

CHAPTER 3: PARKS

Introduction

Parks help to provide opportunities for health and wellness, social engagement, and community building. They reinforce a sense of community by offering places for members of the community to gather and interact and contribute to the community’s quality of life. The Town of Erie provides several well-maintained parks that are geared for both neighborhood and community use. Among them are a variety of property types including small pocket parks, larger neighborhood parks, and a community park.

Park Inventory & Types

The park and recreation system inventory was described in Chapter 2 and can be found, along with corresponding maps, in **Appendix 1**. The Town’s park system includes pocket parks that are designed with basic amenities to serve the immediate neighborhood and larger neighborhood parks that expand the range of amenities and are sized for larger, entire-neighborhood and community events. In addition, the Town has set aside land and funding for the new Erie Community Park. This park will provide services and amenities at a community scale that are not otherwise available at the pocket park or neighborhood park level. At build-out, the park will include a ballfield complex, a multi-purpose field, a community green, picnic areas, tennis courts, an amphitheatre, and a destination playground. (At the time of this plan, Phase 1 of the Erie Community Park was planned, funded, and in design.)

The following is a summary of Erie’s existing park inventory:

- Forty-five (45) Pocket Parks
- Nine (9) Neighborhood Parks
- One (1) Community Park

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Following are descriptions of each park type:

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

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

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

Alternative Providers

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

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

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

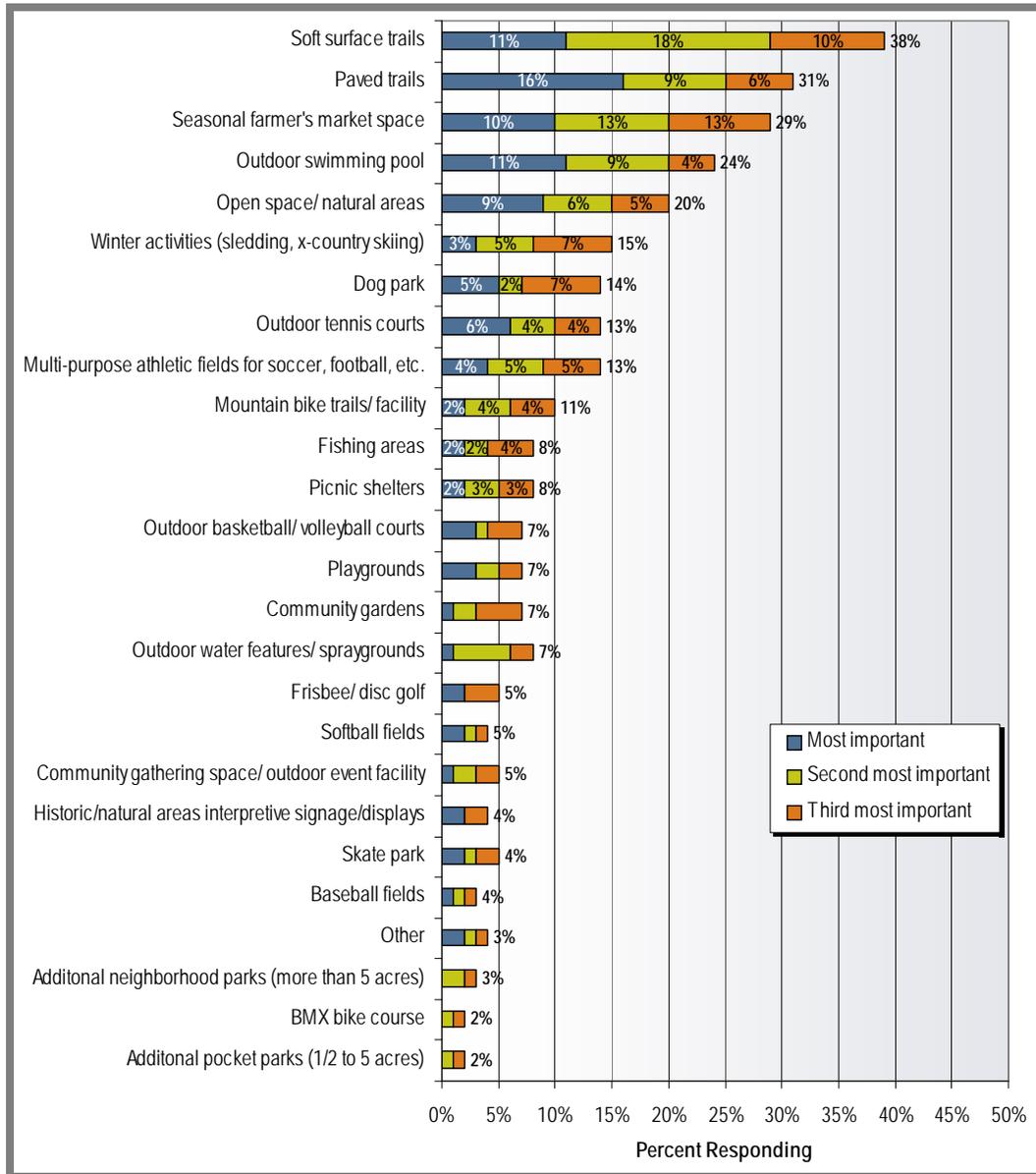
Survey & Other Stakeholder Input

Highlights of community survey findings regarding parks are listed below:

- Neighborhood parks and pocket parks followed Town trails and the Erie Community Center in frequency of use.
- Seventy-three percent of survey respondents rated neighborhood parks as very important, and 75 percent rated neighborhood parks as mostly or completely meeting the needs of the community.
- Pocket parks rated high in importance, but slightly lower than neighborhood parks (with 67 percent rating pocket parks as very important, and 72 percent indicating pocket parks are mostly or completely meeting community needs).
- Respondents stated that they use the following other parks and facilities: parks outside of Erie (44%), HOA facilities (38%), golf courses (30%), and dog parks outside the Town (23%).
- Quality, maintenance, and number of parks the Town maintains received positive ratings.
- Out of a list of statements regarding preferences and values for parks and recreation amenities, respondents indicated a high level of agreement with statements pertaining to having a park within walking distance of their home (85%), a mix of parks that incorporate both native and manicured park types (84%), and active recreation opportunities in parks near their homes (82%).
- Park facilities that rated in the top ten outdoor facilities to add, expand, or improve (after trails) included seasonal farmers market space, outdoor swimming pool, winter activities (sledding, cross-country skiing), dog park, outdoor tennis courts, and multi-purpose athletic fields as shown in **Figure 5**.



Figure 5: Most Important Outdoor Facilities to Add, Expand, or Improve (Survey)



Source: Erie Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Master Plan Survey, 2008

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

Demographics, Trends, & Benchmarking

A summary of demographics, trends, and benchmarking findings and how they relate to parks are highlighted in this section. Detailed information can be found in the companion *Findings Report*.

- The Town of Erie’s population is projected to increase by 57 percent by 2015, from 17,000 in 2008 to 26,650 in 2015. The Town’s parkland and open space dedication requirements are key to ensuring that parkland and open space is added to meet the demands of new residents as Erie grows. By 2013, the 5-14 and 45-54 age groups are projected to make up the highest percentage of Erie’s population. Park facilities such as loop walks, playgrounds, and athletic fields will be important to serving these age groups.
- Research from the University of Illinois shows that trees, parks, and green spaces have a profound impact on people’s health and mental outlook. U.S. Forest Service research indicates that when the economic benefits produced by trees are assessed, total value can be two to six times the cost for tree planting and care.
- The Trust for Public Land, in the report entitled “*The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space*” makes the following observations about the health, economic, environmental, and social benefits of parks and open space:
 - Physical activity increases with access to parks.
 - Contact with the natural world improves physical and physiological health.
 - Residential and commercial property values increase.
 - Parks and open space add value to a community and support economic development sustainability.
 - Parks and open space enhance tourism benefits.
 - Trees are effective in improving air quality and act as natural air conditioners.
 - Trees assist with storm water control and erosion.
 - Crime and juvenile delinquency are reduced.
 - Recreational opportunities for all ages are provided.
 - Stable neighborhoods and strong communities are created.
 - Physical activity makes people healthier.
- Benchmarking data collected specifically for purposes of this **Master Plan** from comparable Colorado agencies (Boulder, Brighton, Broomfield, Lafayette, Longmont, and Windsor) shows that Erie is tied for the lowest developed park acres per 1,000 residents with Longmont, while Boulder has the highest (**Figure 6**). However, Erie ranks 4th in developed park acres per 1,000 when HOA-maintained pocket parks are added (approximately 48 acres). The Town’s parkland dedication requirements will ensure that parkland is increased to keep pace with Erie’s growing population.

Figure 6: Benchmarking – Developed Park Acres per 1,000

City	Developed Park Acres	Developed Parks Acres per 1,000 Persons
Boulder, CO	1,406	15.0
Broomfield, CO	537	11.0
Lafayette, CO	230	9.3
Brighton, CO	210	6.8
Windsor, CO	98	6.2
Longmont, CO	423	5.1
Erie, CO	87	*5.1

*With the addition of 48 acres of HOA-maintained pocket parks the acres per 1,000 persons increases to 7.9, ranking Erie 4th in developed park acres per 1,000.

Level of Service Analysis

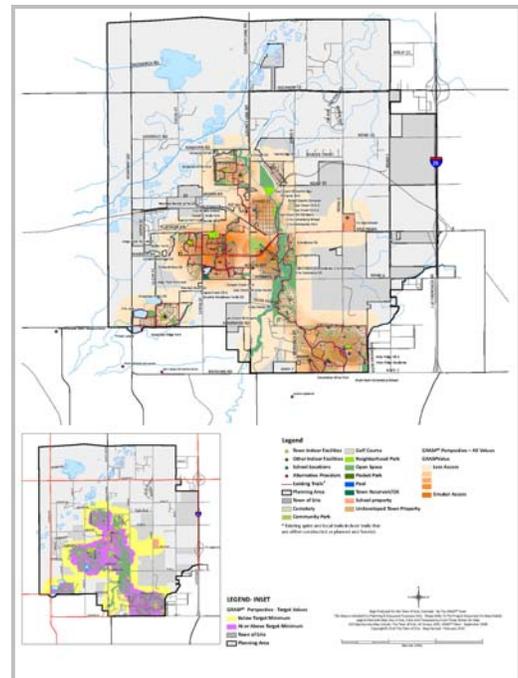
The Town of Erie has consistently high levels of service throughout the community with the majority of residents having neighborhood access to some level of service provided by the parks, recreation, open space, and trails system. Erie has good distribution of service within its newer neighborhoods,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

The highest concentration of service is located in the geographic center of Town where the Erie Community Center and future Erie Community Park are located as shown to the right in *Perspective B: Walkable Access to All Components* as a thumbnail for reference only. A larger map is included at the end of Chapter 2. *Note: for the purposes of this study, future components that are very likely to be in place within the next 3-5 years and have funding for design and construction were included. This applies in particular to Erie Community Park.*

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

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

Generally, Erie parks provide comfort and convenience features such as seating, shelter, dog pick-up stations, and picnic tables. Other comfort and convenience features such as drinking fountains, bicycle parking, and restrooms are not available in pocket parks but are provided in many neighborhood parks.



Policy Framework for Parks

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Park Dedication Requirements

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The *1997 Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan* identified a "tot lot" as a minimum size of .5 acres and service area of one per 80 housing units. The *Municipal Code, Title 10* changed the park type name from "tot lot" to "pocket park" and changed the service area of a pocket park to .5 acres per 1,000 residents. With these new parkland dedication requirements in the *Municipal Code, Title 10*, the Town is shifting away from a large number of small pocket parks to a more moderate distribution of pocket parks with larger acreage dedicated to neighborhood parks and community parks. The new model is more sustainable from a level of service and maintenance perspective. *Resource Map C: Parks and Recreational Trails Recommendations*, located at the end of this chapter, shows the general park types and locations for new parks based on projected population build-out.

When compared to a select number of Colorado communities, Erie has the highest parkland dedication requirements of 8.5 acres per 1000 residents, followed by Parker (7.5 acres per 1000), Ft. Collins (seven acres per 1000), and Brighton (six acres per 1000). Additional parkland dedication information can be found in Chapter 5 of this **Master Plan** and in the companion *Findings Report*.

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

Based on a review of Erie’s *Impact Fee Study*, it appears that current impact fees are not sufficient to finance the Level of Service set by the Town for parks and recreation capital programs or facilities. According to the *Findings Report*, the current fees collect only 40 percent of the estimated current cost to develop parks, open space, and trails (See *Findings Report*, Chapter 5.E.). As Erie takes on a review of its impact fees, consideration should be given to including a pro-rata share for community parks and in some cases trails, open space, and development of community level facilities such as sports complexes and recreation centers. (See *Funding and Sustainable Operations* section in Chapter 7 for more information and recommendations.)

Ownership, Design & Construction, Maintenance/Replacement Options

Pocket Parks

Ownership and Maintenance/Replacement

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

Design and Construction

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

Neighborhood Parks

Ownership and Maintenance/Replacement

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

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

Design and Construction

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

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

Community Parks

Ownership and Maintenance/Replacement

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

Design and Construction

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

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

Park Classification & Design Standards

Pocket Parks

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

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

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

Neighborhood Parks

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

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

Community Parks

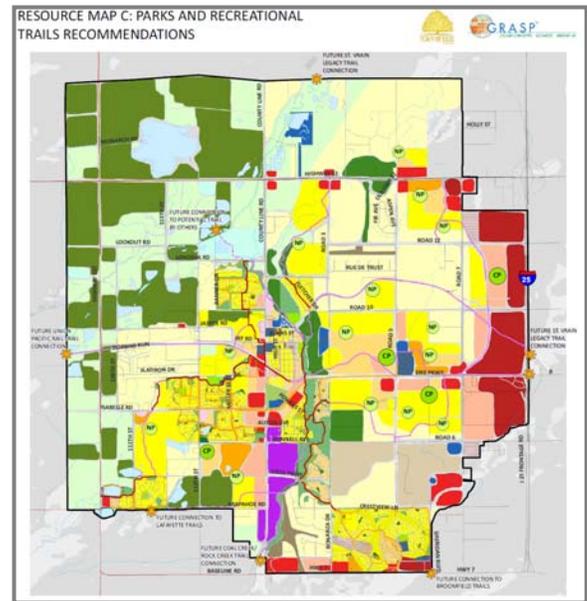
Community parks serve multiple neighborhoods (typically within one [1] to one-and-a-half [1 ½] miles) and focus on the recreational needs of the whole community. They provide opportunities for self-directed and programmed recreational activities as well as community events and gatherings. Community parks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

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

Park Design Standards

Location

Park design and development begins with the selection of a site. *Resource Map C: Parks and Recreational Trails Recommendations Map*, shown to the right as a thumbnail for reference purposes, identifies the general location of potential park sites within the Erie Planning Area. A larger map can be found in at the end of this chapter. Only larger neighborhood parks and community parks are illustrated in the recommendations map because of their larger service radius. Pocket parks are more numerous and site specific and will be determined at the time of each development's platting and/or design. The number of parks shown is estimated from projected population numbers in those areas. The final number and size of future neighborhood parks and community parks are dependent on actual residential development. The location of future parks on the map is general in nature and is subject to final development plans. As each neighborhood develops, specific park locations will be determined in the context of the overall neighborhood design.



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

Site Analysis

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

Connectivity

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

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

Park Priorities – Capital Improvement Plan

Following is a list of desired park improvements based on park projects identified in the Fiscal Year 2009 budget document with additional projects identified through this **Master Plan** process. The desired park improvements are represented by short, mid, and long-term timeframes.

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

These priorities and timeframes should be evaluated annually during the budget process based on funding opportunities and evolving community needs. These improvements are consistent with the GRASP® analysis of where additional or improved parks are needed.

The following criteria for project need should be considered when reviewing and prioritizing park capital improvement projects.

- Correcting public hazards (as needed).
- Providing an equitable level of service to existing residents.
- Maintaining levels of service as new growth occurs.
- Providing for the replacement or improvement of existing parks and recreation assets as needed.
- Implementing the goals and policies of the Town.
- Meeting changing community needs.

In addition, refer to *Resource Map C: Parks and Recreational Trails Recommendations* at the end of this chapter for potential locations of future community and neighborhood parks. These should be added to the Capital Improvement Plan as development occurs, additional parkland is acquired and funding is available.



Table 1: Recommended Park Capital Improvement Priorities

RECOMMENDATION	TIMING/ PRIORITY**
Short Term (1-2 years)	
Erie Community Park - Phase 1	Short-Term
Coal Creek Park Master Plan	Short-Term
Park Signage	Short-Term
Mid Term (3-4 years)	
Reliance Park - Phase 2	Mid-Term
Erie Community Park - Phase 2	Mid-Term
Coal Creek Park - Phase 1	Mid-Term
Canyon Creek Filing 6 Park	Mid-Term
Erie Commons Linear Park	Mid-Term
*Long Term (5+ years)	
Canyon Creek Park Phase 2	High
Coal Creek Park - Phase 2	High
Northridge Open Space Parcel	Low
Erie Reservoir Improvements	Low
* Long Term Park projects are grouped by priority level and not designated in order of anticipated completion.	
**Timing and priorities are dependent on availability of funding and evolving community needs.	
The timing and priority level of the following parks are dependent on private subdivision development and availability of funding.	
Bridgewater Community Park	TBD
Morgan Hill Neighborhood Park	TBD
Flatiron Meadows Neighborhood Park	TBD

Erie Community Park – Phase 1

Located north of the Erie Community Center, Phase 1 includes the construction of four lighted adult/youth softball/baseball fields, four lighted tennis courts, three playgrounds, lighted multi-use field, community green, a restroom and shelter building, a concession/shelter/restroom building, hard and soft surface trails, picnic areas, and additional parking . Overlot grading will be designed and completed for the entire site as part of Phase 1. These improvements are being constructed in the Summer/Fall of 2009 and Spring 2010.

Coal Creek Park Master Plan

This item includes master planning with a public input process to generate a vision and plan for the future of Coal Creek Park, which may include expansion of the skate park area. Some existing uses for Coal Creek Park may be diverted to the new Erie Community Park once it is built out. As the only neighborhood park in the downtown area, it is important for Erie to create a unique role for Coal Creek Park and incorporate it as a gateway between Coal Creek and the historic downtown. This item does not include construction documentation.

Park Signage

Improvements include the installation of entry/identification and rules and regulations signs for parks and open space areas, including Reliance, Longs Peak East and West, Arapahoe Ridge, and Country Fields. Signage will help create a sense of community as well as help users to locate and identify the sites when participating in recreational activities. Signs also allow emergency personnel to identify the site when responding to calls.

Reliance Park – Phase 2

Phase 2 includes the construction of a multi-purpose field, parking lot expansion, trail extensions, a dog park, along with landscape and irrigation improvements. Phase 1 improved 5.46 acres. Phase 2 will improve the remaining 13.25 undeveloped acres. The project has been designed, but some design aspects need to be resolved. Potential impacts of the floodway will need to be considered in the design.

Erie Community Park – Phase 2

Phase 2 includes design, construction documentation, and construction of the amphitheater, destination playground, and east parking lot. The northwest parking lot and trail connections to Erie Commons Linear Area will be phased depending on the construction of Maxwell Street and further development of Erie Commons.

Coal Creek Park – Phase 1

This item includes construction documentation and construction of first phase improvements identified through the Coal Creek Master Plan process. Phase 1 will most likely include construction of facilities and amenities related to the unique role of the park as identified in the master plan, updates to some amenities, and access and parking improvements.

Canyon Creek Filing 6 Park

This item includes construction of athletic field and parking facility south of Austin Avenue and west of County Line Road.

Canyon Creek Park Phase 2

This phase includes demolition of practice fields and parking area, development of a trail and landscape improvements, installation of irrigation, and construction of multi-purpose fields. The ditch with underground pipe may need to be enclosed. The undeveloped park area is 15.26 acres west of the ditch. Due to anticipated funding constraints, this project is likely to be completed over multiple years.

Coal Creek Park – Phase 2

This phase includes construction documentation and construction of the second phase improvements identified through the Coal Creek Master Plan process. Phase 2 will most likely include Coal Creek improvements and enhancement, a trail connection from the park to Coal Creek’s spine trail through the construction of a bridge/culvert, and gateway improvements for the park for travel between Coal Creek and the downtown area. *Note: The design must consider floodway requirements.*

Northridge Open Space Improvement

Improvements include reclaiming the 40-acre parcel north of Reliance Park as a native grass area to enhance passive recreation opportunities for a growing population in that area of Town.

Erie Reservoir Improvements

Recreational amenities were added at Erie Reservoir in 2007 to enhance public access and the angler and hiker experience. Phase 2 includes adding two jetties to provide access during lower water levels creating an improved year-round experience for users.

Pending Timing of Private Subdivision Development:

Morgan Hill Neighborhood Park

This item includes design and construction of a new neighborhood park in the Morgan Hill subdivision.

Flatirons Meadows Neighborhood Park

This item includes design and construction of a new neighborhood park in the Flatirons Meadows subdivision.

Bridgewater Community Park

This item includes design and construction of a new community park in the Bridgewater subdivision.

Recommendations

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

Strategies:

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

Actions:

- A. Adopt the *Pocket Park Design Standards* (at the end of this chapter) into the *Municipal Code, Title 10*. (Developers may seek alternative equivalent compliance for components not listed.)
- B. Every two years, or as needed, review amenities in pocket parks that future survey and public process participants identify as important, and update *Pocket Park Design Standards* accordingly.
- C. Evaluate and incorporate new relevant component options every two years, as recreation trends change, to allow for diversity of amenities that will best serve the surrounding population.

P.1.2. Adopt a policy in which the Town of Erie designs and constructs neighborhood and community parks. The Town may contract with a developer to provide this service to Town standards.

Actions:

- A. Utilize *Resource Map C: Parks and Recreational Trails Recommendations* (located at the end of this chapter) for approximate future neighborhood park locations. (Also refer to the *Natural Areas Inventory* and other tools referenced in Chapter 5 of this Plan to avoid locating developed parks in high value natural areas.)
- B. Update the *Municipal Code, Title 10* (Section 10.6.3.B.4) to reflect revised characteristics of neighborhood parks to be dedicated. The policy changes include:
 - 1) That the Town shall be responsible for the design and construction of neighborhood parks unless otherwise agreed in writing.
 - 2) That developers shall be responsible for constructing curbs, gutters, storm sewers, and roads adjacent to the park site, as applicable, and stubbing utilities including water, sewer, and electricity to the park property line.
- C. Add cost of grading, turf grass, irrigation and water taps, and raw water fees for the neighborhood park into an updated Park Impact Fee. These costs are currently the responsibility of the developer per the *Municipal Code, Title 10*. (See Funding and Sustainable Operations Recommendation F.1 in Chapter 7 of this Plan.)

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

Actions:

- A. Utilize *Resource Map C: Parks and Recreational Trails Recommendations*, located at the end of this chapter, for approximate future community park locations. (Also refer to the *Natural Areas Inventory* and other tools referenced in Chapter 5 of this Plan to avoid locating developed parks in high value natural areas.)
- B. Complete design and construction of future phases of the Erie Community Park.
- C. Consider a future community park in the Bridgewater subdivision across from Erie High School to include amenities such as an outdoor pool and a skatepark as identified in the Erie Community Park master plan public process.

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

Actions:

- A. Review and update Town of Erie *Park Construction Standards and Specifications for Design and Construction of Public Improvements* annually.
- B. Expand the Town of Erie *Park Construction Standards and Specifications for Design and Construction of Public Improvements* to include site furniture and installation; fall surfaces; playing fields and courts such as baseball, softball, tennis etc.; swing chains coating, and playgrounds.
- C. Adopt a playground materials requirement that prohibits PVC coated materials on playground components (under Section 1073.05). Remove current requirement: "All Platforms, Landings, Walkways, Ramps, Protective Barriers, Guardrails, and Transitional Play surfaces shall be PVC coated."

P.1.5. Adopt a policy identifying the level of restroom service required for each park type, open space areas and trailheads as follows:

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

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

Strategies:

P.2.1. Clarify when the Town will begin maintenance of a developer-built neighborhood park (when applicable). The current *Municipal Code, Title 10* states that the Town shall own and maintain neighborhood parks, and the Town policy (dated 12-5-05) states that the Town will maintain a neighborhood park built by a developer once the Town begins programming in the park. (At the time of this **Master Plan**, Kenosha Park and Lehigh Park, Town-owned neighborhood parks, were maintained by the development and not programmed by the Town.) *Note: Transfer of neighborhood park maintenance would occur by a formal resolution by the Town Board of Trustees.*

Actions:

- A. Specify a warranty period by which the maintenance of a developer-built neighborhood park will be transferred to the Town. This ensures predictability for both the development and the Town in planning for maintenance budgets. Availability of funding may be considered in determining the length of the warranty period. The recommended warranty period is two years unless other factors dictate a one-year warranty period. Less than one year is not recommended.
 - B. Interpret the Town policy (dated 12-5-05) that a neighborhood park only be constructed when the Town intends to program (based on increased population growth and demand for facilities and services).
 - C. With the agreement of the relevant HOA or Metro District, develop a timeline for transfer of maintenance responsibilities for Kenosha Park and Lehigh Park to the Town by a formal resolution of the Town Board of Trustees.
- P.2.2. Amend the *Municipal Code, Title 10* to require basic standards for pocket parks (e.g. playground safety, landscape upkeep, etc.). Include language in development agreements in accordance with these maintenance standards.
- P.2.3. Amend the *Municipal Code, Title 10* to require that the level of service of HOA or Metro District-owned and maintained public pocket parks will be maintained over time with all equipment and amenities in good working condition. Include language in new development agreements in accordance with this amendment.

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

Strategies:

P.3.1. Research and respond to regional trends in conjunction with community interests identified in this planning process (i.e. farmers market, dog parks, skateparks, etc.) and additional sources in the design and planning for park facilities.

Actions:

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

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

Actions:

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

P.4 GOAL: Enhance Coal Creek Park to serve as a destination park in Old Town.

Strategy:

P.4.1. Refine and finalize current concept plans through a public process as resources allow.

Actions:

- A. Request funding to develop the site Master Plan.
- B. Identify a unique recreational role that the Town lacks and could be provided at Coal Creek Park. (Consider the following programs or features: destination playground, updated skatepark, and historic interpretation.)
- C. Incorporate a strong physical and visual connection between the Coal Creek open space and trail and the downtown.
- D. Identify funding sources for phased improvements.

P.5 GOAL: Responsibly care for and preserve the tree canopy in public parks and open space areas.

Strategy:

P.5.1. Develop a community forestry master plan.

Actions:

- A. Document the history and existing condition of Erie's tree canopy.
- B. Elicit and summarize community values and attitudes regarding the community forest.
- C. Develop design, planting, and maintenance goals and standards.
- D. Update community forestry policies, regulations, and guidelines as needed.
- E. Identify community forestry budget priorities and policies.
- F. Develop processes for monitoring the urban forest.

P.6 GOAL: Ensure park and recreation facility usage is effectively regulated to provide maximum access and enjoyment, to maximize the useful life of the assets, and to protect the rights of those in areas surrounding such facilities.

Strategy:

- P.6.1 Review and update the *Municipal Code, Title 7, Chapter 6* as new facilities are opened, such as the Erie Community Center and Erie Community Park.

Pocket Park Design Standards

Pocket parks are small parks that are provided by the developer of a subdivision and maintained by the development. They provide opportunities for passive outdoor recreation at a sub neighborhood scale. They are ideally located within one-quarter (1/4) mile of the residences that 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:

- One-quarter (¼) to two (2) acres in size.
- Centrally located within or to neighborhood(s) served.
- Bordered on at least one side by public streets, excluding collector and arterial streets, to provide easy public access, visual surveillance, and parking.
- Accessible from the surrounding neighborhoods using sidewalks and/or trails.
- Owned and maintained by an HOA or Metro District.
- Platted with a dedicated public access easement.
- Constructed to Town standards for public improvements.

All proposed pocket parks must have the following elements:

- **Required infrastructure** (all of the items in **List A**).
- **Components:**
 - *Pre selected components (List B)* – Quantity of two (2).
 - *Components of Choice (List C)* – Quantity of three (3).
- **Comfort and Convenient features of choice (List D)** – Quantity of two (2).

See the lists A-C on the following pages.

Note: Park components must meet the Town of Erie Park Construction Standards and Specifications for Design and Construction of Public Improvements, as applicable.

Pocket Park Components

Developed Pocket Parks are required to include a combination of the following components, according to the formula in the above section.

List A Infrastructure – (All Required)

1. Benches (two minimum).
2. Bicycle Racks (min. to serve four bikes).
3. Dog pick up station.
4. Identification sign (clearly specifying contact number for maintenance or other concerns).
5. Individual shelter with two picnic tables.
6. Irrigation.
7. Open turf area (min. size 3,000 sf, max size 15,000 sf).
8. Sidewalks (ADA accessible).
9. Trash receptacles (minimum of two).
10. Plant Materials:
 - a. Five (5) deciduous trees.
 - b. Three (3) ornamental trees.
 - c. Two (2) evergreen trees.
 - d. Twenty (20) shrubs.
 - e. Twenty four (24) perennials.
 - f. Three (3) ornamental grasses.

List B Pre selected components – (Select 2)

1. Display garden.
2. Group picnic shelter (min. size 500 sf and four tables in place of individual shelter in List A).
3. Loop walk (min. length 2,000 lf).
4. Natural area (min. size 10,000 sf).
5. Multi level play structure.

List C Components of Choice – (Select 3)

If not selected in list A or B

1. Loop walk (min. length 2,000 lf – if not used as a pre-selected component).
2. Natural area – min. size 10,000 sf (if not used as pre-selected component).
3. Multi-level play structure (if not used as pre-selected component).
4. Individual shelters with two tables (in addition to shelter in List A or group shelter in List B).

Additional components:

5. Basketball (one full court).
6. Bocce ball.
7. Boulder play area or climbing structure.
8. Community garden.
9. Fitness course.

10. Handball.
11. Horseshoe pits.
12. Open turf sculpted as a play berm, mound or hill with a minimum three-foot height.
13. Other play features that include swings, spring toys, sand play, dramatic play, tetherball, etc. (include at least three).
14. Outdoor classroom to seat 20.
15. Public art.
16. Shuffleboard.
17. Tennis.
18. Volleyball.
19. Water spray ground.
20. Water feature (A passive, water-based amenity such as fountains, ponds, or waterfalls).
21. Or equivalent component as approved by Town of Erie.

List D Comfort and Convenience Features – (Select 2)

All may be counted only once, except as noted

1. BBQ grills (min. one per every two tables).
2. Benches (min. two per acre, in addition to benches in List A).
3. Drinking fountain (may include dog bowl attachment).
4. Electricity and lighting to shelter for night use (counted one per item).
5. Landscaping (results in double the 'List A' landscaping requirements).
6. Picnic tables (in addition to those in List A, B, or C).
7. Shade structures for components from List B or C (other than List B shelters) counted one per item.

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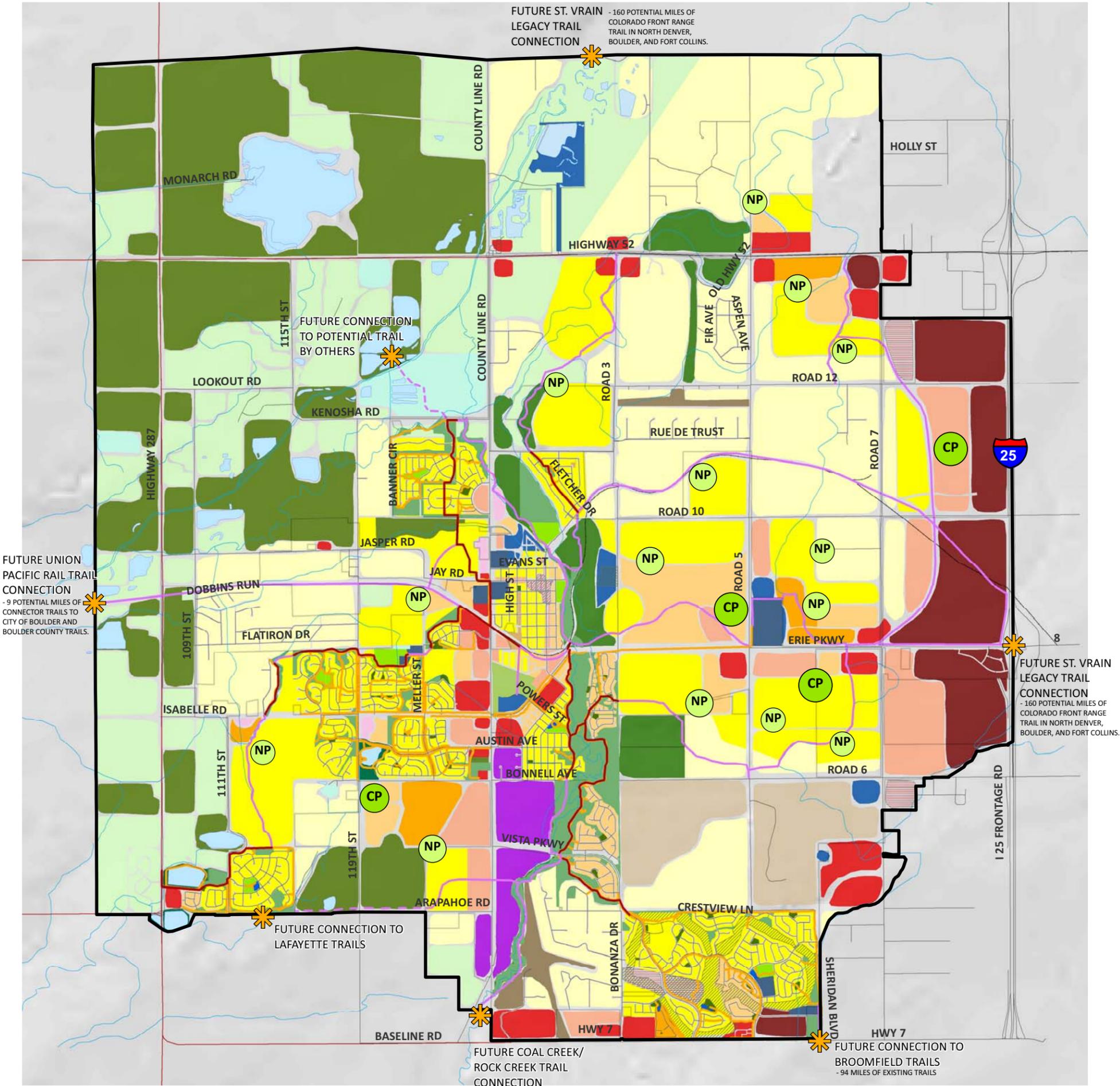
Resource Map C: Parks and Recreational Trails Recommendations

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TOWN OF ERIE

PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN

RESOURCE MAP C: PARKS AND RECREATIONAL TRAILS RECOMMENDATIONS



Legend

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CP Future Community Park NP Future Neighborhood Park Planning Area Boundary Town of Erie Boundary Existing Spine Trails* Proposed Spine Trails Existing Local Trails Comp Plan Residential Land Uses** Rural Residential (0-2 du/ac) Low Density Residential (2-6 du/ac) Medium Density Residential (6-12 du/ac) High Density Residential (12-20 du/ac) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comp Plan Land Uses (Other) Agriculture Parks/Public Open Space Public/Quasi Public Landfill Airport Downtown District Neighborhood Commercial Community Commercial Regional Commercial Mixed Use Business Industrial | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks, Open Space, & Facilities Cemetery Community Park Golf Course Neighborhood Park Open Space Pocket Park Pool Town Reservoir/OS School property Undeveloped Town Property |
|--|---|---|

* Existing spine and local trails include trails that are either constructed or planned and funded.
 ** Land Use symbols and densities are taken from the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Map.

* Note: Future park locations are approximate and should be used for planning purposes only. Actual parks to be located according to Town Code and as determined by Town staff on a case by case basis.

