



**Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails Master Plan**  
**City of Salida, Colorado**  
**February 2020**



## A MESSAGE from the DIRECTOR

I'm excited to present this **Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Master Plan** to our community of locals who call Salida home as well as those who appreciate all that Salida has to offer and choose to spend their leisure time in our amazing city. Among the things that have made Salida a destination of choice for anyone who lives, works and plays here include our community's character and our parklands and recreational opportunities. When you look up at Tenderfoot Mountain and the "S", it is easy to understand how special it is to be in Salida. And this plan represents all that our parks, recreation, open space and trails system is and can be in the future.

Our community is one of many across the country that are evolving – honoring history and the way things have been done while also embracing different ways of thinking and doing can offer opportunities the likes of which we have not yet seen. Closing the gaps between the past and future requires listening, learning and leading and this master plan represents a whole lot of listening.

Listening to what the community believes is important as it relates to our parks, recreation, open space and trails has challenged us to learn and now presents us with the honor of leading efforts and initiatives to influence the health and well-being of Salida. Our team realize that we need to be adaptive and compassionate in order to best serve the community and I believe that through open and honest communication we can create a Department of Parks and Recreation that we all desire and one of which we are all proud.

At the heart of this plan is the critical importance of the legacy of parks, recreation, open space and trails for future generations. A legacy that safeguards Riverside and Alpine Parks, the Hot Springs Aquatics Center, Tenderfoot Mountain, and all of the other sacred public spaces in our community that we have grown to love and that define Salida. We take this responsibility seriously.

I've been blessed with the duty to make the lives of all Salidans better and look forward to doing that alongside each and every one of you.

*Diesel*



Mike "Diesel" Post

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## The SALIDA COMMUNITY

*A special thanks to the dedicated members of the Salida and Chaffee County community who contributed their time, energy and ideas to this plan, particularly focus group participants and other stakeholders who participated in public gatherings. All feedback has been summarized and included in the Appendices of this report.*

## The CONSULTANT TEAM



and sub consultants: Barker Rinker Seacat, Kimley Horn, Aspire GEO, & Jayne Miller

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Experts stress that the most important outcome of any planning effort is the installation of strategic thinking in an organization. They generally agree that any planning process is only useful if built upon a strong foundation of organizational commitment, driven by customer/community need and interests, championed by staff, and grounded in actionable strategies.

To be sustainable, **today's public sector must regularly examine and adjust strategies as situations change and opportunities arise.** Today, scarce resources and a constantly shifting environment are forcing many organizations to reconsider their current strategies or to explicitly undertake strategy development for the first time. All indications are that future success will require much more rapid strategic rethinking and repositioning than are now the norm.

**The 2020 Salida Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Master Plan** was designed to provide operational guidance and policy direction for the Parks and Recreation Department. The master plan shapes the development and delivery of department-provided parks and recreation services in a manner that is consistent with quality service and meeting changing community need and interest.

The **master plan is the overarching and principal strategy document** intended to serve and guide the department in responding to three important questions.

- What's happening around us?
- How do we best respond?
- How do we excel?

The master plan process intends to ultimately lead the Department towards actions that are expected to inherently build success over the long term although the plan includes high-level initiatives that will take time to complete.

The master plan includes an analysis of the community's and parks and recreation system's key issues and current conditions as well as demographic factors and trends; six recommended operating principles which emerged from the planning process including policy statements; concept plans for the City's two gateway parks, Centennial and Marvin; and a three-year action plan with desired outcomes to create momentum and set the stage for the future.

Essentially, **the master plan was designed to be a flexible, high-level framework** from which the Department can begin to best serve the community's needs and interests and be responsible stewards of resources including physical assets and tax dollars.

The master plan is the culmination of over eight (8) months of stakeholder outreach and engagement with constituents, user groups, community organization representatives, City Council and Recreation Advisory Board (RAB) members, and Department staff.

The stakeholder engagement elements of the process were comprehensive and included: interviews and work sessions with City Council and Recreation Advisory Board members; four public meetings which included more than 350 attendees; 12 staff and community/customer focus group meetings; an on-line community survey with more than 400 responses and work sessions with Department staff members [note: supervisory staff participated in more than 12 hours of work sessions and meetings allowing the

consulting team to hear from those who know the system best, and who will ultimately be responsible for implementing and executing the plan]. By engaging diverse stakeholders, current community and organizational conditions including trends, gaps in service, demographic and economic changes and challenges, community needs and interests, and other considerations were identified.

Finally, the master plan, although adopted by the Salida City Council, is **designed to be “living” and capable of evolving with constantly changing social, political, technological and economic conditions** (consistently monitored and measured, both in terms of progress and value, and modified as necessary).

For over 80 years, the City of Salida has provided recreation experiences to citizens and visitors largely at the Salida Hot Springs Aquatic Center. With the recent decision to create the Salida Parks and Recreation Department (merging the Recreation Department

with parks maintenance that previously existed under the auspices of Public Works), the City has made the decision to marry parks with recreation services, providing for a more traditional public sector leisure services model.

The Parks and Recreation Department, now operating under its new structure, will enhance efforts to promote access to parks, and overall health and wellness. The **master plan provides the platform for this tradition to begin, and is focused around six key themes** that emerged from the comprehensive community planning process:

- **Organizational Resilience**
- **A Healthy Salida**
- **Quality Infrastructure**
- **Access & Social Equity**
- **Connection through Recreation**
- **Community Collaborations**



SATIDA

HOT SPRINGS AQUATIC CENTER





## SETTING the STAGE



## KEY ISSUES & CURRENT CONDITIONS - paying attention to what's going on

In a day and age when society is shifting at such a rapid pace, it is critically important for service organizations to ensure that they are doing what is necessary to stay current in the issues and conditions that will ultimately affect organizational thinking and operations. This is fundamental to any organization being relevant to its customers - and in the case of the public sector, to gain and maintain a constituency's trust that the system is well managed and worthy of its advocacy. Without the trust that the system is well managed, the organization will ultimately become irrelevant and unworthy of community support. Essentially, understanding key issues and conditions is core to mobilizing organizational resources and developing strategy. This becomes an early step in designing an architecture of organizational capabilities and establishing a roadmap for long-term success.

The Department's awareness and acknowledgement of today's key issues and current conditions present the organization with opportunities to make strategic moves to ensure the Department's most fundamental work aligns seamlessly with what is happening internally and externally. These components include the Department's operational strategy (how the Department is fulfilling its mission and purpose), its capabilities (what it needs to be good at to affect key issues and conditions), its resources (what makes it a "good" system, including its structure, staff and workplace cultures, its assets and financial condition) and its management methods (the ways in which it performs on a daily basis). These critical components form a values chain by which the Department will perform – and the values chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Principally, clearly understanding today's key issues and current conditions allows for:



Above is a "word cloud" representing stakeholder feedback received during the process.

**Establishing a Vision** - Creating a robust vision of what the Department is and what it intends to do for the community and communicating that vision in a meaningful way to all stakeholders including staff and board, City Council and most importantly, the community. The vision conveys the essential principles that guide organizational design, operational priorities, and performance goals. This has been accomplished by way of this planning effort.

**Designing** - Each component of the organization's value chain should be highly complementary of each other, and supportive of the organization's mission and purpose. Episodic adjustments to the organization's design will happen, but interest in aligning the work of the organization with key issues and conditions should be constant. The design and management of the organization should be adaptive and revisited regularly, based upon robust analysis, to ensure it remains fit to meet its mission and purpose despite the expected changes that will ultimately occur in the external environment (e.g., demographic shifts, economic change).

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT - What Was Heard & Observed

Key issues derived from frequently repeated responses to questions posed during stakeholder engagement efforts and consulting team observations throughout the process are summarized below. These issues are expected to have impacts on Department operations moving forward and were used as the foundation for the development of the 2020 PROST Master Plan. A full view of survey results and comments is available in the appendix to this report.

### ORGANIZATION *centric*

- A current and/or relevant organizational mission/purpose that aligns with today's economic and societal realities does not exist. Nor is there a set of collectively held operational values.
- The existing organizational structure is in transition as the newly formed parks and recreation department is in its infancy.
- Limited policies exist to guide Department operations. Policy types integral to park and recreation operations include cost recovery, capital investment, social equity, and parkland acquisition, development and divestment, among others.
- Current Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and Joint Use Agreements (JUAs), and other types of informal agreements are outdated. These include the MOU for the Golf Course, the use of Marvin Park by the Salida School District, the operations at the Community Center located on Third & F Streets, and the Chamber of Commerce facility located in Centennial Park.
- Staff workloads in some areas of the department appear to be substantial, potentially affecting quality of performance.
- Prevalent community commentary and some survey feedback suggesting many wishes to have services available yet do not want to pay more through either taxes or increased fees and charges, yet there is significant interest in the Department expanding its service menu and building more infrastructure. This conflict will test the Department in the near and long term.

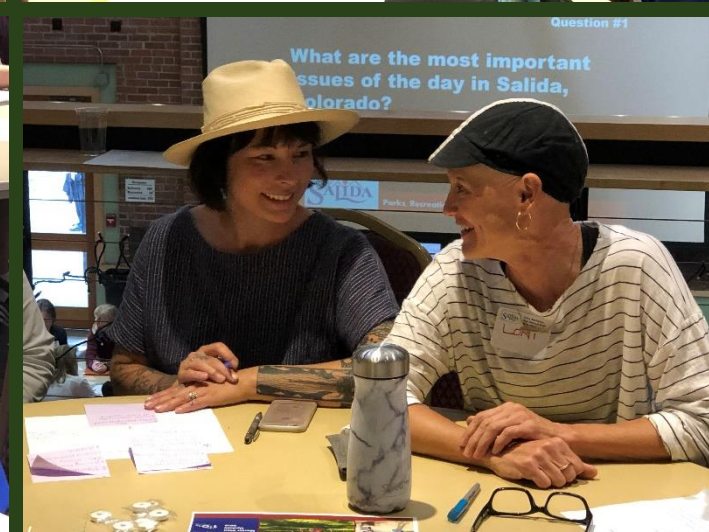
## COMMUNITY *centric*

- Misperceptions exist regarding the differences between “need” and “want”. Significant demand exists even though many suggest they understand the economic challenges and realities the Department/City face.
- There appears to be a population in Salida who have an “ability to pay” but not a “willingness to pay” for the services they expect.
- An abundance of recreational special interest groups exist. While this speaks to the values of healthy and active lifestyles, these group’s expectations of the City can create pressures on the Department to respond favorably to those who are the most persistent - and can lead to sidelining other important interests and/or identified needs.
- A strong desire exists amongst the community to see enhanced and improved community connectivity (e.g., park to park, trail enhancements).
- Enhanced social equity interests are present - addressing and reducing barriers to participation and access for those who are lower income or may require different forms of communication (e.g., language barriers).
- There appears to be a limited understanding on behalf of the community of the Department’s scope of services, how tax resources are used to support the system, and why fees and charges are necessary. The website and general communication are of concern.
- Transportation/physical access concerns exist (e.g., Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance).
- Many different perspectives exist regarding who it is that makes up the Salida “community” (e.g., city residents, County residents, visitors, those who work in Salida but live elsewhere). Some who live in the City do not see value in the Department serving those who either work or visit the City as primary or important customers.
- The community is homogeneous in many ways yet is changing – there is more diversity in beliefs, interests, ability, income level, backgrounds, etc. Yet, there is little diversity in race and ethnicity.
- With community change comes a disparity between multi-generational families and individuals who do not like the changes happening in the community. Some used the phrase “Salida is becoming another Boulder”.
- Among those who are newer residents of Chaffee County, some suggested they moved to Salida due to its character and the natural environment and do not wish to see those things change.
- Growth is a prevailing theme. Salida has realized a 13.8% population increase since the 2010 Census. Among the many unintended consequences of this growth is a real estate boom and unaffordable/unattainable housing.
- With increases in youth and older adult populations, there are opportunities for the Department to focus energies and resources on these two cohorts – which interestingly enough were considered priorities per stakeholder feedback.

- There is heavy reliance on sales tax dollars to support the provision of park and recreation service delivery. Fees and charges are not currently established based upon cost of service and significant tax subsidy is granted to all services.
- The City of Salida and Chaffee County are tourism-based economies. When times are good and tourists are about, more sales tax dollars are generated and pumped into the City's coffers. However, this type of economy base can present high levels of risk and uncertainty, especially when dedicated sales taxes and insufficient reserves exist (in relation to infrastructure needs).
- A long-term taxation strategy for the parks and recreation system does not exist. There is significant reliance on sales tax dollars to support services and there are mixed perspectives about how to and who should pay for services.
- There is uncertainty regarding the total existing infrastructure and maintenance backlog which exists (quantified in dollars). Conflicts of opinion are evident between the interest in taking care of existing infrastructure and the interest in expanding and growing the system.
- A physical asset management plan including maintenance prioritization schedule and annual review process is needed to serve as a guidepost for decisions specific to maintaining existing infrastructure.
- Although not an intentional element of the master plan process, conversation and interests around the future development of the Vandaveer Ranch property are plentiful. Expressed interests included portions of Vandaveer developed as a public park space or site for recreation facilities.
- The current Land Use Code requires language specific to parkland interests and issues ensuring equitable land distribution, and methods to ensure that growth impacts are addressed and paid for through development and not left to the City and taxpayers.
- A comprehensive Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plan currently does not exist. This includes a comprehensive plan to address and resolve interests in physical access to all parks, recreation facilities and activities on behalf of those with disabilities.

**PEST** (political,  
environmental,  
societal and  
technological)  
*centric*

- Growth in Salida and the surrounding areas has bred a broad spectrum of perspectives, an increased number of community-wide issues and needs (such as equity), and heightened expectations from an increasingly changing population.
- A symptom of growth and a strong buyer's market and real estate boom is a lack of affordable and attainable housing for those who have a limited "ability to pay" in the Salida/Chaffee County market. A higher cost of living inhibits many from residing in and around Salida (this includes current and prospective City/Department staff).
- There is a strong perception that all services must be "affordable" and a general misunderstanding about what "affordability" means from both community/customers and staff (the difference between "ability to pay" and "willingness to pay").
- There are a significant number of other park and recreation service providers in the community.
- Homelessness is becoming more of a prevalent issue in the City of Salida affecting Department operations.
- Salida is surrounded by an abundance of public lands. An "outdoor playground" of sorts providing a vast array of self-directed recreation.
- Potential partnership opportunities and interests that may lessen the community's dependence on and expectations of the Department as the primary/sole service provider exist.
- Salida's demographic profile continues to shift and is expected to do so for the next decade. Increases in the older adult population, effects of second homeowners on the tax base, increases in the number of young families, etc. will continue to be important considerations for operational strategy(ies).
- Dynamic technological changes will have impacts on Department operations, community/customer recreational interests and behaviors, etc.
- The Arkansas River, by many, is considered the heart and soul of the City and County.
- The economics of the community are grounded in its tourism-based economy.
- There are some in the community whose livelihoods are not reliant on the economic strength of Salida or Chaffee County as they work remotely. And in some cases, they work for companies outside of Salida, the state or country.



## Stakeholder engagement

*included...*

- 4 public gatherings with 350+ attendees
- 12 focus group meetings
- 400+ responses to the community survey

## The Community Survey

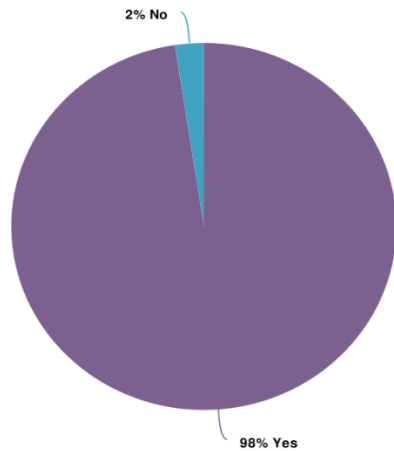
Included below are a sampling of responses received from the community survey that was made available both on-line and hard copies available at the County's Housing and Human Services Department and the Hot Springs-Aquatic Center front desks. The survey was intended as a supplemental outreach effort and complement to the public gatherings and focus group meetings held during the process. response rate for the survey was approximately 7%. A full view of survey results and comments is available in the appendix to this report.

**Please indicate whether you or anyone in your household has participated in any of the activities listed below in the past 12 months at either a City of Salida park or facility, or at another park or facility.**

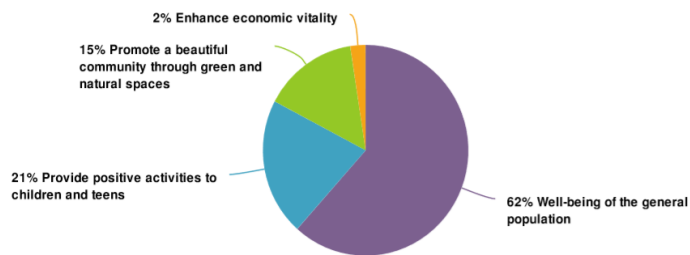
	Done at a City of Salida park or facility	Done somewhere else	Not participated	Total Checks		Done at a City of Salida park or facility	Done somewhere else	Not participated	Total Checks
Used a park or playground (picnicked, relaxed, exercised, etc.) Checks Row Check %	402 75.3%	126 23.6%	6 1.1%	534	Participated in a youth (age 13-19) recreation program or class Checks Row Check %	33 8.2%	17 4.2%	352 87.6%	402
Played outdoor field sports (e.g., baseball, softball, soccer, etc.) Checks Row Check %	173 39.6%	58 13.3%	206 47.1%	437	Participated in an adult recreation program or class Checks Row Check %	98 23.8%	61 14.8%	252 61.3%	411
Played tennis or pickleball Checks Row Check %	65 15.9%	19 4.6%	326 79.5%	410	Participated in an older adult (65+) recreation program or class Checks Row Check %	31 7.7%	10 2.5%	363 89.9%	404
Played other court sports (e.g., basketball, volleyball) Checks Row Check %	128 30.5%	45 10.7%	246 58.7%	419	Participated in a children's (age 0-12) sports program or team Checks Row Check %	86 20.6%	44 10.5%	288 68.9%	418
Played golf or took golf lessons Checks Row Check %	68 16.7%	28 6.9%	310 76.4%	406	Participated in a youth (age 13-19) sports program or team Checks Row Check %	38 9.3%	22 5.4%	347 85.3%	407
Used the Aquatics Center/Pool for "open swim," swim lessons, water exercise classes or swim team Checks Row Check %	278 60.7%	56 12.2%	124 27.1%	458	Participated in an adult sports program or team Checks Row Check %	59 14.7%	46 11.4%	297 73.9%	402
Participated in a children's (age 0-12) recreation program or class Checks Row Check %	135 31.8%	43 10.1%	246 58.0%	424	Participated in an adult exercise, fitness or wellness program Checks Row Check %	105 25.4%	129 31.2%	180 43.5%	414
					Participated in older adult exercise (65+), fitness or wellness program Checks Row Check %	28 7.0%	19 4.8%	353 88.3%	400



Have you or any member of your household used any of the City of Salida parks, recreation facilities or programs in the previous 12 months?



Select the MOST IMPORTANT reason the City of Salida should offer parks, recreation, open space and trails.



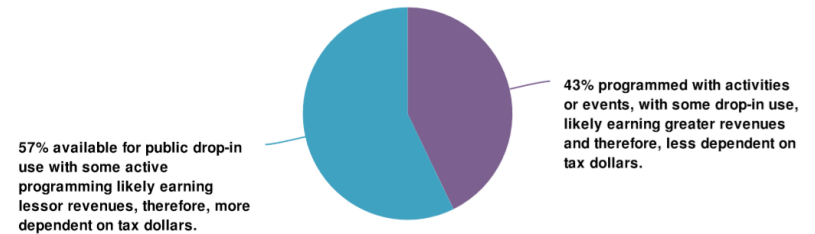
The majority of the City of Salida’s parks, recreation, open space and trails system's budget is supported by sales taxes with no property taxes used to pay for these services. In addition, a lodging tax is used to support the Hot Springs and Aquatics center’s operations and maintenance. Please rate how important you believe it is that the City of Salida serve each of the following groups?

	Essential	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not at all Important	Responses
Residents who live within the city limits of Salida Count Row %	356 85.6%	49 11.8%	10 2.4%	1 0.2%	416
Individuals who live outside Salida but work or own a business in Salida Count Row %	172 41.1%	179 42.8%	57 13.6%	10 2.4%	418
Individuals who live outside Salida but frequent Salida for meals, entertainment or to shop Count Row %	90 21.5%	167 40.0%	129 30.9%	32 7.7%	418
Attendees of events that attract visitors from outside of Salida Count Row %	56 13.5%	134 32.2%	175 42.1%	51 12.3%	416

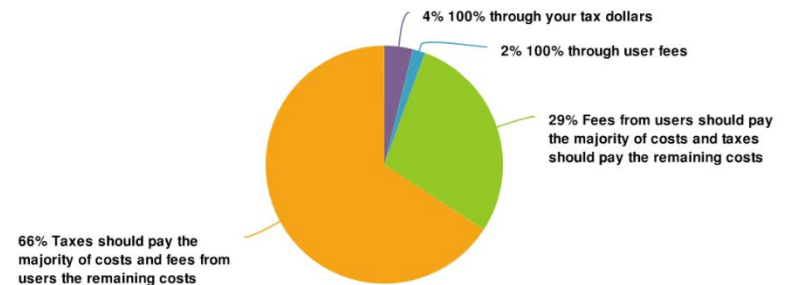
One of the challenges the Department currently faces is a maintenance backlog of aging infrastructure; important repairs and upkeep are needed to keep these assets safe and operating smoothly. On the other hand, there is a sense that the community desires that the parks and recreation system continue to grow and expand. To what extent do you agree or disagree that each of the following are an important principle that should guide Department operations moving forward knowing that additional revenues will be needed to invest in current infrastructure and enhance park and recreation services?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Responses
Increase registration and admissions fees in order to increase funding for the Department Count Row %	43 10.3%	198 47.5%	123 29.5%	53 12.7%	417
Increase City sales tax rate to increase funding for the Department Count Row %	73 17.5%	168 40.4%	99 23.8%	76 18.3%	416
Consider a City property tax to increase funding for the Department Count Row %	85 20.4%	171 41.0%	82 19.7%	79 18.9%	417
Earmark some existing sales tax for the exclusive use of the Department Count Row %	237 57.1%	156 37.6%	12 2.9%	10 2.4%	415
Give higher priority to maintenance of existing parks and facilities rather than expanding or building new ones Count Row %	107 26.0%	163 39.7%	107 26.0%	34 8.3%	411
Reduce the level of services or close some parks or facilities in order to be able to maintain the remaining parks and facilities to higher standards Count Row %	9 2.2%	67 16.2%	170 41.2%	167 40.4%	413

From each pair of statements below, please indicate which ONE of the two statements you believe is more important for Salida. Parks and recreation facilities should be mostly...



Please indicate which one of the following statements best represents how you feel the costs of operating recreation facilities and offering recreational programs should be paid.



**Some interest has been expressed in building a new recreation/community center in the City of Salida. It has been suggested that this new facility would better serve the recreational needs of the community, and possibly provide a partnership opportunity with local non-profits. Please indicate the extent to which you support or oppose each of the following funding policies the City of Salida could pursue to fund a new community/recreation center.**

	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Don't know	Responses
A sales tax increase specifically to fund the center Count Row %	119 28.7%	141 34.0%	64 15.4%	78 18.8%	13 3.1%	415
A property tax increase specifically to fund the center Count Row %	95 23.0%	150 36.3%	61 14.8%	95 23.0%	12 2.9%	413
A bond (loan) that the City would need to pay back Count Row %	99 24.0%	184 44.6%	60 14.5%	40 9.7%	30 7.3%	413
A revenue bond that would mean the City would need to generate enough from the recreation services provided in the facility to pay back the loan Count Row %	75 18.2%	166 40.4%	84 20.4%	54 13.1%	32 7.8%	411

## **DEMOGRAPHICS – understanding the “who” in a community**

Demographics are the statistical characteristics of human populations, such as age, income, race, ethnicity, education, and others, which are used to identify current and future customers or constituents and ultimately, how likely they are to utilize a service or product. By studying constituencies through a demographic analysis, the City of Salida Parks & Recreation Department can examine existing users and identify populations who are potential park and recreation users.

Public sector organizations must collect and consider constituent demographics in order to position themselves to best and most appropriately serve community needs, and if possible, desires. In most forms, demographic data appears as a collection of numbers and statistics that can have little real-world application. You can stare at the numbers and see where the most populous areas are or what percentage of a city or town is comprised of a certain ethnic group, but you cannot easily discern trends from the numbers or quickly get an overview of all of the data.

The demographic research and analysis conducted to inform this process uses figures from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) (The ASC is conducted every year to provide up-to-date information about the social and economic needs of communities). Among the most notable demographic data that has the potential to impact future recreation service planning are the following demographic issues and trends.

### **The Importance of Recreation for Older Adults in an Aging Society**

Numerous academic studies have been conducted over the years indicating that leisure activity is an important quality of life factor for older adults. Many of these studies found a correlation between activity participation and positive psychological well-being and contentment. Higher levels of activity involvement were associated with less depression, less hostility, and less anxiety. There have also been correlations drawn between lower levels of recreation participation and isolation, and low levels of life satisfaction.

Further, research has indicated that satisfaction with recreation (not frequency of participation) is the only significant direct predictor of quality of life in old age; even though the variables of income, education, sex, religiosity, marital status, age, health, and frequency of recreation activity participation were found to have significant relationships to each other, none were significantly related to quality of life. [Source: Leisure in Later Life fourth edition (2012).]

In addition to understanding a community’s age composition, park and recreation providers should understand those generations they wish to serve moving forward. The Center for Generational Studies provides the following information to help us understand older adult populations and their anticipated leisure behavior(s) drawing compelling differences between our society’s older adult generations.



### **Baby Boomers (55-74 years old)**

Seventy-six million American children were born between 1946 and 1964, representing a cohort that is significant based on no more than size alone. Baby Boomers control over 80% of personal financial assets and more than 50% of discretionary spending power. In 2006, the oldest of the baby boomers began turning 60 years old. Projections suggest that 7,918 Americans reach that milestone every day. They are responsible for more than half of all consumer spending, buy 77% of all prescription drugs, 61% of OTC medication and 80% of all leisure travel. This cohort does not relate to the term “senior” nor wishes to engage in the same types of activity as do their “elders”.

Boomers are social-cause oriented, care about vitality and activity, claim, “65 is the new 50!” and are fitness and wellness driven. Lifestyle considerations for Boomers include:

- Activity with a wellness focus
- Hectic lifestyle
- Limited free time
- Rejection of full-time retirement
- Willingness to pay if there is perceived value
- 33% of Boomers are single
- 37% have children under 18 in their household
- Expected to increase wellness spending from \$220B - \$1T or more

This “don’t call me senior” group enjoys more active pursuits including exercising to stay healthy and age well. According to the National Recreation and Park Association, the latest recreation trends for this population include:

- Active lifestyles
- High-risk and experience-based activity – “bucket list” experiences
- Convenience and places supportive of busy lifestyles
- Increased volunteerism but for abbreviated terms

### **The Silent Generation (75-94 years old)**

This generation was born between the two wars during 1925-1945. They experienced the Depression; their fathers served in WWI, and as a generation, have limited disposable incomes or live on fixed retirement incomes. Lifestyle and value implications for this population include:

- Retired from paid work
- Cautious spending and a limited willingness to pay for services
- Duty before pleasure - civic volunteerism
- Snowbird lifestyle for the affluent
- Isolation for those who are poor

With seniors engaging in more exercise, there is a growing trend towards specialized programs for older adults. These programs focus on the special needs of today's seniors like arthritis, osteoporosis, balance issues, flexibility, and better daily functioning. In addition, according to the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), the National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA), and the International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association, the latest recreation trends for this population include:

- Exercise walking
- Pickleball
- Swimming
- Wellness seminars incl: falls prevention
- Health Club Memberships for strength training



### **The GI Generation (95+ years old)**

Also known as the Greatest Generation, this generation includes two overlapping groups: the Depression Era cohort (born between 1912-1921) and the World War II cohort (born between 1920-1924). These older adults include veterans who fought in World War II. They lived through two World Wars, the Great Depression and many other societal changes. They represent approximately 1.5 percent of the US population and are parents of elder Baby Boomers.

Lifestyle considerations for this population include:

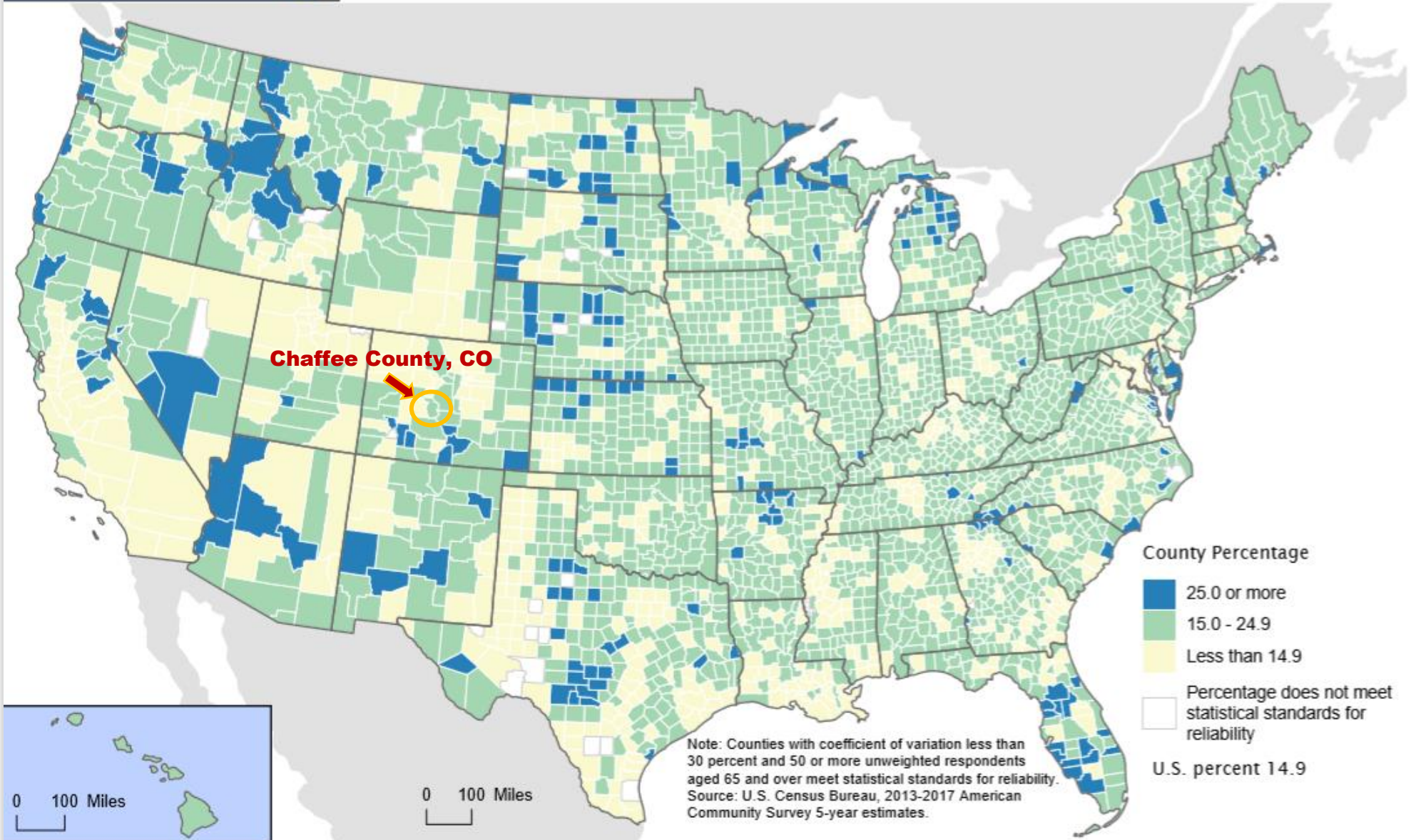
- Retired for many years
- Conservative savers with little willingness or ability to pay for services
- Hard-working with a high sense of moral obligation, patriotism and respect for authority
- High likelihood of being a widow or widower
- Tendency to be physically inactive
- Socially isolated



Figure 1a.

### Percentage Population Aged 65 and Over: 2013-2017

(For more information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/programs/acs](http://www.census.gov/programs/acs))







## Profile & Demographics of Salida, Colorado

Salida (/səˈlaɪdə/ sə-LY-də; Spanish: [saˈliða], "exit") is a statutory city that is the county seat and most populous city of Chaffee County, Colorado.

According to the United States Census Bureau, the city has a total area of 2.57 square miles of its land, and the Arkansas River, which runs through the town, is the major source of water for local agriculture and is a magnet for tourists who enjoy fishing and rafting and kayaking.

The Sawatch Mountain Range runs north and south and is located roughly 10 miles west of Salida. Methodist Mountain, which is a major feature on Salida's southern horizon, is the northernmost mountain in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. To the north of Salida is the Arkansas Valley and the town of Buena Vista.

As of 2018 (US Census 2019 projections), there were 5,963 people representing a 13.8% increase over the 2010 census (5,236 pop).

Other demographic projections from the 2014-2018 American Community Survey) include:

- 2,553 households
- 2.13 persons per household
- 3.4% are under the age of 5
- 16.6% are under the age of 18
- 23.8% are over the age of 65
- 410 are Veterans
- 87.1% have a high school degree or higher
- 34.1% have a bachelor's degree or higher
- 59% are in the labor force
- 84.7% of households have a computer
- 10.3% of the population have a disability

Median household income = \$46,308

The racial makeup of the city is 89.2% White, 1.7% Asian, 0.2% African American, 0% Native American or Pacific Islander, and 8.4% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race are 17.7% of the population.

8.8% of the population speak a language other than English at home

11% of the population are living at or below the federal poverty level (\$29,620 for a family of four – US Federal Poverty Guidelines as of Jan 11, 2019)

## **TRENDS & ISSUES – staying relevant**

A review of futurist literature by scholars and professionals in parks, recreation and leisure studies that focus primarily on the decades of the 1990s and 2000s offers a background to the issues and challenges facing public park and recreation agencies today. Most of this is based on literature reviews, horizon scanning, and analyses of trend data, surveys and essays.

The First Annual Leisure Watch National Issues Survey (1989) produced a National Issues Agenda for the 1990s. An "issue" was defined as "a difficulty or problem that has a significant influence on the way an organization functions or on its ability to achieve a desired future". Similar surveys have been conducted since and have resulted in the same responses suggesting that although our social and economic circumstances have escalated, the prevalent issues have remained unchanged.

Recreation and park administrators, planners and educators in 13 states in the U.S.A. and in Canadian provinces were asked to identify issues that they expected would have the greatest impact on their organizations and/or clientele in the near future. In order of frequency of choice, those issues identified were:

**Economy/consumerism - e.g., the need to better define economic impact of recreation opportunity**  
**Business management - e.g., increasing cost of doing business, decreasing resources**  
**Technology and science - e.g., artificial intelligence, dependence on smart phones, social media as primary form of communication**  
**Family/social relationships - e.g., growth of non-traditional families, decline of social capital**  
**Politics/government/legislation - e.g., political polarization, need for federal and state funding support**  
**Fitness/sports - e.g., declines in traditional team sports, motivating the nonparticipant (youth, disabled, aged)**  
**Medicine/health/wellness - e.g., obesity, diabetes and other health concerns, growth of employee wellness services**  
**Education, learning, and training - e.g., prevalent illiteracy in relevant professional areas**  
**Environment/ecology - e.g., management of increased demand for open space/resources**  
**Workplace/employment - e.g., decline of the power of labor unions**  
**Demographics - e.g., an aging population; growth in Hispanic and Asian populations**

Ironically or otherwise, these "dated" national responses are in direct correlation with today's primary issues and interests affirming that little has changed in the past 30 years. These collective challenges and broad opportunities continue to lie with public parks and recreation agencies. Those that are suggested to make the greatest long-term impact are at right.



***-Financial resilience***  
***-Responding to community "need"***  
***-Avoiding duplication of services***  
***-Affecting a healthy citizenry***  
***-Facilitating social connectivity***



### **Health Trends**

The current Chaffee County Health Assessment & Improvement Plan 2017- 2023 was developed as a community health assessment and intended to identify major health concerns, describe community strengths and assets, and assess community challenges in Chaffee County. This project aimed to engage community members in local public health decision-making and ensure that diverse perspectives were shared. Another resource is the state of Colorado’s Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (HKCS). This is the state’s only comprehensive survey on the health and well-being of young people, with the latest statistics released in 2017 and 2019 survey results in process.

Three consequential issues of particular interest to the City of Salida Park and Recreation Department should be the increased number of falls in the 65+ population, that children between the ages of 2-14 years of age are becoming more overweight or obese, and the critical importance of the increased number of children who abuse drugs and alcohol. All of these issues present opportunities for overall health impacts and cost containment specific to healthy aging initiatives and addressing inactivity amongst youth.

### **Healthy Aging**

Every person should have the opportunity to live a long and healthy life. Yet, the environments in which we live can favor a healthy lifestyle or be harmful to it. Environments are highly influential on our behavior, our exposure to health risks (for example air pollution, violence), our access to quality health and social care, and the opportunities that aging brings.

*Healthy Aging* is about creating the environments and opportunities that enable people to be and do what they value throughout their lives. Everybody can experience *Healthy Aging*. Being free of disease or infirmity is not a requirement for *Healthy Aging* as many older adults have one or more health conditions that, when well controlled, have little influence on their wellbeing.

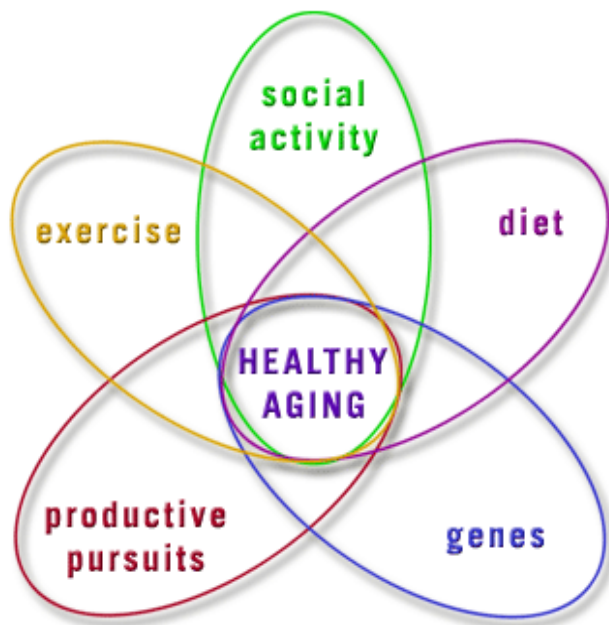
The World Health Organization defines *Healthy Aging* “as the process of developing and maintaining *functional ability* that enables *wellbeing* in older age”. *Functional ability* is about having the capabilities that enable all people to be and do what they have reason to value. This includes a person’s ability to:

- meet their basic needs;
- to learn, grow and make decisions;
- to be mobile;
- to build and maintain relationships; and
- to contribute to society.



Intrinsic capacity comprises all the mental and physical capacities that a person can draw on and includes their ability to walk, think, see, hear and remember. The level of intrinsic capacity is influenced by a number of factors such as the presence of diseases, injuries and age-related changes. Environments include the home, community and broader society, and all the factors within them such as the built environment, people and their relationships, attitudes and values, health and social policies, the systems that support them and the services that they implement. Being able to live in environments that support and maintain intrinsic capacity and functional ability is key to *Healthy Aging*.

**Key Considerations of Healthy Aging include:**



**Diversity:** There is no typical older person. Some 70-year-olds have levels of physical and mental capacity that compare similarly with some 30-year-olds. Others of the same age may require extensive care and support for basic activities like dressing and eating. Operations and service provision should be designed to improve the functional ability of all older people, whether they are robust, care-dependent or in between. This conflicts with the parks and recreation profession’s long-standing history of expecting that everyone over a particular age has the same interests and abilities (e.g., 60 and over considered “senior” and all enjoy bingo).

**Inequity:** The relationships we have with our environments are shaped by factors such as the family we were born into, sex, gender, ethnicity, level of education, access to healthy pursuits, socialization and financial resources.

**Cost containment** – keep seniors active so they do not become a “financial burden” on the system. This requires a commitment within communities to ensure that there is a concerted effort to do what is necessary to keep older adults healthy and able to live independently for as long as possible.

[Source: *Healthy Aging* is the focus of the World Health Organization’s (WHO) work on aging between 2015 – 2030. *Healthy Aging* replaces the WHO’s previous *Active Aging: a policy framework* developed in 2002. *Healthy Aging*, like *Active Aging*, emphasizes the need for action across multiple sectors and enabling older people to remain a resource to their families, communities and economies.]

### **Inactivity, Poor Nutrition & the Obesity Crisis**

Obesity continues to be a serious health problem in the U.S., contributing to heart disease, diabetes, joint disorders and even certain types of cancer. And according to the latest data, more Americans will be obese by 2030 than ever before.

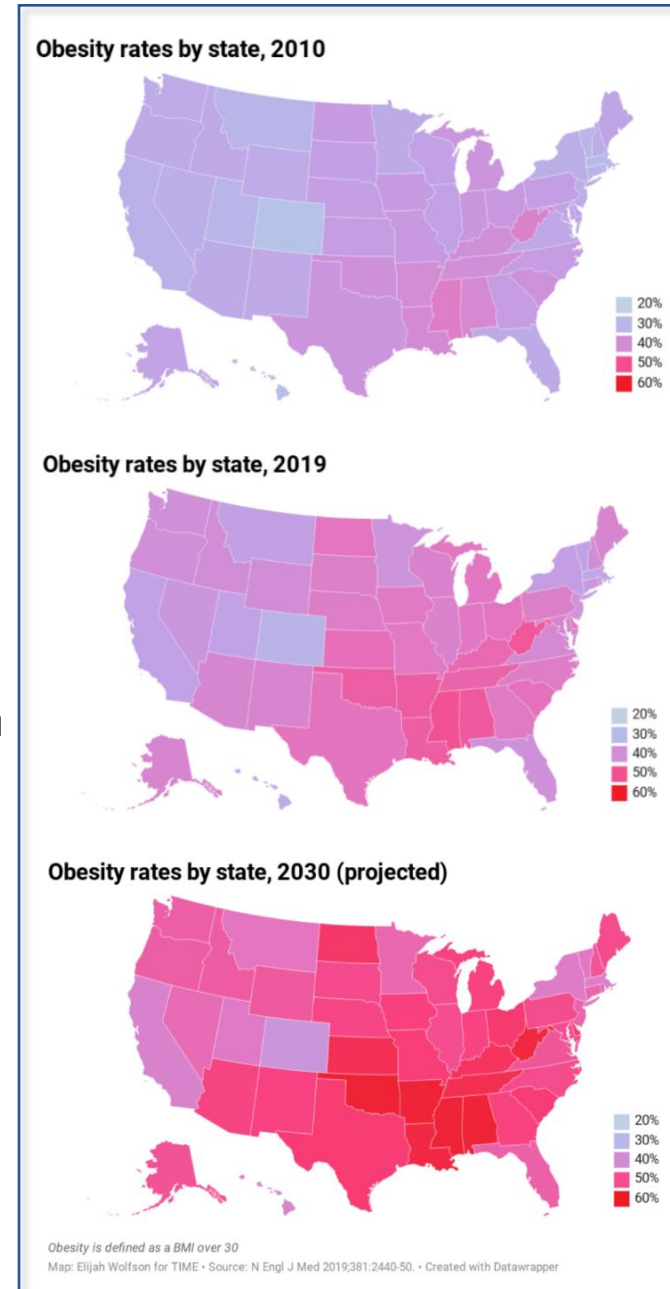
In a study published in the New England Journal of Medicine, researchers at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health found that, over the past few decades, rates of obesity, defined as having a BMI of 30 or greater, have been rapidly rising. For example, in 2000, no state had an obesity rate higher than 35%. By 2010, a full 27 states were over that mark.

By 2019, every single U.S. state had an obesity rate higher than 35% except two: Colorado and Hawaii (and the District of Columbia). Ten states were over 45%, and Mississippi, the state with the highest obesity rate, is closing in on 50%. And although the state of Colorado is amongst the lowest in terms of obesity rates, it is staggeringly above what is unacceptable.

Using current trends, researchers project that by 2030, one in two adults in the U.S. will be considered obese, and one in four will be considered severely obese, with a BMI of 40 or higher. In 29 states, obesity rates will climb to over 50%. Data suggest that income in particular is a striking factor in obesity. Regardless of where people live in the country, the lower an income a person has, the more likely they are to be overweight or obese.

This all highlights the urgent need to find more ways to address lifestyle factors that contribute to weight gain including nutrition education, increased access to healthy foods and the spaces and places that encourage all types of activity and exercise, and support to engage in positive and non-sedentary behaviors.

*[Source: The New England Journal of Medicine, 2020]*



## Park & Recreation Trends

A trend is a general direction in which something is developing or changing. And like most other industries, parks and recreation has been disrupted by technological advancements, cultural changes and overall leisure behavior modifications. It is paramount that park and recreation organizations consider how to capitalize on these shifts and best understand the prevailing winds around what is hot and what is not. A number of trending activities and behaviors are underway, and it is important that the City of Salida Park and Recreation Department position itself to prepare to respond most responsibly to these issues of interest.




### **Is recycling on the outs?**

Recycling has been the most “feel-good” environmental program for park and recreation agencies over the past 40 years. Unfortunately, the recycling of consumer waste may all but be over because of rapidly changing market forces, shrinking profit margins and China’s refusal to accept most American wastes.

With no economic incentive to recycle and the increasing costs to dispose of once-recyclable materials, many formerly recycled-waste materials will now go directly to landfills without passing through waste-separating materials recovery facilities (MRF).

What this means overall to park and rec management and public education efforts to recycle and reuse is currently unknown, but recent developments and market changes are likely to have a profound effect on messaging the need and value of recycling. American cities and U.S. park and recreation agencies that have included paper/plastic/glass recycling in their sustainability plans may be forced to discontinue some types of recycling. Some agencies might continue recycling, but this could amount to perpetuating a false narrative that the materials are being recycled when in fact they no longer are. Some major companies have set ambitious recycling/reuse goals, and there is great public will to support recycling. However, if there are no alternative solutions or technological breakthroughs, a 40-year effort to encourage personal responsibility and actions for environmental conservation through recycling may come to an end sooner rather than later.

 **Prediction:** More U.S. park and recreation agencies that presently recycle paper/plastic/glass will modify or end their internal and public recycling programs in 2020.

### **No Glyphosate? How will we kill weeds?**

The application of the most commonly used weed killer in the world, glyphosate likely soon will be banned in your community and in your park system. Although the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) declared the pesticide safe in 2019, controversy over the safety of glyphosate continues to grow fueled by a growing body of evidence regarding the negative effects on human health as well as pets and wildlife, such as bees and aquatic life.

In 2015 the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) classified glyphosate as “probably carcinogenic” to humans. More than 18,000 lawsuits alleging that the herbicide caused cancer have been filed against Bayer, which recently bought Monsanto, the manufacturer of Roundup, another glyphosate product. Cities and counties are already banning the use of glyphosate, leaving park and recreation agencies few alternatives to halt the spread of invasive species and control aggressive weeds in park landscapes.



**Prediction:** While only a handful of agencies, cities and counties presently ban the use of glyphosate (Integrated Pest Management best practices - IPM), in a stunning reversal of business as usual, more than 250 jurisdictions and agencies will ban it in 2020 causing a wholesale change in landscape management practices to control weeds in parks.

### **Climate change impacts...are they real?**

Some communities in the southwestern United States, such as Phoenix, AZ, have more than 100 days a year when the temperature exceeds 100 degrees Fahrenheit. However, the south and southwest are not the only regions expected to face climate crisis from extreme conditions. During future heat waves, temperatures are predicted to exceed 115 degrees in many U.S. cities. A feature in the Guardian newspaper notes that extreme heat affects the poor and those on limited incomes the most.

So, what do parks have to do with a community’s adaptation to extreme heat? Plenty. A 2018 study by the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) found that large parks in a city like Washington D.C. cooled the city by as much as 17 degrees Fahrenheit. Increasingly, the presence of trees and green infrastructure are touted as vital components of health and well-being in a climate-changing world. Parks provide natural infrastructure that helps communities reduce urban heat island effect and mitigate the impacts of extreme heat.



**Prediction:** Parks and recreation agencies will re-evaluate their parkland inventories in order to reduce urban heat island effects through the natural cooling of tree canopy and shade. New parks, linear green spaces and trail corridors will be designed to cool communities and provide recreational benefits.


## Technology is not going away

Technology is having a greater impact in parks than ever before. Lower costs, technological simplification and mass production is making high tech inexpensive and accessible to park and rec agencies.



The most tantalizing tech developments are monitoring systems, such as beacon counters and geofencing, that can be used in parks. Beacon counters are simple, relatively inexpensive Bluetooth-enabled devices that can be mounted in a variety of locations, interior and exterior, that detect a person's presence through their cellphone signal and relay that information to a central location. Geofences utilize RFID or GPS technology to locate people within larger areas.

Recreational drones are becoming increasingly accepted in park settings, although there is still not much love for them. With advances in technology, reduced prices due to mass production and greater public acceptance, drones are becoming just another type of tech recreation. Fears of some park managers concerning privacy intrusions and safety violations persist, however. Drones are truly a disruptive technology, upending our preconceptions of what this technology may do. However, in parks, the promise of drones in assisting in public safety missions and improving public security continues to make this tech tantalizing.

 **Prediction:** Park and recreation agencies will eagerly embrace the use of technology in 2020 for a variety of purposes, including monitoring of park visitors, biometric identification at entrances to public facilities and programs, and scientific uses, such as surveying fire-prone landscapes and charting the spread of invasive species. Although it is not likely to occur in 2020 just yet, facial recognition software may be coming to parks and recreation sooner than we think, as it already has for retail businesses and law enforcement.

## eSports on the rise

With revenue topping a half-billion dollars per year and a global audience of 400 million annually, eSports are more than a fad. In eSports, spectators essentially sit and watch individuals or teams of players compete in a variety of electronic games. With slick marketing, intensive promotion and exciting competition for participants and audiences alike, this essentially sedentary recreational activity poses a conundrum for parks and recreation. It is almost the antithesis of what we fight for every day — combatting childhood obesity, getting kids on their feet and being physically active.



Despite its sedentary nature, eSports is a form of recreation virtually guaranteed to draw crowds of young people into recreation facilities and venues. eSports events and tournaments have excellent potential for revenue generation and facility utilization. Is it possible for public parks and recreation to convert this enormous potential into a means of promoting health, physical activity and social cohesion for young people?

★ **Prediction:** Several park and rec agencies will sponsor eSports tournaments in 2020, combining digital gaming with supplemental events and physical activity challenges. For participants, this will offer maximum fun in combination with heart-healthy physical activities, gaining the best of what can be an outstanding opportunity for parks and recreation to attract and engage more youth.



### **Investments in park infrastructure finally rise**

As reported in The Wall Street Journal, investments in state and local infrastructure, which have been depressed since the Great Recession of 2008, are rebounding because of increased revenues from local tax receipts that fund much of park and recreation infrastructure, such as buildings, roads and parks.

State and local spending is up nearly 10 percent from 2018, according to data from the Commerce Department, and spending on capital outlays continues to grow, nearly reaching the peak last seen in 2009. Commerce Department data also show that spending on amusement and recreation facilities is up 31 percent from 2018. It appears that economic conditions will remain favorable for new investments in park and recreation infrastructure if local and state tax collections continue to rise and interest rates remain relatively low.

★ **Prediction:** Building on the momentum of the past few years, local and state governments will make even more park and recreation infrastructure investments in 2020 in buildings, playground equipment, roads and bridges, and capital repairs to aging infrastructure, topping the highest level of infrastructure spending since the recession of 2008. Caution: with the predictions of many economists who suggest another recession is on the immediate horizon, it will be critical for organizations to have the foresight to invest in capital improvement funds, embellish reserves and be responsible when it comes to revenue generation and spending in the event of another recession.

***Other trends to keep an eye on include...***



**Dogs:** Dog activities and parks are among the fastest growing park and recreation trends in the country. With more than 90 million dogs in the United States, dog friendly systems can realize a return on investment towards agency revenues and tourism. For many, dogs are regarded as part of the family and as such, it will be incumbent upon park and recreation organizations to become “dog-friendlier” than they may currently be – especially given that the pet ownership market spends more than \$70 billion annually on their furry friends.



**Libraries, health services & social services under one umbrella:** More and more, local jurisdictions are consolidating governmental functions and services. While there are several agencies that have park/schools, a greater collaboration between municipal services for public benefit is here. The consolidation of social and health services with community recreation centers is a no-brainer and combining libraries with community centers makes sense too. Consolidated service centers can incorporate walkable/bikeable access, healthcare, child/ afterschool care into existing parks, providing close-to-home access and a win-win-win for all.



**Micro-mobility devices in parks:** The birth of the “mobility culture” is profoundly changing urban design and personal transportation. E-scooters, e-mountain bikes and other motorized personal mobility devices may vex park and recreation administrators by causing trail-user conflicts, but they open new horizons for people using them. In some cities, they are geo-fencing their parks from e-scooters, while others have been more tolerant and have incorporated bike sharing stations to increase non-motorized transportation and access.



**Non-traditional programming:** “Adult Recess”, cause-related activities and “insta-worthy programs” have all joined Pickleball as the next big things. An article in the Wall Street Journal recently highlighted adult recess in cities where as many as 1,000 people turn out for outdoor adult recess games like tetherball, hopscotch and kickball. Cause-related activities have become popular as well – imagine a local animal shelter sponsoring a 5K run and walk that pairs shelter dogs with participants. And, programs that are “insta-worthy” allowing people to take a cool photo and show off what they are doing on social media in real time are incredibly popular.

*[Source: National Recreation and Park Association]*

## Participation Trends

Despite the many benefits associated with being active, many do not participate. There are several reasons why someone may choose not to participate: disinterest in what is available, convenience of location, and a lack of time are often cited as reasons for not participating. Regardless of the reason, it is necessary that park and recreation agencies understand the underbelly of inactivity so that they may be able to better understand why people do not participate. Further, the consequences of today's high levels of inactivity are significant – health issues like obesity rates, diabetes, and others are not improving yet provide much motivation for parks and recreation agencies to do their part to impart healthy changes in their communities. And while the state of Colorado is considered among the healthiest in the U.S., health indicators are not improving, and the state continues to face declining statistics as it relates to overall health and wellness.

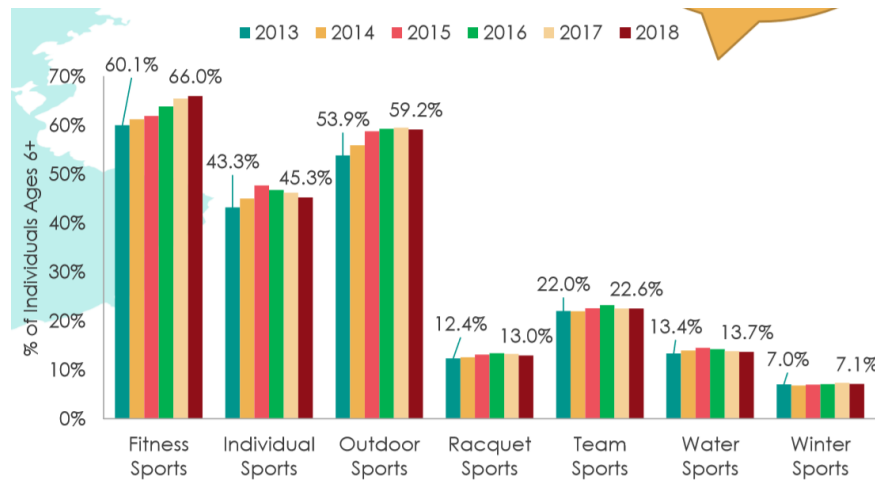
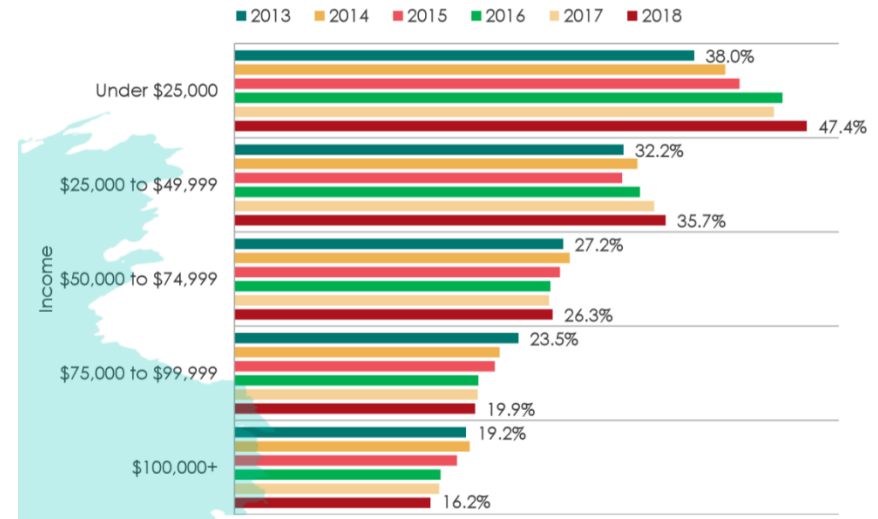


**Total Active Participations (U.S. Population, Ages 6+):** In 2018, overall activity continued its steady climb, gaining 1.6 million participants from 2017. Since 2013, 1.1 million participants, on average, either started or returned to some type of physical activity. While the participation rate appeared flat, this was due to the increase in the overall population year after year. While the population ages 6+ increased, so did the rate of activity. This trend remained hopeful, showing fitness was again being integrated back into the fabric of the daily lives of Americans.

**Inactive to Healthy Activity (U.S. Population, Ages 6+):** When considering the intensity of the activity, 35.9% or 10.8 million Americans ages 6+ participated in high calorie burning activities in 2018. Those in this category reported engaging in high-calorie activities at least three times per week. These activities, when engaged for at least 20 minutes, raised the heart rate to enable calorie-burning, fat shredding, and promoted cardiovascular functions. Those who did these activities “casually,” meaning, participating in a high-calorie burning activity once or twice a week, account for 18.9%, or 56.9 million, Americans. When considered together, over 50% of Americans ages 6+ participated in at least one high calorie activity at minimum once a week. While this rate of activity doesn't quite meet the recommended 150 minutes (5 times at 30-minute intervals) per week, there were 4.8 million more people participating in high calorie activities compared to 2013. This growth was a positive movement in the right direction.

### Inactivity Rates Segmented by Income (U.S. Population, Ages 6+):

Income continued to be correlated with inactivity. The lower the income, the more likely it was an inactive household. Since 2013, household incomes of less than \$50k became inactive 3.2% on average. From 2015, 1.7 million reported inactivity in this income bracket, while the affluent continued to afford fitness boutiques, personal trainers, race entrance fees, among other fitness outlets. These households were exposed to healthier lifestyles, whereas lower economic areas were surrounded by food deserts and provided inadequate education. The lack of healthy, unprocessed foods and a proper educational structure, one that would promote physical education and healthy food choices, fueled the low physical activity levels in these areas.



### Total Participation Rate by Activity Category (U.S. Population, Ages 6+):

Compared to 2013, all activity categories have gained in participation. Fitness and outdoor based activities have increased the most; averaging 1.9% growth over a six-year span. Class-based exercises, such as high impact/intensity training, cross-training, barre, and yoga; cardio equipment usage, such as rowing and stair-climbing machines; and using kettlebells, increased at least 3.5%. The following outdoor activities gained a minimum of 7% average annual increases: trail running, cross-country skiing, stand-up paddling, and hiking. These changes suggested that Americans were adding calorie-burning exercises into their already established activities.

**Participation Interests Among Non-Participants by Age (U.S.**

**Population, Ages 6+):** When it came to what Americans were interested in doing, many reported interests in outdoor activities such as camping, biking, and fishing. For the first time, stand-up paddling drew interest ranking as the top activity for 25 to 44 age groups. Soccer was of interest for the 6 to 12 age group since 2013 and this interest increased each year. Initially ranked 10th, soccer had the most interest from this age group in 2018. Older Americans, aged 45 to 54, ranked camping as their top interest for the last four years. This could be related to potential retirement plans as more retirees now spend their time traveling the country in an RV.

Interest Level	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-17	Ages 18-24	Ages 25-34
1	Soccer	Camping	Camping	Stand-up Paddling
2	Fishing	Fishing	Martial Arts	Swimming For Fitness
3	Swimming on a team	Basketball	Backpacking	Camping
4	Camping	Workout With weights	Snowboarding	Bicycling
5	Martial Arts	Running/Jogging	Climbing	Surfing
6	Basketball	Swimming For Fitness	Kayaking	Kayaking
7	Skateboarding	Golf	Fishing	Workout With weights
8	Bicycling	Volleyball	Bicycling	Running/Jogging
9	Golf	Football	Volleyball	Backpacking
10	Football	Workout with machines	Workout With weights	Wakeboarding

Interest Level	Ages 35-44	Ages 45-54	Ages 55-64	Ages 65+
1	Stand-up Paddling	Camping	Bicycling	Bird/Wildlife Viewing
2	Swimming For Fitness	Workout With weights	Bird/Wildlife Viewing	Fishing
3	Camping	Stand-up Paddling	Workout with machines	Workout with machines
4	Bicycling	Bicycling	Camping	Swimming For Fitness
5	Workout With weights	Swimming For Fitness	Fishing	Hiking
6	Martial Arts	Hiking	Hiking	Fitness classes
7	Basketball	Fishing	Swimming For Fitness	Bicycling
8	Workout with machines	Canoeing	Stand-up Paddling	Camping
9	Volleyball	Workout with machines	Workout With weights	Workout With weights
10	Running/Jogging	Bird/Wildlife Viewing	Canoeing	Shooting

**Participation Interests Among Non-Participants by Income (U.S. Population, Ages 6+):** As discussed previously, income affects the rate of activity. How does it fare against what people aspired to do? Across all income brackets, the activities were the same and rankings were very similar. Fishing, camping, bicycling, and swimming for fitness all ranked in the top four, with the slight exception of those with \$100k household incomes. The big stand out was the interest in outdoor activities including hiking, canoeing, and shooting.

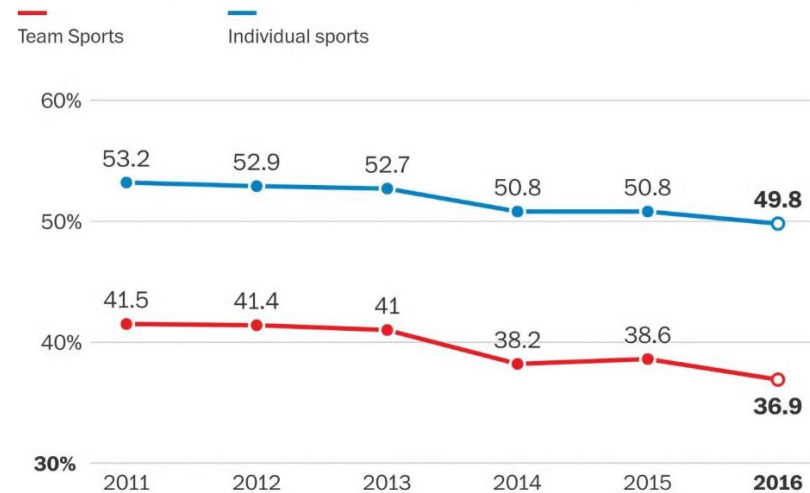
[SOURCE: 2019 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY COUNCIL'S OVERVIEW REPORT ON U.S. PARTICIPATION – The Physical Activity Council's annual study tracking sports, fitness, and recreation participation in the U.S.]

Interest Level	Under \$25,000	\$25,000 to \$49,999	\$50,000 to \$74,999	\$75,000 to \$99,999	\$100,000+
1	Fishing	Fishing	Camping	Camping	Bicycling
2	Camping	Camping	Fishing	Bicycling	Swimming for fitness
3	Bicycling	Bicycling	Bicycling	Fishing	Working out w/weights
4	Swimming for fitness	Swimming for fitness	Swimming for fitness	Swimming for fitness	Camping
5	Working out using machines	Working out using machines	Working out w/weights	Working out w/weights	Fishing
6	Working out w/weights	Hiking	Working out using machines	Canoeing	Hiking
7	Hiking	Working out w/weights	Volleyball	Hiking	Working out using machines
8	Martial Arts	Shooting	Hiking	Basketball	Canoeing
9	Basketball	Martial Arts	Martial Arts	Running/Jogging	Kayaking
10	Shooting	Canoeing	Shooting	Working out using machines	Volleyball

## Youth Sports Trends

Between skyrocketing costs, sport specialization and coaches needing training, youth sports is in the midst of a crisis (Sports & Fitness Industry Association and the Aspen Institute). Athletic participation for children ages 6 through 12 has declined approximately 8 percent over the last decade (according to SFIA and Aspen Institute data), and children from low-income households are half as likely to participate in team sports than children from households earning at least \$100,000.

Experts blame this trend on what they are referring to as an “up or out” mentality in youth sports. Travel leagues that can sometimes cost thousands of dollars to join have crept into increasingly younger age groups. In addition, a shift from the fundamental purpose of youth sport as a fun, social activity to one that has become highly competitive has created a greater level of disinterest on behalf of many children. This declining interest has sent leagues and the non-profits that support them scrambling to attract kids’ attention — often away from video games — and sweeten the deal for parents who sign their kids up for sports.

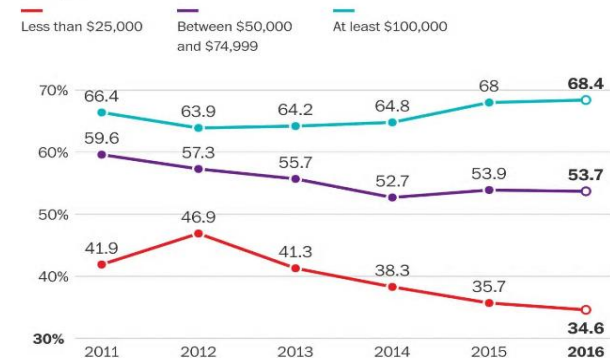


## Youth Sports Participation Continues to Decline

The percent of children who play team or individual sports on a regular basis has declined. Almost 45 percent of children played a team sport regularly in 2008, according to Aspen Institute data. Now approximately 37 percent participate.

### Children who played a team sport for at least one day by household income

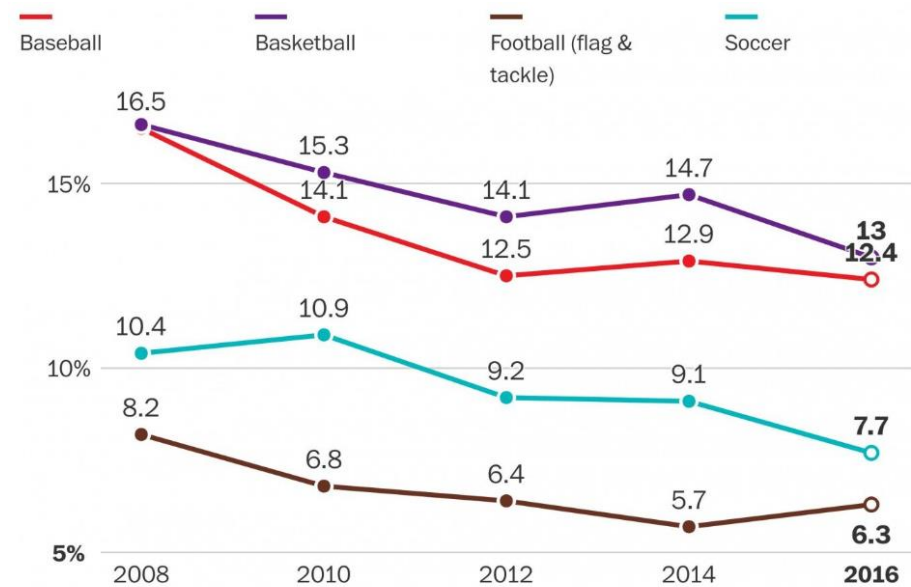
There's a strong correlation between household income and team sport participation, Aspen's data show. Kids from households making less than \$25,000 played one day's worth of team sports in 2016 at half the rate of kids from homes making at least \$100,000.



### The Big “Four” Youth Sports are Declining as Well

Almost every sport the Aspen Institute evaluated is experiencing participation decreases, but none so severely as the “big four”; baseball, basketball, football and soccer.

*SOURCE: The Aspen Institute’s Project Play is comprised of leading organizations that have come together to grow sport participation rates and related metrics among youth. Launched in 2017, the cross-sector group develops shared goals and members take mutually-reinforcing actions to make youth sport accessible to all kids, regardless of zip code or ability. Members of Project Play include Amazon, American College of Sports Medicine, DICK’S Sporting Goods, ESPN, Hospital for Special Surgery, Major League Baseball, National Basketball Association, National Hockey League, NBC Sports / SportsEngine, New York Road Runners, PGA of America, Nike, PHICOR at the City University of New York, Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation, Sports Facilities Advisory | Sports Facilities Management, Sports & Fitness Industry Association, Target, Under Armour, U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee, and U.S. Tennis Association. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Ketchum Sports & Entertainment serve as technical advisors.*



## OPERATING PRINCIPLES





**Operating principles** can go a long way toward minimizing conflict, helping build trust and ensuring that there is focus in managing and operating systems towards affecting a long-term, bigger picture. Essentially, operating principles are the ways in which organizations put values into practice and move the needle to get things done. Operating principles also influence organizational and community culture.

Operating principles provide the opportunity to clearly state what will be done to affect positive change and how an organization will spend its valuable time. This can be liberating for staff as it creates a line in the sand between work that demands attention in contrast to those things that will not.

With operating principles, you can create a strategy that makes sense and is meaningful by way of desired outcomes and intention. This approach to strategy is useful for organizations that want to make their expectations and long-term aspirations clear both internally as well as externally.



## The City of Salida Parks & Recreation Department's Operating Principles

### #1 ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE

### #2 A HEALTHY SALIDA

### #3 QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE

### #4 ACCESS & SOCIAL EQUITY

### #5 CONNECTION through RECREATION

### #6 COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

## #1 ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE

Among the characteristics that differentiate one system from another is its philosophy. An organization's philosophy is a distillation of its desired culture and workings into core operational values and a purpose that direct its management practices. A strong philosophy is a solid way to direct staff when decision-making crossroads surface. It can also serve as a branding tool, making an organization distinctive.

Effective public sector organizations identify and develop clear, concise and shared **values** which reflect both the organization's members' (staff) values as well as those of their customers and communities. An organization's leadership must support and nurture values or their development will have been a wasted exercise. If organizations wish to have values that can make an impact, the following must occur.


- Values guide the development of organizational priorities.
- Staff and governance demonstrate and model values in their decision-making, contributions, and interpersonal interaction.
- Values guide decision.
- Organizational efforts are grounded in identified values.

A **mission** is a statement of purpose. Essentially, it is its reason for existing. The mission should guide actions and decision making through the clarification of purpose. It provides the framework for which an organization's strategies are formulated and developed. Mission statements often include the following elements.

- Services of the organization – the mission answers the question, "What do we provide?"
- The organization's primary stakeholders including specific customers and communities – the mission answers the question, "Who do we serve?"
- How the organization provides value, for example by offering specific types of services – the mission answers the question, "How do we provide services?"
- A declaration of an organization's core purpose – the mission answers the question, "Why do we exist?"



*City of Salida Parks & Recreation Department staff members*



## **SALIDA PARKS & RECREATION**

### **Organizational Values**

1. High standards of excellence & quality service delivery
2. Coalition building/partnering with community agencies to effectively and efficiently utilize resources
3. A commitment to access and social equity
4. Integrity in our work as park and recreation professionals
5. Our work contributes to the community's economic vitality
6. Highly competent and professional staff who are committed to on-going training and development
7. Effective communication through all organizational levels and to our community and customers
8. Responsible and accountable financial management practices that provide strength and resilience
9. Focused efforts on the physical and social health and well-being of our community

### **Our Mission**

**To offer park and recreation services which are essential to the health and well-being of those who live, work and play in Salida. We do this through the provision and facilitation of parks, recreation, open spaces and trails while working cooperatively with other service providers in order to maximize our common resources.**

## **The Critical Importance of Structure**

Good organizational structure and design helps improve communication, increase productivity, and has been found to inspire innovation. It creates an environment where people can work effectively. Most productivity and performance issues can be corrected with an organizational structure analysis and re-design. An effective structure design results in, among other things, clarification of role(s), improved coordination of functions, and improved communication and sharing of ideas. An organization can have sound values, a clear mission, and talented employees, and still not perform well because of a poorly structured organization.

To be effective, an organization's design must be aligned with strategy and the environment in which it operates. It must also have the right management systems, the right flexibility, the right incentives, the right people, and the right resources.

### **Advisory Board Structure**

A properly composed and structured advisory board provides non-binding yet informed guidance and serves as a tremendous ally in the quest for superior governance that is representative of a constituency. The nature of an advisory board gives greater flexibility in structure and management compared to a City Council or similar policy making authority. Unlike a Council, the advisory board does not have authority to vote on policy or bear legal fiduciary responsibilities. Many public sector organizations including park and recreation departments and districts choose to have advisory boards in order to benefit from the knowledge of others and hear from representative citizens or customers.



## Financial Management

Responsible financial management in the public sector has become so much more than just a buzz phrase. It has come to be incredibly profound and meaningful given the ongoing uncertainties with the economy and consumer behavior. Today, financial management in governmental agencies is seen through many lenses including but not limited to:

- It's a fiscal baseline that provides "opportunity" for what it is we can manage well (e.g., if we cannot afford it, we should not be doing it - direct financial resources to the things we should be doing to make an impact)
- It drives how we think about revenues, what we should expect in terms of revenues and therefore, what we are logically able to spend (e.g., 100% CR)
- Innovation plays an important role in how we think about a financial management (e.g., today's dynamic conditions require that we not get bogged down in conventional thinking when it comes to funding sources, therefore, diversifying revenues so there is less dependence on any one tax source)
- Connection with comparative or relative value - essentially knowing that people will pay for what it is they value. (e.g., a willingness to buy a Godiva chocolate rather than a Hershey's kiss)
- Considering a return on investment (ROI), both from the system's as well as the user's perspectives (e.g., this includes not only a financial return but also community impacts)
- A way to measure success – measuring fiscal performance and effectiveness (ROI, relational value, cost recovery, etc.)

## Finite Resources - perspective

*Tragedy of the Commons* is an economic theory by American ecologist, Garrett Hardin (1968) which states that individuals acting independently and rationally according to their self-interests behave contrary to the best interests of the whole by depleting some common resource. It is grounded in the fact that a user receives a direct benefit from some resource yet only receives minimal immediate impact of its exploitation (e.g., overuse or misuse of parks). Fundamentally, individual incentive invites overall ruin.

It is seemingly obvious that a direct link exists between this theory and that of the real issues that park and recreation agencies (and government in general) are facing. At the core of many of these issues are reactive decisions about growth and spending, and special interests willingly served and conceded to compromising finite resources. What is often forgotten or simply ignored is the devastating effect that myopic thinking and self-interest can have on common, finite resources (land, tax dollars, etc.).

Approaches to solving the *Tragedy of the Commons* and therefore how to best manage the issues that compromise finite resources continues to come down to one of two conflicting options. The first is through privatization or private ownership. The second is through Government or public ownership or when the collective rights to the asset are shared with the greater good (e.g., the National Park Service). However, among the more compelling aspects of public ownership is that employees and decision makers do not bear the costs of their actions nor do they receive any value from the good decisions they make. The incentive then to make sound, resource-based decisions is absent.



## Recommended Actions to Further Develop the Parks and Recreation Department's Resilience

- ❑ Continue to engage Department staff and the Board in the further development of the recommended **values and mission** (included on page 43) as warranted. Submit for formal City Council adoption.
- ❑ Among the factors that affect **organizational design** are function, size and life cycle. Given the changes made to the organization in 2019 (shifting from a Recreation and Culture Department to a Parks and Recreation Department), there are structural adjustments that are necessary in order for the human resources of the Department to meet today's needs. These include continued progress towards the complete transition of all parks maintenance employees to Parks and Recreation from Public Works so that it is clear that their primary function in the city is as parks and recreation employees (this can also be fostered by title changes); the creation of a parks manager position; a minimum of one additional full-time parks maintenance employee (to serve and assist in a facility maintenance capacity as well); conversion of a recreation coordinator position to full-time; a full-time guest services position in recreation to improve customer experiences; and titles that reflect the new organization's brand so that clear lines of authority exist.
- ❑ Similar to the issues affecting the organization's structure, the current Recreation Advisory Board does not reflect that of a park and recreation system. It is recommended that the **Board be re-structured** to reflect the new organization's interest and needs. This includes: 1. re-naming of the board to a Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Advisory Board (PROST) or Park and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) aligning with the Department's responsibilities and functions; 2. adding members to include a minimum of seven members with representation from two members who are not required to be city residents aligning with the fact that not all Department funding comes from city residents; and 3. re-opening all positions for application or re-application so that the new Board structure can be set in motion. Also, it is recommended that Board policy include rigorous attendance requirements and that monthly meetings are scheduled and at a time of day (6 p.m. or after) that allows for community members (in particular, those who work) to more freely attend and participate if interested.
- ❑ Develop an improved understanding of **staff roles and responsibilities** and improve communication throughout the Department. This includes but is not limited to evaluation and re-engineering of job descriptions to reflect today's realities, duties and expectations; bi-weekly supervisor/management team staff meetings; and quarterly all staff meetings. [Ongoing]

## Short-term actions 2020-2022

- Further improve **employee satisfaction** levels (leading to trust, perception of safety, higher retention rates, etc.). Efforts can include creating a process for a comprehensive employee on-boarding/training program; development and distribution of an employee satisfaction survey to create a baseline for satisfaction rates; and bi-annual all staff celebrations. [Ongoing]
- Enhance **professional development** training opportunities currently afforded all staff. This includes design of a matrix that details the types of trainings that may be beneficial to staff members based upon their role in the organization, opportunity for advancement, and Department need. [Ongoing]
- Implement the **Department “brand”** across all areas of the organization (written communications, staff attire/uniform, etc.)
- Review and update existing **operating procedures/guidelines** in each work unit. This will require analysis of all existing policies to ensure relevance and identifying missing policies that may be needed to strengthen the Department work. [Ongoing]
- Increase **customer satisfaction** levels. Begin by determining a baseline of current customer/community satisfaction levels (done through the development and distribution of a customer satisfaction survey to find initial baselines). [Ongoing]
- Determine **customer/community “hot spots”** and ensure that staffing aligns with customer expectations of quality service. [Ongoing]
- Develop a comprehensive **cost recovery philosophy, model and policy(ies)** to include specific parameters for the establishment of fees and charges, cost recovery/subsidy allocation expectations based upon beneficiary of services and capital investment. There is also a need for a study and analysis of current taxation sources which support the parks and recreation system and the development of strategies to diversify the type of number of resources the Department needs to sustain itself over the long term. With the recent voter approved 0.25% sales tax increase in November 2018 (Ballot Issue 1A for the Common Ground Fund) earmarked for strengthening forest health, reducing wildfire danger, conserving and supporting working ranches, farms and rural landscapes, and managing the impacts of growth in outdoor recreation, as well as the passing of ballot initiative 5A in November 2019 effectively placing the Salida School District annexation into the Colorado Mountain College (CMC) higher education service area, any additional taxation questions to the citizenry will need to be strongly understood and seen as hugely beneficial to the community if it is to succeed.



# Short-term actions 2020-2022

- ❑ Consistent to investigate **best practices in park and recreation service delivery** to assist the Department in remaining relevant and current in-service delivery efforts and improve customer satisfaction. [Ongoing]



## **#2 A HEALTHY SALIDA**

The “social determinants” of health include the prevailing culture, the physical environment, the schools, the workplace, health care institutions, and public policy. If there are only fast-food restaurants in a neighborhood, if fear of crime is so rampant that people stay indoors and away from playgrounds, or if there are no sidewalks to access schools or parks, then community residents are less likely to have access to nutritious foods and exercise that are essential components of good health.

Social determinants of health are recognized in the health promotion and disease prevention goals set by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Healthy People 2020, which includes as a primary objective, the development of “social and physical environments that promote good health for all.”

Local communities and those who have the power and control to make choices and offer services have a role in crafting policy that impacts individual choices, available options and local health concerns. In fact, some public managers recommend that in any policy-making checklist, resident and community health should be the primary decision-making factor.

There are dozens of ways local government and in particular, parks and recreation agency decisions can impact a community’s health. The provision or facilitation of certain types of services is a thoughtful and intentional way of working towards health impact. And given the enormous amount of data and information we are privy to including statistics about the ever increasing number of our citizens who are sedentary, overweight or obese, or the number of people with diabetes, asthma, and other health concerns, park and recreation systems have a duty to work to affect positive change in their respective communities including but not limited to:

- Sufficient parks, playgrounds and adequate sidewalks to provide access within a 10-minute walk of all homes to encourage exercise.
- Healthy foods in vending/food service areas in government-operated venues.
- Policies that allow public use of publicly-owned recreation facilities (municipal, schools) after hours through cooperative agreements.
- Programs available to engage all ages in physical and social activity.
- No smoking allowed in any park or facility.

*[Source: International City-County Management Association]*

## Recommended Actions to Improve the Overall Health of the Salida Community

### Short-term actions 2020-2022

- Provide opportunities that will **impact the overall health and wellness of the community**. Salida is a healthy community in many ways – with surrounding public lands providing for a natural “outdoor playground” encouraging self-directed activities like skiing, mountain biking, hiking, trail running, etc. And while Salida is a destination and attraction for many outdoor enthusiasts, it is also important to note that there are many Salidans who are sedentary, may be socially isolated or overweight/obese and need assistance to improve their quality of life. [Ongoing]
- Commitment to **increasing participation from under-represented populations** (e.g., older adults -70+, low- income youth and families) are encouraged. This may be accomplished through the development of falls prevention and wellness activities for older adults (70+) and/or specific wellness programs designed for those combating weight issues. These types of services can be explored as partnership opportunities with local agencies and businesses such as (Heart of the Rockies Regional Medical Center (HRRMC) with local fitness facilities like Anytime Fitness or Kim’s Gym as examples. [Ongoing]
- Provide only **healthy foods in vending/food service areas** in any park and recreation facility or program. (Ongoing)
- Disallow smoking** of any kind in all parks and facilities.

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### Mid term action 2023-2025

- Consider locating **bike stations** in strategic locations throughout the community (e.g., downtown; Centennial Park – Chamber of Commerce) offering locals, but more importantly, tourists the opportunity to rent and use bicycle transportation throughout the city. This may reduce traffic congestion and parking challenges in heavy tourism seasons. These types of stations also represent the values and brand of a community – in this case, a physically active city.

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### Long-term action 2026-2029

- Dedicate publicly accessible land at Vandaveer Ranch. Salida has a tremendous advantage over many cities across the country as **ALL residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park**, and the majority of residents live within a **5-minute walk of a park**. However, there are some residents whose access is more limited than others, particularly those who live south of downtown. Give the city’s ownership of the Vandaveer Ranch property, it is recommended that as any future **development of Vandaveer** occur, a minimum of 20-25% of the property (**approx. 20-25 acres**) be dedicated to publicly accessible parkland including trails, and that a commitment be made to create access of that property across Highway 50 safely on foot.

## #3 QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE

### Taking Care of Existing Infrastructure

A new kind of challenge has been emerging and for many years has largely been buried in our national consciousness. Much of our nation's physical infrastructure, including roads, the more than one million miles of pipes beneath our streets, and many parks and recreation facilities are nearing the end of their useful life or are approaching the age at which they require replacement or at a minimum, refurbishment. Chronic inflation which has and continues to inherently affect construction costs coupled with finite funding resources and population growth in some areas of the country demanding expansion are compounding the issue.

Recent data released by the National Park Service (NPS) suggests that NPS needs billions of dollars to recover from their existing maintenance backlog and many local municipal park and recreation systems have millions (and in a few major metropolitan areas, billions) in maintenance backlog due to significant investment in building and development with less interest in ensuring that funds are set aside for ongoing preventative and long-term maintenance needs. Continuing the delay of these necessary investments is resulting in the further degradation of physical infrastructure, increased disruptions, and the chronic condition of being in "catch up" mode. To put this in concrete terms, if an organization has a modest \$10 million dollar deferred maintenance backlog while using a conservative 5% CPI to suggest compounding over time, in 14 years that \$10 million deferred maintenance will result in \$20 million in needed infrastructure improvements if little effort is made to address and reduce the backlog.

### What is a Physical Asset Management Plan?

An **asset management plan** is a strategy for responsibly managing the physical assets of a system. It is a plan needed to direct investment decisions in asset development or build, maintenance, rehabilitation, replacement, disposal, and performance to ensure that the desired levels of service of service and other operational objectives are met. It includes a complete inventory of assets; original cost to build or development, maintenance costs needed (preventative and long-term); life cycle of the asset; replacement costs; and other important data and information.

As an asset management system comes on line, information developed by this strategy will begin to objectively reveal the asset types, locations, and elements that meet community service standards and those which do not. It will also tell a story to the community about where future capital and annual maintenance and operation funds should be allocated to bring the system up to satisfactory levels as determined by industry best practices and the Salida community. Having this information will be critical to direct appropriate funding levels to meet the community's desire to take care of the parks, trails and other physical assets in the current Salida Parks and Recreation system (*working steps for developing a strategic asset management plan are included in the appendices of this report*).

This master plan process shone a light on both the need to prioritize maintaining current infrastructure and the importance of developing a comprehensive asset management program to ensure that all physical assets are cared for over their lifespan. The Department is encouraged to prioritize the maintenance and care of its existing physical assets in order to meet the following three objectives:

**1. Stewardship**

*To ensure the protection of assets (existing and new) for current & future generations.*

**2. Optimization**

*To deliver services while maximizing desired social, environmental, and economic outcomes for the community. The asset system is intended to be driven by cost, risk, and impact in a sound governance and open decision-making framework.*

**3. Relevance**

*To continuously improve the contribution of assets to parks and recreation service delivery and maintain the relevance of assets as service demands change.*



*Exterior of Salida Hot Springs Aquatics Center*



### ***The Need for More Parkland in Salida? - perspective***

In theory, land restrictions limit the buildable supply, tilting construction toward lower densities and larger, more expensive homes. Often, local prerogative and regional need conflict, and policymakers must make trade-offs carefully. When higher income incumbents control the political processes by which local planning and zoning decisions are made, regions can become less affordable as prices increase. Housing assistance programs meant to benefit lower income households may be frustrated by limits on density and other restrictions on the number and size of new units.

When local regulators effectively withdraw land from buildable supplies—whether under the rubric of “zoning,” “growth management,” “conservation” or other regulation or cause, the land and the finished product can become pricier. Caps on development, restrictive zoning limits on allowable densities, and urban growth boundaries all been associated with increased housing prices. The literature fails, however, to establish a strong, direct causal effect just yet.

Salida is in essence, an outdoor playground surrounded on all sides by public lands - and while there is nobility conserving public land and inhibiting development, it may come at a price. And the price being paid can oftentimes be an unaffordable community by many standards. The City’s 5,900 residents are gifted with 18 parks on the city’s interior and 649,508 acres in Chaffee County (~80% of which are public lands – US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and State of Colorado).

## Salida Parks - Criteria for Pocket, Neighborhood, and Community Parks

### City of Salida Pocket Park Designation



Pocket parks provide opportunities for passive outdoor recreation at a sub-neighborhood scale. Pocket parks shall be located within 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 shall be (A) less than 1 acre in size; (B) centrally located within neighborhoods served; (C) bordered on at least one (1) side by public streets (excluding collector and arterial streets) to provide easy public access, visual surveillance, and parking; (D) accessible from the surrounding neighborhoods using sidewalks and/or trails; (E) owned and maintained by the City, an HOA or metropolitan district; (F) platted with a dedicated public access easement; and (G) constructed to City standards and specifications for design and construction of public improvements (per Land Use Code). [Chisholm Park pictured at left]

### City of Salida Neighborhood Park Designation



Neighborhood parks shall provide places for recreation and social gathering within approximately 1/2 mile from most residences being served. Neighborhood parks may include multi-use lawn areas, picnic areas, playground, small game courts, community gardens, open playing fields and facilities as appropriate. Neighborhood parks shall be (A) not less than a minimum size of one (1) acre; (B) centrally located within or adjacent to the neighborhood(s) served; (C) bordered on at least two (2) sides by public streets (excluding arterial streets) providing easy access, visual surveillance and parking; (D) accessible by sidewalks and/or trails; (E) accessible from the surrounding neighborhoods using sidewalks and/or trails; (F) owned and maintained by the City, an HOA or metropolitan district; (G) platted with a dedicated public access easement; and (G) constructed to City standards and specifications for design and construction of public improvements (per Land Use Code). [Alpine Park pictured at left]

### City of Salida Community Park Designation



Community parks serve multiple neighborhoods and focus on the recreational needs and interests of the entire community. They provide opportunities for organized recreational activities as well as community events and gatherings. Community parks shall be (A) a minimum size of 5 acres; (B) sited in an area level enough to accommodate play fields or recreational facilities as needed; (C) able to maintain a balance between programmed activity facilities and other community activity areas, such as performance areas, festival spaces, gardens, water features, etc. that have broad appeal to the community; (D) accessible from a collector or arterial street; (E) integrated into the City’s trail system; (F) owned by the City; and (G) constructed to City standards and specifications for design and construction of public improvements (per Land Use Code). [*Riverside Park pictured at left*]

### City of Salida Regional Park Designation



Regional parks serve an entire community and focus on a broad range of recreational needs. They provide opportunities for organized recreational activities as well as community events and gatherings and offer both passive and active recreation and leisure opportunities. Regional parks shall be (A) a minimum size of 25+ acres (with exceptions based on use characteristics, special features, etc.) Large tracts of land are often necessary to provide natural resource-based recreation opportunities and protect the natural resources for long-term use for outdoor recreation. This criterion will not be exclusively used to determine whether a park is regional. Parks of less than 25 acres may still be determined regional based upon other criteria. (B) able to serve a regional clientele (as opposed to mostly local) including drawing tourists from outside the local area. (C) able to provide outdoor recreation

facilities and activities that are primarily natural resource based (camping, picnicking, hiking, swimming, boating, canoeing, fishing, nature study). (D) able to provide for unique or unusual geologic features, historically significant sites, watersheds, or parks containing characteristics which may be of regional or statewide significance. (E) accessible from a major arterial street; (F) integrated into the City’s trail system; (G) owned by the City, State or Federal government; and (H) constructed to City standards and specifications for design and construction of public improvements (per Land Use Code). [*Union Pacific Open Space (partial) pictured at left*]



### City of Salida Parks, Open Space and Trails – Classification, Acreage/Mileage & Amenities

Park, Open Space or Trail	Classification (pocket, neighborhood, community or regional park, trail)	acreage	miles	Adult Fit/Play Equipment	Basketball Court(s)	Children's Playground	Grill	Park Bench(es)	Pickleball Court(s)	Picnic Table(s)	Restroom(s)	Pavilion	Sand Volleyball	Sport Field(s)	Tennis	Walking Path/Trail
Alpine Park	neighborhood park	2.6	x	x	👍	👍	x	👍	x	👍	👍	x	x	x	x	x
Centennial Park	community park	7.2	x	👍	👍	👍	👍	x	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	x	👍	x
Chisholm Park	pocket park	0.45	x	x	x	👍	👍	👍	x	👍	👍	👍	x	x	x	x
Crestone Park	neighborhood park	1.75	x	x	x	👍	x	x	x	👍	x	👍	x	x	x	x
K Street Park	pocket park	0.36	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	👍	x	x	x	x	x	x
Loyal Duke (Dog) Park	pocket park	0.8	x	x	x	x	x	👍	x	👍	x	👍	x	x	x	x
Marvin Park	community park	15.8	x	x	x	👍	x	x	x	👍	👍	x	x	👍	x	👍
Mac Witty Park	pocket park	0.18	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
McCormick Park	pocket park	0.4	x	x	x	x	x	👍	x	x	👍	x	x	x	x	👍
Monarch Spur Park	pocket park	0.12	x	x	x	x	x	👍	x	👍	x	x	x	x	x	x
Nuno Park	pocket park	0.55	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	👍	x	x	x	x	x	x
Picketts Park	pocket park	0.13	x	x	👍	x	x	x	x	👍	x	x	x	x	x	x
Riverside Park	neighborhood park	2.88	x	x	x	👍	x	👍	x	👍	👍	👍	x	x	x	👍
Skate Park	pocket park	0.13	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Thonoff Park	neighborhood park	1.6	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	👍	x	x	x	x	x	x
Trailside Park	pocket park	0.45	x	x	x	👍	👍	👍	x	👍	x	x	x	x	x	👍
Union Pacific Open Space	regional park	64.43	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
CR 120 Trail	trail	x	0.42	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	👍
CR 140 Trail	trail	x	0.4	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	👍
CR 160 Trail	trail	x	0.55	x	x	x	x	👍	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	👍
Holman Trail	trail	x	0.22	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	👍
Lowry River Park/Trail	pocket park	0.5	0.53	x	x	x	x	👍	x	x	👍	x	x	x	x	👍
Monarch Spur Trail	trail	x	2.45	x	x	x	x	👍	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Stryker Trail	trail	x	0.16	x	x	x	x	👍	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Two Rivers Trail	trail	x	0.5	x	x	x	x	👍	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

## City of Salida Parks, Open Space and Trails – What’s Next?

The master plan process included the proposed development of a comprehensive approach to parks, open space and trails. Historically, the City has assumed leadership for local, urban parkland management and maintenance while Salida-area Parks, Open-space & Trails (SPOT) has been the volunteer led organization to facilitate development and maintenance of city-wide trails, and Salida Mountain Trails (SMT), another volunteer led organization has taken the lead to development and maintain bike and hiking trails in the mountain areas surrounding the city.



### What is SPOT?

Salida-area Parks, Open-space & Trails (SPOT) is a volunteer, non-profit organization with a mission to promote the creation, preservation, improvement and appreciation of parks, open space and trails in the greater Salida area. For over twenty years, SPOT has worked with citizens and the municipalities of Chaffee County to enhance recreational opportunities in the area, including helping to plan and develop the Salida

Trail System and supporting trail maintenance and ecological restoration through its community based Adopt-a-Trail Program. Other ongoing projects have included historic preservation, public park improvements and open-space acquisition.



### What is SMT?

Salida Mountain Trails (SMT) is a volunteer, non-profit organization committed to building and maintaining sustainable, non-motorized, multi-user trails on public lands near the city of Salida. The primary mission of Salida Mountain Trails is to create a real trail system, meaning a mapped and signed network of linked trails. To date, SMT has created some 23 miles of trails with much more in the works. Salida Mountain Trails’ core commitment is to maintain and sustain all the trails around Salida.

While working alongside these two organizations, a proposed parks, open space and trails system has been designed to include a number of proposed trails and connections throughout the City of Salida. These include in-City trail connections/extensions and improvement priorities as detailed on the map included on the following page.

#### A FOCUS on COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY

- Extend the Monarch Spur trail to Centennial Park
- Continue the County Road 140 trail from CR144 to the airport and beyond
- Enhance the wastewater treatment plant bridge for pedestrian access
- Continue the trail from Vandaveer to County Road 111
- Create improved access to Vandaveer including CR 107 access
- Extend the trail along Holman Avenue
- Create a trail along CR 105 (Two Rivers Subdivision) to Hwy 50
- Connect the trails between Starbucks, Rex Circle and Trailside subdivisions
- Extend the trail to Hutchinson Homestead on Highway 50
- Safe Highway 50 crossings to Vandaveer (minimum of two)
- Develop the Opal and Harold Trail adjacent Vandaveer



-The proposed South Fork Arkansas River Trail is included in Chaffee County's Comprehensive Plan and has been an expressed community interest for many years.  
 -Changing needs and opportunities will require that this map remain relevant and kept up-to-date as any development occurs.

## Centennial & Marvin Parks – Salida Gateways

A requirement of the master plan process was the City’s directive to develop and design concept plans for two of most significant public parcels of property owned by the city of Salida, Centennial and Marvin Parks. Concept plans are ideas in image form of what something “could be”. They are simply a way to visualize a space and the opportunities it presents.

An integrated approach to the design of concept plans for Centennial and Marvin Parks and a comprehensive community outreach strategy was used to address the ‘challenges of change’ and work to create a vision for vibrant parks of the future. Working alongside both the community as well as staff, concept designs for both sites were achieved.

### Centennial Park – fun facts

Location – 410 W. Highway 50

Acreage – 7.2 acres (per Chaffee County Assessor)

Current amenities – Centennial Park serves as host site for the Salida Hot Springs & Aquatics Center, pickleball/tennis courts, a playground, pavilion, and other recreational amenities. The park is also the current home for the Salida Chamber of Commerce.



### Centennial Park Concept Plan

The future of Centennial Park will create an active hub for the entire community of Salida and visitors alike. As you come into town on Highway 50, your eye will be drawn to the many new exciting elements that have been designed within the park. Some of these elements include Community/Recreation Center, a 16,000 SF skate park, a newly designed and expanded playground, and splash pad. Centennial Park will truly be a destination for everyone. The Chamber of Commerce and newly added tennis/pickleball courts will remain at their current location, as well as the Salida Hot Springs Aquatic Center. Soaking pools will be added on the west side of the aquatic center. Gateway signage features will be added along Highway 50 to enhance the park as a community gateway. Families can visit this park and utilize a variety of spaces for different interests. The skate park, playground and splash pad are centrally located for a variety of ages to play within viewshed of the shelter/seating areas. Parking will be improved throughout and added around the new community/recreation center. The vision of Centennial Park is to be a community park that meets the needs and desires of the entire community.



**KEY**

- ① DOG RELIEF AREA
- ② ANGLED PARKING
- ③ ENTRY SIGNAGE
- ④ COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTER
- ⑤ SPLASH PAD
- ⑥ SHADE SAILS
- ⑦ PLAYGROUND
- ⑧ SOAKING POOLS
- ⑨ RELOCATED PAVILION
- ⑩ SKATE PARK
- ⑪ EXISTING INDOOR HOT SPRINGS POOL
- ⑫ EXISTING PLAZA/ENTRY
- ⑬ EXISTING TENNIS/PICKLEBALL COURTS
- ⑭ HOT SPRINGS WATER FEATURE/SIGNAGE
- ⑮ EXISTING RESTROOM
- ⑯ EXISTING STORMWATER AREA
- ⑰ LOADING/DROP OFF ZONE
- ⑱ MAINTENANCE GARAGE



**CENTENNIAL PARK - FINAL MASTER PLAN**

OCTOBER 2019 • CONTACT: CHRIS HICE PLA, (720) 636-8302



The 2008 Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Master Plan addressed Marvin Park and its uses and possible future uses. The plan referenced the park's importance to specific sports groups as it serves as host to the only baseball/softball fields in the city, and the historic value that it represents to the sports community. The 2008 plan also referenced Marvin Park as a community gateway park suggesting that with its location and access to the Arkansas River and size, it is a premier and valuable piece of public parkland. These same realizations exist today and were identified as important considerations as part of the visioning and concept plan design for Marvin Park.

### **Marvin Park Concept Plan**

Marvin Park has been transformed to a nature oriented multi-use gateway park on the north side of Salida. As you come into town on Highway 291, you will pass by a parking lot meandering through the site and creating easy access to all park elements. This newly paved parking lot will also serve as a potential location for the community's farmers market or other events. Multiple shelters have been added as well as upgraded and modernized restroom facilities. Native grass berms are strategically placed to frame out different areas of the park. These areas include a multi-use field, pavilion event space, and a nature center located near the center of the park. During the public input process, enhanced river access was at the top of the list for potential improvements. Because of this, the trail along the Arkansas River is enhanced by adding points of respite, connecting to the existing trail system (State of Colorado's Sands Lake), enhancing existing landscape, and opening up viewsheds. A boat launch has been added on the east side of the site to accommodate multiple size river crafts. Adjacent to the boat launch, a playground has been added as well as a facility for rentals and changing rooms for those coming to enjoy the river activities. In this concept, Marvin Park can be used by a variety of users while simultaneously connecting people directly to the river and nature.

### **Marvin Park – fun facts**

Location: 900 W. First Street (off of Highway 291).

Acreage: 15.8 acres (per Chaffee County Assessor)

Current amenities: Marvin Park currently serves as host site for four baseball/ softball fields (one of which is the primary field for Salida HS baseball), a playground and restrooms.

Marvin Park is one of two City-owned park parcels along the Arkansas River (the other being Riverside Park).

Current utilization of the baseball/softball fields that occupy Marvin Park is ~16% (974 hours per year/486 participants) per Department staff's analysis of site use).





**MARVIN PARK - FINAL MASTER PLAN**

OCTOBER 2019 • CONTACT: CHRIS HICE PLA, (720) 636-8302



### Recommended Actions to Improve the Quality of Salida's Park & Recreation Infrastructure

- ❑ Inclusion of Salida Parks - **Criteria for Pocket, Neighborhood, and Community Parks** (included on pages 55 & 56) in the city's updated Land Use Code.
- ❑ Up to date **fees in lieu and impact fees** should be include in the revised Land Use Code as well as parkland dedication requirements. Funds from fees in lieu and impact fees should be directed to a Capital Improvement fund set aside for park maintenance.
- ❑ It will be incumbent upon the city to lead efforts to facilitate and approve the design, development and/or maintenance of all public lands within their domain moving forward. This can be accomplished through formal (updated) **partnership agreements with** organizations like **Salida-area Parks, Open Space and Trails (SPOT) and Salida Mountain Trails (SMT)**.
- ❑ Creation of **consistent signage** which identifies the asset and includes the city's logo and brand across the city on any public lands and properties owned by the City of Salida.
- ❑ It is recommended that a **master plan and subsequent concept plan be developed for the Vandaveer Ranch property** as soon as possible. This site is seemingly a strong candidate for a community park and trail connections to the rest of the city park system. Vandaveer may also serve as a candidate for consideration as a location for the placement of activity fields to accommodate a number of field sports (e.g., soccer, baseball, lacrosse). Additionally, the site may present a partnership opportunity with the Salida School District (a high school baseball site, the new Colorado Mountain Community College campus, etc.).
- ❑ Council adoption of a **Capital Investment policy**, as well as an **Acquisition, Development and Divestment of Parklands and Properties policy**. These should both include language pertaining to the establishment of a capital investment fund specifically for parks and recreation infrastructure.



**Mid term  
actions  
2023-2025**

- Develop a comprehensive **physical asset management plan** which includes a comprehensive inventory of physical assets, cost to install, life cycle, replacement costs, anticipated preventative and long-term maintenance costs, etc. The asset management plan should be complemented by a conditions assessment and amenity and quality study to assess restoration, renovation, programming and possible facility and/or park expansion needs. [Ongoing]
  - Improve community connectivity in accordance with **proposed trail connections** (on pages 58 & 59).
  - Alignment of proposed trail development(s)** with the Salida Regional Transportation Plan, the Chaffee County Comprehensive Plan, and the Chaffee County Multimodal Transportation Plan.
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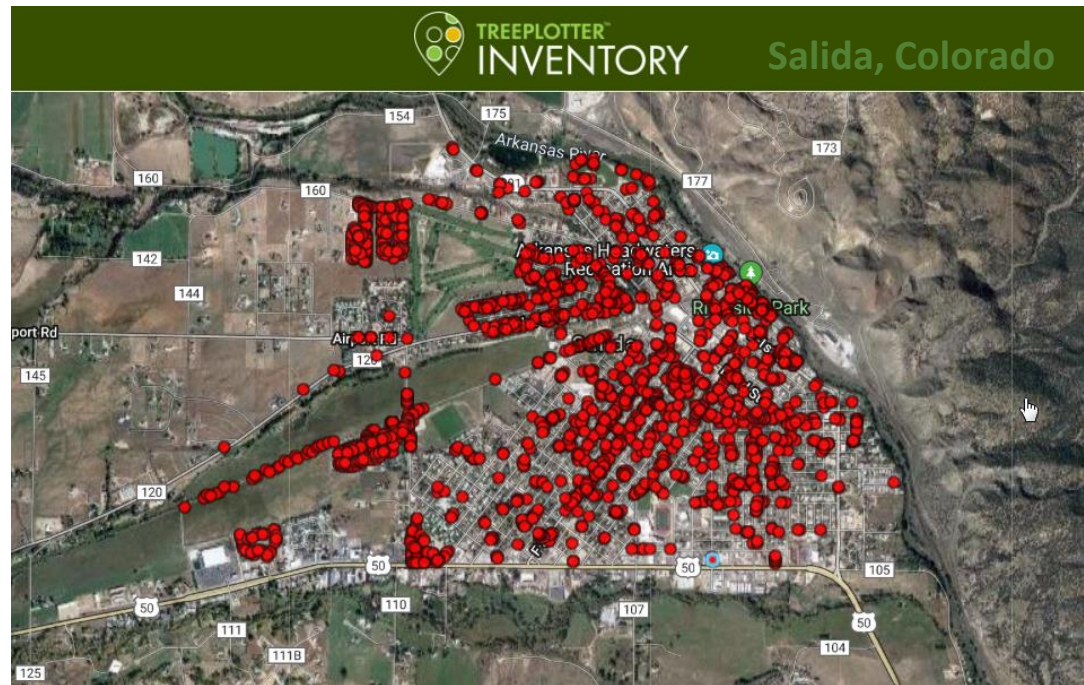
**Long-term  
actions  
2026-2029**

- Pursue the **development of Centennial and Marvin Parks** per the concept plans included in the master plan (pages 61 & 63). This will require the identification of not only construction dollars, but the funds necessary for the ongoing operations and maintenance of the parks and any recreation facilities included in each park.
- Future park development and construction of **Centennial or Marvin Parks** will be coordinated around **environmental issues** and concerns such as wildlife protections (e.g., Osprey nesting), water use, and other resource considerations.
- Any future expansion of the pool to include a “community center” may warrant creativity and the possibility of adding small **transitional housing** to the back of the facility. This can include two to three small units (150-200 sq. ft.) to be used by City employees as affordable and attainable housing continues to be critical quality of life issue in the community and affects City staff as much as others in the community.
- Identify land that can be dedicated to park use and specifically, multi-use fields that can accommodate activities such as baseball, soccer, lacrosse, and other types of field sports in order for the Marvin Park concept plan to be realized. The **current sport fields at Marvin Park** should not be removed until other multi-use fields are constructed and available for play.
- Integrated Pest Management policy – work towards complete elimination of the use of any pesticides, herbicides and fungicides in and around public parks, trails and open space. There are models within the state of Colorado that can be emulated.

## #4 ACCESS & SOCIAL EQUITY

Considerable research exists to support the physical, emotional, economic, and environmental benefits of parks and recreation. Youth with easy access to quality parks and recreation services have improved academic performance, increased self-esteem and confidence, and improved health conditions including decreases in stress, both immediately and in later years. Property adjacent to green space has a higher value than property just 1,000 feet away. Research documents the reduction of health care costs as a result of participation in fitness programs. Parks drive economic development through tourism and housing and commercial development that occur adjacent to parkland. Workers who participate in exercise programs achieve higher levels of relaxation, productivity, and concentration at work. And there is a strong correlation between individuals with access to quality parks within a 10-minute walk and lower rates of obesity, diabetes, depression, and anxiety.

Specific to the natural environment, the conservation and planting of plants and trees improve air quality through the absorption of negative particulate matter, including reducing carbon, reducing human's respiratory issues. Neighborhoods with lower levels of tree canopy have higher summer temperatures and higher utility bills. These neighborhoods also experience higher rates of mortality and higher rates of disease like asthma compared to neighborhoods with high levels of tree canopy. Trees can reduce temperatures by 2-9 degrees Fahrenheit. Plants and trees manage and filter stormwater and improve the quality of water through natural filtration systems. These same plants and trees reduce soil erosion, mitigate flooding from extreme weather, and mitigate noise pollution.



### Need for Equitable Investments

Even with all of the research, public funding for parks, especially in distressed communities, is limited and not keeping up with demand. Especially critical is that historic disinvestment and underinvestment in low-income communities and communities of color have left

some sub-communities without access to quality parks and recreation opportunities and with park assets in need of significant upgrades. These levels of disinvestment and underinvestment have resulted in these communities having significantly greater health issues and health care costs, poorer air and water quality, neighborhoods with higher summer temperatures and utility bills, higher levels of noise pollution, poorer academic performance, and lacking the neighborhood economic benefits that quality parks and recreation services can bring to communities.

The extensive positive impact that parks and recreation provide to individuals and communities justifies park funding that is adequate in order to meet these demands and see beneficial outcomes. These evidence-based facts support that parks and recreation make healthier communities. This continues to be the critical argument for parks and recreation funding today. Contemporary, geospatial-based research provides new place-based information on how funding needs to be distributed for existing parks, new parks and their operations and management. Research documents that the most vulnerable – low-income and minority populations as well as youth and elderly – benefit most from quality parks and recreation services. Therefore, it is critical that equitable investment be strategically applied to affect those with the greatest needs.

### **Data-Driven Equity Approach**

Applying a data-driven equity approach to park and recreation investments is fact based. Without the data, those with the loudest voices or with the best access to decision makers can drive where park and recreation investments are made. By combining thoughtful data analysis, proactive community engagement and an assessment of community need and interest, park and recreation investments can be prioritized for neighborhoods with the greatest needs, ensuring that all members of a community receive access to quality parks and recreation services. This data and community-driven approach enables transparency and democratizes how funds are allocated for park maintenance, rehabilitation projects, capital projects, recreation programming, and the creation of new parks and facilities, and ensures that objective measures are applied to park and recreation service improvements.

### **Applying Data-Driven Equity Approach for Salida Park & Recreation Investments**

Through the master planning process, the demographics of City of Salida were examined. This analysis included a look at the distribution of low-income households, older adult population, youth population, households by ethnicity, and walkability to parks across the city. By examining this data, some key findings about the demographic breakdowns of the City of Salida have been identified. They are as follows.

## Investment considerations to support a commitment to social equity

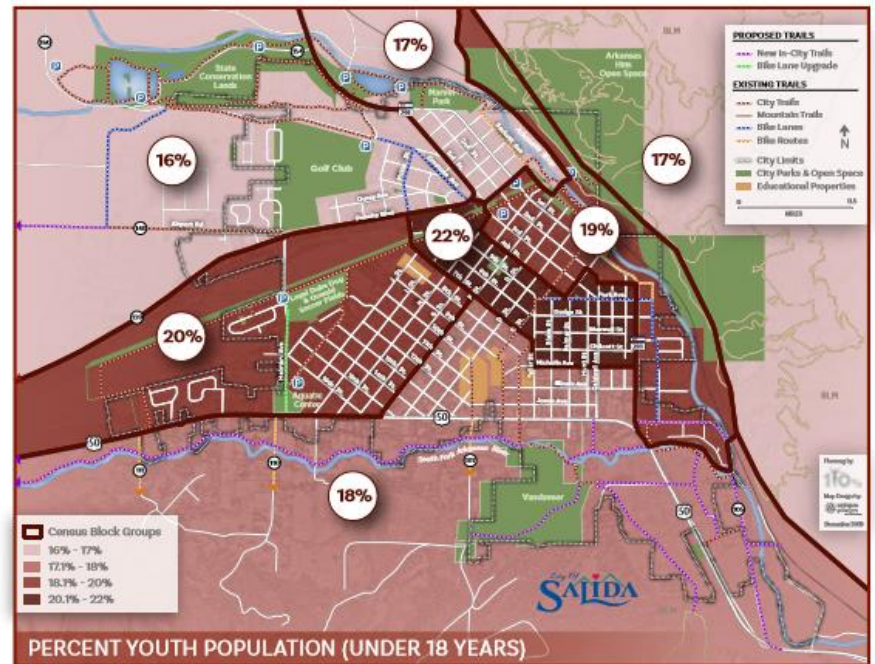
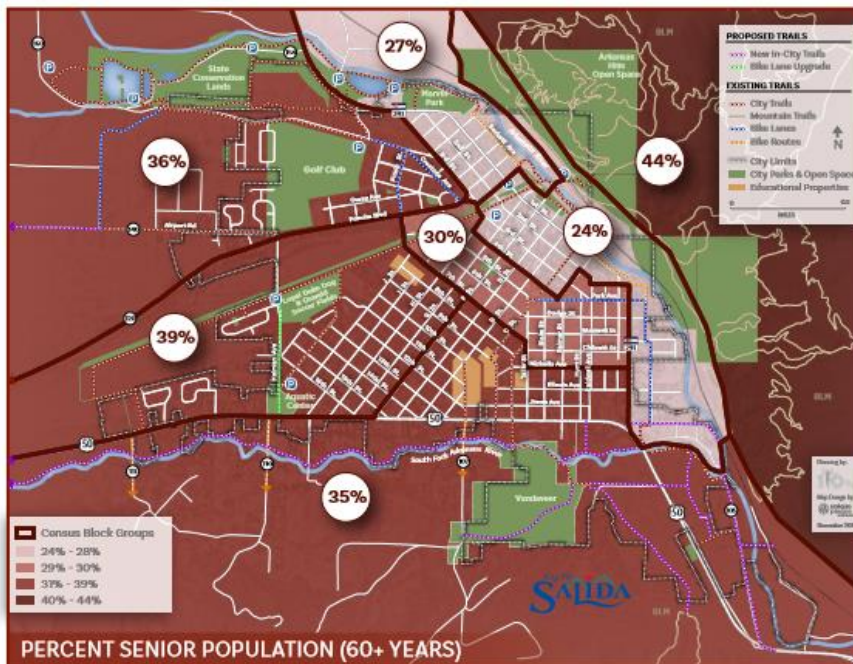
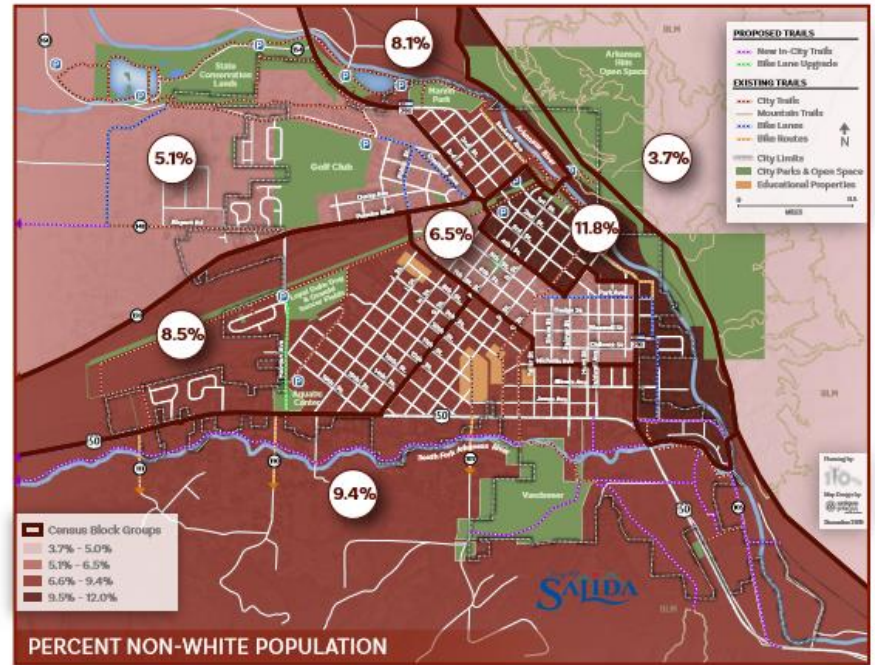
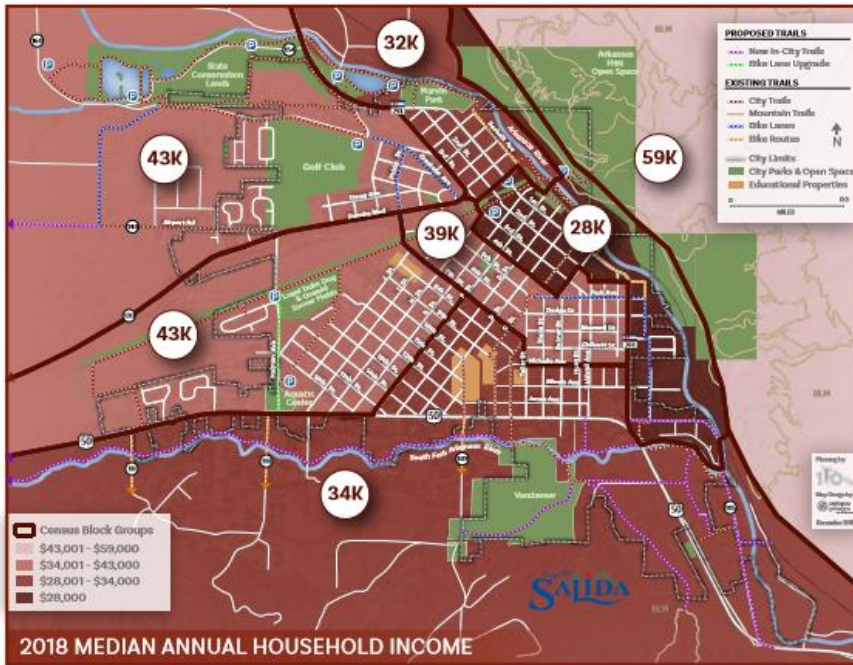
- There is generally a broad distribution of youth throughout the city.
- The southeast section of Salida (just east of downtown) has the highest percent of youth.
- The greatest percent of older adults live in the western section of the city.
- The highest percent of low-income residents live within the downtown core and to the SE of downtown east of Oak Street/Colorado State Road 291.
- The highest percent of high-income residents live southeast of the Arkansas River.
- All Salida residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park, and the majority of residents live within a 5-minute walk of a park.
- The south, southeast section of Salida (south of downtown) has the lowest income.
- The south, southeast section of Salida (south of downtown) has the highest non-white population.
- The south, southeast section of Salida (south of downtown) has the lowest tree cover.

### A 10-minute walk to what kind of park?

Salida residents are all within a 10-minute walk of a park or open space. Only a small percentage of cities, large or small, across the United States can boast this statistic. But a 10-minute walk to what kind of park? And in what condition? Does it have the right amenities that the surrounding residents want or need? A park amenity and quality study assesses restoration, renovation, programming and possible park expansion needs and is among the recommendations of this planning effort.

### Health data

Health data is generally available at the city or county scale and not at the neighborhood or even address level due to confidentiality reasons. It would be helpful when doing data-driven analytics to have higher resolution health data at the neighborhood scale to compare/correlate park access to health statistics. Most health outcomes cannot be directly correlated to the presence or absence of parks or greenspace, but qualitative and visual inspection provides insights that can help the city understand where parks can be a part of the solution where health outcomes are of concern. The city can work with Heart of the Rockies Regional Medical Center (HRRMC) and Chaffee County Public Health to create data at a scale that is aggregated but still useful for making neighborhood-level decisions while maintaining confidentiality for individuals. With this data, the city can track and correlate health outcomes and park access over time.



### Recommended Actions to Improve Access & Social Equity for the Salida Community

- ❑ Annual, **consistent data collection** is critical to be able to respond to the changing demographics and needs of neighborhoods and the community as a whole. It is worth considering analyzing health statistics, unemployment rates, and other important data in the future to further refine decision making. These types of analyses can be strengthened by working with various Chaffee County and state offices (e.g., public health) to collect data annually in order to stay current.
- ❑ Educating the community on the data the Department has and uses to **make informed decisions** is important for building buy-in to the findings and commitment to implementation. Extensive and consistent community outreach and engagement will be essential to ensuring that data aligns with the reality on the ground, and that any process the Department undertakes is a success and builds ownership of the results within the community.
- ❑ Analyze and **update the reduced rate/scholarship/needs based assistance program** to ensure 1) the program has a clear set of operational guidelines; 2) that a clear and easy to understand application process is in place; 3) that staff are familiar with the program and process; 4) that sufficient funding to support the system is dedicated annually (calculated based upon the approximate number of individuals in the community at or below poverty level multiplied times the amount per person the City wishes to provide); and 5) the program is directly marketed to those who likely have the need for the service (consideration of a partnership with Chaffee County Health and Human Services to direct market to those in need).
- ❑ Embellishing the provision of some foundational services like expanding upon community gardens to provide healthy foods to community members who have less access to healthy options is a basic way to **assist those in need**. Alternative programs might include a collaboration with a local garden to allow youth in the community to plant, harvest and sell produce at the local Farmers Market.
- ❑ The Salida Tree Board is an advisory board charged with representing the community as it relates to tree coverage, canopy and health in the city. There appears that there is insufficient focus on **tree management and maintenance**, tree health and future planting strategy(ies). It is recommended that the Department, Department Advisory Board and Tree Board work together to engage in discussion and planning efforts specific to tree maintenance and management practices, and that the two Boards advocate for tree canopy in the city where canopy is sparse. [Ongoing]

**Mid term  
action  
2023-2025**

- ❑ It is recommended that the Department initiate an **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan** analysis and study in order to become 100% compliant with today’s U.S. Department of Justice standards.

**Long-term  
action  
2026-2029**

- ❑ In order for the City of Salida to have **equitable park and recreation access**, the south/southeast area is in need of more park and recreation investment. This area has the highest low income and non-white populations in the city. Even though residents living in this area are within a 10-minute walk to a park, the parks are small, do not provide the amenities the residents want or need and there is a major physical barrier to access (e.g., the busy Oak Street/CO State Road 291 corridor or those who live closest to the Vandaveer Ranch property yet do not have safe access across Highway 50). This area also has the lowest tree canopy cover in the city as referenced in this image from the *Colorado Treeplotter Inventory*, with the red dots representing trees. In order for all citizens to experience a healthy, livable community, it is recommended that the city identify and prioritize funding specific park and recreation investments in this geographic area.



## #5 CONNECTION through RECREATION

Social fabric is a metaphor used to describe a community's connectedness and the level at which community members interact with one another and access support in formal (i.e., government services) and informal (i.e., community clubs or groups) ways through various means.

These means include those that are inherently natural within a community (e.g., mountains, lakes, rivers) and those that are consciously "human-made" in order to create a more cohesive and supportive community (e.g., sidewalks, trails, recreation centers), referred to as the built environment. There are also designed activities and programs (e.g., community events, social gatherings, communications) that can influence how a community interacts and engages. All can have far-reaching impacts on the health, safety and socialization of community members.



The built environment includes elements such as housing, the presence of parks or green space, road quality, the availability of sidewalks, bike lanes, and hiking/walking trails, and "walkability". Natural geographic factors affect a built environment and include things like rural versus urban settings, natural population migration, and other physical geographic features. The impact of the built environment on physical and mental health is well documented. Improved "walkability" has been shown to encourage residents to spend more time outside engaging in light to moderate physical activity which directly impacts their overall physical health, most notably obesity and chronic disease. Although limited, there are also studies that show the impact of the built environment on mental health, particularly the relationship between neighborhood environments and depression.

Designed activities and programs are other methods for creating and encouraging community connectedness. Community events, social gatherings and effective communications have the ability to bring people together and share a mutual sense of enjoyment or understanding.



When people belong to and participate in common social networks, they are more likely to feel a sense of commonality and oneness. *Enhancing the social fabric of a community*, then, means to provide and stage more and better interactions between members of a community so that they can make more friends, be more involved, be more willing to help someone when there is a need, and be inspired to keep their community a positive, pleasant place to live, work and play.

For the City of Salida, Colorado and the parks and recreation opportunities it offers, the inherent natural environment includes the mountains and the Arkansas River where locals and tourists alike share their love and appreciation for hiking, biking, rafting and kayaking, and skiing at Monarch Mountain. The built environment includes the local trail system fostered by local volunteer organizations like Salida Mountain Trails (SMT) and Salida Open Space and Trails (SPOT), and the City's municipal parks and the Hot Springs Aquatics Center. And there are many designed activities and programs offered by a number of service providers in the community – whether it be the local Chamber of Commerce and the community events they provide (e.g., Brewers Rendezvous) to the annual FIBArk event that draws thousands each year from all across the country, to the summer concert series offered by Salida Parks and Recreation, social connections are encouraged with regularity. The challenge lies in continuing the tradition that has been created and encouraging even more people to participate. Particularly those who, for whatever reason, may not feel as though they belong.

It is also important to understand that efforts to create connectedness should not rely solely on natural and built environments nor on planned activities. The social benefits realized from consistent communication and outreach cannot be overstated. People naturally gravitate to human connection through messages and conversation and enjoy knowing what is happening. This in essence is how they become one with their community.



**Recommended Actions to Generate Greater Connection through Recreation**

- ❑ **Allow dogs** in parks on-leash and add “mitt-mutts” at all park locations. This does not include allowing dogs at community events (such as the farmers market, summer concerts, etc.)
- ❑ Develop a **Youth Advisory Council** to advise the Department in decisions affecting service provision for area youth.
- ❑ Create methods to **strengthen community outreach** efforts including regular presentations at local service club functions, the development of a speakers’ bureau, quarterly public gathering providing updates on Department services and happenings, annual community satisfaction surveys, contests on social media, and other innovative ways to keep the community engaged with the Department and one another.
- ❑ Evaluate activity trends that may **engage under-served populations** in Salida. As an example, eSports is an activity that is becoming increasingly popular across the U.S. and appears to have the inherent strength of engaging teens and young adults who have historically been difficult to engage in formal recreation. Despite its sedentary nature, eSports is a form of recreation likely to draw crowds of young people together into facilities and a way to engage youth like never before.
- ❑ Investigate the merits of adding **cause-related events** to the Department’s menu of services. Events such as those suggested in the trends section of the report (e.g., 5K Pet Adoption Fun Walk/Run) have the propensity to connect people with a noble cause or effort and appeal to their values and beliefs.
- ❑ Evaluate the merits of recreation **activities, events and policies which encourage socialization** (e.g., parent-child/grandparent-child dances (note: the name Mother-son or Father-daughter Dance may discourage different types of families from participating; park access for dogs as Salida has a significant population of dog owners and “guardians”).
- ❑ Recreation activities and events that are **designed for children with working parents**. These should not be daycare services, rather, activities focused on health, wellness, skill development, etc.

**Long-term action 2026-2029**

- ❑ Consider a study to evaluate the merits of converting F Street between County Road 291 and 2<sup>nd</sup> street into **a pedestrian mall** (a public park) – appeal to the ongoing and growing concerns regarding traffic congestion in the downtown area.

## #6 COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Given today's competitive landscape in the park and recreation or leisure services market, as well as the fact that consumer and customers are growing more and more finicky, a thoughtfully constructed and managed partnership can be a fantastic strategy. When done right, partnerships are advantageous collaborations that position participating agencies to efficiently utilize resources leading to cost effective service delivery. This is of critical importance in all sectors today as resources are more often than not scarce and sacred. Well planned and managed partnerships also provide for enhanced innovations and credibility. A partnership can result in just about anything two or more consenting agencies want it to be. It can be about bridging markets, cooperative capital development or improvements, or collaborative service delivery.



A sampling of potential partner organizations

### Things to consider when selecting a partner organization with which to work

- *Reciprocal benefit...*any organization that has something another organization needs is a potential partner. Reciprocal benefit is critical to an effective partnership – if it does not exist, failure is inevitable. It is important to recognize that any alliance comes with a cost – whether it be time or money, there is some type of necessary investment. So, it pays to be selective when you are picking a partner.
- *Don't settle...*an alliance needs to be “profitable”. This can be in terms of the bottom line, enhanced image, community impact or some other benefit. If there is no advantage to the partnership, it's best not to pursue.
- *Think long-term...*partnerships are strategic relationships that are meant to benefit those involved for a minimum of three to five years. Try to project whether a would-be partner will provide a net benefit in the distant future. Partnerships should be strategic with an interest in the long term.
- *Relationships are key...*this is a business relationship and the people behind the business are the ones that will make or break the partnership. Just like in a marriage, it is hard to recover if you pick the wrong partner or spouse. You can bring a relationship to its knees if you make a bad choice!
- *Stay away from a questionable reputation...*it is important to research any prospective partner. Are they credible? Do they have honest dealings with others? What is their reputation? What are perceptions about their service and standards? If their values are not in sync with your organization's values, it is best to stay away.
- *Are your eyes on the same ball...*potential partners must have the same or similar fundamental purpose (mission) or the alliance will likely fail.

## Unfair competition - perspective

A continuing problem today is the lack of clarification between which sectors should be producing and providing or facilitating which services, therefore, developing important service line boundaries.

Service lines have become blurred due to a variety of factors including the emergence of new services not offered before, reactive response to customer demand or losses, ambiguity in organizational missions like “something for everyone” philosophies, or reduced availability of public funds leading to greater dependence on revenue generation. These blurred lines can result in response like that of the public sector engaging in unfair competition practices by offering similar or like services to those of the private sector when demand does not justify supply.

The resource advantages the public sector has including immunity from taxation and the ability to charge lower fees for similar or like services due to receipt of tax dollars provide government with an unfair advantage in these circumstances.

Unintended consequence to the public sector? As businesses are bankrupted due to lost markets, the tax base is reduced affecting the very revenue source the public sector is dependent upon. And as the tax base diminishes, the tax rate will likely increase. Thus, when governments enter into inappropriate functions lost tax revenues result and heavier taxation can result.

## A Park and Recreation Providers Network

In an effort to set the stage for the future of partnerships intended to support the leisure services industry in Salida, a first *Parks and Recreation Providers Community Network* gathering was co-hosted by the City of Salida Parks and Recreation Department and the Salida School District.

The primary purpose of this meeting was to introduce the idea of a collaborative of park and recreation service providers in Chaffee County, and to begin work around identifying the types of services currently provided in the County and by which organizations they are being offered (*provider information is available in the appendices of this report*).



**Recommended Actions to Improve & Create Community Collaboration**

- Continue to **partner with the Salida School District** as opportunities present themselves as the unity shown to the community by these two influential entities working alongside one another will model what can be to others.
- Develop and maintain a comprehensive **park and recreation provider inventory** as the result of the **Park and Recreation Provider Network (PRPN)**.
- Continue to **host PRPN meetings** (3X per year – winter/spring/fall).
- Identify potential partners** in the PRPN that would be interested in collaborating to best use limited resources and reduce duplication of service.
- Analyze all Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) and Joint Use Agreements (JUA)** ensuring that reciprocal benefit is identified. In addition, include specific terms in each such as dates for review and renewal, and terms and conditions for termination if necessary. Note that agreements should not extend beyond a three-year term without evaluation and re-negotiation.
- Develop relevant MOU/JUA templates** for use in re-negotiated or new agreements.
- Re-negotiate existing MOU's/JUA's** (golf course, community center, SPOT, SMT, Salida Schools) to ensure that fair and reciprocal benefits are included.
- Investigate the merits of new MOU's/JUA's**. Examples include: Anytime Fitness or Kim's Gym - a multi-use pass for access to both their fitness facilities as well as access to the Hot Springs and Aquatic Center; HRRMC – therapeutic programs for older adults; Guidestone – embellishment of community garden programs; Farmers Market – youth gardening program and social enterprise; Boys & Girls Club – Out of school days; etc.



PLAY  
IS  
LOVE  
IN  
ACTION

SALIDA  
BUSINESS