TOWN OF ERIE
Findings Report

Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan

March 2010

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1. Introduction

This ***Findings Report*** was conducted as part of the Needs and Resource Assessment for the Town of Erie ***Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan*** and serves as a companion, reference document to the Master Plan document. This report includes information collected between September 2008 and January 2009 on the following topics: demographics, trends, and community input; programs; inventory and level of service; maintenance, and administration and management. The findings identified as a result of the planning process form the basis of the Master Plan recommendations.

This project was guided by a project team made up of key staff and a Steering Committee of the Town Board of Trustees, along with input from a public process. The project team met with consultants from the GreenPlay team and provided input throughout the planning process. The project consisted of the following tasks.

Needs Assessment and Public Involvement:

- Review of previous planning efforts and historical information.
- Consideration of the profile of the community and demographics, including anticipated population growth.
- Extensive community involvement efforts including focus groups and community-wide public meetings.
- Identification of alternative providers of recreation services, offering insight regarding partnership opportunities.
- Research of trends and statistics related to American lifestyles to guide the efforts of programming staff.

Inventory:

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

Level of Service Analysis:

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

Assessment and Analysis:

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

Based on the findings from the tasks above, recommendations and implementation strategies were developed and are included in the *Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan* document.

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2. Demographics, Trends, and Community Input

Identification of community demographics, trends, and community needs helps us better understand future parks and recreation opportunities for the Erie Parks & Recreation Department. This section first highlights key Erie demographic information, as well as national and local trends in parks and recreation services. Also included is a summary of community input on strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities as related to the Department's parks and recreation facilities and services. Collectively, this information provides a framework to understand the context, community needs, and future direction for the Department.

A. Demographic Profile

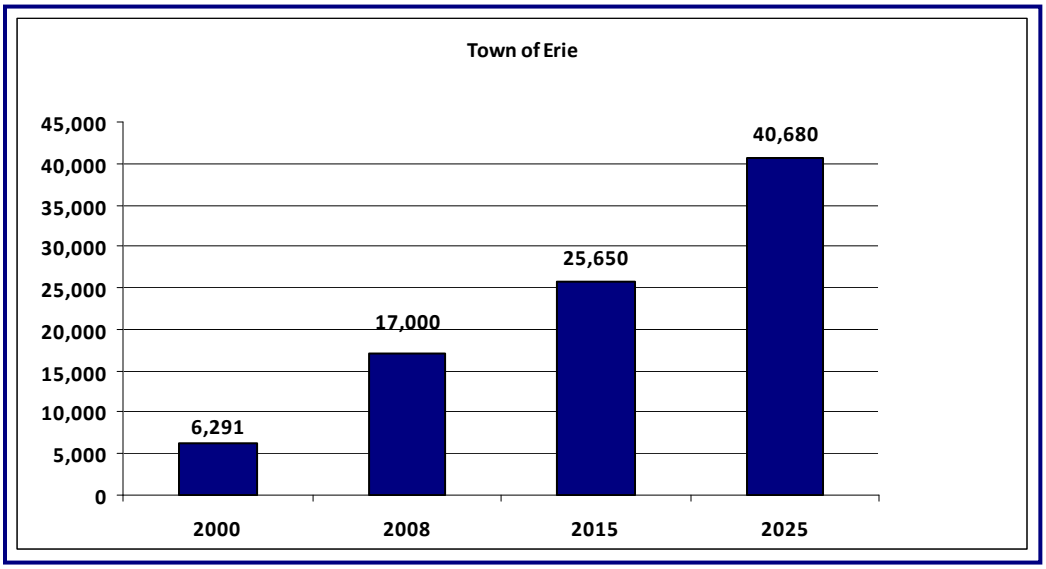
Service Area

The primary service area for this analysis is the Town of Erie, Colorado. The municipal boundary area is 14 square miles and has a planning area of 48 square miles. Erie also represents two different counties within the planning area, Boulder County and Weld County.

Population and Demographic Trends

To sufficiently represent current and future demographics, several sources were consulted. These include the Town's *Comprehensive Plan*, Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI) Business Solutions, Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), and Erie's Economic Development staff. Estimated and forecast demographic information for this document is taken from Town's *Comprehensive Plan* and Economic Development staff. As shown in **Figure 1,** the estimated 2008 population for the Town of Erie is 17,000 within the municipal boundary area. The Town is forecasted to reach 40,680 by the year 2025.

Figure 1: Town of Erie Population



Source: Town of Erie Economic Development and Erie Comprehensive Plan

ESRI Business Information Solutions, Inc. is a source of demographic data for population, age, gender, race, education, household income and size, and employment. The trends discussed in this document were carefully considered based on national, regional, and local research. Implications of the trends are broken down to help identify recreation and leisure needs specific to the Town of Erie.

Population, Age Ranges, and Family Information

As part of the population trend analysis it is important to understand the age distribution in Erie. According to the demographic profile in the *Economic Comprehensive Plan*, the median age in the Town of Erie is 32.5. A comparison of Erie to the State of Colorado and the United States is illustrated in **Figure 2.**

Age Distribution
The following age breakdown is used to separate the population into age sensitive user groups.

- **Under 5 years:** This group represents users of preschool programs and facilities. As trails and open space users, this age group is often in strollers. These individuals are the future participants in youth activities. Erie's resident population under five is 9.5 percent.

- **5 to 14 years:** This group represents current youth program participants. This is the second largest age cohort in Erie. They represent 19.5 percent of the population.

- **15 to 24 years:** This group represents teen/young adult program participants moving out of the youth programs and into adult programs. Members of this age group are often seasonal employment seekers. The 15-24 year olds in Erie represent 10.4 percent of the population. It is anticipated that the percentage in this age cohort will increase in the next five years.

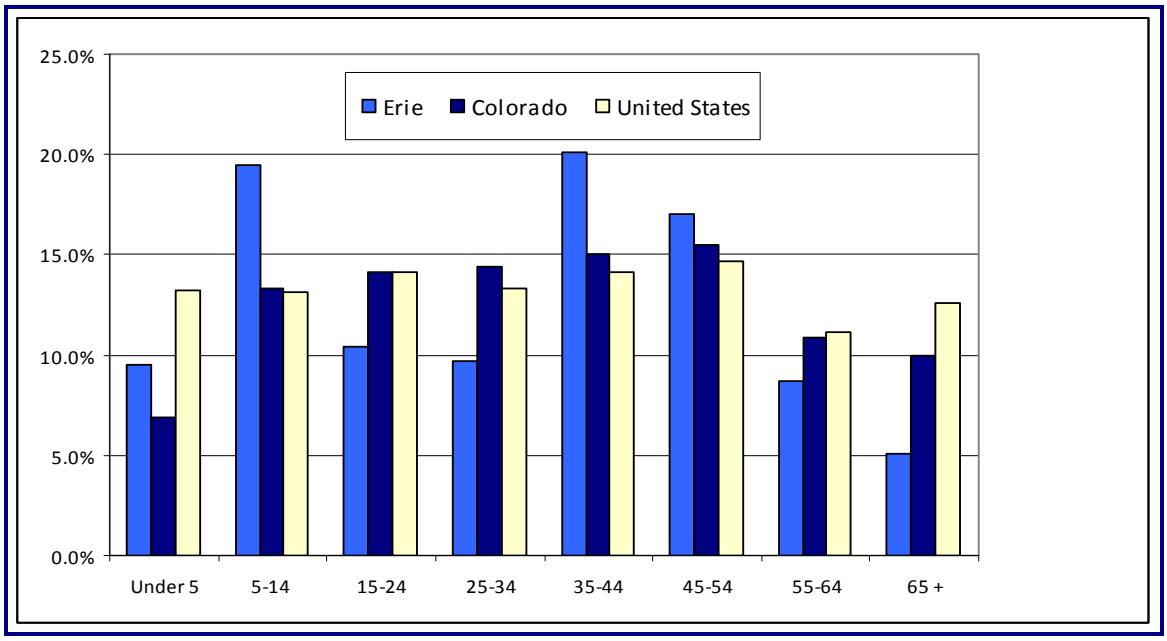
- **25 to 34 years:** This group represents potential adult program participants. Citizens in this age group are beginning long-term relationships and establishing families. It is estimated that 25-34 year olds represent 9.7 percent of Erie's population.

- **35 to 54 years:** This group represents users of a wide range of adult programming and park facilities. Their characteristics extend from having children using preschool and youth programs to becoming empty nesters. This is the largest age group in the Town (20.1%).

- **55 to 64 years:** This group represents users of older adult programming, many of whom are approaching retirement or are already retired and typically enjoying grandchildren. Less than nine percent of Erie's residents are 55-64 years old.

- **65 years plus**: This group ranges from very healthy, active seniors to more physically inactive seniors. Nationally, this group will be increasing dramatically with current population projections. Erie's 65+ age cohort is represented by 5.1 percent of the population.

Figure 2: 2007 Population Breakdowns by Age - Erie, Colorado, U.S.

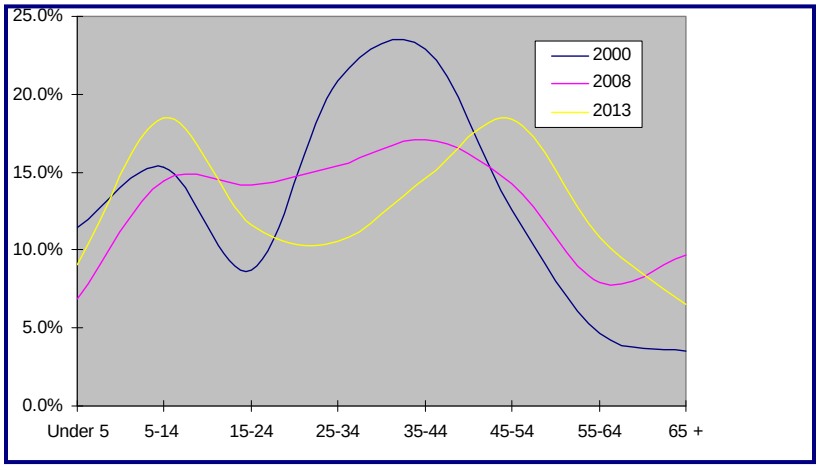


Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions

Population Comparisons

The Town of Erie, when compared to Colorado and the United States, has significantly different percentages in many age cohorts. In the 5-14 year old age group, Erie has 6.2 percent more residents than the State and 6.4 percent more than the nation. Similarly, in the age cohort of 35-44 years, Erie has 5.1 percent more residents than the State and six percent more than the nation. The percentage of residents in the 55+ cohort tends to decrease in Erie, while the number increases in the State and in the nation. **Figure 3** illustrates the forecast population trend between the years 2000-2013. This information suggests that the Town has a high number of families with young children.

Figure 3: Erie Population Trendline, 2000-2013



Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions

Race

Statistics gathered from ESRI Business Solutions provide the race breakdown for Erie, Colorado, and the United States. As shown in **Table 1**, the race with the largest population is White for all three areas. However, the significance of this table indicates that the diversity in Erie is less when compared to Colorado and the United States. With the exception of White Alone, all races in Erie demonstrate a lower percent of residents in the remaining cohorts. It is important to note that the trend in the Town, the State, and the nation reflects a diversification of population. By the year 2013, ESRI suggests that the diversity index (the probability that two people from the same area will be from different race/ethnic groups) in Erie will increase from 39.3 to 43. The State's diversity index will increase from 55.2 to 57.8 and the nation's will increase from 60 to 63. Erie's population is forecast to diversify at a higher rate as the Town continues to grow.

Table 1: Race Comparisons for 2008

Race	Town of Erie	State of Colorado	United States
White Alone	88.5%	80.9%	72.3%
African American Alone	.6%	3.8%	12.6%
American Indian Alone	.7%	1.0%	.9
Asian Alone or Pacific Islander Alone	2.9%	2.8%	4.6%
Some Other Race Alone	4.9%	8.4%	6.7%
Two or More Races	2.4%	3.0%	2.9%
Hispanic/Latino Origin (Any Race)*	**12.9%**	**19.9%**	**15.4%**

Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions

**Persons of Hispanic Origin may be of any race. This number reflects the percentage of the total population.*

Education

According to ESRI Business Information Solutions and as shown in **Figure 1***,* the Town of Erie shows a lower percentage of its population with education less than 9th grade or those without a high school diploma. The Town has higher percentages of residents with Bachelor's Degrees and higher education degrees when compared to the State and the nation.

National trends, reported by the Federal Interagency Forum on Aging Related Statistics in March of 2008, suggest that older people enjoy higher levels of prosperity than any previous generation, with an increase in higher incomes and a decrease in the proportion of older people with low incomes and in poverty. Major inequalities continue to exist for people without high school diplomas who report smaller economic gains and fewer financial resources. Residents in Erie reflect a highly educated section of Colorado's population.

Table 2: Educational Attainment – 25 Years and Older (2000)

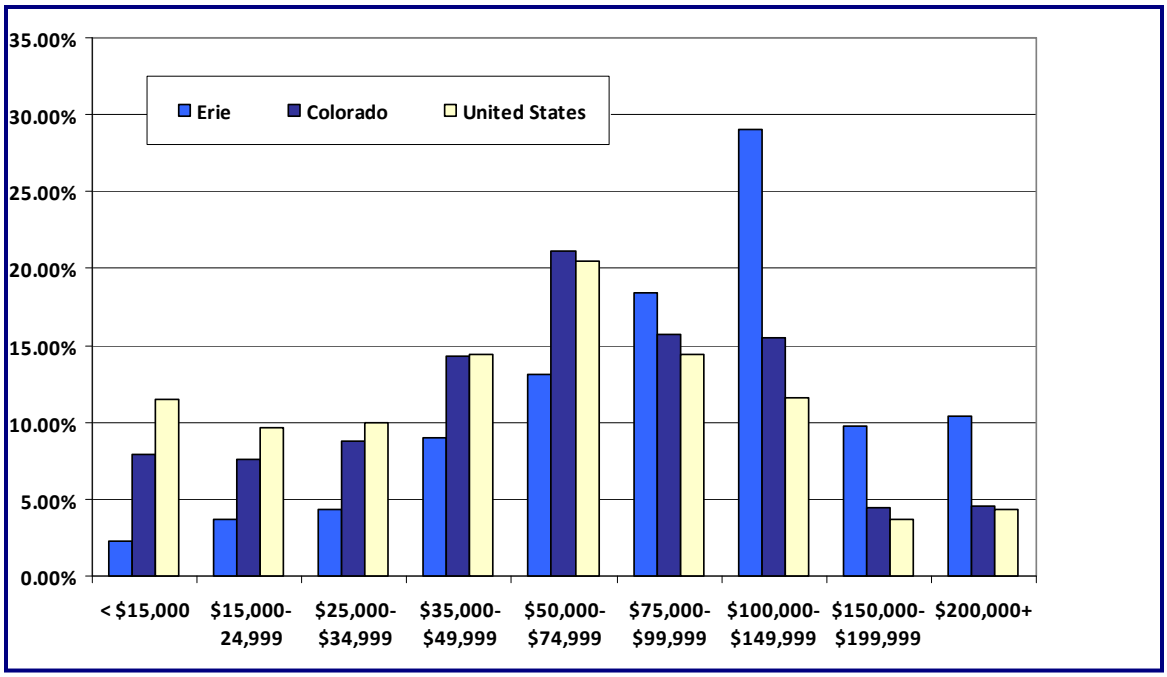
Level of Education Attained	Town of Erie	State of Colorado	United States
Less than 9th Grade	3.1%	4.5%	6.5%
9th-12th Grade, No Diploma	2.7%	7.5%	9.9%
High School Graduate	16.8%	24%	29.6%
Some College, No Diploma	17.9%	21.8%	20.1%
Associate Degree	9.0%	7.6%	7.2%
Bachelor's Degree	33%	22.4%	17.0%
Master's/Prof/Doctorate	17.2%	12.2%	9.7%

Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions

Household Income

According to the Town's Economic Development staff, the median Household Income for Erie residents is $87,284. ESRI Business Information Solutions indicate that the State and the nation have lower median incomes than Erie. It is estimated that Colorado residents have a median household income of $62,469 and US residents have a median household income of $54,749. Per Capita income for Erie is estimated to be $41,909, higher than both the State ($31,359) and the US ($31,359).

Figure 4: Households by Income – Town of Erie, State of Colorado, United States



Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions

Figure 4 shows a comparison of household income in the Town, the State, and the United States. In comparison with the State and the U.S., Erie has significantly higher percentages of the population in the $75,000-$149,999 income categories and lower percentages of the population in the under $74,999 income categories. According to ESRI, 37.6 percent of the Town's population earns more than $75,000. In 2008, the annual average amount spent on entertainment and recreation by household in Erie was $6,142. This amount does not include travel. This is close to double the national annual average.

Household Size and Units

The 2008 average household size in Erie is 2.85 persons, higher than the State (2.55) and the US (2.59). **Table 3** shows that Owner Occupied Units for Erie are higher than both the State (61.7%) and the nation (60.6%). Erie's 2007 Annual Financial Report indicates that the number of households in the Town is 6,152.

Table 3: Housing Units (2008)

Housing Units	Town of Erie	State of Colorado	United States
Owner Occupied Housing Units	83.3%	61.7%	60.6%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	10.1%	26.0%	28.9%
Vacant Housing Units	6.5%	12.2%	10.5%

Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions

Employment

According to 2008 figures, 95 percent of Erie residents age 16 and over who are in the labor force are civilian employed. The civilian employed work force in Colorado is 94.4 percent and the US is 93.1 percent. According to 2008 estimates of the employed work force in Erie, approximately 69.3 percent are engaged in White Collar professions such as management, business, financial, and sales. The balance of the work force is engaged in service (13.4%) and blue collar (17.3%) professions.

Population Forecasts

Although we can never really know the future with certainty, it is helpful to make assumptions about it for planning purposes. **Table 4** contains population estimates and percentage changes for the Town of Erie. Populations for 2000 are from the 2000 US Census. Estimated 2008 and forecast 2015 populations are from the Town's Economic Development staff, and the forecast 2025 population is from the Erie *Comprehensive Plan*. The growth rate in Erie is very high. The Town has more than doubled in size in just eight years, from 2000 to 2008. It is forecast that the growth rate will dip slightly in coming years, but Erie will continue to see upward growth in both the municipal boundaries as well as the 48 square-mile planning area.

Table 4: Population projections and percent change - Town of Erie

	Town of Erie Population	% Change
2000	6,291	
2008	17,000	170%
2015	26,650	56.8%
2025	40,680	52.6%

Demographic Trend Analysis Summary

In summary, key demographic trends to reference for future planning efforts of the Town of Erie's Parks & Recreation Department are the following.

- Median age for Erie residents is younger (32.5) than both the State (35.9) and the nation (36.8).
- The two largest age cohorts in Erie are 35-44 (20.1%) followed by 5-14 (19.5%), indicating a large percentage of the current population is families with school age children.
- Median household income is higher in Erie than the State of Colorado and the United States.
- Owner occupied housing units is greater in Erie than in the Colorado and the United States. (Erie 83.3%, Colorado 61.7%, and the United States 60.6%)
- Educational attainment for Erie residents indicates that there are more people 25 years and older with Bachelor's and Master's Degrees than residents in State and the nation.
- Population in Erie is projected to increase at a high rate (56.8%) by 2015.

Behavioral Trend Information

Health and Obesity Trends

The United Health Foundation has ranked Colorado 16th in its 2007 *State Health Rankings*, unchanged from 2006. The State's biggest strengths include:

- Lower prevalence of obesity when compared with most states, with 18.2% of the population considered as obese. However, consistent with the national trends of increasing obesity rates, Colorado went from an obesity rate of 6.9% in 1990 to 18.2% in 2007. This increasing obesity rate in Colorado should therefore be considered more of a challenge than a strength.
- Few poor physical health days per month at 2.9 days in the previous 30 days.
- Low rate of cancer deaths at 176.8 deaths per 100,000 population.
- Low rate of preventable hospitalizations with 56.2 discharges per 1,000 Medicare enrollees.

Some of the challenges the State faces include:

- Limited access to adequate prenatal care, with only 68.6 percent of pregnant women receiving sufficient care.
- High rate of uninsured population at 17.2 percent.
- Low per capita public health spending.

B. Park and Recreation Trends

A challenge of parks and recreation departments is to understand and respond to the changing characteristics of the population it serves. In this fast-paced society, it is important to stay on top of current trends that influence parks and recreation. The following information highlights relevant local, regional, and national parks and recreational trends from various sources. The demographic profile of Erie was taken into consideration when compiling applicable trends. The Town will see an increased need to focus on youth, teens, and young adults, in addition to Baby Boomers, who are steadily moving into retirement.

Population-Based Programming Trends

General Trends

- In 2006, Americans spent about 8.5 hours a day watching television, using computers, listening to the radio, going to the movies, or reading. Among adults, 97 million Internet users sought news online in 2006. *(Oregon TrendScan, Spring 2007*) Book clubs, information and technology classes, and online enrichment classes are all opportunities.
- More than 65 million people did volunteer work in 2005. *(Oregon TrendScan, Spring 2007)*
- About one in every 523 Americans under the age of 20 has been diagnosed with diabetes. Fitness and wellness programs are becoming more important in younger generations. *(Centers For Disease Control, CDC)*
- As the cost to travel increases, "Staycations" are becoming popular. This is an opportunity for local parks and recreation departments.

Pre-School

Local park and recreation agencies are finding great success in programming for the pre-school age child by responding to parent feedback and desires. The requests tend to center around opportunities to expose a child to a variety of activities to learn the child's interests and opportunities for interaction outside the child's own home. Popular requests include:

- Parent/tot activities, starting at age nine months, are popular (e.g. swimming, gymnastics, music, art, story time, special one-time holiday classes such as Father's Day gift or card making).
- Daytime activities for "at home" parents.
- Activities for children from 24-36 months (art, music, story time).
- Sports for four to five-year-olds (soccer and T-ball).

Youth Programs

Out of school activities and programs provide support for youth and working families and benefit the youth socially, emotionally, and academically. *(trendSCAN)*

<u>After-school Programs</u>

- After-school programs have been proven to decrease juvenile crime and violence, reduce drug use, decrease smoking and alcohol abuse, and decrease teen pregnancy. Furthermore, research demonstrates that in comparison to unsupervised peers, children who participate in after-school programs show improvement in standardized test scores and decreased absenteeism and tardiness. *(Vinluan, Monica Hobbs)*

- Over half of teens surveyed (54%) said they would not watch so much television if they had other things to do. The same number indicated they wished there were more community or neighborhood based programs and two-thirds said they would participate, if they were available. *(Penn, Schoen & Bertrand)*

<u>Sports and Fitness</u>

- According to the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (SGMA), seven of the 15 most popular activities for children are team sports. Organized after-school activities, club sports, and programs targeted at school-aged children could help to fill the fitness void that is growing larger in United States schools.
- Specific sport training programs for kids' fitness are slowly increasing in health and fitness facilities. *(IDEA Health and Fitness Association, IDEA*)
- For youth seven to eleven years of age, bicycle riding has the highest number of participants.
- According to the National Sporting Goods Association, (NSGA) **(Table 5)**, in terms of overall youth participation for selected sports, skateboarding experienced the largest increase in participation from 1998-2007 at 75%, while snowboarding (39%) and tackle football (23%) also increased by more than 20%. In-line skating experienced the largest decrease in participation at 60%, followed by softball (36%), alpine skiing (29%), and fishing (20%). Volleyball, basketball, and golf also experienced decreases of more than 15 percent in participation rates.
- According to the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association athletic field use trends indicate sports requiring ball fields such as baseball and softball have seen a decline in participation while sports requiring large multi-use turf areas have seen an increase in participation. Locally, the Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA) reports that the number of student athletes in lacrosse has risen 60 percent, and the number in soccer has risen 13.4 percent. However, participation in baseball has risen 2.5 percent since 1999 according to CHSAA, which differs from the national trend. Growing communities with young families such as Erie will see a demand for additional ballfields, multi-use fields, and courts.

Table 5: Youth Participation in Selected Activities and Percent Change 1998-2007

	Overall % Change 1998-2007	Age 7-11 % Change 1998-2007	Age 12-17 % Change 1998-2007
Total U.S.	9.3%	-2.3%	9.0%
Baseball	-12.0%	-15.7%	-32.5%
Basketball	-17.9%	-21.5%	-15.7%
Bicycle Riding	-14.1%	-29.9%	-16.9%
Bowling	8.5%	4.6%	12.5%
Fishing (Fresh water)	-20.2%	-37.5%	-24.0%
Football (Tackle)	-23.5%	19.1%	29.6%
Golf	-17.3%	-48.3%	-40.7%
Ice Hockey	-2.8%	-31.0%	-29.3%
In-line Skating	-60.4%	-66.7%	-50.9%
Mountain Biking (off road)	-13.8%	-38.5%	-23.0%
Skateboarding	75.3%	36.7%	85.1%
Skiing (alpine)	-28.5%	-2.7%	-34.9%
Snowboarding	39.3%	60.6%	-8.5%
Soccer	4.6%	-8.2%	-15.3%
Softball	-36.1%	-62.0%	-45.0%
Tennis	9.5%	20.1%	-6.4%
Volleyball	-18.7%	-23.3%	-20.1%
Source: National Sporting Goods Association			

Generation X

The Town of Erie has a high population of residents in the Generation X category. They are roughly defined as anyone born between 1965 and 1980. Members of this generation, with its young families, are settling into the Town of Erie. Below are general trends often associated with this generation and its families.

- "Women in Generation X, which the U.S. Census Bureau provisionally defines as born between 1968 and 1979, are not only having more children than their baby-boomer predecessors, but are working fewer hours in the labor market." *(Population Reference Bureau, PRB)*
- Generation X and Generation Y (born after Generation X from the early 1980's to the late 1990's) moms view the internet as a must-have tool for finding information, according to a study from The Parenting Group and NewMediaMetrics.
- The X Games, an annual event with a focus on extreme action sports, are typically attractive to this generation of dedicated outdoor and extreme sports enthusiasts.
- Popular activities for this age group includes festivals, special events, farmer's markets, and individual activities such as biking, rock climbing, and running.

Older Adults
Leisure Trends' "Retirement in America" (2004) indicated that older Americans' leisure time is increasingly being spent doing physical activities, in educational classes, turning hobbies into investments, utilizing online retail and education websites, partaking in adventure travel, and attending sporting events. Approximately 70 percent of the current retired population entered retirement before the age of 65. These new retirees are younger, healthier, and have more wealth to spend for the services they want. Many may feel an important need for part-time employment in recreation, for fun, socializing, and added fulfillment in their lives.

These trends will only increase with Baby Boomer retirement. The oldest Boomers turned 60 years old in 2006, and are about to retire in record numbers. These trends are important to recognize and may explain the changing national demands, from traditional low-cost social services to more active programming for which older residents are willing to pay.

The top three sports activities in 2007 for persons 65 years and older were exercise walking, exercising with equipment, and swimming. The majority (60%) of the most popular activities for seniors are fitness related according to the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association 2006 Edition of *Sports Participation.* There are more than 10 million people ages 55 years and older who exercise walk and more than eight million who stretch and exercise with a treadmill.

With seniors getting into exercise, there is a growing trend towards specialized programs for older adults. These programs focus on the special needs of seniors like arthritis, osteoporosis, balance issues, flexibility, and better daily functioning.

According to AARP, 2008's latest trends for the older population include:

- Virtual Birding – View a photo gallery and name that bird's tune.
- Electronic games – Adults over 50 are enjoying Wii and other electronic games.
- Incentive-based walking programs.
- Wellness seminars.

Special Populations
More activities are being adapted for disabled participants. Programs should strive to be "universally" accessible. Programming trends include unified recreation, where individuals with and without disabilities participate in programs together. Those with disabilities receive individualized support and resources to enable them to participate as fully as possible. Other programming trends include classes such as "gentle yoga," social events, working out with a partner, walking groups, participation in Special Olympics sports, development of independent living skills, and job readiness training.

Activity-Based Programming Trends

General Trends

People desire quality over quantity programs, desiring a first class experience in the form of excellent customer service, programs, and facilities. Recreation programs need to encompass a whole "experience," as people look to add quality to the basic recreation activity with depth, self-fulfillment, and self-expression. This starts when an individual walks in the door or on the field with front line staff or instructors. Examples of classes and programs that have found such success include senior programs that are comprehensive with seminars, fitness, and enrichment classes. For the Baby Boomer population, examples may include Tai Chi, yoga, cooking, group or individual fitness and wellness programs, hiking, and outdoor recreation. The younger population finds interest in areas similar to the Baby Boomer population and may gravitate towards activities such as rock climbing, indoor and outdoor group cycling, music, and language classes.

Additional programming trends include a shift from long 6-8 week class sessions to one or two day workshops. Drop-in programs are growing in popularity as well. There is an increasing demand for self-directed activities, with less reliance on instructors and more flexible scheduling. *Recreation Management* magazine's *2008 State of the Industry Report* listed the top 10 program options most commonly planned for as an addition to program offerings over the next three years include:

1) Programs for active older adults.
2) Day camps and summer camps.
3) Nutrition and diet counseling.
4) Educational programs.
5) Holidays and other special events.
6) Fitness programs.
7) Environmental education.
8) Sports tournaments and races.
9) Mind-body balance.
10) Individual sports activities.

Bike Trends

Bike friendly towns and cities are emerging in the United States. It is estimated that over one million people ride their bikes to work. With gasoline prices fluctuating, obesity on the rise, and global warming, cycling has become a popular mode of transportation.

- "Complete streets" designed for safe, comfortable, and convenient travel for all users (i.e. pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transport users) is a trend across the nation.
- Fifty-two percent of Americans would like to bike more than they do now. Fifty-five percent of Americans would prefer to drive less and walk more. *(Jacobsen)*
- Boston has installed new bike lanes on many streets and has placed 250 bike racks throughout the city. They also have a school that teaches Baby Boomers how to ride bikes. (Featured on the July 18, 2008 TODAY show; *TRAINING WHEELS – Learning to Bike Later in Life)*
- Bike sharing is popular in small and large cities in Canada as well as the United States. People rent bikes and access multiple pick-up and drop-off locations.

- On May 1, 2008, eleven communities were honored with the League of American Bicyclist's prestigious Bicycle Friendly Community designation. Awarded communities realized the potential of bicycling as they addressed the challenges of climate change, traffic congestion, rising obesity rates, and soaring fuel prices. There are currently 84 Bicycle Friendly Communities across the United States. Awards are based on the following elements: education, engineering, enforcement, encouragement, and an evaluation plan. The only two Platinum Bicycle Friendly Cities are Davis, CA and Portland, OR.

Sports and Health Trends

Highlights from the 2007 National Sporting Goods Association participation survey **(Table 6)** include the following statistics:

- Tennis participation led sports growth in 2007 at 18.7 percent.
- Exercise walking grew by 2.7 percent in 2007 and was the number one sports and recreation activity with 89.8 million participants.
- Among fitness activities, only aerobic exercising, with 30.3 million participants in 2007, showed a significant decline (-9.9%). Some of the decline may have come from the inclusion of yoga in the survey for the first time. Yoga attracted 10.7 million participants in 2007.
- Other sports and recreation activities showing less than five percent growth in 2007 include skateboarding (4.2% to 10.1 million participants); in-line skating (2.1% to 10.7 million participants); weightlifting (0.9% to 33.2 million participants); and exercising with equipment (0.8% to 52.8 million participants).

Table 6: Top 10 Activities & Sports Measured by Participation Growth (2006 to 2007)

Activity	Total Participation In millions	Percent Change 2006 - 2007
Tennis	12.3	18.7%
Scooter Riding	10.6	11.4%
Target Shooting	20.9	9.7%
Boating (Motor/Power)	31.9	8.9%
Volleyball	12	8.7%
Target Shooting – airgun	6.6	7.9%
Running/jogging	30.4	5.5%
Bicycle Riding	37.4	5.0%
Skateboarding	10.1	4.2%
Exercise Walking	89.8	2.7%
Source: National Sporting Goods Association *Participated more than once, for persons seven (7) years and older.*		

Team Sports

- The typical age for participants in team sports ranges from 16 to 29 years. For males, the range is 18.2 to 29.3 years as compared to a slightly younger age range for females (16.2 to 25.3 years). *(NSGA)*
- Overall participation in amateur softball has been declining since 2000. The number of adult Amateur Softball Association teams decreased three percent (3%) between 2004 and 2005. *(2007 Statistical Abstract)*
- Among team sports, ice hockey rebounded to over 2.5 million participants in 2005 from 1.9 million in 2004. *(Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association, SGMA)*

Table 7: Participation in Team Sports (in millions) 2001 to 2006

Sport	2001 Participation	2006 Participation	Percent Change 2001 to 2006
Baseball	14.9	14.6	-1.5%
Basketball	28.1	26.7	-4.9%
Football (Tackle)	8.2	11.9	45.0%
Hockey (Ice)	2.2	1.9	-12.2%
Soccer	13.9	14.0	1.0%
Softball	13.2	12.4	-5.8%
Volleyball	12.0	11.1	-8.0%
Source: National Sporting Goods Association *Participated more than once, for persons seven (7) years and older.*			

As shown in **Table 7**, among the team sports, tackle football (45.0%) and soccer (1.0%) experienced increases in participation between 2001 and 2006. At the same time, a decline in baseball (-1.5%), basketball (-4.9%), softball (-5.8%), volleyball (-8.0%), and ice hockey (-12.2%) participation occurred. *(NSGA)*

Participation in women's team sports has also increased. Females account for a significant number of softball players (slow-pitch – 47% and fast-pitch – 75%). In court and grass volleyball, females represent the majority of participants, and in beach volleyball they represent 46 percent of all players. *(SGMA)*

Overall, team sports continue to experience an overall trend of declining participation.

Fitness & Wellness

There have been many changes in fitness and wellness programs from 1998 to 2004. What participants wanted in 1998 is not necessarily what they want today.

- Fitness programs that have increased in popularity since 1998 include Pilates, stability/ball-based classes, personal training (two clients share), post-rehabilitation, kids-specific fitness, and sport-specific training.
- Declining programs since 1998 include dance, abdominals, health fairs, sports clinics, high-impact aerobics, mixed-impact aerobics, step aerobics, stress-management classes, weight-management classes, lifestyle classes (managing money, book club), and low-impact aerobics. *(IDEA)*

The American College of Sports Medicine's (ACSM's) *Health and Fitness Journal* conducted a survey to determine trends that would help create a standard for health and fitness programming.

Table 8 on the following page shows survey results that focus on trends in the commercial, corporate, clinical, and community health and fitness industry. The Worldwide Survey indicates the following shift in fitness trends between 2007 and 2008.

Table 8: Worldwide Fitness Trends for 2007 and for 2008

2007	2008
1. exercise programs for children to fight childhood and adolescent obesity	1. educated and experienced fitness professionals
*2. special fitness programs for older adults fitness professionals	2. exercise programs for children to fight childhood and adolescent obesity
*2. educated and experienced fitness professionals	3. personal training
*2. functional fitness	4. strength training
*2. core training	5. core training
*2. strength training	6. special fitness programs for older adults
7. personal training	7. Pilates
8. mind/body exercise	8. functional fitness
9. exercise and weight loss	9. Swiss ball
10. outcome measurements	10. yoga
*11. sport-specific training	11. exercise and weight loss
*11. simple more accessible exercise	12. spinning® (indoor cycling)
*11. comprehensive health promotion programming at the worksite	13. sport-specific training
14. physician referrals to fitness professionals	14. balance training
*15. shorter more structured classes	15. group personal training
*15. reaching new markets	16. outcome measurements
*15. worker incentive programs	17. comprehensive health promotion programming at the worksite
*18. wellness coaching	18. reaching new markets
*18. group personal training	19. worker incentive programs
20. family programming	20. wellness coaching

*Source: Thompson, Ph.D., FACSM, FAACVPR, Walther R. ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal Vol 11/No. 6, "Worldwide Survey Reveals Fitness Trends for 2008." * Tied rankings*

Recreation Facility & Equipment Trends

The current national trend is toward a "one-stop" facility that serves all ages. Large, multi-purpose regional centers help increase cost recovery, promote retention, and encourage cross-use.

Amenities that are becoming "typical" are:

- Multi-purpose, large regional centers (65,000 to 125,000+ sq. ft.) for all ages and abilities. This design saves on staff costs, encourages retention and participation, and saves on operating expenses due to economies of scale.
- Leisure and therapeutic pools.
- Weight and cardiovascular equipment.
- Interactive game rooms.
- Nature centers, outdoor recreation, and education centers.
- Regional playgrounds for all ages of youth.
- Indoor walking tracks.
- Themed décor.
- Gymnasium space.
- Green design techniques and certifications such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). In a recent survey, 52 percent of the recreation-industry survey respondents indicated they were willing to pay more for green design knowing it would reduce utility costs and reduce or eliminate the negative impact of buildings on the environment and occupants.

Recreation Management magazine included in the June 2008, *State of the Industry Report* the following list of most popular amenities planning to be added to recreation facilities.

- Bleachers and seating.
- Climbing walls.
- Playgrounds.
- Park structures such as shelters and restroom buildings.
- Dog parks.
- Fitness centers.
- Splash play areas.
- Trails and open spaces, such as gardens and natural areas.
- Concession areas.
- Classrooms and meeting rooms.

Natural Environments and Open Space Trends

In April 2007, the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) sent out a survey to member agencies in order to learn more about the programs and facilities that public park and recreation agencies provide to connect children and their families with nature. A summary of the results follow.

- Sixty-eight percent of public park and recreation agencies offer nature-based programming, and 61 percent have nature-based facilities. More than 30 percent of public agencies offer no nature programming, and slightly less than 40 percent have no nature-based facilities.

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

Trails and Specialty Parks

- In 2007, Colorado residents used trails, parks, and open spaces approximately 1.5 times per week, whereas they used community recreation centers about .7 times per week. *(Colorado Recreation Trends, Issues, and Needs Survey conducted by Business Research Division Leeds School of Business, University of Colorado at Boulder, July 2007)*
- Two of the emerging specialty parks include skate parks and dog parks. *(van der Smissen et al.)*

Parks - Economic and Health Benefits

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

- Trails, parks, and playgrounds are among the five most important community amenities considered when selecting a home, according to a 2002 survey of homebuyers conducted by the National Association of Home Builders and the National Association of Realtors. *(Pack, A. & Schunel)*
- 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, the total value can be two to six times the cost for tree planting and care.

Outdoor Recreation and Wildlife

It is common for residents to contact parks and recreation departments when looking for outside leisure activities, and it is often the mission of parks departments to get more people outdoors.

The No Child Left Inside Coalition is becoming a popular partnership for parks and recreation departments across the nation. It is a broad-based organization made up of more than 600 member groups, including environmental, educational, business, public health, outdoor recreation, and conservation groups. The Coalitions' focus is the passage of the federal *No Child Left Inside Act*. (In September 2008, the Bill passed in the House and continues to move through legislature.) This legislation will authorize new funding for states to provide high-quality, environmental instruction. Funds will support outdoor learning activities both at school and in non-formal environmental education centers, teacher training, and the creation of state environmental literacy plans.

Following is a list of current outdoor recreation trends.

- More participants in wildlife-related activities are between the ages 35 to 54 years than any other age category.
- The top three active outdoor recreation activities in terms of participation are wildlife watching, bicycle-based, and trail-based. *(Outdoor Industry Association, OIA)*
- With nearly two million horse owners in the United States, equestrian developments are popping up across the country. There are about 250 equestrian communities nationwide.
- Industry experts suggest that equestrian developments have strong similarities to golf-course developments in terms of approach and demographic draw.
- Colorado ranks 10th among states in number of horse owners.
- Forty-one percent of Equestrians are age 45 or older.
- The economic impact of the equestrian industry is $39 billion nationally.

Park Trends

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

- Physical activity makes people healthier.
- Physical activity increases with access to parks.
- Contact with the natural world improves physical and physiological health.
- Residential and commercial property values increase.
- 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.

A shift has occurred in the approach of urban planning, from designing community spaces around the automobile to creating public spaces that engage a community. Civic life requires settings in which people meet as equals, and the most significant amenity that a city can offer potential residents is a public space where people can meet. Property values are typically higher for property near parks and open spaces.

Administration Trends

Park and Recreation professionals face many challenges and opportunities including:

- Doing more with less, requiring partnership development.
- Partnering between non-profit and public agencies.
- Increasing the quality and diversity of services.
- Moving toward a more business-like model, while not directly competing with private sector.
- The ability to maintain the increasing number of parks and open spaces.
- Providing support for the socially and economically disadvantaged by offering programs in areas such as childcare, nutrition, etc.
- Increasing responsibility for measurement and evaluation of programs and services. *(van der Smissen et al.)*

The trend in park and recreation management is toward outcome-based management, reflecting the effect on quality of life of those who participate or benefit from parks and recreation opportunities. Outcome-based management is useful in establishing the benefit to the community and to individuals. *(van der Smissen et al.)* Information technology has allowed for tracking and reporting of park and recreation services and operations.

Level of subsidy for programs is declining and more "enterprise" activities are being developed, thereby allowing the subsidy to be used where deemed appropriate. Agencies across the United States are increasing revenue production and cost recovery. Pricing is often designated by peak, off-peak, and off-season rates.

Partnerships are also an administrative trend on the national level. More agencies are partnering with private, public, and non-profit groups. A major component in exploring any potential partnership is to identify additional collaborating partners that may help provide a synergistic working relationship in terms of resources, community contributions, knowledge, and political sensitivity. Partnerships should be mutually beneficial for all proposing partners including the citizens of the community.

Trend Analysis Summary

As a developing community, Erie is already on the cutting edge as it relates to many of these trends. The Town's new multi-use community center is one of the assets listed in *Recreation Management's* "State of the Industry Report" as a facility trend. Parks, trails, and playgrounds are among the five most important community amenities considered when selecting a home. This is important for Erie as the Town is experiencing high growth.

The Town has placed high value on preservation of open space. As stated earlier in this section, 68 percent of public park and recreation agencies offer nature-based programming and have nature-based facilities. Erie does not currently offer much nature-based programming, presenting an opportunity for future program expansion efforts.

Related to fitness and wellness programming trends, the Town currently offers a wide array of the top 20 world-wide fitness trends listed in **Table 8.** Opportunities currently exist within the Erie Community Center, through the Parks Division, and through alternative providers to participate in the top 10 growing activities and sports listed in **Table 6.**

As Erie continues to grow, the trends listed above will present opportunities for community participation in additional special events, festivals, and programs.

Key trends that are important for the Town of Erie to evaluate for future planning efforts include the following.

- Participation in out-of-school activities and programs offer support for youth and working families and benefit youth socially, emotionally, and academically.
- Outdoor pools in Colorado are only open for approximately three months out of the year. There is an increasing trend towards indoor leisure and therapeutic pools. Additional amenities like "spray pads" are becoming popular as well.
- Environmental education programs were listed at the top of the 10 programs parks and recreation departments are planning to add within the next three years. *(Recreation Management , June 07)*
- Partnerships are a national trend in the delivery of parks and recreation services.

Trend Sources

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C. Community Survey Summary

A statistically-valid survey was conducted as part of needs assessment for the *Erie Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan*. The survey was mailed to 3,500 randomly selected households located in the Town of Erie and supplemented with an online version of the survey. The response rate was approximately 12.7 percent. A summary of survey result highlights follows. (For the full survey report, see ***Appendix A***.)

Overall, respondents reported a high level of satisfaction with the parks and recreation facilities and services provided by the Town of Erie. The Erie Community Center received the highest levels of satisfaction, while connectivity of trails received the lowest, following restroom amenities.

Following is a summary of the highest responses (top five) to a series of questions where respondents were asked to rank their top three priorities for a given question.

<u>Aspects of Erie parks and recreation most in need of improvement</u>

- Trail connectivity (with 67% ranking it as one of their top three priorities).
- Number of trails available (45%).
- Number or amount of open space areas available (21%).
- Trail maintenance (21%).
- Variety of programs offered (20%).

<u>Most important indoor facilities to add, expand, or improve</u>

- Additional swimming pool with lanes for fitness/competition (42%).
- Additional weight room and cardio fitness space (27%).
- Additional teen activity areas (24%).
- Youth activity areas (24%).
- Ice/hockey rink (23%).

<u>Most important outdoor facilities to add, expand, or improve</u>

- Soft surface trails (38%).
- Paved trails (31%).
- Seasonal farmer's market space (29%).
- Outdoor swimming pool (24%).
- Open space/natural areas (20%).

<u>Most important functions of open space</u>

- Preserve wildlife habitat (53%).
- Preserve views and view corridors (46%).
- Protect rivers, creeks, canal corridors, and wetlands (45%).
- Provide trails (34%).
- Protect the rural character of the town (30%).

In addition, survey respondents indicated the highest need for the following programs.

Programs

- Fitness and wellness (61%).
- Individual activities (such as biking and hiking) (59%).
- Special events (39%).
- Cultural arts (38%).
- Volunteer programs (36%).

References to specific survey results are included in relevant sections of this *Findings and Analysis Report*.

D. Additional Community and Stakeholder Input

Extensive public and stakeholder input was gathered throughout the master planning process, including residents, stakeholders, elected officials, and staff.

Public Input

A summary of the public input opportunities include the following:

- *Public Meetings* – three meetings, two at the beginning of the planning process and one to gain input on the Draft Master Plan.
- *Focus Groups* – two meetings at the beginning of the process.
- *Open Space and Trails Advisory Board* – two meetings, one at the beginning of the planning process and one to gain input on the Draft Master Plan.
- *Planning Commission* – one to present the Draft Master Plan.
- *Board of Trustees Meetings* – four meetings at different stages of the planning process.

In addition to the statistically-valid survey, community input was gathered through two initial public meetings and two focus groups, held early in the planning process in September and October 2008. The public meetings were promoted via press releases, newspaper ads, electronic newsletters, and Town website. One hundred thirty-three (133) invitations to focus groups were made to local businesses, organizations, developers, and interest groups. A total of 47 individuals attended the public meetings and eight (8) stakeholders attended the focus groups, all held at the Erie Community Center. Participants were asked to discuss key strengths, areas for improvement, and opportunities for parks, recreation, open space, and trails in the Town of Erie. Following is a summary of participant comments from these meetings. This input, along with the results from the statistically-valid survey, is important in identifying community needs and interests. ***Appendix B*** offers a more detailed listing of responses.

Strengths:

- Erie Community Center .
- Open spaces and rural character.
- Pro-active about growth.
- Reservoirs.
- Trail system plan.
- Strong sense of community.
- Parks, trails, and open space.
- Community commitment to parks and recreation.

Need Improvements/Weaknesses:

- Trail connections.
- Amenities along trails (e.g. benches).
- Skate park.
- Additional programs (e.g. gymnastics, adult sports, tennis).
- Lack of team sport facilities.
- Outdoor pool and space for swim teams.
- Access to existing open spaces.
- Town is disjointed and needs a greater sense of community.

Opportunities:

- More special events (e.g. concert series, movies in the park).
- Preserve open spaces.
- Keep views to mountains.
- Expand trails and connectivity.
- Preserve small town character.
- Promote coal mining heritage (e.g. signage).
- Winter sports (e.g. sledding, cross country skiing).
- Farmer's market.
- Improvements to Coal Creek – benches, sculptures.
- Add outdoor facilities (e.g. skate park, dog park, sports complex, pool, tennis, amphitheatre).
- Gymnastics space.
- Continue community outreach and involvement.
- Balance land uses.
- Smart growth.
- Partnerships.

Staff Input

In addition, stakeholder input was gathered from staff through meetings with the Recreation Division and Park Maintenance Division staff as well as Town Department Heads. Furthermore, input and comments from the Parks & Recreation Department staff were incorporated throughout the project through monthly project team meetings.

Other Efforts

Community input from the Erie Community Park planning efforts (that was occurring simultaneously to the *Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan* process) helped inform the Master Plan.

3. Recreation Program Analysis

Following is a description and analysis of the Erie Parks & Recreation Department's current programs, and existing parks, and facilities. First, the Department's recreation programs are discussed. Next, an overview of area alternative recreation providers is provided, and partnerships are discussed.

A. Recreation Programs and Administration

Program Overview

Recreation programming for the Town of Erie is still in its infancy stages. The addition of the Erie Community Center (ECC) in 2008 opened the doors to a wide array of new programming opportunities. To begin the program analysis process, a focus group was conducted with the Recreation Division. Staff identified program strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities to be reviewed. Additionally, staff provided Active Net (registration software) program reports and budgets to help with this process.

Approximately 180,000 visits were made to the Erie Community Center its first year of operation in 2008. Eighty-three percent (83%) of program participants are Town of Erie residents. On average, 50-60 fitness classes were offered each week in 2008. These classes drew approximately 2,000 participants a month to the ECC.

Aquatic classes offered at the center in its first year of operation experienced wait lists. Traffic at the ECC is consistent. The Recreation Division consists of the following major program areas.
All are housed at the ECC. Following is a brief description of highlights from each program area.

<u>Active Adults</u>

- Ages 60 and over.
- Programs consist of day trips, classes, special events, lunch programs, and drop-in activities.
- The *Erie Scene* is published four times a year as an additional marketing tool, which helps make this program area strong.
- Participation is expected to grow as "Boomers" age in Erie.

<u>Adult Programs</u>

- Both contractual and in-house general interest classes are offered.
- Revenue splits are negotiated to achieve target cost-recovery with contractual instructors.
- Attendance is steady.

<u>Adult Sports</u>

- Basketball, volleyball, racquetball, wallyball, and softball programs are offered.
- Strengths are adult basketball and coed volleyball. Plans for 2009 include women's volleyball and additional softball leagues.
- Lack of athletic field space currently limits program expansion.

Aquatics

- The Town currently operates one swimming pool located at the ECC.
- Aquatics classes offer a low student to teacher ratio, which adds to success. (1:8 6 months – 3 years, 1:4 ages 3-5, and 1:6 ages 6-14).
- Programs include youth swim lessons and adult water fitness classes.
- Programs are at capacity with wait lists.
- In an effort for students to hear, spray features must be shut down when lessons and classes are offered.

Climbing

- Open climb is available with ECC admission during designated times. Climbers must have ECC certification.
- Several youth and adult climbing classes are offered throughout the year.
- Participation is steady.

Fitness/Wellness

- Staff identified group fitness as one of the most successful programs by demand at ECC.
- Eighty-five percent of classes are included with center admission and offered on a drop-in basis.
- Contractual classes are also offered.
- ECC's fitness classes often reach capacity and create a demand for more.

Special Events

- Events include Family Fun Night, Arbor Day Celebration, fishing clinics, Night of the Stars Youth Talent Show, 9 Health Fair, Mighty Kids Triathlon, Bark in the Park, Firecracker 4K, Concerts in the Park, Bike to Work Day, Trunk or Treat and Spookfest, Turkey Tune Up, and the Holiday Lighting Contest.
- Community participation in special events is high and exceeded staff expectations.

Youth Programs

- Programs include a variety of arts and crafts, music, dance, gymnastics, training classes, and martial arts.
- The 7-9 year olds Kids Club drop-in program has been a demand by the residents of Erie; however, participation has historically been low. Staff struggles with dedicating space and staffing this program given low participation.
- Participation in the youth programs fluctuates as staff continues to identify a niche.

Youth Sports

- Leagues and training are offered in the following areas: basketball, flag football, soccer, cheerleading, volleyball, softball, and baseball.
- The Intergovernmental Agreement for facility use with St. Vrain Valley School District is a key factor in successful scheduling of youth sports leagues.
- Participation is strong. Staff is planning to add additional leagues as Erie's population grows.

Participation

Overall, participation at the ECC and in programs is consistent and strong. This is evident as capacity issues for many program areas are the primary challenge for the Recreation Division. **Table 9** shows the participation data since the center opened in January 2008. Analysis of attendance reports, the Community Survey, and revenue reports suggests that Fitness/Wellness, Active Adult and the Aquatics programs are consistently strong. Youth and teen programs are highly requested by Town residents; however, staff has struggled with consistent participation. Identifying a niche for youth and teen programs will be important in the future as Erie's youth population continues to grow.

Table 9: Program Participation (2008)

Program Area	Program Participation	Programs held	Programs Cancelled
Active Adults	858	134	16
Adult Programs	121	22	5
Adult Sports (19 teams x an average of 8 participants per team)	152	5	9
Aquatics	1684	334	35
Climbing	158	67	16
Fitness	403	75	52
Special Events	3800	15	0
Youth Programs	1808	176	22
Youth Sports	1727	82	1
Totals	**10,711**	**910**	**156**
*Drop-In Fitness (thru Sept)	25,478	480	11

**Drop-in fitness measures daily participation. All other program participation is measured by total participants registered in a class session or league. Totals do not yet include drop in fitness numbers.*

Creating a Niche

The 2008 Department Budget overview indicates that the *"Recreation Division oversees the operations of the Erie Community Center and provides sports programs, senior programs and activities, and general recreation activities to all ages in order to promote active and healthy lifestyles and the development of lifetime skills and social interaction among participants."* The *Recreation Program Guide* provides a comprehensive listing of programs and services available to residents, whether their interests are indoors/outdoors, scheduled/drop-in, or structured/unstructured. At this time, the Recreation Division is the primary service provider for youth and adult programs. As the Town grows and alternative providers continue to move in, staff will have the opportunity to evaluate what programs and services are offered and to define their niche in fitness/wellness, youth programs, adult programs, outdoor recreation, older adult programming, aquatics, etc.

Program Marketing

The *Erie Program Guide* is the primary marketing tool for the ECC and its programs. It is printed three times a year and is distributed at the Community Center and Town Hall. Other means of marketing include electronic communications through Active Net. As well as promotion in the *Erie Review*, flyers, the *Erie Scene*, utility bills, and memo boards at the ECC. Active Net registration software eblasts are affordable and efficient; however, they reach only those people already in the system. The School District stopped flyer distribution, which left staff with a gap in reaching youth and teens. There is currently no marketing plan for future program enhancements. As the ECC plans new programs, alternative marketing tools may be necessary to reach new residents and to address demographic shifts. A comprehensive marketing program would help in this area.

According to the *2008 Community Survey*, the *Erie Review* and flyers in water bills are the most common ways residents receive information. Survey respondents indicated that Town email via Listserve, the Erie website, and flyers in water bills will be the best ways to promote future announcements from the Park and Recreation Department.

Cost Recovery for Programs

Erie has a solid recreation cost recovery program. Ordinance # 31-2005, as outlined in **Table 10,** explains the required amount of cost recovery by program area. Programs offered in 2008 through the Erie Community Center have met and/or exceeded their revenue goals. Group fitness and climbing classes are inclusive with membership at the ECC.

Table 10: Erie Program Cost Recovery Policy

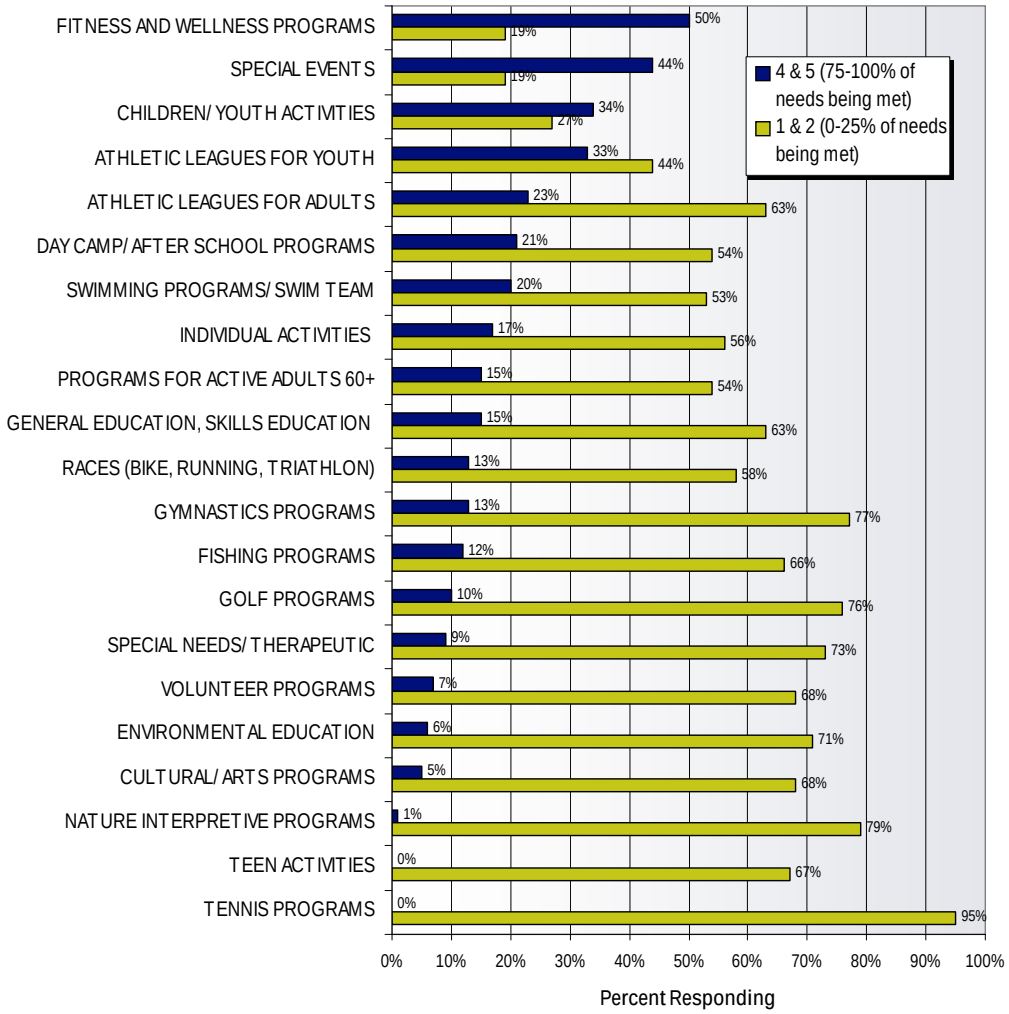
Program Area	Cost Recovery
Adult Activities	100%
Senior Activities	75%
Youth Activities	50% (non-resident fees include an additional 25%)

Recreation Survey Needs

The *2008 Community Survey* indicated that the ECC and its services ranked high (87%) in satisfaction. Respondents rated program satisfaction for youth, teens, and adults in the 55-62 percent range, which is very good for the Community Center's first year of operation. When asked about household programming needs, fitness/wellness and special events rated high. **Figure 5** shows the programs households desire and how well these needs are being met. Within the first year of ECC operations, the Recreation Division staff has done a good job of identifying program needs of the community. The Erie Community Park , scheduled to open in 2010, will provide facilities to expand adult and youth sports programs as well as day camps and special events. The challenge staff will face in the future is balancing the number of classes the ECC can schedule or operate out of outlying facilities through partnerships with outside organizations (e.g. homeowner associations, private agencies, and the School District) in an effort to continue reaching to meet the needs of residents.

Figure 5: Survey Program Needs

Of the programs your household has a need for, how well are your needs currently being met?



Source: Town of Erie statistically valid community survey

Summary of Key Findings from Program Analysis

- Recreation programs are primarily based out of the ECC at the present time.
- Overall program attendance is strong.
- Youth and teen programs are highly requested; however, participation does not reflect the expressed demand for dedicated space in the ECC.
- Aquatic and fitness classes are in high demand and face challenges with additional space and for scheduling.
- ECC facility scheduling at peak hours (generally weekday evenings from 5-7 pm) is challenging due to the high demand.
- Program cost recovery is meeting ordinance requirements.
- Approximately 90 percent of ECC program participants are Erie residents.
- ECC had close to 180,000 visits in 2008, surpassing original target.
- Special events are valued by Erie residents as an important family programming component.

- Marketing is working well through direct mail in water bills, the *Erie Program Guide*, and the *Erie Review.*
- However, survey respondents indicated that Town email, the Erie website, and flyers in water bills will be best ways to promote future announcements from the Park and Recreation Department.

B. Alternative Providers & Partnerships

Alternative Providers

Erie Parks & Recreation Department staff identified 20 alternative providers offering fitness, youth sports, summer camps, adult sports, golf, gymnastics, tennis, and community or recreation facilities in the area. However diligent the effort is to attract Erie residents to Department facilities and programs, individuals and families will continue to seek recreation opportunities that best meet their needs. They may venture outside of what is offered by the Town and utilize private providers or other surrounding public park and recreation agencies. ***Appendix C*** provides detailed information on these providers. As the Town of Erie continues to grow and expand programs, collaborations with outside organizations will be helpful with facility space, ball fields, and services. As demand increases in a particular niche, Erie has the opportunity to partner with other organizations to respond to citizen needs. It is not expected that Erie can provide everything to everyone while trying to keep up with the fast growth that the Town is experiencing. Potential partnerships with alternative providers offer a way to diversify program offerings with limited facilities or field space.

The list of alternative providers identifies six public agencies, three private/non-profit agencies, eight private agencies, and three homeowner associations. Three local YMCAs offer youth and adult sports, summer camps, fitness/wellness, and aquatics programs. The five neighboring municipalities offer a variety of programming from leagues, to camps, and fitness and wellness programs. During the public process, Erie residents and stakeholders representing gymnastics and soccer participants indicated that they use Boulder and Lafayette programs to satisfy these needs. The private agencies that offer programs in or near Erie's municipal boundaries target residents looking for gymnastics, tennis, golf, and fitness programs. These private providers offer specialized programs that can complement the Town of Erie's programs. Three HOAs have outdoor pools and offer limited fitness/wellness programs.

Following is a breakdown of key alternative providers in the region.

<u>Public</u>
- City of Louisville
- City of Lafayette
- City of Longmont
- City of Broomfield
- City of Brighton
- Carbon Valley District

<u>Private/Non-profit</u>
- Boulder Valley YMCA Boulder
- Boulder Valley YMCA Lafayette
- Ed and Ruth Lehman YMCA Longmont

Private

- Lifetime Fitness
- 24 Hour Fitness Broomfield
- 24 Hour Fitness Thornton
- Curves – Erie
- Fitness 19
- Extreme Gymnastics
- Leonard's Golf
- Rich's Tennis

HOAs

- Vista Ridge
- Arapahoe Ridge
- Erie Commons

Staff cites the lack of additional municipal pool facilities in Erie as a key reason that Erie residents utilize surrounding parks and recreation agencies. Leisure pools and competitive pools were identified as a need in public meetings held in September 2008 and by staff.

With the high number of private fitness providers located within Town limits and nearby, it is apparent that some Erie residents seek options that are different from what the Town offers. With the recent opening of the Lifetime Fitness facility, the Town will have to work to identify its own niche in the fitness/wellness area. If the Erie Community Center's fitness areas were not being used at or near capacity this would be a concern. However, with the success of current programs Erie's fitness programs have the opportunity to remain successful. In consideration of alternative providers, the goal is to complement versus duplicate services.

Partnerships

Newer partners of parks and recreation agencies throughout the nation include the healthcare system, social services, justice, education, corporate sector, and community service agencies. This reflects both a broader interpretation of the mandate of parks and recreation agencies, and the increased willingness of other sectors to work together to address community issues. The relationship with health is vital in promoting wellness. The traditional relationship with schools through joint use agreements for shared facilities is evolving into cooperative planning and programming aimed at addressing youth inactivity levels and community needs.

Municipal parks and recreation structures and delivery systems have changed and more alternative methods of delivering services are evident. There is more contracting out of certain services, and more cooperative agreements with non-profit groups and other public institutions.

The Town of Erie's primary partnership is with the St. Vrain Valley School District. The relationship is positive and provides valuable space. The schools are primarily used for gym and field space at this time. To improve upon this relationship, the Town hopes to more effectively market programs and services to students and to expand school facility use as the population grows and additional programs are added.

According to Recreation Division Staff, the Joint Use Agreement (JUA) in place with St. Vrain Valley School District works well. It is currently up for renewal at the end of 2008. The Agreement, however, will need to be tightened as growth continues for both the School District and the Town.

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4. Inventory and Level of Service Analysis

This section of the report provides an overview and analysis of the Town of Erie parks, recreation, trails, and open space system. First, the process for the inventory collection is described. Next, an overview of the inventory is provided. Finally, the service provided by the parks, recreation, trails, and open space system is discussed.

A. Inventory

Overview

One essential part of the ***Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan*** project is to establish a complete and accurate inventory of the parks, recreation, open space, and trails system offered by the Town of Erie. A comprehensive inventory was conducted in September and October of 2008. This was accomplished by visiting each park property and recreation facility, talking with appropriate personnel, and recording the quantity and functionality of each component. For the purposes of this master plan, the inventory focused on components at sites that are maintained for public use by the Town of Erie, Homeowner Associations (HOA), St. Vrain Valley School District, and other providers. These facilities are part of the overall level of service enjoyed by residents of Erie. The purpose of this study is to analyze the effectiveness of all town-wide park and recreation services and to create a complete inventory of amenities that are publicly accessible, even in a limited fashion such as HOA pools or school ballfields.

Each component was located, counted, and assessed for the functionality of its primary intended use. A GRASP® (Geo-Referenced Amenities Standards Process) score was assigned to the component as a measure of its functionality as follows. (A more detailed description of the history of GRASP® and its relationship to NRPA standards can be found in ***Appendix D: GRASP® History and Methodology***.)

- **Below Expectations (BE)** – The component does not meet the expectations of its intended primary function. Factors leading to this may include size, age, accessibility, or others. Each such component was given a score of **1** in the inventory.

- **Meeting Expectations (ME)** – The component meets expectations for its intended function. Such components were given scores of **2.**

- **Exceeding Expectations (EE) –** The component exceeds expectations, due to size, configuration, or unique qualities. Such components were given scores of **3.**

- If the feature exists but is not useable because it is unsafe, obsolete, or dysfunctional, it may be listed in the feature description, and assigned a **score of zero (0).**

Components were evaluated according to this scale from two perspectives, the value of the component in serving the immediate neighborhood, and the component's value to the entire community.

Next, amenities that relate to and enhance the use of the component were evaluated. Each **park site** or **indoor facility** was given a set of scores to rate its comfort and convenience to the user. This includes such factors as the availability of restrooms, drinking water, shade, scenery, etc.

Lastly, the overall design and ambiance of the facility or park was recorded as a part of the inventory. Characteristics such as overall layout, attention to design, and functionality inform the design and ambiance score.

The assessment findings from each location were entered into a master inventory database/spreadsheet. This inventory will serve as a tool that the Town of Erie can use for future updating and analysis. (See ***Appendix E: Town of Erie Park and Facility Inventory.)*** The database serves as a record of the inventory and was also used to perform the GRASP® analysis that follows.

Inventory Description

Existing Infrastructure

The parks, recreation, open space, and trails system in Erie can be thought of as an infrastructure that serves the health and well-being of Town residents. This infrastructure model is made up of components that are combined in various ways to provide service.

The Town of Erie provides several basic and well-maintained parks. Among them are a variety of park and property types including small developed Pocket Parks, larger developed Neighborhood Parks, and even larger areas of undeveloped open space. Recreational opportunities include both passive and active, and parks are geared to both neighborhood and community use.

Within the system are a number of recently developed smaller parks that are designed with basic amenities to serve the immediate neighborhood. In addition, larger neighborhood parks expand the range of amenities in the immediate neighborhood and are sized for larger, entire-neighborhood and community events.

There are also several properties that have been set aside as part of larger open space systems. These properties are largely undeveloped but have a great potential and are designated for future community trails. Developing these properties will allow Erie to create a complete park, trails, and open space system, as funding is available, without expending major dollars on property acquisition.

Finally, 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 otherwise are not available at the pocket park or neighborhood park level. The park will include a ballfield complex, multi-purpose fields, community green, amphitheatre, and destination playground. (While not yet built at the time of this plan, this community park was planned and funded and therefore included in the inventory as part of this master plan.)

Generally, 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 neighborhood parks.

The Town of Erie has a solid parkland dedication ordinance that requires developers to dedicate parkland for neighborhood parks. The ordinance also requires developers to develop and dedicate park land, providing playgrounds and furnishings in pocket parks. (For more information about the Town of Erie's park and open space land dedication requirements, see *Section7-E* of this report.) These efforts enhance the system as a whole while increasing passive and active park and open space uses for the Town's growing population. The location and amenities within these developer parks are important to the Town, ensuring that necessary services are well integrated into the layout of the neighborhood they serve.

Currently, the park and recreation system contains developed and undeveloped parks and indoor facilities, trails, and designated open spaces. Below is a sampling of parks and facilities within Erie that illustrates the variations in size and the array of amenities one might find in each park type or facility.

Erie Community Park – *Community Park*
This park is currently in the design phase and will be the largest park in the system. The master plan for the site will include a ballfield complex, multi-purpose fields, community green, community amphitheatre, destination playground, group shelters, and picnic areas. The site is large, relatively flat, central to the Town's geographic boundaries, and adjacent to the new Erie Community Center – all ideal attributes for a sports complex and community park.

Lehigh Park – *Neighborhood Park*
This is one of the larger neighborhood parks in the system and provides both passive and active recreation. It contains a large turf area and an adjacent HOA-operated and maintained pool and poolhouse. The site offers a group picnic shelter, a fully accessible playground, a water play sprayground, and seat boulders. At the east end of the park is natural open space adjacent to the Coal Creek corridor.

Coal Creek Park – *Neighborhood Park*
Located in the downtown area adjacent to Coal Creek, this park is the oldest neighborhood park in Erie. The park includes two ballfields with a multi-purpose field, a skate park, and an older shelter. It has direct access to Coal Creek and can be a vital connection between the Coal Creek corridor and downtown. Many of the Town's festivals and concerts are held at this park.

Reliance Park – *Neighborhood Park*
This park is located north of the downtown area and is adjacent to Coal Creek. The first of two phases have been constructed, including a ballfield, group shelter, destination playground, and portable restroom with enclosure, typical of most Erie parks that provide restroom facilities. Components planned for the next phase of the park's development, but not yet funded, include a large multi-purpose field, dog park, and creek access. Like most Erie neighborhood parks, picnic tables, ornamental plantings, a trail connection, and dog pick-up stations are provided for users.

Coal Creek Open Space – *Open Space*

Centered in the Town of Erie's planning area, Coal Creek provides a strong natural focal point for the Town. It is a continuous piece of open space that creates a green central 'spine' providing opportunities for habitat, recreation, and pedestrian transportation. A trail constructed within portions of the open space is a major arterial for activities such as walking, jogging, and biking. Local trails from neighboring residential subdivisions and commercial and industrial areas can access this spine trail. As the trail in Coal Creek expands, it can become a regional trail by tying into trails from Boulder County, Weld County, Lafayette, and Broomfield.

Pocket Parks

Pocket parks are small, focused neighborhood parks in Erie that are typically Town-owned and HOA maintained. Erie has 45 of these properties distributed through its single-family residential neighborhoods and multi-family complexes. Pocket parks such as those located in Creekside, Vista Ridge, and Erie Commons typically contain a new playground, new shelter, and open turf at a minimum. They also provide connection to trails, dog pick-up stations, picnic tables, and ornamental plantings. Some features unique to a sample of pocket parks such as Creekside include a basketball court, several educational signs, and a xeriscape garden display.

Erie Community Center

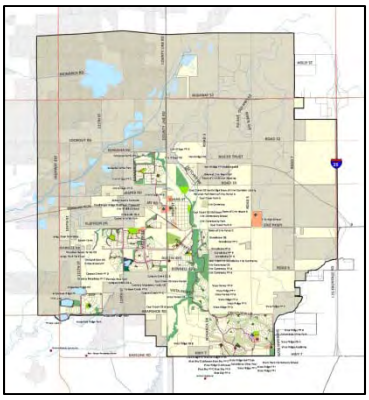
The Community Center opened in January 2008 and serves the Town of Erie's residents and guests, offering indoor recreation and meeting room opportunities. Active recreation components include a lap pool, leisure pool, gymnasium, weight and cardio equipment, indoor track, and racquetball courts. The center has dedicated space for a climbing wall, fitness, and dance room. The center also provides space and activities for a wide cross-section of age groups, including a babysitting area, an indoor playground for children, a teen-lounge with interactive games, and a senior lounge with computers and internet access. Four multi-purpose rooms, which can be opened together to form a single, large indoor area, are located adjacent to a kitchen and stage on the north side of the building.

Schools - Other

School properties provide a shared facility opportunity for the Town of Erie. For example, in the downtown area, Erie Elementary School and Erie Middle School add to the level of service with recreation facilities such as ballfields, multi-use fields, and playgrounds that are available for neighborhood and community use. These recreation components can supplement the Town's facilities in servicing residents. School recreation facilities that have restricted access because of fences or are programmed during the year by the school for functions and activities are included in this analysis but receive lower or "discounted" scores (in the GRASP® scoring system).

Map B: Inventory

The small map shown here is for reference only. Larger maps and **GRASP®** Perspectives can be found in ***Appendix F: Maps and GRASP® Perspectives.*** This map shows where the existing parks, trails, and open spaces are located. For this study, the analysis area includes the Town's corporate boundary and pre-determined planning areas. In addition, schools, landmarks, and alternative providers are shown for reference.



B. Level of Service Analysis

As part of this Master Plan, a Level of Service (LOS) analysis of the parks, recreation, open space, and trail system was conducted. This tool allows for analysis of the inventory, quantity, location, distribution, and access to recreation components. Level of Service (LOS) is typically defined in parks and recreation plans as the capacity of the system's components to meet the needs of residents. The **GRASP® Method** was used in this analysis, which records quantity, quality, and location information about the components and displays the information in chart and map form. A more detailed description of the history of GRASP® and its relationship to NRPA standards can be found in ***Appendix D: GRASP® History and Methodology***.

The GRASP® Analysis

GRASP® methodology is a unique way of looking at LOS because it considers not only the quantity and distribution of parks and facilities but also functionality, comfort and convenience, and overall design and ambiance. It is also unique in that it applies to individual recreation *components* (playground equipment, shelters, ballfields, etc.) and creates a <u>component-based model</u> for evaluating LOS.

After scoring each component, as outlined in the inventory description, GIS software is used to create graphic representations that allow for easy visual and numerical analysis of the recreation system. Some of the representations show raw data collected through the inventory process or received from other sources. These are referred to as ***Resource Maps***. Other representations emerge from the processing of data within the GIS using composite values analysis. These analyses can look at both general and specific aspects of the system. Each of these representations is referred to as a ***GRASP® Perspective***. The following maps and Perspectives were prepared for this plan and can be found in ***Appendix F: Maps and GRASP® Perspectives.***

Map A: **Regional Context**
Map B: **Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails System**
Map D: **Indicators of Potential Open Space Value**
Map E: **Trailshed: Trail Access to Community Facilities**
Perspective A: **Neighborhood Access to All Components**
Perspective B: **Walkable Access to All Components**
Perspective C: **Neighborhood Access to Trails**

(Note: *Resource Map C: Parks and Recreational Trails Recommendations* is included in the ***Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trail Master Plan***.)

For each ***GRASP® Perspective***, components that are relative to the Perspective are combined into a composite analysis. Each component's GRASP® score is applied to a service area (or *buffer*) based on a radius from the component. ***Perspective A*** applies the component's qualitative score to both one-mile and one-third mile buffers. One-mile buffers represent a distance from which convenient access to the component can be achieved by normal means of transportation such as driving or bicycling. The one-third mile buffer shows the distance that a resident can reasonably walk in 10 minutes. Scores are doubled within the one-third mile buffer to reflect the added accessibility of walking, since almost anyone can reach the location on their own by walking, even if they do not drive or ride a bicycle. No major barriers to pedestrian access, such as highways, interstates, or railways were identified.

When buffers with associated scores are plotted on a map, a picture emerges that represents the cumulative LOS. Where buffers for multiple components overlap or component scores are higher, a darker shade results and indicates locations that are "served" by a combination of more components and/or higher quality ones. In other words, **where there are darker shades, the level of service is higher** for that particular Perspective. It is important to note that the shade overlaying any given point on the map represents the cumulative value offered by the surrounding park system to an individual situated in that specific location.

GRASP® Target Scores Analysis

Within the GRASP® Perspectives, the buffers and associated scores are presented in two ways – with infinite tone ranges (orange) and in two tones based on ***target values*** (purple and yellow).

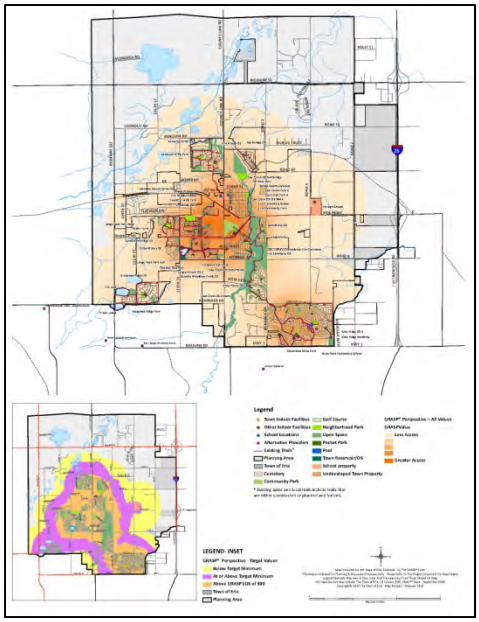
The **larger scale map** in each of the Perspectives shows the **GRASP®** buffers or service areas with an infinite tone range that portrays the nuances of service that is being provided to the community. At this scale, it is easier to see the differences in services provided by parks and individual components. The complete Perspective series is set to the same tone scale so that the different Perspectives can be compared side-by-side.

The **inset map** shows the **GRASP®** score ranges bracketed to show where service is either *Below Target Minimum Score* or *At or Above Target Minimum Score*. Each Perspective uses a different target minimum score based on the values the Perspective is evaluating. A description of the inset map's target minimum score is explained in each Perspective section. **Areas in yellow have service available, but that service is *Below the Target Minimum Score*. Areas in purple have service that is *At or Above the Target Minimum Score*.** Areas with neither yellow nor purple shading do not have service within the parameters of that Perspective. In the inset, you can clearly see which areas fall into each of the categories for a summarized look at the service provided. Different score breaks were used from one Perspective to another on the inset maps based on what the target minimum score is for each Perspective. For this reason, these maps cannot be compared to each other but are specific to each Perspective. For further information on how target scores are established, please refer to the *GRASP® History and Methodology* in ***Appendix D.***

The following section reviews the Perspectives and highlights where higher and lower levels of service are being provided from a given set of components.

Maps and Perspectives for the Town of Erie

Thumbnails of the GRASP® target scores inset and excerpts from some of the maps and Perspectives are shown here for convenience only – please refer to the full maps in ***Appendix F*** for complete information and clarity.



Perspective A:
Neighborhood Access to All Components

This Perspective shows how the Town is providing service at a neighborhood level through its parks, recreation, open space, and trails system. This is defined by having services within one-mile radius from your home with a higher value placed on the services that are available within walking distance, or one-third mile. For this Perspective, the *target value* is a score that represents a resident who has access within one-third mile of their home to four recreation components and one recreational trail. This score equals a numeric value of *67.2*. All components within the inventory (including indoor) were utilized to generate this Perspective. Town-owned components and HOA or Metro District maintained facilities and schools with open access were counted at full value. HOA facilities and schools with limited access were counted at half of full value.

A majority of residents have 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 highest concentration of service is located in the geographic center of Town where Erie Community Center and future Erie Community Park are located. (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 aforementioned Erie Community Center and Erie Community 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.

Table 11 provides a numeric summary of the GRASP® Perspective showing percentages of the area that either have no service, service that is below the target level, or service that meets or exceeds targets that correspond to residential service models. The table is broken into two categories: 1) Areas located within the Town's corporate limits, and 2) Areas located outside the corporate limits but within the planning area. In this analysis, residents that have access to the equivalent of a park parcel with four components and a trail within one-third of a mile from their home are receiving service at residential target levels.

Within the corporate limits, the Town of Erie provides some service at a neighborhood level to 87 percent of the Town's geographic area. Where service is provided, 86 percent of that area has access to service that meets or exceeds target residential levels, and 14 percent has access to service, but not service that is meeting residential targets. Compared to the corporate limit, service levels for the Planning Area decline around the edges of the Town where residential properties are not yet developed.

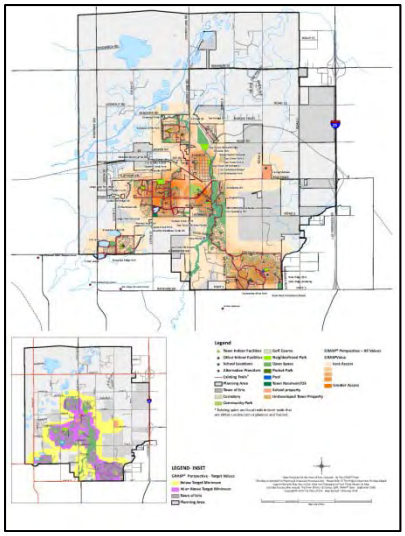
For **Perspective A**, the inset map further identifies an area (in orange) with a GRASP® score that exceeds 300, which is significantly above the target minimum score of 67.2. This further analysis shows that central and southeast Erie has the highest level of service.

Table 11: Perspective A - Neighborhood Access to All Components, Overall Statistics

				Total Area			Area Served (LOS)*	
	Total Acres (1)	Percent of Area With LOS (2)	Average LOS Per Acre Served (3)	Percent with no Score	Percent Below Target Minimum Score	Percent Above Target Minimum Score	Percent Below Target Minimum Score	Percent Above Target Minimum Score
Corporate Erie	11,025	87%	427	13%	12%	75%	14%	86%
Unincorporated Planning Area	18,305	37%	136	63%	19%	18%	52%	48%
Entire Area	**29,330**	**57%**	**305**	**43%**	**17%**	**40%**	**30%**	**70%**

* Subset of the *Total Area* representing only those areas where service is provided (shown in column 2). Values within the area served fall either below the *target value* or above the *target value*.

Perspective B: Walkable Access to all Components



This Perspective shows the level of service provided to the community at a walkable level. All components are shown and each has only a one-third mile buffer, which equates to about a 10-minute walk. Scores within the buffers are equal to the base score for the components, calculated as described in ***Appendix D***, and doubled to reflect the walkable access, as was done on Perspective A. In a sense, this is Perspective A with the one-mile buffers removed. Like Perspective A, the *target score* for residential areas reflects the equivalent of a park with four components and trail within one-third of a mile from each home. This score again equals a numeric value of *67.2*.

In this Perspective, more gaps in service appear, including the area between the High School and downtown area that was adequately covered in Perspective A. Another gap exists between the Arapahoe Ridge development and the center of the Town. Like Perspective A, concentrations in service are located around Lehigh Park, the Thomas Reservoir area, and Vista Ridge.

The presence of safe and comfortable routes to parks can increase recreation opportunities dramatically. Walkability is especially important to consider as the Town looks to providing service to youth and the elderly, as these groups often do not have access to cars.

Although gaps in walkable service do appear, **Table 12** shows that 66 percent of the corporate boundary has access to parks and recreation facilities within one-third of a mile. The remaining 33 percent within the corporate boundary that is without a LOS are primarily properties that have been annexed into the Town but are not yet developed. Fifty-nine percent of the corporate area served has service that meets or exceeds the target minimum score. This indicates that when the Town provides service through recreation facilities, the number and distribution of parks approaches the community's needs but can still be improved. Like Perspective A, target scores for residential areas reflect the equivalent of a park with four components and a trail within one-third of a mile from each home. Improvements can be made to these areas with low LOS by adding components within parks.

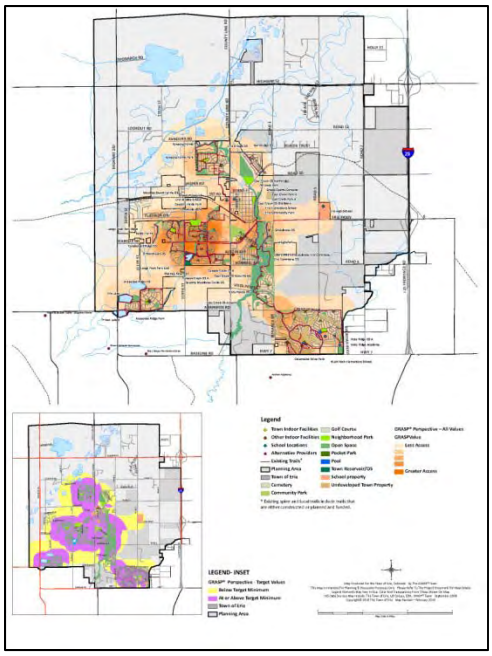
Only 12 percent of the unincorporated planning area provides any level of service. This is largely attributable to the fact that many parcels and properties in these areas have not been developed. As these areas are developed, designating land for parks, incorporating components within parks, and providing trails, connectivity, and open space will be important to provide service to a growing population.

Table 12: Perspective B - Walkable Access to All Components, Overall Statistics

				Total Area			Area Served (LOS)*	
	Total Acres	Percent of Area With LOS	Average LOS Per Acre Served	Percent with no Score	Percent Below Target Minimum Score	Percent Above Target Minimum Score	Percent Below Target Minimum Score	Percent Above Target Minimum Score
Corporate Erie	11,025	66%	93	34%	27%	39%	41%	59%
Unincorporated Planning Area	18,305	12%	37	88%	10%	2%	85%	15%
Entire Area	**29,330**	**32%**	**80**	**68%**	**16%**	**16%**	**51%**	**49%**

* Subset of the *Total Area* representing only those areas where service is provided (shown in column 2). Values within the area served fall either below the *target value* or above the *target value*.

Perspective C: Neighborhood Access to Trails



This Perspective shows how the Town provides trail service at a neighborhood level. This is defined by having trails within a one-third mile radius from your home, or within walking distance. In this Perspective, several types of trails are shown and calculated, including linear trails along open space or creek corridors, loop walks within parks, and designated trails within road corridors. The *target value* for trails is equivalent to a trail consisting of three components including one active component, one passive component and the parcel itself. The target score equals a numeric value of *28.8*.

A majority of residents have neighborhood access to trails. A high level of service of trails is located along the Coal Creek corridor and open space, particularly where it runs through newer developments. As Coal Creek travels north through the older downtown core of Erie, trail service is adequate, but relatively limited.

The highest concentration of service is located in the residential developments west of the Erie Community Center, and to the north and south of Erie Parkway. Large contributors to this concentration of services include loop walks in Longs Peak East Park, Longs Peak West Park, and Thomas Reservoir. These service centers connect to an integrated trail network located in designated open space and road corridors.

A service gap exists between the Arapahoe Ridge subdivision and the Orchard Glen neighborhood, where land has not yet been developed. A second service gap exists between the Grandview neighborhood and Erie High School. An adequate service level exists around the new Erie Community Park property, but it is relatively lower than the Erie Commons development and subdivision to the west. Overall, Erie has a fairly even distribution of trail service within its neighborhoods.

Table 13 provides a numeric summary of the GRASP® Perspective showing percentages of area that have no service, have service that is below the target level, or have service that meets or exceeds targets that correspond to residential service models. In this analysis, residents that have access to a recreational trail/greenway or loop walk within one-third of a mile from their home are receiving service at residential target levels.

Within the corporate limit, the Town of Erie provides some service at a neighborhood level to 64 percent of its area. Where service is provided, 89 percent of that area has access to service that meets or exceeds target residential levels, and 11 percent has access to service, but not service that is meeting residential targets. Compared to the corporate limit, service levels for the remaining planning area decline around the edges of the town where residential properties are not yet developed.

Table 13: Perspective C - Neighborhood Access to Trails, Overall Statistics

				Total Area			Area Served (LOS)*	
	Total Acres (1)	Percent of Total Area With LOS (2)	Average LOS Per Acre Served (3)	Percent with no Score	Percent Below Target Minimum Score	Percent Above Target Minimum Score	Percent Below Target Minimum Score	Percent Above Target Minimum Score
Corporate Erie	11,025	64%	62	36%	7%	57%	11%	89%
Unincorporated Planning Area	18,305	18%	26	82%	9%	9%	50%	50%
Entire Area	**29,330**	**36%**	**44**	**66%**	**7%**	**27%**	**24%**	**76%**

* Subset of the *Total Area* representing only those areas where service is provided (shown in column 2). Values within the area served fall either below the *target value* or above the *target value*.

Other Tools for Measuring Level of Service (LOS)

Besides the GRASP® Perspectives and associated LOS numbers, this plan also uses capacity-based analysis tools. One tool determines capacity by comparing GRASP® scoring to population, and the other tool models traditional methods of determining LOS by using straight quantity as compared to population.

Communitywide LOS

Table 14 shows in numerical indices the LOS that accounts for both quantity and quality of Erie's recreational components. The table shows the community **GRASP®** index for select components, as well as the number of **GRASP®** points needed to maintain the current indices as the population grows.

This information can be used to plan for future improvements to the parks and recreation infrastructure and to accommodate growth. Because **GRASP®** scores are a blend of quantity and quality, it is possible to increase these scores by either adding components or improving the quality of existing ones. In most cases, a combination of the two is recommended. Used in conjunction with the **Capacities LOS Table**, the best combination of quantity and quality can be determined for planning purposes. The GRASP® Indices also allow the community to benchmark its combined LOS for quality and quantity of service over time and measure its progress.

Table 14 also identifies the GRASP® score needed for each current component to maintain the current LOS as Erie's population grows. In most cases, the score increase is nominal and could be achieved by adding components or increasing comfort and convenience features that surround the components. However, shelters, playgrounds, natural areas, and ballfields have the highest GRASP® scores per capita. To maintain the LOS as shown by the GRASP® score would require more components in addition to comfort and convenience features.

Table 14: Erie Community Components GRASP® Scores and Population Ratios

Town of Erie

Community Components GRASP® Index

	Current Population	17,000	Projected Population 2015	25,650
	Total GRASP® Community Score per component type	GRASP® score per 1000 population (GRASP© Index)	Total GRASP® score needed at projected population	Additional GRASP® score needed
Aqua Feat, Pool	8.2	0.48	12	4.2
Aqua Feat, Spray	7.2	0.42	11	3.7
Ballfield	137.8	8.11	207.9	70.1
Basketball	14	0.82	21.1	7.1
Disc Golf	0	0.00	0.0	0.0
Dog Park	0	0.00	0.0	0.0
Garden, Community	4.8	0.28	7.2	2.4
Golf	4.8	0.28	7.2	2.4
Loop Walk	32.8	1.93	49.5	16.7
MP Field, all sizes	66.8	3.93	100.8	34.0
Multi-use Courts	17.8	1.05	26.9	9.1
Natural Area	173	10.18	261.0	88.0
Open Turf	105.2	6.19	158.7	53.5
Playground, all sizes	250.1	14.71	377.4	127.3
Public Art	9.2	0.54	13.9	4.7
Shelter, all sizes	404.7	23.81	610.6	205.9
Tennis	38.2	2.25	57.6	19.4

Capacities Level of Service

For some components, the quantity needed is proportional to the population that will be served by that component. This is a straightforward calculation when components are programmed for use. Programming determines how many people will be using the facilities over a period of time. Sports fields and courts fall into this category. For other components, the ratio of components to the population may vary, depending upon the size or capacity of the component and the participation levels within the community for the activity served by the component. Skate parks and group picnic facilities fall into this category.

The following table represents the current level of service and projected needs for community components for Erie (if Erie was to maintain the current mix of park components in the future). This table closely resembles a traditional LOS analysis and shows how the quantities of certain park and recreation components compare to the population. For each component, the table shows the current quantity of that component on a "per-1000 persons" basis (referred to as the Capacity LOS) and the pro-rata number of persons in the community represented by each component. This kind of analysis can be used to show the capacity of the current inventory – in other words, how many people are potentially being served by park components.

As shown in **Table 15** Erie's expected population increase by 2015 will affect the number of components needed if service is continued at the present LOS. As the school districts are also providers of certain components, it is anticipated that they will provide additional components as the population grows. The Town will need to add several ballfields, basketball courts, open turf areas, playgrounds, shelters, and tennis courts as well as multi-purpose fields to maintain a consistent LOS within the community.

It is important to note that this table is simply one tool that is used to inform future planning efforts. This information should be considered along with local parks and recreation trends and community interests and needs. The numbers of facilities shown on this table may differ from the final recommendations due to community needs, availability of land, ability to upgrade existing facilities, and the possibility of partnerships.

Table 15: Capacities LOS for Community Components

Capacities LOS for Community Components

	Aqua Feat, Pool	Aqua Feat, Spray	Ballfield	Basketball	Garden, Community	Golf	Loop Walk	MP Fields, all sizes	Multi-use Courts	Open Turf	Playgrounds, all sizes	Public Art	Shelter, all sizes	Tennis
INVENTORY														
Town Property		1	11	3		1	7	8	1.5	61	47	2	50	2
HOAs	4				1						3		4	2
Schools			9	2				8	4	2	3			8
TOTAL	**4**	**1**	**20**	**5**	**1**	**1**	**7**	**16**	**5.5**	**63**	**53**	**2**	**54**	**12**
CURRENT RATIO PER POPULATION														
CURRENT POPULATION 2008 **17,000**														
Current Ratio per 1000 Population	0.24	0.06	1.18	0.29	0.06	0.06	0.41	0.94	0.32	3.71	3.12	0.12	3.18	0.71
Population per component - Overall	4,250	17,000	850	3,400	17,000	17,000	2,429	1,063	3,091	270	321	8,500	315	1,417
Population per component-Town only		17,000	1,545	5,667		17,000	2,429	2,125	11,333	279	362	8,500	340	8,500
PROJECTED POPULATION - YEAR 2015 **25,650**														
Total # needed to maintain current ratio of all existing facilities at projected population	6	2	30	8	2	2	11	24	8	95	80	3	81	18
*Number that should be added to achieve current ratio at projected population**	***2***	***1***	***10***	***3***	***1***	***1***	***4***	***8***	***3***	***32***	***27***	***1***	***27***	***6***

* The number of components to be added assumes that the current mix of components is desired and should be replicated as growth occurs. If the current mix is not desired, the number of components to be added will change.

Inventory Summary Findings

The inventory and analyses presented in this section indicate that Erie is doing a good job of providing park and recreation amenities to both the older parts of Town and in new, developing areas. These findings suggest that current practices (even though some policies currently conflict) are resulting in equitable service in all developed parts of Town. Areas that show lower service levels today are likely to meet targets as development continues around them.

C. Open Space and Trail Connectivity

Open Space

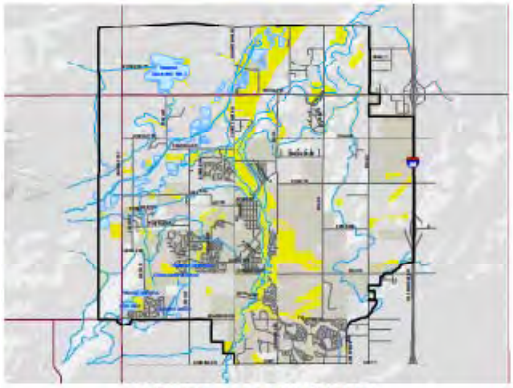
The first step in evaluating potential open space land in Erie is through the *Potential Open Space Value* analysis described here. The analysis expands on the *Natural Areas Inventory* that identifies open space value in terms of wetlands, habitat, wildlife, and vegetation and further evaluates land based on its proximity to reservoirs, major creeks, irrigation ditches, ephemeral creeks, and floodplains. The analysis also values a property's proximity to the designated alignment of Erie's Spine Trail network, and weighs the significance of agricultural lands to Erie's overall land use. The categories have been assigned values and are overlaid to form a composite map that identifies preliminary indicators within the study area for potential open space. The result is *Resource Map D: Indicators of Potential Open Space Value* shown to the right as a thumbnail for illustrative purposes only. A larger map is found in ***Appendix F***. Areas with darker colors in the map exhibit a multiple number of open space indicators for potential open space. Lighter colored areas exhibit fewer, but still significant, indicators for potential open space.

Because areas in the *potential open space value analysis* were evaluated based on the broad potential that these preservation attributes occur, there is limited evaluation of how well or to what extent individual parcels meet specific criteria. In this analysis, the potential to meet several criteria marginally would result in a higher score than a parcel that met a single criterion exceptionally well. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate individual parcels on a case-by-case basis for value as open space regardless if they exhibit indicators or not on the map.

Data for *Map D: Indicators of Potential Open Space Value* were from the *Natural Areas Inventory* and GIS resources available through Boulder County, Weld County, the United States Geological Survey, and the Town of Erie. Information within the database was broken out into the four major categories of Natural Areas Inventory, Surface Water, and Regional Trails, and Agricultural Lands. These categories represent evaluation criteria identified in the *Municipal Code, Title 10*. The categories were than assigned values and overlaid to form a composite map that represents the occurrence of multiple open space values indicating the suitability of lands within the study area for open space.

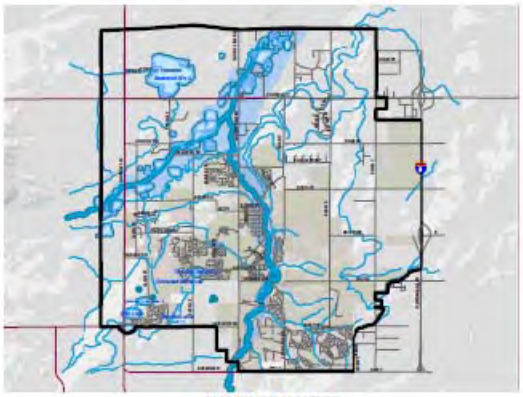
Attributes within the dataset were assigned a value score and boundary. A base value of 100 was assigned to features which exhibited a medium quality for the category being evaluated. The categories were determined as follows.

Natural Areas Inventory – Information detailing ecology, wildlife, habitat, and vegetation were included in creating this dataset. In the 2008 *Natural Areas Inventory*, the parcels were given a value of low quality, medium quality, high quality, and inaccessible. For this Master Plan study, the parcels' qualities were translated as follows: low quality carries a value of 100, medium quality a value of 150, while high quality and inaccessible lands carry a value of 250. These values were assigned to only those parcels designated in the 2008 inventory.



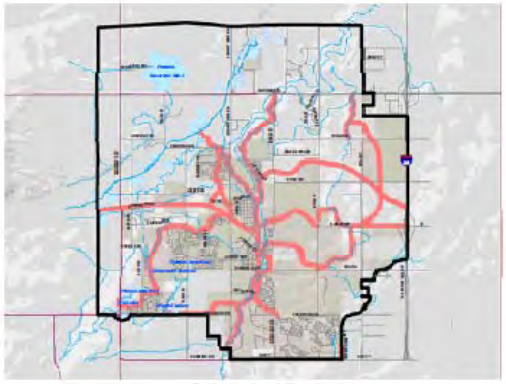
NATURAL AREAS INVENTORY
Source Data Collected from Erie Natural Areas Final Report 2008.
Multiple Values Assigned from Report
100 (Medium)
150 (Medium)
250 (High)

Surface Water – Areas within proximity to reservoirs, major creeks, ditches, and ephemeral creeks were weighted. Reservoirs include all surface water, excluding wetlands and intermittently wet properties. Because of their importance as a source of water and the need to manage their edges, a buffer of 300' from shorelines was generated and given a high value of 200. Next, Coal Creek and Boulder Creek are important channels and corridors for water conveyance. The study buffers 300' on either side of the flowline of the creek (for a total width of 600') and scores that land with a value of 200 (high). All ditches as designated by Boulder County and Weld County were buffered 75' on both sides of their flowline (for a total width of 150') and scored with a medium value of 50. Ephemeral creeks identified by the United States Geological Survey were buffered 75' on both sides of their flowline and assigned a value of 50 (low). Finally, floodplains designated by FEMA throughout the Erie Planning Area were given a value of 50 (low). Although floodplains were assigned a low value, it does not imply they are of low significance. Several floodplain properties were identified and valued through the Natural Areas Inventory, and this study attempts to avoid duplicating high values for these properties. The floodplains overlay layer allows those floodplain properties not included in the Natural Areas Inventory to be represented in this analysis with an indicator and to show on the *Resource Map D*.



SURFACE WATER
Multiple Values Assigned at Varied Buffer Distances of:
Reservoirs at 300' from Shoreline - 200 (High)
Coal Creek & Boulder Creek at 600' Total Width - 200 (High)
Ditches and at 150' Total Width - 100 (Medium)
Ephemeral Creeks at 150' Total Width - 50 (Low)
Floodplains at Limits by FEMA - 50 (Low)

Regional Trails – Original Spine Trail data was generated by the Town of Erie for future trail alignments within the Town of Erie and as connections to adjacent municipalities and unincorporated Boulder County. Additional spine trail alignments were generated through this master plan and are represented in this dataset. The study places a buffer of 330' from the trail centerline (for a total width of 660') and assigns a high value of 200.

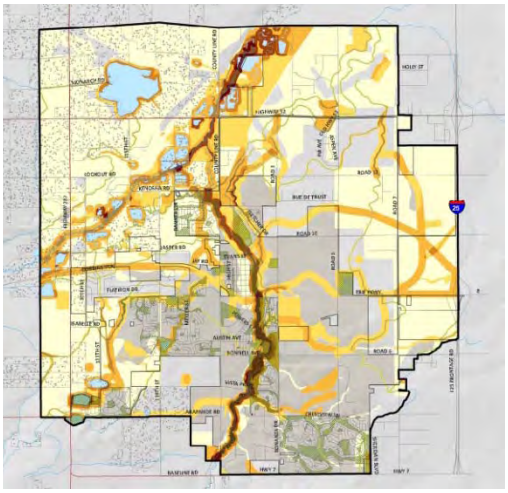


REGIONAL TRAILS
Displayed to Detail Corridors Generated by Buffering Spine Trails with a 660' Total Width Buffer. Links Were Intended to Connect Existing Parks, Trails and Open Space as Well as Supplement General Flow and Accessibility. Single Value Assigned - 200 (High)

Agricultural Lands – Data for the agricultural lands was collected from the Town of Erie *Comprehensive Plan* and Boulder & Weld Counties. Agricultural lands identified within the *Comprehensive Plan* map show locations that Town staff, elected officials, and residents have selected to either be maintained or converted to agricultural land use. These values were assigned a low score of 25. Agricultural lands identified by Boulder & Weld Counties' GIS departments were overlaid with an additional low score of 25. Where both agricultural datasets intersect, the total score for agricultural lands is 50.

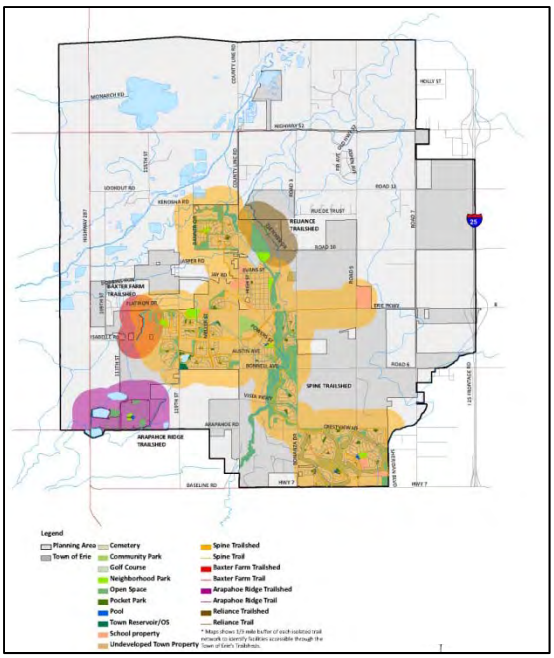
AGRICULTURAL LANDS
Source Data Collected from Erie Comprehensive Plan and Boulder & Weld Counties
Ag Land Shown in Comp Plan (Darker Shade) - 25 (Low)
Ag Identified by Boulder & Weld Counties (Lighter Shade) - 25 (Low)

Composite Map – Utilizing the Geographic Information Systems, the four categories were overlaid to create a composite map based on the number of preliminary potential open space value indictors for any given point within the study area. Mapping for each category along with the composite map is found in ***Appendix F***. Darker colored areas exhibit the highest occurrence of potential open space criteria in the ordinance; lighter colored areas show less occurrence. All land that has a value features a color within the gradient.



Because areas were evaluated based on the broad potential that these initial attributes occur, there is limited evaluation of how well or to what extent individual parcels meet specific criteria. In this analysis, the potential to meet several criteria marginally would result in a darker value than a parcel that met a single criterion exceptionally well. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate all individual parcels on a case-by-case basis for potential value as open space. This individual evaluation may occur when the preservation of potential open space land is triggered through a development process, conservation easement, or other means. Additional maps, analysis, and recommendations are included in the ***Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan*** document.

Trail Connectivity



The demand for trails has been substantiated in a number of ways including through the survey results conducted as a portion of this Master Plan project. The Town of Erie has developed documents that support the planning and construction of trails including the 2005 *Open Space and Trails Advisory Board Trail Connectivity Report* and the *Open Space and Trails Map*. Several key trail connection projects have been completed recently including the Kenosha Farms to Erie Elementary, Coal Creek Park to Erie Parkway, a portion of the Arapahoe Ridge trail from Erie Lake, and Vista Ridge to Coal Creek spine trail connections.

The goal of trail connectivity is to create a system of connected trails that link to open space, parks, schools, and other community facilities. For trail systems that are not fully built out, connectivity between trails may be cut off by properties not yet developed, major infrastructure such as a highway or interstate, or older neighborhoods in which trails were not originally planned. Barriers such as these can result in a municipal trail network that is actually segmented into smaller trails networks with no connectivity to each other.

Trailshed Map E – This map exhibits gaps of connectivity between one segment of the trail network and another segment. (See ***Appendix F*** for enlarged map.) Trailsheds are defined much the same way as a watershed. Whereas a watershed defines the limits of an area that drains into a single river, river system, or other body of water, a trailshed defines the limits of an area that can be accessed by an unbroken, continuous length of trail. The trailsheds in this plan are defined by a one-third (1/3) mile distance. Once on the trail within a trailshed, the user can access a certain number of parks, open spaces, schools, Town facilities, and components within that trailshed without ever leaving the trail.

As the Town constructs connections between trailsheds, the amenities and facilities available to a user on that trail will increase as those two trailsheds connect and become one. For instance, if a connection was made between the Core Trailshed and the Arapahoe Ridge Trailshed (as shown in Map E in ***Appendix F***), the number of schools available to Arapahoe Ridge via trails would increase from zero to seven and the number of reservoirs accessible to the Core Trailshed would increase from one to three. Trails that most benefit the connectivity between trailsheds should be placed near the top of the priority list for trail construction when the Town's goal is trail connectivity.

Also included in Map D are approximate locations where regional trails from Boulder County, Lafayette, and Broomfield will likely connect to the Town of Erie's planning area. The trail network, particularly the designated spine trail alignments, as shown in the Town's Open Space and Trails map are closely aligned with these identified regional trails.

Table 16: Trailsheds: Facilities Accessible through Erie's Trail Network

Trailsheds: Facilities and Parks accesible through the Town of Erie's trail network

TRAILSHED	Community Park	Neighborhood Park	Pocket Park	Open Space	Reservoir	School	Pool	Town Facility	Golf Course	Other	TOTAL	Components
Core	1	8	43	19	1	7	4	7	1	5	**96**	330.5
Baxter Farm				2						0	**2**	3
Arapahoe Ridge		1	1	1	2		1			0	**6**	20
Northridge		1		2						1	**4**	5
Outside				*1*				*2*		*0*	*3*	*11*

* Some facilities may fall within multiple trailsheds. Sums of facilities and components may exceed actual quantities.

5. Maintenance Analysis – Park, Open Space, and Trails

This section of the Plan provides an overview and assessment of the Town of Erie's current park management approach and maintenance operations. This analysis is based on information provided by the Parks & Recreation Department, staff meetings, community input, and site assessments.

A. Overview

The consultant team conducted a general meeting with parks staff and individual meetings with the Parks Superintendent and Department Director. A second meeting and park tour was conducted with the Parks Superintendent. In addition, Town staff provided numerous park maps, trails maps, budget information, and park department policy and procedure documents for review and analysis.

The Town Parks & Recreation Department was established in 2007. Prior to that, park maintenance had first reported directly to the Town Administrator, and then was part of the Town Public Works Department. As a division of the Parks & Recreation Department, the Park Maintenance Division is currently responsible for maintenance at eight (8) developed park sites totaling 87 acres, grounds at several Town-owned facilities (including Cemetery, Town Hall, and the Erie Community Center) totaling 33 acres, a number of open space properties totaling over 200 acres, and maintenance of several partially-developed trail corridors. The Division currently has seven (7) full-time employees including the Parks Superintendent. The 2008 approved Parks Division budget is $1,262,000 which when adjusted for non-maintenance related items leaves $1,122,000 for maintenance related activities.

In addition to the Town-owned properties, recent area residential development has included several small parks, playground areas, and trails constructed by local developers and presently maintained by local HOA groups. Town staff indicates the number of HOA-maintained sites creates confusion for area residents regarding ownership and maintenance responsibilities. From observation, the HOA-maintained sites do not appear to be maintained as well as Town-owned sites. In addition, there is no indication that the HOA maintenance routines include regular inspection of playgrounds or other safety related checks.

With the exception of Coal Creek Park, all major park sites and trail corridors appear to have been developed within the past three (3) to ten (10) years, thus the park system is relatively new. Maintenance of park properties is accomplished through a combination of in-house efforts and contracted services (including open space and right-of-way mowing, chemical applications, aeration, tree services, and some general park repairs). Efforts currently place an emphasis on turf and tree maintenance, athletic fields, shelters, playgrounds, and a significant number of collector trails. In general, Town parks observed were clean and well-maintained, with irrigated turf areas in very good condition.

A number of new park developments are planned for the next five years including expansion of two existing parks, development of additional trails, and construction of the Erie Community Park adjacent to the Community Center. These funded developments will add a minimum 41 acres of developed parks to the system and are expected to significantly impact the size and scope of park maintenance operations. In addition to developed park facilities, the Town has plans to add an undetermined number of acres of open lands and trail corridors. Trail corridor expansion and development is detailed in the Town's recently adopted Trails Master Plan.

Organizational sections within the division include: 1) forestry/horticulture, 2) irrigation maintenance, and 3) grounds/sports fields. The parks staff is professionally-trained and key staff members possess the necessary turf, forestry, and irrigation system certifications. Staff indicated a high level of pride in current operations and noted that there are relatively few public complaints regarding maintenance of Town-maintained parks. Staff is however frequently dealing with complaints and inquiries regarding HOA-maintained properties and significant time is spent tracking down problems and referring callers to the appropriate HOA.

Internal record keeping and scheduling of maintenance activities is generally consistent with industry standards. Forms and policies are typical of maintenance operations of this size. Current documentation in use includes playground inspection reports, vehicle maintenance checks, pesticide application records, park inspection reports that include general standards for safety and quality control, irrigation system inspection reports, and general data collection forms for recording labor tasks performed by site. Other procedures in place include a snow removal plan, seasonal mowing and trash collection schedules, athletic field preparation schedules, and work order forms for general and special repairs.

As noted above, recent growth and planned expansion of the park and trail inventory will require adjustments and expansion of park maintenance operations. Major challenges facing the department include:

- No formal written maintenance standards linked to a formal resource classification system.
- Confusion over maintenance and ownership responsibilities for some Town versus HOA properties.
- Lack of a life cycle costing program.
- No detailed system for tracking and calculating current and future maintenance costs.
- Further and more detailed consideration of contracted versus in-house services.
- Park, open space, and trail signage is limited.
- Maintenance and management plans for key assets including new Community Park and Coal Creek Open Space and Trail Corridor is lacking.

B. Analysis

Following is an analysis of the Erie Parks & Recreation Department maintenance and management current practices related to the parks, open space, and trails system.

Asset Classifications

A general resource classification system similar to comparable agencies at a minimum would include the following.

- Community parks
- Neighborhood parks
- Pocket parks
- Open space (open lands)
- Trail corridors

Since the current system in Erie consists of neighborhood parks and one planned community park, maintenance standards are recommended to be essentially the same for **community parks** and **neighborhood parks** (irrigated turf parks) with differences between these two tied primarily to the existence of athletic fields. The second major difference in service levels and standards will come through definition of standards for open space lands and trail corridors.

Maintenance Standards

Maintenance standards help to define consistency for regular work activities, set forth expectations regarding general service levels, assist in determining operations budget needs, and provide a level of maintenance that can be defined to park users. Standards typically vary from agency to agency depending on general budget resources, facility use, staffing levels, and expectations of users and agency decision makers. The Park and Recreation Department's mission statement includes a commitment to "*delivering exceptional parks, open spaces, trails, facilities, programs and services,*" and the 2008 parks budget document has stated a desire to achieve "*100% of maintained sites meeting or exceeding good quality*." This is an admirable goal, but presents challenges since the department does not have a current means of measurement to evaluate performance toward the desired "good quality."

The Park Maintenance Division has developed and published "Landscape Maintenance Guidelines" that are used to guide park department operations and have also been distributed to local HOA groups in an attempt to establish consistency for HOA-maintained parks with Town-maintained parks. This information, along with refinement of several existing procedures, provides a strong base for the development of standards which can be further refined by Town staff.

Tracking Existing Maintenance Costs

Current forms and procedures used by the Park Maintenance Division provide for limited tracking of maintenance costs. Existing daily forms track only the labor portion of activities. Tracking is an important tool to provide an understanding of current costs and to provide a basis for predicting future costs. When looking at calculating maintenance costs, discussion naturally turns toward "What are other agencies spending?"

Comparable agency costs per acre will be difficult for the Town to use as a benchmark due to the wide variety of definitions/methodology used by other agencies, differences in service levels, differences in available resources, and varying mix of contracted versus in-house services. Researched maintenance costs along the Colorado Front Range vary from $500 for open lands to as high as $20,000 per acre for developed parks. A City of Austin, Texas park operations audit in 2002 reported a wide range of 20 comparable agency costs, ranging from $800 per acre to over $20,000 per acre. The nearby Town of Windsor established in their 2003 Master Plan an estimated cost of $10,124 per acre for developed parks which, when adjusted for inflation, would be $13,667 in today's dollars. In 2007, an internal staff report for the City of Greenwood Village, Colorado reported a range of $800 for open lands to $16,000 per acre for developed parks depending on the level of site development. Douglas County, Colorado reports estimated costs of $10,000 to $11,000 per acre for developed sites.

A more meaningful way to look at maintenance costs is to evaluate current Town expenses and extend those costs over a reasonable estimate of acres maintained. This approach is more local in nature and assumes the current costs are, at a minimum, adequate to meet expected service levels. Assuming the Town is comfortable with current expense levels, these costs can then be projected and applied to new development or any increases in service levels at existing parks.

Based on the current parks budget (modified downward to eliminate non-maintenance related activities such as costs for this Master Plan), existing costs are approximately $9,738/acre when applied to **developed parks only**.

Annual adjusted maintenance budget		$1,042,000
Developed acres maintained		107 acres
	$1,042,000/107 =	**$9,738 per acre**

Note: Developed acres includes other sites such as Town Hall, ECC, Cemetery.

Applying the current budget levels to **future** development, ($9,738 X 41 developed acres) the division budget will need to expand by approximately $400,000 upon the completion of proposed new/expanded parks. This equates to nearly a 40% increase in the current budget.

Budgeted costs and existing contracts for open space areas in 2008 were $525/acre for contracted maintenance (primarily mowing). This current per acre cost for open space areas, when spread over the existing inventory (200+acres), amounts to approximately $100,000 of the current overall budgets. The current budget figure appears to be adequate for Town needs, thus maintenance costs can be expected to increase by $525 annually for every open space acre added. This number should be adjusted annually for inflation purposes, and further adjusted if level of service is increased on open space properties. Of note is the fact that contracted mowing of over 60 miles of street right-of-way is included in current Parks Division costs. This cost might be more properly allocated within the overall Town budget if budget and oversight responsibilities were moved to the Public Works Department.

The above provides a general analysis of current costs. Forms and processes within the existing system provide basic data. However, in order to gain a better understanding of per acre costs, an updated system for tracking costs should be developed. This system should include reviewing the current inventory, coding of all sites, and an update of work codes for all tasks performed at those sites. In addition, cost accounting should include the establishment of hourly costs for equipment use; and distribution of materials costs for routine tasks such as fertilizer, weed control, chemicals, playground parts, etc. If the Town has the software capabilities, a computerized tracking system could be developed internally. If not, there are several commercially available software programs that could meet Town needs. The following information tracking is key to establishing cost estimates:

- Comprehensive inventory of assets maintained.
- Proper record keeping and logging of daily costs.
- Regular data entry to keep the system up to date.

It is important is to update labor and materials costs as they increase and to factor those increases into projections of future costs. Additional resources for cost data include the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) manual of labor and equipment costs, and maintenance/construction cost estimating data available through the Associated Landscape Contractors of Colorado (ALCC).

Evaluate Current and Future Staff Levels

Current staff levels appear to be adequate with one significant exception. Recent park development has included major expansion in the number of irrigated park sites, which has dramatically increased the maintenance load and expectations for irrigation system maintenance. Currently, the division has only one full-time employee assigned to irrigation maintenance, and that individual also serves as Assistant Superintendent of Parks.

In addition, as the department grows, there will be a need for administrative support for the park maintenance operations. An Administrative Assistant to manage record keeping, internal reports, public information, vendors, data entry, and other tasks will likely become necessary within the next two years.

Of note is the fact that most of the Park Maintenance Division procedures and activities are based on an "experience with the system" approach, supported by the technical expertise of several key staff including certified forestry, horticulture, irrigation, and turf technicians. In order to provide the information-based systems required by department and Town administration, movement toward a "standards and data" based approach is necessary.

The current staff level of seven (7) full-time people translates on a staff per acre maintained basis to one (1) FTE per 12.4 acres when considering only fully developed sites, and one (1) FTE per 42 acres if considering fully developed sites and open space properties. Comparable agencies in Colorado function at a staff to acre ratio ranging from 1/10 to 1/40. For example, the nearby Town of Windsor has established a goal of one FTE per every 10-15 acres, and the Foothills Park and Recreation District in south Jefferson County has an existing ratio of 1/40 with approximately 40% of their inventory consisting of open lands. Parker's ratio is 1/15, and Highlands Ranch is 1/54 with over half of their inventory maintained by private contractors.

It is difficult to establish a hard and fast standard for staff per acres maintained because agencies vary widely on maintenance standards, mix of in-house versus contracted services, and definitions of developed versus undeveloped acreage. Current general practice among Colorado Front Range agencies was reported to be in the range of 10 to 15 acres of developed park land per full-time employee.

With this supporting documentation, and appropriate caution toward adopting specific ratios, it is reasonable to conclude that a ratio of 1/10 or 1/15 is consistent with current staff levels in Erie and industry practice among similar agencies. With 41 acres of additional developed parks proposed for development over the next five years and undetermined acres of open space planned to be added, staff levels should be increased over the next five years.

Developed parks –	1/10 = 4 new staff 1/15 = 3 new staff
Open space parks –	Add one person for every 42 acres, or contract services for new acreage (this continues existing standard)

Maintenance Equipment Needs

In addition to the staff issues covered above**,** the development of new sites (especially the planned Erie Community Park) will require the purchase of additional maintenance equipment. The new park acreage will require items such as a high volume mower, general utility vehicles, possibly a small tractor, grooming equipment for ball field maintenance, a power vacuum, and a storage building or satellite shop to house this equipment. Costs for this equipment could total as much as $250,000. Lease/purchase of equipment to spread the original purchase cost over the expected life of the equipment could be considered. The need for an on-site storage facility should be a discussion item in the upcoming final design of the Community Park. A planned new Public Works/Park Maintenance facility located within a quarter-mile from the park may be adequate to meet the on-site needs.

Contracted Versus In-House Services

Current park maintenance is accomplished through a combination of contracted and in-house services. This approach is a growing trend among Colorado Front Range agencies to use private contractors for some maintenance functions to contain costs, improve effective services, cover routine tasks such as mowing, and provide specialized services when needed. Current services provided by private contractors for the Town of Erie include:

- Right-of-way mowing
- Open space and trail corridor mowing
- Tree trimming
- Chemical applications
- Aeration
- Fertilizer application
- Selected general park repairs

Contracting services allows an agency to better absorb highly fluctuating costs (such as equipment purchases and maintenance, fuel, labor, insurance), and to transfer high-cost/nuisance maintenance areas to private contractors who may be better equipped to handle the costs. Conversely, keeping services in-house provides a higher degree of control, greater pride and ownership, quicker response times, and perhaps a higher degree of consistency and accountability. Depending on the type of service and the expected standards, a private contractor may or may not be able to provide services at a lower cost and acceptable level of service compared to in-house staff.

As the Town develops a more sophisticated process of tracking costs, it may be beneficial to look at expanding the number of sites maintained by private contractors. Common concerns about contracting services include lack of accountability and quality, problems with inconsistency, and possible higher costs to expand contracted maintenance. One solution to these contractor performance issues is to develop a very "tight" process for bidding, detailed specifications, and enforceable contracts. It also may require some staff training or re-training in the nuances of contract management.

Develop a Life Cycle/Capital Repair Plan

The Town does not currently have a formal plan for funding of capital repairs to existing park facilities. A formalized plan will allow the Town to:

- Accomplish capital repairs as they become necessary.
- Fund life-cycle costing through means other than the operating budget.
- Address risk management and safety issues that may arise as park facilities age.
- Allow for regular upgrades to maintain "state of the art" facilities.

The recent, rapid growth in the area has resulted in the development of several new park sites at the same time. These sites will begin aging and generating capital repair at the same time. Therefore an organized and regularly funded capital repair plan will help to avoid the need to fund capital repairs all at one time.

At a minimum, a capital repair plan should include:

- An inventory of major components at all park sites.
- Determination of expected life span for key components.
- Cost estimates, including inflation factors, for proposed renovations/repairs.
- Determination of annual funding sources and funding levels for capital repair.
- Approval of repair and replacement projects on an annual basis based on staff recommendations.

For example, the Town may determine that playgrounds in park sites have an expected life span of 15 years and an expected replacement cost of $60,000 each. To adequately fund life cycle replacement, the Town should set aside approximately $4,000 per year for future replacement of *each* playground. A sample form for determining and tracking life cycle costs was provided to staff.

Most agencies do not have sufficient funds for 100% support of capital repair needs; however, even a partially funded program would benefit the Town and establish a pro-active approach to the life-cycle cost issue. The Town may want to consider retaining an outside consultant to assist with the development of a life-cycle cost program.

Park Signage and Identity

Signage and identification of Town-owned park properties is a key component for positive public relations, communication, and facility labeling/marketing, and will assist with enforcement of park regulations. The current system of identification and informational signs at Town-owned park properties lacks consistency and basic information.

At a minimum, a formal policy should include:

- A design theme and design standards incorporating the Town logo on all signs.
- Standard park identification signs for all existing park sites. Existing park identification signs are of high quality and can serve as a foundation for a formal plan.
- Rules and regulation signs where needed, with a minimum of one per site.
- A sign manual defining proper use, location, and maintenance of signs.
- Identification signs for all open space properties, including trails that intersect major streets.
- Interpretive and directional signs where needed – for example maps and mileage markers on major trail corridors.

There does not appear to be an existing formal policy for park naming. Parks are generally named according to the name of the adjacent subdivision. The Town may want to consider establishing a site naming policy that is consistent with local history, events, community leaders, natural features, etc.

Maintenance Management Plans for Key Facilities

With proposed new park development and open space and trails expansion, the Town has a unique opportunity to develop a firm foundation for management of these expanded facilities.

In the case of the Erie Community Park, a maintenance management plan will help to address service levels, program priorities, maintenance costs, and user demands. As a minimum, a maintenance plan for the Erie Community Park should address the following:

- Hours of operation
- Designated sports "seasons"
- Allowed and restricted uses
- Water conservation
- Special maintenance needs or standards
- Special events policies

A plan can best be developed through a process of meetings with staff and administration designed to identify major operational and maintenance issues, set priorities, identify expected use of the park, and then formulate a management plan tailored to the site. For example, with the development of sports fields proposed for the site there will likely be demands by local sports associations for both spring and fall soccer use. By designating playing seasons, the Town will be better able to control sports activity and provide adequate time in the use calendar to allow staff to properly renovate and maintain turf. Another example is an expected demand for major special events at the new community park. A management plan will allow the Town to establish maximum "crowd" numbers, policies for site access by vendors, and policies for temporary facilities such as tents and performance stages.

The **Coal Creek Open Space and Trail Corridor** will eventually become a major community asset. A maintenance management plan for the trail and surrounding open space will ensure proper preservation of this asset. At a minimum, a management plan for this area should take into account the following.

- Storm water impacts
- General water quality
- Preservation of wildlife habitat
- Preservation of grass and tree resources
- Control of noxious weeds
- User interface and interpretive opportunities
- Mowing practices
- Encroachments
- Wildfire mitigation

Again, a detailed staff assessment and priority setting, plus policy setting by elected officials will be required. State and local water quality and wildlife and plant management agencies can provide assistance in developing the required plan and some management policies are already in place by agencies upstream from the current corridor (i.e. City of Boulder, City of Lafayette).

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6. Administration and Management

This section provides an overview of the Park and Recreation Department's administration and financial context. Included in this section is an **Administrative Overview**, a **Financial Analysis** of the Parks & Recreation Department, **Administrative Benchmarking**, which compares Erie to six other Colorado communities, and a discussion of **Park and Open Space Land Dedication and Impact Fee Practices**.

A. Administration and Management

Town Governance

The Town of Erie is governed by a Board of Trustees composed of seven members. The Board is responsible for establishing Town policies and goals. The following 2009 goals give direction to Town staff for conducting business in Erie.

- Growth Management – Manage the direction and rate of growth to achieve quality, predictability, and sustainability.
- Boundaries – Continue to establish municipal land use boundaries of Erie to achieve community stability and economic security.
- Community Gathering Places – Continue to enhance recreational and cultural amenities for all Erie citizens.
- Infrastructure – Fund and provide essential infrastructure that corresponds with the planned rate of growth.
- Financial Responsibility – Manage Erie's financial operation in an open, responsible, and ethical manner.
- Communication – Develop and continue to promote proactive communication between government and the citizens of Erie.
- Education – Support educational opportunities for all of Erie's citizens.
- Public Safety – Maintain a safe community in which to live, work, and play.
- Maximize Efficiencies in Government – Manage resources to maximize utilization of people, energy, and capital.

The Town has both statutory (Planning Commission and Board of Adjustments) and advisory boards to provide input and make recommendations as needed. The advisory boards include the Airport Advisory Board, Historic Preservation Commission, Housing Authority, the Open Space and Trails Advisory Board, and the Tree Board. The latter two interface with the Parks & Recreation Department, as described below.

The Open Space and Trails Advisory Board (OSTAB) advises the Board of Trustees on open space and trails-related issues. It consists of seven members, of which five must be bona fide residents of the Town. The Board of Trustees makes the appointment of seven members to staggered four-year terms. The mission of OSTAB is to *"conserve and protect open space lands and significant natural resources in and around Erie, and provide for an extensive network of trails open to all types of non-motorized travel that link neighborhoods to other areas in the community and region."* Clarifying the role of OSTAB and its relationship to the newly formed Parks & Recreation Department needs to be reviewed in order to ensure strong communication and coordination on open space and trail projects and policies.

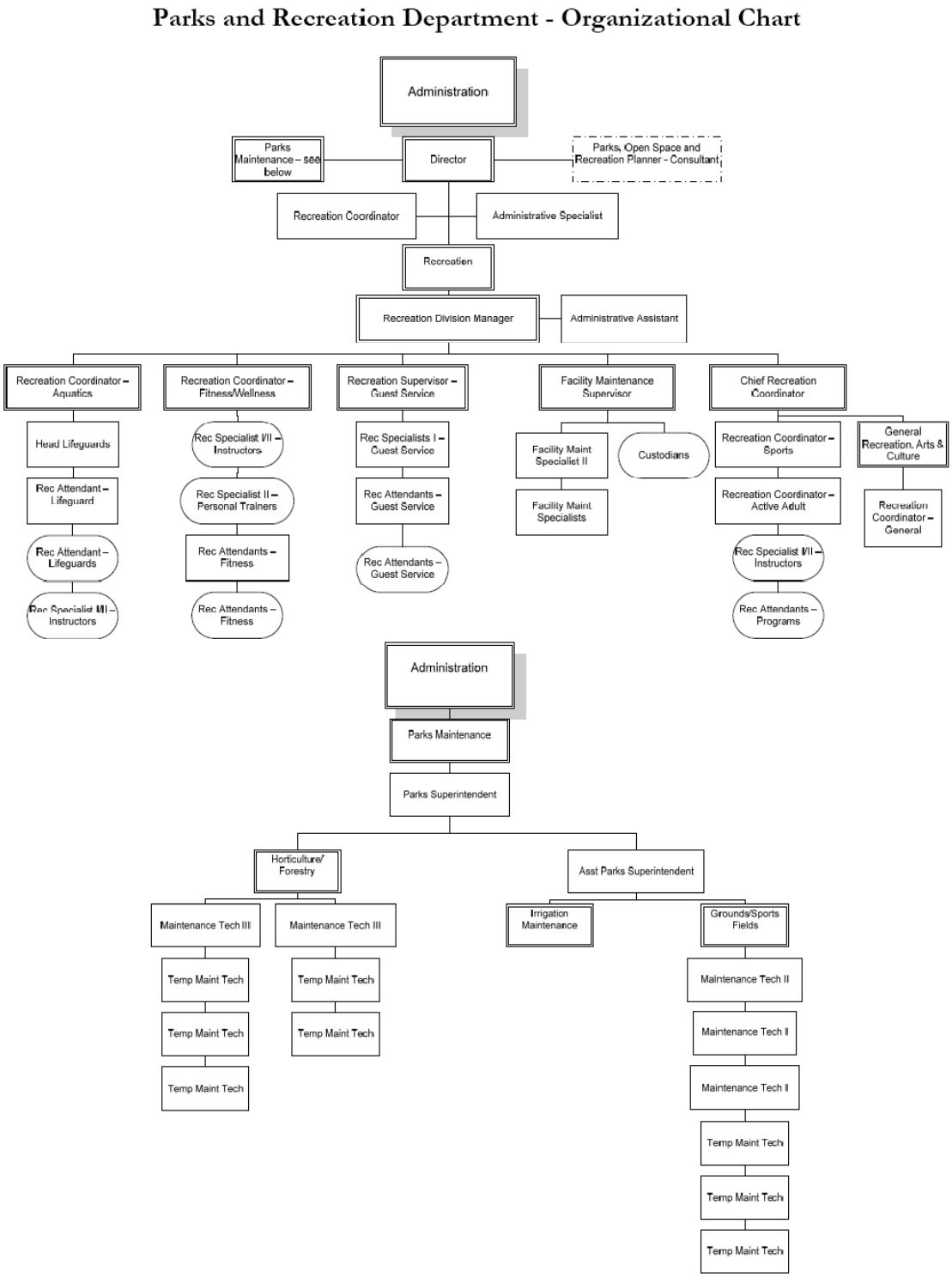
The Tree Board consists of seven members (residents of the Town) appointed by the Board of Trustees to serve four-year terms. The Tree Board is also a primary source of information about community forestry. The mission statement of the Tree Board is *"to educate the citizens of Erie about the importance of planting and maintaining trees on public and private lands; to maintain Erie's Tree City USA Certification; to plan and promote an annual Arbor Day Festival; to involve the community in the work of the Tree Board, and to promote sound management of Erie's urban forest."* Staff from the Parks & Recreation Department provides support and interface with the Board as needed.

Parks & Recreation Department Administration

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

The department is currently organized into three Divisions: **Administration, Recreation,** and **Parks**, as shown in the organizational chart in **Figure 6**. With the opening of the Erie Community Center in January 2008, the department significantly increased its budget and staffing. As of 2008, the Town employed three (3) full-time staff in the Administration Division, seven (7) full-time and eight (8) seasonal staff in the Parks Maintenance Division, and fifteen (15) full-time and approximately 120 part-time staff in the Recreation Division.

Figure 6: Parks & Recreation Department Organizational Chart



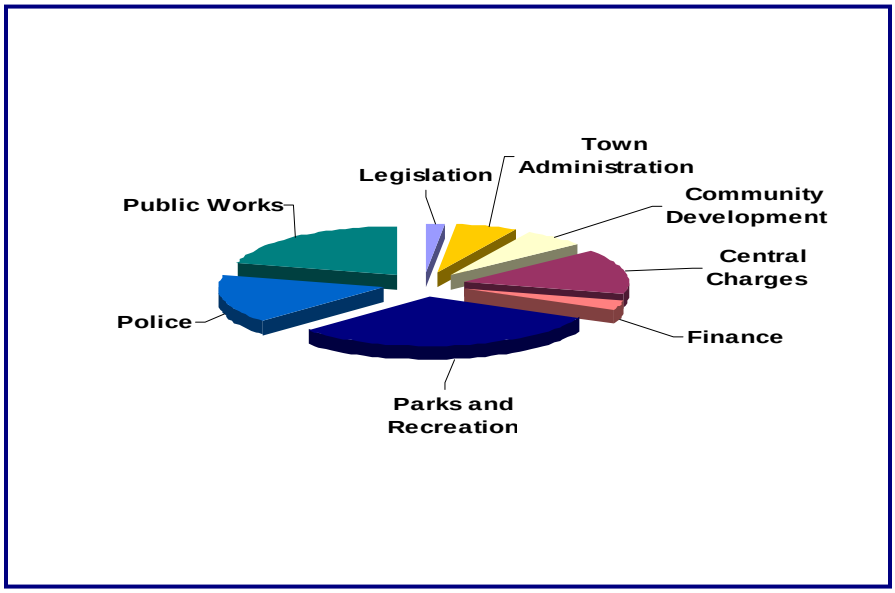
B. Financial Overview and Analysis

Town Financial Overview

Operating Budget

The Town's 2008 General Fund budget, supported by taxes and building permits, is $13,308,200. Of that, $4,187,100 (31%) is allocated to the Parks & Recreation Department as shown in **Figure 7** below.

Figure 7: General Fund Expenditures by Department



New to the 2008 Town Budget was the inclusion of the Parks & Recreation Department. It is 31 percent of the Town's General Fund. One of the goals highlighted in the budget by the Board of Trustees is to "*Create active and passive recreational amenities."* The 2008 budget includes the construction of new trails and ball fields, the continuation of the concert series, and the operation of the new Erie Community Center."

Highlights impacting the Parks & Recreation Department in the Town's 2008 Operating Budget

- Total General Fund revenues are budgeted at $12,544,500, an increase of $741,700 from the 2007 amended budget. The increase is due to anticipated revenues from the new ECC.
- Although building permit revenues are down, general fund revenue is up due to ECC revenues.
- The 2008 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funds include money for the construction of the Erie Community Park and trail construction.

Capital Improvement Program
The Town CIP budget for 2008-2012 is $134,466,200. Of that, the Parks & Recreation Department has $9,053,800 budgeted, (6.7%). The Parks Improvement Impact Fund, Trails, and Natural Areas Fund are identified as resources to support Parks & Recreation Department capital projects.

The 2008 Budget summary recognizes the Erie Community Park as a capital project, and one of four projects contributing to the reduction of fund balance. (The other projects are either capital or non-operating items.) The addition of Erie Community Park in 2010 will include amenities that increase revenue, such as ballfields, picnic shelters, and multi-use space for additional special events.

Parks & Recreation Department Financial Analysis

Sources of Funding

Sources of funding for the Parks & Recreation Department include the General Fund and Special Revenue Funds. Special Revenue Funds include Parks Improvement Impact, Trails and Natural Areas, Tree Impact, and the Conservation and Trust Funds. Previously, this also included the Recreation/Senior Center Construction and the Recreation /Senior Center Contribution Funds. In 2008, those were folded into the General Fund. **Table 16** outlines historical budgets for each Special Revenue Fund.

Conservation Trust Fund Revenues
The Conservation Trust Fund accounts for the Town's share of the State Lottery proceeds. By state law, these funds can only be expended for the acquisition, development, and maintenance of new conservation sites. In past years, Conservation Trust funds have been used as matching funds for grants to build parks and to buy heavy equipment and vehicles to maintain conservation sites.

Tree Impact Fund
This fund includes the tree certificate program and other replacement/improvement activities managed by the Administration Division. Revenue for this fund is collected through impact fees, grants, and interest income.

Parks Improvement Impact Fund
This fund provides funding for all improvements to the Town's parks and open space systems, including purchase of land and open space, and development and improvement of parks, open space, and connections. Revenue for this fund is collected through impact fees and interest income.

The 2009-2013 Capital Improvement Program (from the 2009 Town Budget document) includes the following projects:

- Erie Community Park
- Park Signage
- Reliance Park, Phase 2
- Canyon Creek Park, Phase 2
- Erie Reservoir Redevelopment, Phase 2

Per the 2009 Town Budget, "projected negative fund balances in the Parks Improvement Fund in 2011-2014 may require scheduled capital improvements to be postponed."
(See ***Section 7-D*** for more detailed discussion of Erie's park impact fee.)

Trails and Natural Areas Fund
Revenues in this fund are earmarked for specific activities. Created in November 2004, Erie voters approved a four (4) mill property tax for the purpose of creating trails and purchasing natural areas. This tax was approved for 10 years, beginning in the 2005 tax collection year. Capital funds ($590,000) were budgeted in 2008 for the Coal Creek trail extension.

Table 16: Special Revenue Funds

	2006 Actual	2007 Budget	2008 Budget
Conservation Trust Fund	$373,230	$454,930	$553,430
Tree Impact Fund	$223,346	$146,400	$133,500
Trails and Natural Areas	$701,592	$543,292	$751,992
Parks Improvement Impact Fund	6,805,467	$1,097,867	$380,367

Capital Expenditures
The primary capital funds for the Parks & Recreation Department in 2008 were allocated to the following projects: Erie Community Park, Coal Creek Trail Extension, reimbursable capital projects through developers, and additional park improvements.

Departmental Operating Budget

The Department Budget is divided in three divisions: Administration, Park Maintenance, and Recreation. **Figure 8** shows each Division's percent of the Parks & Recreation Department Budget.

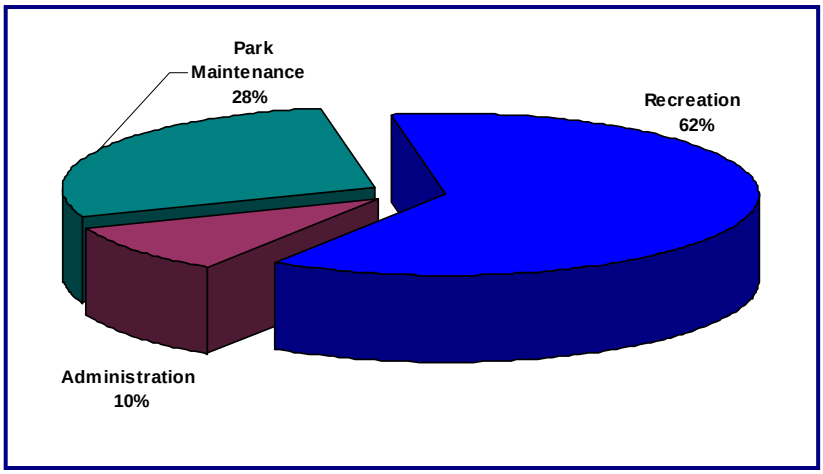


Figure 8: 2008 Parks & Recreation Department Expenditures by Division

Since the addition of the Erie Community Center (ECC) in 2008, the Parks & Recreation Department budget increased by $2,263,400 (118%). It is important to note that the increase was primarily due to the formation of the Department and the opening of the ECC. A summary of expenditures (personnel, operating, and capital outlay projects) and revenues for the entire Department is found in **Table 17**.

Challenges faced by staff with the opening of the center included determining appropriate cost recovery policies for the ECC and hiring appropriate staff to manage the center. The Town added 44.49 FTE's to support the ECC.

The Recreation Division oversees the operations of the ECC and provides sports programs, senior programs and activities, and general recreation activities to all ages. The goals of these programs are to promote active and healthy lifestyles and the development of lifetime skills and social interaction among participants.

Table 17: Parks & Recreation Department Expenses and Revenues (2006-08)

	2006 Actual	2007 Actual	2008 Budget (Rev.)
Expenditures			
Personnel Services	$610,555	$ 882,846	$2,711,700
Operating and Maintenance	$458,799	$ 561,558	$1,469,400
Capital Outlay	$ 93,201	$ 232,319	$ 240,900
Total	**1,162,555**	**$1,676,722**	**$4,422,000**
Revenues (Fees and Charges)	**$65,400**	**$78,196**	**$1,282,800**
Cost Recovery	**5.6%**	**4.7%**	***29%**

*Erie Community Center opened in 2008.

Cost Recovery for Recreation Programs

The Town of Erie's Cost Recovery policy for programs is outlined in Town Ordinance #31-2005. It explains cost recovery rates for programs/services for adult activities, youth activities, and senior activities. As stated in the 2008 Budget Summary, staff will need to determine what the cost recovery policy will be for the ECC.

Subsidy as an Investment Philosophy

Subsidy/Cost Recovery Philosophy refers to the justification of the degree to which programs and services are supported by tax subsidy, as compared to user fees, as well as alternative funding sources such as grants, sponsorships, and donations. Typically, park development, maintenance and operations, and agency-wide administrative costs are heavily subsidized through tax dollars, which are supplemented by some incidental revenues. On the other hand, recreation programs are generally supported with a mix of tax funding and revenue from user fees and other alternative sources. The Parks & Recreation Department receives substantial subsidy through the General Fund as well as Special Revenue Funds.

Examples across the country indicate a wide range of subsidy levels or tax investment for parks and recreation services and facilities. These levels can range from 15 percent to 80 percent and higher, depending upon the mission of the organization, how debt service is counted, operation funding availability, structure of agency budgets, and the philosophy regarding subsidy levels and user fees. The cost recovery for Erie's Parks & Recreation Department in 2008 was 29 percent.

Dr. John Crompton from Texas A & M University, a leading educator and researcher on the benefits and economic impact of leisure services, indicates that, while varied, the national average may be around 34 percent cost recovery, conversely indicating an average of around 66 percent subsidy. The Erie Parks & Recreation Department, with all of its identified financial resources and expenditures combined, falls within the range suggested by Dr. Crompton, but is less than the 34 percent estimated national average.

Developing a Cost Recovery and Pricing Philosophy

Developing a Cost Recovery and Pricing Philosophy, based on the **Pyramid Model,** as shown in **Figure 9,** can help identify cost recovery goals. Cost recovery goals provide a framework for setting fees for programs, facility rentals, maintenance, and concessions. The goals ensure the provision of fair, equitable, and simple fee structures that allow for a comprehensive operation that is financially feasible, sustainable, and affordable, and offers outstanding service. Developing a Cost Recovery Philosophy will involve examination of the types of programs and services offered and what segment of the population these programs serve in order to address the following questions.

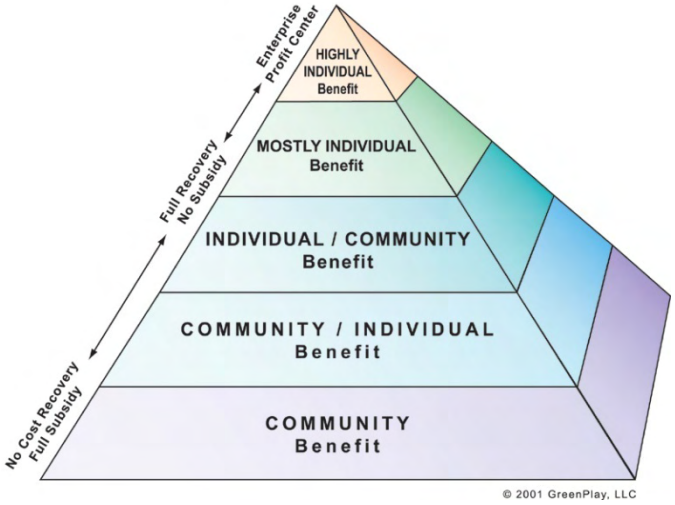
Who benefits from the service?

Is it the community in general or only a specific segment of the community benefiting from the service? Is it serving youth, adults, seniors, or people with disabilities? The Pyramid Model provides insight regarding group benefit levels. Additionally, it provides insight as to whether the individual/group receiving the service generates a need to bear the cost of providing the service.

Additional questions that should be addressed are:

- Will the full cost fee pose a hardship for specific users?
- If so, are there methods in place to ease these situations of financial hardship (i.e., scholarships, sponsorships, sliding scale fees, etc.)?
- To what degree do community values support taxpayer subsidy of the cost of service for certain special needs individuals? For example, is the community supportive of subsidizing services for disabled or low income people?
- To what degree should indirect costs be applied to program and facility fees?
- How will the fee level impact demand for the service? For instance, will fees increase demand because they are reasonable, affordable, and have perceived value or will they decrease demand because they are too high, due to necessity or a misunderstood market range?

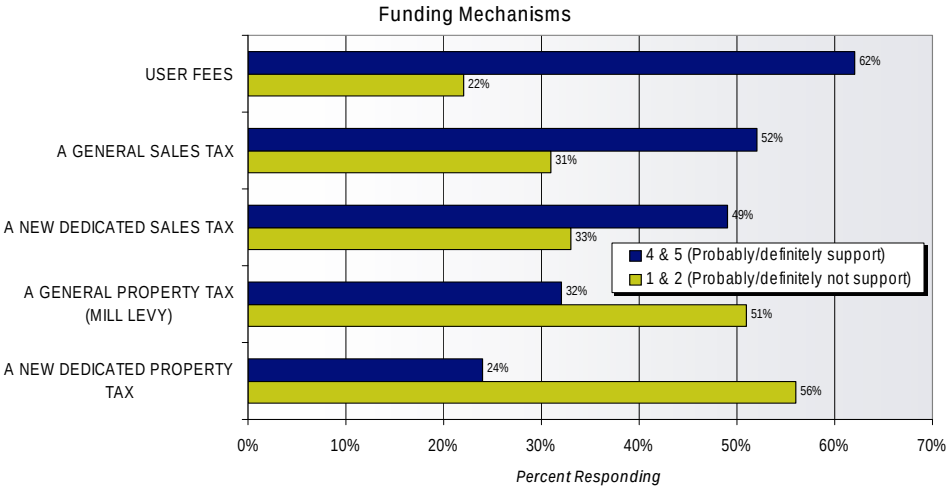
Figure 9: Pricing Pyramid Model



The Town is in a strong financial position to support the current demand for services. However, potential development of park land and the necessary operating and maintenance costs that accompany new park development may burden the existing financial structure over time if long-term organizational sustainability strategies are not put into place.

Figure 10 shows how respondents from the 2008 resident survey felt about future financial options to support sustainability.

Figure 10: Future Funding Mechanisms



Financial Analysis Summary

The financial analysis of the Erie Park and Recreation Department is based on a review of the sources of funding and cost recovery. Following is a summary of the financial analysis related to current and future provision of parks and recreation facilities and services.

- The General Fund and Special Revenue Funds provide a solid foundation for future capital outlay projects as the Town's population continues to grow.
- There is a need to develop a cost recovery plan for the Erie Community Center.
- The addition of the Erie Community Park will provide some financial support through services and rentals.
- Cost recovery for the Parks & Recreation Department in 2008 was 29 percent.
- Revenue for the Town is down due to decreased public improvement bond proceeds as well as a decrease in building permits.

The Town will have to make short- and long-range planning decisions in the coming years regarding the capital and operational needs to sustain the parks, recreation, open space, and trails system over time. The challenge will be how to maintain the current high level of service as the Town continues to grow.

C. Benchmarking

Limits of Comparative Data and Analysis

Benchmarking is an important tool that allows for comparison of certain attributes of the Town's management of public spaces (parks, recreation, aquatics, and related services) with other similar communities. For this Plan, benchmarking data was collected from comparable Colorado agencies including: Boulder, Brighton, Broomfield, Lafayette, Longmont, and Windsor.

It is very difficult to find exact comparable communities because each has its own unique identity, ways of conducting business, and differences in what populations they serve. It is important to keep in mind that while many park and recreation departments serve primarily residents, others serve a large portion of non-residents.

Additionally, organizations typically do not break down the expenditures of parks, trails, facilities, and maintenance the same way. Agencies also vary in terms of how they organize their budget information and it may be difficult to assess whether or not the past year's expenses are typical for the community. Therefore, the benchmarking information presented here should be used as a catalyst for the Town of Erie to continue to research best practices for more specific areas when they are needed.

Benchmarking Data Sought

The communities selected for benchmarking data were chosen primarily for their proximity and perceived similarities to the Town of Erie. Requested benchmarking data included:

- Population
- Median household income
- Prior year budget, actual expenses, and revenues for the entire department
- Prior year budget, actual expenses, and revenues for the parks and recreation divisions
- Number and square footage of recreation centers
- Total acres of open space and developed park land
- Number of maintenance acres contracted out and maintenance description
- Total miles of agency maintained trails
- Number of indoor and outdoor pools
- Number of lighted and unlighted softball/baseball fields
- Recreation and parks department full-time employees and FTE's

Benchmarking data looks to weigh pertinent data along with comparing against a "per thousand" population calculation in some cases. For this analysis, data was analyzed on a "per one thousand residents" for categories including: total department budget, total acres, developed acres, miles of trails, recreation/community center square footage, number of pools, number of softball/baseball fields, and recreation FTEs. Parks expenses and FTEs were calculated per developed acre. Population and median household income estimates were provided by ESRI Business Information Solutions, unless otherwise noted.

Analysis of Benchmarking

General

The population of Erie is the second lowest of the respondent communities. The median household income for Erie however, is the highest of all the respondent communities ($98,527) followed by Broomfield ($86,129).

City	Population	Median Household Income
Boulder, CO	93,992	$58,685
Longmont, CO	82,291	$68,190
Broomfield, CO	48,960	$86,129
Brighton, CO	30,948	$61,262
Lafayette, CO	24,687	$76,927
Erie, CO	17,000*	$98,527
Windsor, CO	15,740	$72,276

**Source: Town of Erie Economic Development staff.*

Financial

City	2007 Total Parks and Recreation Budget	Budget per 1,000 Persons
Erie, CO	$4,187,100*	$246,300
Windsor, CO	$3,848,692	$244,617
Broomfield, CO	$10,326,631	$210,920
Boulder, CO	$13,516,373	$143,803
Brighton, CO	$2,975,008	$96,129
Lafayette, CO	$1,741,925	$70,560
Longmont, CO	$4,408,797	$53,576
**2008 budgeted figures*		

Erie has the highest budget per 1,000 persons, followed by Windsor.

(*Note: For this analysis 2008 budget information was used for the Town of Erie reflecting the addition of the new Erie Community Center.)

Financial

City	2007 Recreation Expenses	2007 Recreation Revenues	2007 Recreation Expenses per 1,000
Erie, CO	$2,724,200*	$1,282,800*	$160,247
Windsor, CO	$2,461,619	$862,772	$156,393
Broomfield, CO	$5,362,069	$4,267,218	$109,519
Boulder, CO	$8,563,462	$6,764,794	$91,108
Brighton, CO	$1,793,660	$830,138	$57,957
Longmont, CO	$3,618,539	$2,918,999	$43,972
Lafayette, CO	$1,082,379	$1,038,895	$43,844
**2008 budgeted figures*			

Erie has the highest recreation expenses per 1,000, followed closely by Windsor. Both communities are small and have relatively new recreation centers. The lowest are Lafayette and Longmont.

Open Space & Parks

City	Open Space Acres	Open Space Acres per 1,000 Persons	Developed Park Acres	Developed Parks Acres per 1,000 Persons
Boulder, CO	1,100	11.7	1,406	15.0
Broomfield, CO	3,676	75.1	537	11.0
Lafayette, CO	1,042	42.2	230	9.3
Brighton, CO	528	17.1	210	6.8
Windsor, CO	312	19.8	98	6.2
Longmont, CO	3,091	37.6	423	5.1
Erie, CO	259	15.2	87	*5.1

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

- **Erie has the lowest total parks and open space acres per 1,000 persons; Broomfield has the highest.**
- **Erie is tied for the lowest developed acres per 1,000 with Longmont; Boulder has the highest.** *However, with 45 acres of HOA-maintained pocket parks included, Erie ranks 4th in developed park acres per 1,000.*
- **Erie has the second lowest open space acres per 1,000 persons.**

Parks & Trails

City	Maintenance Acres Contracted Out	Maintenance Description	Total Miles of Agency Maintained Trails	Miles of Trails per 1,000 persons
Broomfield, CO	110	DNR	104	2.12
Longmont, CO	N/A	Arterials/Forestry for a total of $150,000	120	1.46
Windsor, CO	2	Small section of right of way	21.6*	1.37
Brighton, CO	68	Turf mowing, fertilization, weed spraying, open space mowing	27.4	0.89
Erie, CO	238	Road sides, some open space, chemical application	13.6	0.80
Boulder, CO	DNR	Security, park restrooms/buildings, park trash, recycling, snow removal, equipment repairs, pest control, etc.	41.0	0.44
Lafayette, CO	N/A	N/A	10	0.41

**Per Windsor Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Lands Master Plan- 2007 Update*

DNR= Did Not Respond

The number of maintenance acres contracted out varies greatly, as does the type of maintenance performed. **Erie has the third lowest** (Town-maintained) **trails per 1,000 persons** at approximately 0.80 miles per 1,000. Broomfield has the highest trails per 1,000 at 2.12 miles, and Lafayette has the lowest at 0.41 miles per 1,000.

Recreation

City	Number of Recreation Centers	Total Square Footage of Centers	Square Footage per 1,000 Persons
Erie, CO	1*	63,784	3,752
Windsor, CO	1	45,000	2,859
Broomfield, CO	2	130,000	2,655
Brighton, CO	2	67,000	2,165
Lafayette, CO	1	43,500	1,762
Longmont, CO	3	107,277	1,304
Boulder, CO	3	114,616	1,219

**In 2008*

Erie has the highest community/recreation center square footage per 1,000 persons compared to the other respondent communities, followed by Windsor. Boulder has the lowest square footage per 1,000 persons.

Recreation

City	Number of Indoor Pools	Number of Outdoor Pools	Total Number of Pools per 1,000 Persons
Lafayette, CO	2 (1 lap, 1 leisure)	2 (I leisure, 1 lap)	.24
Windsor, CO	1 (indoor lap through school district IGA)	1	.13
Brighton, CO	2 (1 leisure, 1 lap)	1 (lap)	.10
Longmont, CO	3 (2 lap, 1 leisure)	3 (leisure)	.07
Broomfield, CO	2 (1 lap, 1 leisure)	1 (leisure)	.06
Erie, CO	1 (1 indoor leisure with 3 lap lanes)	0	.06
Boulder, CO	5 (3 indoor lap, 2 indoor leisure)	2 (lap)	.07
City	**Number of Lighted Baseball/ Softball Fields**	**Number of Unlighted Baseball/ Softball Fields**	**Total Number of Baseball/ Softball Fields per 1,000 Persons**
Broomfield, CO	8	26	.69
Erie, CO	0	6	.35
Brighton, CO	10	4	.45
Windsor, CO	1	5	.38
Boulder, CO	11	13	.26
Longmont, CO	12	8	.24
Lafayette, CO	1	4	.20

Erie and Broomfield have the lowest number of pools per 1,000 persons. Lafayette has the highest.

Erie ranks midway in baseball/softball fields per 1,000 persons, after Broomfield. Lafayette has the lowest. However, Erie is the only community without a lighted ballfield.

Employees

City	Total Recreation Full-time Employees	Total Recreation FTE's	Recreation FTEs per 1,000 Persons
Erie, CO	16*	50.2	3.0
Broomfield, CO	25	105.2	2.1
Brighton, CO	22	40.4	1.3
Boulder, CO	80	119.1	1.3
Lafayette, CO	10	N/A	N/A
Windsor, CO	10	16.1	1.0
Longmont, CO	21.08	69.1	0.8

City	Total Park Full-time Employees	Total Park FTE's	Park FTEs per Developed Acre
Windsor, CO	8	12.8	.13
Erie, CO	7	10.9	.12
Broomfield, CO	35	57.6	.11
Brighton, CO	9.75	16.1	.08
Longmont, CO	18.15	31.75	.07
Boulder, CO	58	86.3	.06
Lafayette, CO	7.6	12.6	.05

**In 2008*

DNR= Did Not Respond

Full-time Equivalents, FTE's, are calculated by dividing the total annual hours of full-time seasonal and part-time employees by 2080 (52 weeks x 40 hours).

Erie has the highest recreation FTEs per 1,000 persons, followed by Broomfield. Longmont has the lowest.

Erie has the second highest park FTEs per developed acre, after Windsor. Lafayette has the lowest.

(Note: There are limitations in this general benchmarking comparison as it relates to the true scope of park maintenance staff responsibilities. For example, the Erie park FTE per developed park acres does not account for the additional non-park Town properties maintained. For a more thorough analysis, see ***Section 6: Maintenance Analysis*** of this report.)

Benchmarking Highlights

Following is a summary of key Erie rankings in the benchmarking comparison:

- #1 Parks & Recreation Department budget per 1,000 persons (followed by Windsor and Broomfield).
- #1 Indoor recreation center square footage per 1,000 persons.
- #7 Total acres of developed parks and opens space per 1,000 persons.
- #4 Total acres of developed parks if HOA pocket parks are included.

The Town of Erie is a growing community and has the smallest population of the compared communities. The benchmarking results show that Erie has a higher level of service per 1,000 persons in term of parks and recreation budget and recreation center space per 1,000. This reflects the community's recent investment in the Erie Community Center. Most communities the size of Erie do not have a 64,000 square foot, state-of-the-art recreation/community center. Erie is well-positioned to meet the needs of future growth in the coming years. However, Erie will need to continue to focus on expanding its parks and open space acreage in order to keep pace with future growth and rise in the rankings provided in this benchmarking analysis.

D. Planning and Design

Overview

Park, open space, and trail planning and design functions for the Town are managed by the Parks & Recreation Department. The Town does not have a landscape architect on staff and relies on design consultants for major park design and construction projects. In addition, the Town provides park, open space, and trail design criteria and standards (as specified in the *Municipal Code, Title 10* and the *1997 Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan*) to private developers who in many cases design and construct pocket parks, open space, and trails, and in some cases, neighborhood parks. Both the Parks & Recreation Department and the Community Development Department staff review developer park design proposals.

One of the goals of this Master Plan Update is to ensure consistency between Town standards and code documents related to park, open space, and trail design standards. For example, the "tot lot" design standards (now identified as "pocket parks") outlined in the 1997 *Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan* need to be updated to reflect updated pocket park design practices and policies. In addition, Town staff expressed a desire to enhance neighborhood park design standards. There is also a need to clarify responsibilities (e.g. design, construction, and maintenance) between the Town and private developers.

Classifications and Standards

Erie's *Municipal Code, Title 10* and the *Comprehensive Plan* provide descriptions and requirements for several types of lands and facilities related to parks and recreation. These include Pocket Parks, Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, Open Space, the Community Center, and others. The three types of parks (Pocket, Neighborhood, and Community) are based primarily on size, intended user base, and types of activities offered. Ownership is one of the differentiating factors, with Pocket Parks being specifically designated in the *Municipal Code, Title 10* (but not in the *Comprehensive Plan*) as owned and maintained by an HOA or Metro District, while Community Parks are designated as owned and maintained by the Town. Neighborhood Parks are dedicated by the developer to Erie for ownership and maintenance once the Town begins programming activities within the park.

The 1997 *Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Master (PRTOS) Plan* conflicts with the *Municipal Code, Title 10* in some terminology and in standards. The *PRTOS Plan* identifies the Town's half-acre developer parks as "Tot Lots" whereas the more recent *Municipal Code* (as amended in 2006) identifies them as "Pocket Parks." The 1997 Master Plan specifies the old requirement that "tot lots" of a minimum half-acre size shall be constructed at a rate of one tot lot for every 80 dwelling units. This ratio is dated and conflicts with the *Municipal Code, Title 10's* current requirement of 0.5 acres of pocket park per 1,000 residents.

The 1997 *PRTOS Plan* design standards that specify "tot lot" shape, surfacing, amenities selection, landscaping, and plant materials are not codified in the *Municipal Code, Title 10*.

The *Municipal Code, Title 10 Section 1000* identifies parks and recreation construction standards and specifications for earthwork and grading, site preparation, seed and sod, irrigation, planting, and playground equipment. Other sections within the *Municipal Code, Title 10* specify concrete work, roads, and sewers. The Code also includes park specific drawings for irrigation, soft-surface trails, spine trail, and planting standard details.

Signage Standards

Signage and identification of Town-owned park properties is a key component for positive public relations, communication, and facility labeling/marketing, and can assist with enforcement of park regulations. The Town has a standard design for neighborhood park and open space identifier signs. However, the current system of identification and informational signs at Town-owned park properties lacks consistency and basic information. For example, pocket parks do not have park signs.

In addition, the Town does not currently have a formal park naming policy. Some parks are named after natural features such as Coal Creek or after Coal Mines such as Leigh and Columbine, while other parks are named after the subdivision. The Town should consider developing a park and open space naming policy related to the Town's history (i.e. mines, farming families, natural features, etc.).

Many HOA or Metro District-maintained parks lack consistent park signage, leading to confusion by the public as to who is responsible for maintenance issues. A signage policy for pocket parks should be considered, distinguishing them from Town-owned and maintained parks.

Summary of Key Planning and Design Findings

- Town standards for parks, open space, and trails are minimal and need to be expanded and updated.
- Park components to be placed in pocket parks/ "tot lots" are identified in the 1997 Master Plan but are outdated and do not reflect appropriate amenities for different types of housing such as multi-family and age-restricted (such as senior housing).
- There is also a need to clarify responsibilities (e.g. design, construction, and maintenance) between the Town and private developers.
- The current system of identification and informational signs at Town-owned park properties lacks consistency and basic information.
- The Town lacks a parks and open space naming policy.

E. Park Land Dedication and Impact Fees

Erie utilizes both an impact fee system to support parks and open space and a land dedication (or fees-in-lieu) requirement for parks, open space, and trails. This Section reviews Erie's current practices related to park, recreation, open space, and trail dedication requirements. Also, the Town's impact fee for parks is compared with area values and examined from a policy perspective.

Colorado Statutes dictate procedures for setting impact fees and how these fees relate to land dedication (exactions). Erie has an impact fee ordinance that establishes how impact fees are set and collected. The Town also has, as part of their development code, specific standards for parks, open space, and trail dedication requirements that include design characteristics.

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

Land Dedication and Fees In-Lieu

Following is a summary of the Town of Erie park and open space land dedication and fee in-lieu of land dedication requirements for new residential development.

Park Dedication
The park land dedication requirement is 8.5 acres per 1000 residents. **Table 18** shows the dedication criteria for each park types in the *Municipal Code (Section 10.6.3)*.

Table 18: Park Dedication Criteria

Park Type	Acres/1000	Service area	Size	Ownership
Pocket Parks	0.5 acres/1000	¼ mile	¼ -2 acres	HOA
Neighborhood Parks	3.0 acres/1000	½ mile	min. of 7 acres	Town
Community Parks	5.0 acres/1000	whole community	min. of 30 acres	Town

Source: Town of Erie Municipal Code, Title 10, Section 10.6.3.

Park Fee In-Lieu
Where there is no suitable land available (based on *Subsection 6.3.B.4*), the equivalent monetary value may be substituted at the Town's discretion. This fee In-lieu of land dedication is based on an appraisal of fair market value (based on developable land within the final plat and zoning).

Open Space and Trails Dedication
According to the *Municipal Code*, *Title 10*, "*open space can help direct growth, maintain rural character, protect sensitive environmental areas, scenic views and historic resources, and provide opportunities for education, wildlife protection and observation, hiking, and other passive and active recreation activities for existing and future Town residents.*" (*Section 10.6.3.C.1*). The *Municipal Code, Title 10* requires that **17 acres of open space per 1,000 population** be dedicated by residential developers. The characteristics of open space to be dedicated include:

- A minimum of ten contiguous acres.
- A parcel that is no less than 300 feet at the narrowest width (unless the Town approves a lesser amount for a trail).
- To the extent possible, a location that is contiguous with or connected to adjacent open space or parks.
- Is generally free of utility lines, built structures, and paved surfaces.
- Is covered with native vegetation and is generally free of weeds and other noxious plants and trees.

Table 19: Erie Open Space Dedication Criteria

	Acres/1000	Size	Ownership
Open Space	17 acres/1000	min. of 10 acres	*Town

Source: Town of Erie Municipal Code, Title 10, Section 10.6.3.
* Typically open space shall be owned and maintained by the Town. However, the Town may consider a conservation easement.

Open Space and Trails Fees In-Lieu
According to the *Municipal Code, Title 10*, a fees in-lieu of land dedication may be required if a development would be required to dedicate less than five acres as open space or if an area over five acres has sufficient open space.

Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Impact Fee

The Town has adopted an Impact Fees and Funds ordinance (*Municipal Code, Title 2, Chapter 5*) that describes the process for determining impact fees. The section of Erie's *Municipal Code* related to impact fees was developed in compliance with State Statutes that specify local governments shall "*quantify the reasonable impacts of proposed development on existing capital facilities and establish the impact fee or development charge at a level no greater than necessary to defray such impacts directly related to proposed development*." Although there are several national court cases that have ruled on the legality of impact fee systems, the State of Colorado requires a clear accounting of the fees to be "directly related" to impacts created by the development in question.

Impact fees are one-time payments used to fund system improvements needed to accommodate development. An *Impact Fee Study* completed in 1999 for the Town of Erie provides the basis for the current park impact fee. The maximum park impact fee, based on this study, was $2,848 for single-family dwelling and $2,455 for all other residential. (Note: the Town adopted a park and open space fee of $2,164.)

The study used both “plan based” and “incremental expansion” approaches for setting impact fees. The plan assumed a total capital expenditure between 1999 and the year 2020 of $23,533,000 (1999 dollars) for parks, recreation, open space, and trails (PROST) related projects. Also, the plan used a projected 2020 population of 30,980 (2010 population projection = 18,800).

The study made numerous assumptions. “*Neighborhood park land has been excluded from the calculations of park impact fees because the Town of Erie will continue to require land for neighborhood parks through subdivision regulations and development agreements*” (p. 8). A formula for calculating the impact fee is outlined in the study. The study assumed a LOS for open space of 12.2 acres/1000 population at a cost of $11,000/acre. Several tables were used to derive intermediate and final demand measurements (p. 11-13).

Based on a review of the *Impact Fee Study*, it would appear that current impact fees are not sufficient to finance the Level of Service set by the Town for PROST-related capital programs or facilities. In addition, current impact fees do not appear to cover the capital improvement expenditures obligated to improve required park and open space dedications in the Town’s *Municipal Code.*

Assessment

Assessing a community's land dedication and impact fee systems can be accomplished in several ways. One framework uses a perspective based on the community's vision and development goals (community-centric). The contrasting viewpoint considers the issue of how competitive the community's exaction system is, in relation to neighboring communities (market-centric). The community-centric approach generally functions better where there is a boom cycle in building or there are unique features of the community that add value to developments. The market-centric approach has some short-term advantages where the building climate is flat or declining. Here, a community with equal or lower impact fees may be seen as a more profitable location for development. Generally, some combination of these two approaches allows for a balancing of community vision with market competition.

From a community-centric approach, the primary goal is to create a cohesive system of parks, open space, and trails to serve the community's vision. The land dedication component for parks, open space, and trails uses several databases to integrate ultimate community build-out (population and dwelling units) with such factors as resource and environmental preservation to calculate per unit contribution. The related impact fees provide the funding source to fully implement the plan. In setting the impact fee, the two key policy issues are:

1. What level of cost recovery will be assessed to the new development; what increased demand will need to be served due to new growth? The converse of this issue is: “what level of subsidy should the community support – i.e., what is the community wide benefit of additional parks. (This will vary by park/trail/facility location and expected usage).
2. What are the actual costs of construction financed by the community? (Also, it is important to consider the long-term operation and maintenance issues – substantial dedication requirements have proportionally greater operations and maintenance costs.)

From a market-centric perspective, the overall park and open space vision is tailored to require dedication and fees that are comparable with neighboring jurisdictions. A competitive impact fee and dedication system coupled with some regional standard for calculating fees-in-lieu contributions puts the local community in a position to attract development that might locate outside of the community. As above, this approach also requires consideration of the near and long term financial policy issues related to setting impact fees and land dedication requirements.

Erie has taken somewhat of a middle path between these two approaches. The 1999 Fee Study recommended the maximum Park, Recreation, Facility, and Open Space Trail impact fee be $2,848 per Single Family Detached and $2,455 for all other residential units. The study also suggested that the Town would need to contribute four percent (4%) to collected impact fees to fully fund the identified park system (based on a ten-year planning and budgeting plan). However, the actual adopted fee was only a portion of the recommended maximum; the Town's current impact fee for parks, open space, and trails is $2,165 per residential unit. When compared with a select number of other communities in the region, this fee is in the mid range of impact fees. However, the Town's mandatory land dedication requirement for Parks, Trails, and Open Space is at the high end in the region. Escalating maintenance costs of the increased inventory also has implications for sustaining the system over time.

The other key concern identified in reviewing Erie's park impact fee is that the fee system appears to collect only forty percent (40%) of the estimated costs of park, trail, and open space construction. (This gap in financing would increase further if recreation facilities were added.) Based on the construction experience of Design Concepts on the consultant planning team, estimates of current costs of what it would cost to develop a park in Erie were made. The following is an example of a subdivision with 1,000 people and the regional development cost of parks identified by Design Concepts.

Neighborhood Parks	$175,000 per acre x 3 acres per 1,000 people
Community Parks	$275,000 per acre x 5 acres per 1,000 people
Open Space	$10,000 per acre (seed one acre)
Trails	$275,000 per mile – assume one mile for the example project
(10' wide concrete trail and associated improvements such as drainage and over/under pass)	
TOTAL	$2,185,000
	(This is a conservative estimate of actual development costs to fulfill parks, open space, and trails dedication requirements per 1,000 persons.)

Assuming a development population of 1,000 and 2.5 persons per household, there would be 400 households contributing impact fees. At $2,165 per dwelling unit, impact fees would generate $866,000 for park and open space development. However, based on the above preliminary calculations, the actual costs to improve the land dedications would be an estimated $2,185,000. This represents a short fall in impact fee revenues of $1,319,000. Another way to state the discrepancy is, the current impact fee ($2,165) only provides in the range of forty percent (40%) of the actual costs of park and open space development (again, other facilities like the Community Center are not included, hence, the percentage of actual costs covered by current impact fees would be lower).

Although current revenues may be adequate for park, trail, and open space development, the above example illustrates that impact fees make up a smaller portion of total development costs than were recommended in the 1999 Fee Study. It is desirable to have impact fees at a level that achieves community goals. That is, the impact fee should be based on a total expected public facility/improvement program cost that is intentionally divided between revenues to be generated by impact fees with the remainder coming from either general funds or voter approved revenues.

Comparisons with Other Colorado Communities

When compared to a select number of Colorado communities, Erie has the highest combined parks and open space land dedication requirements. Impact fees are more difficult to compare since they use different assumptions and calculations. In general, the information provided in **Table 20** shows that Erie's park and open space impact fee is mid-way between the communities used in the comparison. The highest park impact fees are found in Longmont and Windsor. Many communities choose to tie their impact fees to an inflationary index (e.g. consumer price index) to more accurately reflect annual cost increases related to park development.

Table 20: Land Dedication, Fees in Lieu, and Impact Fees – Colorado Comparisons

Town	Park Impact Fee Requirements	Required Acres of Parkland Dedication	Fees-in-lieu of Parkland Dedication
Windsor	For neighborhood park **$3,145** per residential dwelling unit. For community parks, **$1,063** per residential dwelling unit.	Ordinance 2004-1190 requires parkland to be dedicated at a ratio of .0055 acres per resident or **5.5** acres per 1,000 (based on 2.73 residents per dwelling unit)	In 2008, Ordinance 2004-1190 requires payment of **$42,766** per acre for parks or open space. (Fee adjusted annually per the CPI).
Parker	Developers assume all responsibility of development of dedicated parks, open space, and trails (unless otherwise determined by Town)	**7.5** acres per 1,000 (Based on occupancy factor of 3 people per household) (Neigh. park = dwelling unit x .0075 acres/unit, Community park = units x .0150 acres/unit)	Market value (after platting and construction of public improvements) + park development costs/acre
Ft. Collins	**$845-1,969** for neighborhood parks **$940-2,192** for community parks (based on dwelling sq. ft; Adj. annually by CPI)	**2.5** acres per 1,000 for neighborhood park, **4.5** acres per 1,000 for community park	Not Applicable
*Brighton	<u>Neighborhood Park Impact Fee:</u> *For developments of 337 units or less –* 1)**$1,380**/unit with land dedication ***or*** 2) **$1,700**/unit without land dedication *For developments 338 units or more –* Developer to construct park to City standards <u>Community Park Impact Fee:</u> Developer can construct park ***or*** pay 1) **$400** per unit with land dedication ***or*** 2) **$720** without land dedication	Parks: **6** acres per ***1,000*** residents (338 units) -3 acres for neighborhood park -3 acres for community park Open Space: **15** acres per 1,000 population	Calculated based on periodic evaluation of the fair market rate
Longmont	**$4,825** for comprehensive park and recreation infrastructure (November 2007)	1 acre per 100 one-family and two-family units	Factored into park impact fee of $4,825
Erie	$2,165 for parks and open space	Parks: **8.5** acres -0.5 acres/1,000 for pocket parks -3 acres/1,000 for neighborhood parks -5 acres/1,000 for community parks Open Space: **17** acres per 1,000 popl.	Based on an appraisal of fair market value (based on developable land within the final plat and zoning)

Summary of Key Findings of Land Dedication and Impact Fees

- The 1999 Fee Study recommended the maximum Park, Recreation, Facility, and Open Space Trail impact fee be $2,848 per Single Family Detached and $2,455 for all other residential units.
- The study also suggested that the Town would need to contribute four percent (4%) to collected impact fees to fully fund the identified park system (based on a ten-year planning and budgeting plan).
- However, the actual adopted fee was only a portion of the recommended maximum; the Town's current impact fee for parks, open space, and trails is $2,165.
- The Erie Parks and Open Space Impact Fee is not annually adjusted for inflationary factors and has remained the same since adoption.
- When compared with a select number of other communities in the region, this fee is in the mid to lower range of impact fees.
- However, the Town's mandatory land dedication requirement for Parks, Trails, and Open Space is at the high end in the region.
- Based on a review of the *Impact Fee Study*, it appears that current impact fees are not sufficient to finance the Level of Service set by the Town for PROST-related capital programs or facilities.
- In addition, current impact fees do not appear to cover the capital improvement expenditures obligated to improve required park and open space dedications in the Town's *Municipal Code, Title 10*.

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Appendix A – Survey Results

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

FINAL RESULTS
DECEMBER 2008

PREPARED FOR:

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INTRODUCTION/METHODOLOGY

The Master Plan Survey was conducted primarily through a mailback survey, and was supplemented with an online version of the survey. The survey was originally sent to 3,500 randomly selected households located in the Town of Erie and the ZIP code associated with it (80516), which may include households outside the town limits as well as Erie P.O. boxes belonging to residents who live outside the town limits. A link and individually assigned password (one per household) were also included in the mailed invitation, in order to allow recipients to complete the survey online, should they prefer. Completed surveys received totaled 438 out of a net estimated 3,438 delivered (approximately 62 surveys out of the 3,500 originally mailed were returned "undeliverable" due to invalid addresses and/or residents who have moved and no longer reside at a particular address). This represents a good response rate of approximately 12.7%. Based upon the total sample size of 438 responses received, overall results have a margin of error of approximately +/- 4.7 percentage points calculated for questions at 50% response[1]. Also, note that the resultant database is weighted by age of respondent to ensure appropriate representation of Town residents across different demographic cohorts in the overall sample.

The primary list source used for the mailing was a third party list purchased from Equifax, one of the three largest credit reporting agencies in the world. Use of the Equifax list also includes renters in the sample who are frequently missed in other list sources such as utility billing lists.

Additionally, a third, open-link version of the online questionnaire was made available to all residents of Erie, who could complete the questionnaire if they did not receive one by invitation in the mail. A total of 43 open-link surveys were completed online. As responses to the open-link version of the questionnaire are “self-selected” and not a part of the randomly selected sample of residents, results from the open-link questionnaire are kept separate from the mail and invitation web versions of the survey. Although these surveys were considered in the overall analysis of the data, the discussion and graphic illustrations of results that follow focus only on results from the randomly selected sample of residents. A brief summary of the open-link responses is included at the end of the report, as well as the full set of open-link data tables provided in the appendix sections to the report.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

Based on US Census data and the 2008 ESRI forecast of the adult population (over 19 years old) for the Town of Erie, the age profile of residents is distributed as follows (which is the basis for the weighting of the survey data): 21 percent are under 35 years old, 31 percent between 35 and 44 years, 26 percent between 45 and 54 years, 13 percent between 55 and 64 years, and 8 percent 65 years or over.

Forty-seven percent of responding households have kids living at home, 20 percent are couples without kids, 12 percent are single without kids, and 21 percent are empty-nesters (couples and

[1] For the total sample size of 438, margin of error is +/- 4.7 percent calculated for questions at 50% response (if the response for a particular question is “50%”—the standard way to generalize margin of error is to state the larger margin, which occurs for responses at 50%). Note that the margin of error is different for every single question response on the survey depending on the resultant sample sizes, proportion of responses, and number of answer categories for each question. Comparison of differences in the data between various segments, therefore, should take into consideration these factors. As a general comment, it is sometimes more appropriate to focus attention on the general trends and patterns in the data rather than on the individual percentages.

singles with kids no longer at home). Respondents were most likely to have lived in Erie for five years or less (57 percent) with an average length of residency being 7 years. The majority of respondents (82 percent) live in the Town limits of Erie, compared to 11 percent who live outside the Town in unincorporated Weld County and 7 percent in Boulder County. Almost one-third of respondents (32 percent) live in the northwest portion of Erie (north of Leon Wurl Parkway and west of County Line) along with 32 percent who live in the southeast portion (south of Leon Wurl Parkway and east of County Line). The remainder live in the southwest portion (22 percent), northeast portion (9 percent), and Old Town Erie (5 percent). In regards to household income, 50 percent of responding households had annual incomes greater than $100,000.

Figure 1
Respondent Demographics

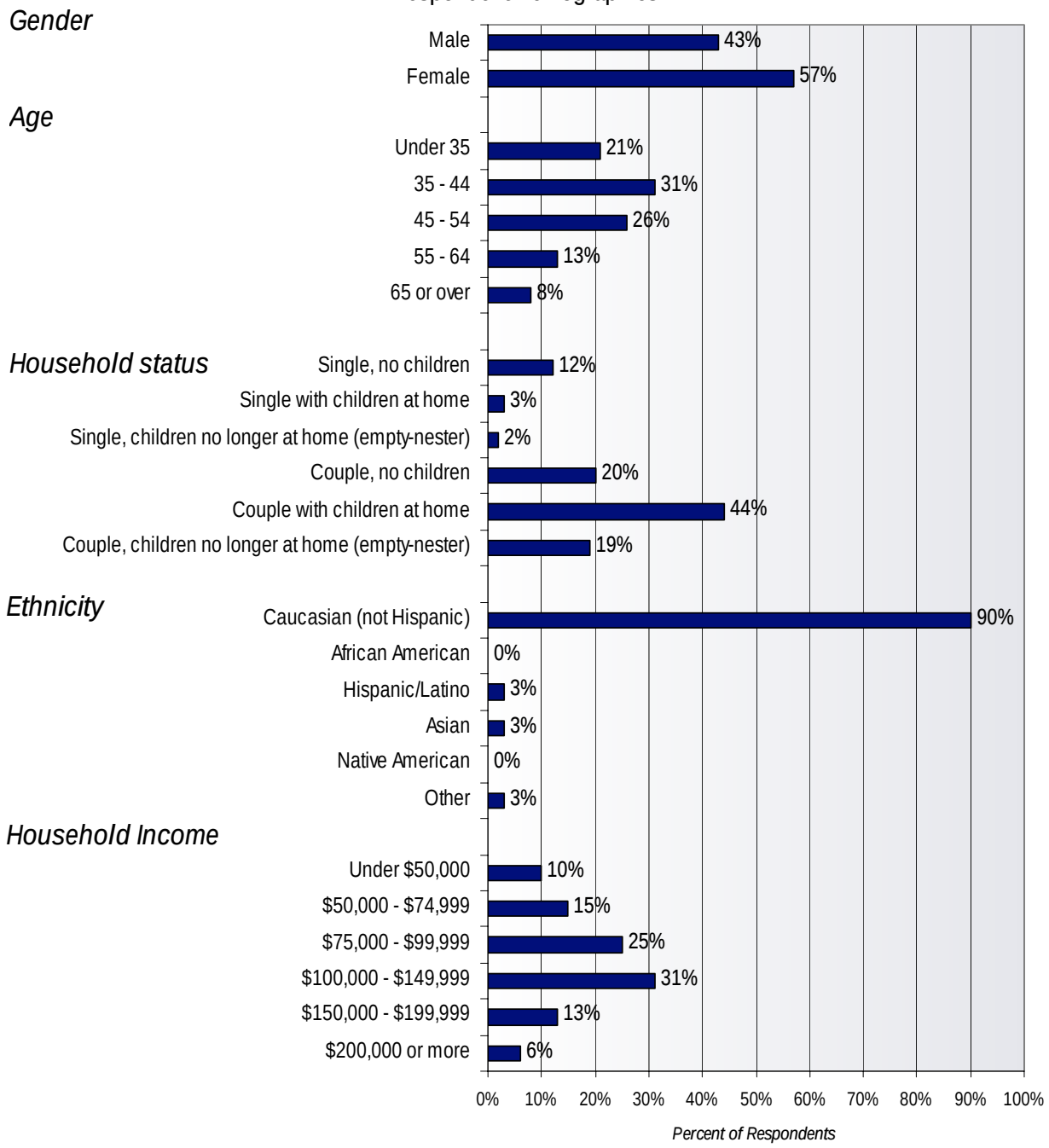
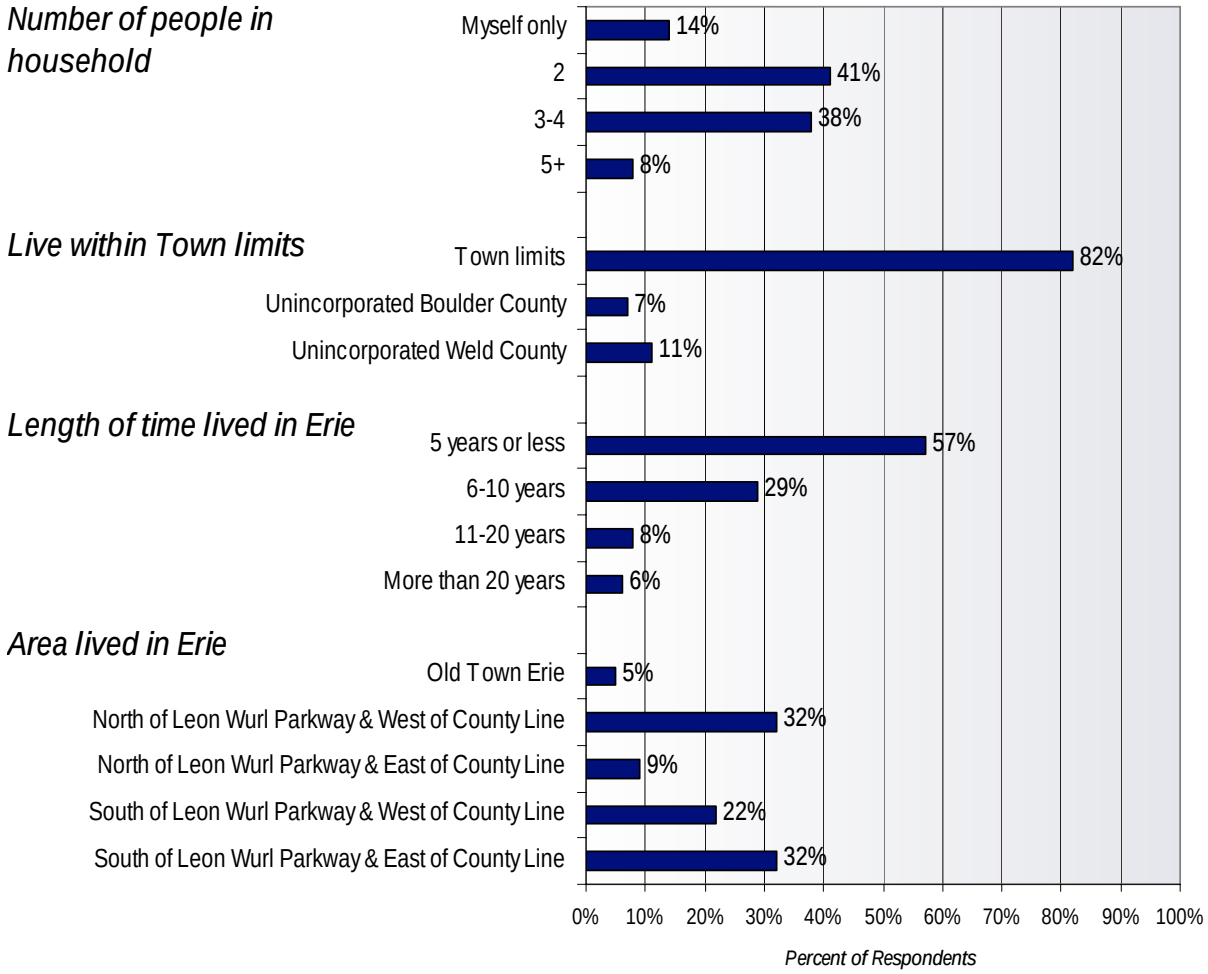


Figure 2
Respondent Demographics



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

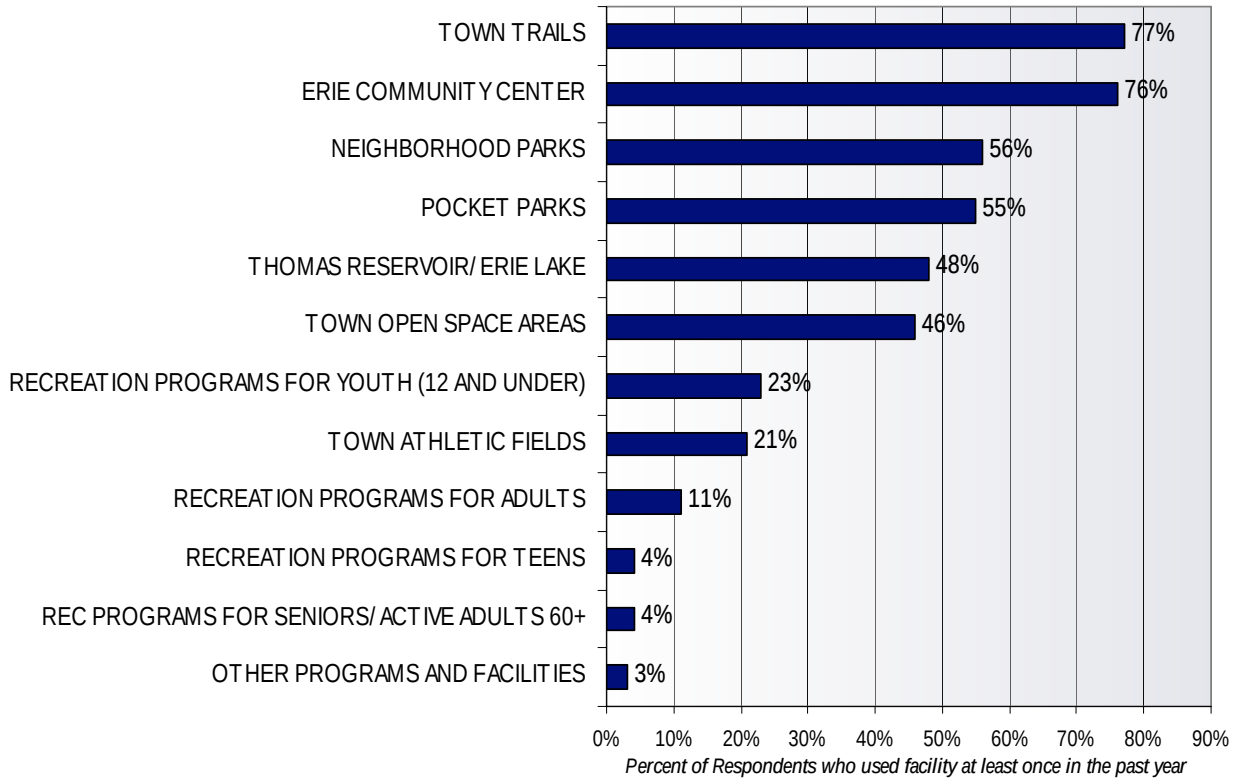
Key findings from the study are summarized below. Additionally, several of the questions on the survey form allowed respondents to "write in" their response or comment. Major themes that emerge from the comments are summarized in the report, while a complete set of the comments is provided as an appendix section.

In addition to overall responses, results are also segmented comparing respondents by location of residence, length of time lived in Erie, and household status. This segmentation of the results helps to further "explain" local opinions and provides additional insight to parks and recreation issues in the area. Three sets of data tables showing these segmentations are provided as appendix sections.

Current Programs and Facilities

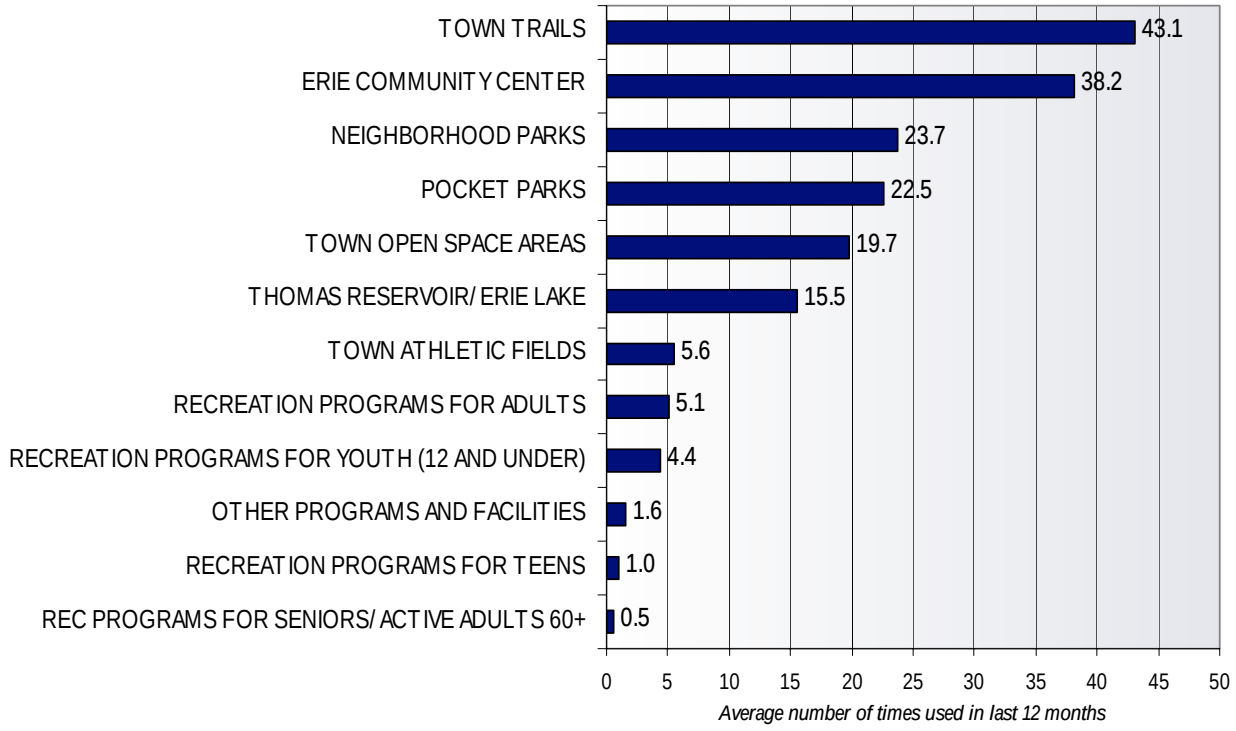
Usage levels. Among the facilities and amenities currently available in Erie, town trails were used by the greatest proportion of respondents (77 percent of respondents have used a town trail at least once in the last 12 months) followed by the Erie Community Center (76 percent of respondents). Approximately 46-56 percent have used neighborhood parks, pocket parks, Thomas Reservoir/Erie Lake, and town open space areas at least once in the last 12 months. Used or attended the least were recreation programs for teens and seniors/active adults.

Figure 3
Current Usage of Town of Erie Facilities and Programs
Percent using at least once in last 12 months



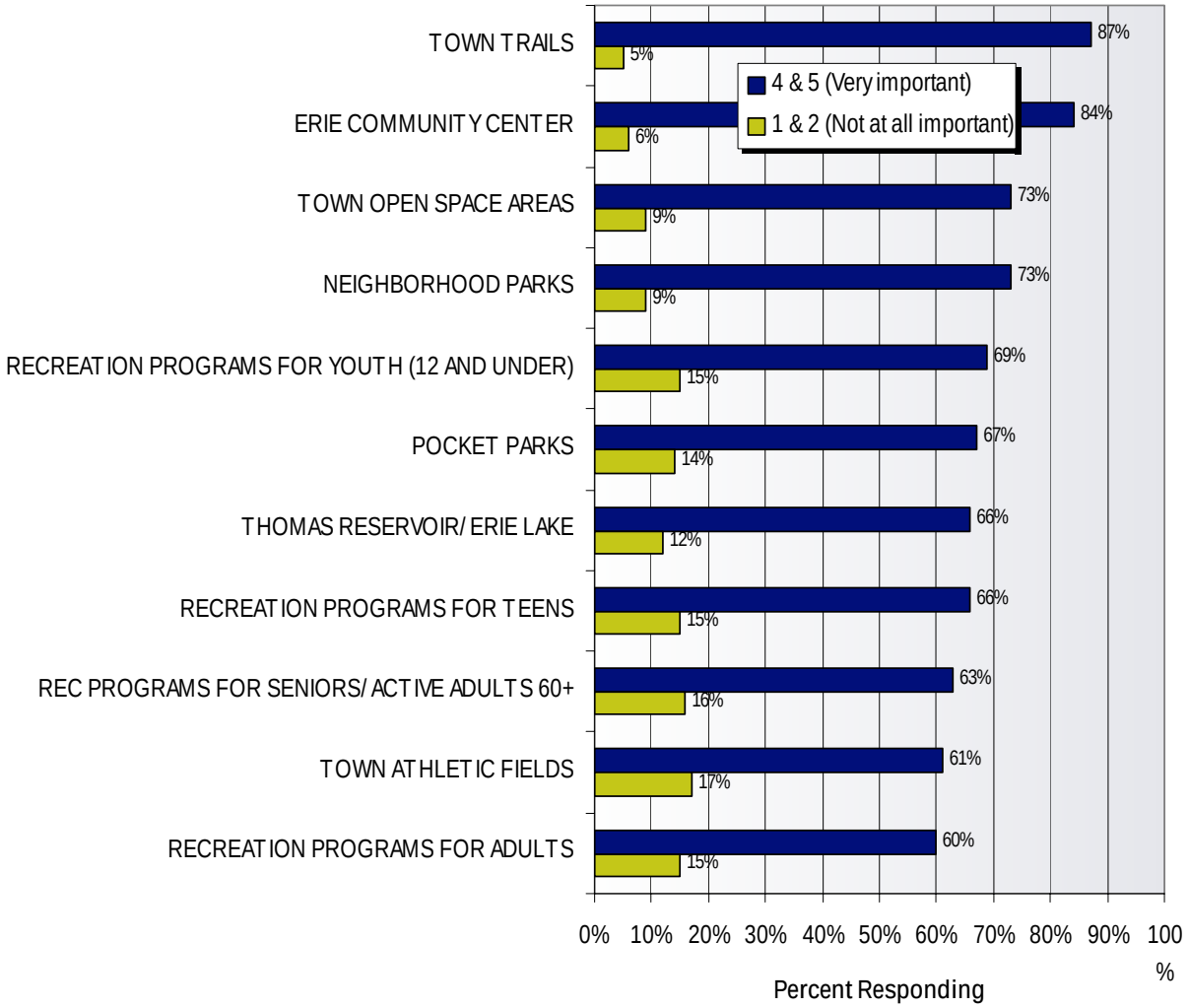
When asked about their frequency of use, respondents indicated the highest number of average uses per year to town trails (43.1 times per year), again followed relatively closely by the Erie Community Center (38.2 times). Neighborhood parks (23.7 times per year), pocket parks (22.5 times per year), Town open space areas (19.7 times per year), and Thomas Reservoir/Erie Lake (15.5 times per year) were also used frequently throughout the year.

Figure 4
Current Usage of Town of Erie Facilities and Programs
Average number of visits in last 12 months



Importance to the community. Respondents were then asked to indicate how important each of these parks and recreation amenities are to the community. While the majority of facilities and amenities are rated as being relatively important to the community, town trails and the Erie Community Center were rated the highest (84-87 percent of respondents rated it "very important," a 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale). Next was Town open space areas (73 percent) followed by neighborhood parks (73 percent). Recreation programs for adults (60 percent of respondents rated it "very important") and the Town athletic fields (61 percent) were rated among the least important, however, only a small margin behind some of the top amenities, indicating a high level of importance overall for all facilities in the area.

Figure 5
Importance of each facility to the community

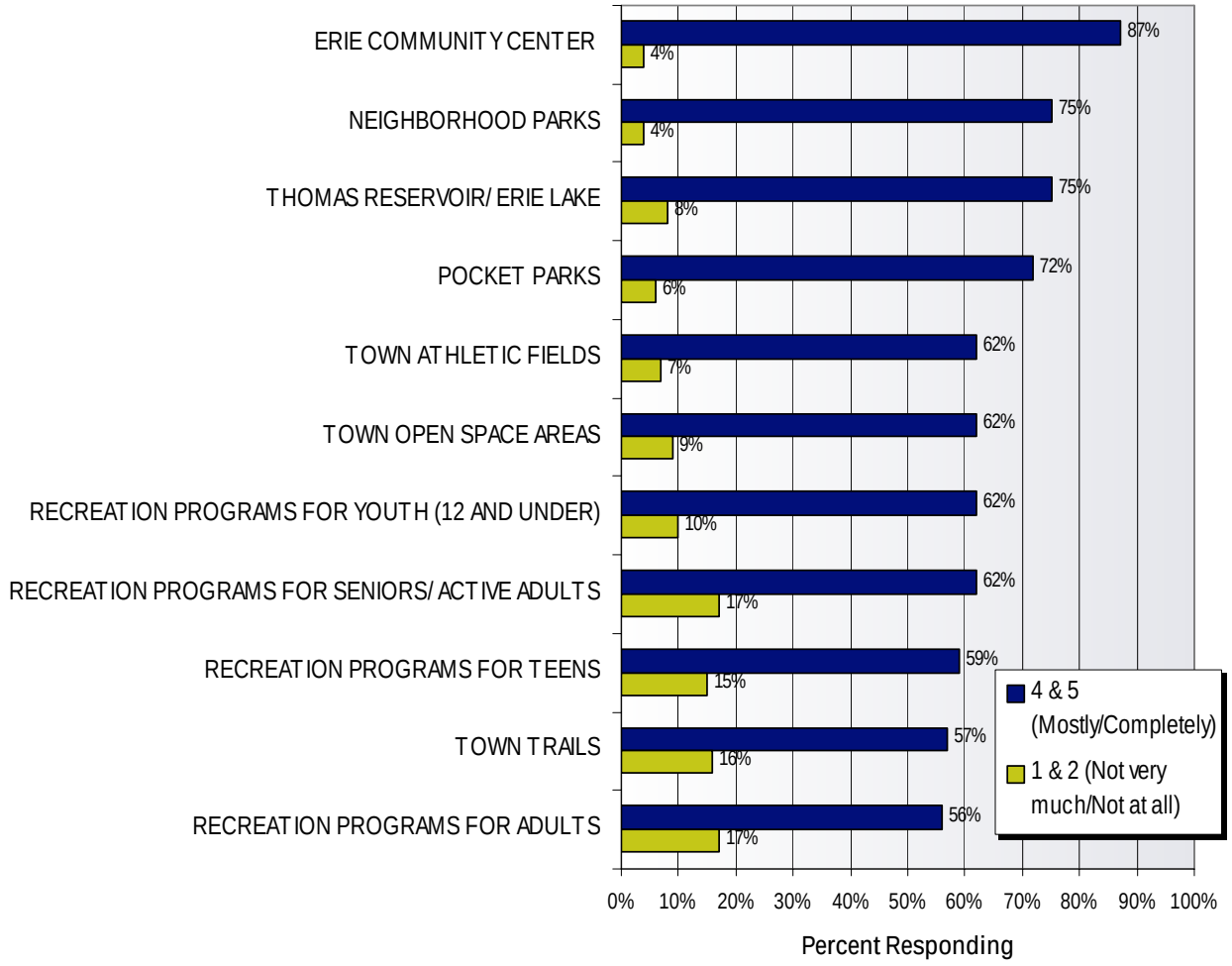


How well are parks, trails, recreation facilities, and programs currently meeting the needs of the community? Overall, most parks, facilities, and amenities available in Erie received relatively positive satisfaction ratings. Similar to the frequency of use of current facilities, respondents indicated that the following facilities meet the needs of the community the most:

- Erie Community Center
- Neighborhood parks
- Thomas Reservoir/Erie Lake
- Pocket parks
- Town athletic fields
- Town open space areas
- Recreation programs for youth

Unlike what was indicated in the levels of usage and importance, Town trails ranked near the bottom in terms of satisfaction. However, it's overall satisfaction rating was still relatively positive (57 percent were "mostly or completely" satisfied, ratings of "4" and "5" on a 5-point scale), with 16 percent indicating needs were not being met very much or at all (ratings of 1 or 2). Recreation programs for seniors/active adults, teens, and adults similarly received 15-17 percent responses of needs not being met.

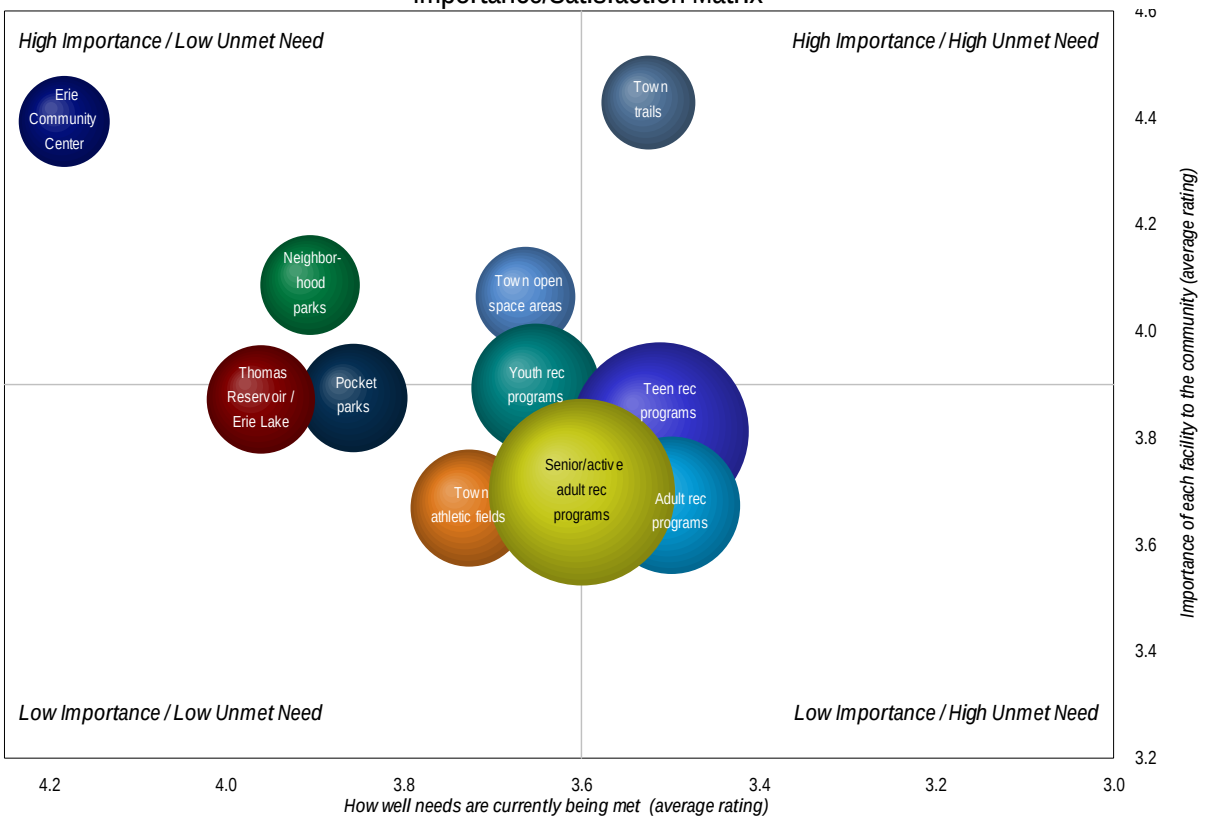
Figure 6
How satisfied are you that the parks, trails, recreation facilities, and programs provided in Erie are meeting the needs of the community?



Importance-Performance Matrix. It is also instructive to compare and plot the importance scores against the performance scores in an "importance-performance" matrix. As illustrated in the graph, although perhaps not meeting a certain level of need for some residents, note that many of the same facilities listed above that are meeting needs are also considered the most important to the community (Erie Community Center, neighborhood parks, and Town open space). As previously mentioned, Town trails are important to respondents overall, but are not quite meeting the needs of the community as well as the Community Center, parks, or to a lesser extent, open space. As also previously identified, after trails, adult recreation programs, teen recreation programs, senior/active adult recreation programs, and to a lesser extent, youth recreation programs, while considered less important to the community as a whole, are not meeting the needs for many respondents.

The size of each circle in the graph represents the confidence interval for each amenity. Confidence Intervals (CI) are used to determine the reliability of an estimated range of values by measuring the spread of data (the range of values around a point estimate that takes sampling error into account). The narrower the spread (smaller the circle on the graph, such as with the Erie Community Center), the smaller the sampling error and the greater the confidence that the indicated value is accurately represented by the data point. For the Erie Community Center, for example, the CI is +/- 0.1, so there is little variability in responses and a high level of confidence that the indicated value is true. The wider the spread (i.e. the larger circles on the graph, such as senior programs) indicates a larger CI, or more variability in responses or greater spread of distribution of responses. In the case of senior programs, the CI is +/- 0.2.

Figure 7
Importance/Satisfaction Matrix



*Data point size is equal to 95% confidence interval for each amenity. When confidence interval of importance and satisfaction differed, the greater value was used.

Respondent Comments. To further probe satisfaction and desires of what is currently available in Erie, respondents were asked in an open-ended question if they had any comments or suggestions of what improvements could be made to better meet the needs of the community. A number of suggestions were offered, particularly in regards to trails and trail connectivity, creating a trail map, the need for bike lanes, meaningful and unfragmented open space, a modern skate park, dog park, more athletic fields and better maintained, more youth sports programs and better coaching/instruction, pricing and user fees (particularly for residents over 55), additional lap lanes for the swimming pool, longer hours of operation at the Erie Community Center (longer hours in general, but also to help manage perceived lack of space and facility issues), better staff training, and size of facilities. While overall satisfaction levels are very high, there exists a sense that "everything was built too small" to accommodate the current level of demand and usage. Most of these topics emerged as consistent themes throughout the survey's open-ended comments. A sampling is listed below, but the full set of comments can be found in the attachments.

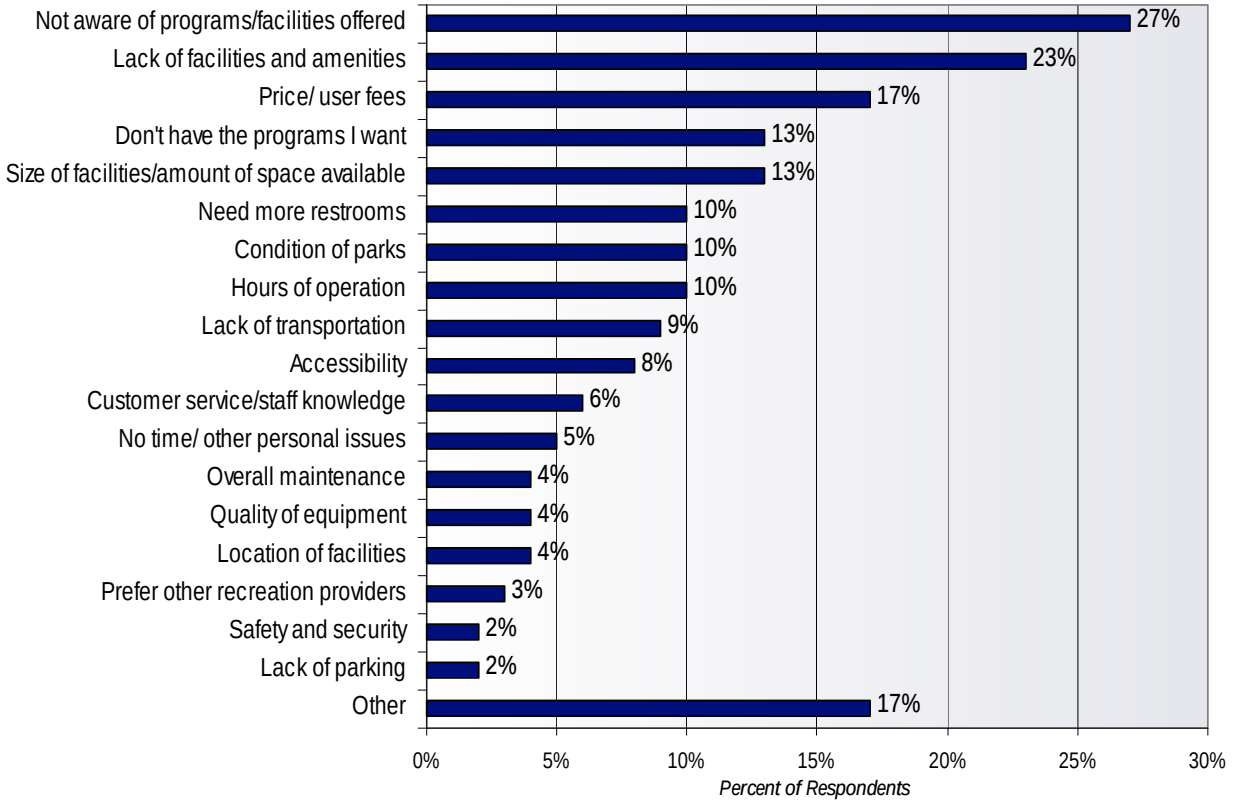
- *Acquire meaningful open space instead of small chopped up parcels*
- *Better lighting along trails and in parks, additional trash receptacles along the trails*
- *Better trail signage on open space/trails.; More lap lanes in the rec center, though I realize this is a hard one to change...*
- *Build new modern skate park*
- *Connect the trails*
- *Connect town trails to Boulder and Lafayette trails!*
- *Dedicated coaches that WANT to coach!*
- *Erie needs to add an outdoor swimming pool. Trails should have dirt paths as well as concrete. County Rd. 1 should be widened to accommodate bikes.*
- *Have more programs in evening/weekends; rec center stay open later on weekdays*
- *I would like to see the trail system continue to expand. Great job so far, keep going!!!*
- *Improve and increase number of bike lanes. Most roads are dangerous.*
- *Improved bike lanes on roads, or beside roads to get down county line or 119th w/o risk of traffic.*
- *Knowing where all are located - improve website and info by front desk staff at community center*
- *More athletic fields are needed, more connecting of trails to town center*
- *More trails connected, better bike lanes, disappointed new roads didn't make bike lanes*
- *Need a dog park*
- *Open space - need more! Plus define access and educate us - e.g. they do not show up on the parks and rec map*
- *Open space seems fragmented, it needs to be connected from larger areas. I think open space has been neglected in favor of parks and the community center. I see a lot of trails, where is the open space?*
- *Senior rates should apply at 55 - because of your high age limit I joined the Lafayette rec center*
- *The price is too high in comparison to Lafayette. My husband and I are 58 and 59 and an annual pass is $300 total for the two of us (in Lafayette). At our hometown center (in Erie) the cost is more than twice as much.*
- *More tennis courts, more tennis programs for youth, teens and adults*

Aspects of Town's facilities and/or programs most in need of improvement. When asked what parks and recreation facilities, services, and programs they think are most in need of improvement, respondents indicated a lack of awareness of programs/facilities offered (27 percent of respondents) and a lack of facilities and amenities (23 percent). Other aspects (indicated by 10-17 percent of respondents each) include the following:

- Price/user fees
- Don't have the programs I want
- Size of facilities/amount of space available
- Need more restrooms
- Condition of parks
- Hours of operation

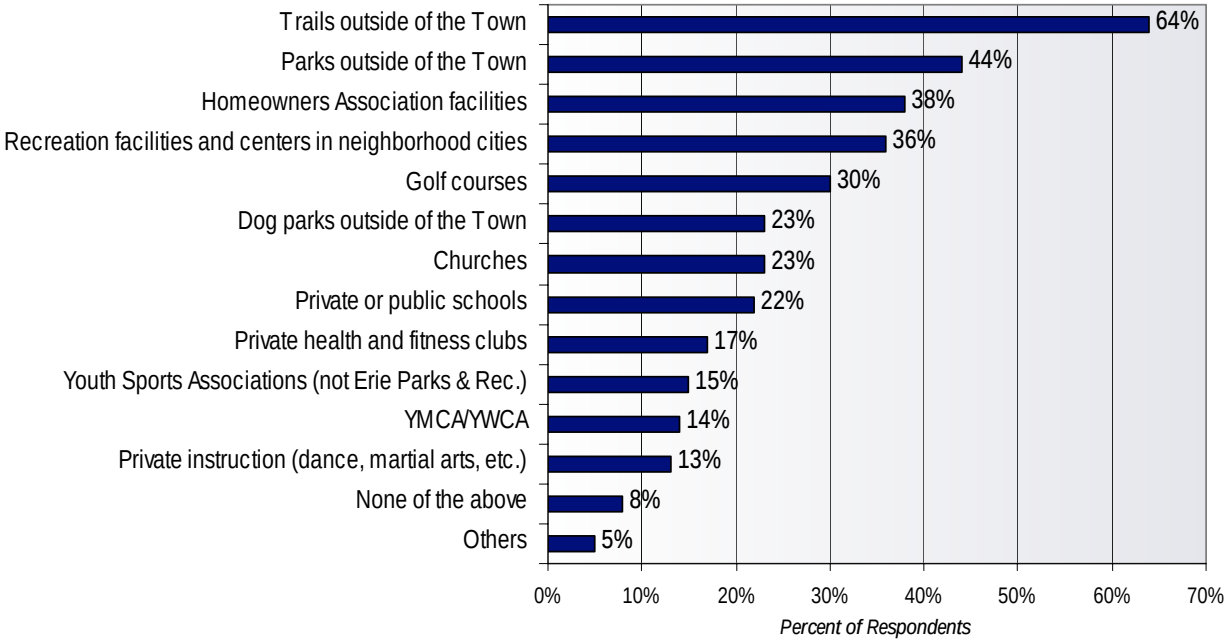
Again, many of the facilities and amenities listed in open-ended comments to this question were summarized on the previous page, including trails, bike lanes, modern skate park, etc.

Figure 8
What parks and recreation facilities, services, and programs are most in need of improvement?



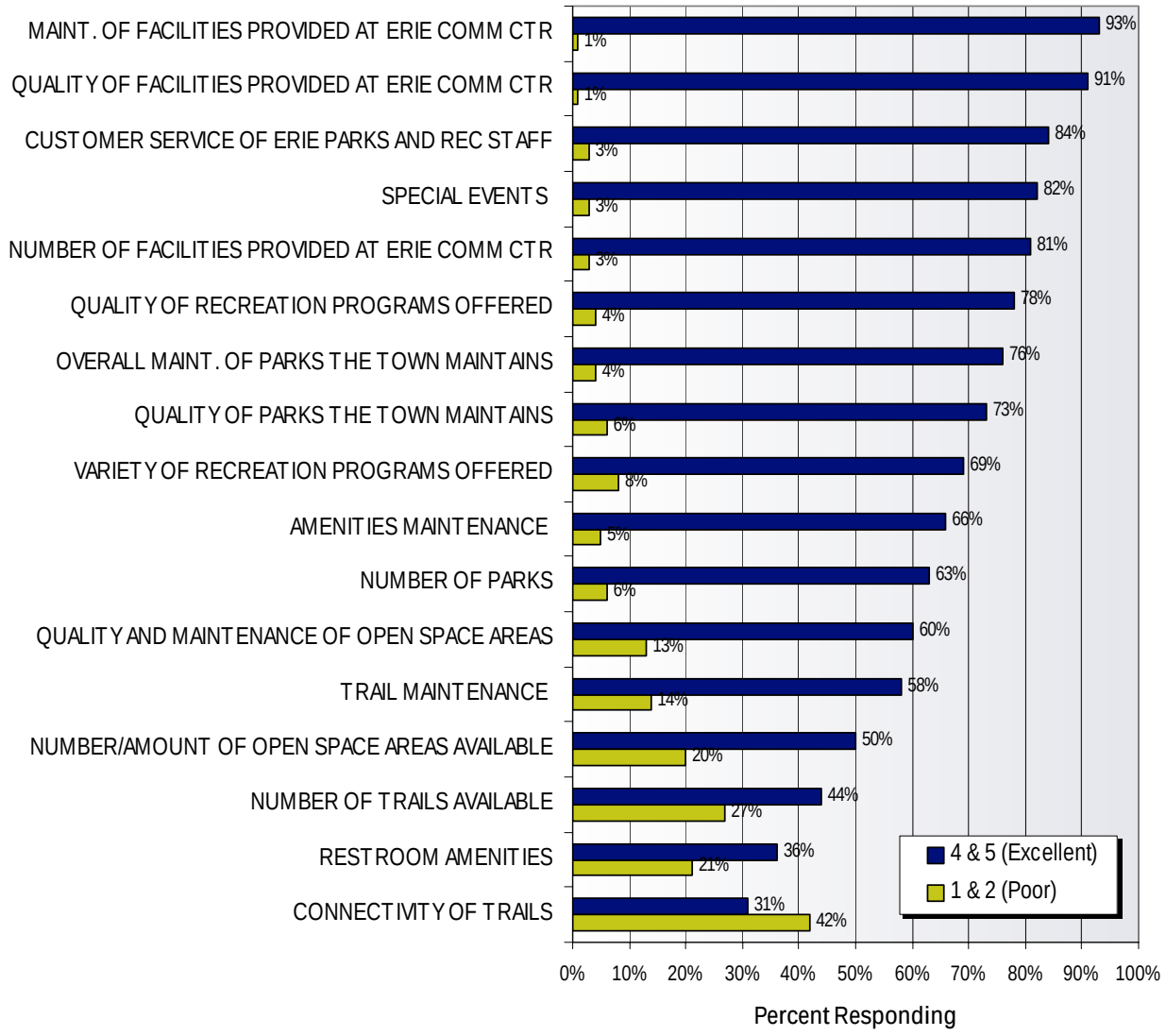
Other recreation facilities used. When asked what other organizations respondents and their household members use for recreation facilities and programs, 64 percent of respondents indicated that they use trails outside of the Town, along with 44 percent who indicated they use parks outside of the Town. Other facilities used include homeowner's association facilities (38 percent), recreation facilities and centers in neighboring cities (36 percent), golf courses (30 percent), dog parks outside of Town (23 percent), churches (23 percent), and private or public schools (22 percent).

Figure 9
Other Recreation Facilities and Programs Used



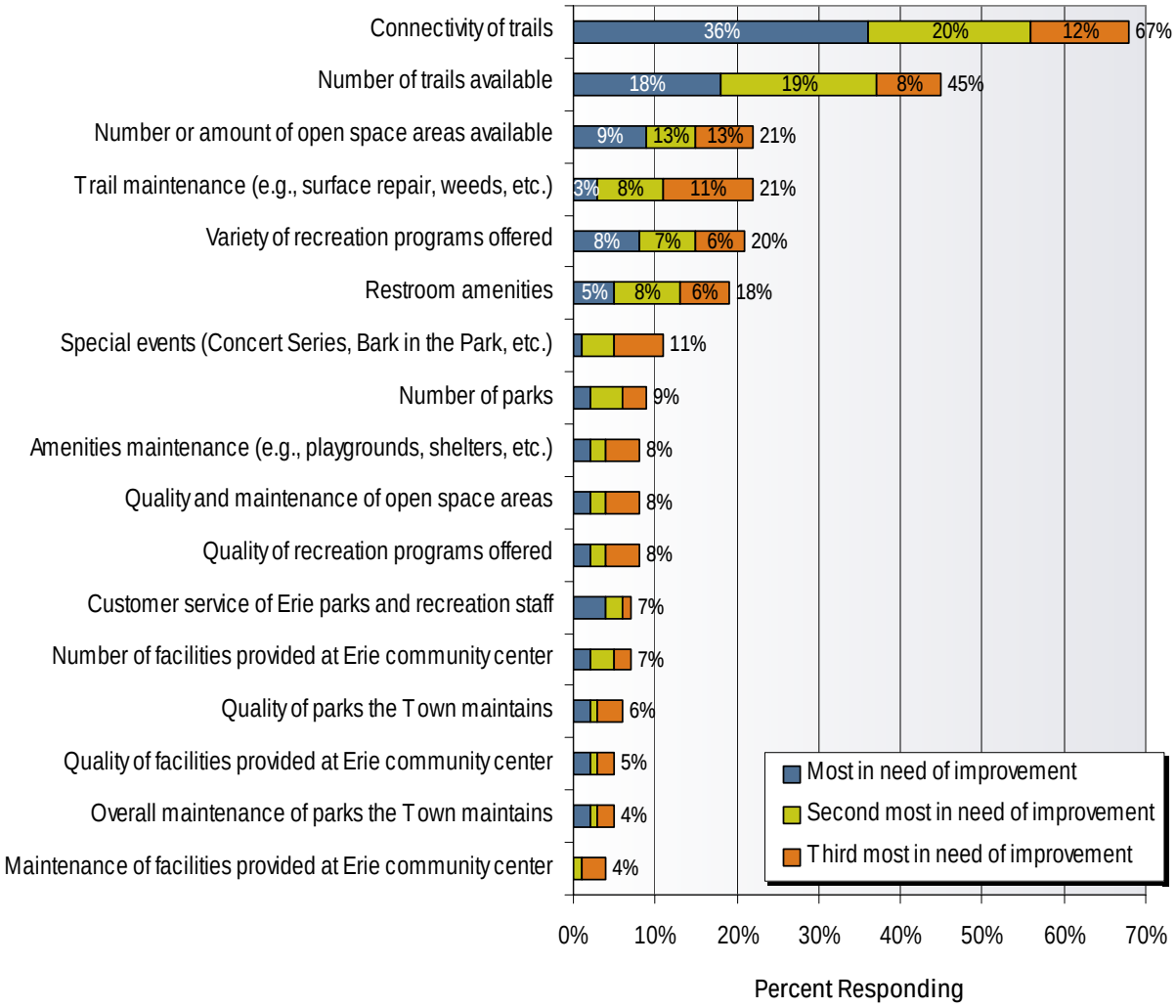
Current Ratings of Erie Parks and Recreation. Respondents were asked to rate a variety of aspects of the Parks and Recreation department overall in Erie, such as maintenance, service, and facilities provided in Town. Ratings were positive overall with "maintenance of facilities provided by the Erie Community Center" ranking the highest (93 percent of respondents indicated it was a 4 or 5 "Excellent" on a 5-point scale), followed by "quality of facilities provided at Erie Community Center" (91 percent), "customer service of Erie Parks and Recreation staff" (84 percent), "special events" (82 percent), and "number of facilities provided at Erie Community Center" (81 percent). Rated the lowest were "connectivity of trails" (42 percent of respondents indicated it was a 1 or 2 "Poor" on a 5-point scale), "number of trails available" (27 percent), "restroom amenities" (21 percent), and "number or amount of open space available" (20 percent). "Trail maintenance" and "quality and maintenance of open space areas" received 13-14 percent responses of "poor."

Figure 10
Overall ratings of Erie Parks and Recreation



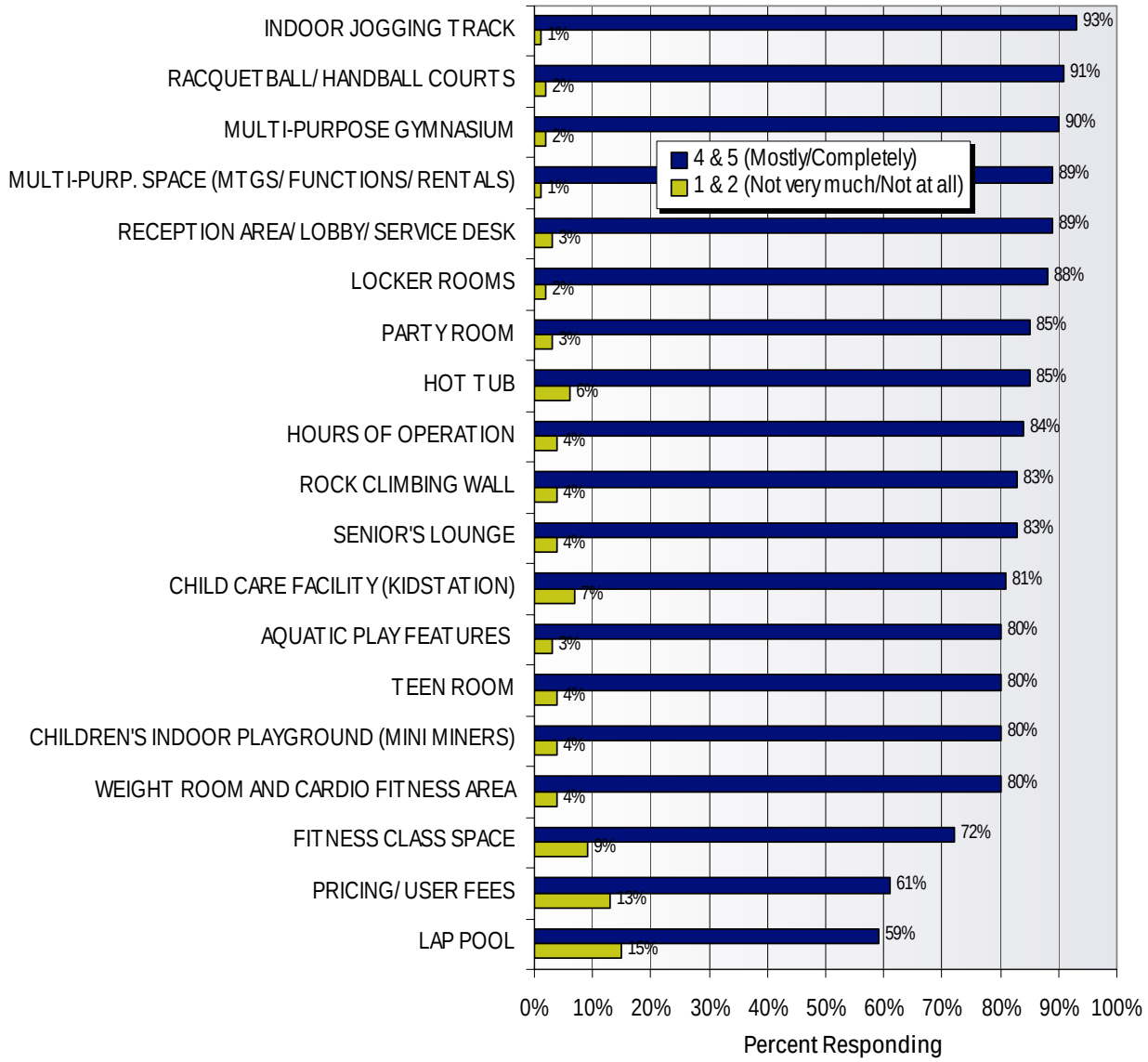
Respondents were also asked to indicate which three of the aspects they felt were most in need of improvement. This provides the opportunity to not only see what aspects are currently viewed positively by respondents but also to get an idea of how important it would be to improve each one and how respondents prioritize these improvements in relation to each other. Not surprisingly, "connectivity of trails" is ranked, by far, the highest priority in need of improvement (36 percent of respondents indicating that it is their top choice and 67 percent indicating that it is one of their top three priorities). Also indicated as a relatively high priority was the "number of trails available" (18 percent of respondents indicating that it is their top priority and 45 percent indicating that it is one of their top three priorities), followed by a second tier of responses including "number or amount of open space areas available," "trail maintenance," "variety of recreation programs offered," and "restroom amenities" (all with 18-21 percent of respondents indicating each as one of their top three priorities).

Figure 11
Which aspects of Erie Parks and Recreation are most in need of improvement?
(Top 3 most important)



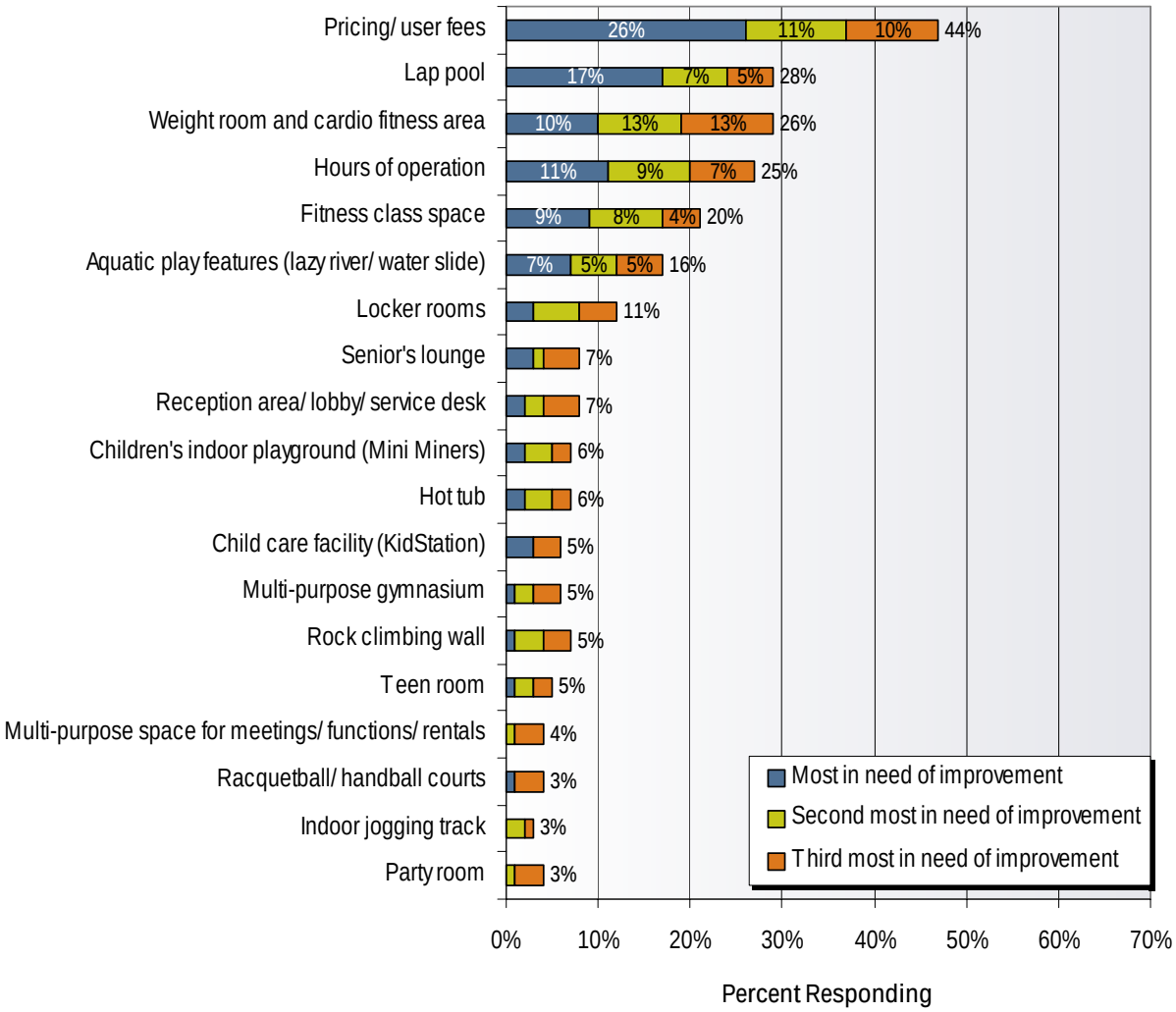
Erie Community Center. Respondents were asked to indicate how well they think the Erie Community Center is currently meeting the needs of the community, and similar to the previous section, which aspects of the Community Center are most in need of improvement. Ratings were extremely positive overall with 16 out of the 19 amenities listed, receiving ratings of 4 or 5 ("mostly or completely meeting the needs of the community") on a 5-point scale from 80 percent or more of respondents. Rated the highest were indoor jogging track (93 percent of respondents indicated it was a 4 or 5), followed by racquetball/handball courts (91 percent), multi-purpose gymnasium (90 percent), multi-purpose space for meetings/functions/rentals (89 percent), reception area/lobby/service desk (89 percent), and locker rooms (88 percent). While still receiving relatively positive ratings, fitness space (72 percent rating "excellent"), pricing/user fees (61 percent), and the lap pool (59 percent) were rated relatively lower than the others (13-15 percent rated the lap pool and pricing/user fees as not meeting needs).

Figure 12
How well do you think the following facilities and services provided by the Erie Community Center are meeting the needs of the community?



When asked which three aspects of the Erie Community Center respondents felt were most in need of improvement, "pricing/user fees" is ranked as the highest priority in need of improvement (26 percent of respondents indicating that it is their top choice and 44 percent indicating that it is one of their top three priorities). Also indicated as relatively high priorities were the lap pool (28 percent of respondents indicating that it is one of their top three priorities), weight room and cardio fitness area (26 percent), and hours of operation (25 percent). Fitness class space was mentioned by 20 percent of respondents, aquatic play features by 16 percent, and locker rooms by 11 percent.

Figure 13
Which aspects of the Erie Community Center are most in need of improvement?
(Top 3 most important)



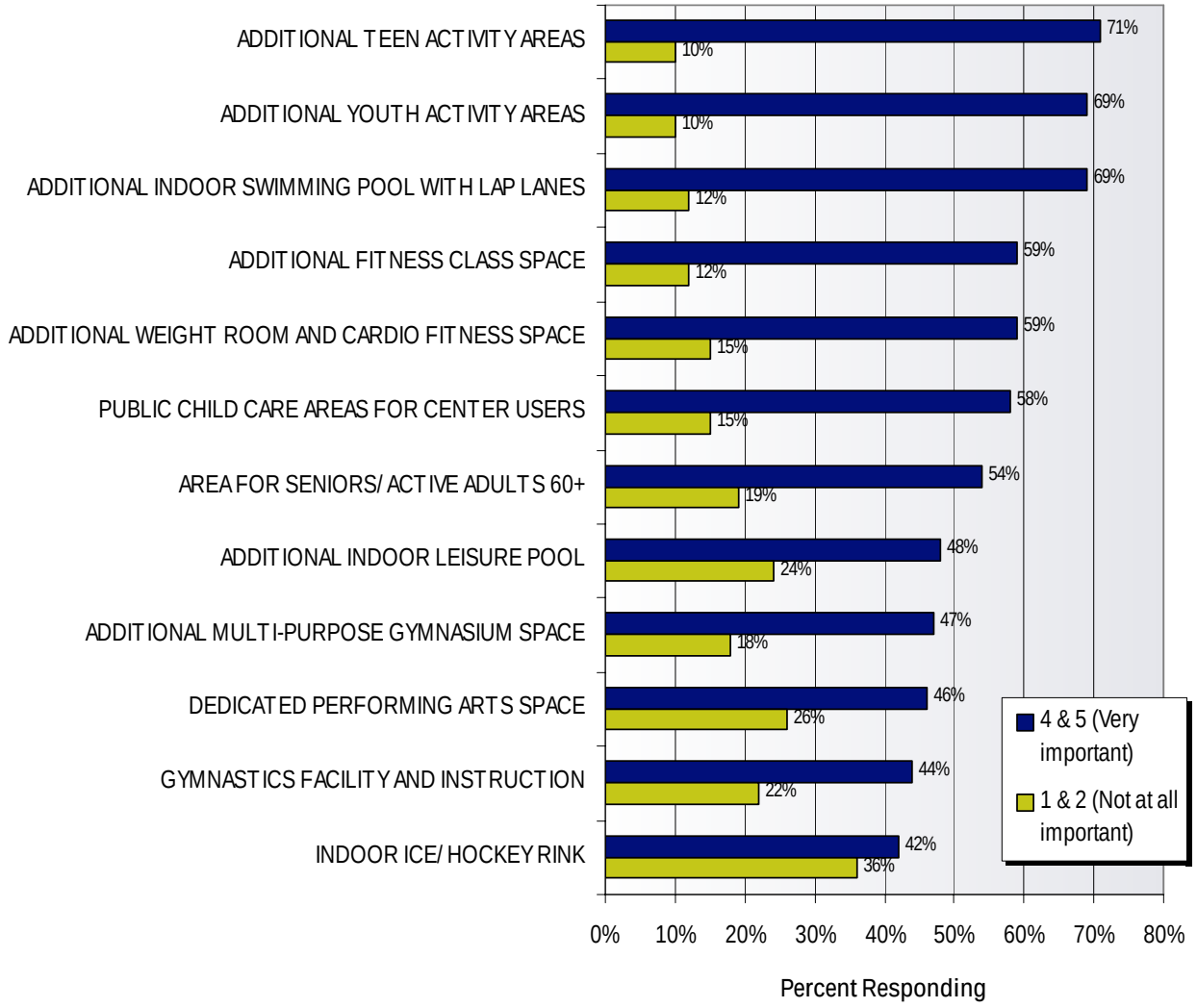
Additional comments were offered by respondents in regards to the programs and facilities offered at the Erie Community Center, many of which pertain to the limited number of lap lanes in the pool, user fees, and locker rooms. A sampling of comments is listed below, but the full set of comments can be found in the appendix.

- *A bigger lap pool and longer hours of operation.*
- *Everything should have been bigger! Too small!*
- *Extend operating hours on weekends. Outdoor pool!!!*
- *I don't understand why our excellent library is free to Erie residents but the rec. center has a huge annual fee*
- *I think the front desk staff attempt to do well in customer service, however, my experience is they just aren't knowledgeable enough about how the programs are run within the facility.*
- *Lap pool is getting really crowded for adult lap swim. Probably too late to add lanes, but maybe more after-work times; longer weekend hours. Evening yoga in community room is challenging when martial arts/loud meetings are next door.*
- *Larger area for lap lanes or more times available; larger free weight area*
- *Pool way too small. Swim at neighboring town. Large lap lanes, warm water and smaller fees.*
- *Senior discount and services should be reduced to age 55*
- *The family locker room is a great idea but it's so small and often a long wait for cabanas. Later hours Saturday night would be great.*
- *The folks at reception area are the first people guests see. They should be out-going, helpful, and friendly making everyone feel welcome.*
- *The front desk staff has not been well trained. They provide conflicting information regarding fees, hours of climbing wall, requirements for climbing wall, class information, age requirement for soccer, the pool. This greatly affects our family's ability to fully use the center.*
- *Dry and wet saunas are strongly needed in Erie Community Center. We still frequently use Lafayette Community Center rather than Erie because Lafayette has those.*
- *Lafayette, has dry and steam rooms. Very little offered for youth programs 98% of our recreation is done outside of Erie.*
- *Locker room needs a swim suit dryer. Not enough space for water classes*
- *Locker rooms are always freezing--even before coming out of the pool wet. Kids hate to leave the pool because it is so cold.; ; Timing of swim lessons during the week is suboptimal for working parents--classes between 5&7 pm would be huge improvement (similar to neighboring towns)*
- *Need a steam or sauna room.*
- *Need more family changing areas. Need more lap lanes and bigger pool overall (can get very crowded). Teen room is great! Staff is great and very flexible. Sports programming needs improvement--can be disorganized.*

Future Recreation Facilities, Amenities, and Services

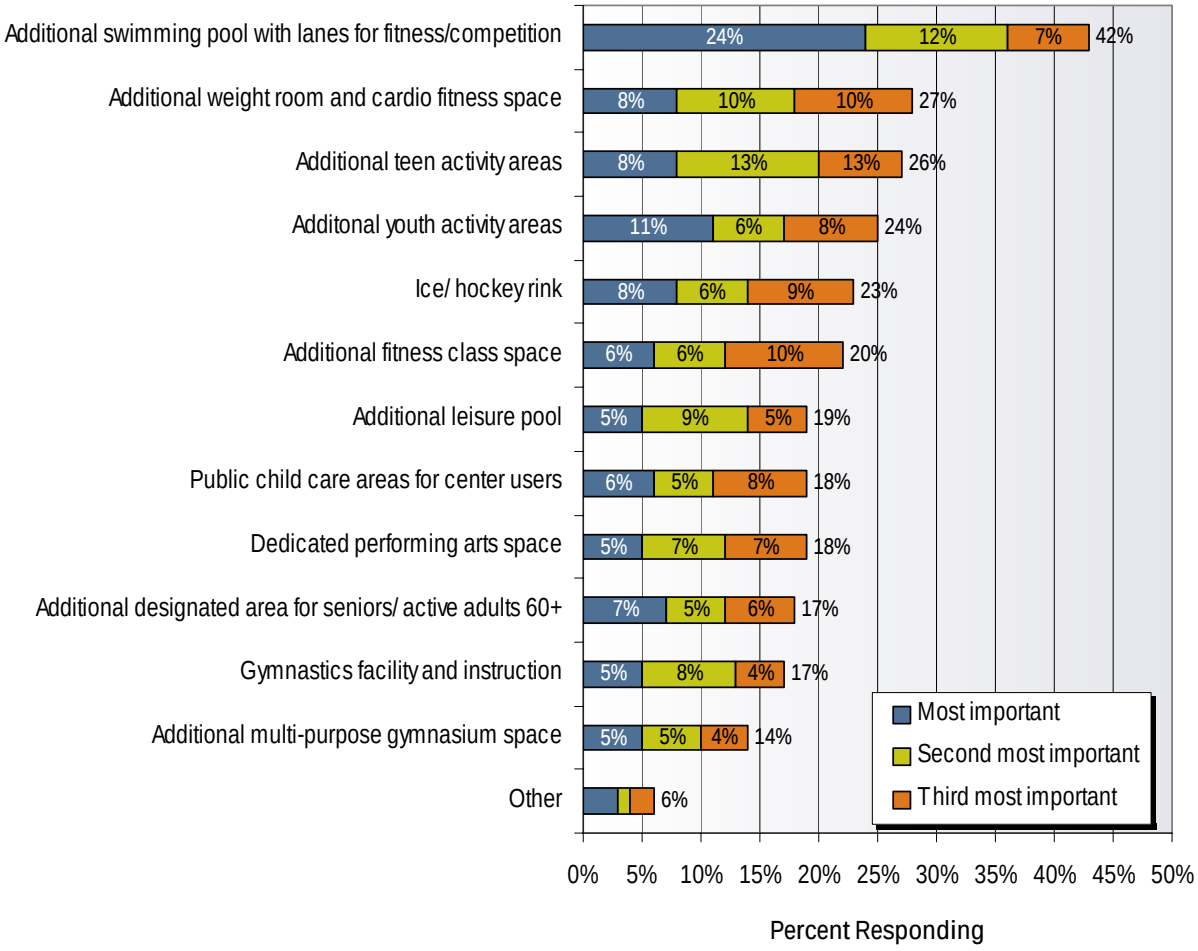
Importance of adding, expanding, or improving indoor recreation facilities. The survey provided a list of indoor facilities/amenities and asked respondents what they thought would be the greatest needs for indoor facilities within the next 5-10 years. The results show that respondents feel additional teen activity areas would be the most important (71 percent of respondents indicated it as "very important," a 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale), followed by youth activity areas (69 percent), and additional indoor swimming pool with lap lanes for fitness swimming and competition (69 percent). Additional fitness class space, additional weight room and cardio fitness space, public child care areas for center users, and additional designated area for seniors/active adults are also relatively important (54-59 percent of respondents indicating they are "very important"). As shown in the following figure, amenities such as an indoor ice/hockey rink were among the least important.

Figure 14
In the next 5-10 years, what do you think will be the greatest needs for indoor facilities in Erie?



Respondents were also asked to indicate which of the potential facilities and amenities were the three most important to them and their household. This provides the opportunity to not only see what amenities are important to respondents, but also to get an idea of how the same amenities are viewed in relation to each other, allowing priorities to become more evident. While the teen and youth activity areas remained as high priorities, the additional swimming pool with lanes emerged as the clear top priority (24 percent of respondents indicating that it is their top choice and 42 percent indicating that it is one of their top three priorities). The three priorities behind the additional swimming pool (additional weight room and cardio fitness space, additional teen activity areas, and additional youth activity areas) are all relatively close in prioritization (24-27 percent indicating each as one of their top three). Interestingly, the ice/hockey rink emerged as a high priority, but had a relatively low individual rating overall (shown in the previous figure). This indicates that it is not hugely important to the community overall, but to the respondents that it is important to, it is a top priority. Additional fitness class space was also relatively important to respondents (20 percent indicating it as one of their top three).

Figure 15
Most important needs for indoor facilities
(Top 3 most important)



Importance of adding, expanding, or improving outdoor recreation facilities. The survey also provided a list of outdoor facilities/amenities that could be added, expanded, or improved in the Erie area. The results show that respondents feel a seasonal farmer's market space, soft surface trails, open space/natural areas, and paved trails are the most important to add, expand, or improve (rating between 69 and 81 percent "very important"). Winter activities (such as sledding, cross-country skiing, etc.), mountain bike trails/facility, multi-purpose athletic fields, outdoor swimming pool, outdoor tennis courts, picnic shelters, and playgrounds are also relatively important (all with more than 50 percent of respondents indicating they are "very important"). A BMX bike course and Frisbee disc golf course were among the least important. (See Figure 16)

As done with the indoor facilities, respondents were also asked to indicate which of the potential outdoor facilities and amenities were the three most important to them and their household. Soft surface trails and paved trails emerged as the top priorities, with 11 percent of respondents listing soft surface trails as their number one priority and 38 percent of respondents listing it as one of their top three priorities. Sixteen percent of respondents listed paved trails as their number one priority and 31 percent of respondents listed it as one of their top three priorities. Similar to the previous ratings, other top priorities for outdoor facilities/amenities include a seasonal farmer's market space (29 percent), outdoor swimming pool (24 percent), and open space/natural areas (20 percent). (See Figure 17)

Figure 16
Importance of the following outdoor recreation facilities to be added, expanded, or improved

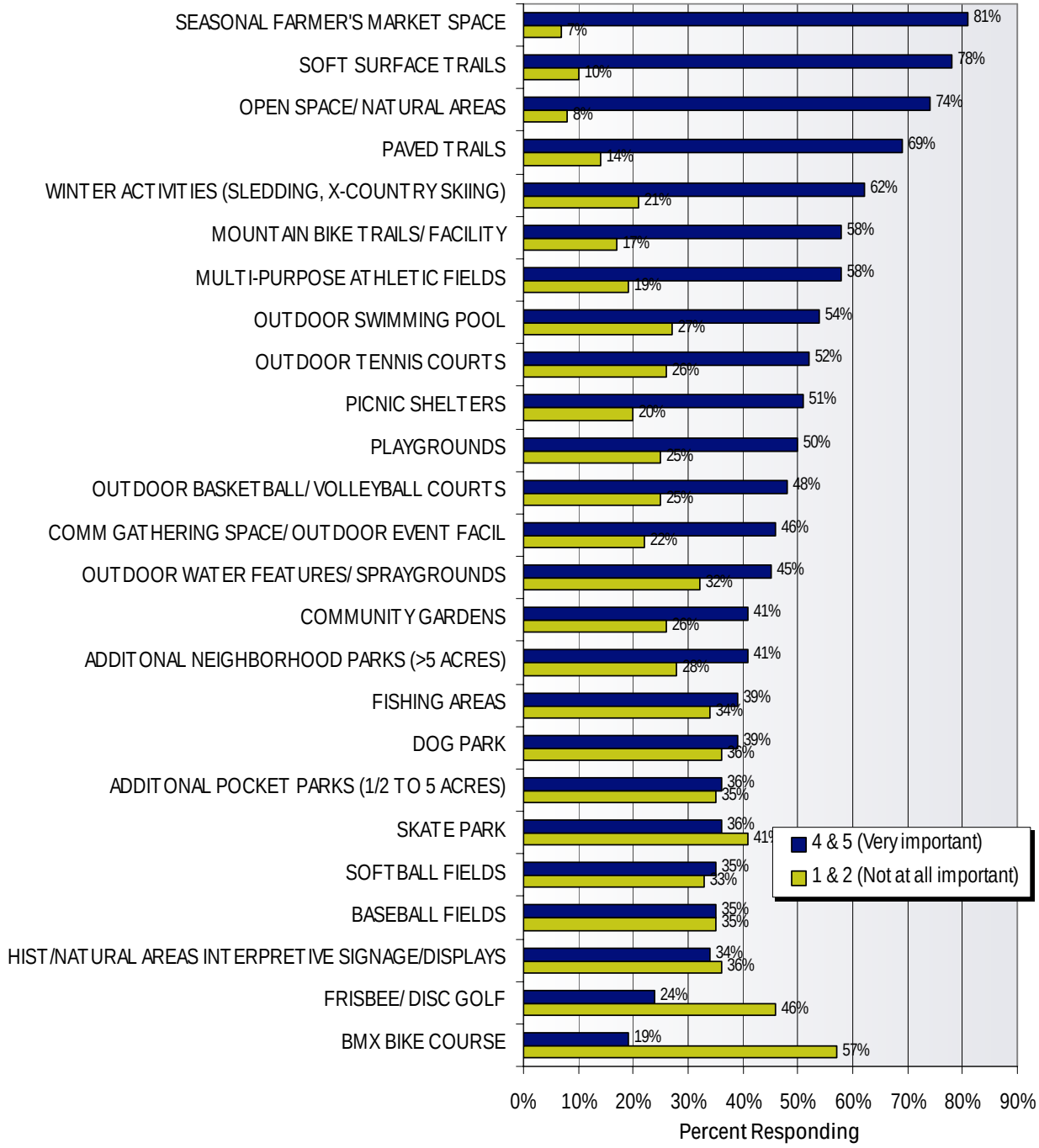
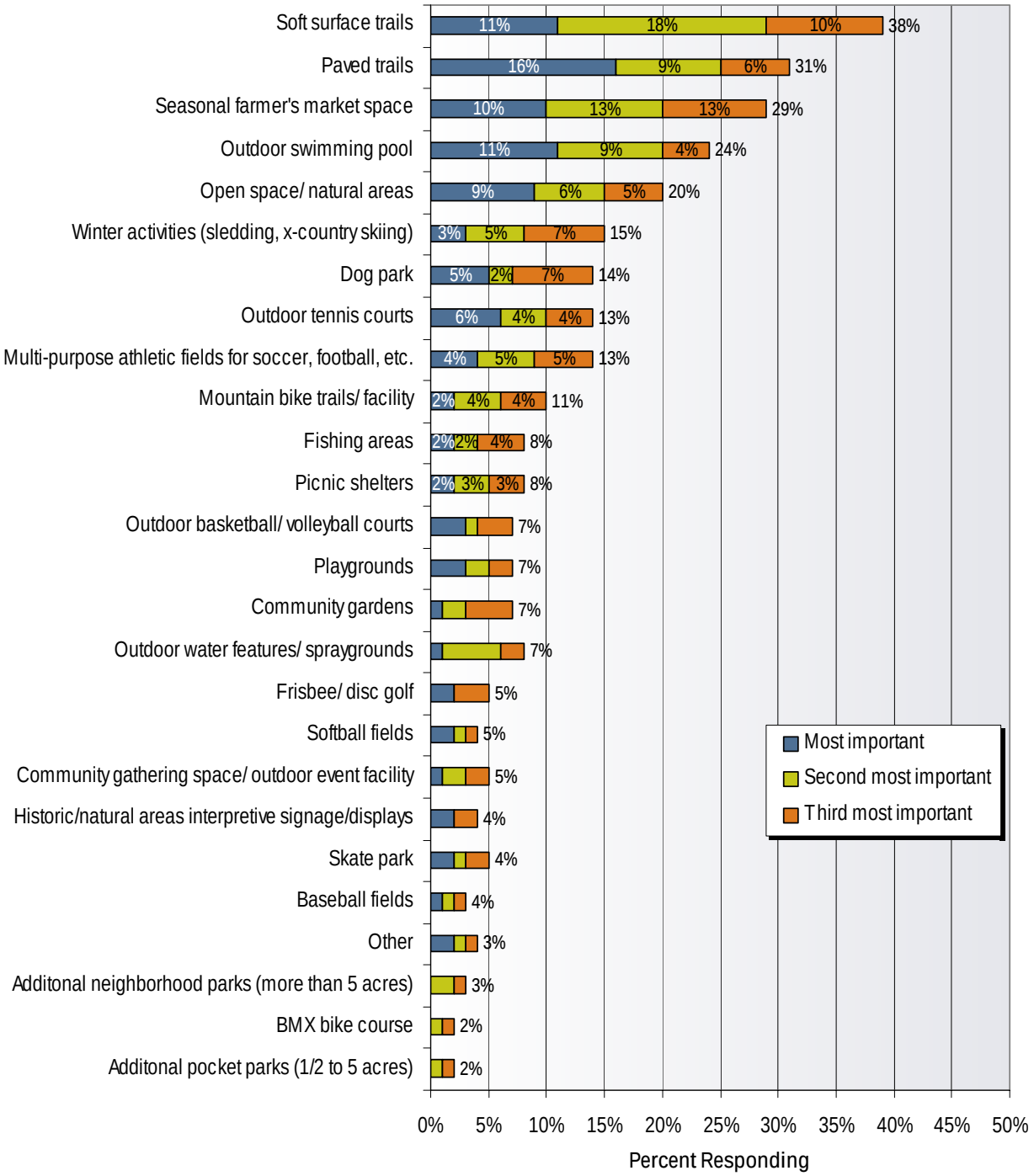


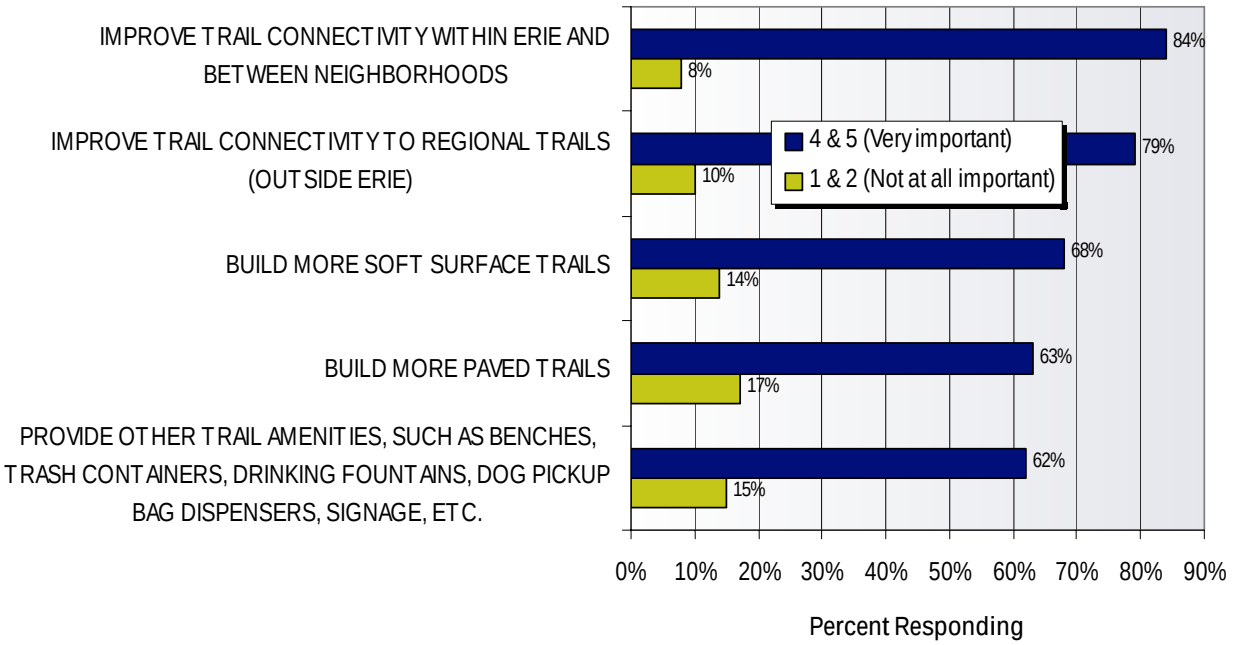
Figure 17
Most important outdoor facilities to be added, expanded, or improved
(Top 3 most important)



Trails and Open Space

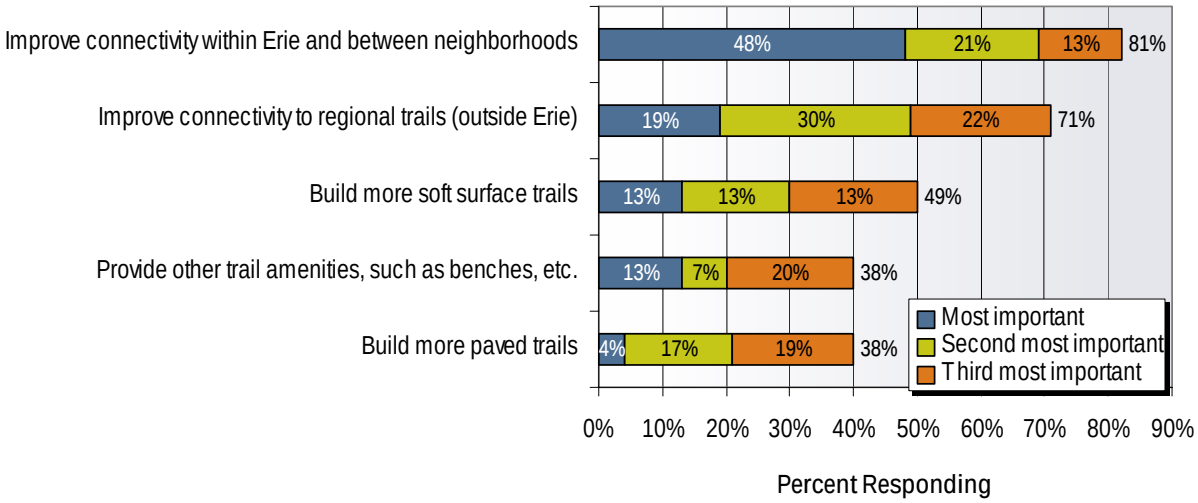
Trails. Respondents were asked to indicate how important various aspects of trail improvements in Erie are to them and their household. All five categories were relatively important to the respondents overall. "Improve trail connectivity within Erie and between neighborhoods" was most important to respondents (84 percent of respondents indicating it as a 4 or 5 "very important" on a 5-point scale), followed closely by "improve trail connectivity to regional trails outside Erie" (79 percent). As discussed in the previous section, the desire for soft surface trails is just slightly more important to respondents than hard surface trails.

Figure 18
With respect to trails, how important are the following to you and members of your household?



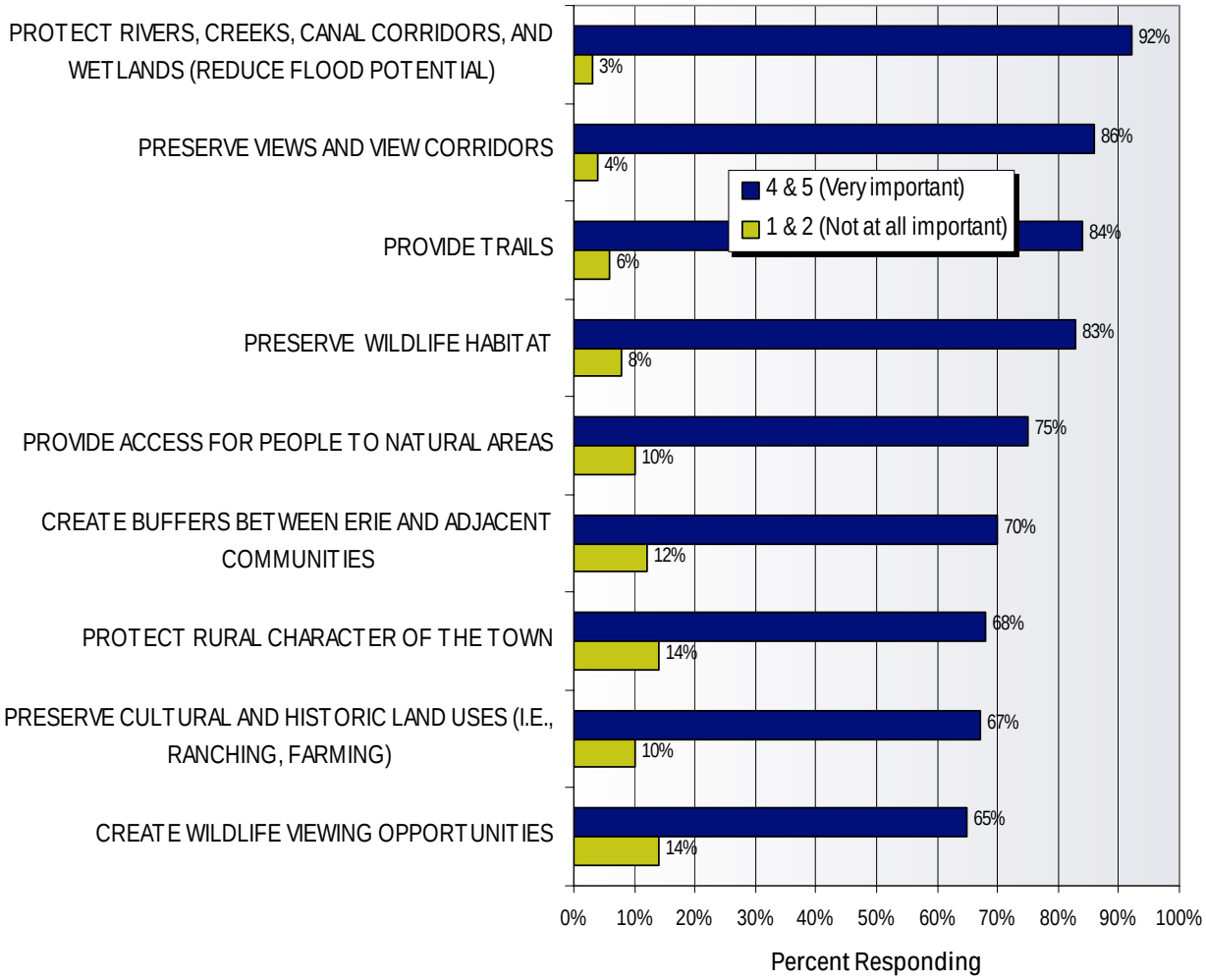
Since all categories were relatively important to respondents overall, it is useful to look at the prioritization of which categories respondents' selected as their top three. For the most part, the order did not change, but the top priorities become clearer, as shown in the following figure. "Improve connectivity within Erie and between neighborhoods" was the highest priority with 48 percent of respondents listing it as their number one priority and 81 percent listing it as one of their top three priorities. Also important was to "improve connectivity to regional trails (outside Erie)" with 19 percent of respondents listing it as their number one priority and 71 percent listing it as one of their top three priorities.

Figure 19
Most important aspects of trails (Top 3 most important)



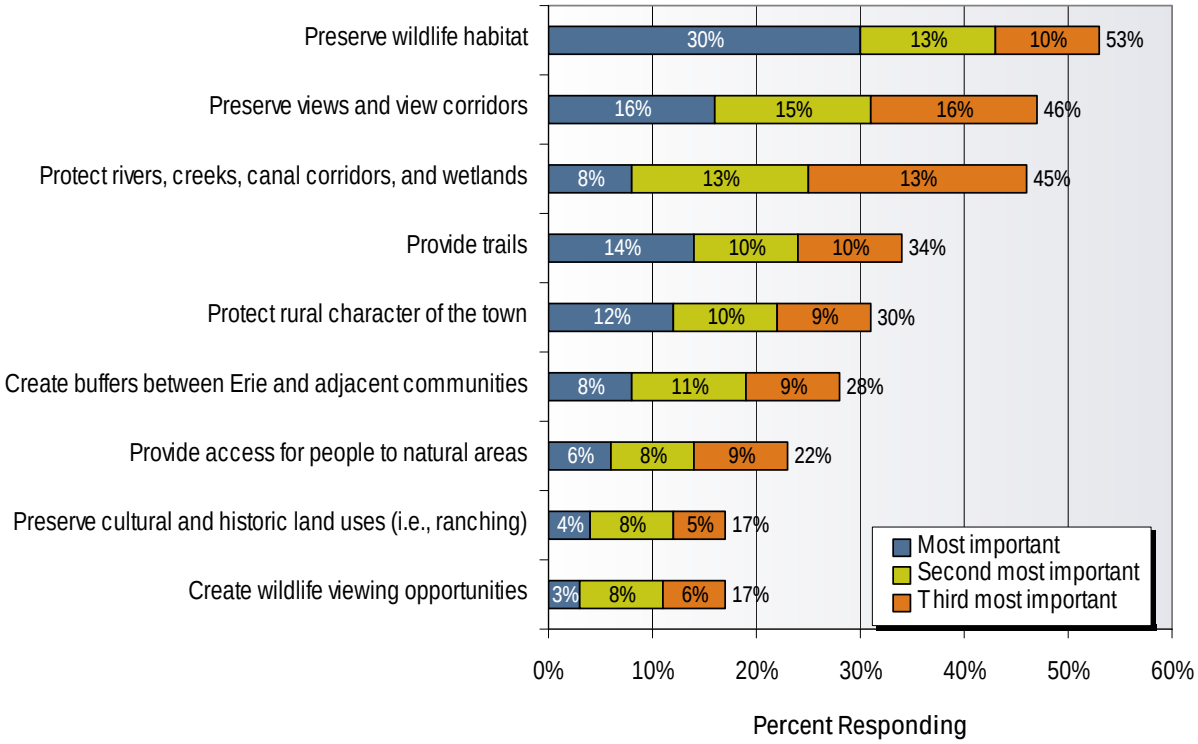
Open space. Respondents were also asked to indicate what they think the most important functions of open space are. As shown in the following figure, "protect rivers, creeks, canal corridors, and wetlands" was rated the highest (92 percent of respondents indicating it as a 4 or 5 "very important" on a 5-point scale), followed by "preserve views and view corridors" (86 percent), "provide trails" (84 percent), and "preserve wildlife habitat" (83 percent).

Figure 20
What do you think are the most important functions of open space?



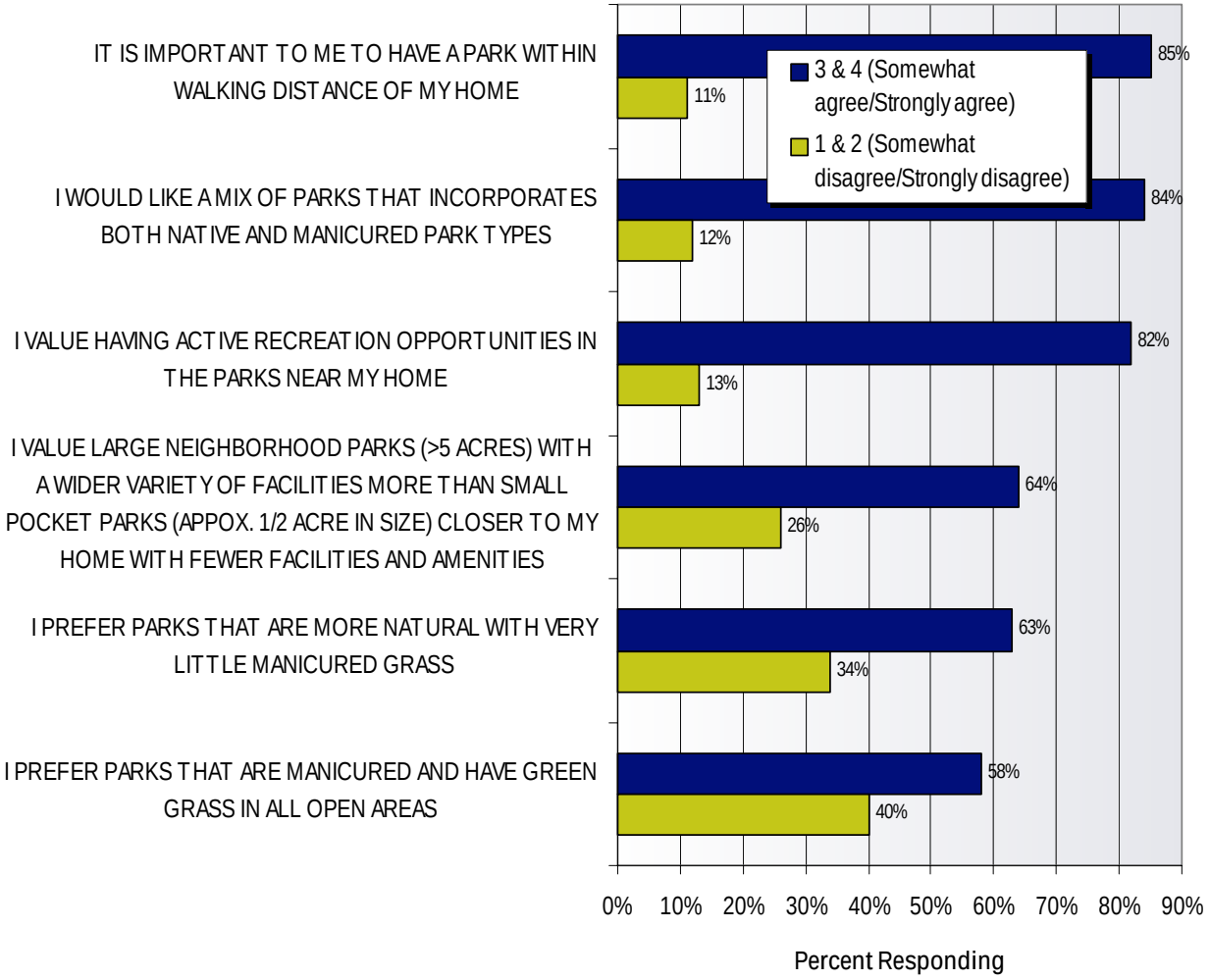
As done in previous sections, a follow-up question asked respondents to select their top three most important functions of open space from the same list. While the top four functions remained the same, they shifted somewhat in their order of importance. "Preserve wildlife habitat" emerged as the top priority (30 percent of respondents listing it as their number one priority and 53 percent listing it as one of their top three priorities). Next are "preserve views and view corridors" (46 percent), "protect rivers, creeks, canal corridors, and wetlands" (45 percent), and "provide trails" (34 percent).

Figure 21
Most important functions of open space
(Top 3 most important)



Parks and recreation values and preferences. The survey listed a number of statements regarding respondents' preferences and values for parks and recreation amenities, with which respondents were to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement. For a full list of the statements, refer to the following figure. Overall, respondents indicated a high level of agreement with statements pertaining to having a park within walking distance of their home (85 percent), a mix of parks that incorporates both native and manicured park types (84 percent), and active recreation opportunities in the parks near their homes (82 percent). Of lesser importance to respondents were parks that are manicured and have green grass in all open areas, and parks that are more natural with very little manicured grass.

Figure 22
Preferred Park Types (respondents' level of agreement with statements)

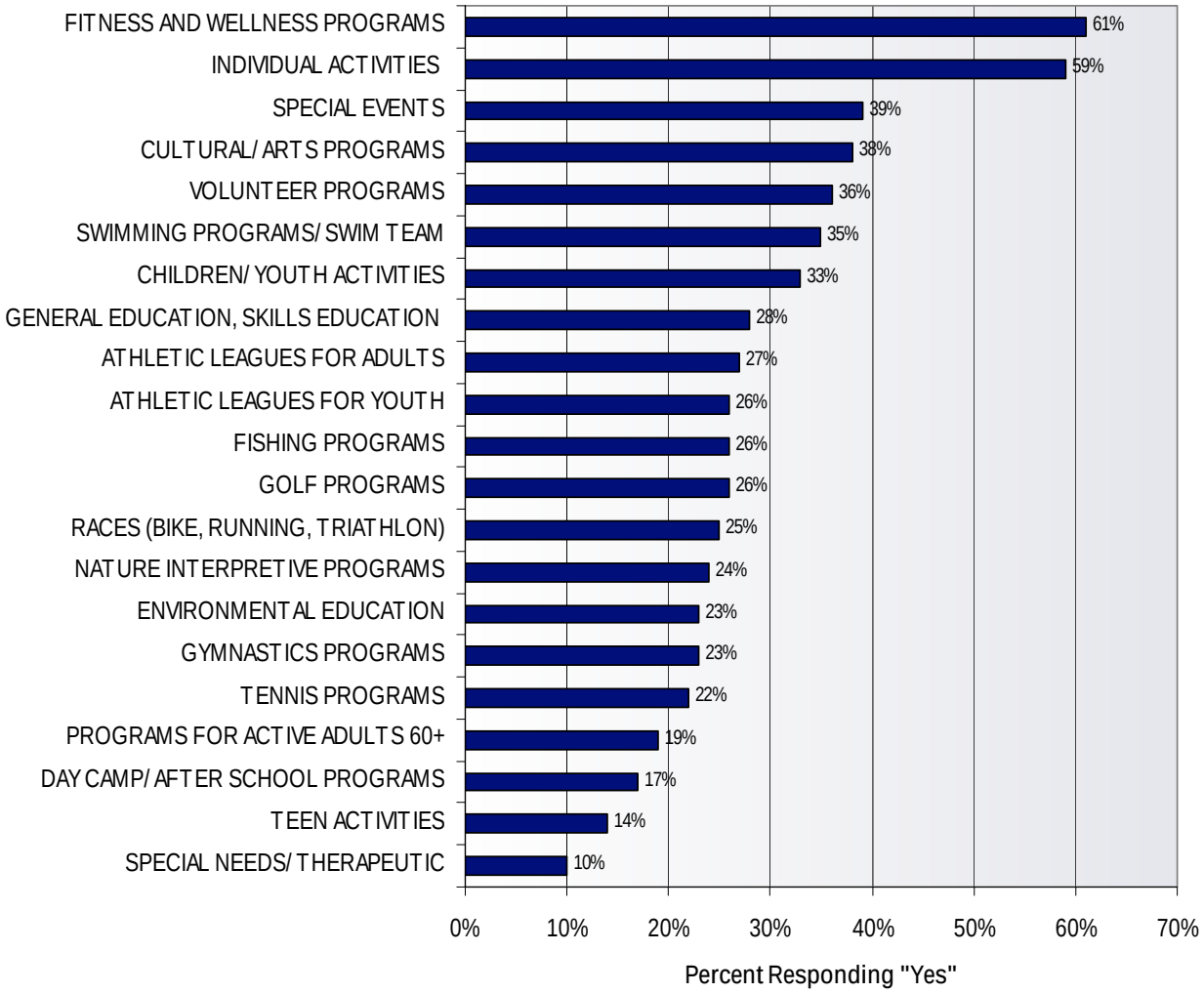


Programs, Activities, and Special Events

Programs and Activities. The survey listed a variety of programs, activities, and special events that are currently available in Erie and asked respondents to indicate for which ones their household has a need, then of the ones for which they have a need, how well those programs are meeting their needs.

As shown in the following figure, the programs and activities with the highest need include fitness and wellness programs (61 percent of households have a need) and individual activities (such as tennis, road biking, hiking, etc.) (59 percent of households). A second tier of programs and activities include special events, cultural/arts programs, volunteer programs, swimming programs/swim team, and children/youth activities (all with 33 to 39 percent of households expressing a need).

Figure 23
Does your household have a need for the following programs?



Of the respondents who indicated a need for each of these programs or activities, the level at which their need was being met was relatively low for most programs. Rated the highest was fitness and wellness programs with 50 percent of respondents indicating that 75 to 100 percent of their needs are being met. Special events (44 percent) and children/youth activities (34 percent) were the only other categories where a higher percentage of respondents indicated their needs were being met in comparison to the percent that indicated their needs are not being met (rating of 1 or 2, "0-25 percent of needs being met"), as shown in the figure below.

Figure 24
Of the programs your household has a need for, how well are your needs currently being met?

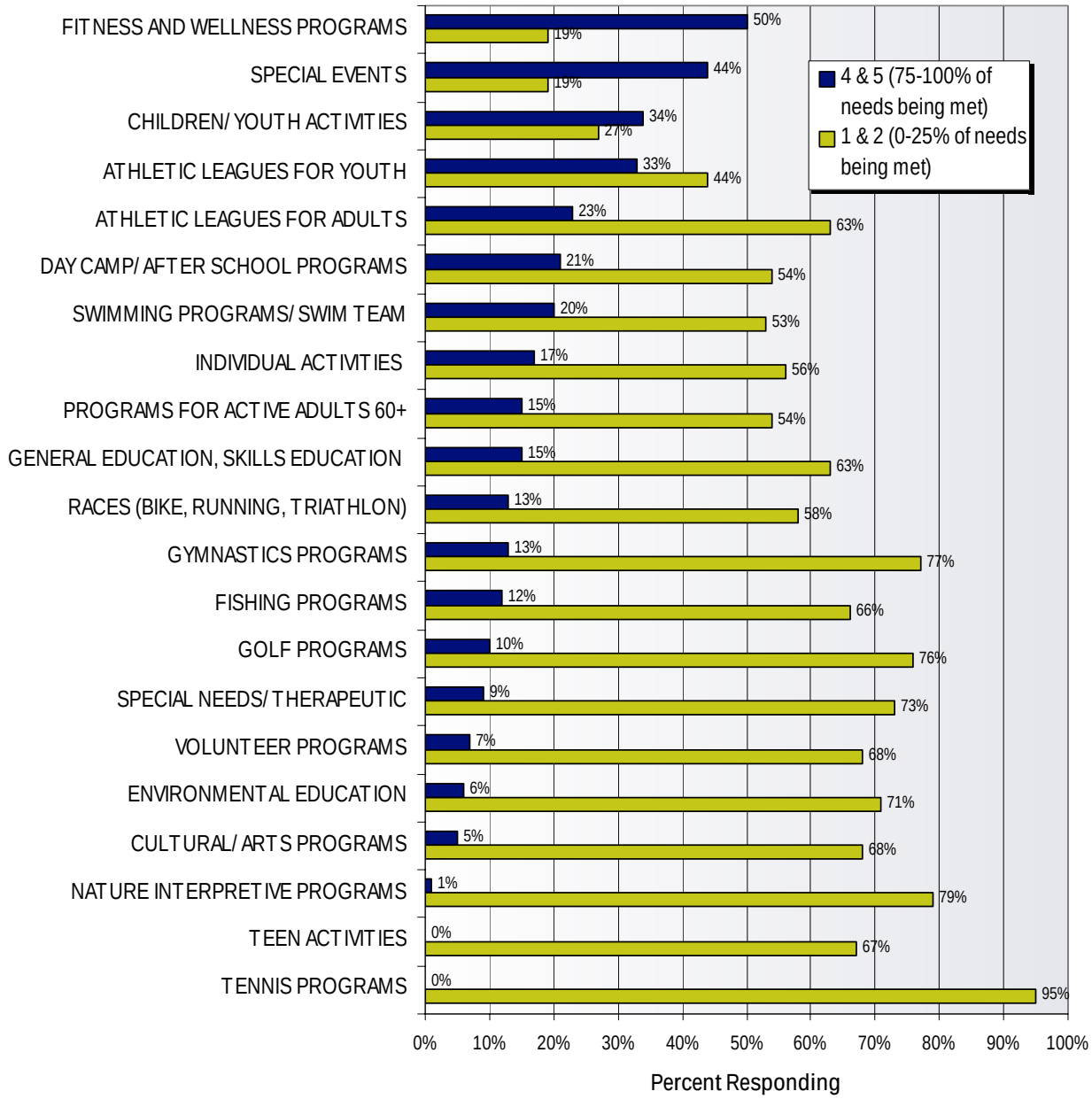
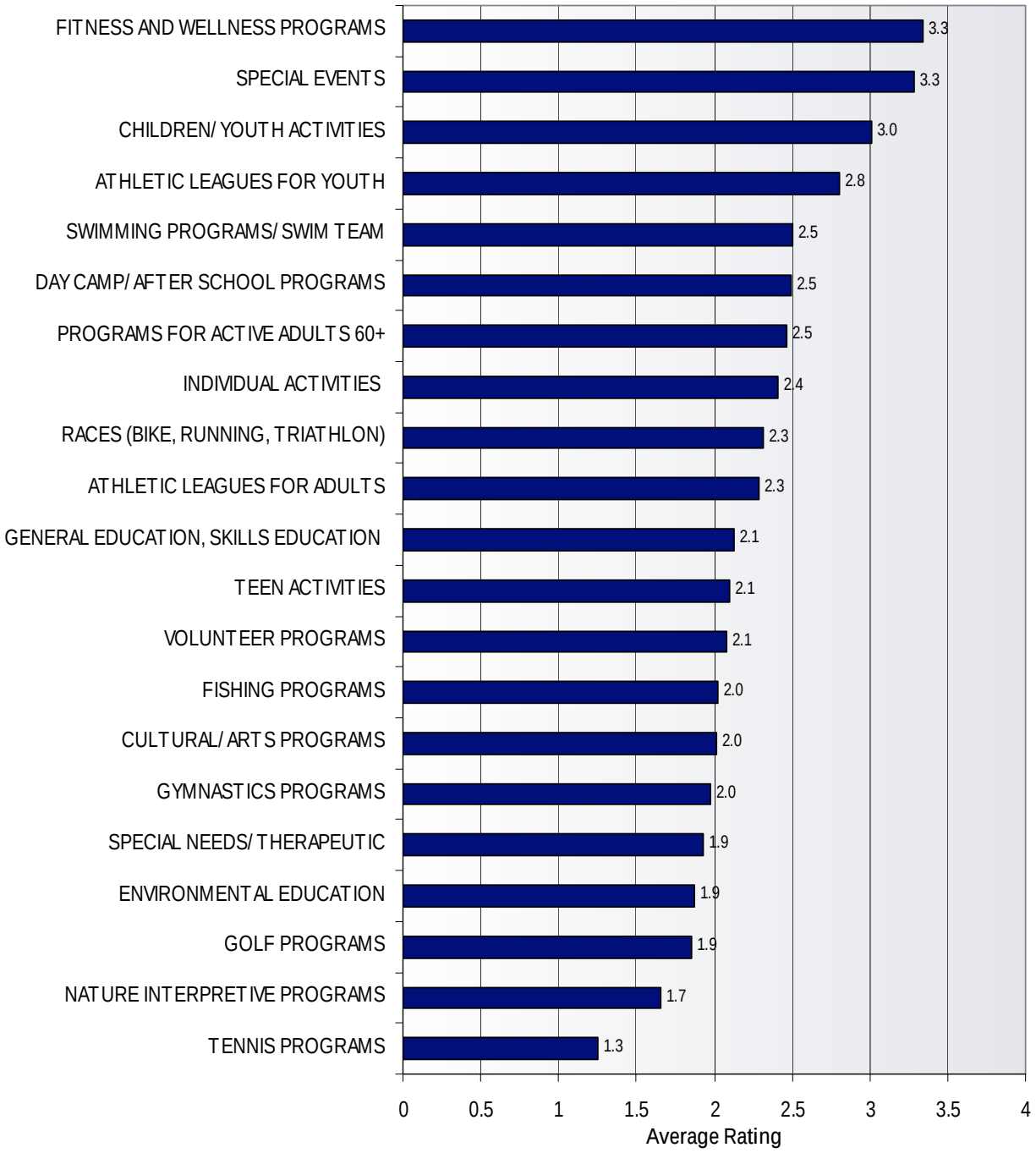


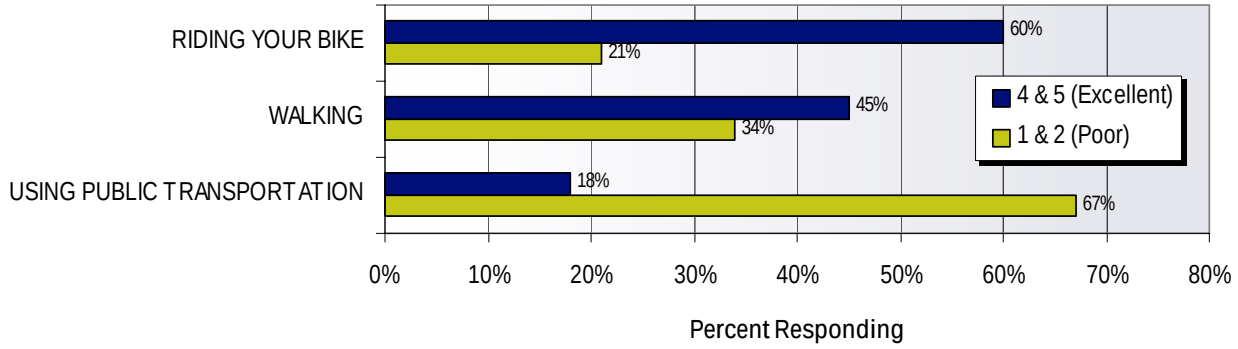
Figure 25
Of the programs your household has a need for, how well are your needs currently being met?
Average Rating (*1="0% of needs being met"; 2="25% of needs being met"; 3="50% of needs being met"; 4="75% of needs being met"; 5="100% of needs being met"*)



Transportation and Communication

Transportation. Respondents rated their ability to get to parks, recreation facilities, and programs in Erie using alternative means of transportation. Using a 1 to 5 scale (5 being "excellent" and 1 being "poor"), 60 percent of respondents rated their ability to ride their bike to a facility or program "excellent," while 45 percent rated their ability to walk as "excellent" (34 percent rated walking access as "poor"). Eighteen percent rated their ability to use public transportation "excellent" (67 percent rated public transportation as "poor").

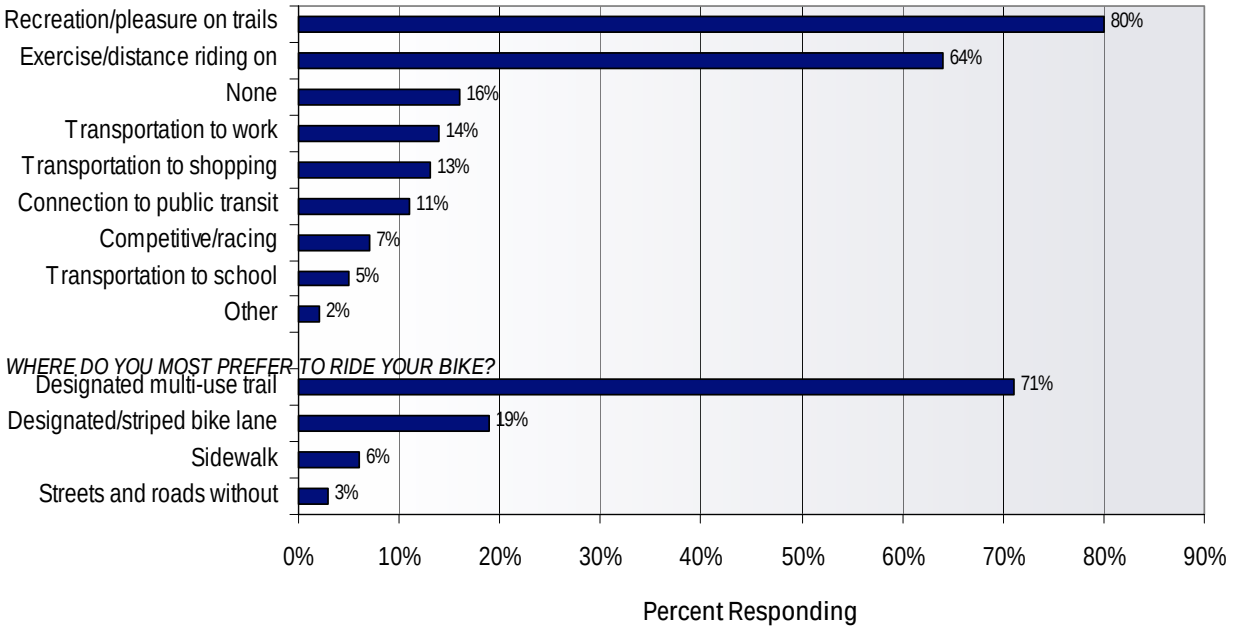
Figure 26
How would you rate your ability to get to parks, recreation, facilities, services, and programs in Erie by:



When asked if they had ridden a bike within the last 12 months and for what purposes, 84 percent indicated that they had ridden a bike. The reasons most cited for riding a bike included for recreation/pleasure on trails (80 percent) and exercise/distance riding on streets (64 percent). Other reasons included transportation to work, transportation to shopping, and connection to public transit (each indicated by 11 to 14 percent of respondents). When asked where they most prefer to ride their bike, the majority of respondents (71 percent) indicated "designated multi-use trails." A significant proportion (19 percent), however, prefer on-street bike lanes.

Figure 27
Bike riding frequency and characteristics

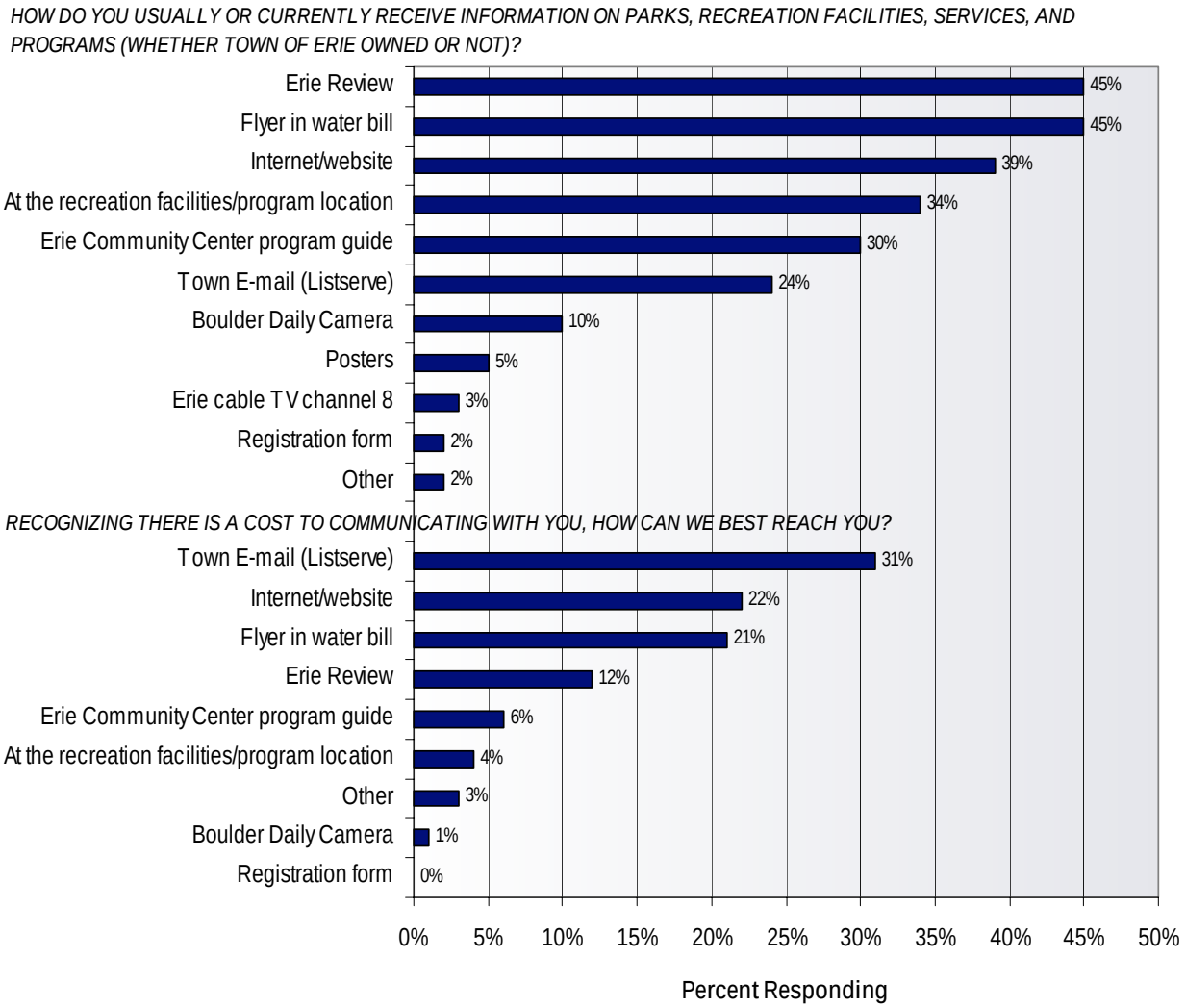
IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS, HAVE YOU OR MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD USED A BIKE FOR ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:



Communication. Almost half of respondents currently get information on recreation services and programs from the Erie Review (45 percent) and flyers in their water bill (45 percent). Other sources of information include Internet/websites (39 percent), information at the recreation facilities/program location (34 percent of respondents), Erie Community Center program guide (30 percent), and the Town e-mail listserve (24 percent).

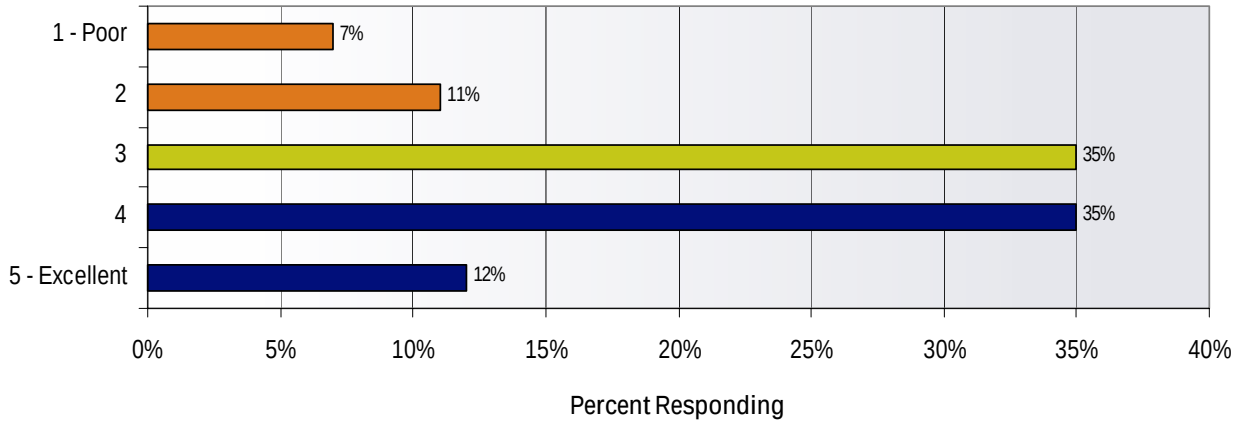
When asked how the Town can best communicate with them, Town e-mail listserve was mentioned the most (by 31 percent of respondents), followed by Internet/websites (22 percent), and flyers in the water bill (21 percent). Compared to the proportion currently receiving information through e-mail, the relatively large proportion of residents who would like to get their information through e-mail is notable, and poses a potential opportunity for the Town to explore improvements in future communications.

Figure 28
Communications



Respondents were asked to rate how good of a job the Town does in providing them with information about recreation facilities, parks, open space, trails, and programs. Overall, the average rating was 3.3 (on a 5-point scale), with 35 percent of respondents rating it as a "3," 35 percent rating it as a "4," and 12 percent rating it as a "5 – Excellent."

Figure 29
Overall, how good a job does the Town of Erie do providing you with information about recreation facilities, parks, open space, trails, and programs?

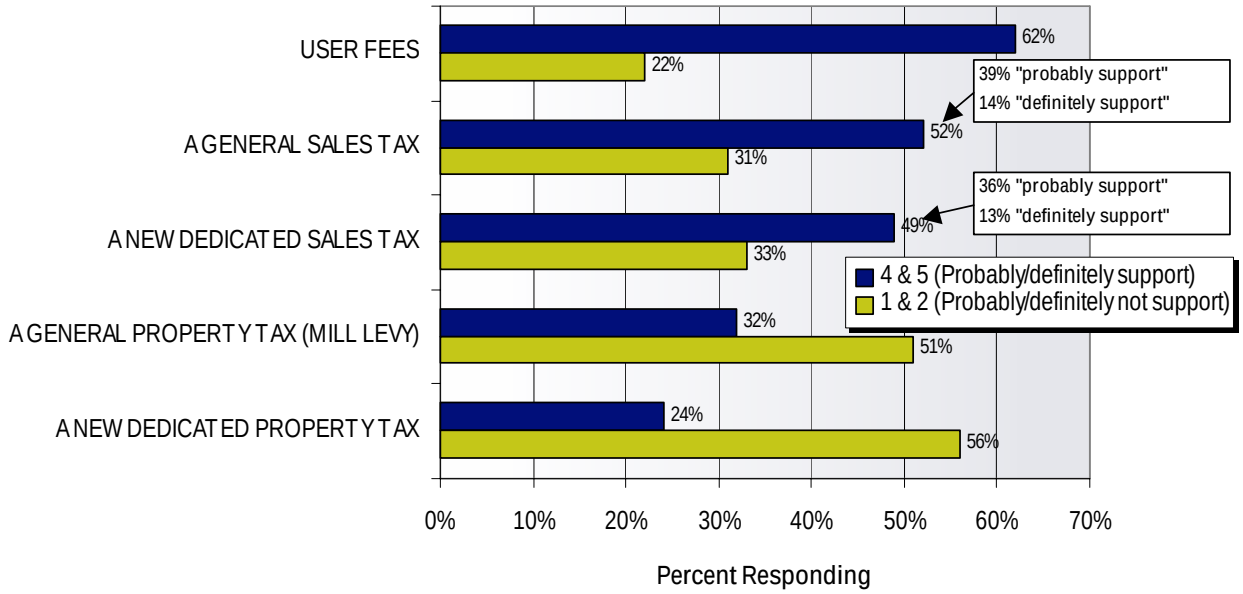


Financial Choices

It was explained in the survey that "the Town of Erie receives taxes, grants and impact fees from new development to build parks, recreation facilities, open space, and trails. Additional funds are required for the operations and maintenance of new facilities. User fees, grants, and donations offset some costs."

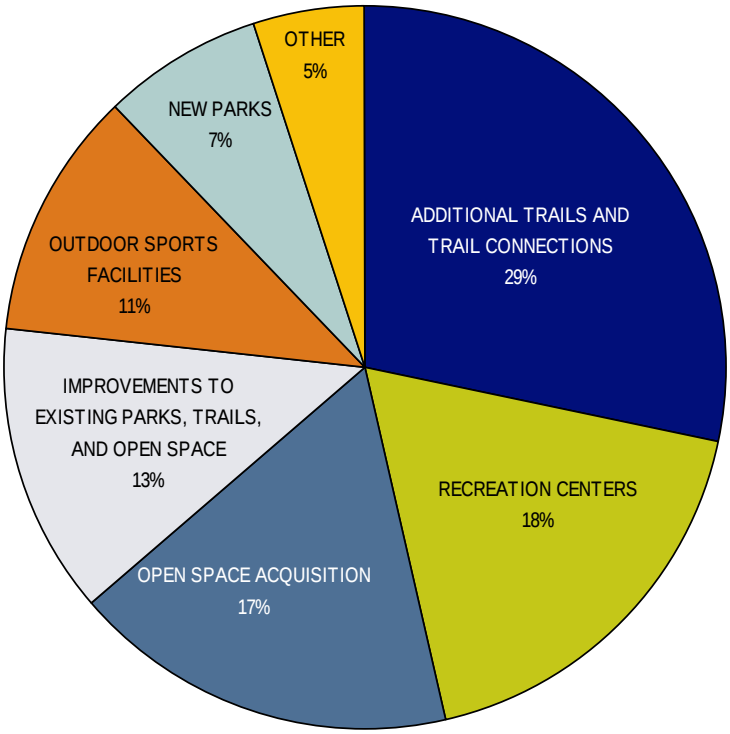
Respondents were then asked to what extent, if any, they would be willing to support a number of different funding mechanisms to fund operations and maintenance costs of new parks and recreation facilities, open space, trails, and programs in Erie in the future. Of the list of potential mechanisms (shown in the figure below), user fees has the strongest support, followed by the general sales tax (52 percent) and a possible new dedicated sales tax (49 percent), both of which had moderate support. At the same time, most of that support is "probable," with very few respondents indicating "definite" support of a sales tax to fund operations. Overall, respondents were largely not supportive of any kind of additional property tax.

Figure 30
Potential Funding Mechanisms



Priorities for budgeting department funds. As another broad measure of resident priorities, it was explained in the survey that "the Town of Erie Parks and Recreation Department develops and manages a variety of park and recreation services and facilities. If you were responsible for budgeting $100 of Department funds for new development or park improvement projects, how would you spend it?" As illustrated in the following figure, residents clearly distributed the greatest share to additional trails and trail connections—$29 or 29% of their total $100 allocation. Allocations to other categories include recreation centers ($18), open space acquisition ($17), improvements to existing parks, trails, and open space ($13), outdoor sports facilities ($11), new parks ($7), and other facilities ($5). Included in the "other" category were a number of written-in suggestions, including bike lanes, dog parks, and an outdoor pool.

Figure 31
Allocation of department funds



Comparison of Open-link Web Survey Results

The results from the open-link web survey were analyzed separately in order to maintain the representative sample of the mail and invite web responses. For the most part, open-link responses were very similar to the mail and invite-web responses. A few differences were seen in the data, which are summarized in the following key observations. It is important to keep in mind that the open-link web responses represent a small proportion of the total surveys received (43 open-link web surveys were completed, representing approximately 9 percent of the total surveys), and therefore do not represent a majority of the community opinion, but are worth noting.

Overall, open-link respondents use the facilities, trails, and open space available in Erie noticeably more than the random sample respondents. Along these same lines, they also place a higher importance on the availability of recreation facilities, trails, and open space in the community. Not surprisingly, open-link respondents are the ones who use the amenities more, have a greater need for them, but have a similar or lower level of satisfaction with how well the same facilities are meeting the needs of the community. When asked what facilities, services, and programs were most in need of improvement, random sample respondents indicated that they were “not aware of programs/facilities offered” and that there is a “lack of facilities and amenities,” while open-link respondents indicated that the facilities “don’t have the programs I want” and that there is a “lack of facilities and amenities,” indicating that, for the most part, open-link respondents are aware of the programs and facilities offered, they are just not as satisfied with what is available.

In regards specifically to the Erie Community Center, open-link respondents were less likely to feel “pricing and user fees” were the aspect most in need of improvement (like the random sample respondents), but felt the “lap pool” and “hours of operation” were the most in need of improvement. When asked what will be the greatest needs for indoor facilities in Erie in the next 5 to 10 years, open-link respondents indicated a high importance for additional fitness class space and additional weight room and cardio fitness space.

Overall, open-link respondents were much more supportive of each financial mechanism listed to fund operations and maintenance costs of new parks and recreation facilities, open space, trails, and programs in Erie in the future.

As would be expected, open-link respondents tend to more often get their information from websites and email currently, and would most prefer to receive information through Town emails (listserve) in the future.

Appendix B – Community Input Summary

Two public meetings and two focus groups were held during September and October 2008 to obtain public input for the Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan. A total of 47 individuals attended the public meetings and eight stakeholders attended the focus groups. Participants were asked to discuss key strengths, issues, and opportunities for parks, recreation, open space, and trails in the Town of Erie. These meetings were held at the Erie Community Center. Below is a summary of comments from these meetings.

Public Meeting and Focus Group Questions

Key Strengths

Public Meetings Summary

- State-of-the-art Community Center
- Wildlife
- Plan for spine trail system
- Open spaces and rural character
- Existing horse trails
- No major roads cutting through Town
- Proactive about growth
- Strong sense of community
- Lots of trails and open space, parks in every neighborhood
- Arbor committee
- Bus service
- Reservoirs
- Linear park alignment from railroad - opportunity for connections
- Rec center provides sports that school doesn't
- Pet friendly area

Focus Groups Summary

- Existing parks, Community Center
- Location of Community Center
- Time to get creative with potential development and plan for future residents
- Strong commitment to parks, recreation, open space, and trails
- A lot of open space still

Needed Improvements (Weaknesses)

Public Meetings Summary

- Knowledge of spine trail
- Connections to surrounding communities
- Trail to high school
- Dog park needed
- Add soft surface to old trails; mixed-use trails
- Benches along trails
- New skate park
- Trail system connectivity
- Need outdoor pool and space for swim teams

- Medians could be landscaped
- Rail-to-trail connection to Boulder
- Hillside between Old Town and cemetery needs to be preserved
- Need courts, team sport facilities, etc.
- Access to existing open space areas
- Prairie dog issues
- Need additional programs (e.g. gymnastics, adult sports, tennis)
- Child care at center is at capacity
- Off school day care for 6-8 year olds

Focus Groups Summary

- Trail money used for sidewalks –delineate what is a sidewalk and what is really a trail
- Definition of open space and conservation in Erie
- Utilization of space at Community Center – free usage for residents; cost recovery issues
- Need for collaborations to satisfy different interest groups

A. *Other non-Town facilities and programs used:*

- Skate Parks in Longmont and Boulder
- Regional trails
- Outdoor gathering areas (e.g. Pearl Street mall in Boulder)
- Parks and trails in neighboring communities
- Baseball fields
- Shooting range

B. *Gaps in parks or recreation facilities/services:*

- Gymnastics
- Nowhere for distance bike riding
- Hockey
- Soccer and soccer fields
- Transportation issues for seniors
- Athletics for middle school – recreational opportunities
- Ballfields
- Public tennis courts

Opportunities

Programs

Public Meetings Summary

- Lacrosse
- Arts
- Permanent gymnastics
- Multi-venue sports complex (indoor/outdoor)
- Adult dance
- Concert series earlier in evening
- Movies in the park or film series

Focus Groups Summary

- Add fall soccer – currently going to Lafayette

Indoor Facilities

Public Meetings Summary

- Gymnastics space
- Competitive pool

Focus Groups Summary

- Identify plots of land for future recreation opportunities (e.g. destination recreation facilities along I-25 corridor)
- Basketball courts (Erie Community Center will help)
- Gymnastics space
- Competitive swimming pool

Outdoor Facilities

Public Meetings Summary

- Dog park
- Public gardens
- Campsites
- Stock reservoirs with fish
- Technical trail – once landfill closes
- Sledding hills
- Cross country skiing
- Outdoor aquatic center (Broomfield Bay)
- Put Erie on map as athletic town
- Lacrosse
- Amphitheatre
- Farmer's market
- Archery
- Shooting range (gun safety)
- Coal Creek improvements – benches, sculptures (like Golden)
- Multi-purpose areas (Boulder Park)
- Skate park
- Competition pool

Focus Groups Summary

- Public tennis court
- Ballfields (lighted to maximize field use)
- Soccer fields
- Sports complex
- Outdoor pool
- Outdoor concert venue/amphitheatre
- Public art

Trails and Open Space

Public Meetings Summary

- Keep views to mountain
- Large bike park (such as in Boulder)
- Access to Coal Creek Community Park
- Ditch roads could become trails

Focus Groups Summary

- Natural trails; soft surface; crushed granite
- Identify land for open space
- Expand on trails
- Designate significant areas (wildlife, historic…)
- More benches

Other

Public Meetings Summary

- Business recreation
- Keep hot air balloons in area

Focus Groups Summary

- Identify directives for planning and development; fees-in-lieu of land dedication
- Know the rules up front – provide stability for developers
- Understand Town goals so developers can incorporate into development plans

Potential Partnerships

Public Meetings Summary

- Partnership with gun club
- Partner with other communities on trail connectivity
- Businesses; Chamber of Commerce, etc.
- Residential developers
- Softball associations
- Schools
- Sport businesses
- Churches
- Schools
- Anthem development
- Excel – provide money for pool
- Boulder County Open Space
- Reclamation funds from companies
- Alternative energy companies
- Gravel mine north of Town
- Landowners for trail easements, etc.

Focus Groups Summary

- Schools
- Private/public ice rinks
- Emergency services (e.g. safety training/education)
- Historical Society – Wise Museum; stage coach building
- Artists
- Art Festival
- Other municipalities
- Youth sports groups
- Local hospitals
- Silver Sneakers

Key issues

Public Meetings Summary

- Keep views of mountains
- Minimize light pollution
- Preserve rural, small town character
- Preserve natural and open space areas
- Wildlife preservation
- Balance land uses
- Fiscal responsibility
- Educate about heritage and mining background
- Natural surface water is an asset to build on
- Smart Growth
- Town is disjointed and needs greater sense of community
- Keep kids and families a priority
- More publicity and education about recycling

Focus Groups Summary

- Open space – growth or no growth; how it's done
- Plan for activities for growing population
- Ongoing connection with community/constant outreach
- Retirement facilities coming in near Community Center; plan for older adults
- Get kids to participate in feedback process
- Connectivity
- Promote coal mining heritage – signage
- Sport facilities for all ages
- Dog park
- Community identity and signage; hard to find Town

Financial Support

Public Meetings Summary

- Arbor committee funds
- Grants
- Foundations – Gates, etc.
- Get HOA's together as a way to develop sense of community

- Partnerships with energy companies, others
- Volunteers
- Fundraisers
- User fees

Focus Groups Summary

- Business partnerships – Conoco Phillips coming in
- State soccer association; US Soccer Federation grants
- Grants for the arts
- User fees – resident and non-resident fees
- Property tax for open space, parks, and trails

Appendix C – Alternative Providers

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Town of Erie Alternative Providers Matrix

Alternative Provider	Address	Private/Public/ Private Non Profit/HOA	Who do they serve? What is their niche?	Notes
Lifetime Fitness	I-25 & Hwy 7 Westminster	Private	All	400 pieces of CV and resistance equipment, group exercise, cycling, Pilates and yoga studios, trainers adult and youth programs, indoor rock cavern, two full-size basketball courts, and dry saunas. Indoor and outdoor water parks, interactive child center, LifeSpa
City of Louisville Louisville Recreation /Senior Center	900 W. Via Appia Way Louisville,CO 80027	Public	All	fitness equipment, aerobics room, double gym, gymnastics, volleyball, tennis, basketball, pool, multipurposeclassroom, senior area
City of Lafayette Bob L. Burger Recreation Center	111 W. Baseline Road, Lafayette, CO 80026	Public	All	child care, fitness equipment, indoor track, spinning, gym, leisure pool, lap pool, dry sauna, steam room, hot tub, multipurpose room, racquetball courts, seniors at different location, Silver Sneakers
	310 Quail Road Longmont, CO 80501	Public	All	child care, fitness area, indoor track, spinning, aerobics room, 6-lane lap pool, leisure pool, spa, steam room and sauna, multi purpose room, seniors in different location, climbing wall
Broomfield Parks and Recreation	13201 Lowell Blvd Broomfield, CO	Public	All	gym, indoor pool, teen room, multi purpose rooms, senior area, small fitness area.
Broomfield Bay	250 Lamar Street Broomfield, CO	Public	Aquatics	outdoor leisure pool
City of Brighton Brighton Recreation Center	555 N.11th Avenue Brighton, CO 80601	Public	All	fitness room, aerobic room, indoor pool, indoor track bday party room, multi-purpose room, racquetball courts childcare, pro shop, senior center in different bldg., Silver Sneakers
Anthem Highlands	Between Lowell & Sheridan Blvd off HWY 7	HOA	All	fitness, aquatics, parks, rec center trails, ballfields, tennishomeowners only, fitness center, programs, pool, gymnasium, mulit-purpose rooms

Town of Erie Alternative Providers Matrix

24 Hour Fitness Broomfield	4650 W. 120th Ave. Broomfield, CO 80020	Private	Fitness	child care, fitness classes, 3-lane pool, BB court, group fitness, pool, sauna, steam room, spa, volleyball, cardio theatre, coin collect lockers
24 Hour Fitness Thornton Express	3750 E. 120th Thornton, CO 80233	Private	Fitness	child care, fitness classes, group fitness
Anytime Fitness Vista Ridge	3160 Village Vista Drive Erie, CO 80516	Private	Fitness	fitness classes, cardio equipment and Cardio Theater, free weights, group fitness
Boulder Valley YMCA Boulder	2850 Mapleton Avenue Boulder CO 80301	Non Profit	All	summer camps, after school care, no school program, parents night out, aerobics, fitness center, hot tub, 25 yard-4 lane indoor heated pool, spray park outside indoor pool, indoor track, indoor cycling studio, rqcquet courts, sauna, spirit, mind, body studio, Cardio Theatre, Silver Sneakers
Boulder Valley YMCA Lafayette	2800 Dagny Way Lafayette CO 80026	Non Profit	All and ICE	summer camps, no school programs, parents night out, child care, after school care, aerobics, BMX track, fitness centers, gym, ice rink, indoor cycling studio, indoor track, outdoor track,turf field, Cardio theatre, Silver Sneakers
Ed and Ruth Lehman YMCA Longmont	950 Lashley St , Longmont, CO 80501	Non Profit	All	child care, before and after child care, out of school programs, fitness equipment, 2 full sized gyms, yoga studio, 8-lane lap pool, multi purpose room, racquetball courts, seniors at different location
Carbon Valley Carbon Valley Recreation Center	701 5th Street Frederick, CO 80530	Public	All	child care, lap pool, hot tub, steam room, leisure pool, multi purpose room, raquetball court, seniors in different bldg.
Curves - Erie	515 Briggs Street Erie, CO 80516	Private	Fitness	fitness equipment, only
Fitness 19	297 N. Hwy 287 #101 Lafayette, CO 80026	Private	Fitness	fitness equipment, childcare

Town of Erie Alternative Providers Matrix

Vista Ridge Community Center	2750 Vista Parkway Erie, CO 80516	HOA	Golf, aquatics, parks, fitness, tennis	must be homeowner, multi purpose rooms, pavillion area, limited fitness equipment, outdoor, leisure pool lap pool
Extreme Gymnastics	555 Aspen Ridge Drive, Unit F, Lafayette, CO 80026, and 2645 Industrial Lane Broomfield, CO 80020	Private	Gymnastics	Gymnastics, cheerleading, camps, birthday parties
Rich's Tennis School	710 Austin Ave Erie, CO 80516	Private	Tennis	Indoor tennis courts, tennis lessons
Leonard's Golf - Indoors	710 Austin Ave Erie, CO 80516	Private	Golf	Indoor driving range, putting surface, simulated golf courses
Green Mill Sportsman's Club	2490 Weld County Rd. 3 Erie, CO 80516	Private	Shooting Sports	Indoor range for all types of shooting sports for youth and adult
Arapahoe Ridge	1750 Powell Street, Erie, CO	HOA	Tot Lot Pool	outdoor pool, kids program, limited programs fitness equipment

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Appendix D - GRASP® History and Level of Service Methodology

A. Level of Service Analysis

Analysis of the existing parks, open space, trails, and recreation systems are often conducted in order to assess how the systems are serving the public. A Level of Service (LOS) has been typically defined in parks and recreation master plans as the capacity of the various components and facilities that make up the system to meet the needs of the public. This is often expressed in terms of the size or quantity of a given facility per unit of population.

Brief History of Level of Service Analysis
In order to help standardize parks and recreation planning, universities, agencies and parks and recreation professionals have long been looking for ways to benchmark and provide "national standards" for measurements including: how much acreage, how many ballfields, pools, playgrounds, etc., a community *should* have. As examples, in 1906 the fledgling "Playground Association of America" called for playground space equal to 30 square feet per child. In the 1970's and early 1980's, the first detailed published works on these topics began emerging (Gold, 1973, Lancaster, 1983). In time "rule of thumb" **capacity** ratios emerged with 10 acres of parklands per thousand population becoming the most widely accepted standard application. Other normative guides also have been cited as "traditional standards," but have been less widely accepted. In 1983, Roger Lancaster compiled a book called, "Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines," that was published by the National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA). In this publication, Mr. Lancaster centered on a recommendation "that a park system, at minimum, be composed of a core system of parklands, with a total of 6.25 to 10.5 acres of developed open space per 1,000 population" (Lancaster, 1983, p. 56). The guidelines went further to make recommendations regarding an appropriate mix of park types, sizes, service areas, and acreages, and standards regarding the number of available recreational facilities per thousand population. While the book was published by NRPA and the table of standards became widely known as "the NRPA standards," for Level of Service Analysis, **it is important to note that these standards were never formally adopted for use by NRPA**.

Since that time, various publications have updated and expanded upon possible "standards," several of which have also been published by NRPA. Many of these publications did benchmarking and other normative research to determine what an "average LOS" should be. It is important to note that NRPA and the prestigious American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, as organizations, have focused in recent years on accreditation standards for agencies, which are less directed towards outputs, outcomes and performance, and more on planning, organizational structure, and management processes. The following table gives some of the more commonly and historically used "capacity standards."

Common Historically-Referenced LOS Capacity "Standards"

Activity/ Facility	Recommended Space Requirements	Service Radius and Location Notes	Number of Units per Population
Baseball Official Little League	3.0 to 3.85 acre minimum 1.2 acre minimum	¼ to ½ mile Unlighted part of neighborhood complex; lighted fields part of community complex	1 per 5,000; lighted 1 per 30,000
Basketball Youth High school	2,400 – 3,036 vs. 5,040 – 7,280 s.f.	¼ to ½ mile Usually in school, recreation center or church facility; safe walking or bide access; outdoor courts in neighborhood and community parks, plus active recreation areas in other park settings	1 per 5,000
Football	Minimum 1.5 acres	15 – 30 minute travel time Usually part of sports complex in community park or adjacent to school	1 per 20,000
Soccer	1.7 to 2.1 acres	1 to 2 miles Youth soccer on smaller fields adjacent to larger soccer fields or neighborhood parks	1 per 10,000
Softball	1.5 to 2.0 acres	¼ to ½ mile May also be used for youth baseball	1 per 5,000 (if also used for youth baseball)
Swimming Pools	Varies on size of pool & amenities; usually ½ to 2-acre site	15 – 30 minutes travel time Pools for general community use should be planned for teaching, competitive & recreational purposes with enough depth (3.4m) to accommodate 1m to 3m diving boards; located in community park or school site	1 per 20,000 (pools should accommodate 3% to 5% of total population at a time)
Tennis	Minimum of 7,200 s.f. single court area (2 acres per complex	¼ to ½ mile Best in groups of 2 to 4 courts; located in neighborhood community park or near school site	1 court per 2,000
Volleyball	Minimum 4,000 s.f.	½ to 1 mile Usually in school, recreation center or church facility; safe walking or bide access; outdoor courts in neighborhood and community parks, plus active recreation areas in other park settings	1 court per 5,000
Total land Acreage		Various types of parks - mini, neighborhood, community, regional, conservation, etc.	10 acres per 1,000

Sources:

David N. Ammons, Municipal Benchmarks - Assessing Local Performance and Establishing Community Standards, 2nd Ed., 2002

Roger A. Lancaster (Ed.), *Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines* (Alexandria, VA: National Recreation and Park Association, 1983), pp. 56-57.

James D. Mertes and James R. Hall, *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenways* Guidelines, (Alexandria, VA: National Recreation and Park Association, 1996), pp. 94-103.

In conducting planning work, it is important to realize that the above standards can be valuable when referenced as "norms" for capacity, but not necessarily as the target standards for which a community should strive. Each community is different and there are many varying factors, which are not addressed by the standards above. For example:

- Does "developed acreage" include golf courses? What about indoor and passive facilities?
- What are the standards for skateparks? Ice Arenas? Public Art? Etc.?
- What if it is an urban land-locked community? What if it is a small town surrounded by open Federal lands?
- What about quality and condition? What if there are a lot of ballfields, but they haven't been maintained in the last ten years?
- And many other questions….

B. GRASP® Composite-Values Level of Service Analysis

In order to address these and other relevant questions, a new methodology for determining Level of Service was developed. It is called a **Composite-Values Methodology** and has been applied in many communities across the nation since 2001, to provide a better way of measuring and portraying the service provided by parks and recreation systems. Primary research and development for this methodology was conducted jointly by GreenPlay, LLC, a management consulting firm for parks, open space and related agencies, Design Concepts, a landscape architecture and planning firm, and Geowest, a spatial information management firm. While Composite-Values Methodology can be utilized by anyone, the proprietary trademarked name for the composite-values methodology **process** that these three firms use is called **GRASP® (Geo-Referenced Amenities Standards Process).** The **GRASP®** methodology for analysis is proprietary, but the software used is common and typical for most agencies, and the data and information collected is owned and can be updated and managed by the agency for ongoing usage.

For this methodology, capacity is only part of the LOS equation. Other factors are brought into consideration, including *quality*, *condition*, *location*, *comfort*, *convenience*, and *ambience*. To create a GRASP® inventory and analysis, parks, trails, recreation, open space and any other relevant amenities and properties being studied are looked at as part of an overall infrastructure for a community made up of various components, such as playgrounds, multi-purpose fields, passive areas, etc. The methodology inventories characteristics that are part of the context and setting of a component. They are not characteristics of the component itself, but when they exist in proximity to a component they enhance the value of the component.

The characteristics of components include:

Quality – The service provided by anything, whether it is a playground, soccer field, or swimming pool is determined in part by its quality. A playground with a variety of features, such as climbers, slides, and swings provides a higher degree of service than one with nothing but an old teeter-totter and some "monkey-bars."

Condition – The condition of a component within the park system also affects the amount of service it provides. A playground in disrepair with unsafe equipment does not offer the same service as one in good condition. Similarly, a soccer field with a smooth surface of well-maintained grass certainly offers a higher degree of service than one that is full of weeds, ruts, and other hazards.

Location – To receive service from something, you need to be able to get to it. Therefore, service is dependent upon proximity and access. All components are geographically located using GPS coordinates and GIS software.

Comfort – The service provided by a component is increased by having amenities. For example, outdoor components are often enhanced by attributes such as shade, seating, and a restroom nearby. Comfort enhances the experience of using a component.

Convenience – Convenience encourages people to use a component, which increased the amount of service that it offers. Easy access and the availability of trash receptacles, bike rack, or nearby parking are examples of conveniences that enhance the service provided by a component.

Ambience – Simple observation will prove that people are drawn to places that "feel" good. This includes a sense of safety and security, as well as pleasant surroundings, attractive views, and a sense of place. For example, a well-designed park is preferable to a poorly-designed one, and this enhances the degree of service provided by the components within it.

Capacity is still part of the LOS analysis and the quantity of each component is recorded as well. By combining and analyzing the composite values of each component, it is possible to measure the service provided by a parks and recreation system from a variety of perspectives and for any given location. Typically, this begins with a decision on **"relevant components**" for the analysis, collection of an accurate inventory of those components, analysis and then the results are presented in a series of maps and tables that make up the **GRASP®** analysis of the study area.

Data for Analysis and Making Justifiable Decisions

All of the data generated from the GRASP® evaluation is compiled into an electronic database that is then available and owned by the agency for use in a variety of ways. The database can help keep track of facilities and programs, and can be used to schedule services, maintenance, and the replacement of components. In addition to determining LOS, it can be used to project long-term capital and life-cycle costing needs. All portions of the information are in standard available software and can be produced in a variety of ways for future planning or sharing with the public.

It is important to note that the GRASP® methodology provides not only accurate LOS and facility inventory information, but also works with and integrates with other tools to help agencies make decisions. It is relatively easy to maintain, update, and creates easily understood graphic depictions (analysis maps and/or "Perspectives") of issues. **Combined with a needs assessment, public and staff involvement, program and financial assessment, GRASP® allows an agency to defensibly make recommendations on priorities for ongoing resource allocation along with capital and operational funding.**

C. Inventory Data Collection Process

A detailed inventory of relevant components for the project is conducted. The inventory locates and catalogues all of the relevant components for the project, and evaluates each one as to how well it was serving its intended function within the system. The planning team first prepares a preliminary list of existing components using aerial photography and the community's Geographic Information System (GIS) information. Components identified in the aerial photo are given GIS points and names according to the GRASP® list of standard components.

Next, field visits are conducted by the consulting and project team staff to confirm the preliminary data and collect additional information. Additionally, indoor facilities are scored and for the purposes of this study, each relevant space is considered a component and is scored based on its intended function. During the field visits and evaluations, any missing relevant components are added to the data set, and each component is evaluated as to how well it meets expectations for its intended function. During the site visits the following information is collected:

- Component type and location
- Evaluation of component condition
- Evaluation of comfort and convenience features
- Evaluation of park design and ambience
- Site photos and general comments

After the inventory is completed, the project team completes a final review and approval for accuracy.

D. Standardized Process for Scoring Components

Component Scoring
The approved inventory is the basis for the creation of values used in the GRASP® analysis. Each component received a functional score that is related to the quality, condition, and ability of the space to meet operational and programming needs.

The range of scores for each component is as follows:

- **Below Expectations (BE)** – The component does not meet the expectations of its intended primary function. Factors leading to this may include size, age, accessibility, or others. Each such component is given a score of **1** in the inventory.
- **Meeting Expectations (ME)** – The component meets expectations for its intended function. Such components are given scores of **2.**
- **Exceeding Expectations (EE) –** The component exceeds expectations, due to size, configuration, or unique qualities. Such components are given scores of **3.**
- If the feature exists but is not useable because it is unsafe, obsolete, or dysfunctional, it may be listed in the feature description and assigned a **score of zero (0).**

If a feature is used for multiple functions, such as a softball field that is also used for T-Ball or youth soccer games, it is scored only once under the description that best fits the use that for which the component was designed.

Neighborhood and Community Scoring
Components are evaluated from two perspectives: first, the value of the component in serving the immediate neighborhood, and second, its value to the entire community.

Neighborhood Score
Each component is evaluated from the perspective of a resident that lives nearby. High scoring components are easily accessible to pedestrians in the neighborhood, are attractive for short and frequent visits, and are unobtrusive to the surrounding neighborhood. Components that do not have a high neighborhood score may not be located within walking distance of residents, may have "nuisance features" such as sports lighting, or may draw large crowds for which parking is not provided.

Community Score
Additionally each component is evaluated from the perspective of residents in the community as a whole. High scoring components in this category may be unique components within the parks and recreation system, have a broad draw from throughout the community, have the capacity and associated facilities for community-wide events, or are located in areas that are accessible only by car.

Indoor Components
Indoor components are generally thought to be accessible to the entire community, partially because it is often not financially feasible to provide indoor facilities at a walking distance from every distance from each residence. Additionally indoor facilities often provide programs and facilities that are geared to the community as a whole, or in larger communities, are intended for a region of the community. For these reasons, unless a detailed indoor analysis is completed, indoor facilities are given only one score.

Modifiers (Comfort and Convenience Features) Scoring

Outdoor Modifiers
Besides standard components, this inventory also evaluates features that provide comfort and convenience to the users. These are things that a user might not go to the parks specifically to use, but are things that enhance the users' experience by making it a nicer place to be and include: drinking fountains, seating, BBQ grills, dog stations, security lighting, bike parking, restrooms, shade, connections to trails, park access, parking, picnic tables, and seasonal and ornamental plantings. These features are scored as listed above with the 1-3 system. In this case it is not important to get a count of the number or size of these components; instead the score should reflect the ability of the item to serve the park.

Indoor Modifiers
For indoor facilities the comfort and convenience features change slightly to reflect the characteristics of the building. Building modifier categories include: site access, setting aesthetics, building entry function, building entry aesthetics, overall building condition, entry desk, office space, overall storage, and restrooms and/or locker rooms.

Activity and Sports Lighting
This modifier accounts for lighting that allows for component use in the evening/night hours and is applied to the quantity of the component as it affectively expands the capacity of the component. This modifier does not apply to security lighting.

Shade
Like Activity and Sports lighting, shade can be added to outdoor components to extend use beyond normal hours or seasons.

Design & Ambience Scoring
Using the same rating system that is used for components and modifiers, the quality of Design and Ambience is scored. Good design not only makes a place look nice, it makes it feel safe and pleasant, and encourages people to visit more often and stay longer.

Trails Scoring
Trails can be scored as independent parks or greenways or as individual components within another park. The former type of trail receives its own set of scores for modifiers and design and ambiance. The trail in the latter situation takes on the modifiers and design and ambiance of the larger park in which it resides. Multi-use trails are assumed to consist of 3 components including one active component, one passive component, and the parcel itself. Because traveling the length of any given trail is time consuming, trail information is often collected with the aid of staff.

Ownership Modifier
This modifier is generally weighted with a percentage that is applied to the GRASP® score after other modifiers have been applied. It accounts for access and control of components that are provided by alternative providers. For example, in most cases components that are owned and managed by schools are given a 50% weighted ownership modifier, which halves the GRASP® score to account for the limited access that the neighborhood has to school facilities (it's only open to the public outside of school hours).

E. Calculating GRASP® Functional Scores

Once the components are inventoried and scored, calculations can be made for any combination of components to derive average scores, scores per combinations of various components, scores per sub-areas, etc., depending on the key issues being studied and objectives for the project. These are very helpful for analyzing area comparisons and setting of target scores for component service and agency target standards.

For example, a total composite GRASP® score for each individual component is determined by using the following formula:

(total component score) x (adjusted modifier score) x (design and ambiance score) x (ownership modifier) = Composite GRASP® Score

These individual scores can be additively combined in various ways to examine service from various subsets of the agency's system.

F. GRASP® Perspectives and Target Scores

GRASP® scores are often used to create analysis maps, called **Perspectives**, to show the cumulative level of service available to a resident at any given location in the community service area. The scores provided blended quantitative values based on the number and quality of opportunities to enjoy an experience (or level of service) that exist in a reasonable proximity to the given location. Tables and charts are created along with the Perspectives to help provide quantitative and graphic analysis tools.

If a philosophy is adopted wherein the goal is to provide some minimum combination of opportunities to every residence, a GRASP® score can be calculated that represents this minimum. These scores can be used to create standards for the agency to maintain a measurable level of service over time. A variety of Perspectives are created to analyze and depict the communities LOS through a variety of combinations and composites, depending on the key issues being studied.

Typical and Standard GRASP® Perspectives
Often Perspectives are created that analyze the actual level of service being obtained as compared to a "standard" target.

Neighborhood Composite

This Perspective depicts service from a neighborhood point of view. The target for analysis is that each resident will have access within 1/3 mile of their home to 4 recreation components and one recreational trail. Further expanded, the goal is to offer a selection of active and passive recreation opportunities (indoor or outdoor) to every residence, along with access to a recreational trail of which components, modifiers, and design and ambiance are meeting expectations.

Walkability (same as Neighborhood Composite but with only 1/3 mile buffers)

The idea for this target score and Perspective is that each resident will have access within 1/3 mile of their home to 4 recreation components and one recreational trail.

Perspectives showing Neighborhood LOS for one component

The target here is that each resident will have access within 1/3 mile of their home to the selected component of which the component, modifiers, and design and ambiance are meeting expectations.

Active (or Passive) Components

This target evaluates if each resident will have access within 1/3 mile of their home to three active (or passive) components. Further expanded, the goal is to offer at least three components, which equates to roughly half of the components provided in the minimum neighborhood composite scenario. These components can be either indoor or outdoor and will be provided within walking distance to every residence and have scores that meet expectations.

Note: Aside from meeting this goal, the mix of components also needs to be considered. For example, a home that is within 1/3 mile of four tennis courts and no other amenities would meet the basic numeric standard, but not the intent of the standard. Based on this, it is recommended that the target be to provide the minimum score to as many homes as possible, but also to exceed the minimum by some factor whenever possible.

G. GRASP® Project Technical Standards for GIS Data

The GRASP® Team utilizes the most up to date computer hardware and software to produce and enhance project-based GIS data. The following technical details are standard with all GRASP® Team projects.

- All GRASP® Team GIS workstations employ Microsoft® Windows® operating systems. All project files conform to PC-based architecture and extension naming standards.
- The GRASP® Team employs ESRI® ArcGIS™ 9.x for all GIS applications. Final project GIS data is submitted to the client in Microsoft® Access™-based Geodatabase (*.mdb) Feature Class format and/or Shapefile (*.shp/*.dbf/*.shx) format. ArcMap™ Layer files (*.lyr) are submitted to ease client replication of all project map legend formats. The GRASP® Team will not resubmit original client source data that has not undergone enhancement.

- All final GIS datasets (deliverables) area submitted to the client using the geographic coordinate system(s) from the original client source data. The GRASP® team will assign a coordinate system that is most appropriate for the client location if the client does not require a predetermined standard coordinate system. Most GRASP® project data is submitted in State Plane Coordinates (Feet) with a NAD83/NAD83 HARN datum.
- The GRASP® Team employs Trimble® GPS units for all (spatial) field data collection. All data is collected with sub-foot and/or sub-meter accuracy when possible. All GPS data is post processed with Trimble® Pathfinder Office® software. All GPS data will be submitted to client as an ESRI®-based Geodatabase Feature Class or Shapefile.
- All GRASP® Perspectives and Resource Maps (deliverables) are submitted to the client in standard PDF and JPEG formats. The project PDFs are high resolution, print-ready files for scalable print operations. Most project map-based PDFs are 300dpi, 36”x24” images. The project JPEGs are lower resolution digital presentation-ready files for insertion into Microsoft® Office® productivity suite applications – MS Word®, MS Power Point®, etc. Most project map-based JPEGs are 300dpi 4x6” images.

H. Project Deliverables and Future Use

All information and deliverables described above are transmitted “as-is” to fulfill specific tasks identified in the scope of services for this contract. While these may be useful for other purposes, no warranties or other assurances are made that the deliverables are ready for such use.

The database can be modified to add, change, or delete information as needed by personnel trained in use of these standard software applications. For example, if new parks or facilities are constructed, the components of these may be added to the database to keep it current. The database may also be queried in a variety of ways to produce tables, charts, or reports for use in operations, management, and planning or other agency tasks. Such modification, updating, reformatting, or other preparation for use in other purposes is the sole responsibility of the client.

Similarly, the database information can be used to prepare a variety of maps and analysis perspectives using GIS software. Such use by the client is beyond the scope of this contract, and no warranties or assurances are made that the deliverables are ready or intended for such future use. If desired, the GRASP® Team can make such modifications, and/or prepare additional or updated maps or Perspectives upon request for a negotiated fee.

Appendix E – Facility Inventory

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Appendix E
Town of Erie, Colorado-Inventory of Indoor Recreational Facilities

LOCATION	Fitness Dance	Patio/Outdoor Seating	Pool, Lap	Pool, Leisure	Pool, Therapy	Gymnasium	Weight/Cardio Equip	Track - Indoor	Lobby/Entryway	Climbing Wall	Racquetball	Food - Vending	Childcare/Preschool	Multi-Purpose	Kitchen - Kitchenette
Erie Community Center	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	4	1	1	7	1

Town of Erie, Outdoor Facility Inventory

LOCATION	Aqua Feat, Complex	Aqua Feat, Pool	Aqua Feat, Spray	Backstop, Practice	Ballfield	Basketball	Batting Cage	Complex, Ballfield	Complex, Tennis	Educational Experience	Event Space	Exercise Course	Garden, Community	Garden, Display	Golf	Hockey, In-line	Lawn Bowling	Loop Walk	MP Field, Large	MP Field, Small	Multiuse Court	Natural Area	Open Turf	Open Water	Other-Active	Other-Passive	Passive Node	Playground, Destination	Playground, Local	Public Art	Shelter	Shelter, Group	Skate Park	Structure	Tennis	Track, Competition	Volleyball	Water Access, General
Vista Ridge PP H																							1						1			1							
Vista Ridge PP I													1										2							1	1								
Vista Ridge PP J																							1				2												
Vista Ridge PP K																							1						1	1	1								
Vista Ridge PP L																										1	1							1					
Vista Ridge PP M																							1					1				1					1		
Neighborhood Parks																																							
Arapahoe Ridge Park					1														1							1			1						2				
Arapahoe Ridge Pool		1																																1			1		
Coal Creek Park					2														1				1					1			1		1	1					
Columbine Mine Park					1											1			1				1								1								
Columbine Mine Pool		1																																					
Country Fields Park				2	1																		1						1		1								
Kenosha Farms Park																		1	1			1	1					1				1							
Lehigh Park			1															1					4		1	2		1				2							
Lehigh Pool		1																																					
Longs Peak East						0.5												1	1			1	1						1			1							
Longs Peak West					1													1	1			1																	
Reliance Park					1																							1				1		1					
Vista Ridge Clubhouse	1																																	1	2				
Community Parks																																							
Erie Community Park					4			1			1								2									1				3							
Reservoirs																																							
Erie Lake																		1						1	1														2
Thomas Reservoir																		1				1		1			1					1							3
Schools																																							
Black Rock Elementary School					1	2															1		1			1			1										
Erie Elementary School				1	1														1	1	2		1						1										
Erie High School					4			1	1										2						1									1	6	1			
Erie Middle School																			1						1										2	1			
School Proposed																			1																				
School Sports Complex					3		1	1											1																				
Vista Ridge Academy				1													1		1		1								1					1					
Grand Total	**1**	**4**	**1**	**4**	**20**	**5**	**1**	**3**	**1**	**3**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**4**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**6**	**15**	**1**	**5.5**	**9**	**59**	**2**	**8**	**5**	**7**	**6**	**47**	**2**	**26**	**28**	**1**	**8**	**12**	**2**	**5**	**5**

LOCATION	Aqua Feat, Complex	Aqua Feat, Pool	Aqua Feat, Spray	Backstop, Practice	Ballfield	Basketball	Batting Cage	Complex, Ballfield	Complex, Tennis	Educational Experience	Event Space	Exercise Course	Garden, Community	Garden, Display	Golf	Hockey, In-line	Lawn Bowling	Loop Walk	MP Field, Large	MP Field, Small	Multiuse Court	Natural Area	Open Turf	Open Water	Other-Active	Other-Passive	Passive Node	Playground, Destination	Playground, Local	Public Art	Shelter	Shelter, Group	Skate Park	Structure	Tennis	Track, Competition	Volleyball	Water Access, General
Pocket Parks																																						
Arapahoe Ridge PP																							1					1		1								
Baxter Farm																						1																
Blue Sky Clubhouse		1																																1				
Blue Sky PP A																														1								
Blue Sky PP B																										1		2		1								
Blue Sky PP C																										1				1								
Blue Sky PP D																						1						1		1							1	
Canyon Creek PP A						1																	1		1			1			1							
Canyon Creek PP B																							1					1			1							
Canyon Creek PP C																							1					1			1							
Canyon Creek PP D																							1				1	1			2							
Coal Miners Park																												1			1						1	
Creekside PP						1				1				1									1					1			2							
Country Fields PP A																							2					1										
Country Meadows PP A																							1					1		1								
Country Meadows PP B														2									1					1		1								
Country Meadows PP C																							1		1			1		1								
Erie Commons PP A																							1					1			1							
Erie Commons PP B																							1					1		1								
Erie Village PP A																							2					2		1								
Erie Village PP B																						1	1					1		1								
Erie Village PP C																							1					1		1								
Erie Village PP D																												1		1								
Grandview PP A																							2					1		1								
Grandview PP B																							1					1		1								
Grandview PP C																							2					1			1						1	
Grandview PP D																							1					1		1								
Orchard Glen PP																							1					3			1							
Sunwest PP A																							2					1		1								
Sunwest PP B																						1	1					1		1								
Vista Pointe PP A																							2					1		1								
Vista Pointe PP B																					0.5		2					1		1								
Vista Ridge PP A																							2					1			1							
Vista Ridge PP B						0.5																1	2					1			1							
Vista Ridge PP C										1													2					1			1							
Vista Ridge PP D																							2		1			1			1							
Vista Ridge PP E																					1		1					1		1								
Vista Ridge PP F																							1		1			1			1							
Vista Ridge PP G										1				1									1					1			1							

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Appendix F – Maps and GRASP® Perspectives

Resource Map A: Regional Context

Resource Map B: Existing Park, Open Space & Trail System

(Note: Resource Map B series enlargements of northwest, northeast, southwest, and southeast are located in the ***Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trail Master Plan)***

Resource Map D: Indicators of Potential Open Space Value

Resource Map E: Trailsheds: Trail Access to Community Facilities

Perspective A: Neighborhood Access to All Components

Perspective B: Walkable Access to All Components

Perspective C: Neighborhood Access to Trails

(Note: *Resource Map C: Parks and Recreational Trails Recommendations* and is located in the ***Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trail Master Plan***.)

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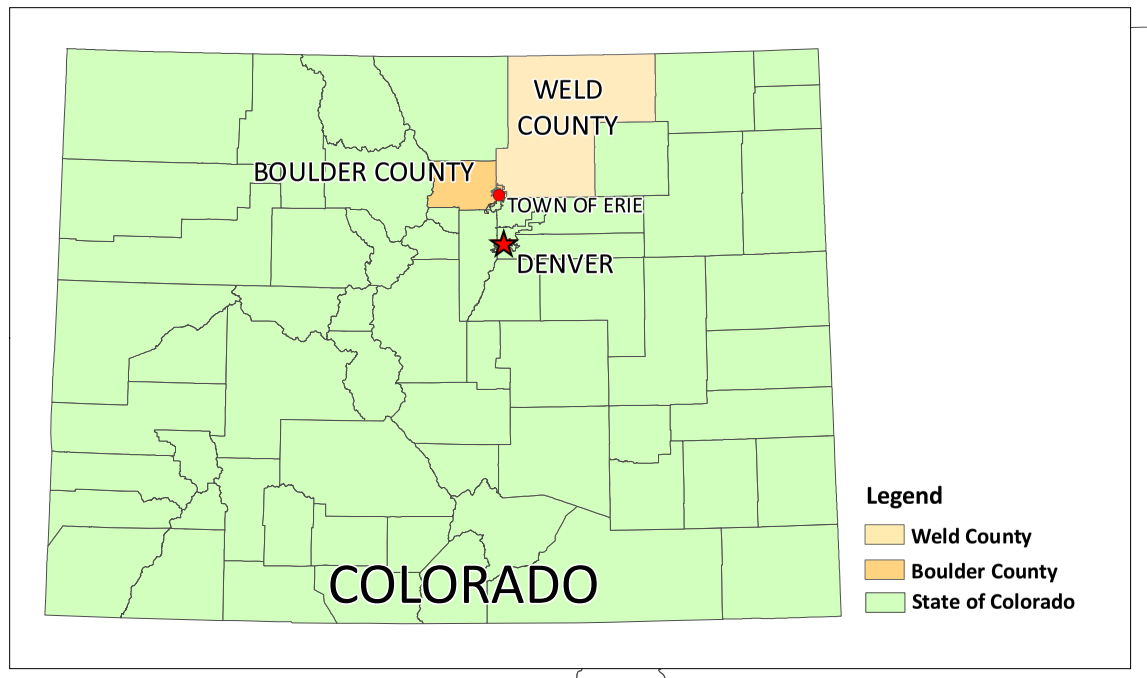
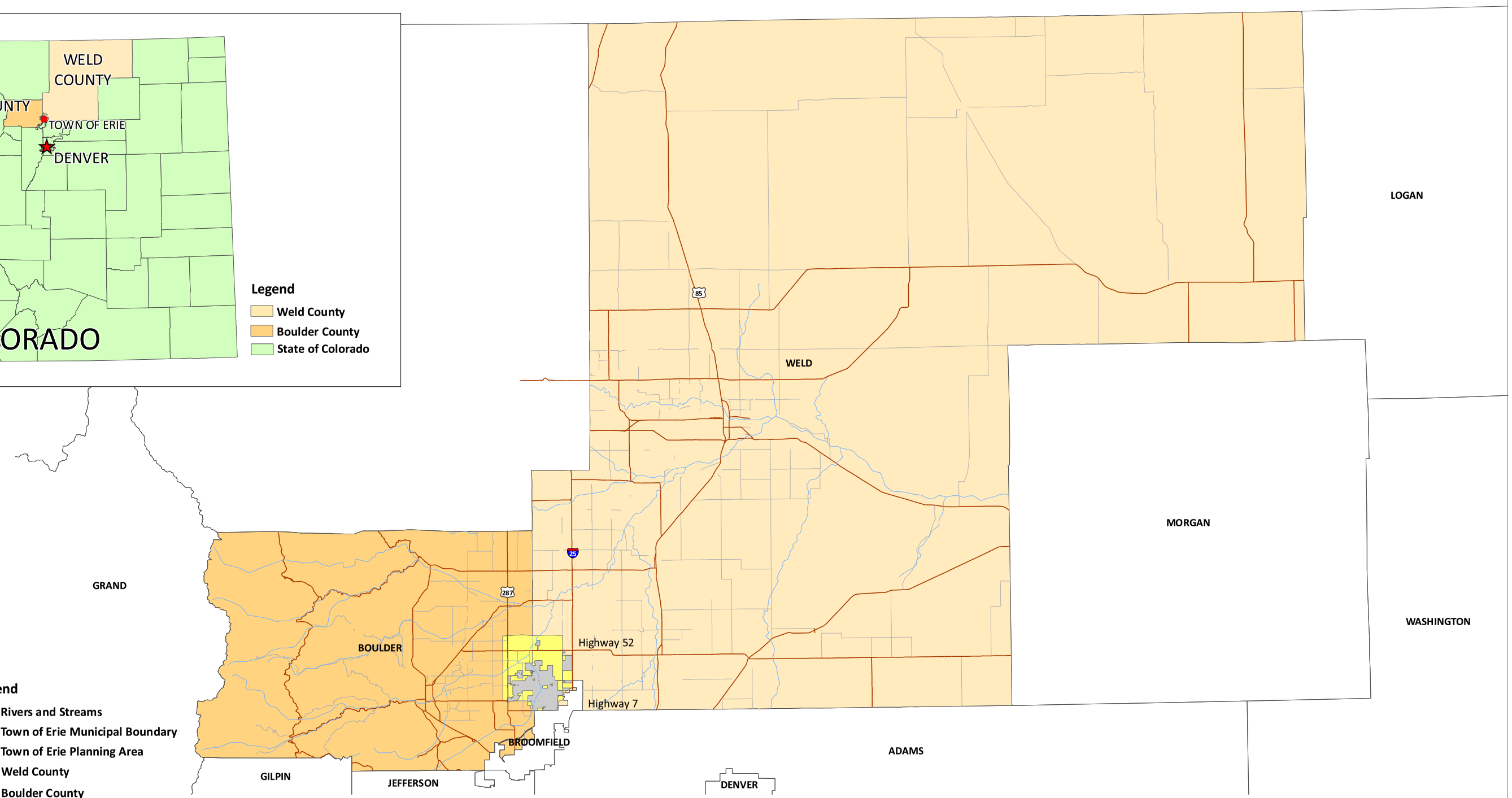
RESOURCE MAP A: REGIONAL CONTEXT

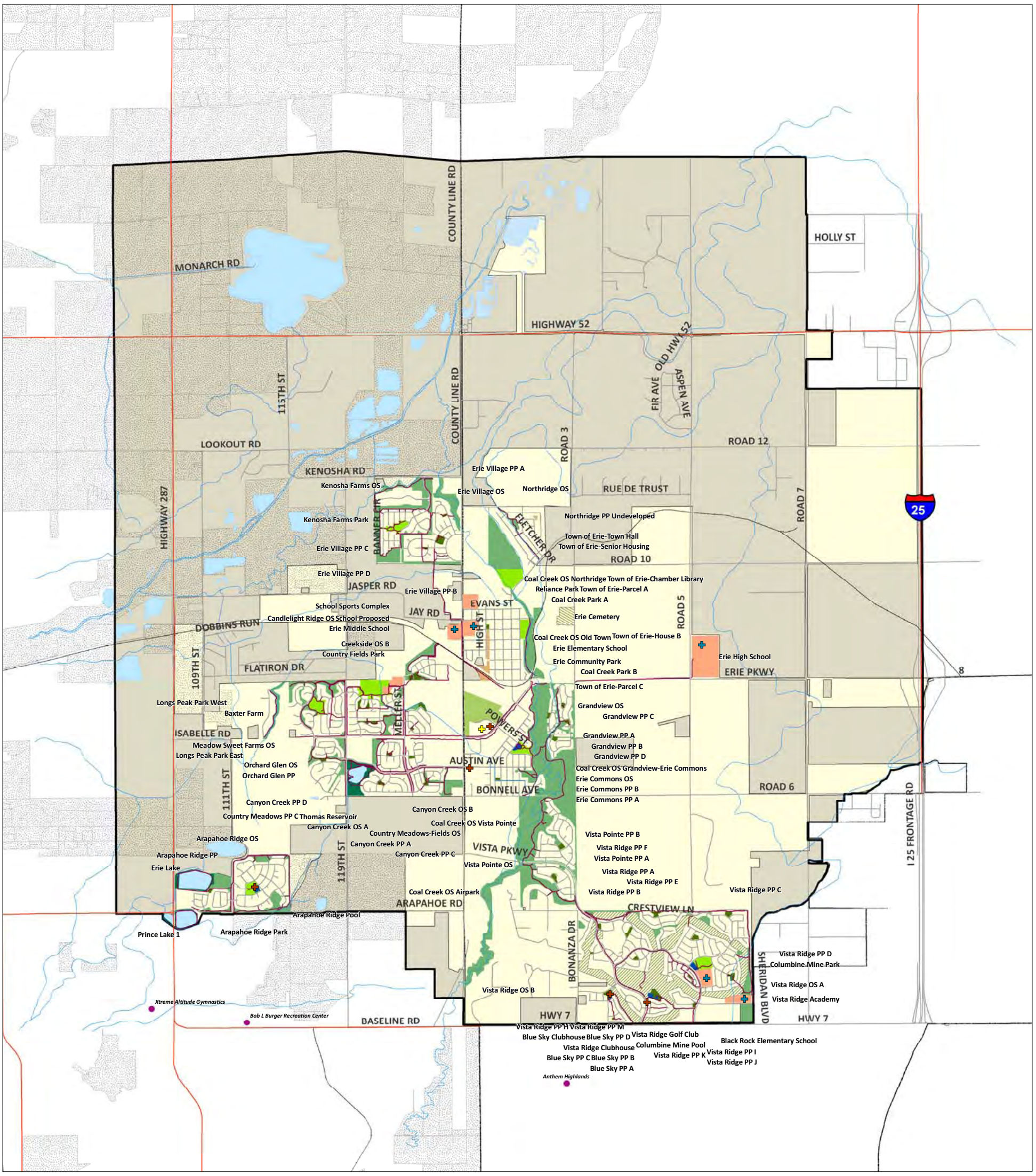


INSET



Map Produced For the Town of Erie, Colorado - By The GRASP® Team
This Map Is Intended For Planning & Discussion Purposes Only - Please Refer To The Project Document For Map Details
Legend Elements May Vary In Size, Color And Transparency From Those Shown On Map
GIS Data Sources May Include: The Town of Erie, US Census, ESRI, GRASP® Team - September 2008
Copyright© 2009 The Town of Erie - Map Revised – May 2009

RESOURCE MAP B: EXISTING PARK, OPEN SPACE & TRAIL SYSTEM



Legend

- Town Indoor Facilities
- Other Indoor Facilities
- School Locations
- Alternative Providers
- Existing Trails *
- Town of Erie Planning Area
- Town of Erie
- Boulder County Open Space
- Cemetery
- Community Park
- Golf Course
- Neighborhood Park
- Open Space
- Pocket Park
- Pool
- Town Reservoir/OS
- School property
- Undeveloped Town Property

* Existing trails include trails that are either constructed or planned and funded.

Map Produced For the Town of Erie, Colorado - By The GRASP® Team
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GIS Data Sources May Include: The Town of Erie, US Census, ESRI, GRASP® Team - September 2008
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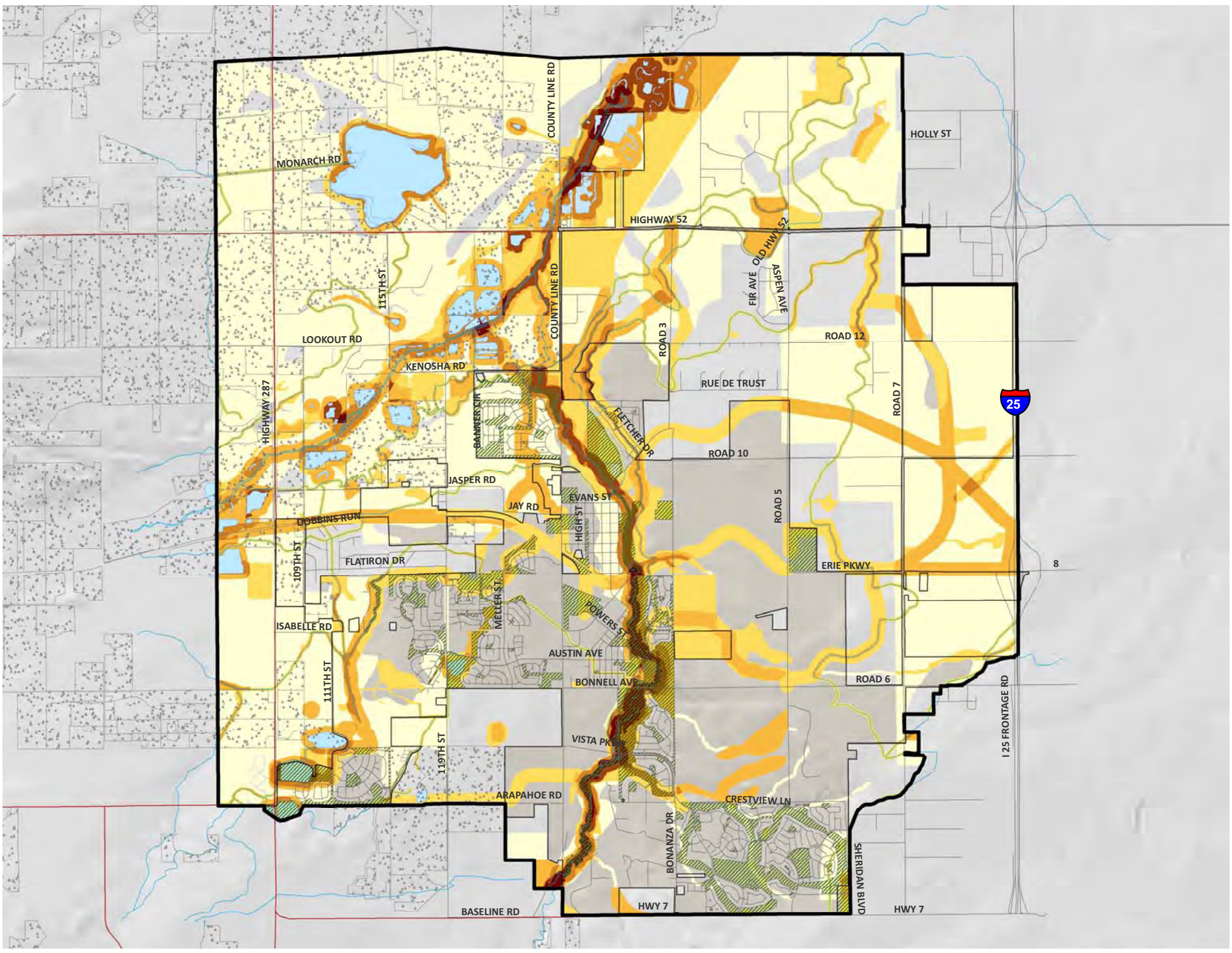
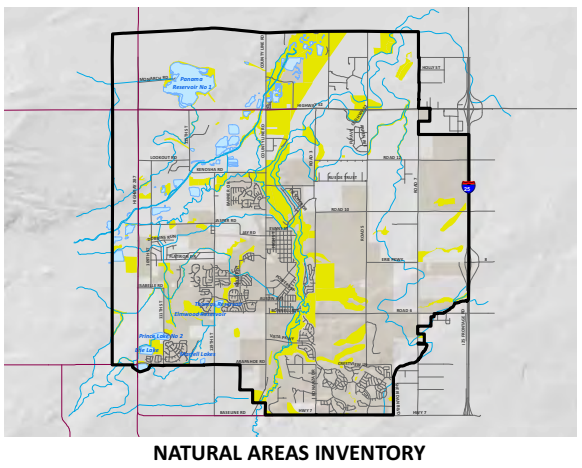
Map Scale in Miles

TOWN OF ERIE

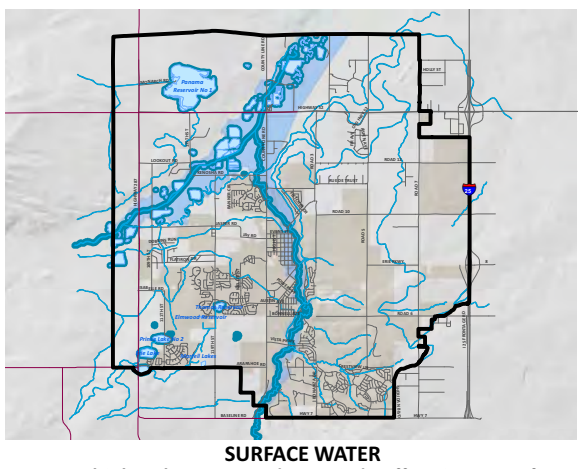
PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN

RESOURCE MAP D: INDICATORS OF POTENTIAL OPEN SPACE VALUE





NATURAL AREAS INVENTORY
Source Data Collected from Erie Natural Areas Final Report 2008.
Multiple Values Assigned from Report
100 (Medium)
150 (Medium)
250 (High)



SURFACE WATER
Multiple Values Assigned at Varied Buffer Distances of:
Reservoirs at 300' from Shoreline - 200 (High)
Coal Creek & Boulder Creek at 600' Total Width - 200 (High)
Ditches and at 150' Total Width - 100 (Medium)
Ephemeral Creeks at 150' Total Width - 50 (Low)
Floodplains at Limits by FEMA - 50 (Low)

Legend

- **Planning Area Boundary**
- **Boulder County Open Space**
- **Highway**
- **Surface Waterways**
- **Road Centerline**
- **Surface Waters**
- **Town of Erie Boundary**
- **Town of Erie Parks & Open Space - Includes Alternative Providers**

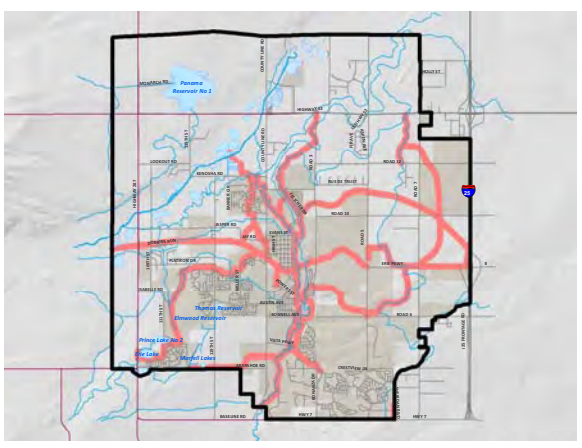
Potential Open Space Value

Score

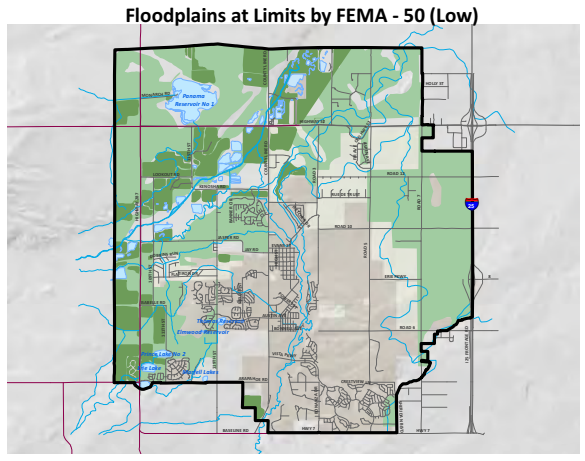
- **25 - 50**
- **51 - 200**
- **201 - 350**
- **351 - 500**
- **501 - 650**
- **651 - 850**

Single Indicator for Potential Open Space Value

Multiple Indicators for Potential Open Space Value



REGIONAL TRAILS
Displayed to Detail Corridors Generated by Buffering Spine Trails with a 660' Total Width Buffer. Links Were Intended to Connect Existing Parks, Trails and Open Space as Well as Supplement General Flow and Accessibility.
Single Value Assigned - 200 (High)



AGRICULTURAL LANDS
Source Data Collected from Erie Comprehensive Plan and Boulder & Weld Counties
Ag Land Shown in Comp Plan (Darker Shade) - 25 (Low)
Ag Identified by Boulder & Weld Counties (Lighter Shade) - 25 (Low)

Sum of Weighted Analysis
Created ESRI ArcMap Version 9.2 Through Multiple Union Processing of Data Viewed in Adjacent Maps.
Higher Values / Darker Browns Indicates Areas Where Overlapping Weighted Values are Concentrated.

N W E S

0 0.5 1 2 3 Miles

"Sum of Weighted Analysis" Map
Scale in Miles

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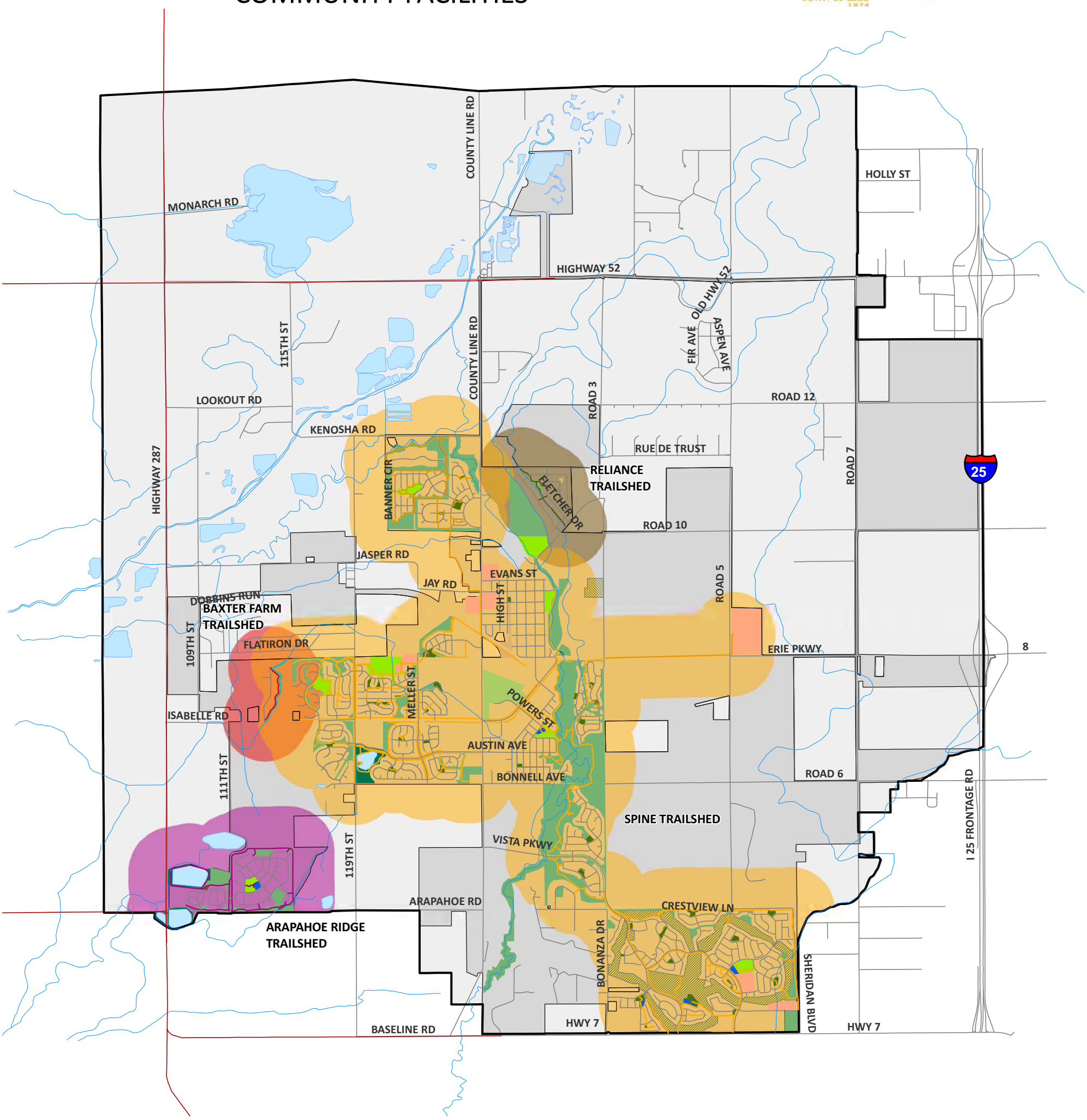
TOWN OF ERIE

PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN

RESOURCE MAP E: TRAILSHEDS - TRAIL ACCESS TO COMMUNITY FACILITIES



Legend

- Planning Area
- Town of Erie
- Cemetery
- Community Park
- Golf Course
- Neighborhood Park
- Open Space
- Pocket Park
- Pool
- Town Reservoir/OS
- School property
- Undeveloped Town Property
- Spine Trailshed
- Spine Trail
- Baxter Farm Trailshed
- Baxter Farm Trail
- Arapahoe Ridge Trailshed
- Arapahoe Ridge Trail
- Reliance Trailshed
- Reliance Trail

* Maps shows 1/3 mile buffer of each isolated trail network to identify facilities accessible through the Town of Erie's Trailsheds.

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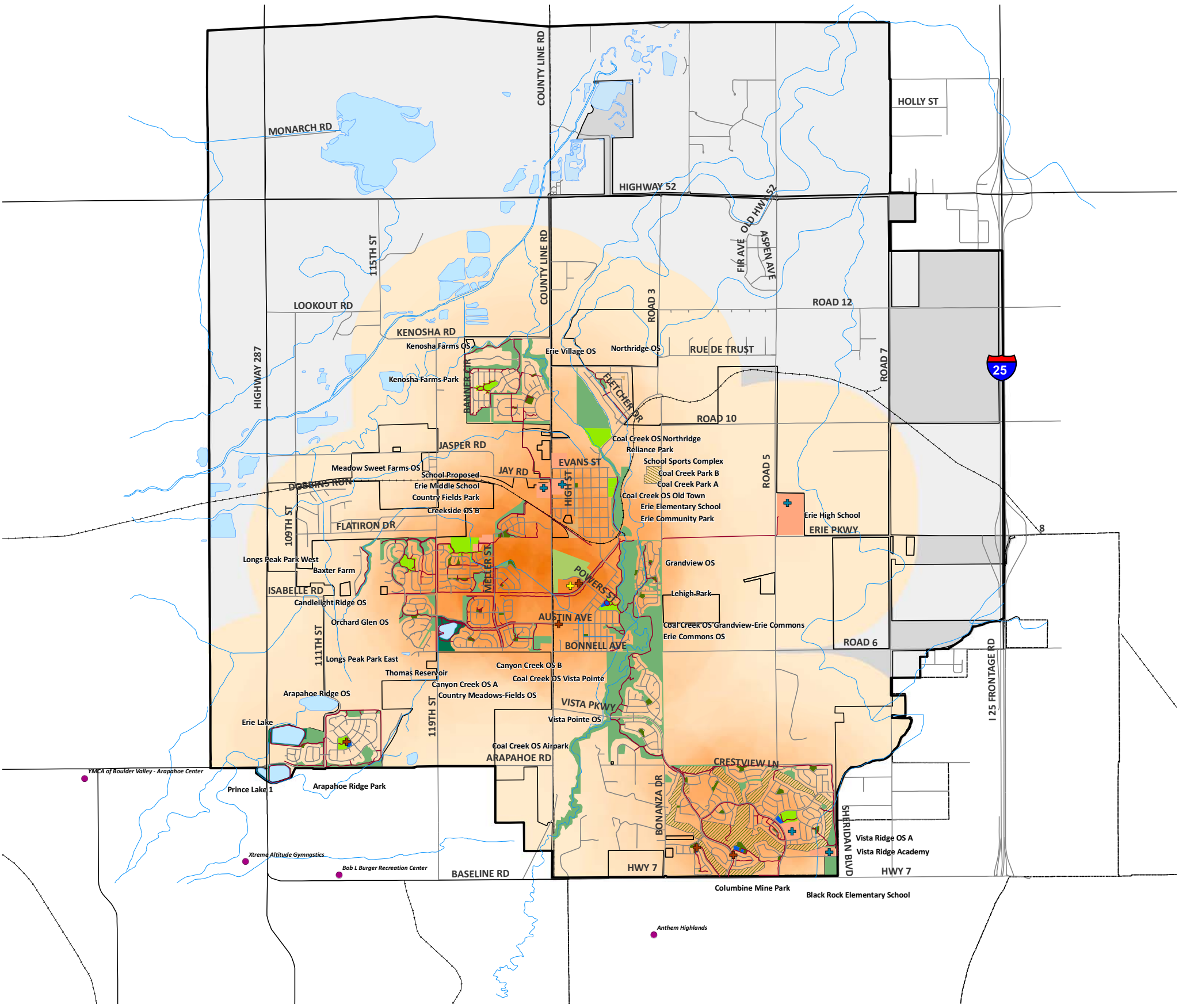
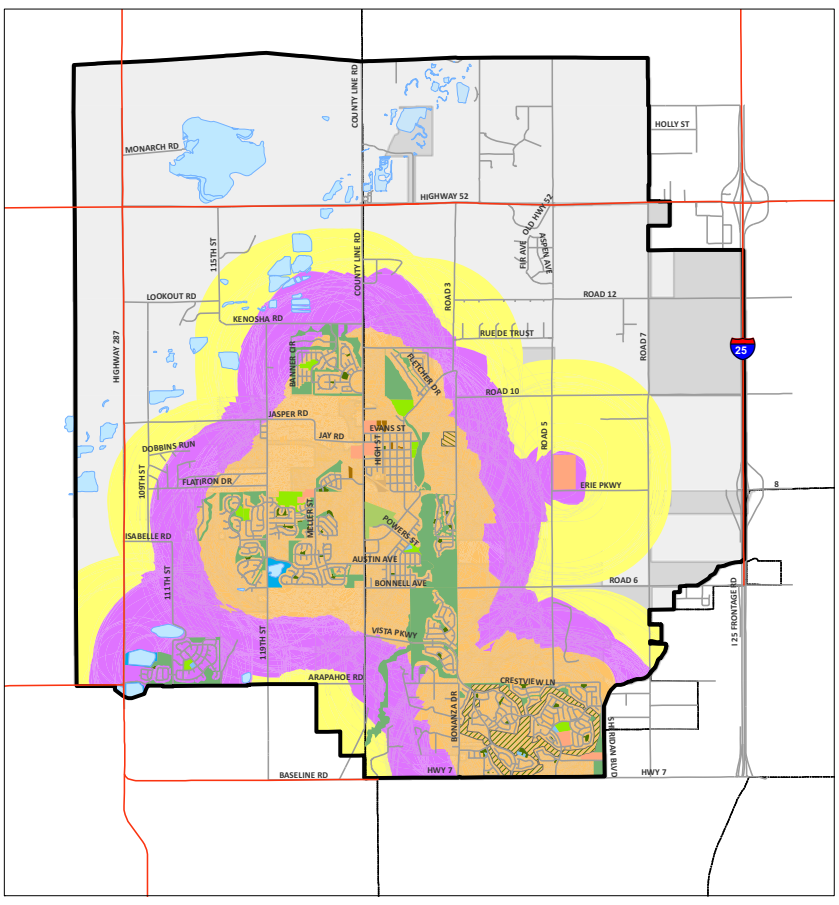
0 1 2 3
Map Scale in Miles

TOWN OF ERIE

PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN

PERSPECTIVE A: NEIGHBORHOOD ACCESS TO ALL COMPONENTS





Legend

- Town Indoor Facilities
- Other Indoor Facilities
- School Locations
- Alternative Providers
- Existing Trails*
- Planning Area
- Town of Erie
- Cemetery
- Community Park
- Golf Course
- Neighborhood Park
- Open Space
- Pocket Park
- Pool
- Town Reservoir/OS
- School property
- Undeveloped Town Property

GRASP® Perspective – All Values

GRASPValue

- Less Access
- Greater Access

* Existing spine and local trails include trails that are either constructed or planned and funded.

LEGEND- INSET

GRASP® Perspective - Target Values

- Below Target Minimum
- At or Above Target Minimum
- Above GRASP LOS of 300
- Town of Erie
- Planning Area

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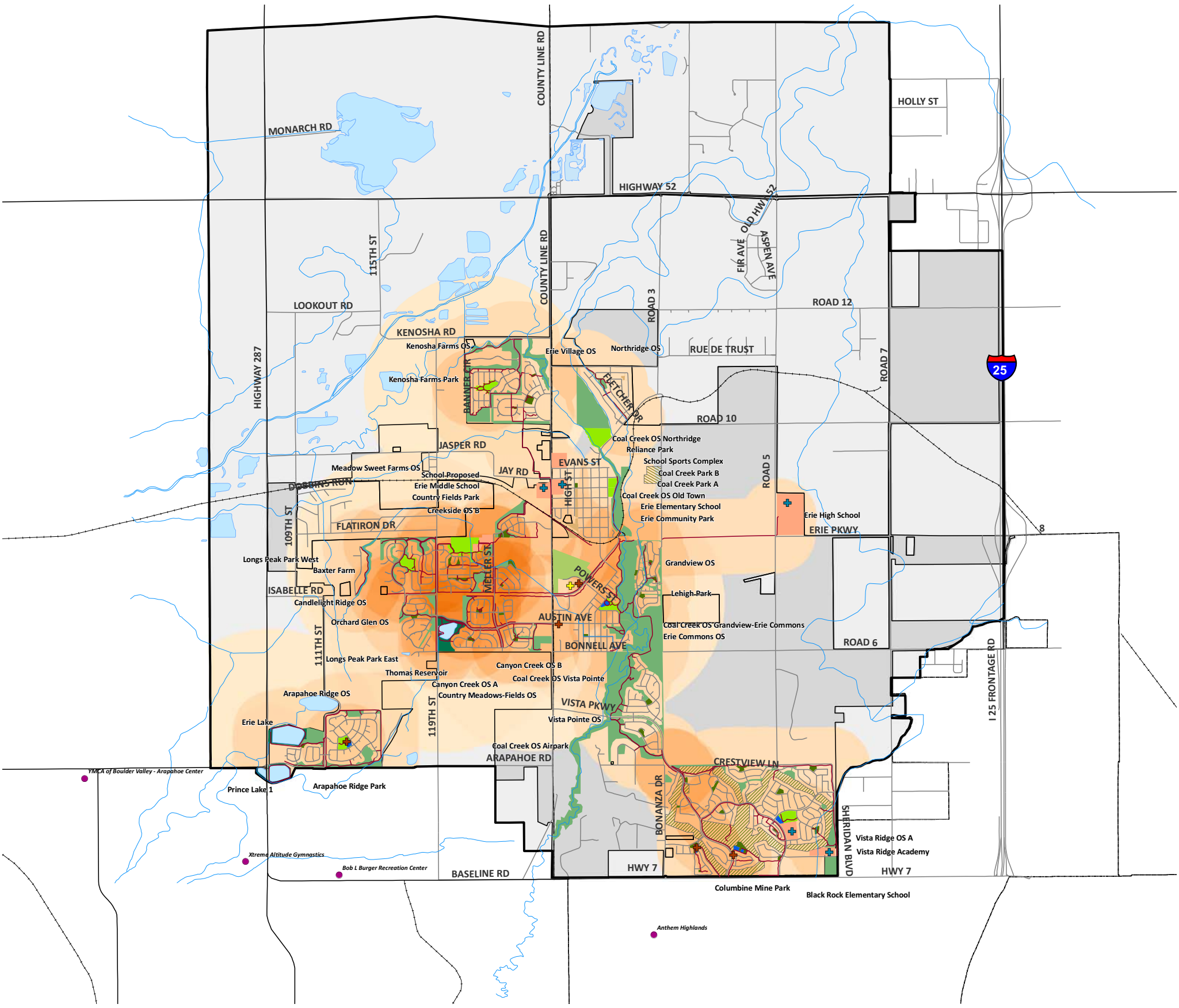
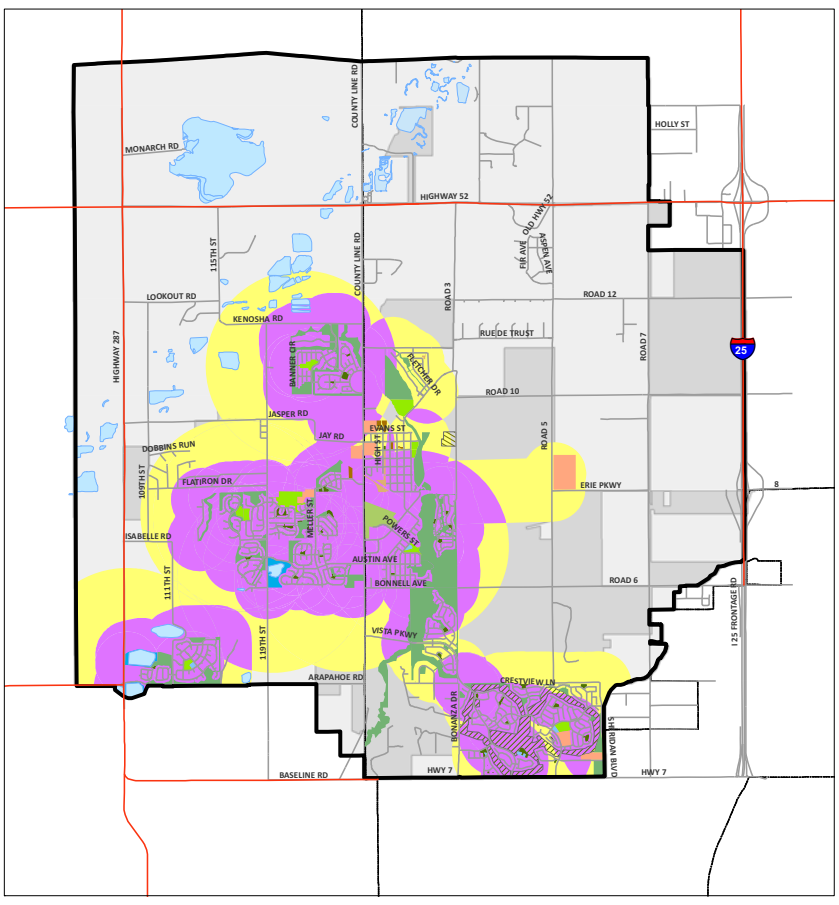
0 1 2 3
Map Scale in Miles

TOWN OF ERIE

PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN

PERSPECTIVE C: NEIGHBORHOOD ACCESS TO TRAILS





Legend

- Town Indoor Facilities
- Other Indoor Facilities
- School Locations
- Alternative Providers
- Existing Trails*
- Planning Area
- Town of Erie
- Cemetery
- Community Park
- Golf Course
- Neighborhood Park
- Open Space
- Pocket Park
- Pool
- Town Reservoir/OS
- School property
- Undeveloped Town Property

GRASP® Perspective – All Values

GRASPValue

- Less Access
- Greater Access

* Existing spine and local trails include trails that are either constructed or planned and funded.

LEGEND- INSET

GRASP® Perspective - Target Values

- Below Target Minimum
- At or Above Target Minimum
- Town of Erie
- Planning Area

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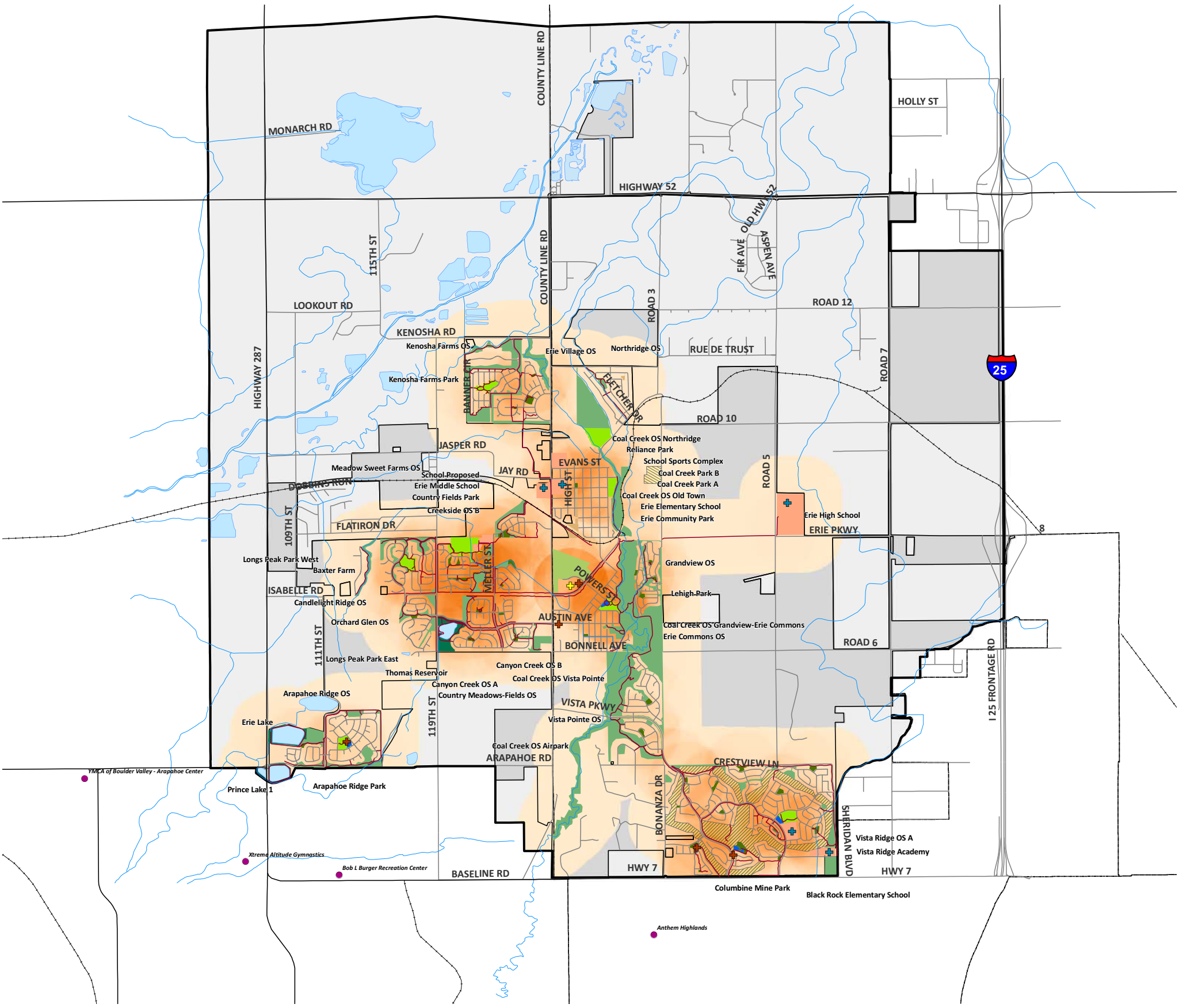
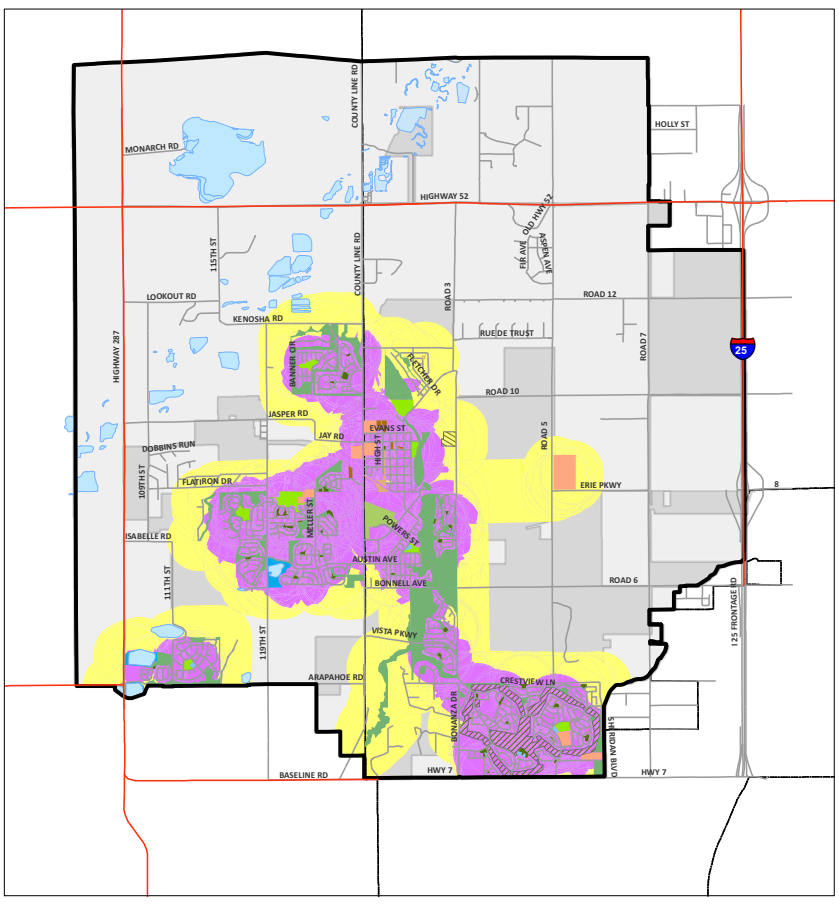
0 1 2 3
Map Scale in Miles

TOWN OF ERIE

PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN

PERSPECTIVE B: WALKABLE ACCESS TO ALL COMPONENTS





Legend

- Town Indoor Facilities
- Other Indoor Facilities
- School Locations
- Alternative Providers
- Existing Trails*
- Planning Area
- Town of Erie
- Cemetery
- Community Park
- Golf Course
- Neighborhood Park
- Open Space
- Pocket Park
- Pool
- Town Reservoir/OS
- School property
- Undeveloped Town Property

GRASP® Perspective – All Values

GRASPValue

- Less Access
- Greater Access

* Existing spine and local trails include trails that are either constructed or planned and funded.

LEGEND- INSET

GRASP® Perspective - Target Values

- Below Target Minimum
- At or Above Target Minimum
- Town of Erie
- Planning Area

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0 1 2 3
Map Scale in Miles