricultural state and that serves one or more identified functions. (See Open Space Chapter of this Plan for list of open space functions.)

OS 1.5—VARIETY OF OPEN SPACE TYPES

Protect open space areas of all types that are of significant value. Balance the level of public use with the sensitivity of the resources and goals for protection of those resources. Select the appropriate protection method (i.e. land dedication and fee-simple ownership, conservation easement, lease, etc.) based on available funds, goals for protection, and desired level of public use.



Coal Creek Open Space.

Note: Text in italics is an excerpt from the *Erie Comprehensive Plan*.

OS 1.6—TYPES OF OPEN SPACE

Three distinct types of open space are defined below. Properties considered for dedication as open space should be evaluated for appropriateness according to the definitions and priorities below:

Unobstructed, Continuous Open Space*—Open space areas meeting the minimum acreage or requirements listed below where view corridors/scenic views, wildlife corridors and patches of land are not encumbered or are minimally obstructed by overhead utility lines, built structures, or paved surfaces (other than trails). This type of open space is the most desirable, given highest priority, and viewed as the most favorable condition if it adjoins or is contiguous with other unobstructed open space and parks. This land is also considered desirable when formulated on existing natural or potentially restorative natural features, including landforms containing native prairie, range land, riparian, wetland and aquatic habitat, and/or significant geologic features. The dedication of this open space by the development community or for acquisition by the Town will be of the highest priority and will be more strongly encouraged than open space dedications that do not meet these parameters, open space requirements, minimum acreages, or are obstructed.*

Obstructed or Fragmented Open Space*—Obstructed open space refers to areas that contain impediments to wildlife and pedestrian travel, or are inhibited or fragmented by man-made structures or constructs such as roads, fences, or buildings. This type of open space may be dedicated to the Town if determined to have high preservation values as determined by the Town. The Town will place a priority on the preservation of lands identified as part of the Natural Areas Inventory when evaluating potential open space areas for dedication.*

Agricultural Open Space*—Those open space areas that are either obstructed or unobstructed that meet the minimum acreage requirement and provide cultural/historical resources and/or seasonal wildlife habitat, including grain fields, hedgerows, non-native mature trees that provide nesting or roosting habitat and farm structures providing the same. Farm ponds within agricultural open space that provide wetland and riparian habitats are included in this category, if they are surrounded by cultivated/barren land.*

OS 1.7—AVOID PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF SMALL, LOW VALUE LANDS

Undevelopable/Unusable Land*—Those areas left over after site design/development that do not provide functional open space for scenic views, recreational, or wildlife use. These lands may include unusable slivers or pieces of land used solely for linear storm drainages (other than storm drainage areas designed for dual use, such as recreation and drainage), irrigation canals/ditches, utility corridors, development monuments, or are left over and isolated by roadway alignments or lot layouts. This category shall not be included or credited toward the minimum open space percentages or required acreages.*

Although this type of land may be provided in a development proposal, undevelopable and unusable land will not be accepted as open space or maintained by the Town unless it is determined to have high preservation values as determined by the Town. The Town will place a priority on the preservation of lands identified as part of the Natural Areas Inventory when evaluating potential open space areas for dedication.

Note: Text in italics is an excerpt from the *Erie Comprehensive Plan*.

OS 1.8—OPEN SPACE LEVEL OF SERVICE GOAL
The Town aspires to provide a total level of service of 71 acres per 1,000 population, based on the open space vision shown on the Future Land Use Map and the projected ultimate build-out population of 68,820 people. A significant portion of this land has been preserved already through various means, and the remaining lands to be preserved result in a target of 17 acres per 1,000 residents.

The Town's level of service goal will be reviewed and updated as needed following the adoption of an Open Space Master Plan, as referenced in OS 1.1, above.

OS 1.9—OPEN SPACE DEDICATION CRITERIA
The Town will use the following criteria when evaluating potential open space dedications associated with new development:

Minimum Size and Location*—Minimum size and location requirements will be established to ensure that open space lands are contiguous to the greatest extent possible and have significant value for the community and their intended purposes.*

Restoration Requirements*—Standards for the restoration of disturbed natural lands to be dedicated as open space will be established.*

OS 1.10—LEVERAGING OF AVAILABLE OPEN SPACE FUNDS
To fully leverage funding provided by the 2004 Open Space Ordinance, the Town will seek supplemental state and federal funding, including Great Outdoor Colorado (GOCO) funds, Land and Water Conservation Funds (L&WCF), TEA-21 Recreational Trails funds, and private donations and grants to advance the goal of conserving and connecting open space.

Goal #2 – Sustainable Open Space System
Integrate the community's social, environmental and economic goals within all aspects of protecting, maintaining, providing public access to, and managing open space.

POLICIES:

OS 2.1—ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS
Locate, design, construct, and maintain open space and constructed facilities in a manner that minimizes local, regional, and global environmental impacts. Mitigate impacts where feasible. Consider operations and maintenance costs during the design phase and shift financial resources forward to capital construction if long-term benefits are possible, or costs are reduced through environmentally responsible design.

Note: Text in italics is an excerpt from the *Erie Comprehensive Plan*.

OS 2.2—INTEGRATED PLANNING AND DESIGN
Design improvements in a manner that integrates trails, recreational activities, land use, drainage and utility infrastructure, and transportation systems into the decision-making process. Consider open space values in the design of neighborhoods and projects, and protect significant resources.

OS 2.3—SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION
Incorporate educational features and accommodate programs and volunteer participation in the design, management, and maintenance of open space properties to increase understanding of and commitment to a sustainable future for Erie.

OS 2.4—MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT
Establish maintenance and design standards, and management plans for open space properties that Erie manages. Annually assess needed maintenance, restoration, and renovation projects system-wide. Adapt management as needed to prevent overuse and irreparable damage to facilities and resources. Adequately staff and fund maintenance and operations and adjust staffing levels to keep pace with the addition of properties to the system.

Municipal Code, Title 10

Erie Comprehensive Plan (2015) goals and policies for natural resource preservation, open space, parks, recreation, and trails were developed into regulations in the *Municipal Code, Title 10*. Any amendments to the text of the *Municipal Code, Title 10* that are necessary due to changed conditions or changes in public policy, or that are necessary to advance the general welfare of the Town, shall be processed in accordance with Section 1-1-10 of the *Municipal Code, Title 10*, as well as requirements set forth in Section 10.7.21. Only the Board of Trustees may, after recommendation of the Planning Commission, adopt an ordinance amending the text of Title 10.

Demographics

Erie has experienced dramatic growth, along with many other communities along the Front Range, fueling demand for Town facilities and services. Following is a summary of the Town of Erie's residential demographic profile from the 2015 Comprehensive Plan:

- It is estimated that the Town will grow at a rate of three percent annually beyond the year 2015 to the year 2035, increasing from approximately 22,000 to 39,850. (***Table 1***).
- The number of dwelling units is estimated to increase from approximately 7,600 to over 13,800 in 2035. (***Table 1***).

Note: Text in italics is an excerpt from the *Erie Comprehensive Plan*.

Table 1: Dwelling units and total population projections from Comprehensive Plan

YEAR	# OF DWELLINGS	CHANGE	TOTAL POPULATION	CHANGE
2015	7,666	-	22,064	-
2020	8,887	1,221	25,578	3,514
2025	10,303	1,415	29,652	4,074
2030	11,944	1,641	34,375	4,723
2035	13,846	1,902	39,850	5,475
2015-2035	-	6,180	-	17,786

- Trends indicate a slight decrease in children ages five and under, and an increase in the age groups 55 and older. In addition, the percentage of the population age 25-34, dropped from 20.9% to 13.0% (***Table 2***).

Table 2: Age demographics from Comprehensive Plan

AGE GROUP	2000 #	2000%	2010#	2010%
Under 5 Years	717	11.40%	1,734	9.56%
5 to 19	1,310	20.82%	4,184	23.07%
20 to 24	201	3.20%	486	2.68%
25 to 34	1,312	20.86%	2,358	13.00%
35 to 54	2,236	35.54%	6,522	35.96%
55 to 64	296	4.71%	1,821	10.04%
65+	219	3.48%	1,030	5.68%
Total	**6,291**	**100.00%**	**18,135**	**100.00%**

- Median household income is higher in Erie than the State of Colorado and the United States.
- Percentage of owner-occupied housing units is greater in Erie than in Colorado and the United States (Erie – 83.1%).
- There is a higher percentage of Erie residents 25 years and older with Bachelor's and Master's Degrees than residents in Colorado and the United States.

Trends

This section contains a summary of trends within the parks and recreation industry for facilities and programming, as well as future trends for the Department to watch. These trends were identified through:

- Analysis of the demographic profile of Erie.
- Community/stakeholder input.
- Outside research.

A full trends report can be found in ***Appendix A***.

Demographic Trends

Youth – Generation Z

- Generation Z is known for its use of technology.
- Tend to be acutely aware that they live in a pluralistic society and tend to embrace diversity.
- With regard to physical activity, a 2013 article published by academics at Georgia Southern University[1] notes that the prevalence of obesity in Generation Z is triple that of Generation Xers.
- The researchers noted that Generation Z is a generation that seeks social support from peers more so than any previous generation.
- Generation Zers tend to struggle in and fear some basic activities such as physical activity and sports.

Adults – Generation X

- A high percentage of Erie's population falls within Generation X; with this generation being smaller than the Baby Boomer and the Millennial Generation, this is not a common trend.
- According to the Pew Research Center, Gen Xers "are a low-slung, straight-line bridge between two noisy behemoths," sharing similar traits to both generations.[2]
- According to the 2015 Participation Report by the Physical Activity Council,[3] recreational activities to consider with this group, include:
    - Individual Sports
    - Outdoor Sports
    - Fitness Activities
- According to the article "How Generation X is Shaping Government,"[4] this age demographic is starting to settle into communities, and become more involved on a regular basis. With such a strong presence in the community already, Erie should look for opportunities to engage with these individuals.

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[1] David D. Biber, Daniel R. Czech, Brandonn S. Harris, and Bridget F. Melton, "Attraction to physical activity of generation Z: A mixed methodological approach," *Open Journal of Preventive Medicine*, Vol.3, No.3., 310 – 319 (2013), http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/ojpm.2013.33042.

[2] Paul Taylor and George Gao, "Generation X: America's Neglected 'Middle Child,'" http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/06/05/generation-x-americas-neglected-middle-child/

[3] 2015 Participation Report," Physical Activity Council, 2015.

[4] Rob Gurwitt, "How Generation X is Shaping Government," Governing – The State and Localities, http://www.governing.com/topics/mgmt/gov-how-generation-x-shaping-government.html

Adults – Baby Boomers

- 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.
- Jeffrey Ziegler identified "Boomer Basics" in his article, "Recreating Retirement: How Will Baby Boomers Reshape Leisure in their 60s?"[5] Highlights are summarized below.
    - *Boomers are known to work hard, play hard, and spend hard.* Their nostalgic mindset keeps Boomers returning to the sights and sounds of their 1960s youth culture. Swimming pools have become less of a social setting and much more of an extension of Boomers' health and wellness program. 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 park and 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.

Adults – The Millennial Generation

- In a 2011 study of the Millennial Generation,[6] Barkley Advertising Agency made the following observations about Millennials and health/fitness:
    - Sixty percent (60%) of Millennials say they try to work out on a regular basis. Twenty-six percent (26%) consider themselves health fanatics.
    - Much of this focus on health is really due to vanity and/or the desire to impress others — 73% exercise to enhance their physical appearance.
    - Millennials are also fans of relaxation and rejuvenation, as 54% regularly treat themselves to spa services.
    - Despite their commitment to health, Millennials stray from their healthy diets on weekends. There is a noticeable difference between their intent to work out regularly and the amount of exercise that they actually accomplish.

Facilities

The top 10 planned features to be constructed for all facility types are:

1. Splash play areas (planned by 23.4% of parks respondents who will be adding features).
2. Playgrounds (22.4%).
3. Dog parks (22%).
4. Fitness trails and outdoor fitness equipment (21.5%).
5. Hiking and walking trails (20.3%).
6. Bike trails (20.1%).
7. Park restroom structures (19.5%).
8. Park structures such as shelters and gazebos (17.7%).
9. Synthetic turf sports fields (16.1%).
10. Wi-Fi services (14.4%).

[5] Jeffry Ziegler, "Recreating Retirement: How Will Baby Boomers Reshape Leisure in Their 60s?," Parks and *Recreation*, October 2002.

[6] American Millennials: Deciphering the Enigma Generation, https://www.barkleyus.com/AmericanMillennials.pdf, accessed May 2015.

The current national trend is toward "one-stop" indoor recreation facilities to serve all ages. Large, multipurpose regional centers help increase cost recovery, promote retention, and encourage cross-use. Agencies across the United States are increasing revenue production and cost recovery. Providing multiuse and flexibility in facilities versus 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.

Dog Parks

Dog parks continue to see high popularity and have remained among the top planned addition to parks and recreational facilities over the past three years. In 2014, the National Dog Park Association, dedicated to providing informational resources for starting and maintaining dog parks, was founded.

The best dog parks cater to people with design features for their comfort and pleasure, but also with creative programming.[7] Amenities in an ideal dog park might include the following:

- Benches, shade, and water – for dogs and people.
- At least one acre of space with adequate drainage.
- Double gated entry.
- Ample waste stations well-stocked with bags.
- Sandy beaches/sand bunker digging areas.
- Custom designed splashpads for large and small dogs.
- People-pleasing amenities such as walking trails, water fountains, restroom facilities, picnic tables, and dog wash stations.

Programming

Fitness

There have been many changes in fitness programs in the last 15 years. What clients wanted in 2000 is not necessarily what they want today. The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) *Health and Fitness Journal*[8] has conducted a survey annually since 2007 to determine trends that would help create a standard for health and fitness programming. ***Table 3*** shows survey results that focus on trends in the commercial, corporate, clinical, and community health and fitness industry.

[7] Dawn Klingensmith "Gone to the Dogs: Design and Manage an Effective Off-Leash Area," *Recreation Management*, March 2014. (http://recmanagement.com/feature_print.php?fid=201403fe02).

[8] Walter R. Thompson, "Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends for 2012," *Health & Fitness Journal,* American College of Sports Medicine, 2011.

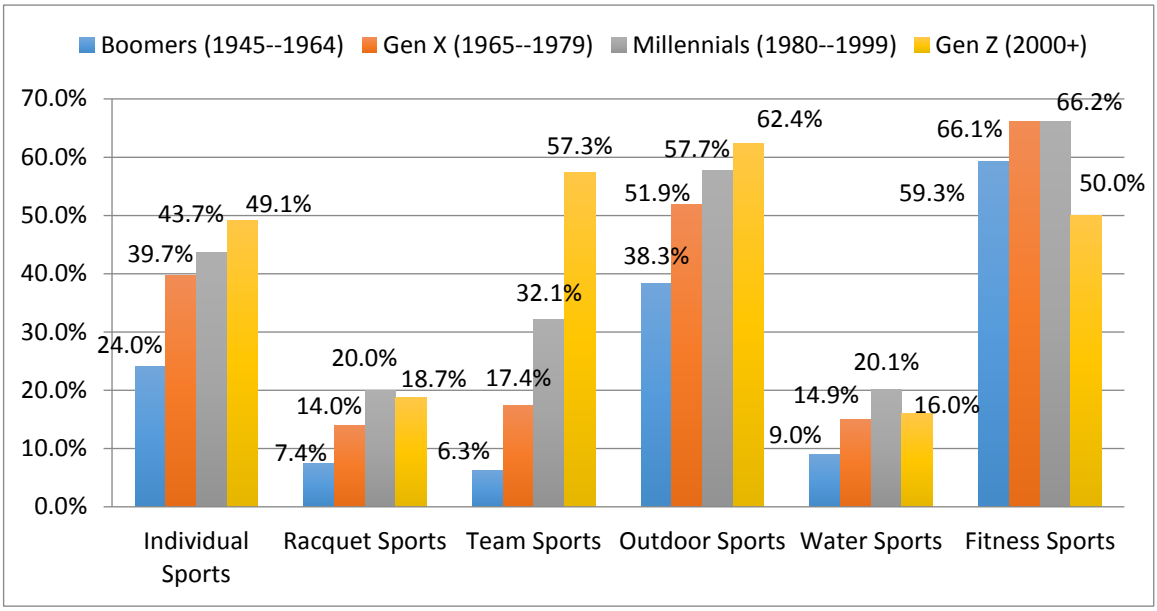
Table 3: Top 10 Worldwide Fitness Trends for 2007 and 2015

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 Sports Medicine

Figure 4 illustrates participation rates by generation. Due to the high volume of Gen X and Gen Z populations in Erie, the Department should explore opportunities in Fitness and Outdoor Sports.

Figure 4: **A Breakdown of Fitness Sports Participation Rates by Generation**



Source: 2015 Participation Report, Physical Activity Council.

General Programming

According to *Recreation Management* magazine's 2015 "State of the Industry Report,"[9] About one-third (35.7%) of parks and recreation respondents indicated that they are planning to *add* programs at their facilities over the next three years. The 10 most common types of additional programming planned for 2015 included:

1. Environmental education programs (up from No. 7).
2. Mind-body/balance programs such as yoga and tai chi (up from No. 6).
3. Fitness programs (down from No. 2).
4. Educational programs (up from No. 8).
5. Programs for active older adults (down from No. 1).
6. Teen programming (down from No. 3).
7. Holidays and special events (down from No. 5).
8. Day camps and summer camps (did not appear in 2014).
9. Adult sports teams (down from No. 4).
10. Water sports such as canoeing and kayaking (did not appear in 2014).

Older Adults and Senior Programming

The American Academy of Sports Medicine issues a yearly survey of the top 20 fitness trends.[10] It ranks senior fitness programs eighth among most popular fitness trends for 2015. Whether it is SilverSneakers, a freestyle low-impact cardio class, or water aerobics, people are realizing the many benefits of staying active throughout life. According to the National Sporting Goods Association, popular senior programming trends include hiking, birding, and swimming.

Active Living and Healthy Lifestyles

Active Transportation

Design of a community's infrastructure is directly linked to physical activity – where environments are built with bicyclists and pedestrians in mind, more people bike and walk. Higher levels of bicycling and walking also coincide with increased bicycle and pedestrian safety and higher levels of physical activity. Increasing bicycling and walking make a big impact on improving public health and life expectancy. The following trends as well as health and economic indicators are pulled from the 2012 and 2014 Benchmarking Reports:

<u>Public health trends related to bicycling and walking include:</u>

- Quantified health benefits of active transportation can outweigh any risks associated with the activities by as much as 77 to 1, and add more years to our lives than are lost from inhaled air pollution and traffic injuries.
- Between 1966 and 2009, the number of children who bicycled or walked to school fell 75%, while the percentage of obese children rose 276%.
- Bicycling to work significantly reduces absenteeism due to illness. Regular bicyclists took 7.4 sick days per year, while non-bicyclists took 8.7 sick days per year.

[9] Emily Tipping, "2015 State of the Industry Report, Trends in Parks and Recreation," *Recreation Management*, June 2015.
[10] "Survey Predicts Top 20 Fitness Trends for 2015," American College of Sports Medicine, http://www.acsm.org/about-acsm/media-room/news-releases/2014/10/24/survey-predicts-top-20-fitness-trends-for-2015, accessed January 2015.

The economic benefits of bicycling and walking include:

- Bicycling and walking projects create 82 jobs per $1 million spent, compared to just 7 jobs created per $1 million spent on highway projects.
- Cost benefit analyses show that up to $11.80 in benefits can be gained for every $1 invested in bicycling and walking.

National bicycling trends:

- There has been a gradual trend of increasing bicycling and walking to work since 2005.
- Infrastructure to support biking communities is becoming more commonly funded in communities.
- Bike share systems, making bicycles available to the public for low-cost, short-term use, have been sweeping the nation since 2010. Twenty of the most populous U.S. cities have a functional bike share system.

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).[11] 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/.

Economic and Health Benefits of Parks

The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space, a report from the Trust for Public Land, makes the following observations about the health, economic, environmental, and social benefits of parks and open space:[12]

- Physical activity makes people healthier.
- Physical activity increases with access to parks.
- Contact with the natural world improves physical and psychological 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.

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

[12] 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.

Trends in Marketing by Parks and Recreation Providers

Municipalities can use marketing to increase awareness of an issue, promote an upcoming program, encourage community participation, or to gain advocacy for a public service. Active Network offers expertise in activity and participation management. Its mission is to make the world a more active place. In its blog, the organization offered the following marketing mix ideas, which came out of a meeting with park and recreational professionals in the Chicago area.[13]

- Updated booths and community event presence—Bring a tablet or laptop to show programs you offer and provide event participants the opportunity to register on the spot.
- Facebook redirect app—This application redirects people automatically to the link you provide. Add it to your Facebook page.
- Instagram challenge—Think about how you can use mobile and social tools at your next event. It could be an Instagram contest during an event set up as a scavenger hunt with participants taking pictures of clues and posting them on Instagram.
- Social media coupons—Research indicates that the top reason people follow an organization on a social network is to receive discounts or coupons. Consider posting an event discount on your social networks redeemable by accessing on phone or printing out.

Mobile marketing is a growing trend. Social websites and apps are among the most used features on mobile phones. Popular social media marketing tools include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn. Private messaging apps such as Snapchat and WhatsApp are being used more and more for live media coverage.[14]

Conservation, Nature, Environment

The top ten recommendations of the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Conservation Task Force were published in the November 2011 issue of *Parks and Recreation* magazine.[15] These recommendations are a compilation of best practices used by trendsetting agencies, some of which follow:

1) Take a leadership role in the community to promote conservation.
2) Lead by example in employing best management conservation practices in parks – do not mow what you do not need to mow, stop wasteful energy consumption, and reduce pesticide use.
3) Engage volunteers in conservation and stewardship to create ownership and value.
4) Establish a strategic land acquisition strategy based on knowledge and awareness of significant natural and cultural resources (watershed protection, unique ecological characteristics, and sensitive natural areas deserving protection).
5) Engage youth in conservation. Get kids and teens outdoors and enjoying their parks.
6) Conserve energy in all ways. Park and recreation agencies should adopt energy conservation measures that make sense and save money.

[13] http://www.activenetwork.com/blog/17-marketing-campaigns-parks-and-recreation-marketing/, May 2013, accessed February 26, 2015.
[14] Jacqueline Woerner, "The 7 Social Media Trends Dominating 2015," Emarsys Blog, http://www.emarsys.com/en/resources/blog/the-7-social-media-trends-dominating-2015/, accessed February 26, 2015.
[15] "Conservation Leaders in our Communities," National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), *Parks & Recreation Magazine,* November 2011, p. 85-101, http://ezine.parksandrecreation.org/HTML5/NRPA-Parks-Recreation-Magazine-November-2011.

7) Protect natural resources in parks and in the community. Parks and recreation agencies are entrusted with some of the most important assets of a community, and the conservation and long-term protection of this public trust is and should be a core component of every parks and recreation agency's mission.
8) Create sustainable landscapes that demonstrate principles of conservation.
9) Forge partnerships that foster the mission of conservation. Promote health, education, and other goals while working toward a common mission of conservation.
10) Utilize technology to promote conservation. This is not only in applications such as GIS (geographic information systems), but in utilizing social media to engage the public, especially youth.

Community Survey

The following section is the executive summary from a Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Survey conducted by RRC Associates. In June 2014, the Town of Erie received a full, stand-alone report.

Introduction/Methodology

The 2014 Erie Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Survey was designed as an update to the 2008 Master Plan Survey, and was conducted as a mailback and online survey. The survey was sent to every identified household within the Town of Erie, which may include households outside the town limits as well as Erie P.O. boxes belonging to residents who live outside the town limits. Unique passwords were included in the mailed invitation, in order to allow recipients to complete the survey online, should they prefer. Completed surveys received totaled 790 out of approximately 7,141 delivered. This represents a robust response rate of approximately 11.1%. Based upon the total sample size of 790 responses received, overall results have a margin of error of approximately +/- 3.5 percentage points calculated for questions at 50% response.[16] Also, note that the resultant database is weighted by age of respondent to ensure appropriate representation of Town residents across different demographic cohorts in the overall sample.

The primary list source used for the mailing was a third party list purchased from Melissa Data Corp., a leading provider of data quality solutions with emphasis on U.S., Canadian, and international address and phone verification and postal software. Use of the Melissa Data list also includes renters in the sample who are frequently missed in other list sources such as utility billing lists.

Executive Summary

Overall, residents indicate a high degree of satisfaction with Erie Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails. Although some variation exists, responses to the 2014 survey are very similar to 2008, suggesting that priorities and interests among residents have remained consistent. Trails, open space, aquatics, and fitness space/equipment continue to be areas of interest for residents, with notable shares of respondents indicating desire for expansion of related amenities and services.

[16] For the total sample size of 790, margin of error is +/- 3.5% calculated for questions at 50% response (if the response for a particular question is "50%"—the standard way to generalize margin of error is to state the larger margin, which occurs for responses at 50%). Note that the margin of error is different for every single question response on the survey depending on the resultant sample sizes, proportion of responses, and number of answer categories for each question. Comparison of differences in the data between various segments, therefore, should take into consideration these factors. As a general comment, it is sometimes more appropriate to focus attention on the general trends and patterns in the data rather than on the individual percentages.

Erie is well-served to consider how best to expand such facilities to meet the needs of a growing resident population, including trail connectivity and expansion of Community Center facilities. Specific key findings from the survey of all Erie households include the following:

Values and Vision: Respondents were asked to indicate which three parks, recreation, open space, and trails services they feel are most important for the Town to provide. Promoting healthy, active lifestyles is viewed as most important (52%), followed by preserving sensitive natural areas and protecting wildlife (44%) and enhancing property values (41%).

Usage Levels and Frequency of Participation: The Erie Community Center (84%), Town trails (79%), neighborhood parks (74%), and Town open space areas (62%) are used by the greatest shares of residents. These facilities are also used most frequently on an annual basis, with the Community Center used 50.7 times per year on average, Town trails 49.2 times, neighborhood parks 32.4 times, and Town open space areas 31.8 times. It can be concluded that these facilities are not only being utilized widely, but regularly as well. As compared to 2008, residents use most of the facilities and programs with greater frequency, suggesting a higher degree of engagement among community members in 2014.

Level of Needs Met by Current Programs and Facilities: Overall, most current facilities and programs available in Erie receive positive satisfaction ratings. Rated highest is the Erie Community Center (83% mostly/completely meeting needs), neighborhood parks (77%), Erie Community Park/The Ballpark at Erie (72%), Town open space areas (72%), Thomas Reservoir/Erie Lake (71%), Town trails (69%), recreation programs and classes (68%), and community special events (66%). When compared to 2008, results show that satisfaction has clearly improved about Town open space areas and trails.

Areas for Improvement: Respondents noted several areas of improvement for parks and recreation facilities, services, and programs, including size of facilities/amount of space available (32%), lack of facilities and amenities (23%), price/user fees (21%), hours of operation (20%), “don’t have the programs I want” (18%), and lack of parking (17%). Size of facilities/amount of space available was mentioned with much greater frequency in 2014 than in 2008. Not being aware of the facilities offered was mentioned less frequently in 2014 than in 2008. Awareness and communications have much improved since 2008, and demand for additional facilities (primarily weight room, fitness space, and aquatics) has clearly increased.

Satisfaction with Erie Parks & Recreation: Respondents rated a variety of aspects of the Parks and Recreation department. Ratings are positive overall, with the following ranking the highest (81 to 87% excellent scores): maintenance of facilities provided by the Erie Community Center, Erie Community Park/the Ballpark at Erie/Skate Plaza, safety and security at parks and recreation locations, and customer service by Erie Parks and Recreation staff.

When responses are compared to 2008, results show a high degree of similarity between the two survey years. However, respondents are slightly more approving of the following areas this year: variety of recreation programs offered, number of parks maintained by the Town, quality and maintenance of open space areas, trail maintenance, amount of open space areas available, number of trails available, and outdoor restrooms.

Respondents also indicated which aspects they feel are most in need of improvement. Number of trails available is by far the highest priority (51%). Open space areas available (34%) is also indicated as a relatively high priority.

Erie Community Center: When compared to 2008 findings, results show that, across-the-board, most levels of needs being met are lower in 2014 than in 2008. Relative to areas most in need of improvement, pricing/user fees tops the list (34%), closely followed by fitness class space (30%), weight room and cardio fitness areas (29%), lap pool (27%), and hours of operation (23%).

Future Facilities to be Added, Expanded, or Improved over Next 5 to 10 Years: The top-rated indoor future facilities include swimming pool/aquatics area (66%), weight room and cardio fitness space/equipment (52%), and fitness class space (49%). Meanwhile, the top-rated outdoor facilities include outdoor pool (43%), open space/natural areas (40%), and paved and/or soft surface trails (38%).

Importance of Trails and Open Space: The survey probed the importance of various aspects of trails and open space among respondents. With regard to trails, the most important to residents is improving trail connectively within Erie and between neighborhoods (70%), improving trail connectivity to regional trails outside of Erie (66%), and building more soft surface trails (52%). With regard to open space, most important are preserving views and view corridors (62%); preserving wildlife habitat/creating viewing opportunities (60%); and protecting rivers, creeks, canal corridors, and wetlands (59%).

Decision to Move to Erie: A new question to the 2014 survey explored the importance of the presence of parks, recreation facilities and programs, trails, and open space in respondents' decision to move to, or continue living in, Erie. Results show that these facilities and amenities are increasingly important among cohorts of newer residents, suggesting that they play a significant role in the growth of Erie and attracting new residents to the area. Sixty-four percent (64%) of respondents who have lived in Erie for less than a year indicated that such facilities were "very important" in their decision to move to Erie. Roughly half of residents who have lived in Erie for between one and 20 years cite such facilities as "very important" to their decision.

Programs and Activities: Residents report the most need for fitness and wellness programs (73% of households have a need), individual activities such as road biking and hiking (71%), and community special events (71%). Compared to 2008, respondents currently indicate higher levels of need for each of these choices. In particular, needs for community special events (71% in 2014 vs. 39% in 2008) are now more in demand.

Relative to how well programs, activities, and events are currently meeting household needs, responses reveal a wide range of needs being met and unmet. Fitness and wellness programs top the list (58% of respondents with needs *met*), followed by youth athletic leagues (56%), community special events (54%), and children/youth activities (53%). Meanwhile, several categories have high shares of respondents reporting needs being unmet, including gymnastics programs (65% of respondents with needs *unmet*), teen activities (60%), golf programs (55%), special needs/therapeutic (52%), and environmental/natural programs (52%).

Communication: According to residents, email or text message notices are the best way to reach them, with 42% of respondents noting this to be their number one communication choice. Having a newsletter or flyer mailed with the utility bill came in as a distant second (17%). Interestingly, social media is not preferred among most respondents, with a slim 5% of respondents choosing Facebook and 1% of respondents choosing Twitter.

Financial Preferences: Residents report the strongest support for user fees as a mechanism for funding the operations and maintenance of new facilities, with 53% of respondents indicating "probable" or "definite" support. General property tax (35%) and new dedicated property tax (32%) earn relatively lower levels of support, with higher shares of respondents indicating that they would not support such mechanisms than those who would support them.

Suggestions: Residents were also provided the opportunity to offer any additional comments or suggestions regarding parks, recreation facilities, services, and programs in Erie. Respondents offered a variety of insightful comments, the full set of which can be found in the appendix to the 2014 report. Commonly identified themes include:

- Concerns regarding taxes and fees.
- Desire for an outdoor pool area.
- Worries about the impact of growth and development in Erie on Town feel and use of facilities and amenities.
- Preservation and maintenance of open space.
- Increased trail connectivity.
- Positive satisfaction with the overall work of Erie Parks and Recreation.

Other Stakeholder Input

To further validate the survey, and update this report, the project team used focus groups and stakeholder/staff interviews, conducted in June and July of 2016, to collect further input. Each group participated in a series of questions that resulted in a modified Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis. The project team also collected input via e-mail surveys for invitees that were not able to attend. A summary of responses follows.

Strengths

- High quality staff
- High quality grounds and facility at the Community Center
- Strong and well managed partnership agreements (Aspen Ridge/School District)
- Department has grown intelligently
- Diverse/quality programming
    - Especially strong senior programs, family based activities, summer-time/day camp programs
- Community feel
- Highly supported department by the community
- Connectivity/access to/number of trails
- Community access to parks
- User friendly – High tech

Weaknesses

- Maintenance of trails seems to be slow (clearing of debris)
- Communication of
    - Access and usage of trails by multiple users (signage on trails/regulations)
    - Class information
    - Changes
    - Fee schedules
- The Community Center is overcrowded
    - People are looking for space and often travelling to other communities/facilities
    - Also lacking outdoor field space (ex. little league ball fields)
    - Seems like there are fields available at the schools, but they are not being used
    - Includes special events/camps/sports
- Many of the activity rooms are too small
- Scheduling logistics are inefficient
    - There doesn't seem to be a synergy of programs offered
- There should be more diversity in the programs offered
    - How can we keep up with changing demographics
- There aren't enough multi-modal transportation options
- No outdoor water space/water play features
- Lack of youth/teen opportunities

New Programs or Activities

- Multi-generational programs
- Gymnastics
- More programming to meet demand
- Growth for age-specific programs (ex. Silver Sneakers/ Youth and Teen)
- Cultural/educational/skill building classes
- Volunteer programs
- Equestrian
- Specialized training for sports/fitness
- Rentals – doors are often closed in rooms

Current Facility Improvements

- It's most important to plan on maintaining the current system
    - Maintenance plans and weed mitigation plans
- Parks and areas away from the Community Center are not at the same standard
- Communication of information
- How do we keep people in Erie?
- Improving registration systems and fee schedules be more accessible for families (variable pricing and registration for camps)
- Tennis back boards
- More bike racks in Old Town
- Playground feature at Coal Creek Park for use at concerts

New Facilities

- Outdoor swimming features (pool or splash pad)
- Outdoor fitness areas
- Off-street trails to avoid cars and traffic patterns
- Basketball/pickle ball courts
- Larger indoor community space
- More shade structures in parks
- Amphitheater
- Inline rink
- Lounge/community area
- Ensuring proper growth of open space
- Mini-golf/batting cages/concessions
- Therapy pool/PT/wellness facility
- Restrooms on trails
- Wildlife sanctuaries in open space
- Pathway from Erie Elementary to Red Hawk from Telleen to Maxwell Ave

Facilities/Programs to be Eliminated

- Could repurpose the Y
- Collier's Hill

Underserved Portions of the Community

- Low-income families
    - Communicating scholarship opportunities
- Fringe neighborhoods travelling to other communities
- Multi-generational families
- Transitional programs
- Tween age group
- People that cannot get to the Community Center because of transportation issues

Sentiment Regarding Sales Tax

- Supportive BUT the community needs more information
    - What is the why? Where is it going?
- How does it play with other sources of funding?
    - Some felt that more diverse funding streams would be more appropriate

Key Issues and Values

- Family oriented
- Reputation for providing a high quality of life
- Commuting work force
- Small town with lots to do!
- Cannot alienate anyone HOAs/low-income families/long-time residents/fringe neighborhoods
- Highly active community because of the access to parks and trails
- Agricultural heritage
- Access to wildlife
    - Needs to keep large open spaces

Top Priorities

- Appropriately managing growth
- Developing sustainable partnerships
- Increasing capacity of programs and Center
    - Increase program diversity indoor/outdoor
- Improving the quality of life
- Provide more facilities
- Less building, MORE open space
- Finding and supporting infrastructure to benefit the entire community
- Be more proactive, less reactive
- Better paths and trails from the Community Center to Old Town
- Keep open spaces open

In addition to this planning process, the Department continuously engages the community via focus groups and public meetings during other planning efforts, including park master planning, site planning, and usage of the Community Center.

Workshop Findings Discussion

As part of a process to help define potential characteristics of future park sites, the Department hosted design workshops during May of 2016. These workshops gathered general comments and allowed participants to sketch mock designs. The information gathered during these workshops is considered too specific for this ***Master Plan***, though pieces of the findings are incorporated to draw consistencies in the Department's planning efforts.

During the sessions, the desire was expressed for a connected set of outdoor places that facilitate both passive and active, as well as structured and unstructured activities. An emphasis on building a sense of community and providing places within the community for people of all ages to engage in a wide variety of activities year-round was expressed. This includes a strong interest in alternative and adventure sports.

The participants seemed to agree that a "cookie-cutter" approach to parks would not respond to the wide range of needs and interests found in the community, and that prioritization was necessary to ensure that new parks make the most of opportunities to fill the broad range of needs. The need for a sustainable approach to park development was clearly understood. Future parks should combine both natural and developed elements, and be designed for the most efficient use of financial and natural resources.

Ideas from the group exercises identified features (***Table 4***) and tactics and strategies (***Table 5***) for addressing the various dimensions of public well-being through parks and greenspace. These tables are intended to be a listing of brainstorming ideas from the sessions, and convey a sense of what ideas should be considered. They should not be construed as a final set of recommendations. This information can be used to guide future planning and policy decisions, although they only provide a starting point. Further public process should be undertaken to flesh out these ideas, and they should be vetted through appropriate procedures.

Table 4: Features *(Note: These focus group sessions were conducted using different formats resulting varied responses.)*

Features Brainstorming			
Feature to Provide	**Staff Workshop**	**Focus Group**	**Both**
Close to Home			
Trail for peds, bikes, dogs – connected			
Area with trees			
BBQ Grill			
Community Garden			
Dog waste facilities			
Drinking water			
Grassy area for free play			
Multi-generation activities			
Natural area			
Playground			
Restrooms			
Seating			
Shade			
Shelter with tables			
Trash receptacles			
Water element			
Wifi			
Community-Wide			
Amphitheater			
Community garden			
Dog park			
Gathering spaces			
Nature center			
Open space			
Pool/swimming			
Pump track			
Recreation Center			
Skate park			
Sports facilities			
Water element			
Water park			
Youth gathering place			

Table 4: Features (continued) *(Note: These focus group sessions were conducted using different formats resulting varied responses.)*

Feature to Provide	Staff Workshop	Focus Group	Both
Options			
Amusement park	"Carousel"		
Arboretum			
Archery			
Art display			
Botanical garden			
Butterfly garden			
Camping			
Carousel			
Disc golf			
Equestrian facilities			
Golf			
Ice Rink			
Lake/water sports			
Nordic area			
Observation tower			
Paddle boats			
Radio-control facilities			
Ropes course			
Shuffleboard			
Sledding/ski hill			
View areas			
Water park			
Wedding venue			
Whitewater			
Wildlife area			
Xeriscape demonstration garden			
Zip line			
"Big Ideas" Session			
Adventure sports			
Bird Sanctuary			
Disc Golf			
History elements			
Labrynth			
Micro-business Incubator			
Nature Center			
Pump Track			
Ski Hill/Complex			
Wedding Venue			
WIFI Park			

Table 5: Tactics and Strategies *(Note: These focus group sessions were conducted using different formats resulting varied responses.)*

Tactics and Strategies Brainstorming			
	Tactic (Town Staff)	**Tactic (Focus Group)**	**Strategy (Town Staff)**
Community/Social Engagement			
	Build adequate spaces		Public input - open house/surveys of wants and needs. $ - general fund, bonds, dedicated tax grants, outside revenue, agreements. Provide time. Willingness (prioritazion)budget, staff support/BOT support, partnerships, community support, laws and master plans and codes, incentives, adaptability/evolve based on needs, purchase of open space, programming/staff facilitation
	Create events		
	Common park amenities (pools, amphitheater, bandshell, special events)		
	Social media		
	Multi-generational greenspaces		
	ADA inclusive/universal design		
	BBQ pits/fire pit		
	Tournament space		
	Regional destination playgrounds/spaces		
		Amphitheater	
		Community garden	
		Event spaces	
		Sports	
Economic Well-Being			
		Activities close to home	
		Community events	
		Concessions	
Education/Contact With Nature			
	Identify and set aside properties for natural education		Public input - open house/surveys of wants and needs. $ - general fund, bonds, dedicated tax grants, outside revenue, agreements. Provide time. Willingness (prioritazion)budget, staff support/BOT support, partnerships, community support, laws and master plans and codes, incentives, adaptability/evolve based on needs, purchase of open space, programming/staff facilitation
	Nature center - guided leader talks/walks		
	Info boards, signs, events		
	Social media		
	QR coding		
	Arboretums		
	Reservoirs		
	Signage		
	Touch-and-feel nature trail		
		Camping	Place/location, needs assesment, partnerships, policy/programs

Table 5: Tactics and Strategies (continued) *(Note: These focus group sessions were conducted using different formats resulting varied responses.)*

	Tactic (Town Staff)	Tactic (Focus Group)	Strategy (Town Staff)
Environmental Services			
	Clean air, water, trees		Public input - open house/surveys of wants and needs. $ - general fund, bonds, dedicated tax grants, outside revenue, agreements. Provide time. Willingness (prioritazion)budget, staff support/BOT support, partnerships, community support, laws and master plans and codes, incentives, adaptability/evolve based on needs, purchase of open space, programming/staff facilitation
	Vector control		
	Water quality		
	Urban forestry		
	Corridors and buffers		
	Protect wildlife & habitats		
	Multi-purpose design: combine field space with retention areas		creative use of required structures such as retention areas
	Reduce carbon footprint		evaluate equipment supplies
	"Greenspace" vs industrial		
		Community garden	
		Natural areas	
		Solar farm	
		Nature center/education	
		Trash/recycling	
Hazard Mitigation			
Undermining			M.L reg in place
Floodplain			Identify through platting process
	Flood control measures (bank stabilization, break-away bridges)		Public input - open house/surveys of wants and needs. $ - general fund, bonds, dedicated tax grants, outside revenue, agreements. Provide time. Willingness (prioritazion)budget, staff support/BOT support, partnerships, community support, laws and master plans and codes, incentives, adaptability/evolve based on needs, purchase of open space, programming/staff facilitation
	Stormwater control (detention/retention, bio-swale		
	Playground safety		
	Fire safety		
	Trash cans/dog waste stations		
	Safety - CPSI		
	Flood/detention areas		
	Oil & gas		
	Waste disposal		Identify hazards, construction standards, safety design
	Safe amenities		
	Sight lines		
		Kids off the streets	
		Flood mitigation	

Table 5: Tactics and Strategies (continued) *(Note: These focus group sessions were conducted using different formats resulting varied responses.)*

	Tactic (Town Staff)	Tactic (Focus Group)	Strategy (Town Staff)
Mental Health			
		Open space	
		Views	
		Wildlife	
		Sitting places	
		Shade	
Physical Activity			
			M.C. Regs
			Parks and O.S. requirements
			Programming to meet needs
	Infrastructure		Public input - open house/surveys of wants and needs. $ - general fund, bonds, dedicated tax grants, outside revenue, agreements. Provide time. Willingness (prioritazion)budget, staff support/BOT support, partnerships, community support, laws and master plans and codes, incentives, adaptability/evolve based on needs, purchase of open space, programming/staff facilitation
	Accessible trails		
	Tournaments/competitive spaces		
	Outdoor workout equipment/fitness stations		check ordinances, obtain funds, gain public support, maintenance considerations, feasibility study, create amenities for activity (structural or not)
	Playgrounds		
	Programs		
	Picnic area with lawn games		
	Obstacle course		
	Water: paddle boards, paddle boats, fishing		
		Trails	Develop exactions, master plan
		Playgrounds	
		Pump track	Land, water, needs assessment, site selection, community involvement, study competing facilities, public education and buy-in, maintenance

Benchmarking

Benchmarking can be an important tool that allows for comparison of certain attributes of the Town's management of public spaces (parks, recreation, aquatics, and related services) with other similar communities. Specifically for the purposes of this ***Master Plan***, benchmarking data was collected from various Colorado agencies in the area.

It is difficult to find exact comparable communities, because each has its own unique identity, ways of conducting business, and differences in the population that it serves. Therefore, the benchmarking information presented here should be used as a catalyst for the Town of Erie to continue to research best practices for more specific areas when they are needed.

The following is a summary of key Erie rankings in the benchmarking comparison to multiple communities within the area including Boulder, Broomfield, Lafayette, Louisville, and Windsor:

#2	Indoor recreation center square footage per 1,000 persons.
#10	Total acres of developed parks.
#7	Total acres of developed parks per 1,000 persons.
#4	Total acres of park and open space acres per 1,000 persons.
#4	Total open space acres per 1,000 persons.
	Newly adopted impact fee are among the highest in the area.

Additional benchmarking data about specific areas (parks, recreation, etc.) can be found in the following chapters.

As noted in the demographics section, the Town of Erie is a growing community, and it has done an excellent job of maintaining, and in some instances increasing, its level of service. Due to development of park land dedication and park impact fee policies, Erie is well positioned to meet the recreational needs of future growth in the coming years, but additional research on indoor amenities and space will be needed. Benchmarking data may change over time and should be updated to reflect accurate information for future years.

Parks and Facilities Inventory

Inventory Methods and Process

In planning for the delivery of parks and recreation services, it is useful to think of parks, trails, facilities, and other public spaces as parts of an infrastructure. This infrastructure allows people to exercise, socialize, connect with nature, and maintain a healthy physical, mental, and social wellbeing. It is made up of ***components*** that support this goal. A ***component*** is a feature that people go to a park or facility to use (such as a tennis court to play a game of tennis) that serves as an intended destination. Components include assets such as playgrounds, picnic shelters, courts, sports fields, and other elements.

The inventory update for this study builds on the 2010 Master Plan and focuses on park sites that have been improved or have had significant property modifications since then. A detailed GIS (Geographic Information System) inventory of parks and recreation facilities was assembled and approved by the Town of Erie in June 2016.

Each component was evaluated to ensure that it was serving its intended function within the system. Any components in need of refurbishment, replacement, or removal were noted. Site comfort and convenience amenities such as shade, drinking fountains, restrooms, etc., called ***modifiers*** were also recorded.

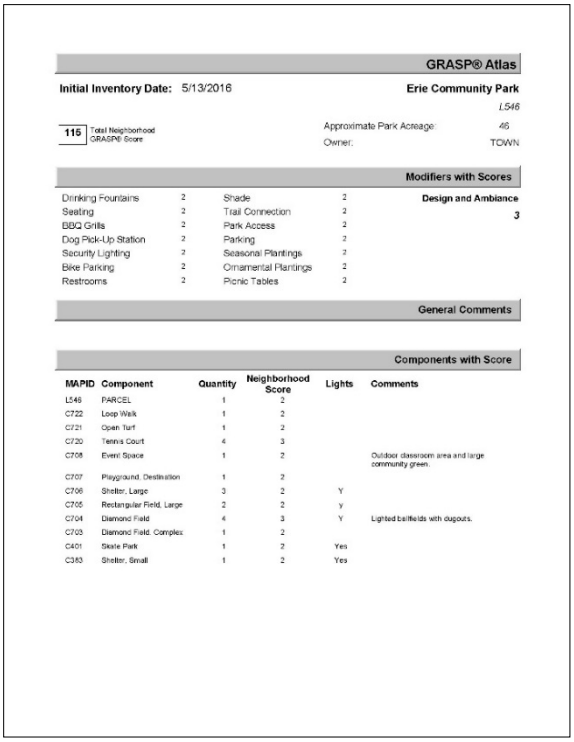
A standardized list of components and modifiers was used to classify each asset in the system, and a range of information was collected:

- Component type and location
- Component functionality
- Modifiers on site
- Site design and ambience
- General comments
- Site photos

The update was completed in a series of steps. The planning team first prepared a preliminary inventory, which was reviewed by Town staff for accuracy and completeness. A short tour introduced the project team to the Erie system to provide context. Field visits were conducted to confirm or revise preliminary component data, add new data, make notes concerning sites or assets, and develop an understanding of the system. The result was *Resource Map G: Indicators of Potential Open Space Value* as shown to the right as a thumbnail for illustrative purposes only. Information collected during the site visits was used to update the dataset, which was then reviewed by Erie staff.

Some property boundaries were updated in GIS to reflect site name revisions or modified demarcation. Updated parcels did not necessarily require site visits. In addition, all components were updated to the latest component list and definitions.





GRASP® Atlas

Initial Inventory Date: 5/13/2016

Erie Community Park

L546

115 Total Neighborhood GRASP® Score

Approximate Park Acreage: 46

Owner: TOWN

Modifiers with Scores

Drinking Fountains	2	Shade	2	**Design and Ambiance**
Seating	2	Trail Connection	2	**3**
BBQ Grills	2	Park Access	2	
Dog Pick-Up Station	2	Parking	2	
Security Lighting	2	Seasonal Plantings	2	
Bike Parking	2	Ornamental Plantings	2	
Restrooms	2	Picnic Tables	2	

General Comments

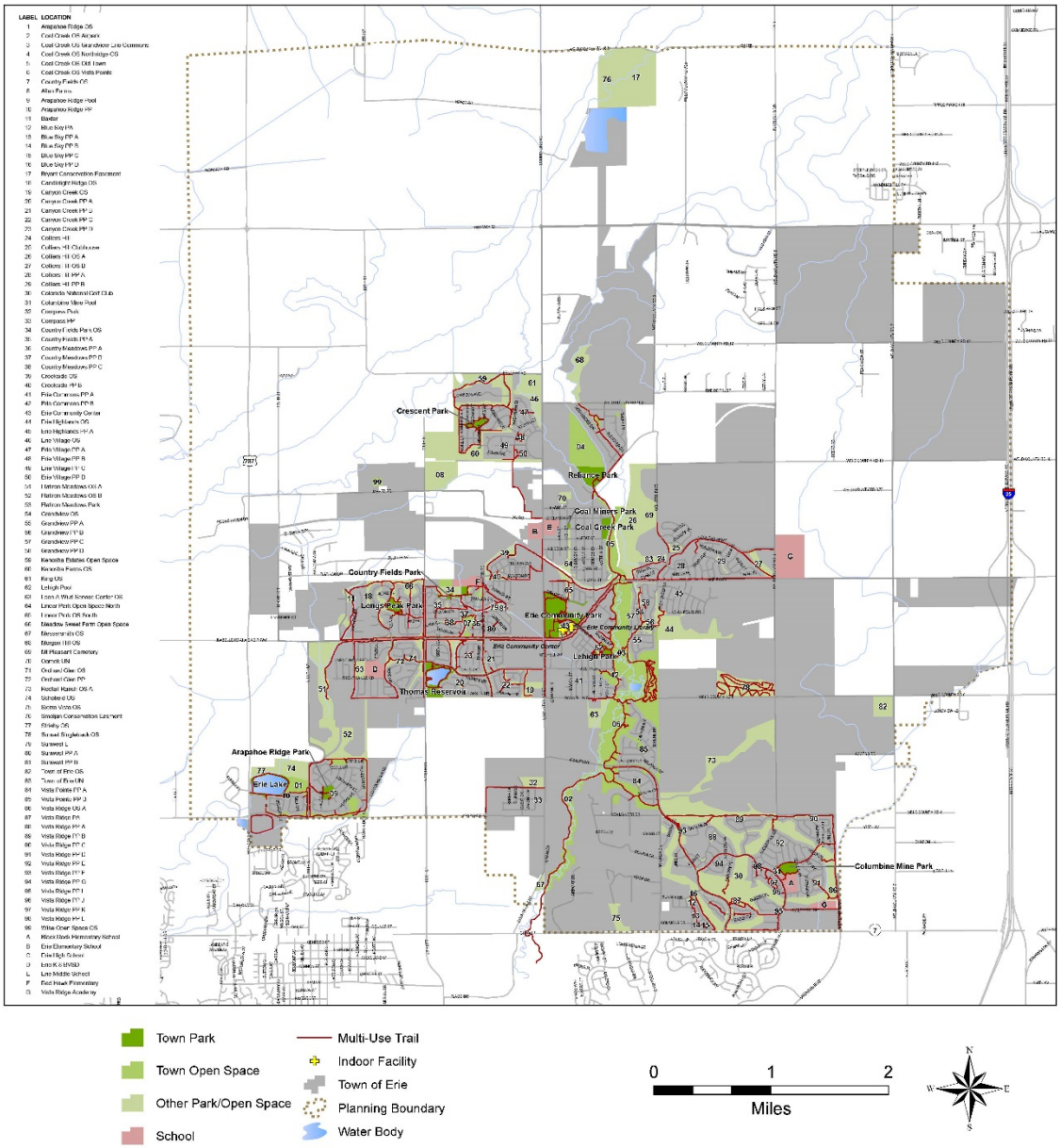
Components with Score

MAPID	Component	Quantity	Neighborhood Score	Lights	Comments
L546	PARCEL	1	2		
C722	Loop Walk	1	2		
C721	Open Turf	1	2		
C720	Tennis Court	4	3		
C708	Event Space	1	2		Outdoor classroom area and large community green.
C707	Playground, Destination	1	2		
C706	Shelter, Large	3	2	Y	
C705	Rectangular Field, Large	2	2	Y	
C704	Diamond Field	4	3	Y	Lighted ballfields with dugouts.
C703	Diamond Field, Complex	1	2		
C401	Skate Park	1	2	Yes	
C383	Shelter, Small	1	2	Yes	

Example of inventory map and data sheet.

The GIS asset inventory (***Figure 5***) will serve the Town of Erie in a number of ways. It can be used for planning and operations tasks, such as asset management, as well as future strategic and master plans. For the purposes of this study, however, it is used to measure access to recreation in the community. The current Erie Town limits were used as the study area.

Figure 5: Resource Map A - Parks and Recreation System



Summary of Inventory

The 2016 Town of Erie Inventory includes the following:

- 89 Town of Erie park or open space sites
- 365 total components
- 17 HOA-managed sites
- 7 school properties
- 5 private recreation properties including Colorado National Golf Club
- 40+ miles of trails
- 2 Indoor Facilities including Erie Community Center, and Erie Community Library

The Town of Erie has various parks and recreation options that serve the community in a variety of ways. Recreation sites are generally categorized based on size, use, and/or type. For reference and discussion purposes, parks and recreation sites were grouped into the following categories:

- Community Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Pocket Parks
- Open Space Areas
- Schools
- Trails
- Indoor Facilities

These categories are only intended for use in generalizing park and recreation sites, and may not reflect formal classifications used by the Town of Erie.

Outdoor Locations

Community Parks

Community parks are intended to serve the community at large, as well as visitors from elsewhere. Erie Community Park, at approximately 46 acres, is currently the only community park in the Town. It offers 11 unique components with lighted athletic fields, multiple shelters, a destination playground, a skate park, and events space.



Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are intended to serve an entire a neighborhood or part of Town. In Erie, they are typically greater than three acres in size. Playgrounds and shelters are usually provided, often with expansive open turf areas, along with several other components and amenities. Crescent, Lehigh, and Longs Peak Parks are good examples of neighborhood parks.

Pocket Parks

Pocket parks are intended for local use within a neighborhood. They are typically smaller than three acres, and have limited offerings that usually include a playground, shelter, and small open turf area. Pocket parks in Erie are typically Town-owned and managed by other entities, often homeowners associations.

Schools

School properties provide some recreational opportunity. However, since access is limited to non-school hours, school components were included in the analysis with a 50% discount in value. This discount also accounts for the fact that the quality of equipment and standards of maintenance may not always be consistent with Town standards. School sites developed since 2010 were located and scored based on aerial photography due to security restrictions.

Open Space Areas

Several open space and natural areas are publicly accessible in the Town of Erie. Most open space areas are Town-owned, and range in size from 15 to 150 acres. Town-owned open space includes publicly accessible parcels near parks, such as Country Fields Open Space, properties along riparian corridors such as Coal Creek. Additionally, several restricted access conservation lands and agricultural open space areas are also included.

Trails

More than 40 miles of trails are included, comprised of existing multi-use trails or paths in Town. Proposed trails or paths were not included. Typical street sidewalks and on-street bicycle lanes were also not included.



Indoor Facilities

The following Indoor Facilities were included in the Inventory for reference only, as indoor facilities are not included in the level of service analyses because it is assumed that the number of components at these facilities are high, and often unquantifiable:

- Erie Community Center
- Erie Community Library

Site Updates From 2010

Due to new park development, component removal/replacement, or changes in property ownership several sites were added to or removed from the 2010 data. Sites new to the system and those with site improvements were visited and all scores for these sites were updated in the process.

The following sites were visited for verification, scoring, and assessment:

- Arapahoe Ridge Park (new playground since 2010)
- Coal Creek Park (playground removed since 2010)
- Colliers Hill Pocket Park A (newly constructed)
- County Fields Park and Open Space (Cricket field added. Updated boundaries.)
- Crescent Park (name updated from Kenosha Farms Park)
- Erie Cemetery (new sidewalks, gates and landscape built)
- Erie Community Park (updated with as-built components and locations)
- Erie Highlands Pocket Park A (newly constructed)
- Kenosha Estates Open Space (renamed and expanded since 2010)
- Kenosha Farms Open Space (added community garden)
- Longs Peak Park (east/west park parcels combined into single park boundary; playground added)
- Reliance Park (dog park added)
- Red Hawk Elementary School (updated name and property boundary)
- Leon A Wurl Service Center (pump track under construction; boundary updated and renamed)
- Sunset Singletrack Open Space (singletrack bike trails added)

The following park projects, currently master planned and funded for construction, were included in the 2016 inventory:

- Coal Creek Park (redevelopment)
- Colliers Hill Neighborhood Park (new park site)
- Flatiron Meadows Park (new park site)

Undeveloped properties added to dataset and visited, if publicly accessible:

- Allan Farms
- Bryant Conservation Easement (not visited)
- Kenosha Estates Open Space
- King Open Space
- Messersmith Open Space
- Schofield Open Space
- Smoljan Conservation Easement (not visited)
- Streiby Open Space
- Town of Erie Open Space
- Town of Erie Undeveloped
- Wise Open Space

Sites removed from 2016 inventory that were included in 2010 dataset:

- Prince Lake 1
- School Sports Complex
- Town of Erie-Fire Station
- Town of Erie-House A
- Town of Erie-House B
- Town of Erie-Parcel D

Inventory Observations

Based on visits to each of the 22 parks and/or facilities, as well as an orientation tour with Town staff, the following were observed:

- Good distribution of parks with a wide range of component types.
- Parks generally show high quality maintenance and upkeep.
- Exceptional trail development and extensive connectivity throughout Erie and to neighboring communities.
- Heavy oil/gas presence throughout Town can have visual impact parks and open space users due to highly visible equipment and infrastructure.
- Equipment varies greatly in stages of lifecycle replacement.

Level of Service Assessment and Analysis

While the 2010 Plan outlined each Parks, Open Space, Trails, and other recreational property type in distinct sections, this update reflects a different approach to the Inventory and Level of Service Analysis, including all in a single discussion. This revised approach is intended to allow for a more complete understanding of the Town of Erie system, and to eliminate redundant content and analyses. More information about GRASP® and how to utilize this analysis can be found in ***Appendix B***.

Neighborhood Access and *Walkable Access* analyses serve as the cornerstones of the Level of Service discussion. Additionally, priority park elements are analyzed, and more traditional capacities analyses are highlighted. These include comparison to other communities, as well as national benchmarks, to round out this update.

GRASP® Level of Service Analysis is used for this update to evaluate how parks, open space, trails, and school facilities in the Town of Erie serve the community. It may be used as a tool to benchmark current access to recreation and serve future planning efforts.

An analytical technique known as **GRASP® (Geo-Referenced Amenities Standard Process)** was used to analyze Level of Service provided by assets in the Town of Erie. This proprietary process, used exclusively by GreenPlay and Design Concepts, yields analytical maps and data that may be used to examine access to recreation across a study area.

GRASP® Level of Service may be defined as the extent to which a recreation system provides residents of a community access to recreational assets and amenities. It is indicative of the ability of people to pursue active lifestyles and can have implications for health and wellness, the local economy, and quality of life. Further, GRASP® Level of Service for a recreation system is intended to reflect community values. It is emblematic of the manner and extent to which people are connected to their communities, especially true in Colorado where residents lead active lifestyles focused on outdoor recreation and healthy living.

Scoring

The GRASP® process is a component-based system. A ***component*** is a feature that people go to a park or facility to use. All components were scored based on condition, size, site capacity, and overall quality as they reflect the expected quality of recreational features in the Town of Erie. A three tier rating system was used to evaluate these:

1 = Below Expectations
2 = Meets Expectations
3 = Exceeds Expectations

In addition to scoring components, each park site or indoor facility was given its own set of scores to account for its comfort, convenience, and ambient qualities, called ***modifiers***. This includes amenities such as restrooms, drinking water, shade, scenery, etc. These ***modifier*** values then serve to enhance or amplify component scores at any given location. Beyond quality and functionality of components, the analysis takes into account these important aspects of a park or recreation site that are easily overlooked. Not all parks are created equal, and the quality of a user's experience may be determined by their surroundings. For example, the GRASP® system acknowledges the different contexts of these identical playground structures:



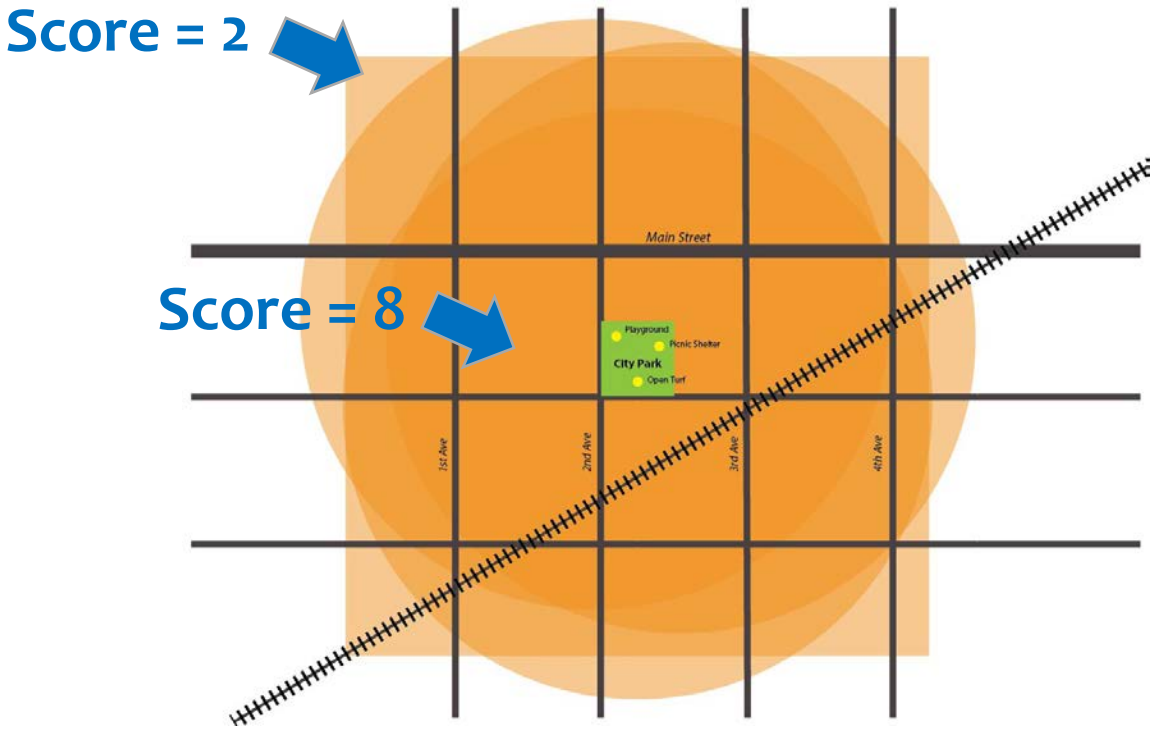


Perspectives

Perspective maps, tables, and charts were produced by applying the GRASP® process to the Town of Erie inventory and assessment. 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. The model can be further analyzed to derive statistical information about service in a variety of ways. Maps are utilized along with tables and charts to provide benchmarks or insights Town staff may use to determine success in providing services.

Catchment areas, also called buffers, are used to calculate total GRASP® Level of Service scores. An outline is drawn on a map around each component and location at a specific distance from that site. This "buffer" is called a catchment area. The GRASP® value for a component or location is then applied to that buffer to reflect that value. This scored buffer is called a ***service area***.

When service areas for multiple components and locations are overlapped on a map, a picture emerges that represents the cumulative GRASP® Level of Service provided by those various locations. This process yields the data used to create GRASP® perspective maps and charts. For any place in a study area there is a total GRASP® value that reflects cumulative scoring for nearby assets.



This simplified example graphic illustrates the GRASP® process assuming the three components at City Park, and the park boundary itself, are scored a "2." The overlap of their service areas yields higher or lower overall values for different parts of a study area.

A basic algorithm is used to calculate scoring totals, accounting for both component and modifier scores for every park and facility in the inventory. The resulting scores reflect the overall value of a site.

Types of Perspectives

People arrive at a recreation destination by a variety of transit modes, on foot, on a bike, in a car, via public transportation, or utilizing any combination of these or other alternatives. The travel mode is often determined, at least in part, by the distance or duration of travel to the destination. This variability may be accounted for by applying more than one catchment area distance to determine GRASP® Level of Service. The GRASP® methodology typically applies two different catchment area distances to calculate scoring totals:

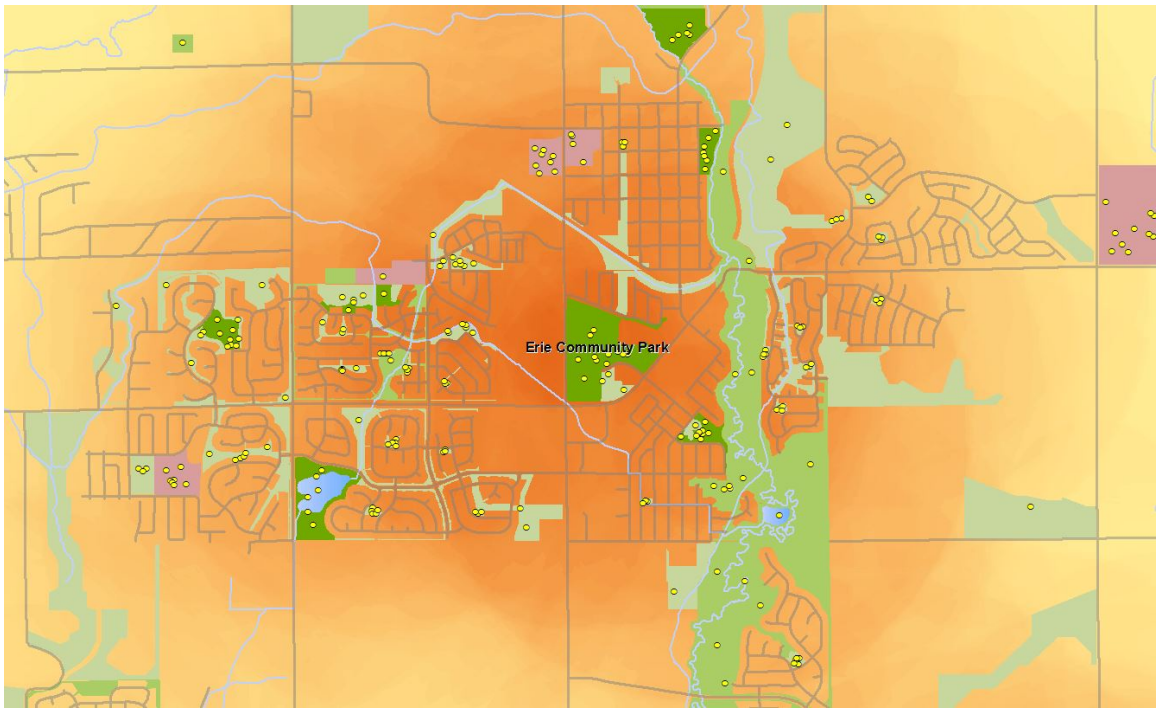
1. Neighborhood Access to Recreation
2. Walkable Access to Recreation

A *Neighborhood Access* perspective applies a catchment distance of one mile to the inventory. A one mile catchment is intended to capture recreational users travelling from home or elsewhere to a park or facility by way of bike, bus, or automobile. One mile is also considered a suitable distance for a longer walk. However, the ability to walk to a recreation opportunity is addressed specifically in the Walkable Access perspective.

A *Walkable Access*, or "walkability," perspective utilizes a shorter catchment distance intended to capture users within a ten to fifteen minute walk travelling at a leisurely pace. This distance can range from as short as 1/4 mile to as far as 1/2 mile, depending on the study area. **For the Town of Erie, a 1/3 mile walkability catchment area was used.** A 1/3 mile catchment accounts for longer actual walking distances as a result of indirect routes and serves to ensure a travel time of **10 minutes or less** for most pedestrians.

GRASP® *Walkable Access* does not necessarily indicate that a safe or desirable route exists between two places. Walking routes between locations have not been specifically evaluated, and this type of network analysis is well beyond the scope of a typical GRASP® Perspective. A distance of 1/3 mile "as the crow flies" is used to determine the parts of Town with walkable access to recreation. In many built environments, the street layout or development pattern does not allow for a direct route between two points. An indirect route is more likely in most towns or cities by way of gridded street sidewalks, or around private property. A 1/3 mile catchment accounts for the fact that users may actually walk a distance closer to 1/2 mile due to such indirect walking routes. An actual walking distance of 1/2 mile is commonly accepted in the industry as "walkable," and most people can walk a 1/2 mile in 10 minutes or less at a typical rate of three miles per hour.

Larger maps can be found in ***Appendix C.***



GRASP® Level of Service perspectives overlap service areas to yield a picture of total service for any place within a study area. Yellow dots indicate components. Modifiers at each park or recreation site influence overall scoring. Orange shades display higher cumulative scoring value for a given map area.

Assumptions

1. Proximity relates to access. The presence of a recreational facility within a specified distance indicates that a site is "accessible." "Access" in this analysis does not refer to access as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
2. Neighborhood Access relates to proximity of one mile, a reasonable distance for a drive in a car or by bicycle.
3. Neighborhood Access also accounts for a premium value for walkability, essentially doubling the score in areas with both 1 mile and unobstructed 1/3 mile access.
4. Walkable Access relates to proximity of 1/3 mile, a reasonable distance attainable in 10 minutes walking at a leisurely pace.
5. Walkable access to recreation is affected by barriers, obstacles to free and easy travel on foot.
6. Barriers within the Erie study area were identified as restrictive to non-motorized travel.
7. A minimum standard for service, also called a ***threshold***, was identified to further the analysis. The threshold equates access to a park with four components and an off-street trail, which is the service level provided by a "typical" neighborhood park. The threshold value used in this Plan is a GRASP® score of 67.2. Common neighborhood park components might include a playground, shelter, open turf area, and a loop walk, though access to a variety of other component types is likely to contribute to GRASP® Value.

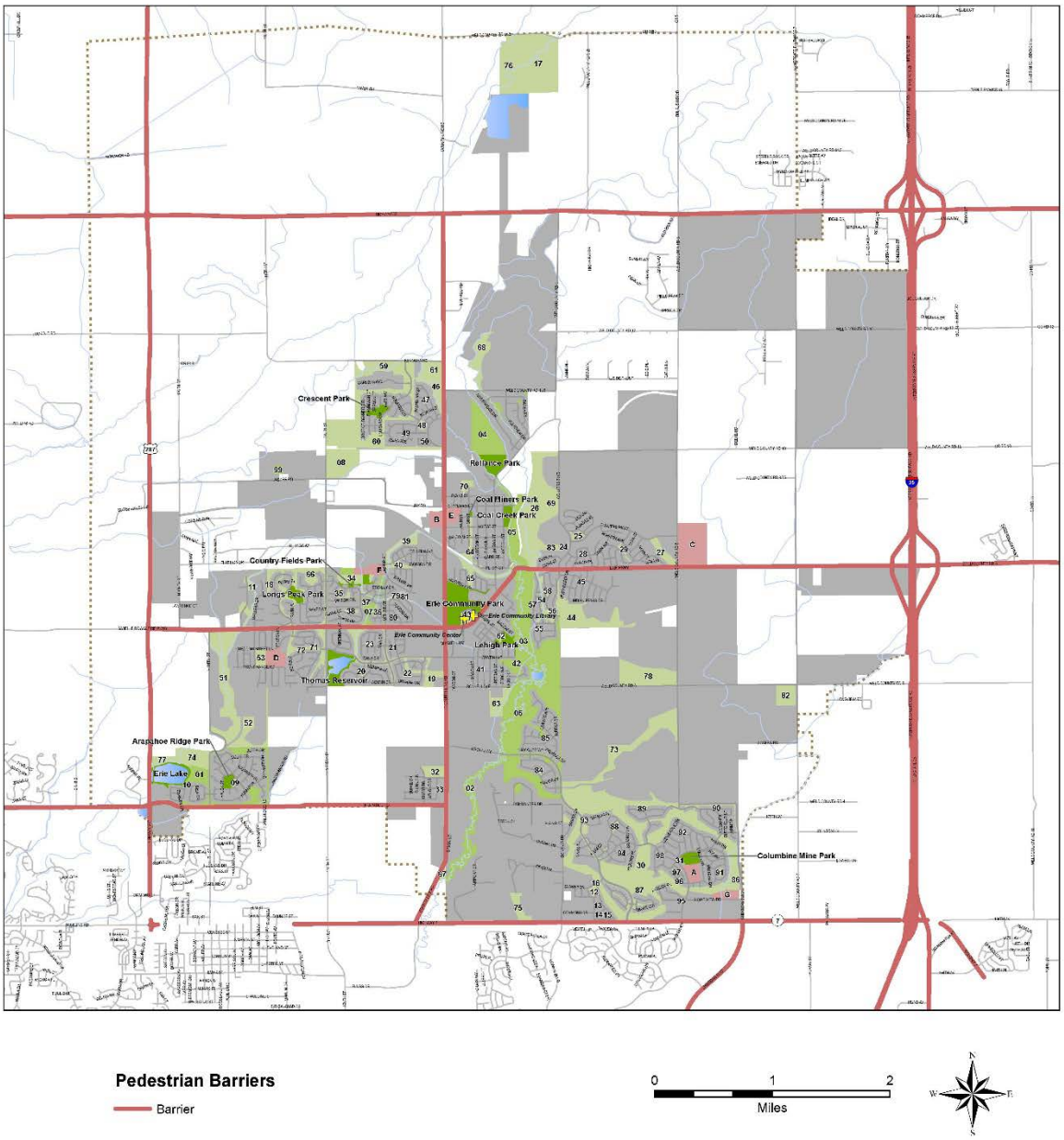
Barriers

Walkability can often be limited by environmental barriers. Several such obstacles to walkable access are created by highways and major roads within the Town of Erie. These include:

- U.S. Highway 287
- U.S. Interstate 25
- State Highway 52
- State Highway 7
- Erie Parkway
- Arapahoe Road
- County Line Road (south of Telleen Ave. and north of Cheesman St.)

To account for this, walkable service areas in the GRASP® Level of Service analysis have been "cut-off" by identified barriers (***Figure 6***). Barriers define zones that serve as discrete areas of Erie within which any facilities are accessible without crossing a major barrier. Due to greater walkability along County Line Road west of downtown, this barrier was made porous between Telleen Ave and Cheesman St. for the GRASP® analysis.

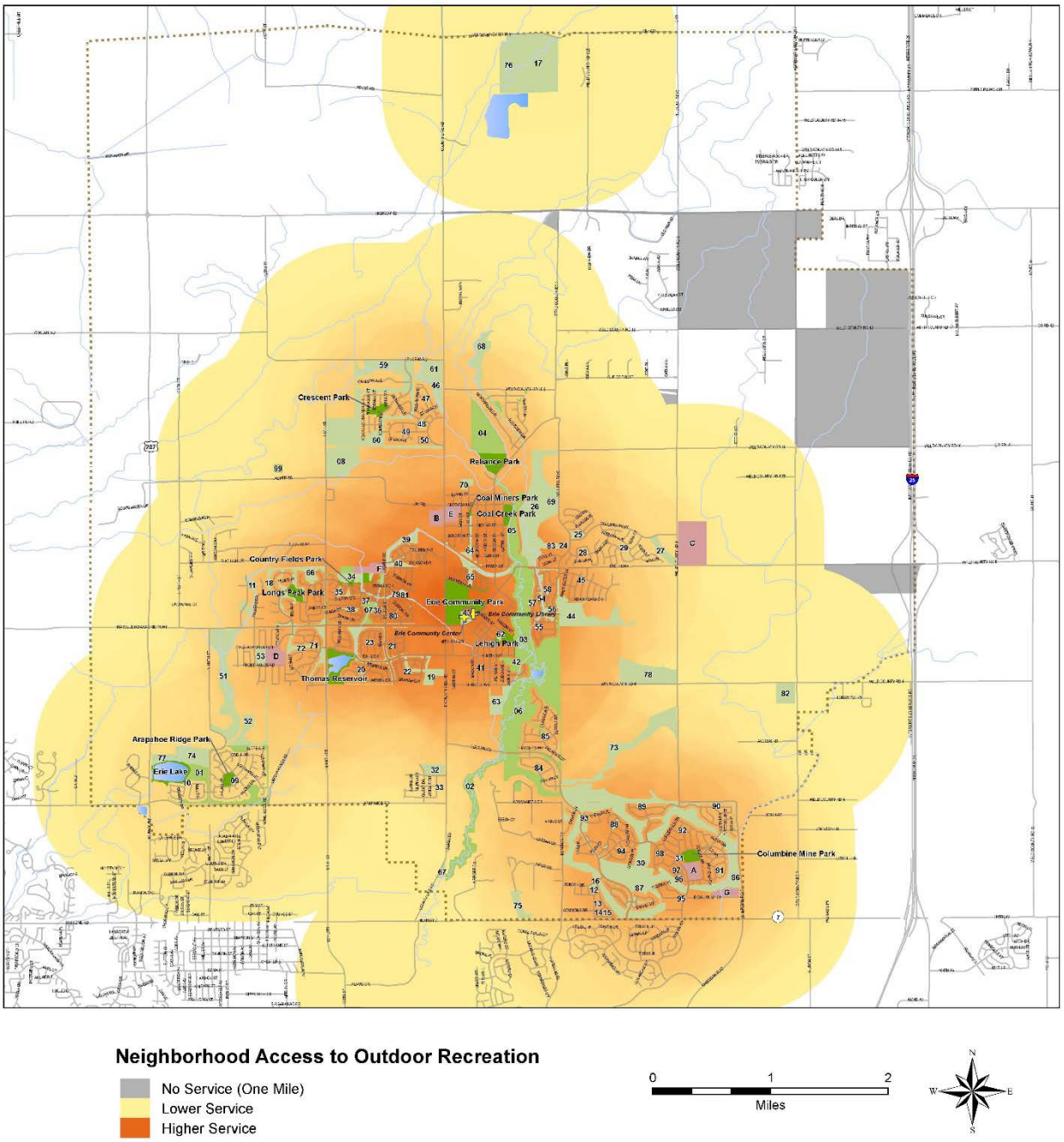
Figure 6: Walkability Barriers



Neighborhood Access to Recreation

This perspective (***Figure 7***) is intended to capture access to recreation for users travelling from home or elsewhere to a park or school facility by way of automobile or bicycle. It highlights areas of Erie with more or better recreation assets available within one mile.

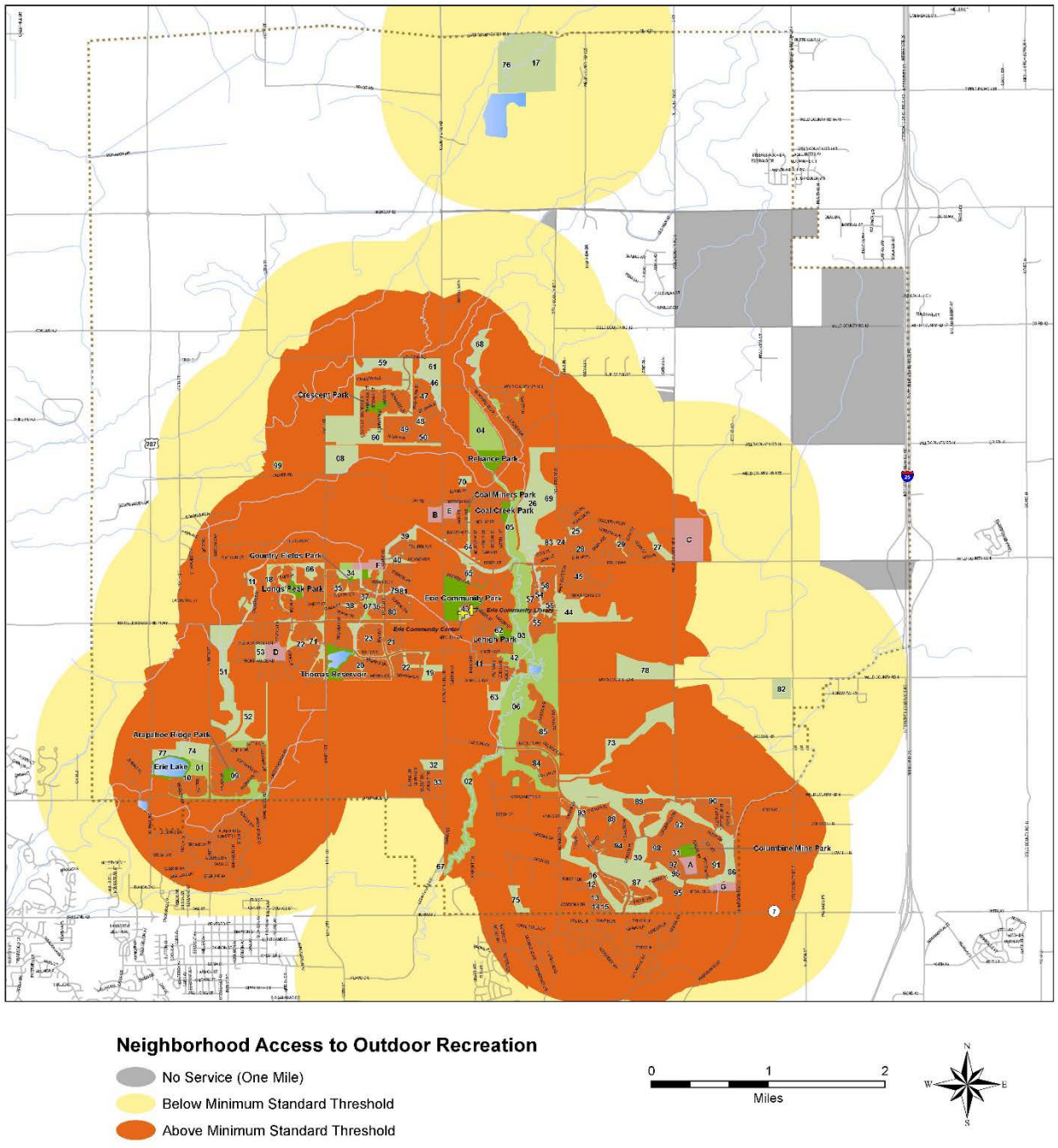
Figure 7: Resource Map B – Neighborhood Access to Outdoor Recreation



The “heat map” created to examine *Neighborhood Access to Recreation* indicates that the central core of Erie, including the historic downtown, has the greatest service concentration. Erie Community Park clearly provides a high level of service that impacts the vicinity. In general, however, Erie has good distribution of parks and outdoor facilities in developed parts of Town. Other high service areas exist, notably in neighborhood subdivisions around Crescent Park, Longs Peak Park, and Columbine Mine Park. Access to recreation is more limited at the periphery of town limits and in future growth areas. This perspective indicates that 86% of the Erie town limits is within one mile of a recreation opportunity. This is a positive finding, as many undeveloped acres in town are included which have no parks or facilities, and therefore, no service.

A variation on the heat map is the “threshold map,” (***Figure 8***) which displays the same data based on a minimum standard, or threshold value. This perspective is intended to identify gap areas; parts of town with opportunities for improvement as compared to other areas of Erie that already meet the target standard. For this purpose, only service areas within town limits are included.

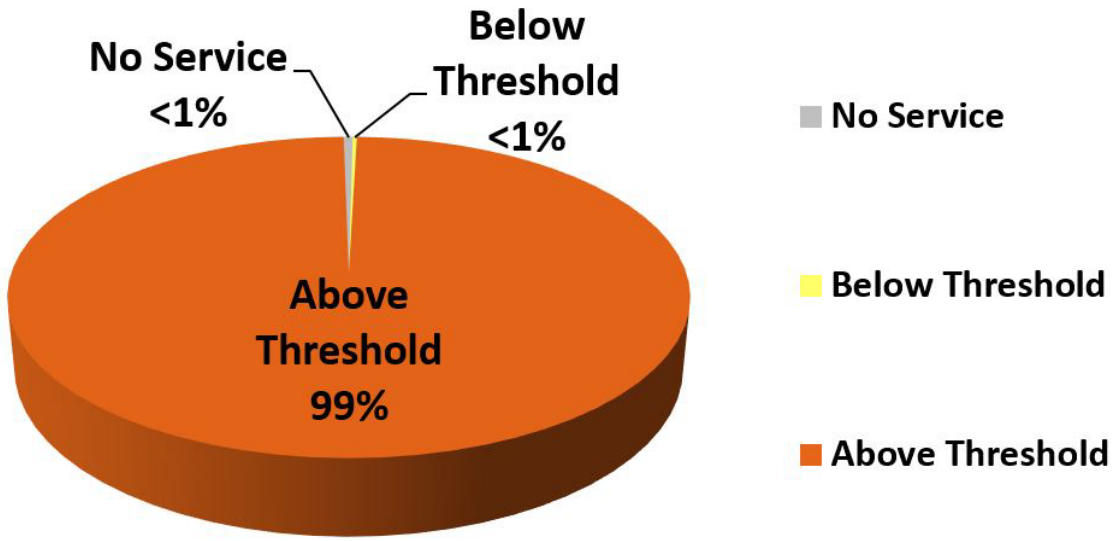
Figure 8: **Neighborhood Access to Outdoor Recreation (Threshold Map)**



For the Town of Erie GRASP® analysis, the minimum standard threshold is based on a neighborhood park with four components (such as a shelter, open turf, a loop walk, and playground for example) and access to an off-street trail. An equivalent GRASP® Value is used as a cut-off – above which the standard is met, below which it is not. The results are mapped, charted, and used for additional analysis.

The threshold perspective for *Neighborhood Access to Recreation* in Erie indicates that most developed areas of town have access to recreation opportunities that meets or exceeds the threshold value. Only one undeveloped area at the northeast edge of town, west of Interstate 25 and south of Highway 52, falls below the minimum standard threshold.

The threshold analysis may be further examined. Assessments based on population distribution can be informative, and often more illuminating than a service assessment based on town acreage. One such perspective compares GRASP® values to where people actually live within the Town of Erie. For Neighborhood Access, this shows that service is in fact exceptional, with 99% of Erie residents living within one mile of recreation opportunities that meet or exceed the minimum standard threshold. N**early all Town of Erie residents live within a mile of a typical park, or within a mile of recreation opportunities that add up to the GRASP® equivalent.** Less than 1% of Erie residents do not have Neighborhood Access within one mile.



Neighborhood Access to Recreation based on population.

Another important demographic indicator, median household income, was also examined as it compared to the Neighborhood Access to Recreation GRASP® threshold data. However, in Erie, any correlation between income and neighborhood access to recreation is inconclusive.

	2016 Median Household Income
No Service	$103,612
Below Threshold	$101,583
Above Threshold	$110,538

Neighborhood access to recreation as compared to median household income.

Households of all service areas are roughly equivalent. This likely reflects that single family homes are essentially the only type of housing stock available in town at present.

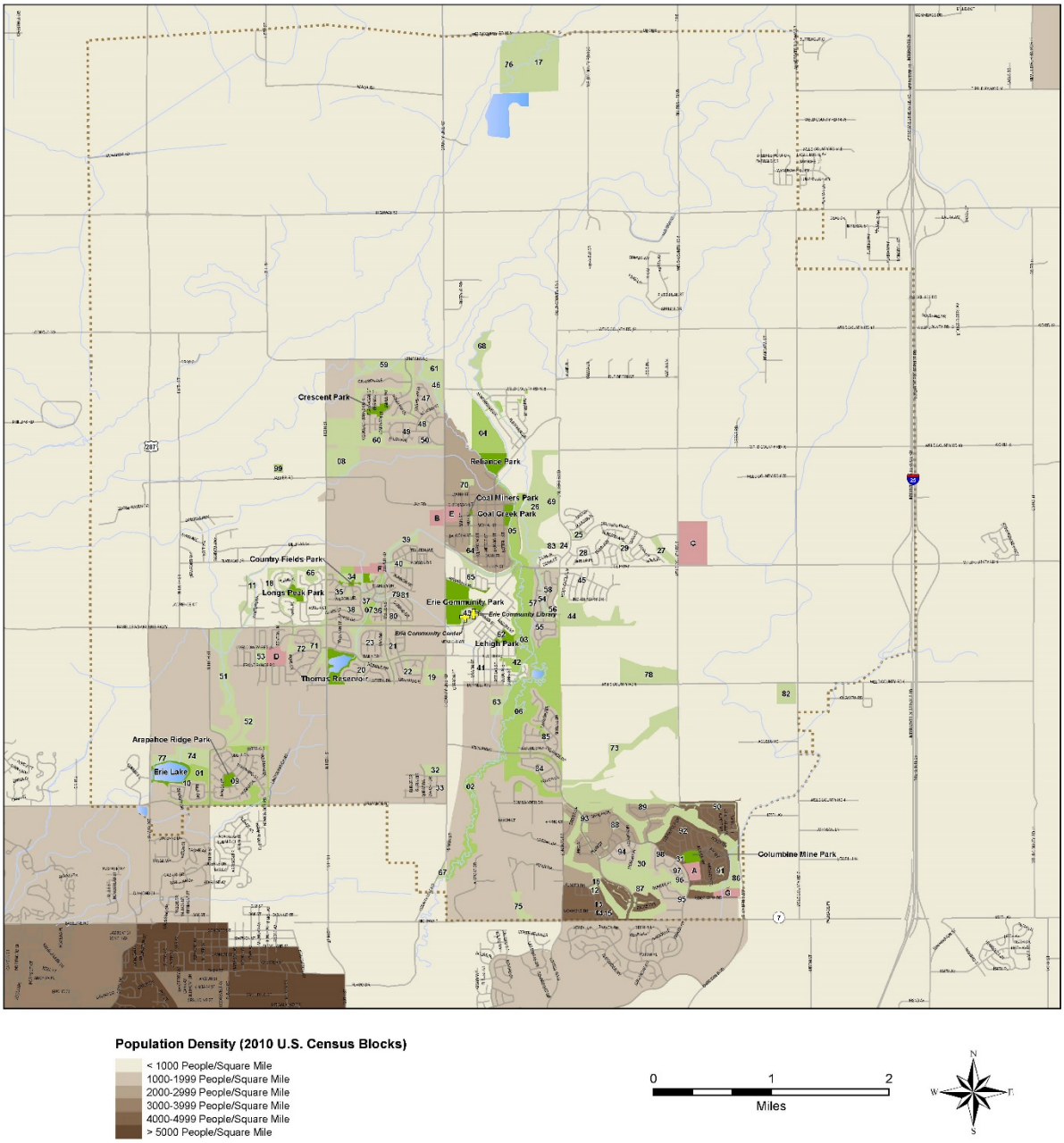
Further, median household income for all service areas is relatively high, above $100,000 per year, and well above the poverty line. Parks and recreation are especially important for lower income demographics that often have more limited mobility and less time and money to invest in exercise and wellness related activities. As higher density, lower cost housing options are planned for future development in Erie, this may be a valuable baseline indicator to monitor as it reflects social equity.

Population Density

When discussing access to recreation, it is also helpful to understand population distribution and density (***Figure 9***). In Erie, population density is relatively consistent with between 1,000 and 3,000 residents per square mile in most developed parts of town. Most other neighborhoods are home to fewer than 1,000 people per square mile, with higher density in old town Erie and the neighborhood around Columbine Mine Park.

Population density in Erie is comparable to similar communities with primarily single family home housing stock and suburban development patterns. By comparison, some adjacent neighborhoods in the City of Lafayette have a higher population density than Erie as result of multi-family residential development in those areas.

Figure 9: Resource Map C – Erie Population Density (2010 Census Block)



Density can be revealing in understanding the impact of service, and this is particularly true in study areas with a wide range of population densities. A comparison of recreational level of service to population is illuminating if more residents benefit from existing service in one part of town than in others. Population density can also be useful in prioritizing future park and recreation improvements. As higher density housing stock is developed in Erie, park planning should reflect that dynamic.

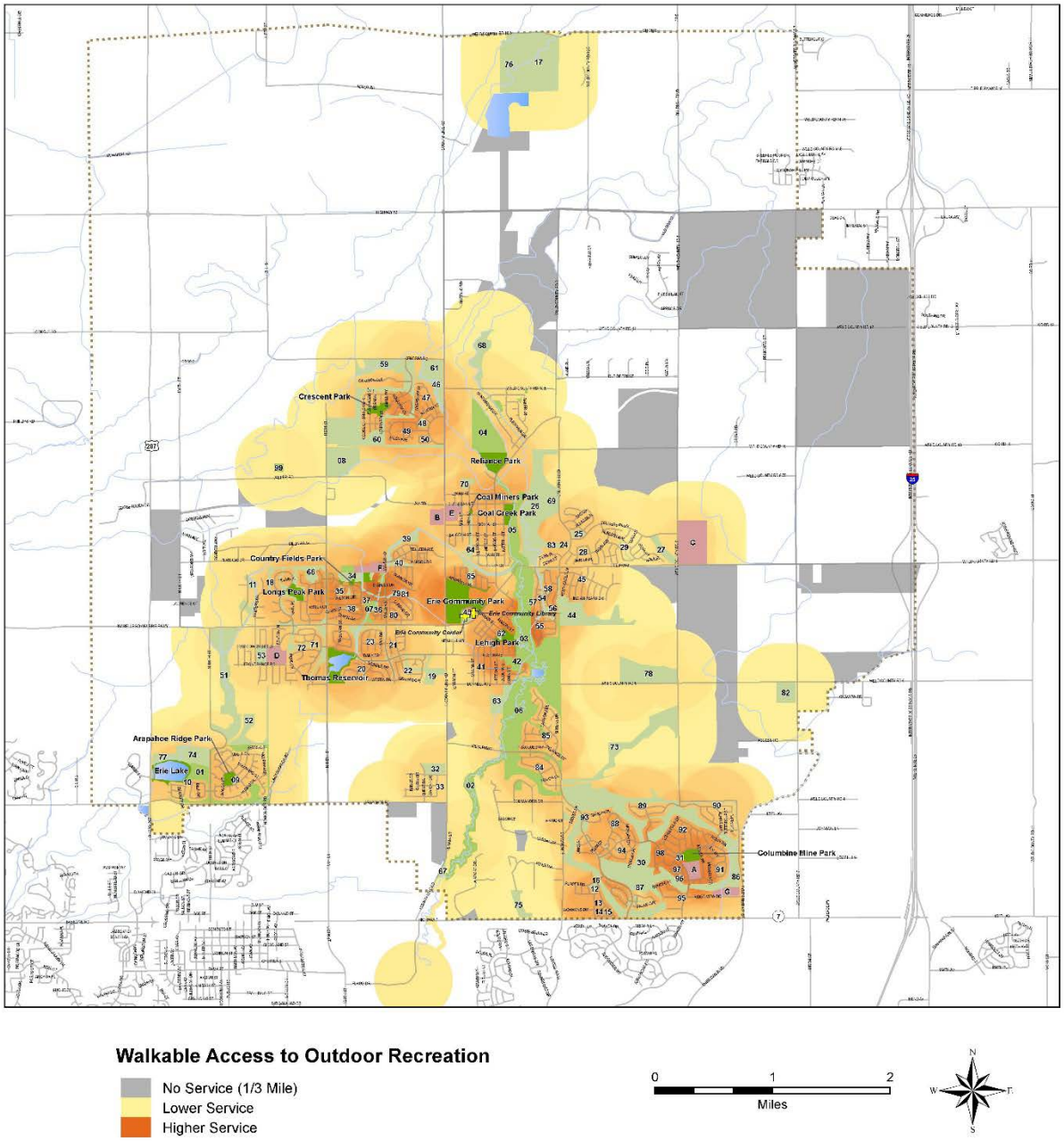
Walkable Access to Recreation

This perspective (***Figure 10***) models access to recreation components by walking or other active transportation. One-third mile service areas have been applied to each component and location and represent a distance from which access to these recreation opportunities can be achieved by an average person within a ten minute walk. The walkability analysis also accounts for barriers to non-motorized travel, thus service areas are truncated by these obstacles.

This perspective indicates 74% of Erie town limits is within a ten minute walk of at least one recreation opportunity, while just nearly half (46%) of acreage in town limits meets the minimum standard threshold. *Walkable Access to Recreation* is very high in developed areas of town. This reflects Erie's well developed trail system and a good distribution of parks and recreation opportunities.

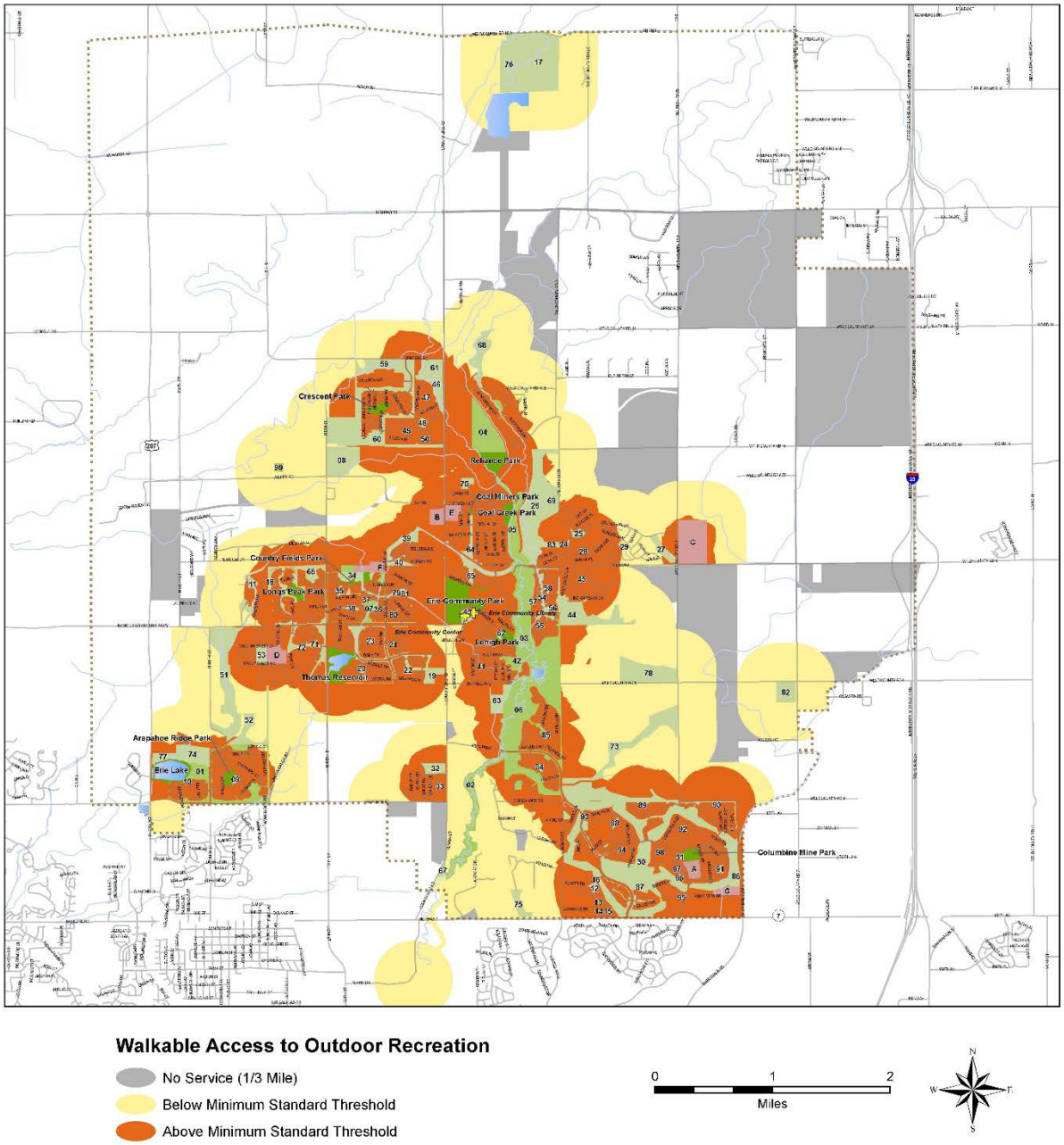
Walkability is a measure of how user-friendly an area is to people travelling on foot. A walkable environment benefits a community in many ways related to public health, social equity, and the local economy. Many factors influence walkability including: the presence or absence and quality of footpaths, sidewalks or other pedestrian rights-of-way, traffic and road conditions, land use patterns, and public safety. Walkability is an important factor in provision of recreation as one of every three Americans is unable to drive a vehicle due to youth, advanced age, or disability.

Figure 10: Resource Map D – Walkable Access to Outdoor Recreation

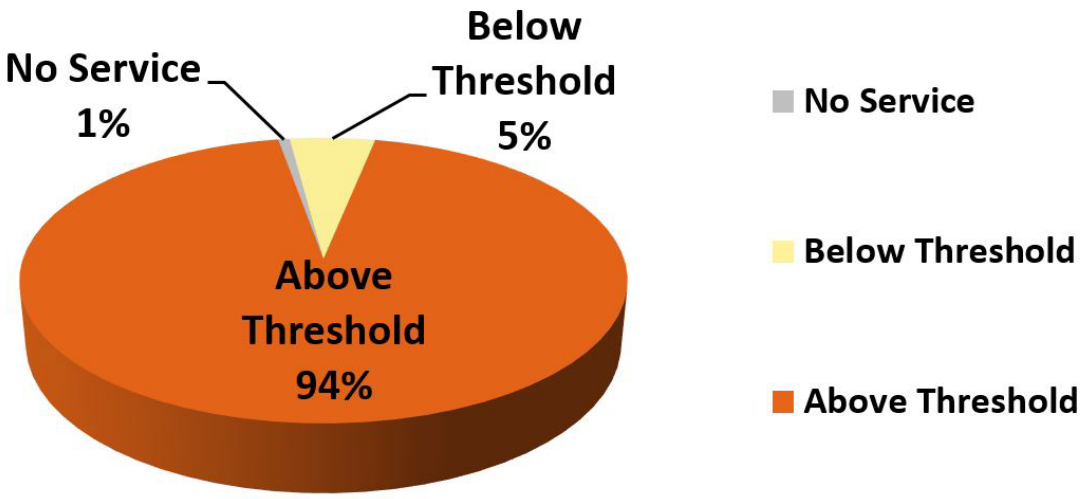


The threshold walkability perspective (***Figure 11***) highlights these extensive high service levels in developed neighborhoods of town. Though above threshold walkable service covers less than half of town acreage, 94% of residents live in these areas. Population analysis further indicates that 99% of Erie residents have walkable access to at least one recreation opportunity.

Figure 11: Walkable Access to Outdoor Recreation (Threshold)



Barriers do not significantly limit walkable access to recreation in Erie. This is an important finding that suggests good connectivity and a very walkable community.



Walkable Access to Recreation based on population.

As with Neighborhood Access, there is no real correlation at present between Walkable Access and household income. Incomes in Erie are relatively high throughout town and are consistent regardless of recreational service levels.

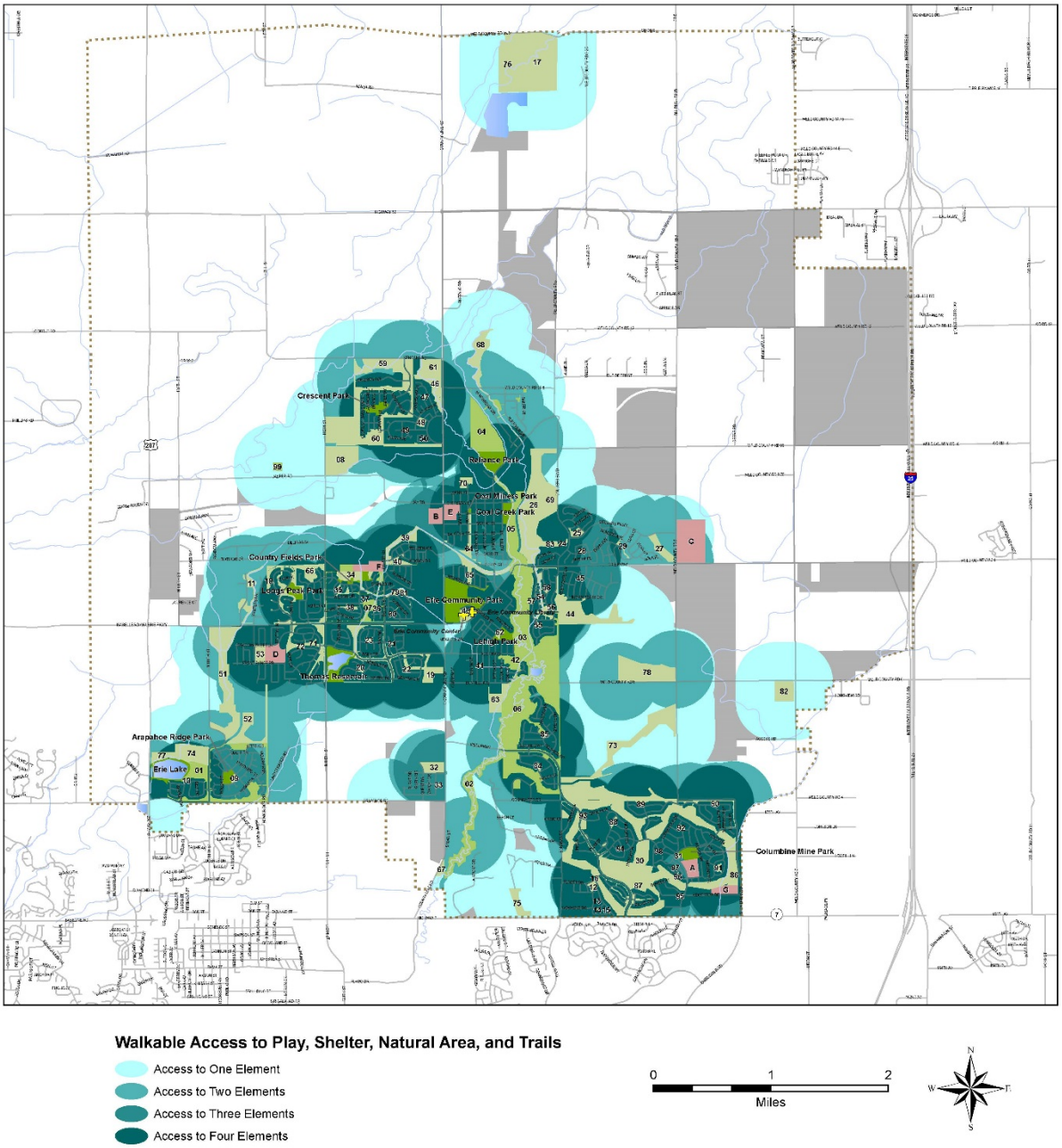
	2016 Median Household Income
No Service	$101,148
Below Threshold	$113,863
Above Threshold	$110,385

Walkable Access to Recreation as compared to median household income.

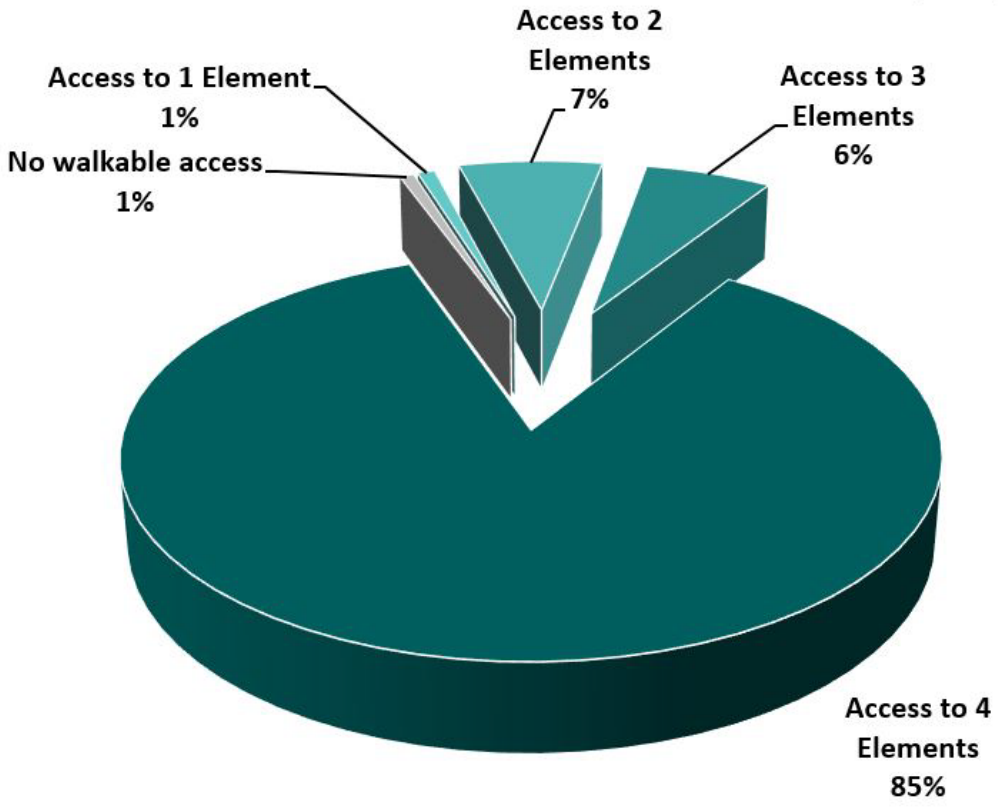
Walkable Access to Priority Elements

One further analysis, Walkable Access to Priority Elements (***Figure 12***), determined access to four priority component types: playgrounds, shelters, natural areas, and trails. This perspective shows the extent to which these essential amenities are available in Erie. The results are quite similar to the general Walkable Access map, with access to all four elements indicated in all developed neighborhoods.

Figure 12: Resource Map E – Walkable Access to Priority Components



Based on population, 85% of Erie residents have access to all four priority components. Nearly all residents (99%) have access to at least one play area, shelter, natural area, or trail.



Walkable Access to Recreation based on population.

Utilizing GRASP® Perspectives

GRASP® perspectives are used to evaluate level of service throughout a community from various points of view. Their purpose is to reveal gaps in access to recreation and provide a metric to use in understanding a recreation system.

However, it may not be necessary that all areas of a community be equally served. Target service levels for a particular area may depend on the type of service being analyzed, land use, community need, population growth forecasts, and planned future development.

Used in conjunction with other assessment tools such as community needs surveys and a public input process, perspectives can be used to determine if current levels of service are appropriate in a given location. Planning efforts may then provide similar levels of service to new, developing neighborhoods. Alternatively, it may be determined that different levels of service are adequate or suitable across a study area. New criteria may be utilized that differs from existing community patterns to reflect these decisions.

Commercial, institutional, and industrial areas might reasonably be expected to have lower level of service than residential areas. Access to recreation in high density or low density areas may also vary appropriately. Undeveloped parts of a study area may be prioritized as future opportunities arise.

GRASP® perspectives are intended to focus attention on gap areas for further scrutiny but must be considered with such factors in mind. Maps, charts, and other GRASP® deliverables provided should be employed as additional tools to assist staff in future planning efforts.

Traditional Analyses

Traditional analyses used to evaluate recreational level of service may also be informative. A few of these are discussed in this chapter.

GRASP® Community Comparison

Basic inventory data for various communities and study areas is compiled by the GRASP® Team for comparison purposes. This includes total population, acreage, park sites, components, and other indicators. An examination of several previous study areas as compared to Erie reveals several aspects of the Erie system.

By comparison with other GRASP® study communities of similar population, Erie stands out as providing a high number of park sites (118) and a high total number of components (396). Both of these statistics have increased since the 2010 study (109 and 368 respectively). The average number of components per site is relatively low, a reflection on the abundance of smaller pocket parks in Erie. Interestingly, the number of components per capita is nonetheless very high, a reflection Erie's high service and fairly low population density.

Table 6: Erie GRASP® Community Comparison Table. Includes both 2010 and 2016 GRASP® Inventory statistics.

STATE	CITY	YEAR	POPULATION	STUDY AREA SIZE (Acres)	# OF SITES (Parks, Facilties, etc.)	TOTAL # OF COMPONENTS	AVG. # COMPONENTS per SITE	TOTAL GRASP® VALUE (Entire System)	GRASP® INDEX	AVG. SCORE/SITE	% of TOTAL AREA w/LOS >0	AVG. LOS PER ACRE SERVED	NUMBER OF COMPONENTS PER POPULATION (in 1,000's)	AVERAGE LOS/POP DEN PER ACRE	Population Density (per acre)	% of Population with Threshold Access	% of Population with Walkable Threshold Access
CO	**Erie**	**2010**	**17,000**	**11,025**	**109**	**368**	**3.4**	**2061**	**121**	**18.9**	**87%**	**427**	**22**	277	1.5	NA	NA
ND	Williston	2011	17,300	5,089	19	104	5.5	446	26	23.5	93%	129	6	38	3.4	NA	NA
CO	Louisville	2011	*19,656*	*5,089*	145	453	3.1	3229	164	22.3	100%	903	23	234	3.9	NA	NA
CO	Golden	2016	20,201	6,221	25	183	7.3	778	39	31.1	NA	NA	9	NA	3.2	99%	70%
CO	**Erie**	**2016**	**21,353**	**12,237**	**118**	**396**	**3.4**	**2177**	**102**	**18.5**	**97%**	**362**	**19**	**207**	**1.7**	**99%**	**94%**
CO	Evergreen PRD	2011	22,736	48,154	28	170	6.1	902	40	32.2	100%	*540*	7	1143	0.5	NA	NA
NH	Keene	2011	23,409	23,868	42	193	4.6	1000	43	23.8	89%	125	8	127	1.0	NA	NA
CO	Lafayette	2012	24,453	5,979	74	201	2.7	1300	53	17.6	83%	175	8	43	4.1	NA	NA

Erie Capacities Analysis indicates those components needed by 2021 to maintain current capacities.

		2015 GIS Acres #	Basketball Court	Diamond Field	Dog Park	Garden, Community	Garden, Display	Loop Walk	Multi-Use Pad	Natural Area	Open Turf	Passive Nodes	Playgrounds (All Sizes)	Rectangular Field (All Sizes)	Shelter (All Sizes)	Skate Park	Tennis Court	Volleyball Court
INVENTORY																		
Parks		**166.5**	**2**	**12**	**1**	**2**	**6**	**8**	**2**	**43**	**68**	**8**	**54**	**10**	**62**	**2**	**8**	**5**
Schools			**2**	**7**		**0**	**0**		**4**		**2**		**3**	**6**			**8**	
Total		**166.5**	**4**	**19**	**1**	**2**	**6**	**8**	**6**	**43**	**70**	**8**	**57**	**16**	**62**	**2**	**16**	**5**
CURRENT RATIO PER POPULATION																		
CURRENT POPULATION 2016	**21,353**																	
Current Ratio per 1000 Population		**7.80**	**0.19**	**0.89**	**0.05**	**0.09**	**0.28**	**0.37**	**0.28**	**2.01**	**3.28**	**0.37**	**2.67**	**0.75**	**2.90**	**0.09**	**0.75**	**0.23**
Population per acre or component		**128**	**5,338**	**1,124**	**21,353**	**10,677**	**3,559**	**2,669**	**3,559**	**497**	**305**	**2,669**	**375**	**1,335**	**344**	**10,677**	**1,335**	**4,271**
PROJECTED POPULATION - 2021	**24,812**																	
Total # needed to maintain current ratio of all existing facilities at projected population		**193**	**5**	**22**	**1**	**2**	**7**	**9**	**7**	**50**	**81**	**9**	**66**	**19**	**72**	**2**	**19**	**6**
Number that should be added by all providers to achieve current ratio at projected population		***27***	***1***	***3***	***0***	***0***	***1***	***1***	***1***	***7***	***11***	***1***	***9***	***3***	***10***	***0***	***3***	***1***

includes all Parks (Community Park, Neighborhood Parks and Pocket Parks)

Capacities Analysis

Capacities analysis compares the quantity of assets to study area population. Current capacities for selected components in the Town of Erie are shown in the table above. This data can be used in conjunction with other information, such as input from focus groups, staff, and the general public to determine if the current capacities are adequate or not for specific components. It can also be compared to national statistics, such as those published by the National Recreation and Park Association in its *2016 PRORAGIS Field Report*.

The capacity table is useful in projecting future needs based on population growth to maintain the current level of service per capita. This type of analysis is most informative in study areas, such as Erie, with a growing population. Based on the capacities, the Town of Erie will need the following to be added to the system by 2021 to keep up with projected population growth:

Basketball court	1
Diamond Fields	3
Display Garden	1
Loop Walk	1
Multi-use Pad	1
Natural Areas	7
Open Turf	11
Passive Node	1
Playgrounds	9
Rectangular Fields	3
Shelters	10
Tennis Courts	3
Volleyball Court	1

An additional 27 acres of park land will also be needed to keep up with the current provision.

Note: This type of analysis is based strictly on the quantity of assets without regard to distribution, quality, or functionality. It is based on the assumption that higher service levels are achieved only by adding assets, without regard for quality or location of those assets. One advantage of the GRASP® system is that the process accounts for such attributes, beyond simple quantities.

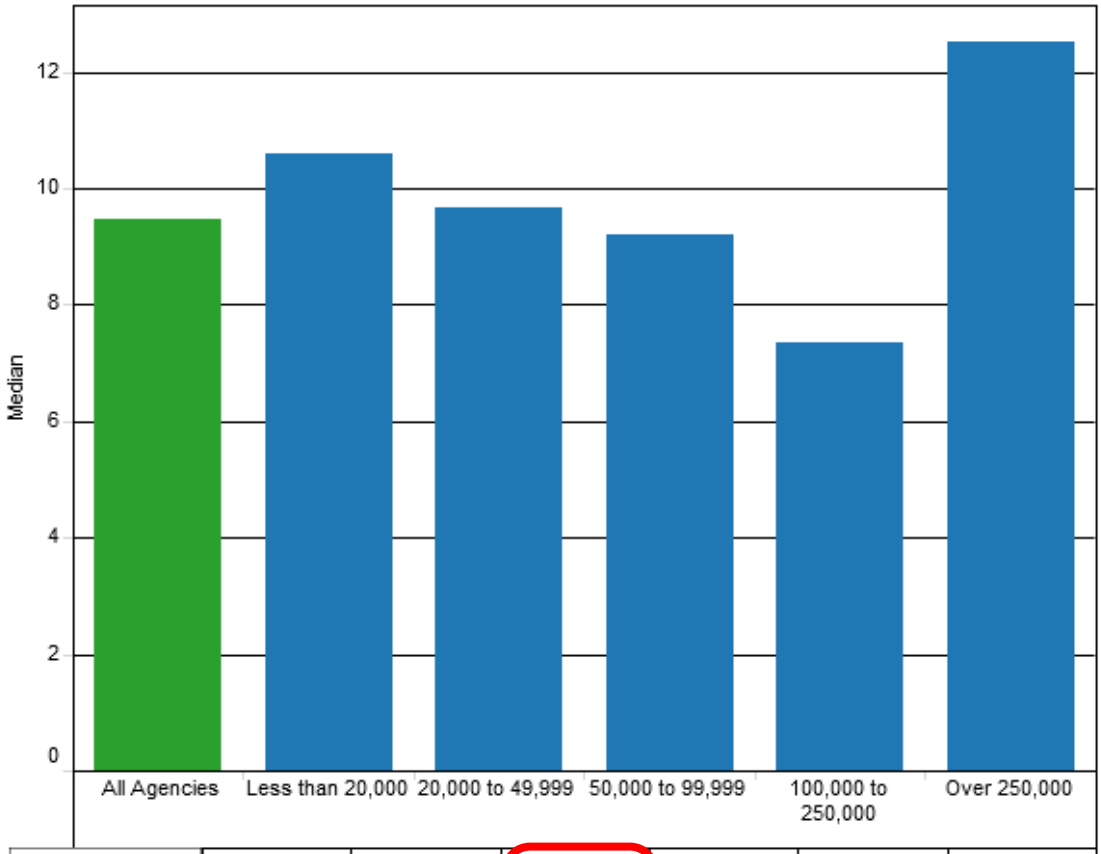
	Agencies Offering this Facility	All Agencies	Less than 20,000	20,000 to 49,999	50,000 to 99,999	100,000 to 250,000	Over 250,000
Basketball courts	85%	7,000	4,161	6,874	7,788	7,214	14,183
Community gardens	47%	32,376	8,500	27,236	39,555	74,500	233,120
Diamond fields: baseball - adult	39%	19,694	7,500	18,553	21,650	48,735	68,755
Diamond fields: baseball - youth	58%	6,599	3,167	6,502	8,317	8,562	26,240
Diamond fields: softball fields - adult	65%	12,463	5,139	10,345	14,263	22,162	35,875
Diamond fields: softball fields - youth	59%	9,687	4,319	9,348	14,978	18,720	34,342
Diamond fields: tee-ball	28%	12,771	6,345	13,500	20,000	28,930	108,168
Dog park	41%	43,183	9,126	27,000	57,535	88,353	156,989
Ice rink (outdoor only)	21%	16,572	7,930	21,500	17,298	63,346	339,848
Multipurpose synthetic field	5%	34,915	N/A	23,625	28,541	109,000	N/A
Multiuse courts -basketball, volleyball	25%	13,736	6,500	19,547	15,250	33,971	59,541
Overlay field	3%	7,257	N/A	20,375	N/A	N/A	N/A
Playgrounds	91%	3,560	2,220	2,833	3,493	4,562	11,207
Rectangular fields: cricket field	6%	199,199	N/A	29,000	N/A	121,496	505,382
Rectangular fields: field hockey field	3%	22,767	N/A	24,017	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rectangular fields: football field	38%	25,523	7,353	16,664	33,496	53,136	63,670
Rectangular fields: lacrosse field	7%	26,639	N/A	19,300	37,114	60,155	N/A
Rectangular fields: multi-purpose	50%	8,060	3,250	7,163	15,288	13,625	24,782
Rectangular fields: soccer field - adult	34%	12,365	7,800	12,000	15,195	15,997	55,093

Median Population Served per Facility (Table from 2016 NRPA PRORAGIS Field Report)

Comparison with statistics from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) 2016 PRORAGIS Field Report shows that Erie exceeds the national median ratio of residents per basketball courts, diamond ballfields, dog parks, playgrounds, and rectangle multi-purpose fields.

Table 7: Erie/NRPA Comparison Tables

	Erie 2016 Population per Amenity Ratios	NRPA 2016 Field Report (Median Value for Population 20,000 to 49,999)
Basketball Courts	5,338	6,874
Diamond Fields	1,124	6,502 - 18,553
Dog Parks	21,353	27,000
Playgrounds	375	2,883
Rectangular Fields	1,335	7,163 - 29,000



	All Agencies	Less than 20,000	20,000 to 49,999	50,000 to 99,999	100,000 to 250,000	Over 250,000
Median	9.47	10.59	9.67	9.19	7.35	12.52
Lower Quartile	4.62	4.50	5.23	4.53	3.94	5.09
Upper Quartile	16.51	18.25	15.59	15.15	14.94	18.68

Erie provides almost 7.8 acres per 1,000 people or 128 people per acre of "park." This includes only developed park lands and does not factor in open space lands or schools. As compared to aggregated findings from communities nationwide, also from the 2016 "NRPA Field Report," Erie is above the lower quartile but below the median in acres of park land per 1,000 residents when compared to other similar sized cities.

Level of Service Summary

The Town of Erie provides high quality, well-distributed park and recreation services to its residents. This is indicated in each analysis conducted in this 2016 GRASP® Inventory and Level of Service Analysis update to the 2010 *Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan*.

Nearly all residents have excellent Neighborhood Access to recreation opportunities, with 99% of residents living within one mile of park lands and recreation offerings that meet the minimum GRASP® standard. This standard equates to access to a park with four park components such as a shelter, open turf, a loop walk, and playground as well as an off-street trail or pathway.

Walkable Access to recreation is exceptional in Erie, as 99% of residents have walkable access to at least one recreation opportunity, even accounting for pedestrian barriers such as highways and major roads. More impressively, 94% of Town population has access to the minimum standard discussed above. Further, the analysis of Priority Elements showed that 84% of residents can walk to at least one playground, shelter, natural area, and trail. As significant, 91% of Erie residents have walkable access to three of the four park element types. These findings clearly reflect the community emphasis on connectivity and walkability, and the efforts of the Parks and Recreation staff to meet these needs.

A traditional capacities analysis shows that projected population growth will require additional expansion of park and recreation opportunities. Both added park acreage and the addition of new open turf areas, shelters, playgrounds, natural areas, athletic fields, and tennis courts among other assets will be needed by 2021 to maintain the current asset/population ratios. It should be noted, however, that the current provision in Erie for many of these assets exceeds the national median as reported by NRPA. A comparison with various Town of Erie statistics from the 2010 study suggests ongoing efforts to develop parks and improve recreation opportunities. These should be expected to continue as the population grows.

Altogether, these findings suggest a strong level of service at present for the Town of Erie, and a bright outlook for residents interested in high quality, well-located, well-connected recreation opportunities now and in the future.

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CHAPTER 3: PARKS

Chapter 3 Contents

- Introduction
- Park Inventory & Types
- Alternative Providers
- Survey & Other Stakeholder Input
- Benchmarking
- Level of Service Analysis
- Policy Framework for Parks
- Park Dedication Requirements
- Ownership, Design & Construction, Maintenance/Replacement Options
- Park Classifications & Design Standards
- Recommendations

Introduction

Parks help to provide opportunities for health and wellness, social engagement, and community building. They reinforce a sense of community by offering places for members of the community to gather and interact, and they contribute to the community's quality of life. The Town of Erie provides well-maintained parks that are geared for both neighborhood and community use.

Park Inventory & Types

The park and recreation system inventory was described in Chapter 2 and can be found, along with corresponding maps, in **Appendix B**. The Town's park system includes pocket parks that are designed with basic amenities to serve the immediate neighborhood and larger neighborhood parks that expand the range of amenities and are sized for larger, entire-neighborhood and community events, as well as a community park.

Summary of Inventory Locations

The 2016 Town of Erie Inventory includes the following:

- 89 Town of Erie park or open space sites.
- 365 total components.
- 17 HOA managed sites.
- 7 school properties.
- 5 private recreation properties including Colorado National Golf Club.
- 40+ miles of trails were included in the inventory and analysis.
- 2 Indoor Facilities including Erie Community Center, and Erie Community Library.

Following are descriptions of each park type:

Pocket Parks provide opportunities for passive outdoor recreation at a sub-neighborhood scale. They are ideally located within one-quarter (1/4) mile of the residences that they are intended to serve and may include lawn areas, picnic shelters and tables, play equipment, artwork, or other amenities appropriate for the demographic served and types of activities the neighborhood may desire.

Neighborhood Parks provide places for informal recreation and gathering places within walking distance of most residences (1/2 mile). Neighborhood parks may include multi-use lawn areas, picnic areas, playground equipment, small court games, community gardens, and playing fields and facilities as appropriate.



Community Parks are larger parks that serve multiple neighborhoods and focus on the recreational needs of the whole community. They provide places for organized recreational activities, community events, and gatherings. They may also take advantage of unique natural settings and provide recreational facilities that are compatible with the site.

Alternative Providers

The Town of Erie parks and recreation inventory also includes major alternative providers that offer parks, trails, and facilities that add to the Town's level of service but are not owned by the Town of Erie.

School districts are the second largest provider of playgrounds and athletic fields within the Town of Erie, after the Town. In most cases, outdoor facilities and amenities at public elementary schools within Erie, such as Black Rock Elementary and Erie Elementary School, are fully accessible to Erie's residents. These playgrounds and playing fields do not have controlled access and contribute directly to the park level of service for the Town. In the case of private schools such as Vista Ridge Academy, its outdoor facilities are open to the public for specific use at times but provide less access to the general public. Erie High School has high value to the Town because of its high quantity and quality of amenities including baseball and softball fields, tennis courts, a football field, and a track. However, the high school and middle school facilities have limited general public access and are heavily programmed with school activities.

HOAs and Metro Districts also enhance park and recreation services for residents of Erie mostly through the provision of pocket parks, pools, and community centers/clubhouses. For example, the Vista Ridge residential subdivision has 13 pocket parks, maintained by the HOA, along with two outdoor pool facilities, and an indoor meeting room/exercise facility. The quantity, quality, and distribution of the pocket parks alone have a significant impact on the recreational value to residents of Vista Ridge, Erie Commons, and other areas. Pocket parks are fully accessible to the public and provide high value to the subdivision's level of service, as is evident from community input.

Survey & Other Stakeholder Input



Highlights of community survey findings regarding parks are listed below:

- According to the National Citizen Survey, 84% of respondents had a positive perception of the parks within Erie, and 89% had visited Town parks.
- Neighborhood parks followed Town trails and the Erie Community Center in frequency of use.
- Seventy-eight percent (78%) of survey respondents rated neighborhood parks as very important, which is higher than the 2008 survey (73%).
- Seventy-seven percent (77%) rated neighborhood parks as mostly or completely meeting the needs of the community, which is higher than the 2008 survey (75%).
- Forty-nine percent (49%) indicated that they use parks outside of the Town (44% in 2008).
- Other facilities used include homeowners association facilities (37%), recreation facilities, private or public schools (30%), dog parks (28%), golf courses (26%), and churches (23%), among other relatively less used facilities and programs.
- Quality, maintenance, and number of parks the Town maintains received positive ratings.
- Park facilities that rated in the top ten outdoor facilities to add, expand, or improve (after trails and open space) included mountain bikes/pump track, outdoor water features, destination or nature-based playgrounds, outdoor special events space, community gardens, a dog park, and large picnic shelters.
- Other parks opportunities identified by the community include:
    - A boating area at Erie Lake.
    - Natural resource education/signage.
    - Unique characteristics in parks (e.g. destination playground features).
    - Mountain biking opportunities, such as pump tracks or skill courses.
    - Sledding areas.
    - Community gardens.
    - Wi-fi services.
    - Specific gathering spaces.

Community input from the public meetings and focus groups echoed many of the same suggestions included in the survey for outdoor park facilities to add or improve. Individuals were interested in the following amenities: areas for winter sports (sledding and cross-country skiing), a skate park, a dog park, soccer fields, and an outdoor pool. Participants agreed that a strength of the existing park system was the number of parks in each neighborhood. Interest was expressed in developing such community gathering spaces as amphitheaters in parks and adding unique features such as public art and signage that communicated Erie's history.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking data collected specifically for purposes of this ***Master Plan*** from comparable Colorado agencies shows that Erie has fewer developed park acres per 1,000 residents than many other surrounding communities (***Table 8***). This number is consistent with the previous planning effort, implying that the Department has maintained this standard as the population has increased. As mentioned in the 2010 Plan, the Town's current parkland dedication requirements are ensuring that parkland is increased as Erie's population increases.

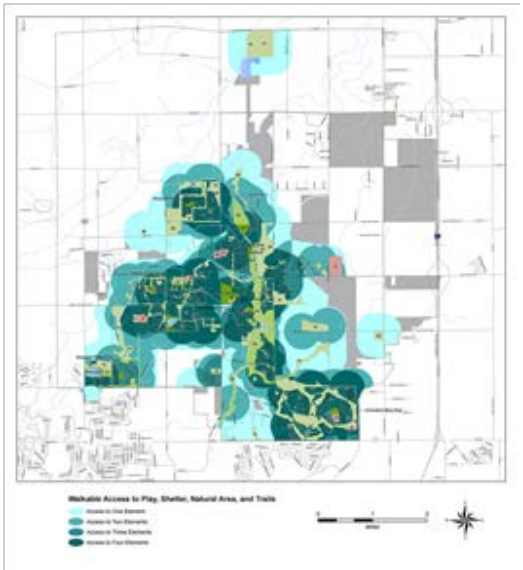
Table 8: Benchmarking – Developed Park Acres per 1,000

City	Developed Park Acres	Developed Park Acres per 1,000 Persons
Berthoud, CO	65	11.2
Boulder, CO*	700	7.2
Brighton, CO	197	5.5
Broomfield, CO	709	10.9
Castle Rock, CO	352	6.3
Lafayette, CO	230	9.3
Windsor, CO	183	8.3
Longmont, CO	968	11
Loveland, CO	439	6
Erie, CO	136*	6.2
Ft Collins, CO	745	4.9
Golden, CO	100	5

**Does not include pocket park acreage.*

Level of Service Analysis

The Town of Erie has consistently high levels of service throughout the community with the majority of residents having neighborhood access to some level of service provided by the parks, recreation, open space, and trails system. Erie has good distribution of service within its newer neighborhoods, where larger neighborhood parks are supplemented by pocket parks.



The only significant gaps remain in service are at the undeveloped edges of Erie. The highest concentration of service is located in the geographic center of Town where the Erie Community Center and Erie Community Park are located as shown to the right in *Walkable Access to Priority Components* as a thumbnail for reference only. A larger map is included in **Appendix B**. *Note: for the purposes of this study, future components that are very likely to be in place within the next 3-5 years and have funding for design and construction were included.*

Large contributors to this concentration of service include the Erie Community Center and Erie Community Park, Coal Creek Park, Lehigh Park, Erie Elementary and Middle Schools, Thomas Reservoir, designated open space and trails, and the numerous pocket parks in this area.

A second concentration exists in Vista Ridge where Columbine Mine Park, Black Rock Elementary, numerous pocket parks, and an integrated trail network serve the development. Service decreases further from the center of these concentrations, which generally corresponds to a decrease in population density and development patterns.

Policy Framework for Parks

The *Erie Comprehensive Plan* (as amended) provides the policy framework for parks (see Chapter 2 of this Plan), along with the *Municipal Code, Title 10* (as amended), which outlines the parkland dedication requirements. This ***Master Plan*** provides additional detail to support the policy framework outlined in these documents.

The *Natural Areas Inventory* also provides resource information that can be helpful in identifying appropriate sites for either preservation or park development.

The *Municipal Code, Title 6, Chapter 13* provides for the regulation of lawn grasses, weeds, and brush in order to protect public health, safety, and welfare and preserve neighborhood landscape and native environments in certain areas of the Town, including parks.

The *Municipal Code, Title 7, Chapter 3* provides for the regulation of trees and shrubs, including those in parks. This chapter also establishes the Tree Board as an advisory board to the Board of Trustees.

The *Municipal Code, Title 7, Chapter 6* provides the park and recreation facility regulations for the Town. The purpose of this section of the Code is to regulate the use of parks and recreation facilities in order that all persons may enjoy and make use of such parks and facilities and to protect the rights of those in areas surrounding such facilities. These regulations should be reviewed and updated in light of the new facilities at the Erie Community Center and Erie Community Park. (See goal P.6 in the recommendation section at the end of this chapter.)

As development continues to occur throughout Erie, including the construction of new parks, it will be important to consider the impact on Erie's overall tree canopy. Town forestry staff is currently completing an inventory of existing trees in public parks and open space areas. On completion of the inventory, it is recommended that the Town consider completing a community forestry master plan. (See goal P.5 in the recommendation section at the end of this chapter.)

A complete review and update to existing ordinances related to the planting and care of trees and shrubs (*Municipal Code, Title 7*, Chapter 3) was underway at the time of this Master Plan.

Park Dedication Requirements

The Town of Erie, through the *Municipal Code, Title 10,* requires private residential developers to dedicate parkland to meet the needs of new residents or provide a fee-in-lieu if no suitable land is available.

A minimum of 8.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents shall be provided in the form of pocket, neighborhood, and community parks. According to the current *Municipal Code, Title 10*, the distribution of this land shall be as follows:

- Pocket Parks – 0.5 acres per 1,000 residents.
- Neighborhood Parks – three acres per 1,000 residents.
- Community Parks – five acres per 1,000 residents.

To avoid duplication of services, parks should be developed as integral parts of other public facilities such as schools, where possible.

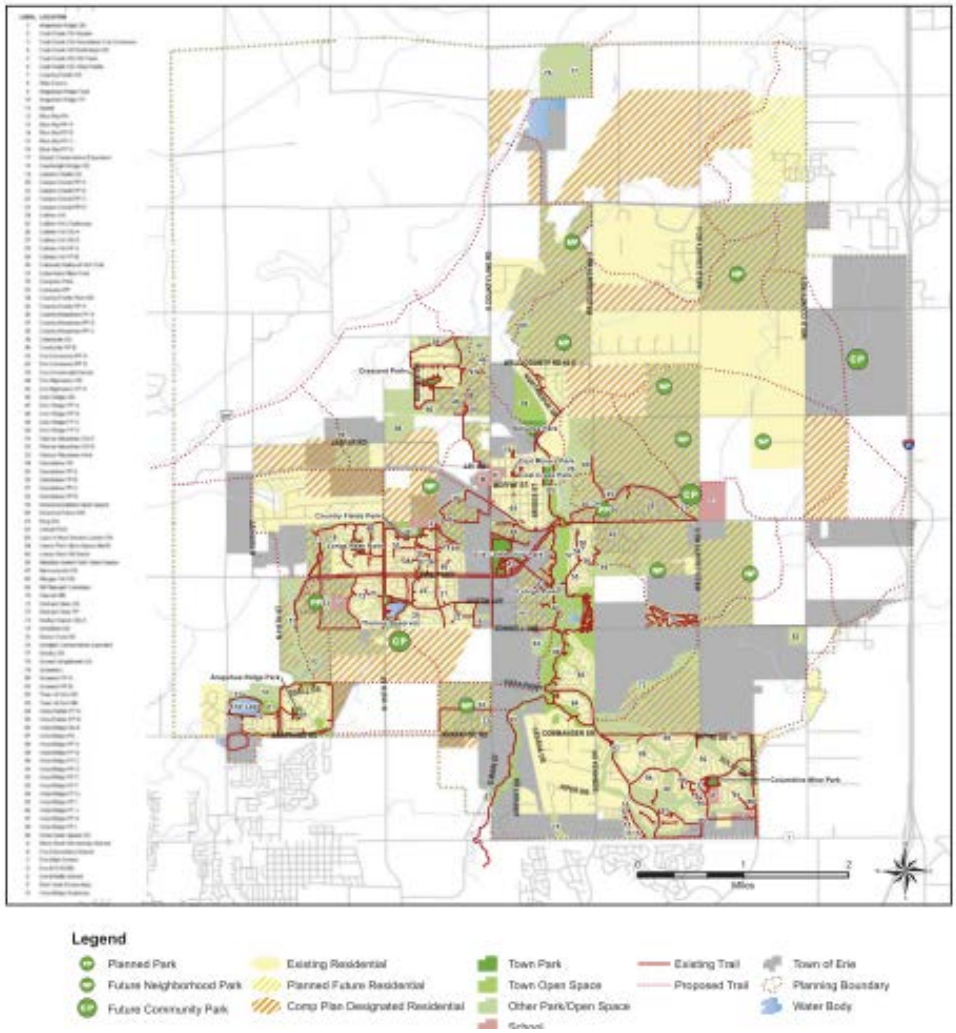
According to the current *Municipal Code, Title 10*, lands within the following areas shall not be accepted for parkland dedication:

- Private yards.
- Public or private streets or rights-of-way not intended for park, open space, or trail-related purpose.
- Open parking areas and driveways for dwellings not intended for park, open space, or trail-related purpose.
- Streetscape or landscape buffers and median strips.
- Major utility easements over 30 feet wide.
- Oil and gas well sites and setbacks.
- Storm water detention and water quality ponds greater than five feet deep with slopes greater than 5:1.
- Mine shafts and associated setbacks.
- Irrigation ditches and storm water channels.

The Town of Erie has solid parkland dedication requirements in the Code that require developers to dedicate parkland or pay a fee-in-lieu for neighborhood and community parks. The *Municipal Code, Title 10* also requires developers to develop pocket parks to be maintained by the HOA or Metro District and provide a public access easement. These efforts enhance the overall parks system to meet the needs of the Town's growing population. The location and amenities within these developer-built and HOA-maintained pocket parks are important to the Town, as they ensure that necessary services are well-integrated into the layout of the neighborhood they serve.

The *Municipal Code, Title 10* changed the park type name from "tot lot" to "pocket park" and changed the service area of a pocket park to .5 acres per 1,000 residents. With these new parkland dedication requirements in the *Municipal Code, Title 10*, the Town is shifting away from a large number of small pocket parks to a more moderate distribution of pocket parks with larger acreage dedicated to neighborhood parks and community parks. The new model is more sustainable from a level of service and maintenance perspective. ***Figure 13*** shows the future park types and locations currently being planned in Erie. A larger map can be found in the Appendix.

Figure 13: Resource Map F – Future Parks and Facilities (2016)



When compared to a select number of Colorado communities, Erie's parkland dedication requirements of 8.5 acres per 1,000 residents remains at the top of the list. Additional parkland dedication information can be found in Chapter 5 of this ***Master Plan*** and in the companion *Findings Report.*

Municipalities in Colorado have used a variety of approaches toward land dedication and park impact fees. The most typical approach is to focus first on "neighborhood" park development. However, many communities have also included the pro-rata (per person) share for community parks and, in some cases, trails, open space, and development of community-level facilities such as sports complexes and recreation centers. Another approach, which is not as typical, is for park impact fees to include the total park infrastructure costs, including parkland and park development costs (instead of having a stand-alone parkland dedication requirement). For example, Longmont, Colorado's park and recreation improvement fee includes the costs of acquiring and building neighborhood and community park and recreation components based on the *Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan*.

The Town conducted an *Impact Fee Study* during 2016, and proposed a significant increase in impact fees. The study concluded that an increase in fees was needed in order to finance the level of service set by the Town for parks and recreation capital programs or facilities, and to meet the demands of a growing community. Specifics from the study can be found in the Town's unified development code.

Ownership, Design & Construction, Maintenance/Replacement Options

Pocket Parks

Ownership and Maintenance/Replacement

Pocket parks are small parks that are provided by the developer of a subdivision and maintained by the development (HOA or Metro District), as specified by the current *Municipal Code, Title 10*. Ownership by the development permits those residents who directly use the park to manage its programming and uses as demographics and recreational trends change over time. Maintenance by the development allows the direct costs of maintaining a pocket park to be borne by residents who directly use the pocket park. The development should be responsible for replacement of pocket park amenities such as playgrounds over time. Although owned and maintained by the development, pocket parks include a public access easement for use of the park and amenities by the public. Some existing pocket parks within Erie are currently owned by the Town. (These pocket parks were developed prior to the *Municipal Code, Title 10* requirement.) During the development of this ***Master Plan***, Erie voters authorized the Town to transfer ownership of various pocket parks to willing HOAs or Metro Districts that currently maintain them. A public access easement would still be required over these pocket parks after ownership is transferred.

Design and Construction

The current *Municipal Code, Title 10* states that pocket parks shall be constructed to Town standards for public improvements. Proposed *Pocket Park Design Standards* that identify minimum requirements for amenities included in pocket parks are detailed at the end of this chapter. These standards provide for a minimum level of service for a pocket park but also provide flexibility in the type and number of amenities to appeal to the specific demographic and recreational desires of that development. The developer will be responsible for the design and construction of pocket parks according to these standards. Town staff should review and approve the pocket park design administratively.

Neighborhood Parks

Ownership and Maintenance/Replacement

Neighborhood parks provide places for recreation and gathering places within walking distance of most residences (1/2 mile). New neighborhood parks should be owned and maintained by the Town per the current *Municipal Code, Title 10*. In most cases, neighborhood parks will be constructed by the developers, though the Town may assume that responsibility in certain circumstances. In cases when the developer constructs the neighborhood park, the Town will own and maintain the park upon final acceptance of the improvements. At the time of this ***Master Plan***, the Town has a policy stating that the Town will accept the maintenance of a neighborhood park constructed by a developer once the Town begins to offer programs in that park. The maintenance of a neighborhood park constructed by a developer would be transferred to the Town by contractual arrangement or by a formal resolution passed by a majority of the Board of Trustees. A warranty period (of one or two years) from the final inspection date should be considered to ensure predictability for both parties.

Because neighborhood parks serve a larger population of Erie than pocket parks, ownership by the Town allows it to manage programs and uses in context of that larger area. Maintenance by the Town allows the costs of maintaining the park to be borne by a broader group of residents who could potentially use the neighborhood park. The Town is responsible for replacement of park amenities and infrastructure in neighborhood parks over time.

Design and Construction

The developer shall dedicate the neighborhood park property to the Town and be responsible for the costs of constructing curbs, gutters, storm sewer, and roads adjacent to the park site, as applicable, and stubbing utilities including water, sewer, and electricity to the park property line. The Town would typically be responsible for design and construction of neighborhood parks. However, the Town may designate the developer to design and construct the neighborhood park. In either case, the Town shall designate what amenities would be placed in the park and the maximum cost of the park improvements. The neighborhood park would be constructed to the *Municipal Code, Title 10* standards and the Town *Standards and Specifications for Design and Construction for Public Improvements*.

Note: The aforementioned statement has been modified from the Municipal Code, Title 10 *to reflect best practices. Recommendation P.1.2., located at the end of this chapter, addresses this modification.*

Community Parks

Ownership and Maintenance/Replacement

Community parks serve multiple neighborhoods (typically within one to one-and-a-half miles) and focus on the recreational needs of the whole community. Community parks shall be owned and maintained by the Town according to the current *Municipal Code, Title 10*. Because community parks serve the entire Town of Erie's residents, ownership by the Town allows it to manage programs and uses in context of the larger Town. Maintenance by the Town allows the costs of maintaining the park to be borne by the Town as a whole. The Town will be responsible for replacement of park components and infrastructure in community parks over time in order to meet Town standards.

Design and Construction

According to the current *Municipal Code, Title 10*, the Town shall typically be responsible for design and construction of community parks; however, the Town may delegate design and construction of the community park to the developer. A warranty period from the final inspection date should be determined, by which a transfer of maintenance responsibilities and costs from the developer to the Town would be set to ensure predictability for both parties. The Town shall designate what amenities shall be placed in the park and the maximum cost of the park improvements. The community park shall be constructed to *Municipal Code, Title 10* standards and the Town *Standards and Specifications for Design and Construction for Public Improvements*.

When a developer dedicates a community park property to the Town, the developer shall be responsible for the costs of constructing curbs, gutters, storm sewer, and roads adjacent to the park site, as applicable, and stubbing utilities including water, sewer, and electricity to the park property line.

Park Classification & Design Standards

Pocket Parks

Pocket parks are small parks provided by the developer of a subdivision and maintained by the development (HOA or Metro District). They provide opportunities for passive outdoor recreation at a sub-neighborhood scale. They are ideally located within one-quarter (1/4) mile of the residences they are intended to serve and may include lawn areas, picnic shelters and tables, play equipment, artwork, or other amenities that are appropriate for the demographics and types of activities that the neighborhood may desire. Pocket parks should meet the following criteria according to the current *Municipal Code, Title 10*:

- One-quarter (1/4) to two (2) acres in size.
- Centrally located within or to neighborhood(s) served.
- Bordered on at least one side by public streets, excluding collector and arterial streets, to provide easy public access, visual surveillance, and parking.
- Accessible from the surrounding neighborhoods using sidewalks and/or trails.
- Owned and maintained by an HOA or Metro District.
- Platted with a dedicated public access easement.
- Constructed to Town *Standards and Specifications for Design and Construction for Public Improvements*.

Proposed *Pocket Park Design Standards*, which identify the minimum requirements for amenities included in pocket parks are detailed at the end of this chapter. These standards provide for a minimum level of service for a pocket park but also provide flexibility in the type and number of amenities to appeal to the specific demographic and recreational desires of that development. Town staff shall review and approve the pocket park design presented by the developer based on the *Pocket Park Design Standards* and the needs of the development (based on demographics of the new residents and community needs and interests).

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks provide places for recreation and gathering places within walking distance of most residences (1/2 mile). These parks may include multi-use lawn areas, picnic areas, playground equipment, small court games, community gardens, and recreational fields and facilities as appropriate. Neighborhood parks shall meet the following criteria according to the current *Municipal Code, Title 10:*

- Minimum size of seven (7) acres.
- Centrally located within or adjacent to neighborhood(s) served.
- Bordered on at least two sides by public streets, excluding arterial streets, to provide easy public access, visual surveillance, and parking.
- Accessible from the surrounding neighborhoods using sidewalks and/or trails.
- Owned and maintained by the Town. *Note: Per Town policy at the time of this Plan, maintenance of developer-built neighborhood parks is transferred from the developer to the Town once the Town programs activities in the park. This policy is not reflected in the* Municipal Code, Title 10.

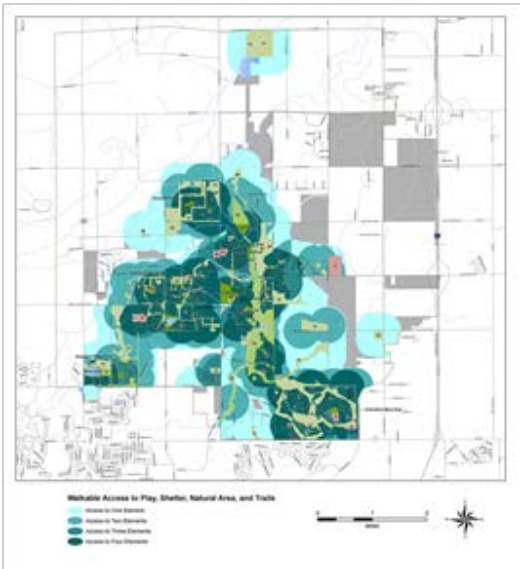
Community Parks

Community parks serve multiple neighborhoods (typically within one [1] to one-and-a-half [1 ½] miles) and focus on the recreational needs of the whole community. They provide opportunities for self-directed and programmed recreational activities as well as community events and gatherings. Community parks shall meet the following criteria according to the current *Municipal Code, Title 10*:

- Minimum of 30 acres in size.
- Sited in an area sufficiently level to accommodate play fields or recreational facilities as needed.
- Maintain a balance between programmed sports facilities and other community activity areas, such as performance areas, festival spaces, gardens, water features, etc. that have broad appeal to the community.
- Accessible from a collector or arterial street.
- Integrated into the Town's trail system.
- Owned and maintained by the Town.

Park Design Standards

Location



Park design and development begins with the selection of a site. *Resource Map E*: *Walkable Access to Priority Components,* shown to the right as a thumbnail for reference purposes, identifies the general location of potential park sites within the Erie Planning Area. Based on this map, the Department can determine priority areas of development based on its own standards. The deep blue areas in the thumbnail are areas that have access to four or more components within walking distance. The lightest blue and grey areas are areas that contain one or zero components within walking distance. The Department should examine these lighter areas to determine if they are appropriate for development. It should be noted that the score in any given area may be appropriate given this analysis. For example, an open space area would (and should) have a lower score than a neighborhood or community park. The final number and size of developments are dependent on actual residential development. As each neighborhood develops, specific park locations will be determined in the context of the overall neighborhood design.

When possible, parks should be located adjacent to schools, open space, and commercial areas to expand the parks, open space, and trails network and provide connectivity to destinations that residents will likely use. Parks should also be located away from inappropriate land uses such as heavy industrial, mine tailings, landfills, and detention areas exceeding slope and depth requirements of the *Municipal Code, Title 10*.

Site Analysis

Each park should be designed in the context of the unique opportunities and constraints associated with the site chosen for the facility. Existing topography, water resources, vegetation, drainage patterns, views, surrounding land use, proximity to utilities and other facilities, and access should be inventoried and evaluated to determine the types of facilities that the site can support.

Connectivity

Parks are major destinations that should be connected to each other and to other community amenities by a community-wide primary trail system that also provides opportunities for trail loops with areas of interest along the route. The following general guidelines help promote access and connectivity to and between parks and recreation facilities. (See Chapter 6 of this ***Master Plan*** for more information on trails.)

- Connect community parks and major recreational facilities with a primary off-street trail system and open space corridors where feasible.
- Connect neighborhood parks to the primary trail system with on-street bike lanes, sidewalks, and secondary off-street trails.
- Provide frequent pedestrian and bicycle trailhead access from adjacent neighborhoods.

Recommendations

P.1 GOAL: Ensure consistent, quality design and construction of parks.

Strategies:

P.1.1. Work with developers to construct to *Pocket Park Design Standards* that incorporate flexibility for development-specific amenities.

Actions:

A. Update *Pocket Park Design Standards* to ensure consistency with public feedback.
   1) Continue to review amenities biennially in pocket parks that future survey and public process participants identify as important, and update *Pocket Park Design Standards* accordingly.

B. Evaluate and incorporate new relevant component options every two years, as recreation trends change, to allow for diversity of amenities that will best serve the surrounding population.

P.1.2. Follow design guideline outlined within the Master Plan when constructing neighborhood and community parks. The Town may contract with a developer to provide this service to Town standards.

Actions:

A. Utilize *Resource Map F – Future Parks and Facilities* for approximate future neighborhood park locations.

B. Update the *Municipal Code, Title 10* (Section 10.6.3.B.4) to reflect revised characteristics of neighborhood parks to be dedicated. The policy changes include:
   1) That the Town shall be responsible for the design and construction of neighborhood parks unless otherwise agreed in writing.
   2) That developers shall be responsible for constructing curbs, gutters, storm sewers, and roads adjacent to the park site, as applicable, and stubbing utilities including water, sewer, and electricity to the park property line.

C. Ensure all costs are appropriately included in new Park Impact Fees. Costs would include grading, turf grass, irrigation and water taps, and raw water fees. These costs are currently the responsibility of the developer per the *Municipal Code, Title 10*. (See Funding and Sustainable Operations Recommendation F.1 in Chapter 7 of this Plan.)

P.1.3. Provide community-wide amenities in existing and future community parks as resources allow.

Actions:

A. Utilize *Resource Map F – Future Parks and Facilities* for future community park locations.

P.1.4. Provide Town of Erie park construction standards, specifications, and details to require safe, durable, and functional park design and construction.

Actions:

A. Annually review and update Town of Erie *Park Construction Standards and Specifications for Design and Construction of Public Improvements*.
B. Continue to expand the Town of Erie *Park Construction Standards and Specifications for Design and Construction of Public Improvements* as needed.

P.1.5. Continue to review and define the level of restroom service required for each park type, open space areas, and trailheads as follows:

A. Permanent, fully accessible restrooms in all community parks; consider year-round facilities where usage warrants.
B. Temporary, portable, and accessible restrooms such as port-a-lets within an enclosure at all neighborhood parks and at trailheads (as needed). Restrooms facilities at a neighborhood park may be improved to permanent restrooms during design or at a future time based on need generated from park use.
C. No restroom facilities in pocket parks.

P.2 GOAL: Ensure consistent ownership and maintenance for all existing and future pocket parks, neighborhood parks, and community parks to allow predictability in planning and management.

Strategies:

P.2.1. Clarify when the Town will begin maintenance of a developer-built neighborhood park (when applicable). The current *Municipal Code, Title 10* states that the Town shall own and maintain neighborhood parks, and the Town policy (dated 12-5-05) states that the Town will maintain a neighborhood park built by a developer once the Town begins programming in the park.

P.2.2. Continue to update *Municipal Code, Title 10* as needed to require basic standards for pocket parks (i.e. playground safety, landscape upkeep, etc.). Include language in development agreements in accordance with these maintenance standards.

P.2.3. Ensure *Municipal Code, Title 10* continues to require that the level of service of HOA or Metro District-owned and maintained public pocket parks will be maintained over time with all equipment and amenities in good working condition. Include language in new development agreements in accordance with this amendment.

P.3 GOAL: Ensure that new park facilities and amenities reflect current trends and local needs to maximize community use and participation.

Strategies:

P.3.1. Research and respond to regional trends in conjunction with community interests identified in this planning process (i.e. disc golf, swimming, adventure course, camping, etc.) and additional sources in the design and planning for park facilities.

Actions:

A. Track trends through Colorado Parks and Recreation Association conferences, sessions, industry publications, and other professional associations.
B. Design parks to promote healthy communities, responding to health trends and efforts (i.e. preventing childhood obesity, LiveWell Colorado, sustainable design, etc.).
C. Continue to pursue public input regarding amenities residents would prefer in Erie.
D. Identify existing parks or new parks where preferred trends can be constructed or programmed.

P.3.2. Incorporate community input into the design process for new parks, open space, and trail facilities (whether built by Town or developer). *Note: For new residential developers with no occupants, neighborhood input may not be possible for pocket parks.*

Actions:

A. Continue to engage community members in public meetings, focus groups, and/or surveys to gain design input.
B. Share community input with design teams and developers involved in the design of new parks, open space, and trails.
C. Promote new parks, open space, and trails projects on the Town website and in newsletters to create awareness of new facilities.

CHAPTER 4: RECREATION

Introduction

Recreation is not just about facilities and services. Today, it has become apparent that the benefits of recreation boost quality of life, health, social services, economic impact, and community building. The Town of Erie's Recreation Division helps connect residents with opportunities in fitness programs, teen activities, older adult activities, and much more. These services provide a foundation for the physical, social, economic, and environmental viability and well-being of the community. This section of this ***Master Plan*** guides the Recreation Division's growth and future visioning.

The Recreation Division represents the largest portion of the Erie Department of Parks and Recreation budget and generates the majority of departmental revenues. The Recreation Division's expenses in 2015 were $2,754,905, an increase of over 10% from the previous planning period. The Division employs 19 full-time staff and approximately 150 part-time/seasonal staff.

Chapter 4 Contents

- Introduction
- Program Inventory
- Erie Community Center Passes
- Alternative Providers
- Survey & Other Stakeholder Input
- Benchmarking
- Level of Service Analysis
- Policy Framework for Recreation
- Public Facilities Dedication Requirements
- Design Standards
- Recreation Priorities – Capital Improvement Plan
- Recommendations

The Erie Community Center (ECC) is the hub for drop-in activity and recreation programming. In addition to the ECC, recreation programs are offered in parks and school district facilities throughout Town. The vast majority of programs offered by the Recreation Division are located at the ECC. Programs that are held away from the ECC include youth sports, off-site senior programs, summer camp field trips, and special events. Over 25,000 youth, teens, adults, and seniors enjoyed these programs.

Program Inventory

The Town of Erie provides a wide array of recreational programs and services to residents whether their interests are indoors/outdoors, scheduled/drop-in, or structured/unstructured. These offerings are listed in the seasonal *Program Guide*, which is published three times each year. The following list gives a brief description of each section within the Recreation Division.

- **Active Adults Programs** *(*ages 60 and over) – includes day trips, classes, special events, lunch programs.
- **Adult Programs** – includes a variety of general interest classes.
- **Adult Sports** – includes basketball, volleyball, racquetball, Wallyball, and softball.
- **Aquatics** – includes youth swim lessons, adult water fitness classes, clinics, and private lessons.
- **Climbing** – includes open climb and youth and adult classes.
- **Fitness/Wellness** – includes a variety of fitness classes and wellness programs.
- **Special Events** – includes neighborhood picnics, evening socials, races, and several holiday events.

- **Youth Programs** – includes a variety of arts and crafts, music, dance, gymnastics, training classes, and martial arts.
- **Youth Sports** – leagues and training are offered in the following areas: basketball, flag football, soccer, volleyball, softball, and baseball.

Participation in Active Adult, General Interest, and Sports saw increases in participation, while Fitness and Special Events participation declined. Aquatics programs stayed relatively the same. The decline in participation in the fitness area shows that participants prefer drop-in classes to session-based (requiring pre-registration) classes. This is consistent with a national trend, as session-based fitness classes that require a longer commitment are on the decline. Community and staff members identified new and trending fitness classes as an opportunity for growth. While these programs are at capacity, further refinement of operations and scheduling is needed before it is determined if additional classes can be offered.

Erie's Active Adult program participation increased 30% from 2014 to 2015. Day trips are often a draw for this program area, as well as the use of the community room. Additional programming in this area was identified in the public process as an opportunity for expansion. However, due to the size and space restrictions at the ECC, new opportunities in this area may require partnerships.

Special Events saw the largest decrease in participation from 2014 to 2015. Since this area continues to grow nationally as an important family/community programming component, staff should review current offerings to determine appropriate changes to programs and schedules.

Youth and teen programs are highly requested by parents; however, staff has struggled with consistent participation as teens are often less interested in structured programs. For example, the teen room at the Community Center has been repurposed as an additional fitness/cycling studio. Identifying the niche for youth and teen programs will be important in the future as Erie's youth population continues to grow. Some communities have found success in creating multi-generational spaces, while others have found success with an active and engaged youth committee.



As programs and services expand, the Recreation Division will also need to form a plan for staffing support. The Recreation Division is currently using part-time, contracted instructors for many programs. While this is a common practice in public recreation program delivery, Erie will need to develop a long-term plan for sustainable staffing requirements. It will be helpful for staff to create an analysis over a period of time documenting increases in the number of programs, revenue, and participation.

Table 9: Program Participation (2014 vs 2015)

Program Area	Program Participation* (2014)	Program Participation* (2015)	Percentage change
Active Adults	1,136	1,488	+30.9%
Aquatics	2,941	2,933	-0.2%
Fitness	772	547	-29.1%**
General Interest	2,519	2,934	+16.5%
Sports	5,313	5,725	+7.8%
Totals	**12,681**	**13,627**	**+7.5%**
Daily Admissions	**195,138**	**207,779**	**+6.5%**

** Fee based programs, events, and activities. Free events/activities, such as Movies in the Park or visiting our Active Adult Lounge are not included in totals.*

*** Between 2014 and 2015, the Department shifted a number of fitness programs from classes/multi-session programs to drop-in sessions; now reflected in Daily Admissions.*

Since opening, the Erie Community Center has seen high usage rates. In 2008, the first year of operation, the ECC provided services to approximately 180,000 visitors. In 2015, over 205,000 community members utilized the Center. A summary of key findings from an analysis of programs offered by the Recreation Division follows.

- Recreation programs are primarily based out of the ECC.
- Overall program attendance is strong.
- Aquatic and fitness classes are in high demand and face scheduling challenges at peak hours (generally weekday evenings from 5-7 p.m. and weekdays from 8-11 a.m.).
- Teen programs are highly requested by parents; however, participation (other than youth sports and general recreation) does not reflect the expressed demand. Partnerships with alternative providers, such as schools, may be more appropriate.
- ECC had nearly 208,000 daily admissions in 2015, over 25,000 more than its first year of operation.
- Erie residents value special events, but this program area shows a decline in participation.
- Fitness, aquatics, and drop-in childcare programs are all close to capacity.
- The Department should considered additional indoor space in the short to mid-term planning.

At its current usage level, the ECC is experiencing overcrowding and capacity issues, which will continue as Erie grows. Additional space will be needed to continue the Department's level of service. The Parks & Recreation Department should explore options to respond to this growing demand through partnerships as well as exploring the addition of new facilities. For example, class schedules at the ECC could be refined to accommodate additional offerings or partnerships with alternative providers, like schools, could also accommodate some fitness programs. Furthermore, to respond to interest in aquatic facilities and programs, the Town should explore the addition of an outdoor water feature, like a splash pad, as well as partnerships for use of HOA outdoor pools for aquatic programs such as youth learn-to-swim classes. Due to the high cost of operating an indoor pool and the size of the Town of Erie, an additional indoor pool is not recommended. A more appropriate approach may be to design water features into new community or neighborhood parks.

Erie Community Center Passes

Erie Community Center's membership base is a significant part of the recreation budget. Consistent monitoring of the market within and around Erie will help staff identify what fees and charges should be recommended as well as what amenities or programs should be included. For example, given the demographics of Erie, the child care program will continue to be of importance to members. Renewal incentives are an option to retain current members. Discounted renewals may help retain members and attract new members at the ECC, although value-added services and offerings may be considered instead of discounting. It will continue to be important to ensure residents have a constant awareness of the ECC programs and services as they continue to evolve.

Table 10: Erie Community Center Pass Sales (2014 and 2015)

ECC Pass Sales	2014	2015
10-Visit	1,275	1,387
Adult 3-Month	358	411
Adult Annual	415	448
Couple 3-Month	156	175
Couple Annual	497	576
Family 3-Month	421	416
Family Annual	1,128	1,442
Healthways SilverSneakers	307	347
Senior 3-Month	104	120
Senior Annual	140	166
Senior Couple 3-Month	52	40
Senior Couple Annual	120	149
Youth 3-Month	87	92
Youth Annual	62	26
Total	5,122	5,795

***excluding Town employees**

Alternative Providers

Public agencies have not traditionally been thought of as organizations needing to be competitively oriented. However diligent the effort is to attract Erie residents to Department facilities and programs, individuals and families will continue to seek recreation opportunities that best meet their needs. They may venture outside of the Town and utilize private providers or other surrounding public park and recreation agencies. There are approximately 20 alternative providers offering fitness, youth sports, summer camps, adult sports, golf, gymnastics, tennis, and community or recreation facilities in the area. The *Findings Report* provides detailed information on these providers.

As the Town of Erie continues to grow and expand programs, collaborations with outside organizations will be helpful for facility space, ball fields, and services. As demand increases in a particular niche, the Town has the opportunity to work cooperatively with other organizations to respond to citizen needs. It is not expected that Erie can provide everything to everyone while trying to keep up with the fast growth that the Town is experiencing. Potential collaboration with alternative providers offers a way to diversify program offerings with limited facilities or field space.

As part of an assessment of the Town of Erie's parks and recreation services, the Recreation Division will have an opportunity to identify what is core to its values and vision. A Public Sector Services Assessment was completed in 2008 to help agencies recommend provision strategies that can include, but are not limited to, enhancement of service, reduction of service, collaboration, or aggressive market position. A review of alternative providers from the previous planning efforts identified six public agencies, three private/non-profit agencies, eight private agencies, and three homeowner associations (HOAs). Three local YMCAs offer youth and adult sports, summer camps, fitness/wellness, and aquatics programs and the five neighboring municipalities offer a variety of programming from leagues, to camps, and fitness and wellness programs. This list should be reviewed and updated periodically.

Many HOAs and Metro Districts in Erie offer neighborhood park and recreation services. Three HOAs have outdoor pools and offer limited fitness/wellness programs. Arapahoe Ridge, Vista Ridge, and Anthem Highlands all have some fitness equipment on site. This complements the ECC as fitness/wellness programs are in high demand and facility space is limited.

The Town of Erie's primary partnership is with the St. Vrain Valley School District and is documented in a joint use agreement that is updated on a regular basis. The relationship is positive and provides valuable space for programs. At this time, the schools are primarily used for gym and field space. To improve upon this relationship, the Parks & Recreation Department would like to more effectively market programs and services to students and to expand school facility use as the population grows and more programs are added. Since school policy prohibits the Town from circulating printed information to students, other opportunities for communication should be explored, such as text messaging, viral emails, social media, etc., to tap into this market.

At this time, the Recreation Division is the primary service provider for youth and adult programs. As the Town grows and alternative providers establish a stronger presence, staff will have the opportunity to perform a service assessment to evaluate what programs and services are offered and to define the Town's niche in fitness/wellness, youth programs, adult programs, outdoor recreation, older adult programming, aquatics, etc.

Currently, the ECC's fitness and aquatics programs and amenities are at or near capacity, and the market position is solid. However, a review of how the Town's offerings and alternative fitness providers can complement each other and avoid unnecessary duplication will help determine the appropriate market position for the future.

Survey & Stakeholder Input

Following are highlights of the community survey specific to the Recreation Division:

- The programs and activities for which respondents indicate the highest need include:
  - Fitness and wellness programs (73% of households have a need).
  - Individual activities such as road biking and hiking (71%).
  - Community special events (71%).
- A second tier of programs and activities includes cultural/arts programs (49%), children/youth activities (48%), swimming programs/swim team (46%), and environmental/natural programs (42%). While the order of programs, activities, and events has remained very similar to 2008, respondents currently indicate higher levels of need for each of these choices. In particular, needs for community special events (71% in 2014 vs. 39% in 2008) are now more in demand.

- Fitness and wellness programs top the list of programs that are currently meeting the needs of respondents (58% of respondents indicating their needs are being "75%" or "100% met"). This is a positive finding given that it is also the choice in which the highest shares of respondents express need. Relatively high levels of needs being met are also recorded for youth athletic leagues (56%), community special events (54%), and children/youth activities (53%). Meanwhile, several categories have high shares of respondents reporting needs being unmet (providing a rating of "1" or "2"), including gymnastics programs (65%), teen activities (60%), golf programs (55%), special needs/therapeutic (52%), and environmental/natural programs (52%).
- The average rating for every single category is higher in 2014 than it had been in 2008, suggesting that needs have been more fully met over time—a very positive finding. Even though there is room for improvement in several of these areas, there has still been strong overall improvement since 2008.
- Additional opportunities identified in the public process were:
    - Athletic fields to draw traffic away from the Community Center or draw in tournaments.
    - Provide more specialized sports and/or fitness training.

Benchmarking

Erie has the second highest recreation center square footage per 1,000 persons compared to other benchmarked communities. Based on a projected 2020 Erie population of 25,578, the recreation center ranking would move from second to the third in ranking (to 2,492 square feet per 1,000).

Table 11: Recreation Center Benchmarking

City	Number of Recreation Centers	Total Square Footage of Centers	Square Footage per 1,000 Persons
Windsor, CO	1	82,500	3,739
Erie, CO	1*	63,800	2,892
Broomfield, CO	2	152,000	2,336
Brighton, CO	2	70,000	1,955
Lafayette, CO	1	47,000	1,901
Boulder, CO	3	150,000	1,540
Longmont, CO	3	107,300	1,219
**In 2016*			

Level of Service Analysis

The community survey and participation rates indicate that Erie's level of service for recreation is very high. Other methods such as monitoring trends and demographic, membership base, demand analysis, and benchmarking can be used to determine level of service for recreation programs. Over time, as Erie grows and programs and services are spread to a higher degree throughout the community, the GRASP® level of service analysis can be used to measure equity of service delivery. Utilizing an updated *Public Sector Service Assessment* tool in conjunction with level of service analysis will provide a best practice analysis to determine the type of programs and services to continue or add to the service portfolio for the Town.

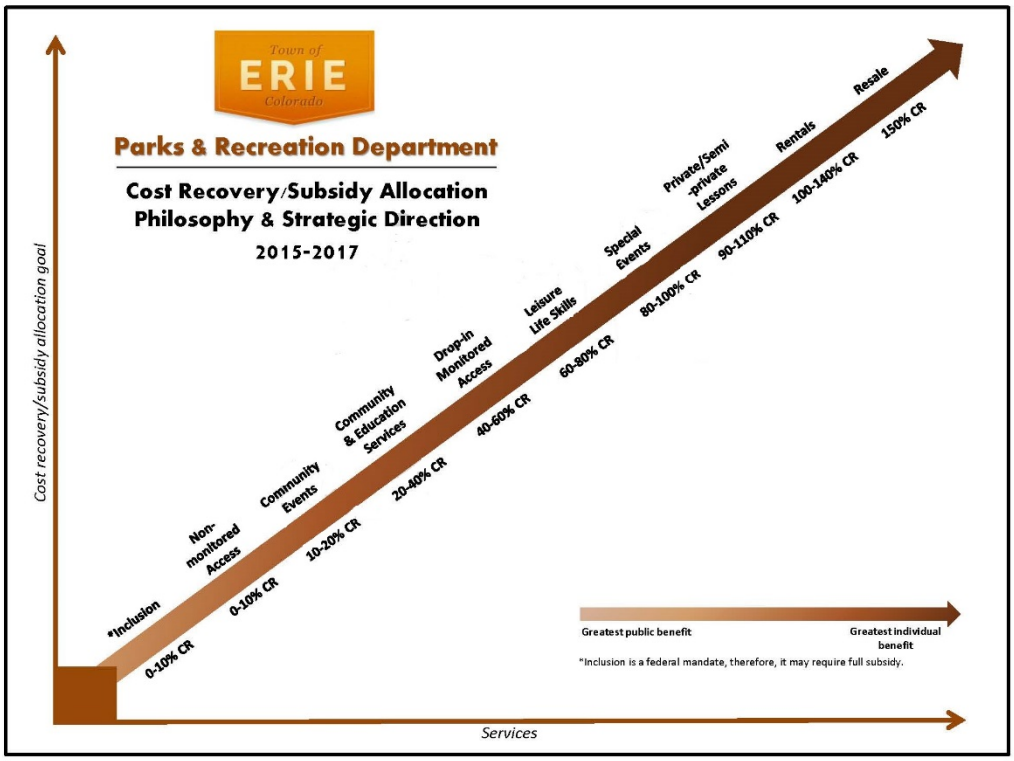
Coordinating efforts with developers is also a good way to respond to growing populations. Park and recreation planning and design should take into consideration the anticipated demographics of a new development. For example, park and recreation amenities may differ for developments consisting of senior housing or single-family homes occupied by young families.

Policy Framework for Recreation

The *Municipal Code, Title 7, Chapter 6* establishes regulations for the use of parks and recreation facilities. These provisions should be reviewed and updated on an on-going basis. Operating policies and procedures should also be in place for these facilities.

The identification of a core services and cost recovery philosophy and policy are key components to maintaining an agency's financial control, identifying core programs, facilities and services, and providing equitably priced offerings. Recently, the Department adopted a pricing model (***Figure 14***) that places services and cost recovery goals on an X and Y-axis. This continuum identifies who is benefiting from the parks and recreation service to determine how that service should be paid for, defensibly identifying the appropriate balance of tax subsidy and user fees for programs and services offered. Using this methodology, all of the Parks & Recreation Department's facilities, programs, and services would be categorized and organized in the pyramid based on who benefits. The premise for this process is to align values, core services, and resources to fulfill the community's vision and mission.

Figure 14: Core Services and Resource Allocation



As Erie has grown at a rapid pace, Recreation Division staff has done an admirable job of providing recreation programs and services. As growth eventually slows, Erie will need to closely manage costs and maximize its financial capacity to deliver recreation services. The tools described above will help position the Recreation Division to continue to make sound resource allocation decisions into the future.

Public Facilities Dedication Requirements

As mentioned in Chapter 3 of this ***Master Plan***, municipalities in Colorado have used a variety of approaches toward land dedication and park and recreation impact fees. The most typical approach is to focus first on "neighborhood" park development. However, many communities have also included the pro-rata (per person) share for community parks and in some cases trails, open space, and development of community level facilities such as **sports complexes and recreation centers**. Another approach, which is not as typical, is for park impact fees to include the total park infrastructure costs, including parkland and park development costs (instead of having a stand-alone parkland dedication requirement). For example, Longmont, Colorado's park and recreation improvement fee is comprised of the costs of acquiring and building neighborhood and community park and recreation components, based on the Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan.

As Erie reviews its impact fees, consideration should be given to including a pro-rata share for community parks and in some cases trails, open space, and development of community level facilities such as sports complexes and recreation centers. (See Funding and Sustainable Operations section in Chapter 7 for more information.)

Design Standards

The Erie Community Center, when compared with other communities in the area, appears to be sized to meet the public recreation needs for indoor recreation for many years. In the previous planning effort, fitness, aquatics, and drop-in childcare components were identified as components that were at or near capacity. The Recreation Division should closely monitor participation and market demands for these programs areas in the future.

If current demand for fitness and aquatics facilities and programs continues, the Department should consider constructing additional indoor components. These components could be at the ECC; however, logistical and design challenges may create an opportunity to develop components away from the ECC. If indoor recreational facilities are added, the building design should be consistent with best practices in sustainable design (per the *Erie Comprehensive Plan* policy NRE 3.6 – Sustainable Design, as detailed in Chapter 2 of this Plan).

Recreation Priorities – Capital Improvement Plan



The Erie Community Center is a substantial community asset that will need capital improvements and repair over time. A pro-active approach to the life cycle replacement costs is important to ensure the functioning of equipment (such as fitness machines) and building systems over the life of the building. Furthermore, life cycle replacement costs for recreation equipment in parks, such as soccer goals, is also needed.

In addition to a life cycle replacement program, Erie will need to evaluate the long-term need for future new amenities or a possible addition to the ECC. Current opportunities could allow the Department to co-locate public recreation facilities with schools or other agencies such as an HOA. While not a priority at this time, if additional indoor recreational facilities are determined to be needed at a later date, a capital improvement plan will need to be established.

Recommendations

R.1 GOAL: Enhance recreation program development to best meet community needs and interests as resources allow.

Strategies:

R.1.1. Develop program offerings reflective of the Town of Erie's demographic forecast, community survey needs and interests, and recreation trends. (Staff is currently implementing several of the actions steps listed below. Continuation of these efforts is recommended.)

Actions:

A. Coordinate staff planning sessions to prioritize program needs and opportunities.
B. Determine feasibility of specific interests in additional water access, cultural arts, youth/adult sports, and special events in addition to specialized fitness and wellness activities.
C. Develop and expand environmental and outdoor education programs. Explore partnership opportunities with area schools, non-profit organizations, and the private sector. Consider the development of a nature/educational programming in park design to promote environmental education.
D. Expand Baby Boomer and Active Adult programming and services addressing trips, on-site programs, and special events.
E. Determine appropriateness of transportation options to encourage participation in Active Adult and teen programs (i.e. transportation for trips, etc.). Explore partnering with Special Transit private provider, the Erie Area Senior Advisory Committee (EASY-C) non-profit organization, and RTD.

R.2 GOAL: Continue plan for sustainable staffing requirements that reflects historical and forecast demands for recreation services and programs.

Strategy:

R.2.1. Correlate program information including participation numbers, number of programs, revenue generated, and staffing expenses annually to prepare staffing requirement justifications.

R.3 GOAL: Ensure that programs and facility scheduling meets community needs and interests as resources allow.

Strategies:

R.3.1. Tailor facility and program offerings to best meet the community interests identified through community input processes (including the community survey for this ***Master Plan***).

Actions:

A. Review and analyze youth participation to determine if existing offerings are maximized.
B. Evaluate class participation in fitness and wellness programs. Discontinue classes that do not meet (determined by staff) required minimums consistently to allow room for other offerings.
C. Collaborate with alternative providers to address those interests that the Recreation Division is not prepared to, or able to host (including collaborations with tennis or golf facilities).

R.3.2. Develop a plan to address anticipated population growth and increased demand.

Actions:

A. Expand collaborations through Joint Use Agreements (JUAs) with school districts.
B. Seek additional collaborations with alternative providers.
C. Perform a needs assessment and feasibility study for the expansion of Erie Community Center or an off-site facility.

R.4 GOAL: Continue to explore partnerships and collaborations to meet community program needs and interests.

Strategies:

R.4.1. Build partnerships within the community to take advantage of existing facilities and provide additional programming and services to the community.

Actions:

A. Expand and formalize programming partnerships with the schools.
B. Seek partnerships with sports associations to provide both recreational and competitive youth sports.

R.5 GOAL: Evaluate relationships with Boulder Valley School District and St. Vrain Valley School District and charter schools in Erie's planning area on an annual or biannual basis.

Strategies:

R.5.1. Update Joint Use Agreement (JUA) with school districts.

Actions:

A. Outline communication protocol for School District and Recreation Division staff. As an attachment to the JUA, both the St. Vrain Valley School District and the Town of Erie should include a contact sheet with titles and phone numbers. The list should identify whom staff should call for scheduling purposes, maintenance issues, and other areas as required.
B. Include reciprocal marketing opportunities in School District Joint Use Agreement (JUA) to the extent possible for both the District and the Town of Erie.
C. Evaluate School District and ECC custodial fees charged through the JUA. Prior to renewals, each agency should evaluate these fees to ensure both are equitable and represented in the JUA.

R.5.2. Continue communications with Boulder Valley School District to identify potential partnerships.

R.5.3 Continue communications with private schools to identify potential partnership opportunities.

R.6. GOAL: Promote community awareness of the Recreation Division facilities, programs, and services through targeted outreach and marketing.

Strategy:

R.6.1. Coordinate marketing, sponsorship, and volunteer opportunities specific to the Recreation Division.

Actions:

A. Identify marketing needs for each section or program area on a semi-annual or annual basis.
B. Create volunteer opportunities as part of a Department-wide volunteer program.

R.7. GOAL: Address capital improvements and maintenance/replacement options for the Erie Community Center as resources allow.

Strategy:

R.7.1. Continue with maintenance/replacement plans for facilities, equipment, and amenities at the ECC (i.e. fitness equipment, HVAC, roofs, etc.), and update as needed.

Actions:

A. Inventory facility equipment and amenities identifying life cycle and replacement cost for each and update annually.
B. Identify revenue sources that can contribute to a maintenance/replacement budget and include this cost in the annual budget. (Explore the development of a fixed fee to be added to ECC fees to fund equipment replacement/capital improvements.)

C. Document costs associated with repair and maintenance in an automated facility inventory system.

R.7.2. Explore options to add fitness space at the ECC to respond to high demand for fitness programs.

Action:

A. Conduct a feasibility study to determine the best strategy to add fitness space. Options include repurposing existing underutilized spaces or a new addition to the ECC.

Note: Refer to Chapter 7: Administration and Management for additional recommendations related to recreation (Community Awareness and Engagement and Funding and Sustainable Operations).

CHAPTER 5: OPEN SPACE

Introduction

The *Erie Comprehensive Plan* defines Open Space as protected lands of significant value that are conserved in their natural state, restored, improved with appropriate native landscaping to retain a natural or natural-appearing condition, or conserved in quality agriculture.

Broad views and rolling agricultural lands are abundant and contribute significantly to Erie's character, although many of these lands have been planned for future development in the *Erie Comprehensive Plan*. Open space should be seen as a means to help direct growth; maintain rural character; and provide opportunities for education, wildlife protection and observation, hiking, and other passive and recreational activities for existing and future Erie residents.

Open Space benefits have been identified in the *Erie Comprehensive Plan*, Section 10.6.3.C of the *Municipal Code, Title 10* and the previous 1997 and 2010 *Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Master Plans*. A consolidated single summary list from those documents includes the following:

- Separating or buffering communities to allow them to keep their individual identities.
- Enhancing community gateways.
- Conserving natural features and protecting lands of high ecological (including wildlife habitat), scenic, or cultural value.
- Providing visual separation between built areas.
- Providing places for types of outdoor recreation appropriate to the natural setting.
- Limiting development on lands that would adversely affect the community in some way.
- Providing places for local agriculture to continue.
- Preserving long distance views.
- Maintaining Erie's rural character and creating corridors for the safe and enjoyable movement of people and animals.

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- Introduction
- Open Space Inventory & Types
- Alternative Providers
- Survey & Other Stakeholder Input
- Policy Framework for Open Space
- Open Space Preservation Strategies
- Open Space Dedication Requirements
- Ownership, Design & Construction, Maintenance/Replacement Options
- Open Space Classifications & Design Standards
- Open Space Acquisition & Protection Priorities
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- Supporting Documents
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Interactions with other people, physical activity, understanding history and culture, and experiences in the outdoor natural environment are essential to human health and well-being. Open space (along with parks, trails, and recreational facilities, which are addressed in previous sections) provide critical settings for these experiences to occur.

In order to better define Erie's Level of Service, and create a more tailored plan, open space was included with parks, components, and trails in the analysis detailed in Chapter 2, which also includes a complete inventory of the system.

Alternative Providers

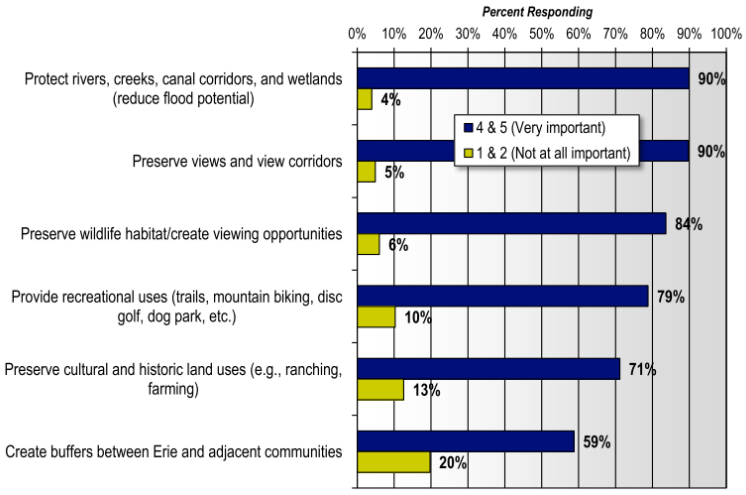
Boulder County will be the largest provider of open space within the Erie planning area at full build out. Most of this land is located in unincorporated Boulder County within the northwest portion of the Erie Planning Area. Boulder County open space will be a valuable resource to supplement Erie's open space. Other alternative providers include the Frederick wetland bank, Lafayette open space adjacent to the town's boundary, and other property owners with conservation easements. As identified in the open space inventory, HOAs or Metro Districts provide many acres of open space within Erie.

Note: Two active landfills currently exist within the Town limits. Although landfills are private property, they provide the potential for future trails or passive recreation. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment governs the closure of landfills. As the landfills in Erie close, the Town should look for potential partnering opportunities to provide for trails or passive recreation areas if possible.

Survey & Stakeholder Input

Following are highlights of the community survey specific to the open space in Erie:

- When asked to indicate what they believe to be the most important functions of open space, respondents selected protecting rivers, creeks, canal corridors, and wetlands and preserving views and view corridors at the highest rate (each 90%, respectively). Creating buffers between Erie and adjacent communities (59%) is considered important; however, it is relatively less important compared to the other functions.



- Results between the two survey years regarding the functions of open space are highly similar. Protecting waterways and wetlands and view corridors are still seen as slightly more important by residents currently. Meanwhile, creating buffers between Erie and adjacent communities (59% vs. 70%) is somewhat less important. Providing recreational uses, a new category this year, ranks in the middle relative to importance (79%).
- Respondents were asked to select their top three most important functions of open space from the same list. Preserving view corridors (62% of respondents noting it as the most, second-most, or third-most important priority), preserving wildlife habitat/creating viewing opportunities (60%), and protecting rivers, creeks, canal corridors, and wetlands (59%) all ranked closely in priority. While providing recreational uses ranked lower overall (47%), it did earn a high share of respondents indicating this use to be a number one priority (20%).

Benchmarking

As shown in ***Table 12,*** benchmarking data was collected from comparable Colorado agencies including Boulder, Brighton, Broomfield, Lafayette, Longmont, and Windsor. This information is intended to show the growth of Erie's system within the region, and not intended to rate Erie's efforts. In 2010, Erie had the lowest total parks and open space acres per 1,000 persons, and the second lowest open space acres per 1,000 persons. As of this update, the Town has increased its open space acreage from 396 to 1,096, with an additional 155 acres of conservation easements held jointly with Boulder County for 1,204. This acreage comparison includes only acres of town-maintained open space land and does not include privately owned designated open space land. The ratio of open space per 1,000 persons increases if HOA or Metro District-maintained open space is considered.

Table 12: Benchmarking, Parks and Open Space Acres per 1000 Persons

City	Total Acres (Parks and Open Space)	Acres per 1,000 Persons
Windsor, CO	1,564*	70.8
Broomfield, CO	4,354	66.9
Lafayette, CO	1,520**	61.5
Erie, CO* **	1,232	55.8
Longmont, CO	3,468	39.4
Brighton, CO	960	26.8
City	**Open Space Acres**	**Open Space Acres per 1,000 Persons**
Windsor, CO	1,381*	62.6
Broomfield, CO	3,645	56.0
Lafayette, CO	1,290**	52.2
Erie, CO* **	1,096	49.7
Longmont, CO	2,500	28.4
Brighton, CO	763	21.3

* Windsor only manages 49 acres of open space within their system.
** Includes jointly owned land.
*** Acreages include Town-maintained parks and open space and do not include privately owned and/or maintained parks and open space.
Note: Boulder, CO was removed from this comparison due to a large discrepancy in open space acreage reported.

Policy Framework for Open Space

The *Erie Comprehensive Plan* provides the policy framework for the open space program with specific principles addressing stewardship of the natural environment; trails, parks, and recreation opportunities; and a protected lands program. See Chapter 2 of this ***Master Plan*** for more detailed information.

The *Municipal Code, Title 10* provides direction for evaluating land for protection and dedicating land as development occurs. *Section 10.6.2 - Natural and Scenic Resource Protection Ordinance* in the *Municipal Code, Title 10* designates a list of natural and man-made features that should be considered in evaluating land for protection and enhancement (a.1.a). As stated in the ordinance, these categories include "*topography and hillsides, reservoirs, stream corridors, floodplains, irrigation ditches, wetlands, native and specimen trees and vegetation, wildlife habitat and corridors, dramatic view corridors to the mountains, historic or cultural sites, and other significant features*." *Section 10.6.3 – Parks, Open Space, and Trails* details the parks, open space, and trails land dedication regulations.

The Town of Erie *Natural Areas Inventory* (February of 2008) identifies and evaluates 140 parcels within the Erie planning area based on their value in the categories of wetlands, habitat, wildlife, and vegetation. Accepted by the Town's Board of Trustees by Resolution 08-35 on February 26, 2008, the *Natural Areas Inventory* provides an important starting point for evaluating properties within Erie's planning area for protection as natural, vegetative, and wildlife open space.

In November 2004, through a ballot entitled *Trails, Natural Areas, and Community Character Measure,* Erie voters approved a four (4) mill property tax. Revenue from the tax is intended for the purpose of creating hiking, biking, and walking trails throughout town to connect neighborhoods and the regional trail network; purchasing natural areas to separate Erie from other communities; preserving wildlife habitat; protecting natural areas along Coal Creek and Boulder Creek; and conserving scenic landscapes and views. This tax was originally approved for 10 years and sunset in 2014. As of 2015, it has been extended another 10 years to 2024. This source of funding flows into the Trails and Natural Areas Fund.

Open Space Preservation Strategies

Methods for Open Space Protection

Below are several methods in which the Town of Erie is, or can be, either individually or partnered with other jurisdictions, protecting land evaluated as open space.



One of the greatest challenges in protecting this open space may be in balancing the community's open space interests with the land owner's vision for the property. Because Erie has limited financial resources available for the outright purchase of property, it is important to creatively employ a variety of protection techniques in a cost effective manner. Although outright purchase allows the most control of a property, there may be situations where it is acceptable to allow limited development to occur and protect the remaining part as open space.

Leadership for the implementation of this effort is provided through the Parks & Recreation Department of the Town of Erie. The Town has established the Open Space and Trails Advisory Board (OSTAB) to advise the Board of Trustees on open space and trails-related issues. It consists of seven members appointed by the Board of Trustees. The mission of OSTAB is to *"conserve and protect open space lands and significant natural resources in and around Erie, and provide for an extensive network of trails open to all types of non-motorized travel that link neighborhoods to other areas in the community and region."* OSTAB provides advice to the Town regarding specific acquisitions, strategies, and priorities through a staff referral process.

Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA)

The Town and the City of Broomfield have entered into an IGA that defines future areas of open space, which expires in 2033.

Environmental Hazard Areas

Erie has a floodplain ordinance that prohibits residential development in floodplains (see current *Municipal Code, 10.2.7*). The Town discourages floodplain modification to protect these areas. The Town also discourages development on areas with subsidence.

Land Dedication

The *Comprehensive Plan* and *Municipal Code, Title 10* require 17 acres of open space dedication for every 1,000 new residents a development will provide. These 17 acres should be applied to land with the highest open space value first and provide connections to adjacent open space, parks, schools, town facilities, and commercial areas.

Fees-in-Lieu of Land Dedication

As specified in the *Municipal Code, Title 10*, if a required dedication is less than ten acres, or greater than five acres in an area of town that already has sufficient open space, the Town may, at its discretion, require the developer to pay cash-in-lieu of land dedication. The fee-in-lieu payment is based on an appraisal or fair market value.

Annexation

The Town can negotiate with landowners at the time of annexation to identify and protect valuable open space resources.

Conservation Easement

If none of the above mentioned tools sufficiently protect a parcel's open space values, the Town can consider purchasing a conservation easement or a partial interest in the property to protect its open space values.

Conservation Easement with a Reserved Homesite

A property owner may choose to donate a conservation easement to the Town, County, or a non-profit conservation organization. As a result, the landowner receives a deduction in both income and estate taxes. In addition, the property owner remains responsible for management of the property.

Acquisition

Town officials may determine that the above tools do not sufficiently protect the open space values of a property. If the Town determines an open space should be protected, the Town can work with the property owner for the fee simple purchase of the property.

Preservation Strategies

Individual tracts of land that are being considered for inclusion in the open space system should be evaluated to determine how well they address the specific attributes of open space. This includes land identified through the *Natural Areas Inventory*, lands triggered by the Town's development process, offered through a willing seller, selected for fee-simple ownership, proposed by an owner for a conservation easement, slated for development, available for lease, or a variety of other means. The following is a three-tool evaluation and protection method for possible open space opportunities in the Town of Erie. A fourth tool, the Unified Development Code, should also be considered in the evaluation process.

Tool 1: Indicators of Potential Value

Previously, the *Natural Areas Inventory* identified open space value in terms of wetlands, habitat, wildlife, and vegetation and evaluated land based on whether or not it is in the floodplain; its proximity to reservoirs, major creeks, and irrigation ditches and ephemeral creeks; and its significance as agricultural land. The analysis valued a property's proximity to the designated alignment of Erie's Spine Trail network, and its potential for connecting the local and regional trail systems. The categories have been assigned values and are overlaid to form a composite map that ranks the probable suitability of lands within the study area for open space. The Department should continue to prioritize development of its open space utilizing this tool, with the consideration of new open space added since the 2010 Master Plan.

Tool 2: Potential Open Space Field Evaluation

Additional evaluation of individual lands for open space potential is performed by scoring the parcel using the *Potential Open Space Field Evaluation Checklist* found at the end of this chapter. The checklist evaluates the occurrence of specific attributes that contribute to the land's value and determines the level or degree at which they exhibit these attributes. These attributes include cultural (habitat buffer, historic or cultural resource, scenic views), management (acquisition and ongoing costs, balance of distribution of open space lands, adjacent uses, restoration potential, how it would support other plans, willing seller), wildlife (habitat diversity; migration corridor; connectivity; habitat for threatened, endangered, or species of concern; etc.), vegetation (mature tree stands, natural plant communities, absence of noxious weeds/trees, riparian areas, wetland, or wetland potential), and water (floodplains or drainage way, presence of surface water).

At this evaluation level, parcels are examined with a fine filter to determine the degree to which specific open space attributes exist on the site. The evaluation scores each tract on the level to which it satisfies the open space values identified in the score sheet. If a parcel scored high enough overall or in any specific category, it could be considered for inclusion in the open space system. The evaluation could also be used to determine how specific parcels should be maintained once they become open space. A parcel that scored a high value as agricultural land would be maintained differently from one that scored a high value for wildlife habitat.

The *Municipal Code, Title 10* identifies that the minimum size for **land dedication purposes** for open space in Erie has been designated as 10 acres. Parcels smaller than 10 acres may have important open space attributes and can be considered for evaluation. The Erie Natural Areas Inventory has identified potential open space parcels that are less than 10 acres. This *Open Space Field Evaluation Checklist* is ideal for, and should be used for, evaluating those parcels.

Tool 3: Protection Methods

Once a parcel has been designated as suitable and desirable for open space through tool one or two or both, the Town will determine how the land should be preserved and managed (refer to Open Space Preservation Strategies above and ***Table 14***). This includes asking questions such as:

- Who should acquire the land?
- Is it a partnering opportunity?
- Should it be acquired fee simple or protected through some other means?

This methodology can (and very likely will be) applied in reverse. If a parcel of land is offered to the Town as open space, it can be evaluated to determine how well it fulfills the defined purposes of open space.

Open Space Dedication Requirements

The *Municipal Code "Section 10.6.3 – Parks, Open Space, and Trails"* details the parks, open space, and trails land dedication regulations. This section states that the regulations *"are intended to preserve natural areas and resources, preserve scenic views, provide access to open areas and recreational opportunities, create public health benefits, and generally enhance the quality of life for residents."* The *Municipal Code* requires that **17 acres of open space per 1,000 population** be dedicated by residential developers.

Ownership, Design & Construction, Maintenance/Replacement Options

Within the Town of Erie, several possibilities exist for the ownership of open space land available for public use. Each has implications for improvements as well as maintenance. ***Table 13*** provides information regarding responsibilities associated with various ownership options. More detailed information regarding methods of protection that may result in the following ownership possibilities is located in above in the Open Space Preservation Strategies section.

Table 13: Open Space Ownership Implications

Ownership	Description	Method of protection	Design & Construction	Maintenance/ Replacement Options
Town-owned	Lands that are owned outright by the Town currently, or will be dedicated for Town ownership, and designated for open space purposes	Dedication, fee-simple purchase, donated or leased (full use) to the Town for open space purposes	Town responsibility, or in the case of dedication with subdivision to the Town, the developer preserves existing native areas or restores the open space area to native plant materials before dedicating it to the Town	Town responsibility – in the case of dedication after warranty period
Other public-owned	Lands owned by State, County or metro/special district or other public entity for open space purposes	Public entity has designated as open space	Public entity responsibility	Public entity responsibility
Privately-owned	Lands owned by Homeowner Associations, or other private organizations or individuals that have been designated to serve a public open space purpose	Designated as public open space through negotiated annexation agreement, other agreement, or regulation	Private responsibility to Town standards as negotiated or required in agreement	Private responsibility to Town standards as negotiated or required in agreement
Town has joint, undivided ownership interest	Lands that are jointly acquired by the Town and some other party(s) for open space purposes	Negotiated agreement	Usually negotiated financial agreement for one party to take on responsibility	Usually negotiated financial agreement for one party to take on responsibility
Town has partial ownership interest	Town owns rights for particular use(s)	Conservation easement/purchase of rights	Negotiated with property owner upon agreement depending on right acquired	Negotiated with property owner upon agreement depending on right acquired

The Town also has *Landscape Maintenance Guidelines* addressing established open space areas. These guidelines are expected to be followed by the Town and are also communicated to HOAs and Metro Districts. Establishing and enforcing such an ordinance requires adequate enforcement resources. At this time, it would be in the best interest of the Town to continue to build relationships with the HOAs and Metro Districts, continue to communicate the guidelines, and provide assistance with understanding appropriate plantings to minimize ongoing maintenance costs yet provide a visually appealing experience. It is important that the Town act as a good role model in following these guidelines.

Open Space Classifications & Design Standards

Characteristics of Open Space

As stated in the *Municipal Code, Title 10*, open space is characterized as undeveloped land that is permanently committed to be maintained in a natural or agricultural state and that serves one or more of the functions listed below.

- Rural/agricultural land preservation.
- Crop production and revenue.
- Working, productive farms and ranches.
- Protection of significant archeological, historic, and cultural resources.
- Aquatic, wetland, and riparian habitat and buffers.
- Waterfowl ponds and wetlands.
- Hedgerows, feeding, cover, breeding, foraging, and nesting habitat.
- Preservation of native wildlife habitat and their migration and travel corridors.
- Creation and preservation of pastoral-scenic views to mountains, plains, and agricultural lands.
- Provides corridors and natural area destinations.
- Provides passive recreational experiences and trails.
- Provides environmental education opportunities.
- Shapes growth.
- Protects landmark topographic features.
- Protects the public from natural and geologic hazards.
- Provides visual and physical linkages between community resources.

The *Municipal Code, Title 10* identifies the following **characteristics of open space to be dedicated.**

- A minimum of 10 contiguous acres.
- A parcel that is no less than 300 feet at the narrowest width, unless the Town approves a lesser amount for a trail.
- To the maximum extent feasible, a location that is contiguous with or connected to adjacent open space or parks.
- Is generally unencumbered by utility lines, built structures, and paved surfaces.
- If the Town has not approved the open space dedication for agricultural purposes, then the property shall be covered with native vegetation and generally free of weeds and other noxious plants and trees. If land being dedicated is not in a native condition acceptable to the Town, then applicant shall be responsible for restoration of the property to native vegetation before the Town accepts it for maintenance.

Typically, open space shall be owned and maintained by the Town. The Town may consider a conservation easement as an alternative. Approval of a conservation easement shall be at the discretion of the Board of Trustees.

Open Space Design Standards

The following design standards have been developed for the Town of Erie and exist currently in the *Municipal Code, Title 10* (10.6.3-C-4-d&g). They have been reviewed in the study effort and found to support the goals of the open space program.

Areas of land designated for open space shall have the following design standards:

- Open space shall not consist solely of undevelopable or "left-over" pieces of the site, but shall be designed as an integral part of the overall development plan, incorporating identified environmentally and historically significant components of the site.
- Open space shall be organized to create continuous, integrated systems that physically and visually connect with the following features:
    - Parks or Greenways.
    - School Sites.
    - Historical, cultural, or archeological sites and features.
    - Trail and open space systems.
- Open space shall be unobstructed by utility lines, built structures, or paved areas (other than trails).
- To maintain strong visual and physical linkages, to the maximum extent feasible, open space shall not be less than 30 feet in width at the point of connection to adjacent lands or uses as described above. Where topography or other site features would prevent the above standard from being met, the point of connection may be reduced to less than 30 feet for short distances at the discretion of the Town.
- Trail corridors outside of open space areas shall have a minimum corridor width of 30 feet.

Areas that are not eligible for developer required open space dedication include the following:

- Private yards.
- Public or private streets or right-of-ways not intended for open space-related purposes.
- Open parking areas and driveways for dwellings.
- Pocket, neighborhood, and community parks.
- Land covered by structures not intended solely for recreational uses.
- Streetscape or landscape buffers.
- Median strips.
- Oil and gas well sites and required buffers.
- Storm water channels, detention and water quality ponds greater than five feet deep with slopes great than 5:1.

The Town currently has set back requirements of 150' from the centerline of creeks and 75' from the centerline of ditches.

Open Space Acquisition & Protection Priorities

The ballot language supported by Erie residents that led to the creation of the Trails and Open Space Funds should guide efforts for open space preservation. The uses of this fund include the following (per the ballot language):

- Create hiking, biking, and walking trails throughout town to connect neighborhoods and the regional trail network.
- Purchase natural areas to separate Erie from other communities.
- Preserve wildlife habitat.
- Protect natural areas along Coal Creek and Boulder Creek.
- Conserve scenic landscapes and views.

Funding and partnership opportunities should also be considered when evaluating open space preservation and acquisition priorities.

The Town should use the tools provided in this ***Master Plan*** to evaluate parcels for potential open space protection through the three tool evaluation process. Open space parcels should be reviewed and prioritized annually by the Town.

These four tools are intended to be used together:

- **Tool 1** is a map of certain values that lend themselves to mapping (data sets are readily available). The mapping depicts values that exist on a given property. These values are further explored using the second tool that involves a site visit, field analysis, and other research, as necessary. A property under consideration does not have to score using this tool in order to warrant evaluation through the second tool.

- **Tool 2** is an evaluation matrix that includes the values depicted in the mapping AND also includes additional important values that do not lend themselves to mapping (data sets do not exist or are not available).

- **Tool 3** helps to determine HOW the land should be preserved and managed.

- **Tool 4** is section 10.6.2 Natural and Scenic Resource Requirement in the Unified Development Code.

The purpose of these three tools is to round out the analysis provided by the *Erie Natural Areas Inventory*, which only addressed some values of the open space program, by combining the results of that analysis with other values and opportunities.

Recommendations

OS.1 GOAL: Provide consistent levels of high value open space to the residents of Erie.

Strategies:

OS.1.1. Identify parcels for potential open space protection.

Actions:

A. Engage the OSTAB in open space planning and prioritization efforts.
B. Consult the Town of Erie *Natural Areas Inventory* for preliminary identification of properties with potential as open space according to environmental and ecological factors.

OS.1.2. Evaluate parcels for potential open space protection through the three-tool evaluation process.

Actions:

A. Utilize tools 1 and 2 of the evaluation process, Resource Map G and the *Open Space Field Evaluation Checklist* (found at the end of this chapter), to further evaluate individual properties or portions of properties**.** (This checklist was generated from additional open space attributes, as identified in the Natural and Scenic Resource Protection section of the *Municipal Code, Title 10*.)
B. Utilize tool three to determine options for how the parcel could be protected.

OS.1.3. Prioritize parcels for potential open space protection.

Actions:

A. Based on the evaluation results and protection options, request an advisory recommendation from the OSTAB regarding prioritization to accompany a staff recommendation.

OS.1.4. Acquire and/or protect areas of land evaluated and prioritized for open space preservation as resources allow.

Actions:

A. Supplement the open space dedication requirement with Town of Erie open space acquisition, the annexation of specific Boulder County open spaces identified in the IGA, or other methods listed below. Protect or acquire open space through:
   - Dedication requirements.
   - Fee simple purchase.
   - Conservation easements.
   - Joint Purchases with other entities.
   - Leases.
   - Donations and gifts.
   - Land swaps.
   - Non-profit acquisition and conveyance to the Town.

OS.1.5 Maintain awareness of Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), adjacent community planning, and other potential opportunities to fund open space planning and acquisition/protection.

OS.2 GOAL: Enhance management of open space lands.

Strategies:

OS.2.1. Create Open Space Management Plans as needed.

Actions:

A. Use the guidelines for *Developing Open Space Management Plans* provided at the end of this chapter as the framework for the plan.
B. Engage OSTAB to aide in the creation and update of Management Plans as needed.
C. Prioritize sites in need of management plans.

OS.2.2. Identify and implement wildlife improvement priorities.

Actions:

A. In conjunction with the recommendation to develop a Wildlife Management Plan for species of concern in Erie, ensure that those plans extend to address wildlife on open space properties. (See Wildlife Management Plan recommendation in Maintenance section of Chapter 7.)
B. Continue to consult with the Division of Wildlife for current best practices and regional efforts.

OS.2.3. Develop environmental interpretation and education opportunities in open space areas.

Actions:

A. Identify appropriate areas for an interpretive signage program to continue to promote awareness of natural areas.
B. Distribute brochures, programs, and information on the Town of Erie website.
C. Develop interactive maps and/or virtual tours of open space.
D. Continue to promote opportunities for natural areas stewardship through volunteer program.



Volunteer opportunities could include:

- Clean-ups.
- Wildlife monitoring.
- Invasive plant removal.
- Habitat improvement.

OS.2.4. During the annual budget process, assess needed open space maintenance, restoration, and renovation projects system-wide.

OS.2.5. Communicate open space maintenance guidelines to HOAs and Metro Districts and provide assistance with integrating and applying best practices for open space maintenance.

Developing Open Space Management Plans

The ***Master Plan*** recommends an evaluation process for identifying and prioritizing opportunities for the preservation of open space properties and trail corridors. The text of the plan recommends that management plans be developed for key open space areas such as Coal Creek.

By nature, management plans for these sites will involve multiple objectives depending on location, character, and intended use. The following is a general outline of the process to develop a management plan for a specific parcel.

A) Identify and Map Resources

Document the property's features and open space values using photographs, on-site inspection, maps, and soils and plant inventories. The evaluation should identify plant communities, wildlife habitat values, agricultural values, recreation values, geologic features, safety hazards, water resources, views, scenic qualities, adjacent land uses, access, and other important opportunities and constraints on the property. Research and incorporate existing plans and appropriate plans from adjacent agencies (such as Boulder County and Lafayette for Coal Creek).

B) Define Management Objectives

These objectives should address the purpose of ownership and inventory anticipated uses. Objectives should be clearly stated and based on the findings of Step A above. The following are samples of management objectives with examples of how to implement objectives noted in parenthesis.

1) Protect the parcel's scenic quality (Limit development to areas that would minimize visual impact and preserve view corridor).
2) Protect ecosystem functions (Maintain ecosystem integrity by minimizing disturbances and using best management practices).
3) Protect and properly manage significant plant and animal communities (Maintain adequately sized parcels of land to allow for plant dispersal and animal migration and limit public access to sensitive areas).
4) Preserve cultural, historical, geological, and archeological integrity of the area (Develop interpretive trail system and involve state and local historic societies in the design and development process).
5) Provide safe, passive recreation opportunities that are compatible with preservation objectives (Consider buffers and setbacks when developing trails and locate trails away from sensitive areas).
6) Restore and enhance degraded areas (Plant native grass and tree species and control the invasion and spread of undesirable or non native plants).
7) Manage conflict between people and natural areas (Use signage and interpretive information to educate users).
8) Prepare for and manage natural occurrences (Develop wildfire and flood response Plans and locate impacted structures out of flood plain).
9) Ensure public awareness of Town owned properties (Signage, site brochures, website information).

Accomplishing management objectives will require involvement and commitment from the Erie community and Town government, particularly for the Coal Creek open space. Coordination will be required with local officials, community organizations, local businesses, and individual volunteers to develop and implement an action plan. Citizen involvement is key to attaining a real understanding of the value of open lands and may well lead to a feeling of responsibility and connection to the community.

C) Develop Site Management Plans

The site management plan should discuss in detail methods to accomplish the management objectives and define site requirements. Issues may include:

- **Access** – Discuss access to and through the site. Where is public access appropriate, is the site handicapped accessible, are emergency access points needed, and where is access not appropriate?
- **Security** – Location and extent of fencing. How will site be secured, is adequate police patrol and fire protection available?
- **Visual Aesthetics** – Specific plans to protect views, preserve key natural features.
- **Wildlife** – What actions are needed to preserve and enhance wildlife use of the site.
- **Plant Communities** – What are the weed and plant management needs for the site; what areas need to be re-vegetated, enhanced, or protected?
- **Character and Heritage** – Are there any restoration or enhancement opportunities; how can non-invasive interpretive information be included?
- **Recreation** – What recreation activities are appropriate, where should they be placed, and what steps need to be taken to protect resources and ensure safe pleasant user experiences?
- **Facilities** – What infrastructure and support facilities are needed on site, buildings, parking areas, electric service, water fountains, restrooms, shelters, signage, kiosks, picnic areas, benches, maintenance storage, observation decks, etc.?
- **Legal Issues** – Risk management review, rules and regulations posting, curfew.
- **Education** – How can public be enlightened about values and benefits of preserving the land; how can public be educated about plant communities, wildlife, preservation, abuse through use, ensure a safe environment and minimize conflicts between people and natural areas; is it feasible to coordinate with local schools for outdoor/environmental education?
- **Maintenance** – What maintenance activities are necessary to preserve and enhance the site? Who will perform these activities, educate the public on proper open lands maintenance practices?

D) Action Plan

Prepare and implement an action plan to meet the parcel's management objectives.

- Plan should define and prioritize activities, estimate costs, state who will be responsible for performing tasks, and propose an implementation schedule. Plan should also allow for public review and Board of Trustees approval, if appropriate.
- After adoption, the plan should be reviewed annually and updated as needed.
- Consider using the Open Space and Trails Advisory Board (OSTAB) to function in an advisory capacity in the development of the management plans.

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CHAPTER 6: TRAILS

Chapter 6 Contents

- Introduction
- Trails Inventory & Types
- Alternative Providers
- Survey & Other Stakeholder Input
- 2015 Trail Map
- Policy Framework for Trails
- Trail Dedication Requirements
- Ownership, Design & Construction, Maintenance/Replacement Options
- Trail Classifications & Design Standards
- Protection & Restoration Guidelines for Trail Construction
- Trail Priorities
- Recommendations

Introduction

Trails were identified as a high priority by residents throughout the community planning process and in the survey results. The vision for Erie's trails system is to provide a linkage network connecting residents to destinations within and outside of the community. Trails provide off-road linkages for all types of non-motorized travel within and between the following – neighborhoods, businesses, jobs and employment centers, community services, future mass transit stops, parks and open space, and publicly accessible open space and park areas. In addition, trails serve the following functions for the Town's residents:

- Promote health and physical fitness.
- Provide leisure opportunities.
- Promote stress reduction.
- Increase awareness, understanding, and appreciation of open space values and functions.

Policy 1.3 in the Open Space chapter of the *Erie Comprehensive Plan* identifies the following corridors as key elements of the open space and trail network: Coal and Boulder Creeks, along with their tributary drainage channels and the many irrigation ditches (Lower Boulder, FRICO, and Community Ditch).

Trail Inventory & Types

The recreational trail system provides a community-wide off-road linkage network that connects major destinations and provides opportunities for trail loops with areas of interest along the route.

The trail system in Erie includes the following types of trails.

- Spine Trails – consist of a wide concrete trail with an attached crusher fines trail, and whenever possible, are the primary off-road connection between neighborhoods and major activity centers (such as the Erie Community Center, Erie Community Library, Old Town, commercial areas, schools, and parks) and to regional trails.
- Local Trails – consist of a concrete trail within neighborhoods to form secondary connections to other residences, schools, businesses, and the spine trail.
- Primitive Trails – consist of a stabilized crusher fine or other natural surface trail within open space or rural areas where frequency of use is low and a more natural experience is desired.

Together, these make up an overall recreational trail system to meet the needs of the residents of Erie. While the trail system in this ***Master Plan*** focuses on off-road recreational trails, it should be noted that the Town of Erie *Transportation Master Plan* identifies on-road bike lanes for some road types. As part of the overall trail system, connections between off-road recreational trails and on-road bike lanes should be made, when applicable. It is likely that some sections of sidewalks along roads may be considered part of the Town's trail network as they serve to meet connectivity needs where other options are limited or non-existent. In discussions with developers, the Town should encourage establishing a specific tract outside the road right-of-way when "sidewalks" need to be used to make trail connections. Those tracts can be designed to create a different landscape and user experience that is more trail-like than a basic sidewalk.

Alternative Providers



In addition to the trails provided by the Erie Parks & Recreation Department, the Erie Public Works Department along with other municipalities, counties, and HOAs or Metro Districts provide trails either within the Town or to the edge of its planning area. These trails provide a service to Erie residents with the Town or as alternative ways to access neighboring communities, activity centers, parks, natural areas, and open space.

The Town of Erie *Transportation Master Plan* (2008) identifies roadway cross sections that incorporate on-street bike lanes and off-street pedestrian paths or sidewalks. The Erie Public Works Department is responsible for the street sidewalks and on-street bike lanes identified in the *Transportation Master Plan*. These alternative connections can function as recreational links to activity centers and are a vital component of the overall trail network.

It is important for Erie to work with area county and municipal agencies to plan for the regional trail system. Weld County and Boulder County may provide trail connections to and trails within the Erie planning area in the future. These potential alignments and connection points include the Union Pacific Rail Trail, the Coal Creek/Rock Creek Trail, and the abandoned rail line east of Interstate 25. In addition, trails in the adjacent communities of the City of Lafayette and the City of Broomfield can connect to the Town of Erie's spine and local trails and provide connectivity between municipalities. The St. Vrain Legacy Trail can also provide regional connectivity to Erie in the future as it expands south from the City of Longmont. The Town of Erie should coordinate planning efforts for regional trails with Boulder County, Weld County, the City of Lafayette, the City of Broomfield, the Town of Dacono, the Town of Frederick, and other regional trails and open space organizations.

Note: Two active landfills currently exist within the Town limits. Although landfills are private property, they provide the potential for future trails or passive recreation. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment governs the closure of landfills. As the landfills in Erie close, the Town should look for potential partnering opportunities to provide for trails or passive recreation areas if possible.

Survey & Stakeholder Input

Following are highlights of the community survey specific to trails in Erie:

- Respondents were asked to indicate how important various aspects of trail improvements in Erie are to them and their household. Improving trail connectivity within Erie and between neighborhoods is most important to respondents with 83% of respondents indicating it as a "4" or "5" on a 5-point scale), followed closely by improving trail connectivity to regional trails outside of Erie (80%). Findings also show that soft-surface trails are more important to residents (74%) than paved trails (59%), helping clarify the outdoor priorities explored in the previous section.
- Findings are nearly identical between the two survey years. However, building more soft surface trails is seen as slightly more important in 2014 (74% indicate it is "very important") than in 2008 (68%), while paved trails have become slightly less important over time (59% vs. 63%).
- Improving connectivity within Erie and between neighborhoods is the highest priority with 70% listing it as one of their top three priorities. Also important is improving connectivity to regional trails (outside Erie) with 66% listing it as one of their top three priorities. While building more soft surface trails receives a lower share of respondents rating is as one of their top three priorities overall (52%), it did receive a high share of respondents listing it as their number one priority (23%).

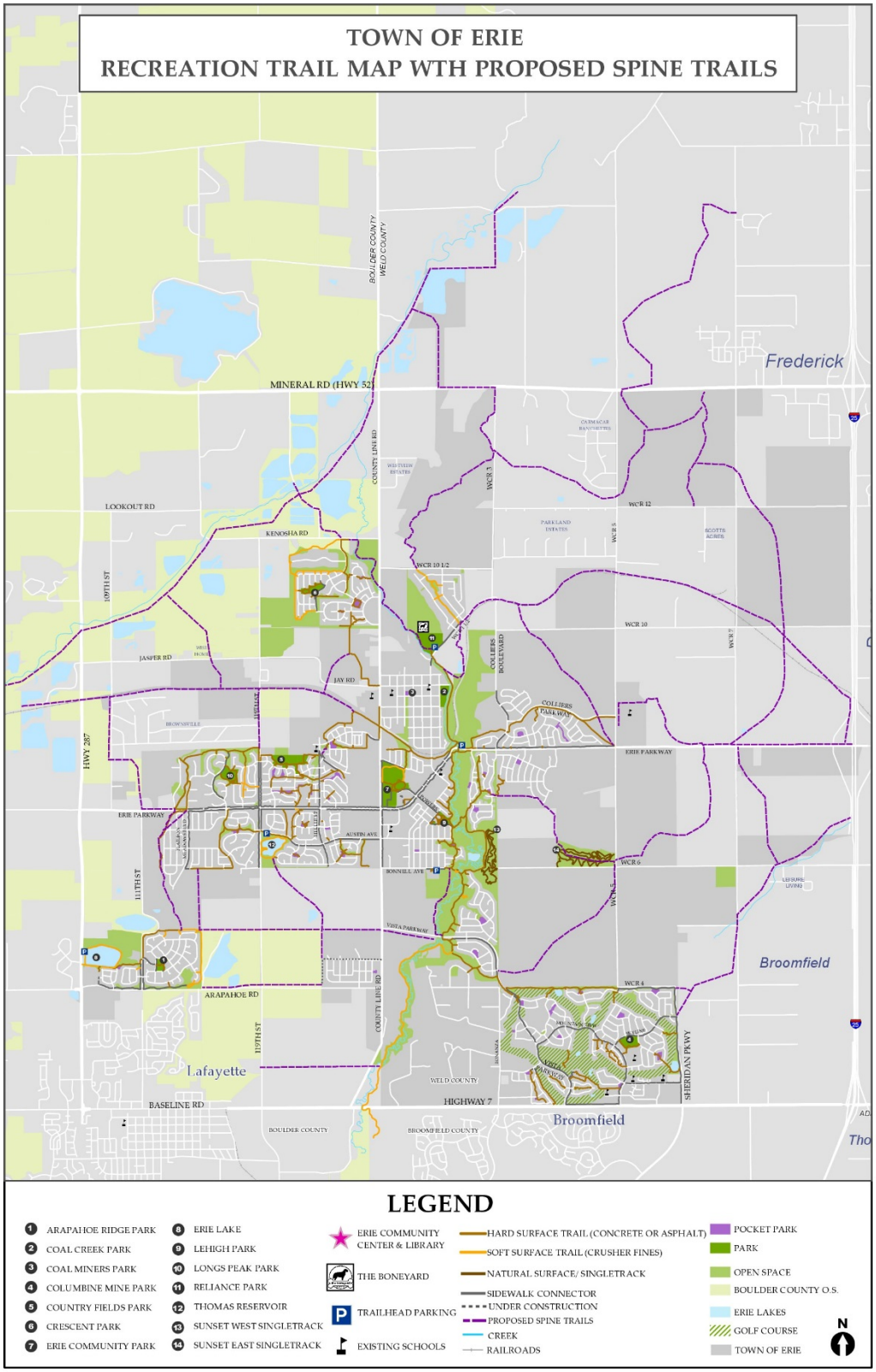
2015 Recreation Trail Map

Throughout the public process, trails/pathways and connectivity was a key area of focus. Citizens expressed interest in a trails system that connected them locally and regionally. A 2015 planning effort identified the current trail system, as well as potential spine trails, (***Figure 15***) that would connect Erie's community members to local amenities like parks, recreational amenities, and the Town Center and regionally to opportunities along the Front Range and I-25.

While the entire proposed system may not be feasible in the short-term, the Department should identify key focus areas of development:

- Walkability barriers.
- Key spines trails, which connect residents to recreational opportunities.
- Ability to partner with HOAs or regional providers.
- Prioritization of connection points – recreational (including open space)/retail/commuter.
- Funding as available.

Figure 15: Proposed Spine Trails (Updated 2017)



Policy Framework for Trails

Several Town documents provide context and guidance for the development and management of trails. The *Erie Comprehensive Plan* goals and policies for trails, as shown in Chapter 2 of this ***Master Plan,*** provide the policy framework for trails. The *Municipal Code, Title 10* addresses open space and trail dedications and fees-in-lieu, but provides little detail related to trail standards. The *Transportation Master Plan*, guided by the goals and policies identified in the *Erie Comprehensive Plan* (Chapter 11: Transportation and Mobility), provides design standards for on-street bike lanes for collector streets and off-street paths and/or bikeways for new and improved roads. All of these documents inform this ***Master Plan***.

Trail Dedication Requirements

Trail dedication from a developer or land owner to the Town will follow the dedication requirements of Open Space as detailed in Chapter 5 in accordance with the *Municipal Code, Title 10.* The Town will not accept dedication of a trail itself, but rather the property on which the trail is located and in turn the trail and any other improvements located on the parcel. In most cases, local trails and primitive trails will not be dedicated to the Town but owned and maintained by the HOA or Metro District. In situations where the Town does accept local trail and primitive trail dedication, the dedication requirements will follow those of Open Space.

All spine trails, local trails, and primitive trails located within public right-of-way as platted in a new subdivision will be constructed by the developer.

Figure 15 shows existing spine trails and identifies potential alignments for future spine trails. As properties are designed for subdivision or development, this recommendations map should be used to evaluate if future spine trail alignments are located on or adjacent to the property. If a future spine trail alignment intersects the property, the developer will incorporate the trail design into the plan and connect it to existing spine trails in adjacent properties and stub it to future spine trail alignments at the property boundary. Local trails within the developing property shall provide connections to the spine trail.

Ownership, Design & Construction, Maintenance/Replacement Options

Spine Trails

Ownership and Maintenance/Replacement

Spine trails in many cases will be built by the developer when aligned through the property of a new subdivision. If the trail is located on property that is not dedicated to the Town, the development will designate a public access easement on the parcel through which the trail is located and the Town will assume long-term maintenance of all spine trails. Maintenance includes weed control, mowing trail edges, refreshing crusher fines, snow removal, sweeping, concrete repairs as needed, and safety inspections. The development may own and maintain, most likely through a Homeowners Association or Metro District, the open space, outparcel, or tract on which the trail is located; however, the Town will maintain all spine trails.

In some cases, spine trails may be constructed on Town property, right-of-way, or an easement. In all cases, the Town will maintain the spine trail.

Design and Construction

The developer will design and construct the spine trail per the Town's *Municipal Code, Title 10* and the *Design Standards* identified below in cases where the trail is located within a new development. In cases where the Town acquires property, right-of-way, or an easement for spine trail alignments, the Town is responsible for its design and construction.

Local Trails

Ownership and Maintenance/Replacement

Local Trails will be built by the developer when aligned through the property of a new subdivision. The development will own and maintain, through a Homeowners Association or Metro District, the open space, outparcel, or tract on which the local trail is located. The development will designate a public access easement on the parcel through which the trail is located.

In cases where the Town of Erie builds a local trail within Town-owned and maintained public open space or other town properties, the Town will maintain the trail and replace sections as necessary.

Design and Construction

The developer or Town will design and construct the local trail per the *Municipal Code, Title 10* and the *Design Standards* identified below.

Primitive Trails

Ownership and Maintenance/Replacement

Primitive Trails will be built by the developer when aligned through the property of a new subdivision. The development will own and maintain, most likely through a Homeowners Association or Metro District, the open space, outparcel, or tract on which the local trail is located. All properties that contain a primitive trail will be designated with a public access easement. In cases where the Town of Erie builds a primitive trail within public open space or town properties, the Town will maintain the trail and replace sections as necessary.

Design and Construction

When a primitive trail is included in a development, the developer will design and construct the primitive trail per the Town's *Municipal Code, Title 10* and the *Design Standards* identified below. For Town-owned properties or parcels on which the Town has acquired an easement, Erie will be responsible for the design and construction of the primitive trail.



*Note: Chapter 7 – Administration and Management of this **Master Plan** addresses key issues and recommendations related to the maintenance of parks, open space, and trails.*

Trail Classifications & Design Standards

As stated in the *Erie Comprehensive Plan*, the Town will use the following criteria when evaluating potential trail facilities.

- Location – To the extent possible, trails should be located, configured, and set back from natural creeks or water bodies so that recreational use will not significantly impact native plant and animal habitat.
- Alignment – Trails should be generally sinuous in nature, avoiding overly long and straight runs greater than 300 feet.
- Width – Spaces used to accommodate trails should generally be no less than three (3) times the width of the trail and shall accommodate development of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant trails.

The location, intended service area, appropriate activities, and design for each trail classification are further detailed below. The Town has final determination on trail classification within new developments, the location of each trail type, and any variances to these standards. This section concludes with details of additional amenities that strengthen the trail network including trailheads, waysides, and signage.

Types

Spine Trails

Location & Service Area

The backbone of the trails system is the **spine trail network.** It should provide connectivity to major activity centers including community parks, Coal Creek open space, public schools, Old Town, and employment and commercial centers. Spine trails should follow routes along rivers, streams, ditches, ridges, or other features with scenic or recreational value whenever possible to form the basic template for the network. They may also parallel arterial or other streets if properly designed to provide an enjoyable recreational experience in the absence of these corridors. A choice of lengths and circuits is desirable. It is desired for the user to experience a variety of views, landscapes, shade, and amenities along the way, and ideally to travel a circuit and return to his or her starting point without having to backtrack. Spine trails should be located in open space corridors, when possible, to completely separate trails from roadways and minimize street crossings.

Spine trails should be located away from nuisance areas including above ground oil and gas facilities, pipelines, dangerous ditches, steep slopes, and mining areas that include tailings and shafts.

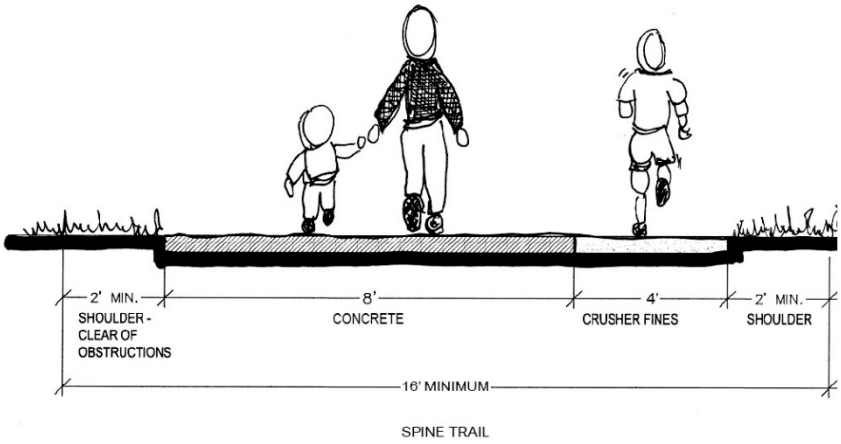
The approximate location of spine trail alignments is shown in ***Figure 15***. Only spine trails are illustrated in this map. Local trails and primitive trails are more numerous and locations will be determined at the time of development. Spine trails were designed to create key connections between all Town neighborhoods, key activity centers, and regional trails. The alignments shown on ***Figure 15*** are intended to indicate the overall concepts of primary connectivity. Location of trails is general in nature on the map and is subject to final development plans. Specific alignments and locations should be determined according to several criteria. These include the availability of suitable right-of-way for the trail and the occurrence of conflicts with streets or other impediments to construction and safety.

Activities

Spine trails are appropriate for pedestrians, joggers, bicyclists, strollers, roller bladers, and skateboarders. All spine trails shall be fully accessible and perform to ADA standards.



Figure 16: Cross-Section for Spine Trail

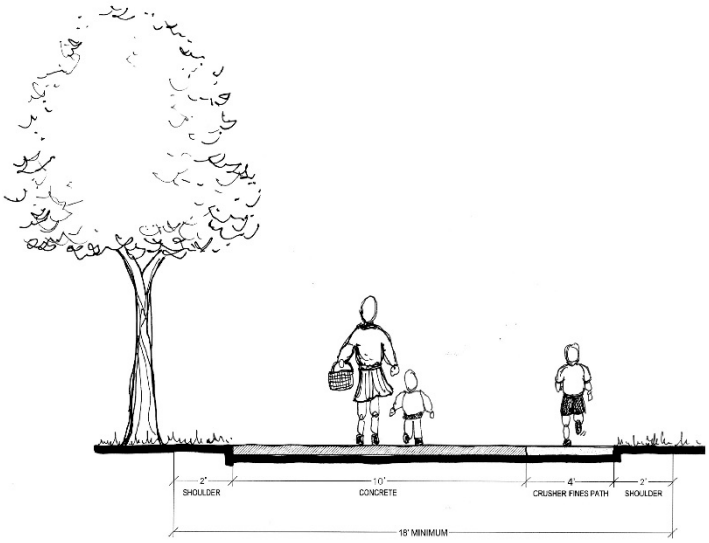


Design

A cross-section for a spine trail concept is shown in ***Figure 16***. It includes an 8-foot wide concrete section suitable for wheeled vehicles including strollers, bikes, and skates. An attached 4-foot soft surface of crusher fines provides a place for runners and pedestrians who want to stay out of the path of faster-moving cyclists or skaters/bladers. A mower width shoulder on both sides should be kept clear of obstructions to provide a safety zone. All shoulders should have a maximum 1:6 slope. Wider shoulders are recommended to provide clearance from trees, poles, walls, fences, and guardrails or other lateral obstructions. Where the path is next to a steep (1:3 or more) drop-off, a 5-foot separation between the path and the top of the embankment is recommended. The slopes across the travel surface of the path should not exceed two percent (2%). Along the direction of travel, slopes should not exceed five percent (5%) in order to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

An alternative to the 8'+4' main cross-section concept described above is shown in ***Figure 17***. It consists of a single 10-foot width or wider paved trail with mower width shoulders on either side. This is useful when a high volume of bikes and other wheeled travelers are expected, or when the trail needs to accommodate service vehicles. In such a case, a 4-foot wide soft trail adjacent to one side is still recommended.

Figure 17: Spine Trail Cross Section



The trail configurations described above dictate a minimum of 22-feet of horizontal space needed to fit the trail's cross-section. Additional space will be needed to allow for the trail to be graded and to meet existing grades at the corridor's edge and to fit around existing trees or other obstructions. The amount of additional space needed will increase with the steepness of the terrain and the density of existing vegetation or other obstructions. Providing adequate separation from roadways and other adjacent hazards may also dictate a wider corridor. Space for directional signs, trailside benches, and other amenities should also be taken into account.

A minimum corridor width of 30-feet is recommended in order to account for the variables listed above, and a corridor width of at least 40-feet is recommended whenever possible. This corridor can be an easement or right-of-way, but the entire corridor width must be available for trail purposes.

Spine trails should be designed to minimize crossings with streets, driveways, and other hazards. Grade separated crossings are recommended whenever possible. On-grade crossings should be clearly marked with caution signs for motorists, crosswalks on the street that is to be crossed, and stop signs on the trail where it crosses a street. Locating on-grade crossings at intersections, especially signalized ones, is preferred to mid-block crossings unless a pedestrian signal or other accommodations can be made.

Local Trails

Location & Service Area

Local Trails are the veins of the trail network. They connect neighborhoods, schools, parks, and commercial areas to each other and to the spine trails. Local trails should be located within open space corridors, linear tracts, and parks.

Local trails are not shown in the *Parks and Recreational Trail Recommendations Map*, but are equally important to provide secondary connections from residences, schools, businesses, and public places to the spine trails. Local trails need to be designed into all new developments, and their location and form will depend upon specific conditions on a case-by-case basis. All new developments should be required to provide adequate local trails across their property to connect to any spine trails and serve areas within one-third of a mile of any given point within the development.

Local trails should be located away from nuisance areas including above ground oil and gas facilities, pipelines, dangerous ditches, steep slopes, and mining areas that include tailings and shafts.

Activities
Local trails are appropriate for pedestrians, joggers, bicyclists, strollers, roller bladers, and skateboarders. All local trails shall be fully accessible and perform to ADA standards.

Design
The width and surface of these trails can vary according to the expected type and amount of traffic. At a minimum, these trails should be off-street multi-use paths and should meet ADA requirements. In some cases, local trails will need to meet the same standards for width and surface as the spine trail to which they connect. In other cases, local trails should have a minimum six-foot width of paved concrete.
In certain sections of the community, low-traffic streets or existing sidewalks might serve as secondary connections to the spine trails if wide enough and if designed to minimize conflicts with streets and driveways. While not meeting AASHTO standards for *bike* trails, these can provide safe access for pedestrians and others to the multi-use spine trails. Such routes should not be signed or marked as bike paths unless they are safe for such use, according to AASHTO standards. Streets adjacent to these routes may be marked with signage to warn motorists to watch for people using the route.

Primitive Trails

Location & Service Area
Primitive Trails should also be a part of the recreational trail system. These are appropriate within open space lands or other situations where traffic is low or the goal is to provide a more natural experience. Primitive trails should be kept away from sensitive natural areas and, depending on its intended purpose, steep slopes. Proximity to other potential nuisances should be evaluated by staff on a case-by-case basis. There is no designated service area for this type of trail.

Activities
Primitive trails are appropriate for pedestrians, joggers, and bikes.

Design

Figure 18: Primitive Trail Cross Section



A cross-section for this type of trail is shown in ***Figure 18***. This cross-section is presented as a concept, understanding that the topography of the area will dictate the design of primitive trails. It consists of crusher fines, though other natural surfaces should be considered, with improvements made for trail stabilization and erosion control. This can include water bars, culverts, steps, or other elements. The minimum width of a typical primitive trail is approximately four feet. Adjacent slopes, grades, and separations shall comply with those described under the spine trail section. While not required in all cases, at least some primitive trails should be designed with slopes and surfacing to allow for use by wheelchair occupants who desire and are able to handle a challenge that is beyond the standards of ADA, yet not beyond the capabilities of an athletic wheelchair operator.

Amenities

Trailheads, waysides, and signage are ancillary features that enhance the safety and enjoyment of the trail system. Trailheads provide access to spine trails from neighborhoods, parks, and the street network. Waysides are places along trails where travelers can stop to enjoy the shade or a pleasant view, or to read an interpretive sign. Signage provides trail identification, wayfinding, and interpretation while accessing and traveling sections of trail.

Trailheads

Trailheads are the interface between spine trails and the Town's transportation system. Trailheads should be provided at points where several primary routes converge and in places where easy access from streets to a parking area can be created. An adequate number of parking spaces should be provided to serve the projected use of the trailhead. Other features that can be provided include an information kiosk with a trails map posted on it and trash receptacles. Benches and shade should also be provided. All of these features should be selected for consistency of materials, colors, and form. Trailheads should also be provided for access to rivers and streams.

Trailheads should occur where roads intersect primary trails and a suitable pull-out or curb cuts can be attained, especially in rural areas. Safe entry and exit for cars is a primary concern. Some trailheads may consist of little more than a safe parking space or two, with appropriate signage. In some locations, greater use may be expected and additional improvements such as trash bins and toilets may be necessary. Portable toilets in a permanent enclosure work well in this situation. Permanent structures of any type should maintain a look and quality that fits with the overall character of Erie's parks system and that can adequately meet the maintenance requirements of the Town.

Waysides

Waysides are places along trails where travelers can stop to enjoy the shade or a pleasant view or to read an interpretive sign. Waysides should be provided at places that offer these characteristics, or at least every one-half (1/2) mile along the trail. Benches and/or picnic tables should be provided at waysides. Parks or other features along the trail can serve as waysides if properly designed and connected to the trail.

Signage

Trails within the system should be marked with consistent signage to identify the trail, help users find their way along the trail, and provide regulatory information on allowable uses, trail courtesy, etc. Other types of signs include identification signs for trailheads and interpretive signs. All signs should be consistent in their materials, colors, and graphics. The Town's logo should be included on all signs to clearly identify the trails as part of the Town's trail system.

Protection & Restoration Guidelines for Trail Construction

Locating trails along drainage ways offers an opportunity to bring people into some of the Town's most scenic and attractive natural areas like Coal Creek, Boulder Creek, and man-made opportunities provided by ditches and subsidiaries. However, care must be taken in selecting the exact alignment and configuration of trails in order to protect the scenic and environmental resources found within these corridors. The following is a list of protection and restoration guidelines for trail construction.

Ensure that trail routing avoids the most valuable habitat, and in general, protects wildlife habitat and plant cover as much as possible.
Route trails around, rather than through, the highest value habitats. Avoid putting trails near critical wetland or breeding habitats, and consciously choose to route trails away from such areas. Allow trails to touch riparian habitats briefly, if appropriate, rather than continuously intruding into them. Opportunities for wildlife viewing should be considered when appropriate.

Practice a knowledge-based, minimal disturbance trail building protocol to avoid disturbing native vegetation and creating an environment for noxious weeds.
Unless the area is already heavily disturbed and full of invasive plants, disturb as little vegetation as possible in construction activities. Bare soil creates a haven for non-native, invasive plant species. Protect and preserve native trees, shrubs, forbs, and grasses, as it is far easier to maintain these through management than to attempt to restore them. Know and observe critical distances to protect nesting areas, particularly of birds of prey.

Protect and restore existing features affected by trail construction and improve degraded areas along the trail corridor as part of implementing the trail system.
All construction associated with trails should be sensitive to the natural resources and other features that make using the trail an enjoyable experience. This includes protecting and restoring the landscape as well as historic and cultural features. Construction should strive to preserve standing dead trees (for raptor habitat) by routing trails around them.

Screening should be used to reduce the visual impacts of trails in natural areas. When disturbance of natural areas during construction of the trail is unavoidable, this can be used as an opportunity to enhance or improve upon the existing condition in the restoration of the area.

Preserve standing dead trees that provide raptor habitat and route trails around them, maintaining adequate buffers according best management practices for raptor habitats.

Trail Priorities





This ***Master Plan*** acknowledges several future trails that have been identified by the Town as important. Trails that create key connections between separate trailsheds and from spine trails to the Erie Community Park are valued as high priorities as well as connections to Coal Creek Park, the downtown area, and connections to the regional trail network.

The Town should maintain awareness of significant grant opportunities to supplement the Trails and Open Space Fund to enable completion of key trail segments over time. The annual CIP budget process should be used as a time to assess and reprioritize trail construction projects, seeking input from OSTAB in the process. The annual CIP budget process should also reflect the trail projects and priorities submitted to Boulder County in its annual request process.

Town staff should refer developers to ***Figure 15: Potential Spine Trails*** and seek cooperation with constructing key connections through future developments as an opportunity.

Recommendations

T.1 GOAL: Ensure access and connectivity to parks, recreation, open space, neighborhoods, and activity centers within Erie.

***Strategies*:**

T.1.1. Utilize ***Figure 15: Potential Spine Trails*** to guide trail planning and design efforts.

Action:

A. Develop an overall master plan for the spine trail network to clarify desired alignments, potential land acquisitions needed, and the cost and timing for implementation.

T.1.2. Require new developments to provide trails that tie into existing or future trails.

Actions:

A. Continue use of the *Trail Design Standards* (provided in this chapter) as part of Town of Erie *Park Construction Standards and Specifications for Design and Construction of Public Improvements*.

T.1.3. Plan for trailheads for the Town's trail network.

Action:

A. Identify and prioritize parks adjacent to existing or future trails that could be improved for parking, signage, wayfinding, and enhanced access. (See the Trailheads section under the *Trail Design Standards.*)

T.1.4. Engage the OSTAB in conceptual trail planning efforts.

T.2 GOAL: Improve access to Regional Trails and neighboring communities.

***Strategy*:**

T.2.1. Manage potential alignments and connection points at the Town limits to the Coal Creek/Rock Creek Trail, the St. Vrain Legacy Trail, Union Pacific Rail Trail, abandoned rail lines east of Interstate 25, and Broomfield regional trails.

Actions:

A. Coordinate planning efforts for regional trails with other agencies including Boulder County, Weld County, the City of Lafayette, the City of Broomfield, the Town of Dacono, the City of Longmont, and the Town of Frederick.
B. Utilize ***Figure 15*** to identify properties for regional trail alignments.
C. Develop strategies to secure land for regional trail connections including easements, dedication, or acquisition as resources allow.

T.3 GOAL: Minimize the impact of trails to sensitive natural areas.

Strategies:

T.3.1. Develop and adopt a site-specific trail location strategy for Erie's natural areas to minimize impact to sensitive areas. See the *Protect & Restore Existing Features* section in this chapter for general guidelines.

Note: Refer to Chapter 7: Administration and Management for recommendations related to signage and community awareness of the Town's trail network.

CHAPTER 7: ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT

The Town of Erie's Parks & Recreation Department was created in May 2007. Prior to this time, park maintenance staff were part of the Public Works Department, and the recreation staff reported to the Assistant to the Town Administrator. The Town offered limited fitness, sports, senior, and general recreation programs at that time.

The Department is currently organized into three Divisions: Administration, Parks, and Recreation. With the opening of the Erie Community Center in January 2008, the Department significantly increased its budget and staffing. As of 2016, the Town employed over 30 full-time staff (12 full-time staff in the Parks Maintenance Division and 19 full-time staff in the Recreation Division) and over 150 part-time staff.

This chapter of the ***Master Plan*** expands on three administration and management focus areas: maintenance, community awareness and engagement, and funding and sustainable operations.

Chapter 7 Contents

- Maintenance of Outdoor Facilities
  - Introduction
  - Key Findings
  - Recommendations
- Community Awareness & Engagement
  - Introduction
  - Key Findings
  - Recommendations
- Funding & Sustainable Operations
  - Introduction
  - Key Findings
  - Recommendations

Maintenance of Outdoor Facilities

Introduction

As part of this ***Master Plan*** process, the Town specifically requested review of maintenance standards and practices for outdoor facilities maintained by the Parks & Recreation Department. Following is an overview of the Parks Maintenance Division.



Parks Maintenance is a division of the Parks & Recreation Department and, at the time of this ***Master Plan***, was responsible for the maintenance of developed park sites, the grounds at several Town-owned facilities, a number of open space properties, and the maintenance of several partially-developed trail corridors.

In addition to the Town-owned properties, recent area residential development has included several small parks, playground areas, and trails constructed by local developers and presently maintained by local homeowner associations (HOAs). Town staff indicates the number of HOA-maintained sites creates confusion for area residents regarding ownership and maintenance responsibilities.

Maintenance of park properties is accomplished through a combination of in-house efforts and contracted services (including open space and right-of-way mowing, chemical applications, aeration, tree services, and some general park repairs). Efforts currently place an emphasis on turf and tree maintenance, athletic fields, shelters, playgrounds, and a significant number of collector trails. In general, Town parks observed were clean and well-maintained, with irrigated turf areas in good condition.



A number of new park developments are planned for the next five years, including development of additional trails and parks of varying sizes and open space. These funded developments are expected to significantly impact the size and scope of park maintenance operations. In addition to developed park facilities, the Town will continue to add an undetermined number of acres of open lands and trail corridors as these parcels come out of warranty periods from developers.

Key Findings

Recent growth and planned expansion of the park and trail inventory will require adjustments and expansion of park maintenance operations. Major challenges facing the Department include:

- The ability to attract and retain employees.
- The ability to continue the standard level of service in a growing community.
- Ensuring operational efficiencies in a developing system.
- Further and more detailed consideration is needed of contracted versus in-house services.
- Park, open space, and trail signage is limited and inconsistent.
- Maintenance and management plans for key assets call for continuous upgrades.

Recommendations

MAINTENANCE OF OUTDOOR FACILITIES (Parks, Open Space, and Trails)

M.1 GOAL: Establish expectations for minimum level of service for maintenance services.

***Strategy*:**

M.1.1. Update park maintenance standards based on new impact fees and level of service analysis.

Actions:

A. Staff review and approval of standards.
B. Implement standards and evaluate/modify after one year of use taking into account available resources.
C. Modify current maintenance schedules and inspection reports as needed to reflect adopted standards.
D. Evaluate standards located in Chapter 7 and available resources.

M.2 GOAL: Establish meaningful system for tracking maintenance tasks and costs.

Strategies:

M.2.1. Modify and expand current data collection.

Actions:

A. Continue to update current system to track labor, equipment, utilities, materials, and contracted services costs by site.

M.2.2. Ensure asset management and maintenance software system is in line with current needs.

M.3 GOAL: Ensure adequate maintenance equipment as the system expands and as resources allow.

Strategy:

M.3.1. Evaluate equipment needs for Erie Community Park and other park assets based on design and construction specifications.

Actions:

A. Staff review development plan to determine needs.
B. Evaluate funding plan.
C. As resources permit, obtain necessary equipment as additional acreage is assumed.

M.4 GOAL: Optimize mix of contract and in-house maintenance services for best return on investment.

Strategies:

M.4.1. Continue to use mix of in-house staff and contracted services.

M.4.2. Consider expanding contract services for routine tasks such as mowing, trimming, and edging.

M.4.3. Evaluate the effectiveness of bidding and contract management for contracted services.

M.5 GOAL: Ensure adequate maintenance staff to meet future needs as resources allow.

Strategy:

M.5.1. Request staffing level commensurate with increased acreage and maintenance responsibilities as funding permits.

Actions:

A. Consider establishing a target of one full-time staff person per 15 acres of developed parkland, or 200 acres of open spaces, as lands are acquired.
B. Monitor and request seasonal maintenance staff to cover requirements during peak season.

M.6 GOAL: Ensure adequate funding for capital repair and replacement as resources allow.

Strategies:

M.6.1. Continue to evaluate and refine a Life Cycle Cost (capital repair and replacement) Program.

Actions:

A. Inventory current park components (i.e. playgrounds, playcourts, parking lots, shelters, backstops, etc.) using inventory detail provided as part of this Master Plan.
B. Update replacement cost estimates for park components biennially.
C. Review funding priorities annually.

M.7 GOAL: Minimize use of water for irrigation purposes.

Strategies:

M.7.1. Develop and implement a Water Conservation Plan using an integrated systems approach based on irrigation science and effective design and management policies.

Actions:

A. Utilize low water use design criteria for all irrigated landscape improvements.
B. Utilize a “no runoff” irrigation system design policy.
C. Require ground preparation and soils amendments to a depth of eight inches (current practice is six inches).
D. Increase the frequency and detail of irrigation systems operations inspections.
E. Consider shift to non-potable (raw) water sources wherever possible.
F. Investigate possibility of capturing runoff at selected sites for irrigation use.

M.7.2. Evaluate and reconstruct turf areas in existing parks as needed and as resources allow.

Actions:

A. Review need for “wall-to-wall” irrigation.
B. Consider fringe areas, greenbelts, long narrow areas, perimeter areas that could exist with less or no irrigation.

M.7.3. Continue to document and consistently monitor existing irrigation uses.

Actions:

A. Monitor ET/evaporation rates.
B. Conduct site plant and soil audits.
C. Establish a target of 10% reduction in water costs.

M.7.4. Continue to educate staff on best management practices and make conservation a department-wide expectation, not just a responsibility of the irrigation crew.

Actions:

A. Conduct training sessions.
B. Establish staff expectations for water conservation across all specialty areas.

GOAL M.8: Establish site specific Management Plans for key assets.

Strategies:

M.8.1. Continue to develop and adopt Management and Operations Plans for other key park facilities and update as needed.

Community Awareness & Engagement

Introduction

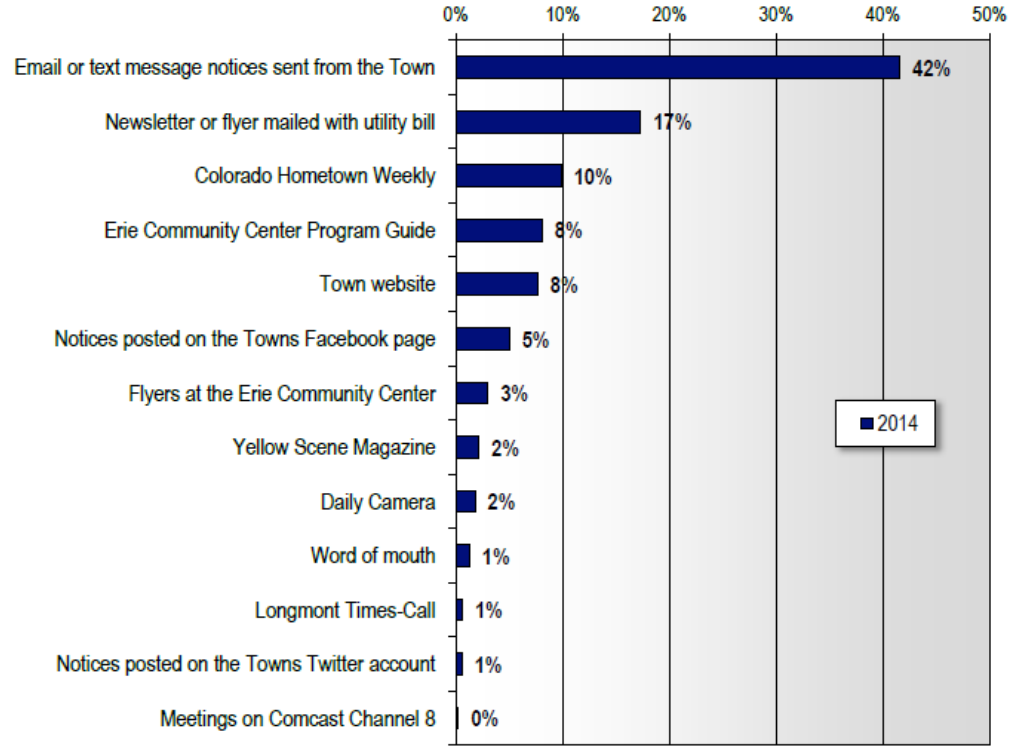
Parks, recreation, open space, and trails are central to Erie's community life by creating gathering places for social and recreational activities. It is important that efforts are made to foster community awareness of the many facilities and services so that residents can fully enjoy these resources. It is also important to provide opportunities for residents to contribute their ideas and talents to preserve and enhance these community amenities. These opportunities will continue to create a sense of community and preserve the small town character of Erie as it grows.

Key Findings

Getting the word out about the many facilities, programs, and services is important. When asked in the community survey how the Town can best communicate with them (***Figure 19***), Town e-mail and text was mentioned the most (by 42% of respondents), followed by newsletter/utility bills (17%), and Colorado Hometown Weekly (10%). Compared to the proportion currently receiving information through e-mail, the relatively large proportion of residents who would like to get their information through e-mail is notable, and poses a potential opportunity for the Town to explore improvements in future communications.



Figure 19: Communications (2014 Community Survey)



Community Engagement

The value the Town places on community engagement is demonstrated through its many volunteer boards, including the Open Space and Trails Advisory Board (OSTAB) and the Tree Board.

OSTAB advises the Board of Trustees on open space and trails-related issues. It consists of seven members, of which five must be residents of the Town. The Board of Trustees makes the appointment of seven members to staggered four-year terms. Currently, it is Town policy that Parks & Recreation Department staff may attend up to four OSTAB meetings a year as requested by OSTAB. Given the importance of open space and trails to the community, it is essential that strong communication and coordination on open space and trail planning occur between the Department and OSTAB.

The Tree Board consists of seven resident members appointed by the Board of Trustees to serve four-year terms. The mission statement of the Tree Board is:
"to educate the citizens of Erie about the importance of planting and maintaining trees on public and private lands; to maintain Erie's Tree City USA Certification; to plan and promote an annual Arbor Day Festival; to involve the community in the work of the Tree Board; and to promote sound management of Erie's urban forest."

Staff from the Parks & Recreation Department provides support and interfaces with the Board by attending up to four meetings a year as requested by the Tree Board. Strong communication and coordination between the Department and the Tree Board is also important.

The community survey conducted as a part of this master planning process also showed an interest in expanding ongoing volunteer opportunities. According to community surveys, public interests, and national trends, volunteer programs are an opportunity to increase community engagement. This goal also supports the "sustainable education" policy OS 2.3 in the *Erie Comprehensive Plan* in Chapter 2 of this ***Master Plan*** to "accommodate programs and volunteers in the design, management, and maintenance of open space properties to increase understanding of and commitment to a sustainable future for Erie." Volunteerism contributes to community building and is a valuable way to share resources. The Department has opportunities to expand volunteer opportunities as the Town grows.



In addition, creating community input opportunities as major parks, recreation, open space, and trails are planned and designed is important in order to ensure that the Town is best meeting the needs of the community. The community survey is a valuable tool to gauge community interests. This tool should be coupled with neighborhood input as specific projects are planned.

Recommendations

COMMUNITY AWARENESS & ENGAGEMENT

C.1 GOAL: Promote community awareness for key Department programs and facilities.

Strategies:

C.1.1. Develop a marketing strategy and plan to promote programs and facilities. Interface with other Town marketing efforts as appropriate and as resources allow.

Actions:

A. Define and develop the brand of the Department.
B. Identify target markets and align strategies specific to each market. Ensure communication extends and strengthens the brand.
C. Maximize outreach efforts by focusing on communication preferences identified in the community survey.
D. Incorporate needs as identified by Recreation Division staff. (See Goal R.6 in Chapter 5.)

C.1.2. Expand web-based marketing efforts.

C.1.3. Evaluate social media opportunities (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.).

C.2 GOAL: Use park naming, signage, and maps to promote awareness and recognition.

Strategies:

C.2.1. Install new signs as resources allow.

C.2.2. Develop signage guidelines and recommendations for privately-maintained public parks (i.e. HOA or Metro District-maintained pocket parks) to distinguish them from Town-owned and maintained parks.

C.2.3. Update maps to create awareness of parks, open space, trails, and recreation amenities.

Actions:

A. Consider web- or app-based, interactive maps for:
    a. Activity centers and regional trail networks.
    b. Parks and open space map.
    c. The Erie Community Center.

C.3 GOAL: Continue to foster pro-active community engagement and input into parks, recreation, open space, and trails planning efforts.

Strategies:

C.3.1. Engage community input for all major facility design projects.

C.3.2. Develop clear mechanisms of communication between the Parks & Recreation Department staff and OSTAB and the Tree Board.

Actions:

A. Staff shall provide quarterly written updates on related activities to keep OSTAB and the Tree Board fully informed of Parks & Recreation Department activities and initiatives.
B. Have designated Parks & Recreation staff representative attend up to of four meetings annually (of each board).
C. Have OSTAB and the Tree Board provide agendas and minutes to Parks & Recreation Director for each meeting.

C.4 GOAL: Create stewardship and sense of ownership through volunteer opportunities in the Parks and Recreation Department.

Strategy:

C.4.1. Conduct study to determine the most appropriate opportunities within the community.

Funding & Sustainable Operations

Introduction



The Town of Erie has a strong commitment to its parks, recreation, open space, and trail system. This commitment is demonstrated by Erie voter approval in 2004 of a four-mill property tax for the purpose of creating trails and purchasing natural areas, which was renewed for another 10 years in 2014. Residents also supported a $16.8 million bond initiative to fund the design and construction of the Erie Community Center.

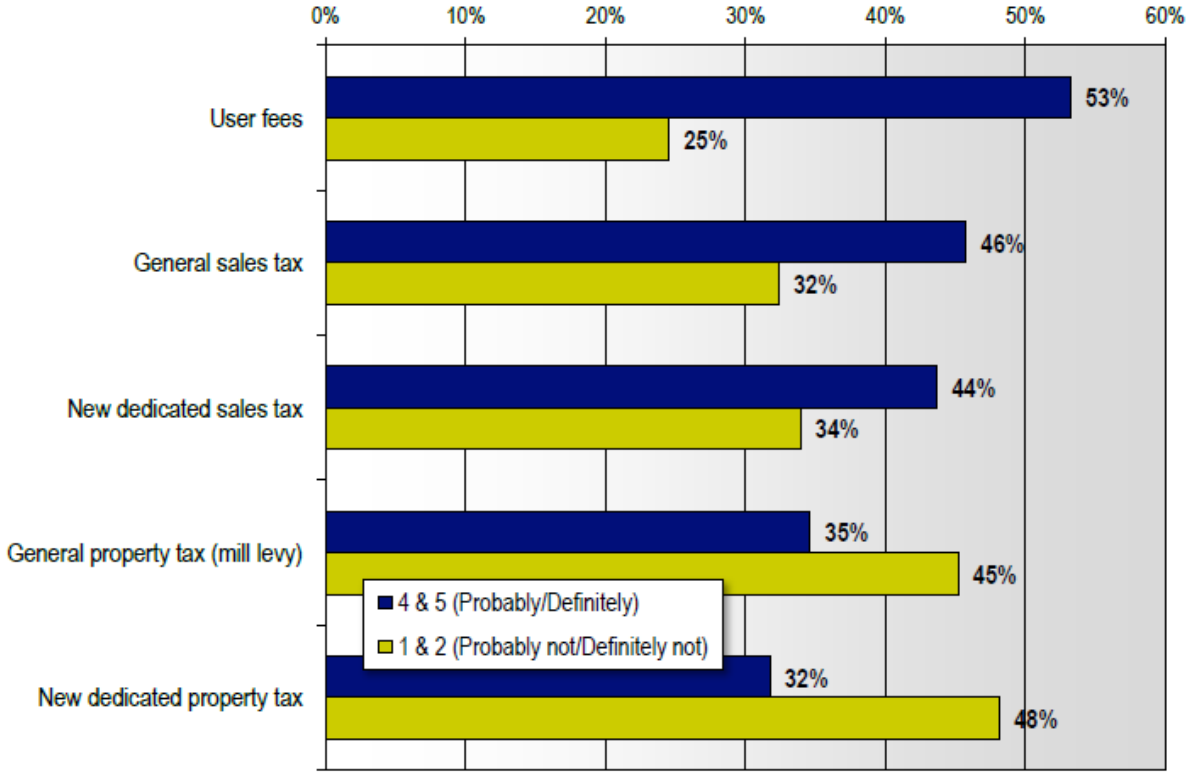
Key Findings

The Parks & Recreation Department budget represented 28% of the Town's 2016 General Fund budget. With a growing parks, recreation, open space, and trails system comes great operational expenses. The Department recovered 46% of its expenses through fees and charges in 2015 (primarily through fees through services provided through ECC). This public investment continues to contribute greatly to the quality of life in Erie and to providing opportunities for Erie's residents to be healthier.

Respondents were asked in the community survey to what extent, if any, they would be willing to support a number of different funding mechanisms to fund operations and maintenance costs of new parks and recreation facilities, open space, trails, and programs in Erie in the future. Of the list of potential mechanisms (***Figure 20***), user fees has the strongest support (53%), followed by a general sales tax (46%), both of which had moderate support. At the same time, most of that support is "probable," with very few respondents indicating "definite" support of a sales tax to fund operations. Overall, respondents were largely not supportive of any kind of additional property tax.

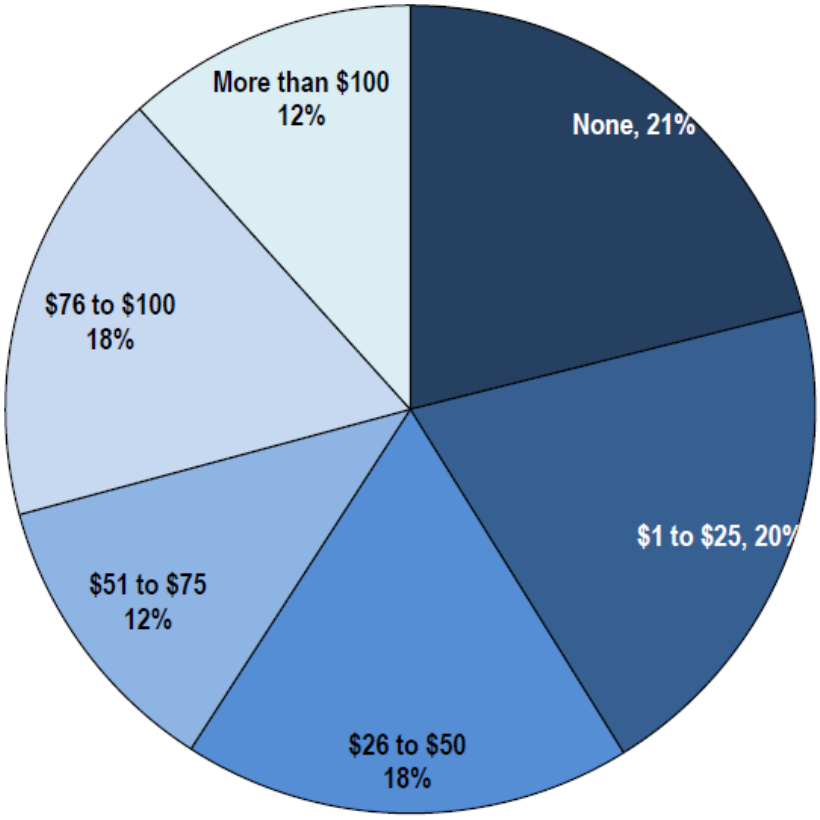
Given the results of the survey and the higher household incomes in Erie, there are opportunities to increase cost recovery through fees, charges, sales tax initiatives, and other alternative funding.

Figure 20: Potential Funding Mechanisms (2014 Community Survey)



A related question prompted respondents with the notion that "quality recreation facilities and programs cost money to provide and maintain," and then asked how much additional property tax (if any) they would be willing to pay annually to increase recreational opportunities in Erie (***Figure 21***). Twenty-one percent (21%) of respondents are not willing to pay any additional money annually, while 20% are willing to pay an additional $1 to $25 annually. Fifty-nine percent (59%) of respondents are willing to pay at least $26 extra in property taxes per year. The median amount respondents would be willing to pay is approximately $37.50.

Figure 21: Level of Support for Additional Property Tax (2014 Community Survey)



The Town receives funding from a variety of sources to provide parks, trails, open spaces, and facilities. While some funding is for ongoing maintenance, there are also specific fees that are collected to support new residential developments. In 2016, the Town conducted an Impact Fee Study to determine sufficient support needed to continue the current level of service provided. The study determined that impact fees should increase. Additionally, the fee structure will change to assist with incorporating park development through a neighborhood park development fee or overall development processes. The fee has an adjusting index, to be adopted annually.

In addition to funding parks, trails, open spaces, and facilities, the Town has mandatory land dedication requirements. These land dedications are critical for maintaining current level of service to future residents. The Town is working to ensure a balance of land preservation and resources necessary to develop and maintain quality care as well as amenities within the system. Although several components of setting up a sustainable financial system for parks and recreation have occurred, there is still a need to identify a long-term opportunity of funding ongoing maintenance and operations within the department.

Recommendations

FUNDING & SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS

F.1 GOAL: Ensure that development growth supports the Town's parks, recreation, open space, and trails Level of Service Standards at an appropriate level.

Strategies:

F.1.2. Continue to pursue proactive efforts to secure funding for the implementation of open space and trails plans.

F.1.2. Pursue grants to fund Department projects.

F.1.3. Seek out professional organizations to collaborate with and assist in offering programs/services.

F.2 GOAL: Maintain appropriate budget levels to supports parks, recreation, open space, and trails maintenance costs as resources allow.

Strategies:

F.2.1 Request appropriate levels of funding annually to support preventative maintenance and life cycle equipment replacement costs.

F.2.2. Continue to utilize the Conservation Trust Fund to support capital maintenance costs, as appropriate and as resources allow.

F.2.3. Evaluate staffing levels for parks and recreation divisions annually and recommend adequate staffing to achieve service levels and maintenance standards.

F.3 GOAL: Maximize capacity to enhance programs and services through alternative funding sources including partnerships, sponsorships, donation, grants, etc.

Strategies:

F.3.1. Evaluate and refine plan to seek private funding or donations.

F.3.2. Explore opportunities for contracted services to provide complementary services and provide revenue to the Parks & Recreation Department. (Supports Policy PRT 2.2 on page 7-3 in the *Erie Comprehensive Plan*.)

F.3.3. Implement PASS recommendations.

F.4 GOAL: Guide the Department's allocation of budget resources through Cost Recovery Philosophy and Policy.

Strategies:

F.4.1. Implement and communication an overall Cost Recovery Philosophy for Department services with input from stakeholders.

F.4.2. Maintain PASS projections.

F.4.3. Identify and implement fee philosophy in supporting programs areas.

F.5 GOAL: Make short and long range funding decisions supporting recommendations in this *Master Plan* as resources allow.

Strategies:

F.5.1. Consider dedicated sales or property tax to support the gap in projected capital funding for new parks and improvements to existing parks.

F.5.2. Identify staff/resource needs.

F.6 GOAL: Pro-actively plan for evolving community needs by keeping planning information current.

Strategies:

F.6.1. Update this *Master Plan* every three to five years as resources allow.

F.6.2. Update parks and recreation inventory.

F.6.3. Conduct a statistically valid community survey every two to three years.

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CHAPTER 8: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Introduction

This *Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan* provides a guiding mechanism to meet existing and future community needs. The strength of this plan stems from extensive research, community involvement, analysis of needs, identification of key issues and findings, and a public review that forms the basis for the recommendations contained within. The ***Master Plan*** recommends goals for the Erie Parks & Recreation Department that:

- Strive to meet or exceed resident expectations.
- Use innovative ideas and methods to successfully meet challenges posed by budgetary, facility, and staffing limitations.
- Lead by a stewardship approach that provides high-quality facilities, both existing and future, through judicious use of public funds.
- Conserve natural assets.
- Foster cooperation and partnerships with alternative providers in offering recreational services and facilities.
- Promote trail strategies for connecting neighborhoods, public facilities, employment and retail areas, regional trails in neighboring communities, etc.
- Facilitate a proactive planning process guided by community needs and executable strategies and establish a process for reviewing and updating this document regularly.

This ***Master Plan*** is designed to serve as a decision-making tool for the Town of Erie to help set priorities for implementation and to provide a high level of service for parks, recreation, open space, and trail facilities and services. The following Implementation Plan chart summarizes the plan recommendations and identifies timing and financial impact where appropriate. The Implementation Plan is subject to further study and annual review. It should serve as a guide in the development of the Parks & Recreation Department's annual budget development and work plan.

This ***Master Plan*** is intended to be a 5-10 year Plan with a focus on short and medium term priorities. Long-term priorities are also identified to guide planning efforts beyond five years. The following Implementation Plan is based on the following time framework for short, medium, and long-term priorities:

- Short-Term: Within one-to-two (1-2) years
- Mid-Term: Within three-to-four (3-4) years
- Long-Term: Five (5) years and beyond
- Ongoing

Park Recommendations

PARKS			
Goals, Strategies & Actions	**Responsibility (Lead shown first)**	**Financial Impact**	**Timing**
P.1 GOAL: Ensure consistent, quality design and construction of parks.			
Strategies: **P.1.1. Work with developers to construct to *Pocket Park Design Standards* that incorporate flexibility for development-specific amenities.**	Parks and Recreation (P&R)	Staff Time	Ongoing
Actions: A. Update *Pocket Park Design Standards* to ensure consistency with public feedback. ▪ Continue to review amenities biennially in pocket parks that future survey and public process participants identify as important, and update *Pocket Park Design Standards* accordingly.	P&R, Community Development (CD)	Staff Time	Short-Term
B. Evaluate and incorporate new relevant component options every two years, as recreation trends change, to allow for diversity of amenities that will best serve the surrounding population.	P&R, CD	Staff Time Survey Materials	Every Two years
P.1.2. Follow design guideline outlined within the Master Plan when constructing neighborhood and community parks. The Town may contract with a developer to provide this service to Town standards.	P&R,CD	Staff Time Design Fees Construction Costs	Ongoing
Actions: A. Utilize *Resource Map F: Future Parks and Facilities* for approximate future neighborhood park locations.	CD, P&R	Staff time	Ongoing

PARKS			
Goals, Strategies & Actions	**Responsibility (Lead shown first)**	**Financial Impact**	**Timing**
B. Update the *Municipal Code, Title 10* (Section 10.6.3.B.4) to reflect revised characteristics of neighborhood parks to be dedicated. The policy changes include: 1) That the Town shall be responsible for the design and construction of neighborhood parks unless otherwise agreed in writing. 2) That developers shall be responsible for constructing curbs, gutters, storm sewers, and roads adjacent to the park site, as applicable, and stubbing utilities including water, sewer, and electricity to the park property line.	CD, P&R, Board of Trustees	Staff Time	Short-Term
C. Ensure all costs are appropriately included in new Park Impact Fees. Costs would include grading, turf grass, irrigation and water taps, and raw water fees. These costs are currently the responsibility of the developer per the *Municipal Code, Title 10*. (See Funding and Sustainable Operations Recommendation F.1 in Chapter 7 of this Plan.)	P&R, Finance	Staff Time	Short-Term
P.1.3. Provide community-wide amenities in existing and future community parks as resources allow.	P&R, CD, Board of Trustees	Staff Time Design Fees Construction Costs	Ongoing
Actions: A. Utilize *Resource Map F: Future Parks and Facilities* for future community park locations.	P&R, CD	Staff Time	Ongoing
P.1.4. Provide Town of Erie park construction standards, specifications, and details to require safe, durable, and functional park design and construction.	P&R	Staff Time	Short-Term
Actions: A. Review and update Town of Erie *Park Construction Standards and Specifications for Design and Construction of Public Improvements* annually.	P&R, Public Works	Staff Time	Ongoing

PARKS			
Goals, Strategies & Actions	**Responsibility (Lead shown first)**	**Financial Impact**	**Timing**
B. Continue to expand the Town of Erie *Park Construction Standards and Specifications for Design and Construction of Public Improvements* as needed.	P&R, Public Works	Staff Time	Short-Term, Ongoing
P.1.5. Continue to review and define the level of restroom service required for each park type, open space areas and trailheads as follows: A. Permanent, fully accessible restrooms in all community parks; consider year-round facilities where usage warrants. B. Temporary, portable, and accessible restrooms such as port-a-lets within an enclosure at all neighborhood parks and at trailheads (as needed). Restroom facilities at a neighborhood park may be improved to permanent restrooms during design or at a future time based on need generated from park use. C. No restroom facilities in pocket parks.	P&R, CD, Public Works	Staff Time	Short-Term
P.2 GOAL: Ensure consistent ownership and maintenance for all existing and future pocket parks, neighborhood parks, and community parks to allow predictability in planning and management.			
***Strategies*:** **P.2.1. Clarify when the Town will begin maintenance of a developer-built neighborhood park (when applicable). The current *Municipal Code, Title 10* states that the Town shall own and maintain neighborhood parks, and the Town policy (dated 12-5-05) states that the Town will maintain a neighborhood park built by a developer once the Town begins programming in the park.**	P&R Town Administration Board of Trustees	Staff Time	Short-Term

PARKS			
Goals, Strategies & Actions	**Responsibility (Lead shown first)**	**Financial Impact**	**Timing**
P.2.2. Continue to update *Municipal Code, Title 10* as needed to require basic standards for pocket parks (i.e. playground safety, landscape upkeep, etc.). Include language in development agreements in accordance with these maintenance standards.	P&R Town Administration	Staff Time	Short-Term
P.2.3. Ensure *Municipal Code, Title 10* continues to require that the level of service of HOA or Metro District-owned and maintained public pocket parks will be maintained over time with all equipment and amenities in good working condition. Include language in new development agreements in accordance with this amendment.	P&R Town Administration	NA	Ongoing
P.3 GOAL: Ensure that new park facilities and amenities reflect current trends and local needs to maximize community use and participation.			
Strategies: **P.3.1. Research and respond to regional trends in conjunction with community interests identified in this planning process (i.e. disc golf, swimming, adventure course, camping, etc.) and additional sources in the design and planning for park facilities.**	P&R	Staff Time	Ongoing
Actions: A. Track trends through Colorado Parks and Recreation Association conferences, sessions, industry publications, and other professional associations.	P&R	Staff Time	Ongoing
B. Design parks to promote healthy communities, responding to health trends and efforts (i.e. preventing childhood obesity, LiveWell Colorado, sustainable design, etc.).	P&R	Staff Time	Ongoing
C. Continue to pursue public input regarding amenities residents would prefer in Erie.	P&R	Staff Time	Ongoing
D. Identify existing parks or new parks where preferred trends can be constructed or programmed.	P&R	Staff Time	Ongoing
P.3.2. Incorporate community input into the design process for new parks, open space, and trail facilities (whether built by Town or developer). *Note: For new residential developers with no occupants, neighborhood input may not be possible for pocket parks.*	P&R	Staff Time	Ongoing

PARKS			
Goals, Strategies & Actions	**Responsibility (Lead shown first)**	**Financial Impact**	**Timing**
Actions: A. Continue to engage community members in public meetings, focus groups, and/or surveys to gain design input.	P&R	Staff Time Consultant Fees	Ongoing
B. Share community input with design teams and developers involved in the design of new parks, open space, and trails.	P&R	Staff Time	Ongoing
C. Promote new parks, open space, and trails projects on the Town website and in newsletters to create awareness of new facilities.	P&R	Staff Time	Short-Term, Ongoing

Recreation Recommendations

RECREATION			
Goals, Strategies & Actions	**Responsibility (Lead shown first)**	**Financial Impact**	**Timing**
R.1 GOAL: Enhance recreation program development to best meet community needs and interests as resources allow.			
Strategies: **R.1.1. Develop program offerings reflective of the Town of Erie's demographic forecast, community survey needs and interests, and recreation trends. (Staff is currently implementing several of the actions steps listed below. Continuation of these efforts is recommended.)**	Parks & Recreation (P&R) (Recreation Division)	Staff Time	Annually
Actions: A. Coordinate staff planning sessions to prioritize program needs and opportunities.	P&R (Recreation Division)	Staff Time	Annually
B. Determine feasibility of specific interests in additional water access, cultural arts, youth/adult sports, and special events in addition to specialized fitness and wellness activities.	P&R (Recreation Division)	Staff Time	Short-Term Ongoing
C. Develop and expand environmental and outdoor education programs. Explore partnership opportunities with area schools, non-profit organizations and the private sector. Consider the development of a nature/educational programming in park design to promote environmental education.	P&R (Recreation Division)	Staff Time	Short-Term Ongoing

RECREATION			
Goals, Strategies & Actions	**Responsibility (Lead shown first)**	**Financial Impact**	**Timing**
D. Expand Baby Boomer and Active Adult programming and services addressing trips, on-site programs, and special events.	P&R (Recreation Division)	Staff Time	Short-Term Ongoing
E. Determine appropriateness of transportation options to encourage participation in Active Adult and teen programs (i.e. transportation for trips, etc.). Explore partnering with Special Transit private provider, the Erie Area Senior Advisory Committee (EASY-C) non-profit organization, and RTD.	P&R (Recreation Division)	Staff Time	Short-Term Ongoing
R.2 GOAL: Continue plan for sustainable staffing requirements that reflects historical and forecast demands for recreation services and programs.			
Strategy: **R.2.1. Correlate program information including participation numbers, number of programs, revenue generated, and staffing expenses annually to prepare staffing requirement justifications.**	P&R (Recreation Division)	Staff Time	Annually
R.3 GOAL: Ensure programs and facility scheduling meets community needs and interests as resources allow.			
Strategies: **R.3.1. Tailor facility and program offerings to best meet the community interests identified through community input processes (including the community survey for this *Master Plan*).**	P&R (Recreation Division)	Staff Time	Ongoing
Actions: A. Review and analyze youth participation to determine if existing offerings are maximized.	P&R (Recreation Division)	Staff Time	Ongoing
B. Evaluate class participation in fitness and wellness programs. Discontinue classes that do not meet required minimums (determined by staff) consistently to allow room for other offerings.	P&R (Recreation Division)	Staff Time	Ongoing
C. Collaborate with alternative providers to address those interests that the Recreation Division is not prepared to or able to host.	P&R (Recreation Division)	Staff Time	Ongoing
R.3.2. Develop a plan to address anticipated population growth and increased demand.	P&R (Recreation Division)	Staff Time	Ongoing

RECREATION			
Goals, Strategies & Actions	**Responsibility (Lead shown first)**	**Financial Impact**	**Timing**
Actions: A. Expand collaborations through Joint Use Agreements (JUAs) with school districts.	P&R, Town Administration, Board of Trustees	Staff Time	As Needed
B. Seek additional collaborations with alternative providers.	P&R (Recreation Division)	Staff Time	Ongoing
C. Perform a needs assessment and feasibility study for the expansion of Erie Community Center or an off-site facility.	P&R	Staff Time and/or Consultant Fees	Short-Term
R.4 GOAL: Continue to explore partnerships and collaborations to meet community program needs and interests.			
Strategies: **R.4.1. Build partnerships within the community to take advantage of existing facilities and provide additional programming and services to the community.**	P&R, Town Administration, Board of Trustees	Staff Time	Short-Term
Actions: A. Expand and formalize programming partnerships with the schools.	P&R	Staff Time	Short-Term
B. Seek partnerships with private golf and tennis facilities to provide community programs.	P&R	Staff Time	Short-Term
R.5 GOAL: Evaluate relationships with Boulder Valley School District and St. Vrain Valley School District and private schools in Erie's planning area on an annual or biannual basis.			
Strategies: **R.5.1. Update Joint Use Agreement (JUA) with school districts.**	P&R, Town Administration, Board of Trustees	Staff Time	Short-Term
Actions: A. Outline communication protocol for School District and Recreation Division staff. As an attachment to the JUA, both the St. Vrain Valley School District and the Town of Erie should include a contact sheet with titles and phone numbers. The list should identify whom staff should call for scheduling purposes, maintenance issues, and other areas as required.	P&R, Town Administration, St. Vrain Valley School District	Staff Time	Short-Term

RECREATION			
Goals, Strategies & Actions	**Responsibility (Lead shown first)**	**Financial Impact**	**Timing**
B. Include reciprocal marketing opportunities in School District Joint Use Agreement (JUA) to the extent possible for both the District and the Town of Erie.	P&R, Administration, St. Vrain Valley School District	Staff Time	Short-Term
C. Evaluate School District and ECC custodial fees charged through the JUA. Prior to renewals, each agency should evaluate these fees to ensure both are equitable and represented in the JUA.	P&R, Town Administration, St. Vrain Valley School District	Staff Time	Short-Term
R.5.2. Continue communications with Boulder Valley School District to identify potential partnerships.	P&R, Town Administration, Boulder Valley School District	Staff Time	Mid-Term
R.5.3 Continue communications with private schools to identify potential partnership opportunities.	P&R, Town Administration, Relevant Schools	Staff Time	Ongoing
R.6. GOAL: Promote community awareness of the Recreation Division facilities, programs, and services through targeted outreach and marketing.			
Strategies: **R.6.1. Coordinate marketing, sponsorship, and volunteer opportunities specific to the Recreation Division.**	P&R (Recreation Division)	Staff Time	Ongoing
Actions: A. Identify marketing needs for each section or program area on a semi-annual or annual basis.	P&R (Recreation Division)	Staff Time	Annually
B. Create volunteer opportunities as part of a Department-wide volunteer program.	P&R (Recreation Division)	Staff Time	Short-Term
R.7. GOAL: Address capital improvements and maintenance/replacement options for the Erie Community Center as resources allow.			
Strategies: **R.7.1. Continue with maintenance/replacement plans for facilities, equipment, and amenities at the ECC (i.e. fitness equipment, HVAC, roofs, etc.), and update as needed.**	P&R	Staff Time, Consultant Fees	Short-Term

RECREATION			
Goals, Strategies & Actions	**Responsibility (Lead shown first)**	**Financial Impact**	**Timing**
Actions: A. Inventory facility equipment and amenities identifying life cycle and replacement cost for each and update annually.	P&R (Recreation Division)	Staff Time, Consultant Fees	Short-Term, Annually
B. Identify revenue sources that can contribute to a maintenance/replacement budget and include this cost in the annual budget. (Explore the development of a fixed fee to be added to ECC fees to fund equipment replacement/ capital improvements.)	P&R, Finance	Staff Time, Consultant Fees	Annually
C. Document costs associated with repair and maintenance in an automated facility inventory system.	P&R (Recreation Division)	Staff Time, Consultant Fees	Mid-Term
R.7.2. Explore options to add fitness space at the ECC to respond to high demand for fitness programs.	P&R, Town Administration	Staff Time	Short-Term
Action: A. Conduct a feasibility study to determine the best strategy to add fitness space. Options include repurposing existing underutilized spaces or a new addition to the ECC.	P&R	Staff Time, Consultant Fees	Short-Term

Open Space Recommendations

OPEN SPACE			
Goals, Strategies & Actions	**Responsibility (Lead shown first)**	**Financial Impact**	**Timing**
OS.1 GOAL: Provide consistent levels of high value open space to the residents of Erie.			
Strategies: **OS.1.1. Identify parcels for potential open space protection.**	Parks & Recreation (P&R), Open Space & Trails Advisory Board (OSTAB)	Staff and Volunteer Time	Ongoing
Actions: A. Engage the OSTAB in open space planning and prioritization efforts.	P&R	Staff and Volunteer Time	Ongoing
B. Consult the Town of Erie *Natural Areas Inventory* for preliminary identification of properties with potential as open space	P&R, Community	Staff Time	Ongoing

OPEN SPACE			
Goals, Strategies & Actions	**Responsibility (Lead shown first)**	**Financial Impact**	**Timing**
according to environmental and ecological factors.	Development (CD)		
OS.1.2. Evaluate parcels for potential open space protection through the three-tool evaluation process.	P&R, OSTAB	Staff and Volunteer Time	Ongoing
Actions: A. Utilize tools 1 and 2 of the evaluation process, Resource Map C and the *Open Space Field Evaluation Checklist* (found at the end of this chapter), to further evaluate individual properties or portions of properties. (This checklist was generated from additional open space attributes, as identified in the Natural and Scenic Resource Protection section of the *Municipal Code, Title 10*.)	P&R, OSTAB	Staff and Volunteer Time	Ongoing
B. Utilize tool 3 to determine options for how the parcel could be protected.	P&R, OSTAB	Staff and Volunteer Time	Ongoing
OS.1.3. Prioritize parcels for potential open space protection.	P&R, OSTAB	Staff and Volunteer Time	Ongoing
Actions: A. Based on the evaluation results and protection options, request an advisory recommendation from the OSTAB regarding prioritization to accompany a staff recommendation.	P&R, OSTAB	Staff and Volunteer Time	Ongoing (at least annually)
OS.1.4. Acquire and/or protect areas of land evaluated and prioritized for open space preservation as resources allow.	P&R, CD, Finance, Town Administration Board of Trustees	Varies	Ongoing
Actions: B. Supplement the open space dedication requirement with Town of Erie open space acquisition, the annexation of specific Boulder County open spaces identified in the IGA, or other methods listed below. Protect or acquire open space through: - Dedication requirements. - Fee simple purchase.	P&R	Staff Time	Ongoing

OPEN SPACE			
Goals, Strategies & Actions	**Responsibility (Lead shown first)**	**Financial Impact**	**Timing**
- Conservation easements. - Joint Purchases with other entities. - Leases. - Donations and gifts. - Land swaps. - Non-profit acquisition and conveyance to the Town.			
OS.1.5 Maintain awareness of Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), adjacent community planning, and other potential opportunities to fund open space planning and acquisition/protection.	P&R	Staff Time	Ongoing
OS.2 GOAL: Enhance management of open space lands.			
Strategies: **OS.2.1. Create Open Space Management Plan as needed.**	P&R	Staff Time, Consultant Fees	Mid-Term
Actions: A. Use the guidelines for *Developing Open Space Management Plans* provided at the end of the chapter as the framework for the plan.	P&R	Staff Time	Mid-Term
C. Engage OSTAB to aide in the creation and update of Management Plans as needed.	P&R, OSTAB	Staff and Volunteer Time	Ongoing
D. Prioritize sites in need of management plans.	P&R, OSTAB	Staff and Volunteer Time	Short-Term
OS.2.2. Identify and implement wildlife improvement priorities.	P&R	Staff Time	Ongoing
Actions: A. In conjunction with the recommendation to develop a Wildlife Management Plan for species of concern in Erie, ensure that those plans extend to address wildlife on open space properties. (See Wildlife Management Plan recommendation in Maintenance section of Chapter 7.)	P&R	Staff Time	Mid-Term
B. Continue to consult with the Division of Wildlife for current best practices and regional efforts.	P&R	Staff Time	Ongoing
OS.2.3. Develop environmental interpretation and education opportunities in open space areas.	P&R	Staff Time, Volunteer Time	Ongoing

OPEN SPACE			
Goals, Strategies & Actions	**Responsibility (Lead shown first)**	**Financial Impact**	**Timing**
Actions: A. Identify appropriate areas for an interpretive signage program to continue to promote awareness of natural areas.	P&R	Staff Time, Consultant Fees, Sign and Installation Costs	Mid to Long-Term
B. Distribute brochures, programs, and information on the Town of Erie website.	P&R	Staff Time, Graphics Design, Printing Costs	Ongoing
C. Develop interactive maps and/or virtual tours of open space.	P&R, OSTAB	Staff and Volunteer Time	Ongoing
D. Continue to promote opportunities for natural areas stewardship through volunteer program. Volunteer opportunities could include: • Clean-ups. • Wildlife monitoring. • Invasive plant removal. • Habitat improvement.	P&R, OSTAB	Staff and Volunteer Time	Ongoing
OS.2.4. During the annual budget process, assess needed open space maintenance, restoration, and renovation projects system-wide.	P&R, CD, Town Administration, Board of Trustees	Staff Time	Short-Term
OS.2.5. Communicate open space maintenance guidelines to HOAs and Metro Districts and provide assistance with integrating and applying best practices for open space maintenance.	P&R	Staff Time	Ongoing

Trails Recommendations

TRAILS			
Goals, Strategies & Actions	**Responsibility (Lead shown first)**	**Financial Impact**	**Timing**
T.1 GOAL: Ensure access and connectivity to parks, recreation, open space, neighborhoods, and activity centers within Erie.			
***Strategies*:** **T.1.1. Utilize *Figure 15 – Proposed Spine Trails* to guide trail planning and design efforts.**	Parks & Recreation (P&R), Community Development (CD), Open Space & Trails Advisory Board (OSTAB)	Staff and Volunteer Time	Ongoing
Action: A. Develop an overall master plan for the spine trail network to clarify desired alignments, potential land acquisitions needed and the cost and timing for implementation.	P&R, OSTAB	Staff Time, Volunteer Time, Consultant Fees	Short-Term
T.1.2. Require new developments to provide trails that tie into existing or future trails.	P&R, CD	Staff Time	Ongoing
Actions: A. Continue use of the *Trail Design Standards* as part of Town of Erie *Park Construction Standards and Specifications for Design and Construction of Public Improvements*.	P&R, CD, Public Works, Board of Trustees	Staff Time	Short-Term
T.1.3. Plan for trailheads for the Town's trail network.	P&R	Staff Time, Construction Costs	Ongoing
Action: A. Identify and prioritize parks adjacent to existing or future trails that could be improved for parking, signage, wayfinding, and enhanced access. (See the Trailheads section under the *Trail Design Standards.*)	P&R	Staff Time	Short-Term
T.1.4. Engage the OSTAB in conceptual trail planning efforts, particularly during the annual Boulder County request process.	P&R, OSTAB	Staff and Volunteer Time	Ongoing

TRAILS			
Goals, Strategies & Actions	**Responsibility (Lead shown first)**	**Financial Impact**	**Timing**
T.2 GOAL: Improve access to Regional Trails and neighboring communities.			
***Strategies*:** **T.2.1. Manage potential alignments and connection points at the Town limits to the Coal Creek/Rock Creek Trail, the St. Vrain Legacy Trail, Union Pacific Rail Trail, abandoned rail lines east of Interstate 25, and Broomfield regional trails.**	P&R, CD	Staff Time, Construction Costs, Land Acquisition Costs	Ongoing
Actions: A. Coordinate planning efforts for regional trails with other agencies including Boulder County, Weld County, the City of Lafayette, the City of Broomfield, the Town of Dacono, the City of Longmont, and the Town of Frederick.	P&R, OSTAB	Staff and Volunteer Time	Ongoing
B. Utilize *Figure 15 – Proposed Spine Trails* to identify properties for regional trail alignments.	P&R, CD, OSTAB	Staff and Volunteer Time, Construction Costs, Land Acquisition Costs	Ongoing
C. Develop strategies to secure land for regional trail connections including easements, dedication, or acquisition as resources allow.	P&R, CD, OSTAB	Staff and Volunteer Time	Ongoing
T.3 GOAL: Minimize the impact of trails to sensitive natural areas.			
Strategies: **T.3.1. Develop and adopt a site-specific trail location strategy for Erie's natural areas to minimize impact to sensitive areas. See the *Protect & Restore Existing Features* section.**	P&R	Staff Time	Short-Term

Administration and Management Recommendations

MAINTENANCE			
Goals, Strategies & Actions	**Responsibility (Lead shown first)**	**Financial Impact**	**Timing**
M.1 GOAL: Establish expectations for minimum level of service for maintenance services.			
***Strategy*:** **M.1.1. Update park maintenance standards based on new impact fees and level of service analysis.**	Parks & Recreation (P&R), Town Administration	Staff Time	Short-Term
Actions: A. Staff review and approval of standards.	P&R, Town Administration	Staff Time	Short-Term
B. Implement standards and evaluate/modify after one year of use taking into account available resources.	P&R, Town Administration, Board of Trustees	Staff Time	Short-Term
C. Modify current maintenance schedules and inspection reports as needed to reflect adopted standards.	P&R (Parks Division)	Staff Time	Short-Term
D. Evaluate standards located in Chapter 7 and available resources.	P&R (Parks Division)	Staff Time	Short-Term
M.2 GOAL: Establish meaningful system for tracking maintenance tasks and costs.			
Strategies: **M.2.1. Modify and expand current data collection.**	P&R (Parks Division)	Staff Time	Short-Term
Actions: A. Continue to update current system to track labor, equipment, utilities, materials, and contracted services costs by site.	P&R (Parks Division)	Staff Time	Short-Term
M.2.2. Ensure asset management and maintenance software system is in line with current needs.	P&R (Parks Division)	Staff Time	Short-Term
M.3 GOAL: Ensure adequate maintenance equipment as the system expands and as resources allow.			
Strategies: **M.3.1. Evaluate equipment needs for Erie Community Park and other park assets based on design and construction specifications.**	P&R (Parks Division), Finance	Staff Time	Short-Term, Ongoing
Actions: A. Staff review development plan to determine needs.	P&R (Parks Division)	Staff Time	Short-Term, Ongoing

MAINTENANCE			
Goals, Strategies & Actions	**Responsibility (Lead shown first)**	**Financial Impact**	**Timing**
B. Evaluate funding plan.	P&R, Finance	Varies	Short-Term, Ongoing
C. As resources permit, obtain necessary equipment prior as additional acreage is assumed.	P&R, Public Works, Finance	Varies	As needed and approved
M.4 GOAL: Optimize mix of contract and in-house maintenance services for best return on investment.			
Strategies: **M.4.1. Continue to use mix of in-house staff and contracted services.**	P&R (Parks Division)	Staff Time	Ongoing
M.4.2 Consider expanding contract services for routine tasks such as mowing, trimming, and edging.	P&R (Parks Division)	Staff Time	Ongoing
M.4.3. Evaluate the effectiveness of bidding and contract management for contracted services.	P&R (Parks Division)	Staff Time	Short-Term
M.5 GOAL: Ensure adequate maintenance staff to meet future needs as resources allow.			
Strategies: **M.5.1. Request staffing level commensurate with increased acreage and maintenance responsibilities as funding permits.**	P&R	Salary and Benefits	Short-Term
Actions: A. Consider establishing a target of one full-time staff person per 15 acres of developed parkland, or 200 acres of open spaces, as lands are acquired.	P&R	Salary and Benefits for Full-time Staff	Short-Term
B. Monitor and request seasonal maintenance staff to cover requirements during peak season.	P&R	Salary and Benefits for Part-time or Full-time Staff	Short-Term
M.6 GOAL: Ensure adequate funding for capital repair and replacement as resources allow.			
Strategies: **M.6.1. Continue to evaluate and refine a Life Cycle Cost (capital repair and replacement) Program.**	P&R	Staff Time, Consultant Fees	Mid-Term

MAINTENANCE			
Goals, Strategies & Actions	**Responsibility (Lead shown first)**	**Financial Impact**	**Timing**
Actions: A. Inventory current park components (i.e. playgrounds, playcourts, parking lots, shelters, backstops, etc.) using inventory detail provided as part of this Master Plan.	P&R	Staff Time, Consultant Fees	Mid-Term
B. Update replacement cost estimates for park components biennially.	P&R	Staff Time, Consultant Fees	Mid-Term
C. Review funding priorities annually.	P&R	Staff Time, Consultant Fees	Mid-Term
M.7 GOAL: Minimize use of water for irrigation purposes.			
***Strategies*:** **M.7.1. Develop and implement a Water Conservation Plan using an integrated systems approach based on irrigation science and effective design and management policies.**	P&R	Staff Time	Short-Term
Actions: A. Utilize low water use design criteria for all irrigated landscape improvements.	P&R (Parks Division)	Staff Time	Short-Term
B. Utilize a "no runoff" irrigation system design policy.	P&R (Parks Division)	Staff Time	Short-Term
C. Require ground preparation and soils amendments to a depth of eight inches (current practice is six inches).	P&R (Parks Division)	Staff Time	Short-Term
D. Increase the frequency and detail of irrigation systems operations inspections.	P&R (Parks Division), Public Works	Staff Time	Short-Term
E. Consider shift to non-potable (raw) water sources wherever possible.	P&R (Parks Division)	Staff Time	Ongoing
F. Investigate possibility of capturing runoff at selected sites for irrigation use.	P&R (Parks Division)	Staff Time	Ongoing
M.7.2. Evaluate and reconstruct turf areas in existing parks as needed and as resources allow.	P&R (Parks Division)	Staff Time Equipment, Materials	Mid-Term

MAINTENANCE			
Goals, Strategies & Actions	**Responsibility (Lead shown first)**	**Financial Impact**	**Timing**
Actions: A. Review need for "wall-to-wall" irrigation.	P&R (Parks Division)	Staff Time	Short-Term
B. Consider fringe areas, greenbelts, long narrow areas, perimeter areas that could exist with less or no irrigation.	P&R (Parks Division)	Staff Time	Ongoing
M.7.3. Continue to document and consistently monitor existing irrigation uses.	P&R (Parks Division)	Staff Time	Ongoing
Actions: A. Monitor ET/evaporation rates.	P&R (Parks Division)	Staff Time	Ongoing
B. Conduct site plant and soil audits.	P&R (Parks Division)	Staff Time	Ongoing
C. Continue a target of 10% reduction in water costs.	P&R, Town Administration	Staff Time	Short-Term
M.7.4. Continue to educate staff on best management practices and make conservation a department-wide expectation, not just a responsibility of the irrigation crew.	P&R	Staff Time	Annually
Actions: A. Conduct training sessions.	P&R	Staff Time, Training Resources	Annually
B. Establish staff expectations for water conservation across all specialty areas.	P&R	Staff Time	Ongoing
GOAL M.8: Establish site specific Management Plans for key assets.			
Strategies: **M.8.1. Continue to develop and adopt Management and Operations Plans for other key park facilities and update as needed.**	P&R	Staff Time	Short-Term, As needed

COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT			
Goals, Strategies & Actions	**Responsibility (Lead shown first)**	**Financial Impact**	**Timing**
C.1 GOAL: Promote community awareness for key Department programs and facilities.			
Strategies: **C.1.1. Develop a marketing strategy and plan to promote programs and facilities. Interface with other Town marketing efforts as appropriate and as resources allow.**	P&R	Marketing Budget	Short-Term
Actions: A. Define and develop the brand of the Department.	P&R	Marketing Budget	Short-Term
B. Identify target markets and align strategies specific to each market. Ensure communication extends and strengthens the brand.	P&R	Staff Time Marketing Budget	Ongoing
C. Maximize outreach efforts by focusing on communication preferences identified in the community survey.	P&R	Staff Time	Ongoing
D. Incorporate needs as identified by Recreation Division staff. (See Goal R.6 in Chapter 5.)	P&R	Staff Time	Ongoing
C.1.2. Expand web-based marketing efforts.	P&R, IT staff	Staff Time	Ongoing
C.1.3. Evaluate social media opportunities (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.).	P&R, Town Administration, IT staff	Staff Time	Short-Term
C.2 GOAL: Use park naming, signage, and maps to promote awareness and recognition.			
Strategies: **C.2.1. Install new signs as resources allow.**	P&R	Staff Time	Short-Term
C.2.2. Develop signage guidelines and recommendations for privately-maintained public parks (i.e. HOA or Metro District-maintained pocket parks) to distinguish them from Town-owned and maintained parks.	P&R	Staff Time	Short-Term
C.2.3. Update maps to create awareness of parks, open space, trails, and recreation amenities.	CD	Staff Time	Short-Term
Actions: A. Consider web- or app-based, interactive maps for: • Activity centers and regional trail networks. Parks and open space map. • The Erie Community Center.	P&R, Finance	Cost of Signs and/or IT development	Mid-Term

COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT			
Goals, Strategies & Actions	**Responsibility (Lead shown first)**	**Financial Impact**	**Timing**
C.3 GOAL: Continue to foster pro-active community engagement and input into parks, recreation, open space, and trails planning efforts.			
Strategies: **C.3.1. Engage community input for all major facility design projects.**	P&R	Staff and/or Consultant Time	Ongoing
C.3.2. Develop clear mechanisms of communication between the Parks & Recreation Department staff and OSTAB and the Tree Board.	P&R, Town Administration	Staff Time	Short-Term
Actions: A. Staff shall provide quarterly written updates on related activities to keep OSTAB and the Tree Board fully informed of Parks & Recreation Department activities and initiatives.	P&R	Staff Time	Quarterly
B. Have designated Parks & Recreation staff representative attend up to of four meetings annually (of each board).	P&R	Staff Time	Quarterly
C. Have OSTAB and the Tree Board provide agendas and minutes to Parks & Recreation Director for each meeting.	OSTAB, Tree Board	Volunteer Time	Monthly or as needed
C.4 GOAL: Create stewardship and sense of ownership through volunteer opportunities in the Parks and Recreation Department.			
Strategy: **C.4.1. Conduct study to determine the most appropriate opportunities within the community.**	P&R	Staff Time	Short-Term

FUNDING AND SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS			
Goals, Strategies & Actions	**Responsibility (Lead shown first)**	**Financial Impact**	**Timing**
F.1 GOAL: Ensure that development growth supports the Town's parks, recreation, open space, and trails Level of Service Standards at an appropriate level.			
Strategy: **F.1.1. Continue to pursue pro-active efforts to secure funding for the implementation of open space and trails plans.**	P&R, Finance, CD, Town Administration, Board of Trustees	Staff Time, Consultant Fees	Short-Term
F.1.2. Pursue grants to fund Department projects.	P&R , Finance, CD, Town Administration	Staff Time, Consultant Fees	Short-Term
F.1.3. Seek out professional organizations to collaborate with and assist in offering programs/services.	P&R, Finance	Staff Time, Consultant Fees	Short-Term
F.2 GOAL: Maintain appropriate budget levels to supports parks, recreation, open space, and trails maintenance costs as resources allow.			
Strategies: **F.2.1. Request appropriate levels of funding annually to support preventative maintenance and life cycle equipment replacement costs.**	Open Space and Trails Advisory Committee (OSTAB)	Volunteer Time	Mid-Term
F.2.2. Continue to utilize the Conservation Trust Fund to support capital maintenance costs, as appropriate, and as resources allow.	OSTAB, P&R	Volunteer Time, Staff Time	Mid-Term
F.2.3. Evaluate staffing levels for parks and recreation divisions annually and recommend adequate staffing to achieve service levels and maintenance standards.	P&R, Town Administration	Staff Time	Mid-Term
F.3 GOAL: Maximize capacity to enhance programs and services through alternative funding sources including partnerships, sponsorships, donation, grants, etc.			
Strategies: **F.3.1. Evaluate and refine plan to seek private funding or donations.**	P&R	Staff Time, Maintenance and Replacement Costs	Annually
F.3.2. Explore opportunities to use local or regional companies or vendors to provide complementary services (i.e. concessions, vendors, or service providers) at parks and recreation facilities and provide revenue to the Parks & Recreation Department. (Supports Policy 2.2 in the *Erie Comprehensive Plan*.)	P&R	Staff Time	Annually
F.3.3. Implement PASS recommendations.	P&R	Staff Time	Short-Term

FUNDING AND SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS			
Goals, Strategies & Actions	**Responsibility (Lead shown first)**	**Financial Impact**	**Timing**
F.4 GOAL: Guide the Department's allocation of budget resources through a Cost Recovery Philosophy and Policy.			
Strategy: **F.4.1. Implement and communicate an overall Cost Recovery Philosophy and Policy for Department services with input from stakeholders.**	P&R	Staff Time	Short-Term
F.4.1. Maintain PASS projections.	P&R	Staff Time	Annually
F.4.1. Identify and implement fee philosophy in supporting programs areas.	P&R	Staff Time	Annually
F.5 GOAL: Make short and long range funding decisions supporting the recommendations in this *Master Plan* as resources allow.			
Strategies: **F.5.1. Consider a dedicated sales or property tax to support the gap in projected capital funding for new parks and improvements to existing parks.**	P&R, Finance, Town Administration, Board of Trustees	Staff Time, Consultant Fees	Short-Term
F.5.1. Identify staff/resource needs.	P&R, Finance	Staff Time	Annually
F.6 GOAL: Pro-actively plan for evolving community needs by keeping planning information current.			
Strategies: **F.6.1. Update this Master Plan every three-to-five years as resources allow.**	P&R	Staff Time	Mid-Term
F.6.2. Update the parks and recreation inventory annually.	Town Administrator, P&R, Public Works	Staff Time	Mid-Term
F.6.3. Conduct a statistically valid community survey every two to three years.	P&R	Staff Time	Mid-Term

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Appendix A: Demographic Trends

Youth – Generation Z

In the July 2012 issue of *Parks and Recreation* magazine, published by NRPA, Emilyn Sheffield, Professor of Recreation and Parks Management at the California State University, at Chico, contributed an article titled, "Five Trends Shaping Tomorrow Today." In it, she noted that the proportion of youth is smaller than in the past, but still essential to our future. As of the 2010 Census, the age group under age 18 forms about a quarter of the U.S. population. Nationwide, nearly half of the youth population is ethnically diverse and 25% is Hispanic. In Erie, about 24% of the population is 19 and under.

Characteristics cited for Generation Z, the youth of today[17] include:

- The most obvious characteristic for Generation Z is the pervasive use of technology.[18]
- Generation Z members live their lives online and they love sharing both the intimate and mundane details of life.
- They tend to be acutely aware that they live in a pluralistic society and tend to embrace diversity.
- Generation Zers tend to be independent. They do not wait for their parents to teach them things or tell them how to make decisions.[19]

With regard to physical activity, a 2013 article published by academics at Georgia Southern University[20] notes that the prevalence of obesity in Generation Z (which they describe as individuals born since the year 2000) is triple that of Generation Xers (born between 1965 and 1979). It suggests that due to increased use of technology, Generation Z spends more time indoors, is less physically active, and more obese compared to previous generations. The researchers noted that Generation Z is a generation that seeks social support from peers more so than any previous generation. This is the most competent generation from a technological standpoint but Generation Zers tend to struggle in and fear some basic activities such as physical activity and sport.

[17] Note: There does not appear to be a general consensus about the transition from Millennials to Generation Z. The range sited in various articles puts the transition year anywhere from about 1994 to 2000.
[18] La Monica Everett-Haynes, "Trending Now: Generation Z," Arizona University UA News Blog, http://uanews.org/blog/trending-now-generation-z, accessed July 30, 2015.
[19] Alexander Levit, "Make Way for Generation Z," *The New York Times*, March 28, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/29/jobs/make-way-for-generation-z.html?_r=0.
[20] David D. Biber, Daniel R. Czech, Brandonn S. Harris, and Bridget F. Melton, "Attraction to physical activity of generation Z: A mixed methodological approach," *Open Journal of Preventive Medicine*, Vol.3, No.3., 310 – 319 (2013), http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/ojpm.2013.33042.

Adults – Generation X

A high percentage of Erie's population falls within Generation X, defined as individuals born between approximately 1965 and 1979. With this generation being smaller than the Baby Boomer and the Millennial Generation, this is not a common trend. According to the Pew Research Center, Gen Xers "are a low-slung, straight-line bridge between two noisy behemoths," sharing similar traits to both generations.[21] They are often referred to as America's neglected middle child because of their lack of distinctive traits and general self-reliance. For example:

- They are less demographically diverse than Millennials.
- They tend to be less traditional/conservative than Baby Boomers.
- They use technology at a less frequent rate than Millenials.

According to the 2015 Participation Report by the Physical Activity Council,[22] recreational activities to consider with this group, include:

- Individual Sports
- Outdoor Sports
- Fitness Activities

According to the article "How Generation X is Shaping Government,"[23] this age demographic is starting to settle into their communities, and become more involved and become more involved on a regular basis. Once thought to be the generation that would not have much impact, Gen Xers are starting to become vital part of communities and public engagement. With such a strong presence in the community already, Erie should look for opportunities to engage with these individuals.

Adults – Baby Boomers

Baby Boomers are defined as individuals born between 1946 and 1964, as stated in "Leisure Programming for Baby Boomers."[24] 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. In her article, Sheffield also indicated that Baby Boomers are driving the aging of America, with Boomers and seniors over 65 composing about 39% of the nation's population.[25]

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?"[26] Highlights are summarized below.

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[21]Paul Taylor and George Gao, "Generation X: America's Neglected 'Middle Child,'" http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/06/05/generation-x-americas-neglected-middle-child/

[22] 2015 Participation Report," Physical Activity Council, 2015.

[23] Rob Gurwitt, "How Generation X is Shaping Government," Governing – The State and Localities, http://www.governing.com/topics/mgmt/gov-how-generation-x-shaping-government.html

[24] Linda Cochran, Anne Roshschadl, and Jodi Rudick, "Leisure Programming For Baby Boomers," Human Kinetics, 2009.

[25] Emilyn Sheffield, "Five Trends Shaping Tomorrow Today," *Parks and Recreation*, July 2012, p. 16-17.

[26] Jeffry Ziegler, "Recreating Retirement: How Will Baby Boomers Reshape Leisure in Their 60s?," Parks and *Recreation*, October 2002.

Boomers are known to work hard, play hard, and spend hard. They have always been fixated with all things youthful. 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. Swimming pools have become less of a social setting and much more of an extension of Boomers' health and wellness program. 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 park and 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. Recreation trends will shift from games and activities that Boomers associate with senior citizens, as Ziegler suggests that activities such as bingo, bridge, and shuffleboard will likely be avoided because Boomers relate these activities to being old.

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

Adults – The Millennial Generation

The Millennial Generation, generally considered to represent those born between about 1980 and 1999, represent about 24% of the Erie population in 2015. In their book, Millennials Rising, the Next Great Generation, authors William Strauss and Neil Howe identify seven Millennials characteristics.[27] These characteristics were discussed in a 2010 California State Parks article entitled "Here come the 'Millennials': What You Need to Know to Connect with this New Generation":

1. Special: Used to receiving rewards just for participating, Millennials are raised to feel special.
2. Sheltered: Millennials lead structured lives filled with rules and regulations. Less accustomed to unstructured play than previous generations and apprehensive of the outdoors, they spend most of their time indoors, leaving home primarily to socialize with friends and families.
3. Team Oriented: This group has a "powerful instinct for community" and "places a high value on teamwork and belonging."
4. Technically savvy: Upbeat and with a can-do attitude, this generation is "more optimistic and tech-savvy than its elders."
5. Pressured: Millennials feel "pressured to achieve and pressured to behave." They have been "pushed to study hard and avoid personal risk."
6. Achieving: This generation is expected to do great things, and they may be the next "great" generation.

[27] Neil Howe and William Strauss, Millennials Rising, the Next Great Generation, Vintage: New York, New York, 2000.

7. Conventional (and diverse): Millennials are respectful of authority and civic minded. Respectful of cultural differences because they are ethnically diverse, they also value good conduct and tend to have a "standardized appearance."

The California State Parks article provides a broad range of ideas for engaging Millennials in parks and recreation.[28]

In a 2011 study of the Millennial Generation,[29] Barkley Advertising Agency made the following observations about Millennials and health/fitness:

- Sixty percent of Millennials say they try to work out on a regular basis. Twenty-six percent consider themselves health fanatics.
- Much of this focus on health is really due to vanity and/or the desire to impress others — 73% exercise to enhance their physical appearance.
- Millennials are also fans of relaxation and rejuvenation, as 54% regularly treat themselves to spa services.
- Despite their commitment to health, Millennials stray from their healthy diets on weekends. There's a noticeable difference between their intent to work out regularly and the amount of exercise that they actually accomplish.

Facilities

According to *Recreation Management* magazine's 2015 "State of the Industry Report,"[30] 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 26.4 years for their community recreation facilities. To meet that growing need, a majority of the parks and recreation survey respondents (72.6%) reported that they have plans to build new facilities or make additions or renovations to their existing facilities over the next three years. Nearly one-third (32.4%) of parks respondents said they have plans to build new facilities, and 29.9% said they plan to add to their existing facilities. More than half (53.1%) are planning renovations to existing facilities.

Also according to the 2015 "State of the Industry Report," the average amount planned for parks and recreation department construction in the 2015 budgets saw an increase from an average of $3,795,000 in the previous year's survey to an average of $3,880,000 for 2015. Currently the most likely features included in park facilities are playgrounds, park shelters, restroom structures, walking and hiking trails, open spaces – gardens and natural areas, bleachers and seating, outdoor sports courts, natural turf sports fields, concession areas, and classrooms/meeting rooms.

[28] California State Parks, "Here come the 'Millennials': What You Need to Know to Connect with this New Generation," *Recreation Opportunities*. (2010), p. 4-6, http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/795/files/millennials%20final_03_08_10.pdf, accessed January 12, 2015.
[29] American Millennials: Deciphering the Enigma Generation, https://www.barkleyus.com/AmericanMillennials.pdf, accessed May 2015.
[30] Emily Tipping, "2015 State of the Industry Report, State of the Managed Recreation Industry," *Recreation Management*, June 2015.

The top 10 planned features to be constructed for all facility types are:

1. Splash play areas (planned by 23.4% of parks respondents who will be adding features)
2. Playgrounds (22.4%)
3. Dog parks (22%)
4. Fitness trails and outdoor fitness equipment (21.5%)
5. Hiking and walking trails (20.3%)
6. Bike trails (20.1%)
7. Park restroom structures (19.5%)
8. Park structures such as shelters and gazebos (17.7%)
9. Synthetic turf sports fields (16.1%)
10. Wi-Fi services (14.4%)

The current national trend is toward "one-stop" indoor recreation facilities to serve all ages. Large, multipurpose regional centers help increase cost recovery, promote retention, and encourage cross-use. Agencies across the United States are increasing revenue production and cost recovery. Providing multiuse and flexibility in facilities versus 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.

Aquatics/Water Recreation Trends

According to the National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA), swimming ranked third nationwide in terms of participation in 2014.[31] Outdoor swimming pools are not typically heated and open year round. Swimming for fitness is the top aspirational activity for "inactives" in six of eight age categories in the Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) 2013 "Sports, Fitness and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report," representing a significant opportunity to engage inactive populations. Nationally, there is an increasing trend towards indoor leisure and therapeutic pools.

Additional indoor and outdoor amenities like "spray pads" are becoming increasingly popular as well. In this maturing market, communities are looking for atmosphere, an extension of surroundings either natural or built. Communities are also concerned about water quality and well as conservation. Interactive fountains are a popular alternative, ADA-compliant and low maintenance. Trends in architectural design for splash parks can be found in *Recreation Management* magazine articles in 2014 and 2015.[32]

The Outdoor Foundation's 2015 "Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report" provided nationwide trends for various outdoor activities, including the following water recreation activities that may be appropriate in bodies of water in Erie: board sailing/windsurfing, canoeing, fishing, kayaking, rafting, sailing, stand-up paddle boarding, and wakeboarding (***Table 14***). Among water recreation activities, stand-up paddling had the largest increase in participation from 2012 to 2014 (30.5% increase) followed by several varieties of the kayaking experience: kayak fishing (20.1% increase), and whitewater kayaking (15.1% increase). Fly fishing participation went up while other fishing activities went down in the same time period. Sailing participation increased somewhat, while rafting and wakeboarding participation went down.[33]

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[31] "2014 Participation – Ranked by Total," National Sporting Goods Association, 2015.
[32] Dawn Klingensmith "Make a splash: Spraygrounds Get (Even More) Creative," *Recreation Management*, April 2014 (and April 2015 updates). (http://recmanagement.com/feature_print.php?fid=201404fe01).
[33] *Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report 2015*, Outdoor Foundation, 2015.

Table 14: Water Recreation Participation by Activity (in thousands) (6 years of age or older)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	3 Year Average Change
Boardsailing/windsurfing	1,617	1,151	1,593	1,324	1,562	13.2%
Canoeing	10,553	9,787	9,839	10,153	10,044	0.9%
Fishing (fly)	5,478	5,683	6,012	5,878	5,842	1.0%
Fishing (freshwater/other)	38,860	38,868	39,135	37,796	37,821	-0.9%
Kayak fishing	1,044	1,201	1,409	1,798	2,074	20.1%
Kayaking (recreational)	6,465	8,229	8,144	8,716	8,855	2.5%
Kayaking (white water)	1,842	1,546	1,878	2,146	2,351	15.1%
Rafting	4,460	3,821	3,690	3,836	3,781	-0.3%
Sailing	3,869	3,725	3,958	3,915	3,924	1.8%
Stand up paddle boarding	1,050	1,242	1,542	1,993	2,751	30.5%
Wakeboarding	3,645	3,389	3,348	3,316	3,125	-2.6%

Source: Outdoor Foundation 2015 (numbers in thousands).

Dog Parks

Dog parks continue to see high popularity and have remained among the top planned addition to parks and recreational facilities over the past three years. In 2014, the National Dog Park Association, dedicated to providing informational resources for starting and maintaining dog parks, was founded. *Recreation Management* magazine[34] suggests that dog parks can represent a relatively low-cost way to provide an oft-visited, popular community amenity. Dog parks can be as simple as a gated area, or more elaborate with "designed-for-dogs" amenities like water fountains, agility equipment, and pet wash stations, to name a few. Even "spraygrounds" are being designed just for dogs. Dog parks are also places for people to meet new friends and enjoy the outdoors.

The best dog parks cater to people with design features for their comfort and pleasure, but also with creative programming.[35] Amenities in an ideal dog park might include the following:

- Benches, shade, and water – for dogs and people.
- At least one acre of space with adequate drainage.
- Double gated entry.
- Ample waste stations well-stocked with bags.
- Sandy beaches/sand bunker digging areas.
- Custom designed splashpads for large and small dogs.
- People-pleasing amenities such as walking trails, water fountains, restroom facilities, picnic tables, and dog wash stations.

[34] Emily Tipping, "2014 State of the Industry Report, Trends in Parks and Recreation," *Recreation Management*, June 2014.
[35] Dawn Klingensmith "Gone to the Dogs: Design and Manage an Effective Off-Leash Area," *Recreation Management*, March 2014. (http://recmanagement.com/feature_print.php?fid=201403fe02).

Programming

Fitness

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 (ACSM) *Health and Fitness Journal*[36] has conducted a survey annually since 2007 to determine trends that would help create a standard for health and fitness programming. ***Table 15*** 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 fell off the list of 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 2015.

Table 15: Top 10 Worldwide Fitness Trends for 2007 and 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

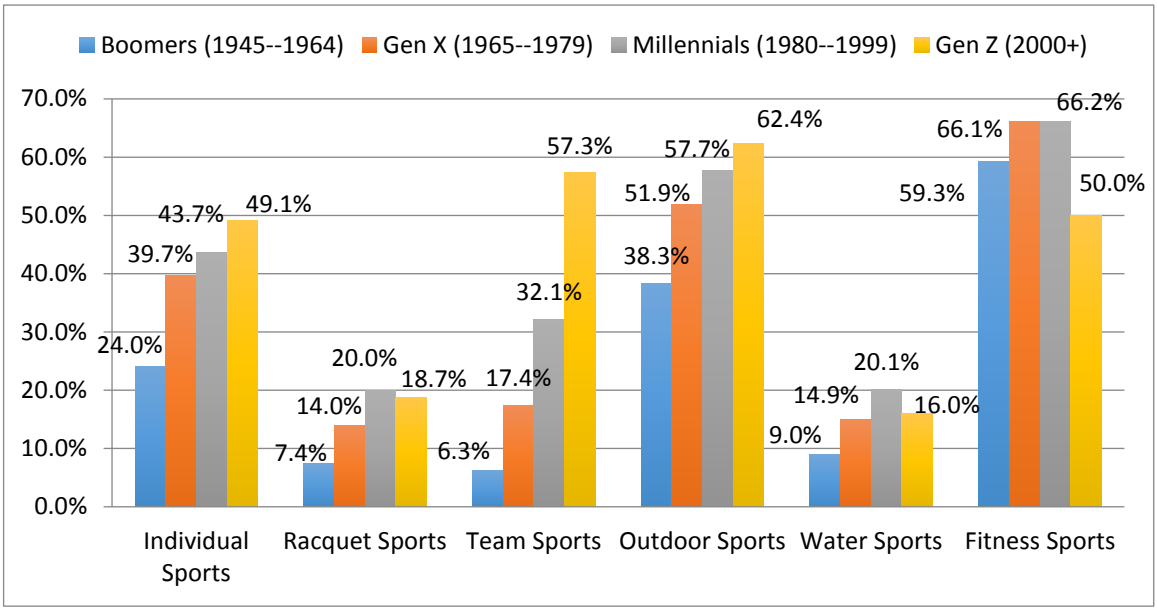
Source: American College of Sports Medicine

According to the 2015 Participation Report by the Physical Activity Council,[37] over half of each generation participates in fitness sports, and team sports are more of a Generation Z activity, while water and racquet sports are dominated by Millennials. Outdoor and individual sports tend to have younger participants with participation decreasing with age. The figure below illustrates participation rates by generation. Due to the high volume of Gen X and Gen Z populations in Erie, the Department should explore opportunities in Fitness and Outdoor Sports.

[36] Walter R. Thompson, "Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends for 2012," *Health & Fitness Journal,* American College of Sports Medicine, 2011.

[37] 2015 Participation Report," Physical Activity Council, 2015.

Figure 22: A Breakdown of Fitness Sports Participation Rates by Generation



Source: 2015 Participation Report, Physical Activity Council.

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 2015 "State of the Industry Report,"[38] the most common programs offered by parks and recreation survey respondents include: holiday events and other special events (79.6%); youth sports teams (68.9%); day camps and summer camps (64.2%); educational programs (63.8%); adult sports teams (63.4%); arts and crafts (61.6%); programs for active older adults (56.2%); fitness programs (55%); sports tournaments and races (55%); and sport training such as golf or tennis instruction (53.8%).

About one-third (35.7%) of parks and recreation respondents indicated that they are planning to *add* programs at their facilities over the next three years. The 10 most common types of additional programming planned for 2015 include:

1. Environmental education programs (up from No. 7)
2. Mind-body/balance programs such as yoga and tai chi (up from No. 6)
3. Fitness programs (down from No. 2)
4. Educational programs (up from No. 8)
5. Programs for active older adults (down from No. 1)
6. Teen programming (down from No. 3)
7. Holidays and special events (down from No. 5)
8. Day camps and summer camps (did not appear in 2014)
9. Adult sports teams (down from No. 4)
10. Water sports such as canoeing and kayaking (did not appear in 2014)

[38] Emily Tipping, "2015 State of the Industry Report, Trends in Parks and Recreation," *Recreation Management*, June 2015.

Older Adults and Senior Programming

The American Academy of Sports Medicine issues a yearly survey of the top 20 fitness trends.[39] It ranks senior fitness programs eighth among most popular fitness trends for 2015. Whether it is SilverSneakers, a freestyle low-impact cardio class, or water aerobics, more and more people are realizing the many benefits of staying active throughout life. According to the National Sporting Goods Association, popular senior programming trends include hiking, birding, and swimming.

Active Living and Healthy Lifestyles

Active Transportation

Bicycle-friendly cities have been emerging over the last 10 years. Cycling has become a popular mode of transportation as people consider the rising cost of fuel, desire for better health, and concern for the environment. Some people also use cycling as a mode of transportation just for the fun of it.

The Alliance for Biking and Walking published its "Bicycling and Walking in the United States: 2014 Benchmarking Report," [40] updating its 2012 Benchmarking Report. The report shows that increasing bicycling and walking are goals that are clearly in the public interest. Where bicycling and walking levels are higher, obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes levels are lower.

Design of a community's infrastructure is directly linked to physical activity – where environments are built with bicyclists and pedestrians in mind, more people bike and walk. Higher levels of bicycling and walking also coincide with increased bicycle and pedestrian safety and higher levels of physical activity. Increasing bicycling and walking make a big impact on improving public health and life expectancy. The following trends as well as health and economic indicators are pulled from the 2012 and 2014 Benchmarking Reports:

<u>Public health trends related to bicycling and walking include:</u>

- Quantified health benefits of active transportation can outweigh any risks associated with the activities by as much as 77 to 1, and add more years to our lives than are lost from inhaled air pollution and traffic injuries.
- Between 1966 and 2009, the number of children who bicycled or walked to school fell 75%, while the percentage of obese children rose 276%.
- Bicycling to work significantly reduces absenteeism due to illness. Regular bicyclists took 7.4 sick days per year, while non-bicyclists took 8.7 sick days per year.

<u>The economic benefits of bicycling and walking include</u>:

- Bicycling and walking projects create 8–12 jobs per $1 million spent, compared to just 7 jobs created per $1 million spent on highway projects.
- Cost benefit analyses show that up to $11.80 in benefits can be gained for every $1 invested in bicycling and walking.

[39] "Survey Predicts Top 20 Fitness Trends for 2015," American College of Sports Medicine, http://www.acsm.org/about-acsm/media-room/news-releases/2014/10/24/survey-predicts-top-20-fitness-trends-for-2015, accessed January 2015.
[40] *2014 Benchmarking Report*, Alliance for Biking and Walking, http://www.bikewalkalliance.org/download-the-2014-benchmarking-report, accessed January 23, 2015.

National bicycling trends:

- There has been a gradual trend of increasing bicycling and walking to work since 2005.
- Infrastructure to support biking communities is becoming more commonly funded in communities.
- Bike share systems, making bicycles available to the public for low-cost, short-term use, have been sweeping the nation since 2010. Twenty of the most populous U.S. cities have a functional bike share system.

In November 2013, the Institute for Transportation & Development Policy published a Standard for Transportation Oriented Design, with accessible performance objectives and metrics, to help municipalities, developers and local residents design land use and built environment "to support, facilitate and prioritize not only the use of public transport, but the most basic modes of transport, walking and cycling." The TOD Standard, along with its performance objectives and scoring metrics, can be found at www.itdp.org/documents/TOD_v2_FINAL.pdf.[41]

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).[42] 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.[43]

Economic and Health Benefits of Parks

Agencies across the nation recognize the connection between health and parks, including the National Recreation and Park Association, the National Park Service, the Trust for Public Lands the Centers for Disease Control and the American Planning association among others. The numerous economic and health benefits of parks, include 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.[44]

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[41] "TOD Standard, Version 2.0," Institute for Transportation & Development Policy, November 2013, http://www.itdp.org/documents/TOD_v2_FINAL.pdf.

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

[43] "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.

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

- 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.[45]
- Fifty percent of Americans regard outdoor activities as their main source of exercise.[46]

The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space, a report from the Trust for Public Land, makes the following observations about the health, economic, environmental, and social benefits of parks and open space:[47]

- 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.

Researchers have long touted the benefits of outdoor exercise. According to a study published in the *Journal of Environmental Science and Technology* by the University of Essex in the United Kingdom, "as little as five minutes of green exercise improves both mood and self-esteem."[48] A new trend started in China as they prepared to host the 2008 Summer Olympics. Their aim was to promote a society that promotes physical fitness and reaps the benefits of outdoor exercise by working out on outdoor fitness equipment.

The United States is now catching up on this trend, as parks and recreation departments have begun installing "outdoor gyms." Equipment that can be found in these outdoor gyms is comparable to what would be found in an indoor workout facility, such as leg and chest presses, elliptical trainers, pull down trainers, etc. With no additional equipment such as weights and resistance bands, the equipment is fairly easy to install. Outdoor fitness equipment provides a new opportunity for parks and recreation departments to increase the health of their communities, while offering them the opportunity to exercise outdoors. Such equipment can increase the usage of parks, trails, and other outdoor amenities while helping to fight the obesity epidemic and increase the community's interaction with nature.

Trends in Marketing by Parks and Recreation Providers

The concept of marketing is rapidly evolving with the changing of technology and social media outlets. Every successful business from start-ups to corporations uses some form of marketing to promote their products and services. For parks and recreation, it can be difficult to stay current with the trends when the "formula for success" has not yet been defined for non-profits and governments.

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[45] Nowak, David J., "Benefits of Community Trees," (Brooklyn Trees, USDA Forest Service General Technical Report, in review).
[46] *Outdoor Recreation Participation Report 2010*, Outdoor Foundation, 2010.
[47] 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.
[48] Cited in: Sally Russell, "Nature Break: Five Minutes of Green Nurture," Green Nurture Blog, http://blog.greennurture.com/tag/journal-of-environmental-science-and-technology, accessed November 14, 2012.

Municipalities can use marketing to increase awareness of an issue, promote an upcoming program, encourage community participation, or to gain advocacy for a public service. Active Network offers expertise in activity and participation management. Their mission is to make the world a more active place. In their blog, they offered the following marketing mix ideas which came out of a meeting with park and recreational professionals in the Chicago area.[49]

- Updated booths and community event presence—Bring a tablet or laptop to show programs you offer and provide event participants the opportunity to register on the spot.
- Facebook redirect app—This application redirects people automatically to the link you provide. Add it to your Facebook page.
- Instagram challenge—Think about how you can use mobile and social tools at your next event. It could be an Instagram contest during an event set up as a scavenger hunt with participants taking pictures of clues and posting them on Instagram.
- Social media coupons—Research indicates that the top reason people follow an organization on a social network is to receive discounts or coupons. Consider posting an event discount on your social networks redeemable by accessing on phone or printing out.

Mobile marketing is a growing trend. Social websites and apps are among the most used features on mobile phones. Popular social marketing electronic tools include Facebook, SocialWhirled, Twitter, YouTube, Tagged, and LinkedIn. Private messaging apps such as Snapchat and WhatsApp are being used more and more for live media coverage.[50]

Ninety-one percent (91%) of Americans own a cell phone and most use the devices for much more than phone calls. 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 chronologically across four major age cohorts that millennials tend to get information more frequently using mobile devices such as smartphones. For example, 97% of cell phone owners ages 18–29 send and receive text messages, compared to 94% of ages 30–49, 75% of ages 50–64, and 35% of those 65 and older.

Conservation, Nature, Environment

The top ten recommendations of the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Conservation Task Force were published in the November 2011 issue of *Parks and Recreation Magazine*.[51] These recommendations are a compilation of best practices used by trendsetting agencies; some of which follow:

1) Take a leadership role in the community to promote conservation.
2) Lead by example in employing best management conservation practices in parks – don't mow what you don't need to mow; stop wasteful energy consumption; and reduce pesticide use.
3) Engage volunteers in conservation and stewardship to create ownership and value.
4) Establish a strategic land acquisition strategy based on knowledge and awareness of significant natural and cultural resources (watershed protection, unique ecological characteristics, and sensitive natural areas deserving protection).

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[49] http://www.activenetwork.com/blog/17-marketing-campaigns-parks-and-recreation-marketing/, May 2013, accessed February 26, 2015.
[50] Jacqueline Woerner, "The 7 Social Media Trends Dominating 2015," Emarsys Blog, http://www.emarsys.com/en/resources/blog/the-7-social-media-trends-dominating-2015/, accessed February 26, 2015.
[51] "Conservation Leaders in our Communities," National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), *Parks & Recreation Magazine,* November 2011, p. 85-101, http://ezine.parksandrecreation.org/HTML5/NRPA-Parks-Recreation-Magazine-November-2011.

5) Engage youth in conservation. Get kids and teens outdoors and enjoying their parks.
6) Conserve energy in all ways. Park and recreation agencies should adopt energy conservation measures that make sense and save money.
7) Protect natural resources in parks and in the community. Parks and recreation agencies are entrusted with some of the most important assets of a community and the conservation and long-term protection of this public trust is and should be a core component of every parks and recreation agency´s mission.
8) Create sustainable landscapes that demonstrate principles of conservation.
9) Forge partnerships that foster the mission of conservation. Promote health, education, and other goals while working toward a common mission of conservation.
10) Utilize technology to promote conservation. This is not only in applications such as GIS [geographic information systems], but in utilizing social media to engage the public, especially youth.

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Appendix B: Using Town of Erie GRASP® Perspectives

Each GRASP perspective, custom built for the Town of Erie, reveals a different aspect of the parks and recreation system. The following discussions are intended to aide Town staff in understanding and using these analyses in future planning efforts.

Neighborhood Access to Recreation

This perspective will be most valuable in determining where system improvements will be needed in the future. The threshold map for *Neighborhood Access to Recreation* (Map B inset, Figure 7) is particularly useful, and shows the analysis based on a minimum standard, called a **threshold**. The standard equates to a neighborhood park with four components (such as a shelter, open turf, a loop walk, and playground) and access to an off-street trail. This analysis indicates that 99% of residents already meet the minimum standard for service travelling by car or bike. Service coverage is generally exceptional in developed areas, with areas that fall below the threshold being undeveloped land on the outskirts of town. Addressing these areas will require upgrades of existing components or additional components to meet this service threshold. As new subdivisions and residential housing stock emerge, this map can help decision makers understand to what extent new populations in these areas will require parks and recreation opportunities. Town staff will need to work with developers to ensure park lands are suitably located and distributed, and that they are developed with adequate infrastructure and amenities to serve new residents.

Walkable Access To Recreation

Again, the threshold map is the most valuable in assessing *Walkable Access to Recreation* perspective (Map D inset, Figure 10). Since 6% of Erie residents live in areas that fall below the minimum standard, there are opportunities to improve service. These below threshold areas, shown on the map in yellow, may be improved by adding new components or improving existing park facilities. Such **low-service areas** can be evaluated case by case to determine which nearby or adjacent existing parks or open space areas impact them. Strategies to improve service in these locations may then be developed. Priority should be given to neighborhoods with greater population density to maximize impact to the most residents. The *ESRI Population Density* (Map C inset, Figure 9) map is valuable resource to reference these areas.

Walkable Access to Priority Elements

The *Walkable Access to Priority Elements* perspective (Map E, Figure 12) indicates that 85% of Town of Erie residents have access to four key components a playground, shelter, natural area, and trail. Thus, 15% of residents lack access to one, two, three or all of these types of amenities. This map shows areas where the addition of one or more components may serve to improve service. Again, attention should be given to neighborhoods with greater population density to impact the most residents. This may involve additional staff investigation, including working with in house GIS to isolate these areas.

General Strategies to Improve GRASP® Level of Service

There are many ways to improve GRASP® Level of Service in the Town of Erie. This discussion outlines general strategies that may be used, informed by GRASP® perspectives and data, to address deficiencies and guide future planning of parks and recreation infrastructure. The GRASP® Inventory will be a valuable reference in applying these strategies.

Note: Inventory scoring and assessment for all sites can be found in the *Town of Erie Parks & Recreation Inventory: Final Inventory Atlas, June 2016*. This document has been approved by Town staff. However, many scores were carried over from the inventory of the 2010 *Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan.* These may need to be confirmed for accuracy before planning improvements.

Level of Service Improvements

GRASP® findings can provide guidance in considering how to improve access to recreation, particularly in gap areas. ***Gap areas***, those that either fall below the minimum standard threshold or provide no service, are opportunities. Although land acquisition and large-scale capital investment is sometimes needed, there are alternatives. Recreational level of service can be enhanced by improving existing sites, adding to, or upgrading existing parks. Building or strengthening partnerships with schools, HOAs, or other providers may also serve to fill in service gaps.

Assessment and Life Cycle Plan

A method or process for continued assessment of existing facilities is key to monitoring existing resources. The inventory assessment process (refer to Chapter 2 – *Parks and Facilities Inventory*) used for this plan involves scoring of all assets to account for condition and functionality. Those components with low-scores may be addressed one by one and will serve to improve level of service. Life cycle replacement should also be factored into the yearly assessment and replacement strategy. Erie should develop a process to maintain and update the assessments on an annual basis at a minimum.

Maintenance and Updates to GIS Database

As part of the final deliverables of this project the GIS data and assessment scoring have been incorporated into a dynamic database. While the inventory was complete based on existing Town of Erie and HOA parks and sites, there may be other alternative provider parks and facilities that should be identified. Updating and adding additional facilities to the database would help in future analysis and system updates. Additional data such as recreation programming and programming locations of other providers can also be added, if desired. This database allows for ongoing in house GIS analysis and can be used to prioritize future improvements.

Low Scoring Components and Modifiers

The simplest way to improve level of service is to address low scoring components and modifiers, site amenities that fall short of expectations. This may involve repair, refurbishment, or replacement of existing assets to improve overall value of a park. Modifiers impact GRASP® value of a park site to a lesser extent than individual components, are more subjective and intangible, and are often informed by the original design of park space. Modifiers are easily addressed by routine maintenance and periodic upgrades and tend to be less complicated than components, which are typically more costly can lose their appeal for a variety of reasons.

How To Address Low Scoring Components

Components whose assessment for functionality fell below expectations were scored with a “1.” Raising the score of a component, from “1” to “2” for example, also raises the Level of Service in your community. Strategies for addressing the repair, refurbishment, replacement, or re-purposing of low-functioning components should begin with the following steps:

1. Determine why the component is functioning below expectations:
   - Was it poorly conceived or unneeded in the first place?
   - 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?
   - Has the maintenance of the component simply been deferred or neglected to the point where it no longer functions as intended?

2. Based on these assessments, select a strategy for each low-functioning component on an individual basis:

   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. For example, an old playground like the one at Country Fields Park, could be updated.

   If the need for a specific type of component has changed such that the original one is no longer suitable, then it should be replaced with a new one that fits current needs. For example, if a picnic shelter is too small for the current level of service demanded, it may be replaced with a new, larger one.

   If a component is poorly located or was poorly designed, consideration should be given to relocating, redesigning, or redeveloping it. If there is still a need for this type of facility at this park, then consideration should be given to relocating it or redesigning it. Some HOA playgrounds at in Erie designed for only one age group, for example, might be better expanded to accommodate users of varying ages.

   If a component is no longer needed due to lack of use, then it should be adapted or removed. Once a very popular amenity, inline hockey rinks often fall into this category. If a rink has been allowed to deteriorate due to waning interest, it could be repurposed as a basketball or tennis court, multi-use play-pad, or perhaps a skate park. It could become something less common, like a trike-track course. Or it could become the surface for a large group picnic shelter. Another possibility might be to install outdoor fitness stations to create an “outdoor gym.” If no appropriate alternative use is identified it should be removed to avoid a blighted appearance, and the space should be integrated into the rest of the park with landscaping. An inline rink currently exists at Columbine Mine Park.

   A component may be scored low because it is not available to the public, such as a facility leased to a private group with limited access to the general public. This may be a perfectly acceptable situation as the asset has a lower value to the community due to limited access. The pools at Arapahoe Ridge Park or Lehigh Park may be an example.

Sometimes a component is outdated or dysfunctional, but has historic or sentimental value. An example might be a decrepit park shelter that poorly serves its original purpose but has been retained due to its historical significance to the community.

Adding New Components

The capacity analysis, a more traditional approach that supplements GRASP® analysis, can help decision makers plan park improvements based on current provision in a park system (refer to Chapter 2 – *Assessment and Analysis*). Based on 2016 capacities, the Town of Erie will need various components added to the system by 2021 to keep up with projected population growth. These include open turf areas, shelters, playgrounds, natural areas, athletic fields, and tennis courts.

While capacities are a valuable starting point, community input from surveys, focus groups, and neighborhood engagement should be gathered to reveal the types of components most desired by residents and users. These ***high demand components*** should be considered when adding new components to the Erie system. For example, if a growing demand for access to pickleball courts is not being met, additional courts may be needed to increase opportunities for pickleball users. These needs may be addressed by upgrading an existing park, developing a new park, or by establishing or strengthening partnerships with other providers. Capacities analysis will not address new and evolving trends in parks and recreation.

As trends grow and change it is worthwhile to stay aware of those that seem to be gaining momentum. As inline rinks and tennis courts fade away, skate parks and pickleball have emerged to take their place. Here are a few national and regional trends to keep in mind as Erie staff consider future park improvements:

- **Dog parks** continue to grow in popularity. This may be due to an aging demographic in America, with more "empty-nesters" transferring the attention they once gave to their children, who are now grown, to their pets. It is also an important form of socializing for people who may have once socialized with other parents in their child's soccer league, and now that the kids are grown they are enjoying the company of other dog owners at the dog park. And for singles, a dog park is a good place to meet people. In Erie, the dog park at Reliance Park added in 2016 is a well-designed asset that serves many residents. Additional dog off-leash areas may be considered in the future as this dog-friendly dynamic evolves.
- **Skateboarding** and other wheel sports continue to grow in popularity. Adding skate features to neighborhood parks and distributing skateable parks throughout the community provides greater access to this activity for younger people. The skate park at Erie Community Park is an excellent facility with a regional draw but may be too far for some local users. Beyond the addition of new skate features, the inline rink at Columbine Mine Park may provide an opportunity to repurpose an underused asset.
- A desire for locally-grown food and concerns about health, sustainability, and other issues is leading to the development of **community gardens** in parks and other public spaces. The gardens at Kenosha Farms Open Space and Vista Ridge Park serve those neighborhoods. However, additional community food gardens may be valuable in other parts of town as well, especially in the downtown area. The ability to walk to a neighborhood garden is an important consideration. The abandoned rail right-of-way along High Street, labelled Linear Park Open Space North, might be a suitable central location for a garden to serve old town residents.

- **Spray parks** are growing rapidly in popularity, even in cooler climates. These lower maintenance aquatic opportunities can transform a park space by attracting users and adding variety in hot summer months. Currently the only spray element in Erie is located in an HOA aquatics facility with limited public access. Erie Community Park might be a good place to consider an added spray feature based on its central location and community-wide draw.
- New types of playgrounds are emerging, including **discovery play, nature play,** and **adventure play**. These new play spaces integrate non-traditional elements such as educational features, natural materials, or exciting new designs. The may rely on free moving parts, opportunities to take risks, and other variations from the standard fixed "post and platform" playgrounds found in typical parks across America. In Erie, opportunities to add these types of play may exist as a special facility at Erie Community Park or as an added feature to a specific natural area or open space.
- A lower impact alternative to tennis, the sport of **pickleball** has gained in popularity, particularly among older Americans. Striping can be added to existing tennis courts, or outdated facilities such as inline hockey rinks may be retrofitted. In Erie, tennis courts are well distributed around town. Pickleball striping could be added to these if a growing interest in the sport is demonstrated. Additionally, town staff could work with Erie Middle and High Schools to inquire about pickleball striping on those courts. These efforts would both expand the use of existing tennis courts, that may be underused, and address a demand for new opportunities.
- **Community events** in parks are growing in popularity, from a neighborhood "movie in the park" to concerts or festivals in more regional parks. These events serve as opportunities to build a sense of community and create local identity. While Erie Community Park has hosted larger events in the past, it may be worth considering utilizing neighborhood parks for smaller scale events.
- Designated **natural areas** in parks are becoming increasingly common as agencies strive to make parks more sustainable and introduce people of all ages to the natural environment. These also incorporate an educational element into park design. Erie has many established natural areas distributed throughout town, and seems to be well ahead of this trend.

Once a new component has been selected a location is needed. One effective strategy to address GRASP® Level of Service deficiencies is use of ***booster components.*** These are new components added to existing recreation sites intended to "boost" the level of service in gap areas. The addition of new components at existing neighborhood parks in low-service areas serves to increase the level of service without acquiring additional land.

Building Partnerships

Sometimes building and relying on partnerships can be a preferable solution to building a new park. Alternative providers, particularly homeowners' associations and schools, often provide park and recreation opportunities that support public facilities or in some neighborhoods serve as the only resources available locally. These can vary drastically from Town parks in type and quality. The complicated arrangement of ownership and maintenance between the Town of Erie and the various subdivision HOAs presents challenges, but also opportunities. Strengthened partnerships with these private entities could allow for greater town oversight and control, informed by a broader understanding of the entire Erie park system.

Similarly, school partnerships can provide additional options for public recreation. School facilities may supplement parks and other public recreational resources, but their limited hours of availability often make neighbors less likely to use them. One way to address this issue is to partner with schools to promote use of school facilities by the community. On-site community programming can make school facilities more inviting. An entry gateway or signage to invite users to school grounds can make neighbors feel more welcome. A clear message about school hours and public access can be helpful to those planning a visit. Volunteer adult supervision can encourage use of school playgrounds or other facilities. Organized events or drop-in sessions at school sites are also helpful in creating awareness of school grounds as community assets.

These types of initiatives all require trust and strong relationships between an agency and local schools. Imagine town staff, recognizing the added value of a shelter near a playground, are considering adding shelters to those play areas lacking them. This would serve to improve GRASP® Level of Service as it provides opportunity for a small family picnic or snack while at the park. In Erie, this type of opportunity currently exists at Country Fields Pocket Park, Erie Elementary, and Black Rock Elementary Schools as these locations provide playgrounds without shelters. However, none of these are Town-maintained sites. Such improvements would require HOA or school approval and partnership and may require town funding or in-kind support. Staff may determine that these the benefit of these additions town residents in areas that currently lack such amenities is worthwhile, despite the added coordination. Partnerships like these can provide opportunities that otherwise may not exist.

GRASP® Glossary

Buffer: see catchment area

Active transportation: any non-motorized travel mode that utilizes human power

Barrier: any obstacle to walking or bicycling, such as a major road or waterway, that impedes movement and limits access to any resources on the other side

Barrier zone: a part of a study area bounded by barriers within which any point is safely accessible from any other point on foot, by bicycle, or utilizing other non-motorized travel

Catchment area: a map overlay that radiates outward in all directions from a component and represents an area assumed to have access to that component in a level of service assessment

Component: an amenity such as a playground, picnic shelter, basketball court, or athletic field that allows people to exercise, socialize, and maintain a healthy physical, mental, and social wellbeing and serves as a recreation destination

Gap analysis: an examination of places within a study area that do not meet specific criteria, intended to focus further attention areas in need of improvement

Gap area: any area that falls below the minimum standard GRASP® threshold score

Geo-Referenced Amenities Standards Process® (GRASP®): a proprietary, component-based methodology that takes quality and functionality of assets and amenities into account in a level of service assessment for a park and recreation system

GRASP® score: a score assigned to a specific component based on its quality and functionality as compared with other components in a recreation system

GRASP® value: a cumulative value that represents the total GRASP® level of service provided by all components assumed to be accessible at a given point within a service area

GRASP® Level of Service: the extent to which a recreation system provides residents of a community access to recreational assets and amenities as indicated by a specific GRASP® perspective

High demand component: a component highly desired by residents and users as indicated by community input from surveys, focus groups, and neighborhood engagement

Low scoring component: a component that does not meet expectations

Low scoring modifier: a modifier that does not meet expectations

Low-service area: an area that has some GRASP® level of service but falls below the minimum standard threshold for overall level of service

Modifier: a basic site amenity that supports users during a visit to a park or recreation site, to include elements such as restrooms, shade, parking, drinking fountains, seating, BBQ grills, security lighting, and bicycle racks among others

No-service area: an area with no GRASP® level of service

Perspective: a map or data quantification, such as a table or chart, produced using the GRASP® methodology that helps illustrate how well a given set of recreational components serves a community; employs specific assumptions for each different GRASP® perspective

Radius: see catchment area

Recreational connectivity: the manner and extent to which recreational resources are physically linked to allow for easy, safe, and enjoyable travel between them

Low scoring component: a component given a GRASP® score of "1" or "0" as it fails to meet expectations

Service area: a catchment area for a component ascribed the GRASP® score for that component, overlapped with other service areas to determine a GRASP® value for any given point within a service area

Threshold: a minimum level of service standard used in GRASP® analysis determined based on typical quality, functionality, and condition of recreation components in a study area

Trail: any off-street or on-street connection dedicated to pedestrian, bicycle, or other non-motorized use

Trail network: a part of a trail system separated from other trail networks by missing trail connections or by barriers, within which all trails are safely and functionally connected

Trail system: a collection of trails and associated infrastructure that serve pedestrians, bicyclists, and other active transportation users in a community

Appendix C: GRASP Perspectives

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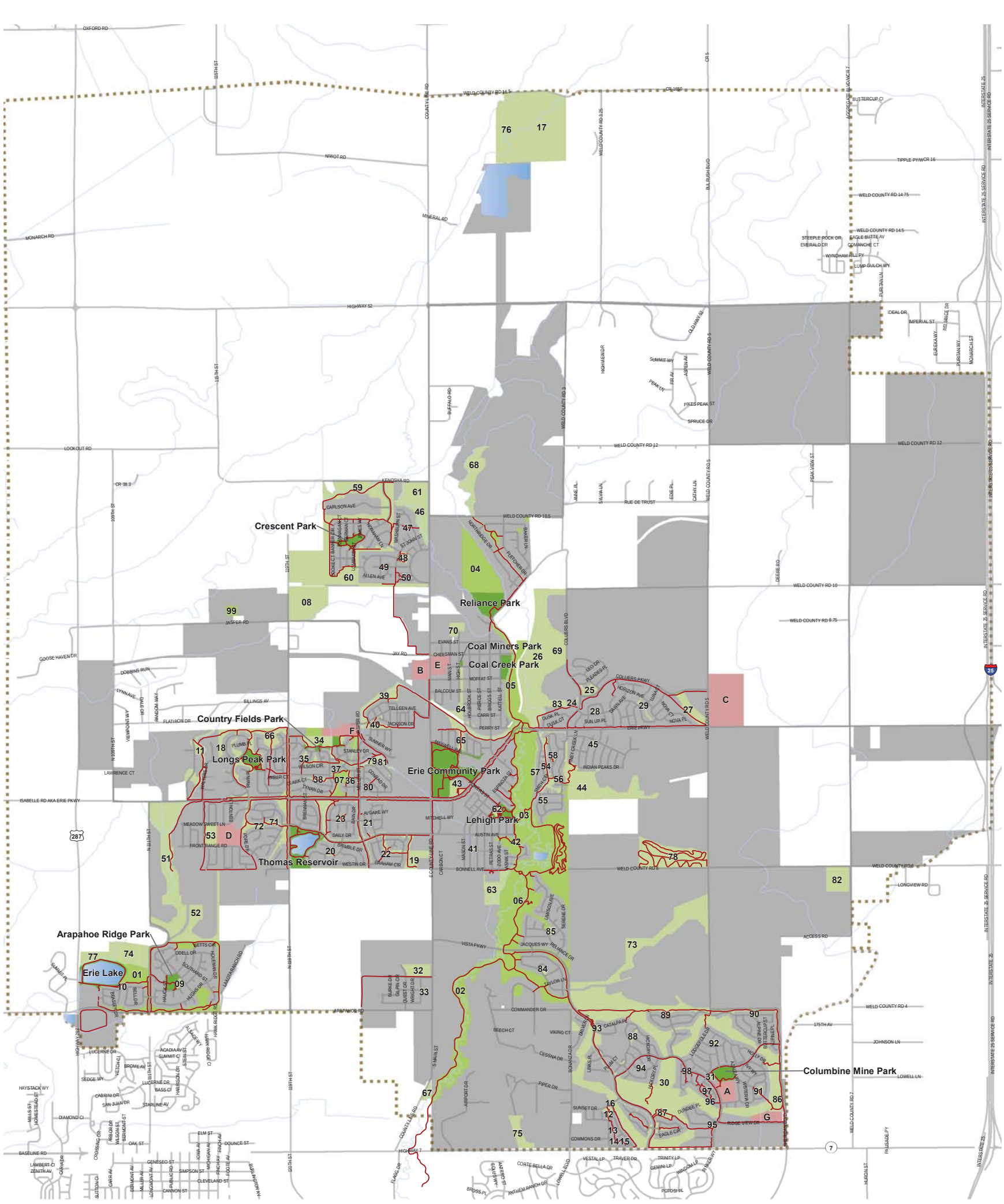
Town of Erie Parks & Recreation Department

Map A: Recreation System Map

Town of Erie

A

LABEL	LOCATION
1	Arapahoe Ridge OS
2	Coal Creek OS Airpark
3	Coal Creek OS Grandview-Erie Commons
4	Coal Creek OS Northridge OS
5	Coal Creek OS Old Town
6	Coal Creek OS Vista Pointe
7	Country Fields OS
8	Allan Farms
9	Arapahoe Ridge Pool
10	Arapahoe Ridge PP
11	Baxter
12	Blue Sky PA
13	Blue Sky PP A
14	Blue Sky PP B
15	Blue Sky PP C
16	Blue Sky PP D
17	Bryant Conservation Easement
18	Candlelight Ridge OS
19	Canyon Creek OS
20	Canyon Creek PP A
21	Canyon Creek PP B
22	Canyon Creek PP C
23	Canyon Creek PP D
24	Colliers Hill
25	Colliers Hill Clubhouse
26	Colliers Hill OS A
27	Colliers Hill OS B
28	Colliers Hill PP A
29	Colliers Hill PP B
30	Colorado National Golf Club
31	Columbine Mine Pool
32	Compass Park
33	Compass PP
34	Country Fields Park OS
35	Country Fields PP A
36	Country Meadows PP A
37	Country Meadows PP B
38	Country Meadows PP C
39	Creekside OS
40	Creekside PP B
41	Erie Commons PP A
42	Erie Commons PP B
43	Erie Community Center
44	Erie Highlands OS
45	Erie Highlands PP A
46	Erie Village OS
47	Erie Village PP A
48	Erie Village PP B
49	Erie Village PP C
50	Erie Village PP D
51	Flatiron Meadows OS A
52	Flatiron Meadows OS B
53	Flatiron Meadows Park
54	Grandview OS
55	Grandview PP A
56	Grandview PP B
57	Grandview PP C
58	Grandview PP D
59	Kenosha Estates Open Space
60	Kenosha Farms OS
61	King OS
62	Lehigh Pool
63	Leon A Wurl Service Center OS
64	Linear Park Open Space North
65	Linear Park OS South
66	Meadow Sweet Farm Open Space
67	Messersmith OS
68	Morgan Hill OS
69	Mt Pleasant Cemetery
70	Oamek UN
71	Orchard Glen OS
72	Orchard Glen PP
73	Redtail Ranch OS A
74	Schofield OS
75	Sierra Vista OS
76	Smoljan Conservation Easement
77	Strieby OS
78	Sunset Singletrack OS
79	Sunwest L
80	Sunwest PP A
81	Sunwest PP B
82	Town of Erie OS
83	Town of Erie UN
84	Vista Pointe PP A
85	Vista Pointe PP B
86	Vista Ridge OS A
87	Vista Ridge PA
88	Vista Ridge PP A
89	Vista Ridge PP B
90	Vista Ridge PP C
91	Vista Ridge PP D
92	Vista Ridge PP E
93	Vista Ridge PP F
94	Vista Ridge PP G
95	Vista Ridge PP I
96	Vista Ridge PP J
97	Vista Ridge PP K
98	Vista Ridge PP L
99	Wise Open Space OS
A	Black Rock Elementary School
B	Erie Elementary School
C	Erie High School
D	Erie K-8 BVSD
E	Erie Middle School
F	Red Hawk Elementary
G	Vista Ridge Academy



Town Park
Town Open Space
Other Park/Open Space
School

Multi-Use Trail
Town of Erie
Planning Boundary
Water Body

0 1 2 3
Miles

N
W E
S

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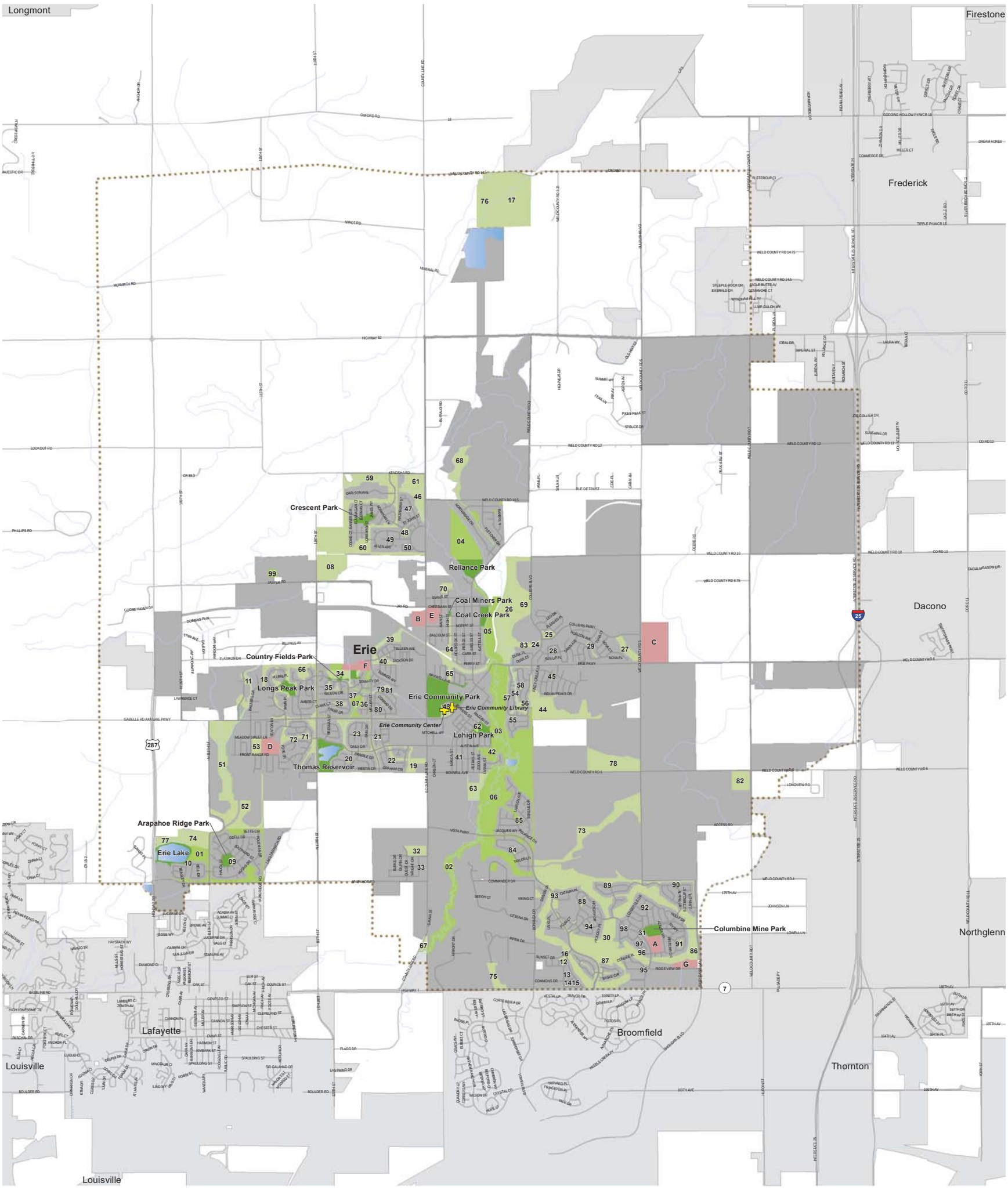
Town of Erie Parks & Recreation Department

Map A-1: Context Map

Town of Erie

A-1

LABEL	LOCATION
1	Arapahoe Ridge OS
2	Coal Creek OS Airpark
3	Coal Creek OS Grandview-Erie Commons
4	Coal Creek OS Northridge OS
5	Coal Creek OS Old Town
6	Coal Creek OS Vista Pointe
7	Country Fields OS
8	Allan Farms
9	Arapahoe Ridge Pool
10	Arapahoe Ridge PP
11	Baxter
12	Blue Sky PA
13	Blue Sky PP A
14	Blue Sky PP B
15	Blue Sky PP C
16	Blue Sky PP D
17	Bryant Conservation Easement
18	Candlelight Ridge OS
19	Canyon Creek OS
20	Canyon Creek PP A
21	Canyon Creek PP B
22	Canyon Creek PP C
23	Canyon Creek PP D
24	Colliers Hill
25	Colliers Hill Clubhouse
26	Colliers Hill OS A
27	Colliers Hill OS B
28	Colliers Hill PP A
29	Colliers Hill PP B
30	Colorado National Golf Club
31	Columbine Mine Pool
32	Compass Park
33	Compass PP
34	Country Fields Park OS
35	Country Fields PP A
36	Country Meadows PP A
37	Country Meadows PP B
38	Country Meadows PP C
39	Creekside OS
40	Creekside PP B
41	Erie Commons PP A
42	Erie Commons PP B
43	Erie Community Center
44	Erie Highlands OS
45	Erie Highlands PP A
46	Erie Village OS
47	Erie Village PP A
48	Erie Village PP B
49	Erie Village PP C
50	Erie Village PP D
51	Flatiron Meadows OS A
52	Flatiron Meadows OS B
53	Flatiron Meadows Park
54	Grandview OS
55	Grandview PP A
56	Grandview PP B
57	Grandview PP C
58	Grandview PP D
59	Kenosha Estates Open Space
60	Kenosha Farms OS
61	King OS
62	Lehigh Pool
63	Leon A Wurl Service Center OS
64	Linear Park Open Space North
65	Linear Park OS South
66	Meadow Sweet Farm Open Space
67	Messersmith OS
68	Morgan Hill OS
69	Mt Pleasant Cemetery
70	Oamek UN
71	Orchard Glen OS
72	Orchard Glen PP
73	Redtail Ranch OS A
74	Schofield OS
75	Sierra Vista OS
76	Smoljan Conservation Easment
77	Stneby OS
78	Sunset Singletrack OS
79	Sunwest L
80	Sunwest PP A
81	Sunwest PP B
82	Town of Erie OS
83	Town of Erie UN
84	Vista Pointe PP A
85	Vista Pointe PP B
86	Vista Ridge OS A
87	Vista Ridge PA
88	Vista Ridge PP A
89	Vista Ridge PP B
90	Vista Ridge PP C
91	Vista Ridge PP D
92	Vista Ridge PP E
93	Vista Ridge PP F
94	Vista Ridge PP G
95	Vista Ridge PP I
96	Vista Ridge PP J
97	Vista Ridge PP K
98	Vista Ridge PP L
99	Wise Open Space OS
A	Black Rock Elementary School
B	Erie Elementary School
C	Erie High School
D	Erie K-8 BVSD
E	Erie Middle School
F	Red Hawk Elementary
G	Vista Ridge Academy



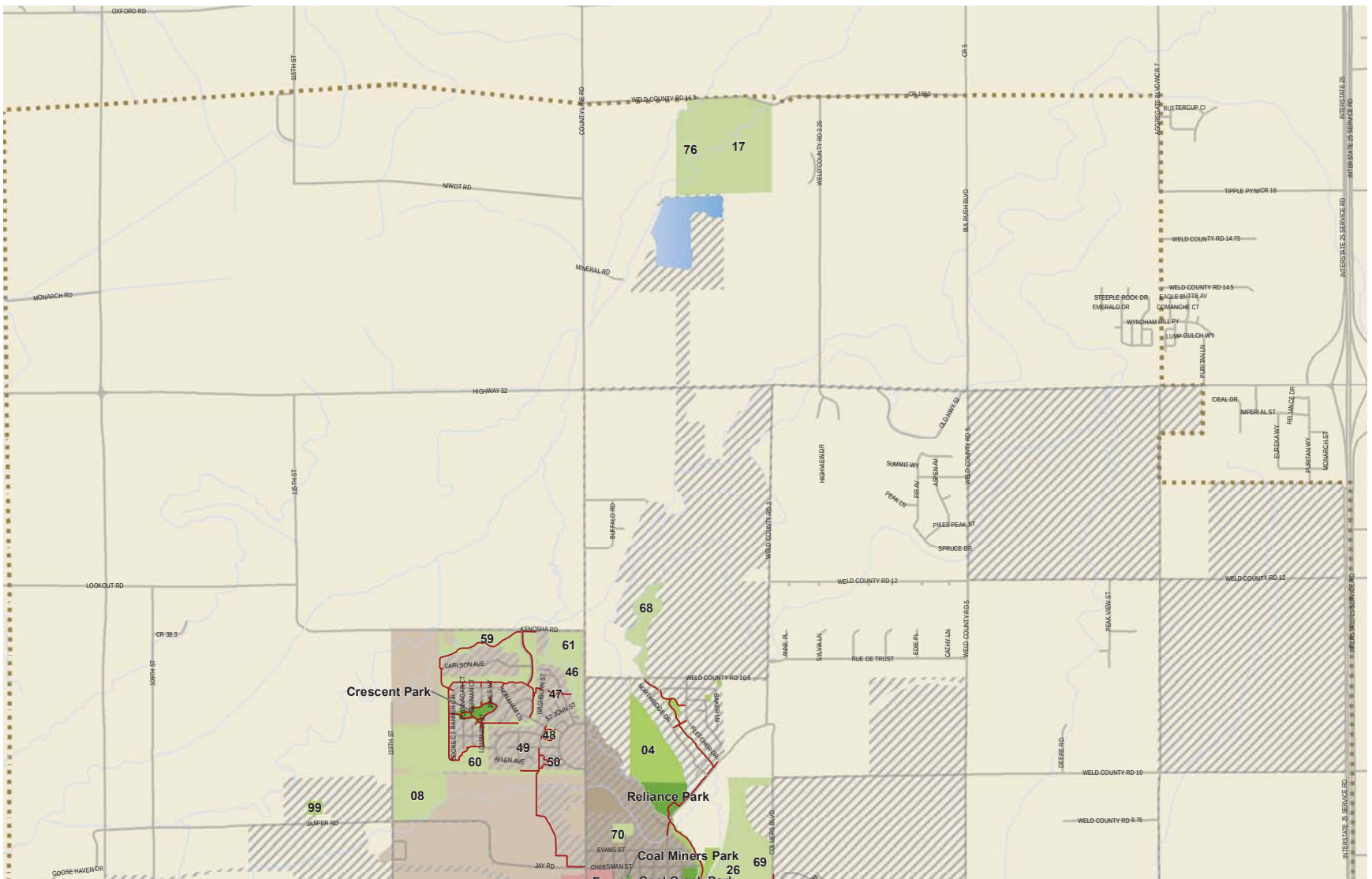
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Map B: Population Density (ESRI 2016)

LABEL	LOCATION
1	Arapahoe Ridge OS
2	Coal Creek OS Airpark
3	Coal Creek OS Grandview-Erie Commons
4	Coal Creek OS Northridge OS
5	Coal Creek OS Old Town
6	Coal Creek OS Vista Pointe
7	Country Fields OS
8	Allan Farms
9	Arapahoe Ridge Pool
10	Arapahoe Ridge PP
11	Baxter
12	Blue Sky PA
13	Blue Sky PP A
14	Blue Sky PP B
15	Blue Sky PP C
16	Blue Sky PP D
17	Bryant Conservation Easement
18	Candlelight Ridge OS
19	Canyon Creek OS
20	Canyon Creek PP A
21	Canyon Creek PP B
22	Canyon Creek PP C
23	Canyon Creek PP D
24	Colliers Hill
25	Colliers Hill Clubhouse
26	Colliers Hill OS A
27	Colliers Hill OS B
28	Colliers Hill PP A
29	Colliers Hill PP B
30	Colorado National Golf Club
31	Columbine Mine Pool
32	Compass Park
33	Compass PP
34	Country Fields Park OS
35	Country Fields PP A
36	Country Meadows PP A
37	Country Meadows PP B
38	Country Meadows PP C
39	Creekside OS
40	Creekside PP B
41	Erie Commons PP A
42	Erie Commons PP B
43	Erie Community Center
44	Erie Highlands OS
45	Erie Highlands PP A
46	Erie Village OS
47	Erie Village PP A
48	Erie Village PP B
49	Erie Village PP C
50	Erie Village PP D
51	Flatiron Meadows OS A
52	Flatiron Meadows OS B
53	Flatiron Meadows Park
54	Grandview OS
55	Grandview PP A
56	Grandview PP B
57	Grandview PP C
58	Grandview PP D
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63	Leon A Wurl Service Center OS
64	Linear Park Open Space North
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66	Meadow Sweet Farm Open Space
67	Messersmith OS
68	Morgan Hill OS
69	Mt Pleasant Cemetery
70	Oamek UN
71	Orchard Glen OS
72	Orchard Glen PP
73	Redtail Ranch OS A
74	Schofield OS
75	Sierra Vista OS
76	Smoljan Conservation Easement
77	Stneby OS
78	Sunset Singletrack OS
79	Sunwest L
80	Sunwest PP A
81	Sunwest PP B
82	Town of Erie OS
83	Town of Erie UN
84	Vista Pointe PP A
85	Vista Pointe PP B
86	Vista Ridge OS A
87	Vista Ridge PA
88	Vista Ridge PP A
89	Vista Ridge PP B
90	Vista Ridge PP C
91	Vista Ridge PP D
92	Vista Ridge PP E
93	Vista Ridge PP F
94	Vista Ridge PP G
95	Vista Ridge PP I
96	Vista Ridge PP J
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98	Vista Ridge PP L
99	Wise Open Space OS
A	Black Rock Elementary School
B	Erie Elementary School
C	Erie High School
D	Erie K-8 BVSD
E	Erie Middle School
F	Red Hawk Elementary
G	Vista Ridge Academy



< 1000 People/Sq Mile
1000-1999 People/Sq Mile
2000-2999 People/Sq Mile
3000-3999 People/Sq Mile
4000-4999 People/Sq Mile
> 5000 People/Sq Mile

Town Park
Town Open Space
Other Park/Open Space
School

Multi-Use Trail
Town of Erie
Planning Boundary
Water Body

0 1 2
Miles

N
W E
S

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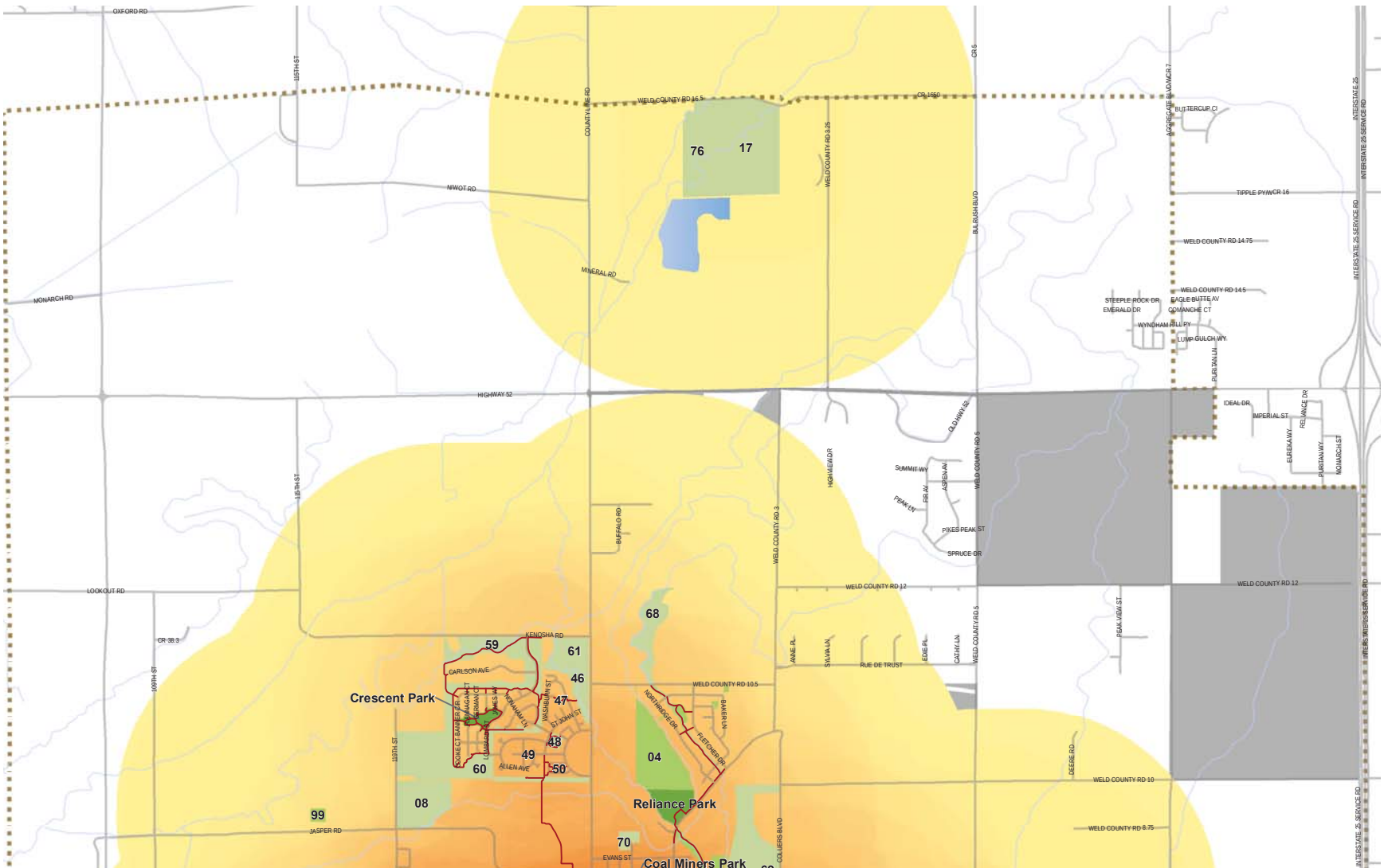
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Town of Erie Parks & Recreation Department

Map C: Neighborhood Access to Outdoor Recreation

Town of Erie

LABEL	LOCATION
1	Arapahoe Ridge OS
2	Coal Creek OS Airpark
3	Coal Creek OS Grandview-Erie Commons
4	Coal Creek OS Northridge OS
5	Coal Creek OS Old Town
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15	Blue Sky PP C
16	Blue Sky PP D
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28	Colliers Hill PP A
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44	Erie Highlands OS
45	Erie Highlands PP A
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47	Erie Village PP A
48	Erie Village PP B
49	Erie Village PP C
50	Erie Village PP D
51	Flatiron Meadows OS A
52	Flatiron Meadows OS B
53	Flatiron Meadows Park
54	Grandview OS
55	Grandview PP A
56	Grandview PP B
57	Grandview PP C
58	Grandview PP D
59	Kenosha Estates Open Space
60	Kenosha Farms OS
61	King OS
62	Lehigh Pool
63	Leon A Wurl Service Center OS
64	Linear Park Open Space North
65	Linear Park OS South
66	Meadow Sweet Farm Open Space
67	Messersmith OS
68	Morgan Hill OS
69	Mt Pleasant Cemetery
70	Oamek UN
71	Orchard Glen OS
72	Orchard Glen PP
73	Redtail Ranch OS A
74	Schofield OS
75	Sierra Vista OS
76	Smoljan Conservation Easment
77	Stnieby OS
78	Sunset Singletrack OS
79	Sunwest L
80	Sunwest PP A
81	Sunwest PP B
82	Town of Erie OS
83	Town of Erie UN
84	Vista Pointe PP A
85	Vista Pointe PP B
86	Vista Ridge OS A
87	Vista Ridge PA
88	Vista Ridge PP A
89	Vista Ridge PP B
90	Vista Ridge PP C
91	Vista Ridge PP D
92	Vista Ridge PP E
93	Vista Ridge PP F
94	Vista Ridge PP G
95	Vista Ridge PP I
96	Vista Ridge PP J
97	Vista Ridge PP K
98	Vista Ridge PP L
99	Wise Open Space OS
A	Black Rock Elementary School
B	Erie Elementary School
C	Erie High School
D	Erie K-8 BVSD
E	Erie Middle School
F	Red Hawk Elementary
G	Vista Ridge Academy



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TOWN OF ERIE 1874

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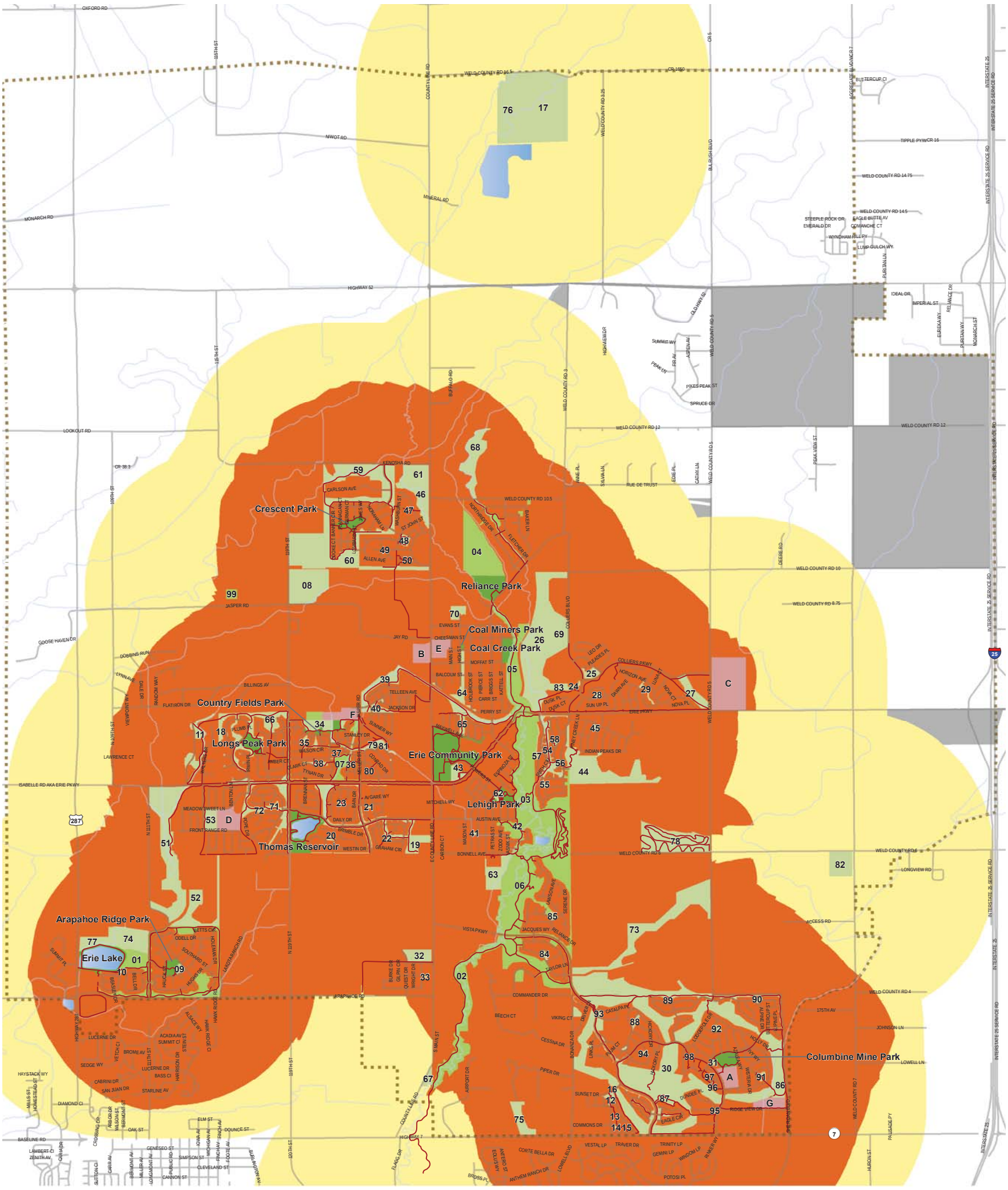
Town of Erie Parks & Recreation Department

Map C-1: Neighborhood Access to Outdoor Recreation

Town of Erie

C-1

LABEL	LOCATION
1	Arapahoe Ridge OS
2	Coal Creek OS Airpark
3	Coal Creek OS Grandview-Erie Commons
4	Coal Creek OS Northridge OS
5	Coal Creek OS Old Town
6	Coal Creek OS Vista Pointe
7	Country Fields OS
8	Allan Farms
9	Arapahoe Ridge Pool
10	Arapahoe Ridge PP
11	Baxter
12	Blue Sky PA
13	Blue Sky PP A
14	Blue Sky PP B
15	Blue Sky PP C
16	Blue Sky PP D
17	Bryant Conservation Easement
18	Candlelight Ridge OS
19	Canyon Creek OS
20	Canyon Creek PP A
21	Canyon Creek PP B
22	Canyon Creek PP C
23	Canyon Creek PP D
24	Colliers Hill
25	Colliers Hill Clubhouse
26	Colliers Hill OS A
27	Colliers Hill OS B
28	Colliers Hill PP A
29	Colliers Hill PP B
30	Colorado National Golf Club
31	Columbine Mine Pool
32	Compass Park
33	Compass PP
34	Country Fields Park OS
35	Country Fields PP A
36	Country Meadows PP A
37	Country Meadows PP B
38	Country Meadows PP C
39	Creekside OS
40	Creekside PP B
41	Erie Commons PP A
42	Erie Commons PP B
43	Erie Community Center
44	Erie Highlands OS
45	Erie Highlands PP A
46	Erie Village OS
47	Erie Village PP A
48	Erie Village PP B
49	Erie Village PP C
50	Erie Village PP D
51	Flatiron Meadows OS A
52	Flatiron Meadows OS B
53	Flatiron Meadows Park
54	Grandview OS
55	Grandview PP A
56	Grandview PP B
57	Grandview PP C
58	Grandview PP D
59	Kenosha Estates Open Space
60	Kenosha Farms OS
61	King OS
62	Lehigh Pool
63	Leon A Wurl Service Center OS
64	Linear Park Open Space North
65	Linear Park OS South
66	Meadow Sweet Farm Open Space
67	Messersmith OS
68	Morgan Hill OS
69	Mt Pleasant Cemetery
70	Oamek UN
71	Orchard Glen OS
72	Orchard Glen PP
73	Redtail Ranch OS A
74	Schofield OS
75	Sierra Vista OS
76	Smoljan Conservation Easment
77	Stnieby OS
78	Sunset Singletrack OS
79	Sunwest L
80	Sunwest PP A
81	Sunwest PP B
82	Town of Erie OS
83	Town of Erie UN
84	Vista Pointe PP A
85	Vista Pointe PP B
86	Vista Ridge OS A
87	Vista Ridge PA
88	Vista Ridge PP A
89	Vista Ridge PP B
90	Vista Ridge PP C
91	Vista Ridge PP D
92	Vista Ridge PP E
93	Vista Ridge PP F
94	Vista Ridge PP G
95	Vista Ridge PP I
96	Vista Ridge PP J
97	Vista Ridge PP K
98	Vista Ridge PP L
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A	Black Rock Elementary School
B	Erie Elementary School
C	Erie High School
D	Erie K-8 BVSD
E	Erie Middle School
F	Red Hawk Elementary
G	Vista Ridge Academy



At or Above Threshold
Below Threshold
No Service (One Mile)

Town Park
Town Open Space
Other Park/Open Space
School

Multi-Use Trail
Town of Erie
Planning Boundary
Water Body

0 1 2
Miles

N W E S

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TOWN OF ERIE 1874

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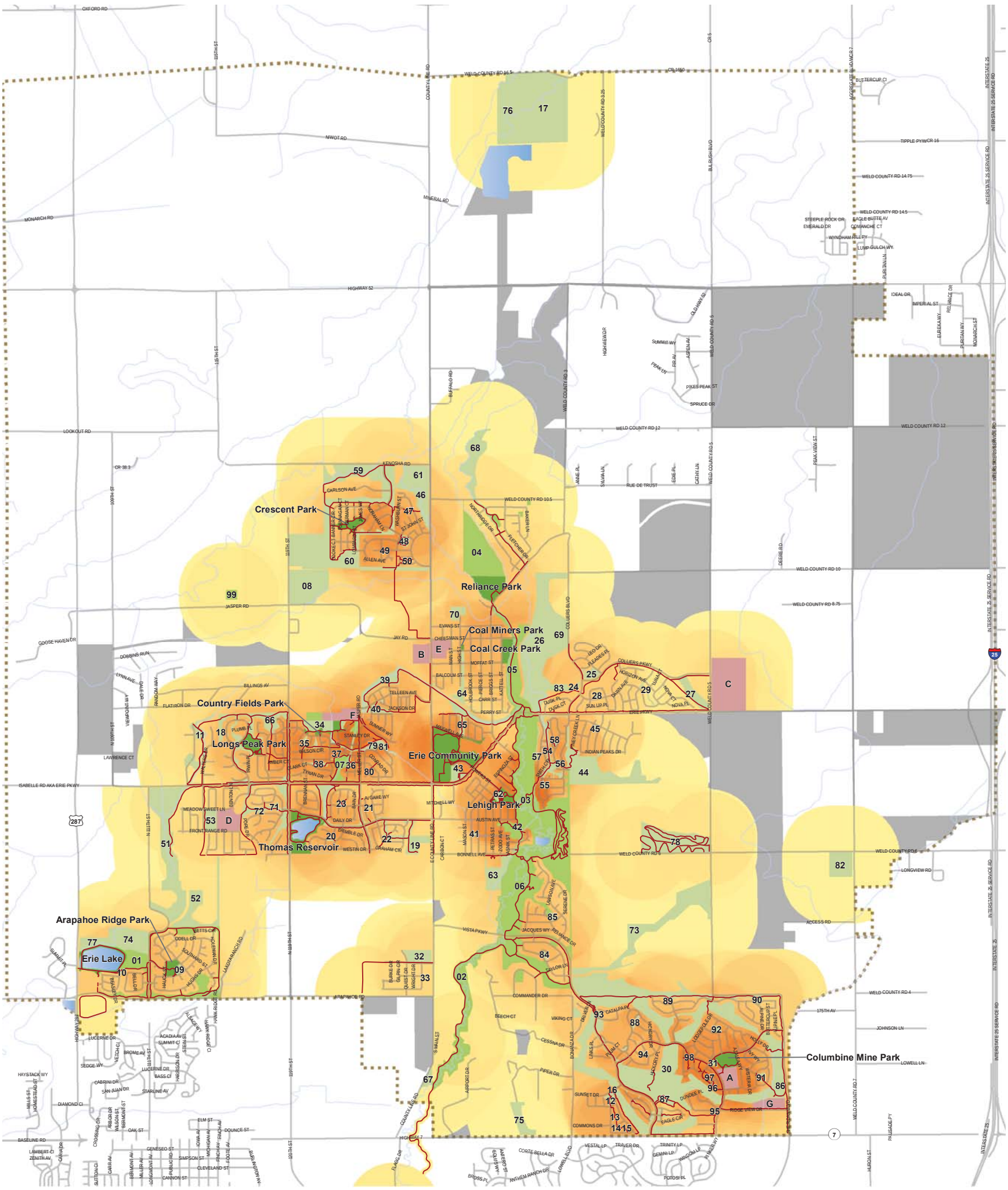
Town of Erie Parks & Recreation Department

Map D: Walkable Access to Outdoor Recreation

Town of Erie

D

LABEL	LOCATION
1	Arapahoe Ridge OS
2	Coal Creek OS Airpark
3	Coal Creek OS Grandview-Erie Commons
4	Coal Creek OS Northridge OS
5	Coal Creek OS Old Town
6	Coal Creek OS Vista Pointe
7	Country Fields OS
8	Allan Farms
9	Arapahoe Ridge Pool
10	Arapahoe Ridge PP
11	Baxter
12	Blue Sky PA
13	Blue Sky PP A
14	Blue Sky PP B
15	Blue Sky PP C
16	Blue Sky PP D
17	Bryant Conservation Easement
18	Candlelight Ridge OS
19	Canyon Creek OS
20	Canyon Creek PP A
21	Canyon Creek PP B
22	Canyon Creek PP C
23	Canyon Creek PP D
24	Colliers Hill
25	Colliers Hill Clubhouse
26	Colliers Hill OS A
27	Colliers Hill OS B
28	Colliers Hill PP A
29	Colliers Hill PP B
30	Colorado National Golf Club
31	Columbine Mine Pool
32	Compass Park
33	Compass PP
34	Country Fields Park OS
35	Country Fields PP A
36	Country Meadows PP A
37	Country Meadows PP B
38	Country Meadows PP C
39	Creekside OS
40	Creekside PP B
41	Erie Commons PP A
42	Erie Commons PP B
43	Erie Community Center
44	Erie Highlands OS
45	Erie Highlands PP A
46	Erie Village OS
47	Erie Village PP A
48	Erie Village PP B
49	Erie Village PP C
50	Erie Village PP D
51	Flatiron Meadows OS A
52	Flatiron Meadows OS B
53	Flatiron Meadows Park
54	Grandview OS
55	Grandview PP A
56	Grandview PP B
57	Grandview PP C
58	Grandview PP D
59	Kenosha Estates Open Space
60	Kenosha Farms OS
61	King OS
62	Lehigh Pool
63	Leon A Wurl Service Center OS
64	Linear Park Open Space North
65	Linear Park OS South
66	Meadow Sweet Farm Open Space
67	Messersmith OS
68	Morgan Hill OS
69	Mt Pleasant Cemetery
70	Oamek UN
71	Orchard Glen OS
72	Orchard Glen PP
73	Redtail Ranch OS A
74	Schofield OS
75	Sierra Vista OS
76	Smoljan Conservation Easement
77	Stneby OS
78	Sunset Singletrack OS
79	Sunwest L
80	Sunwest PP A
81	Sunwest PP B
82	Town of Erie OS
83	Town of Erie UN
84	Vista Pointe PP A
85	Vista Pointe PP B
86	Vista Ridge OS A
87	Vista Ridge PA
88	Vista Ridge PP A
89	Vista Ridge PP B
90	Vista Ridge PP C
91	Vista Ridge PP D
92	Vista Ridge PP E
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94	Vista Ridge PP G
95	Vista Ridge PP I
96	Vista Ridge PP J
97	Vista Ridge PP K
98	Vista Ridge PP L
99	Wise Open Space OS
A	Black Rock Elementary School
B	Erie Elementary School
C	Erie High School
D	Erie K-8 BVSD
E	Erie Middle School
F	Red Hawk Elementary
G	Vista Ridge Academy



High Service Area
-
Low Service Area
No Service (1/3 Mile)

Town Park
Town Open Space
Other Park/Open Space
School

Multi-Use Trail
Town of Erie
Planning Boundary
Water Body

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TOWN OF ERIE 1874

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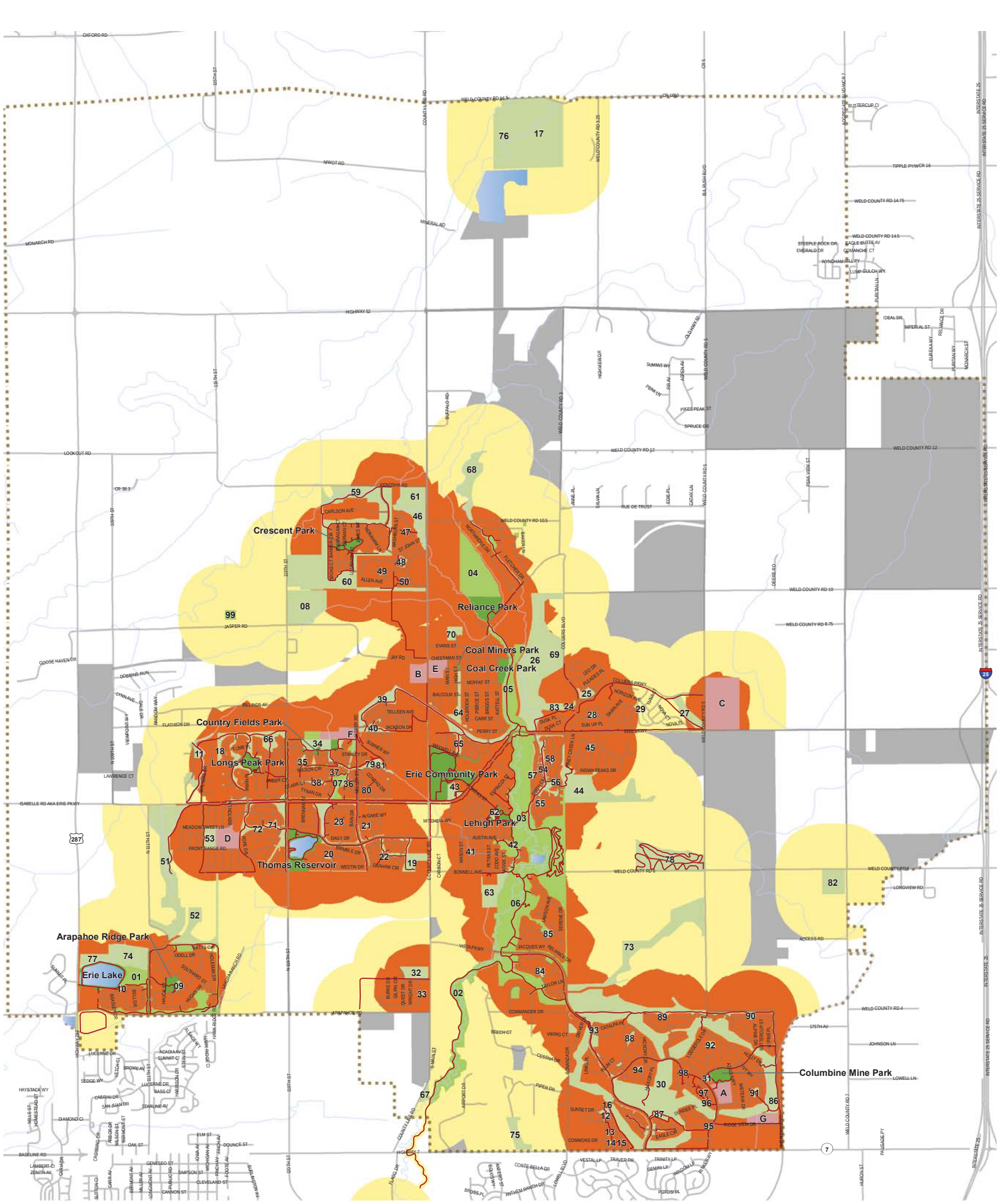
Town of Erie Parks & Recreation Department

Map D-1: Walkable Access to Outdoor Recreation

Town of Erie

D-1

LABEL	LOCATION
1	Arapahoe Ridge OS
2	Coal Creek OS Airpark
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8	Allan Farms
9	Arapahoe Ridge Pool
10	Arapahoe Ridge PP
11	Baxter
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14	Blue Sky PP B
15	Blue Sky PP C
16	Blue Sky PP D
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18	Candlelight Ridge OS
19	Canyon Creek OS
20	Canyon Creek PP A
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27	Colliers Hill OS B
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49	Erie Village PP C
50	Erie Village PP D
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53	Flatiron Meadows Park
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55	Grandview PP A
56	Grandview PP B
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58	Grandview PP D
59	Kenosha Estates Open Space
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63	Leon A Wurl Service Center OS
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65	Linear Park OS South
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67	Messersmith OS
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69	Mt Pleasant Cemetery
70	Oamek UN
71	Orchard Glen OS
72	Orchard Glen PP
73	Redtail Ranch OS A
74	Schofield OS
75	Sierra Vista OS
76	Smoljan Conservation Easement
77	Stneby OS
78	Sunset Singletrack OS
79	Sunwest L
80	Sunwest PP A
81	Sunwest PP B
82	Town of Erie OS
83	Town of Erie UN
84	Vista Pointe PP A
85	Vista Pointe PP B
86	Vista Ridge OS A
87	Vista Ridge PA
88	Vista Ridge PP A
89	Vista Ridge PP B
90	Vista Ridge PP C
91	Vista Ridge PP D
92	Vista Ridge PP E
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D	Erie K-8 BVSD
E	Erie Middle School
F	Red Hawk Elementary
G	Vista Ridge Academy



At or Above Threshold
Below Threshold
No Service (1/3 Mile)

Town Park
Town Open Space
Other Park/Open Space
School

Multi-Use Trail
Town of Erie
Planning Boundary
Water Body

0 1 2
Miles

N
W E
S

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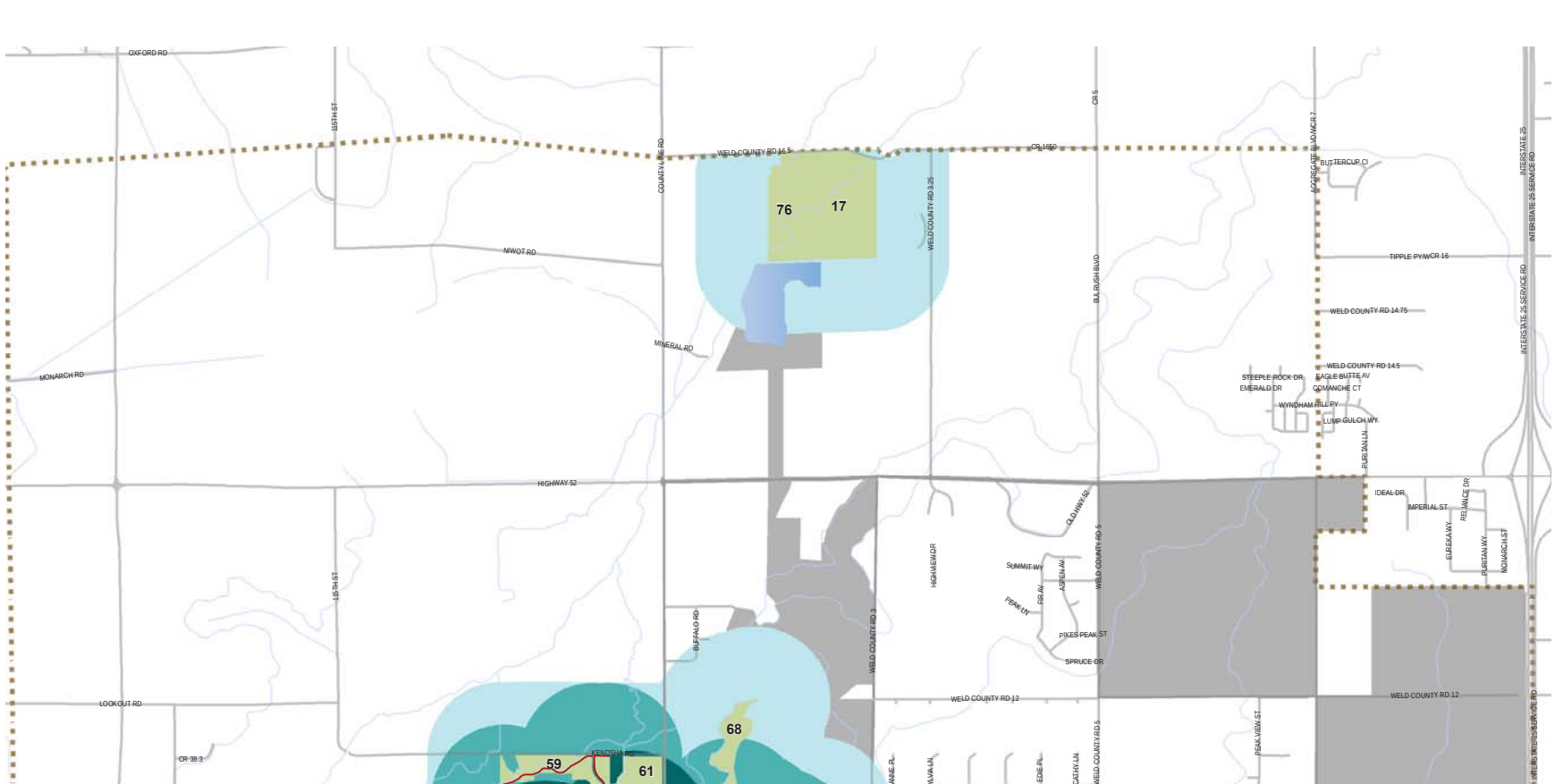
GRASP® DESIGN CONCEPTS GREENPLAY

Map E: Walkable Access to Common Elements (Play, Shelter, Nature and Trail)

Town of Erie

E

LABEL	LOCATION
1	Arapahoe Ridge OS
2	Coal Creek OS Airpark
3	Coal Creek OS Grandview-Erie Commons
4	Coal Creek OS Northridge OS
5	Coal Creek OS Old Town
6	Coal Creek OS Vista Pointe
7	Country Fields OS
8	Allan Farms
9	Arapahoe Ridge Pool
10	Arapahoe Ridge PP
11	Baxter
12	Blue Sky PA
13	Blue Sky PP A
14	Blue Sky PP B
15	Blue Sky PP C
16	Blue Sky PP D
17	Bryant Conservation Easement
18	Candlelight Ridge OS
19	Canyon Creek OS
20	Canyon Creek PP A
21	Canyon Creek PP B
22	Canyon Creek PP C
23	Canyon Creek PP D
24	Colliers Hill
25	Colliers Hill Clubhouse
26	Colliers Hill OS A
27	Colliers Hill OS B
28	Colliers Hill PP A
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30	Colorado National Golf Club
31	Columbine Mine Pool
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45	Erie Highlands PP A
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47	Erie Village PP A
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49	Erie Village PP C
50	Erie Village PP D
51	Flatiron Meadows OS A
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53	Flatiron Meadows Park
54	Grandview OS
55	Grandview PP A
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61	King OS
62	Lehigh Pool
63	Leon A Wurl Service Center OS
64	Linear Park Open Space North
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E	Erie Middle School
F	Red Hawk Elementary
G	Vista Ridge Academy



Access to Four Elements
Access to Three Elements
Access to Two Elements
Access to One Element

Town Park
Town Open Space
Other Park/Open Space
School

Multi-Use Trail
Town of Erie
Planning Boundary
Water Body

0 1 2
Miles

N
W E
S

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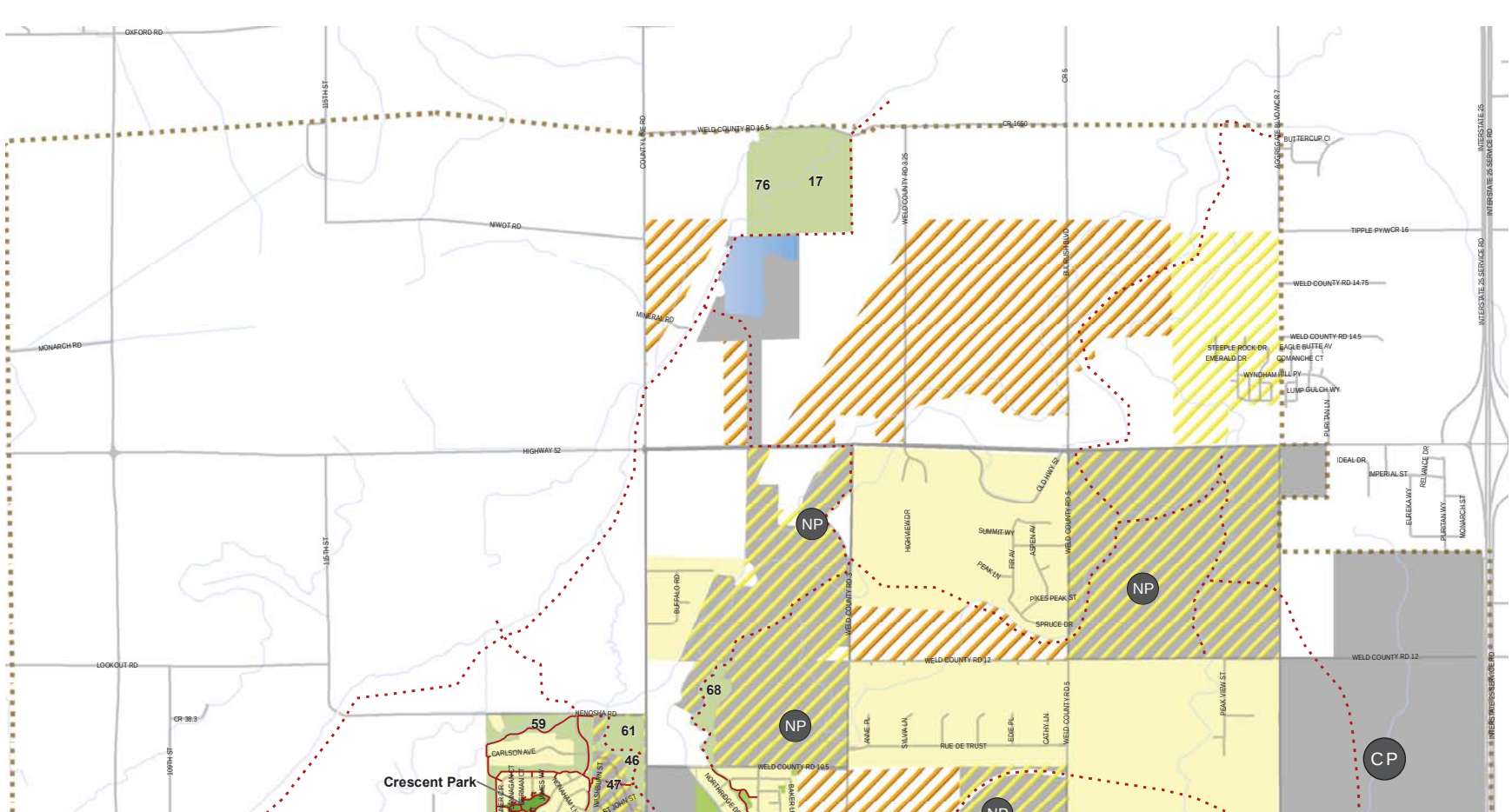
Town of Erie Parks & Recreation Department

Map F: Future Parks and Facilities (2016)

Town of Erie

F

LABEL	LOCATION
1	Arapahoe Ridge OS
2	Coal Creek OS Airpark
3	Coal Creek OS Grandview-Erie Commons
4	Coal Creek OS Northridge OS
5	Coal Creek OS Old Town
6	Coal Creek OS Vista Pointe
7	Country Fields OS
8	Allan Farms
9	Arapahoe Ridge Pool
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65	Linear Park OS South
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68	Morgan Hill OS
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73	Redtail Ranch OS A
74	Schofield OS
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76	Smoljan Conservation Easement
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78	Sunset Singletrack OS
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C	Erie High School
D	Erie K-8 BVSD
E	Erie Middle School
F	Red Hawk Elementary
G	Vista Ridge Academy



- Planned Park
- Future Neighborhood Park
- Future Community Park
- Existing Residential
- Planned Future Residential
- Comp Plan Designated Residential
- Proposed Trail
- Existing Trail

- Town Park
- Town Open Space
- Other Park/Open Space
- School
- Town of Erie
- Planning Boundary
- Water Body

0 1 2

Miles

N W E S

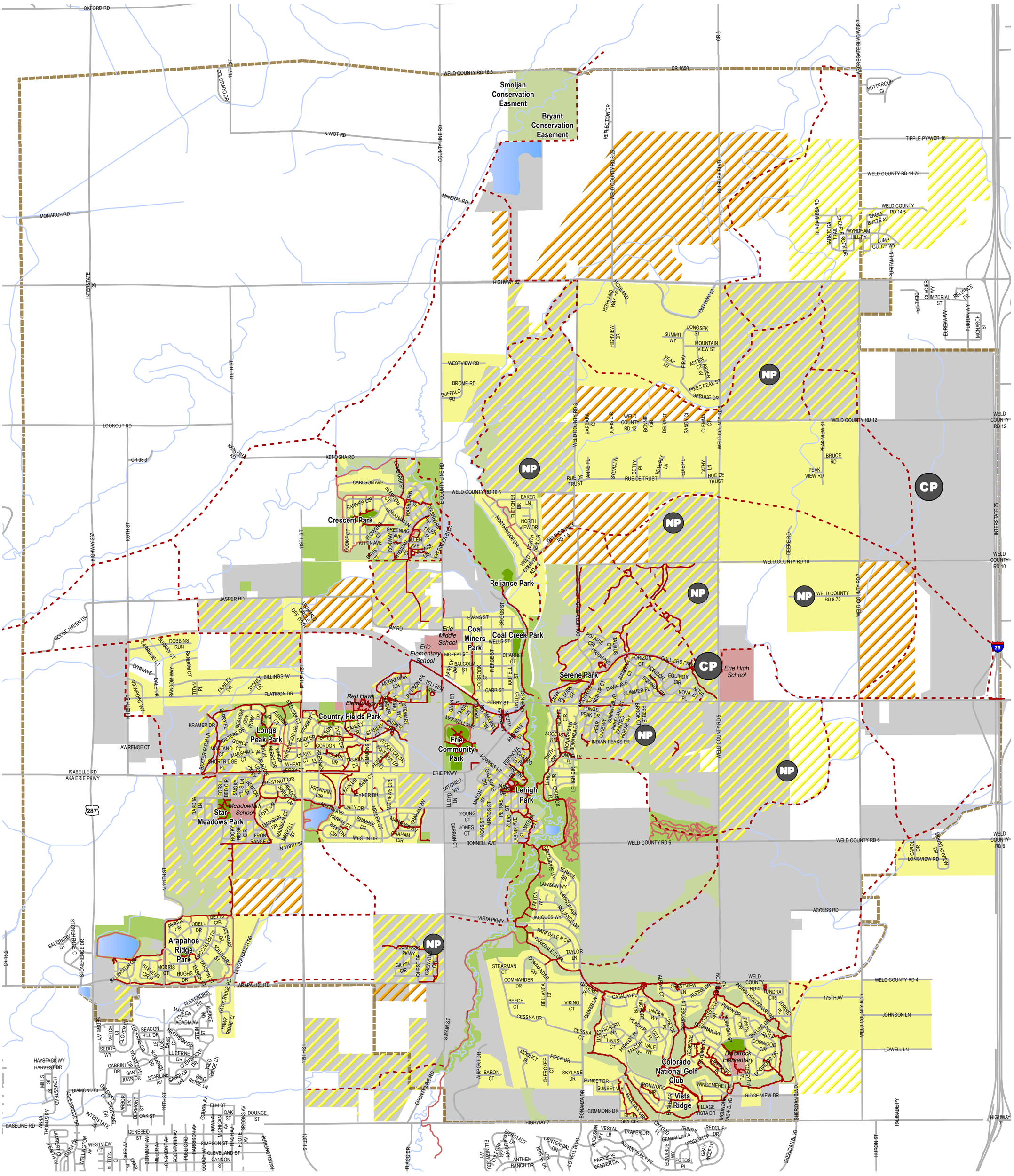
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TOWN OF ERIE 1874

GRASP® DESIGN CONCEPTS GREENPLAY

Town of Erie Parks & Recreation Department

Future Parks and Trails (2019)



- Proposed Trail
- Existing Hard Surface Trail
- Existing Soft Surface Trail
- Future Neighborhood Park
- Future Community Park
- Existing Residential
- Planned Future Residential
- Comp Plan Designated Residential
- Town Park
- Town Open Space
- Other Park/Open Space
- School
- Town of Erie
- Planning Boundary
- Water Body

0 1 2

Miles

N W E S

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TOWN OF ERIE 1874

DESIGN CONCEPTS Community + Landscape Architects