

CITY OF FOUNTAIN

PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN

ADOPTED 26 MAY 2015





RESOLUTION 15-016

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE CITY OF FOUNTAIN 2015 PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS, the Fountain Parks and Recreation Advisory Board on May 5, 2015 voted to recommend adoption of the *City of Fountain 2015 Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Master Plan* (the “Plan”) to the City Council; and

WHEREAS, the Fountain Recreation Task Force on May 13, 2015 voted to recommend approval of the “Plan” to the City Council; and

WHEREAS, the Fountain City Council recognizes the need for the “Plan” to provide goals, needs assessments, standards, recommendation and implementation strategies over a 10-year period in an effort to provide for and continually improve park and recreational facilities, preserve open space, and provide trail opportunities; and

WHEREAS, City of Fountain sought citizen input through a community survey and public input meetings, and that input has been incorporated into the “Plan”.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Fountain:

Section 1. That adoption of the *City of Fountain 2015 Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Master Plan* does not commit the City to specific amounts of funding levels or implementation strategies, but will provide guidance to the City Council, Fountain Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and City staff for future consideration of parks, recreation, open space and trails opportunities, services and facilities.

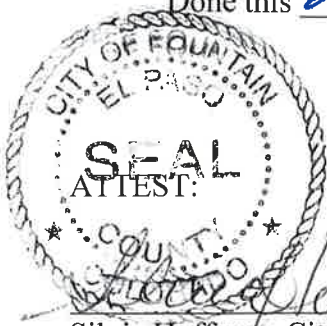
Section 2. That the *City of Fountain 2015 Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Master Plan* is hereby adopted.

Section 3. This Resolution shall become effective upon the effective date of its approval by the City Council.

Done this 26th day of May, 2015.



Gabriel P. Ortega, Mayor



Silvia Huffman, City Clerk

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Special thanks to all the members of the City of Fountain who participated in the development of this plan.

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Plan Summary

In September 2014, the City of Fountain embarked on an update of the 2003 Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan to set the direction and priorities for providing parks, recreation, open space and trails for existing and future residents through the year 2025. Logan Simpson, a landscape architecture and planning firm, was contracted to guide the update of the plan. The existing 2003 Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan focused on the following:

- Defining a comprehensive, City-wide parks system that is well connected by multi-purpose trails.
- Identifying specific recreational facility needs of current and future residents.
- Defining level-of-service standards, a classification system and general design criteria for parks.
- Identifying potential funding tools to implement the plan.

This update to the 2003 plan seeks to document new additions to the system; update the parks and facilities inventory; identify locations for new parks, trail connections, open space, and upgrades or redesigns of existing facilities; identify a strategy for the provision of recreation programs for Fountain residents; and develop a list of priority actions for the next decade. The standards developed for the 2003 plan have proven to be successful and this plan update is focused on applying those standards to existing and future neighborhoods. A community survey of residents was conducted in November 2014 to help guide the update.



The 2015 Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Master Plan is organized into five chapters: Introduction, Existing Resources, Issues and Needs, Recommendations and Implementation. The Master Plan for the community is located and described in Chapter Four - Recommendations. Key recommendations of the plan are:

- The focus for the City of Fountain should be on expanding its recreation programs over the next 3 to 5 years to efficiently and effectively provide basic services and functions. Until the City can support the construction, operation and maintenance of its own recreation center, it is anticipated that indoor recreation programs and services will be offered in school district facilities or by other community partners in the area.
- After 1 to 3 years of successful operation of a broader recreation program, the City should consider conducting a needs assessment to determine the feasibility of developing a recreation center in Fountain. The community center study should include a detailed market analysis that involves a detailed demographic study, assessment of alternative service providers in the area, and soliciting public input through various tools to assure Fountain residents have an opportunity to share their vision, interest and opinions.
- The City should provide 2 acres per 1,000 population of neighborhood parks and 5 acres per 1,000 population of community parks, and equitably distribute these throughout the community. Over the next 10 years, this will mean acquiring, developing and maintaining approximately 4-6 new neighborhood parks and 1-2 new community parks. Funding for new parks, which are needed as a result of an increasing population, should largely be covered by development impact fees. If a developer or homeowners in the Countryside neighborhood are willing to partner with the City, the park site that has remained undeveloped for years should be developed by the City as a public neighborhood park, meeting the needs of those existing residents.
- The City should continue to acquire trail easements and conserve open space, as well as construct trails as shown on the Master Plan Map.
- The City should work to improve satisfaction levels through facility upgrades and maintenance practices.

The document that follows contains the methodology, background information and detailed recommendations of the plan.

Chapter One - Introduction

A. Introduction

Fountain is located along the Colorado Front Range, south of Colorado Springs, 30 miles north of Pueblo and within a 15-minute drive to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Map 1, Regional Context, shows the City's location relative to neighboring communities, public lands and significant natural features. The City's close proximity to the Rocky Mountains provides dramatic views from almost every location in the City. Fountain also encompasses a diverse array of agricultural and natural areas, including riparian habitat along Fountain Creek and Jimmy Camp Creek, upland ranches and sandstone bluffs.

The Fountain town site, along the banks of Fountain Creek at its confluence with Jimmy Camp Creek, was chosen by early settlers in 1859¹. The site was familiar as a crossroads of the Cherokee and Old Santa Fe Trails, which served Native Americans, explorers, trappers and gold-seekers during the years preceding pioneer settlement.

Artifacts, bone fragments and historical accounts attest a long inhabitation by Native Americans in the Fountain vicinity, and many early structural influences resulted from the fear of Indian attack. The Lincoln Trading Post (9 miles south of Fountain on Wigwam Road) has long, thick grout walls, built not only as a house, but as a fortress against possible raiding parties.

Fountain Stage Stop (313 South Main), originally built of adobe and later fancifully reconstructed, was built with a trap door in the front as a probable precaution against Indian attack.

Settlers in Fountain introduced a way of life unfamiliar to the fertile valley, replacing the seasonal encampment by bands of nomadic tribes like the Ute, Arapaho and Cheyenne. The nature of the landscape changed from the grazing land of cattle and uncultivated lands to irrigated agriculture and settlement.

The development of Fountain originated with hopes of recognition as the new state capital. In 1859, the first meeting called to organize a state government in the Pikes Peak region was held in Fountain. In 1888, Fountain vied for political prestige as the capital city. A delegation that planned to visit candidate towns never got closer than Colorado City due to a tremendous explosion caused by a railway accident in Fountain. The explosion destroyed Fountain's chances of becoming the new state capital.

Fountain was incorporated as a town in 1903, and remains one of the oldest incorporated towns in the Pikes Peak region. Development in Fountain was spurred by its ability to serve the region as a centrally located supplier for area cowboys, ranchers, farmers and prospectors. Industries such as dairy farming, cattle-raising, truck farming, and fruit and vegetable production all thrive in the Valley. Fountain also prospered in the 1870's as a railhead shipping point for the area's cattle ranchers.

¹ Fountain historical information can be found on <http://fountaincolorado.blogspot.com/>

Fountain Creek was, and remains, a major determinant in the growth and evolution of the town. It supplies the town with a water source for irrigation and provides for wildlife and lush surroundings, as well as serving as a major recreational asset.

Fort Carson, located immediately west of Fountain, also plays a significant role as a major employer for City residents. This Army Base partners with Fountain School District #8 to provide quality educational facilities as well as the recreational facilities associated with the schools.

In 1999, Fountain received an award from the New York Times as America's "Millennium City." Fountain was chosen after a Queens College sociologist used Census Bureau statistics to find the one city in the country that best represented the population makeup of the U.S. In other words, Fountain is the most accurate representation of the American "melting pot." Because of its unique distinction, Fountain was featured in a special New York Times Millennium Edition on Sunday, December 5, 1999.

Fountain received the distinction of being one of ten "All American Cities" for 2002 by the National Civic League. Fountain was recognized in part for 3 projects that exemplified collaborative problem solving in the community: a comprehensive plan that addressed 50% growth issues; the Lorraine Education and Community Center; and several youth initiatives, including school district education improvements, D.A.R.E. and the Police Activities League. All American Cities are chosen for the ability of their citizens, businesses and governments to effectively address local issues and produce tangible results, thereby serving as models to other cities facing similar challenges.

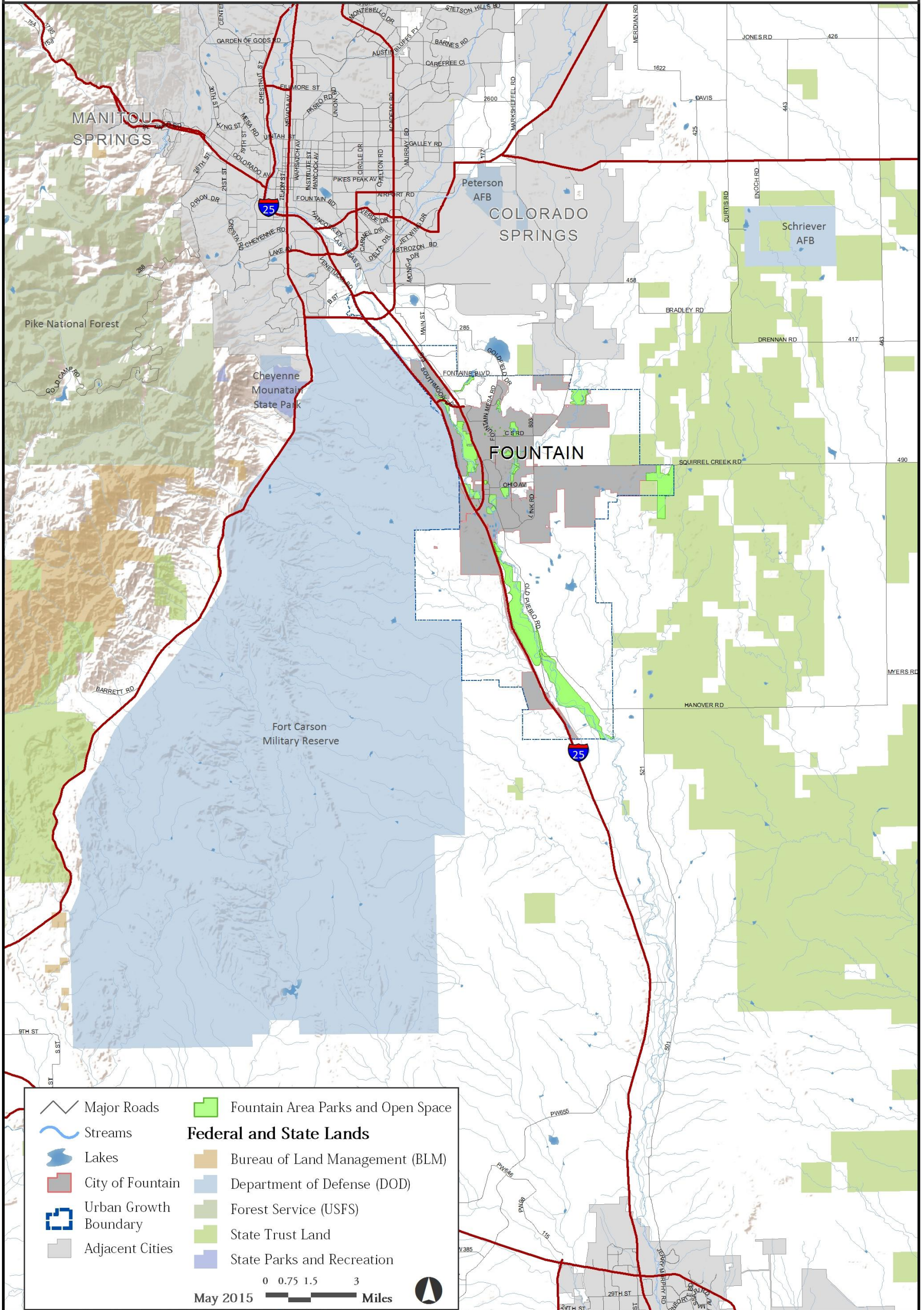
In 2014 Fountain received the distinction of being listed under "Best Places in Colorado for Young Families" and "American City on the Rise".

Today, approximately 28,310 people call Fountain their home, and the City is expected to grow to a population of approximately 36,980 by 2025. To meet the needs of existing and future residents, the City has updated this plan for parks, recreation, open space and trails.





CITY OF FOUNTAIN PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN



REGIONAL CONTEXT



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B. Community Vision and Goals

Fountain City Council adopted an updated Comprehensive Development Plan in 2005 that includes several principles and policies related to the provision of parks, recreation, open space and trails. These policies address new development, acquisition, environmental stewardship, natural resources, transportation and community amenities. These principles and policies relate primarily to “Greenfrastructure”. While this is an invented word for the Fountain community, it represents the community’s desire to preserve and protect the natural amenities and open spaces throughout Fountain, utilize the creek system as the backbone of a trail system, and place a high priority on the development of parks and recreational opportunities throughout the City. There are 3 elements related to “Greenfrastructure”:

- Preservation and Protection of Natural Amenities and Resources
- Trails and Open Space System
- Recreational Opportunities

The specific principles and policies in the Comprehensive Plan that relate most directly are:

- Provide a geographically balanced and equitable park and recreation system that has facilities distributed throughout the community, which are responsive to all age groups and user groups.
- Involve citizens and special user groups in all aspects of parks and recreation planning and implementation.
- Examine and include the needs of special categories of citizens (i.e. the elderly, handicapped and low to moderate income) when developing recreation and open space plans and facilities.
- Strive to improve or expand park facilities and services in relation to population growth, population composition and user demand.
- Ensure that the City’s parks, open space, and recreational facilities enhance the quality of life for all Fountain citizens.
- Assign the highest priority for park acquisition and improvement to those developed areas of the City that have the greatest deficiencies.
- Emphasize active uses, such as tennis courts and ball fields, in community or neighborhood-related recreation areas. If applicable, encourage the creation of a community gathering/activity place in conjunction with these recreation areas.
- Provide a diverse system of developed park land, open space, natural areas, trail systems, and recreation programs and facilities to meet the needs of Fountain’s present population as well as future generations.
- Inventory current and desired land available for parks and open space and prioritize areas best suited as parks or preserved natural areas. Recognize that certain open space areas should not be used for recreation but left alone as wildlife habitat.
- Develop new neighborhood parks in conformance with the adopted Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan. Consider locating new parks along natural drainage ways to allow easy access by bike or foot.

- Ensure that all new development acknowledges, respects, and incorporates existing environmental constraints and opportunities so that Fountain’s natural and man-made environment is preserved and enhanced.

In addition to “Greeninfrastructure”, the following principle relates to recreation and trails.

- Promote biking and walking as viable forms of transportation and recreation by developing a comprehensive path and trail system that interconnects neighborhoods with shopping, parks and recreation, work, schools and systems of adjacent jurisdictions. Additionally, assess the possible special recreational uses for such a path and trail system (i.e., horseback riding, handicap accessibility, rollerblading, skateboarding, etc.).

Through this Comprehensive Plan, the City is truly making a statement about its commitment to parks, recreation, open space and trails in the community.

C. Scope of the Plan

Logan Simpson was retained by the City of Fountain to create this Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Master Plan, with specific focus on:

- Addressing a need for developing recreation programs and documenting priorities for the programs.
- Documenting new additions to the system.
- Updating the parks and facilities inventory.
- Identifying locations for new parks and trail connections, upgrades or redesigns of existing facilities.
- Developing a list of priority actions for the next decade.

The plan was developed through a series of worksessions with the Park and Recreation Advisory Board and the Recreation Task Force (RTF), and various forms of community outreach. The Park and Recreation Advisory Board and the Recreation Task Force held joint worksessions in October and December of 2014 and February of 2015, as well as reviewing the draft plan. These meetings discussed the direction of the plan, reviewed key survey data, and identified priority programs and facilities.

A survey of Fountain residents regarding their perceptions, use patterns and priorities for recreational programs and facilities was mailed to 2,000 households. The survey sought to determine use and satisfaction of park and recreation facilities, interest in potential new parks and recreation activities, input on budget and financing options for park and recreation areas. Results are summarized later in this plan.

This plan represents the vision for the City through the year 2025. The plan should be revisited and updated periodically, ideally every 5 years, to ensure that it accurately reflects current and future needs and changing conditions, as well as to reestablish priorities within the community.

Chapter Two - Existing Resources

This chapter documents the parks, recreational facilities, trails and open space areas currently owned and maintained by the City of Fountain as well as those provided by others. Fountain owns and maintains a total of 7 parks that offer amenities such as picnic tables and shelters, playgrounds, and ball fields. The types of amenities vary in each park (see Table 1). A few of Fountain's parks offer more unusual amenities, such as a climbing wall, disc golf course and skateboard park. Fountain also owns and maintains 6 natural areas/open spaces. El Paso County owns and maintains 4 parks within Fountain's Urban Growth Boundary: 1 neighborhood park, 1 community park, 1 regional park and 1 open space area, part of which is outside the Urban Growth Boundary. There is also 1 undeveloped park site owned by Countryside Homeowner's Association, and 8 parks owned by Metro.

Map 2, Existing Parks, Trails, Open Space and Recreational Facilities, shows the location of various City, county, school district and other public or non-profit facilities and parkland.

A. Existing Public Parks

Fountain has a total of 136.24 developed acres of parkland. Of this, 7 sites (14 acres) are City-owned neighborhood or mini-parks. Two sites, Ceresa Park (9.9 acres) and Widefield Park (17 acres), are neighborhood/community parks owned and maintained by El Paso County. Metcalfe Memorial Park and Fountain Mesa Park, which total 46.5 acres, are considered community parks and are City-owned. Cross Creek Park is owned and maintained by a Metropolitan District but is open to all residents. Fountain Creek Park (465 total acres; 25 acres developed with active park facilities) is a regional park provided by El Paso County. The County also administers the 930-acre Clear Spring Ranch Open Space. One undeveloped park site (11 acres) is owned by the Countryside Homeowner's Association. Fountain has a total of 1,149.46 acres of open space/natural resources. The total acres of land dedicated to parks and open space (developed or undeveloped) is 1,811.19 acres. Map 2 shows the locations of the various public and non-profit parks, recreational facilities and trails within the Fountain Urban Growth Boundary. Table 1 lists the inventory of parkland in the Fountain Urban Growth Boundary. Table 1 also lists the specific recreational facilities that are located within each park. How the need for recreational facilities translates into the need for parkland is discussed in Chapter Three.

Mini parks are generally 3 acres or less in size and serve residents within 0.25 mile. They are typically accessible via walkway or urban trail and are similar to neighborhood parks, except that they have only a few neighborhood park amenities due to their limited size.

Neighborhood parks are centrally located within the area they serve, and are often located adjacent to an elementary or junior high school. They are accessible to residential areas within a walking distance of 0.5 mile and are usually 5 to 12 acres in size. Neighborhood parks usually provide amenities such as paved multi-purpose areas for skating/court games, ADA accessible trails, picnic areas, playgrounds and on-street parking. Programmed sports activities at these parks should be limited to practices. Currently, the City of Fountain provides a level of service for neighborhood parks of 1.55 acres per 1,000 population; including portions of community parks that serve neighborhood park functions (see Chapter Three).

Community parks are usually 30 to 100 acres in size, accessible to residents within 1.5 miles and provide opportunities for community-wide activities. Facilities often combine the amenities of neighborhood parks (sports fields and courts, picnic shelters, etc.) with natural areas or other interesting elements, such as water features, festival spaces, forests or gardens. Ideally, a community park is accessible via a regional trail system. Currently, the City of Fountain provides a level of service for community parks of 3.8 acres per 1,000 population when the developed portion of Fountain Creek Regional Park is included.

Regional parks are typically natural resource-based parks, located opportunistically to preserve highly valued landscapes and provide large-scale open space, natural areas and recreational facilities for the region. As such, there is not a recommended level of service standard for this type of park in Fountain. El Paso County provides regional parks for the Fountain and Colorado Springs areas, as well as in other locations throughout the county.

The service areas for mini, neighborhood and community parks were defined as circular regions surrounding each park. A radius of 0.25 mile was used for mini-parks and 0.5 mile for neighborhood parks, because these parks are intended to be easily accessible by pedestrians and bicyclists. The areas served by neighborhood-level parks did not include areas on the opposite side of major barriers to pedestrians and bicyclists, such as large roads and railroad corridors. Community parks were considered to serve as neighborhood parks for the residential areas immediately adjacent to them.

As shown on Map 3, there are several residential areas within Fountain that are not currently served by a neighborhood-level park. Areas not served by a neighborhood park should be targeted for strategically locating future parks. If this is not possible, access to nearby parks could potentially be improved by constructing grade-separated trail crossings of these major barriers.

Communities across the Colorado Front Range typically apply a 1 to 2-mile service radius for community parks to equitably distribute these facilities across their cities. A service radius of 1.5 miles was applied to community parks in Fountain, which is the same as that used by the City of Colorado Springs. Map 4 shows the service areas associated with community parks, including the developed portion of Fountain Creek Regional Park, which was considered to serve community park needs. As shown on the map, Fountain is relatively well served by community-level parks.

Table 1 Parkland Inventory

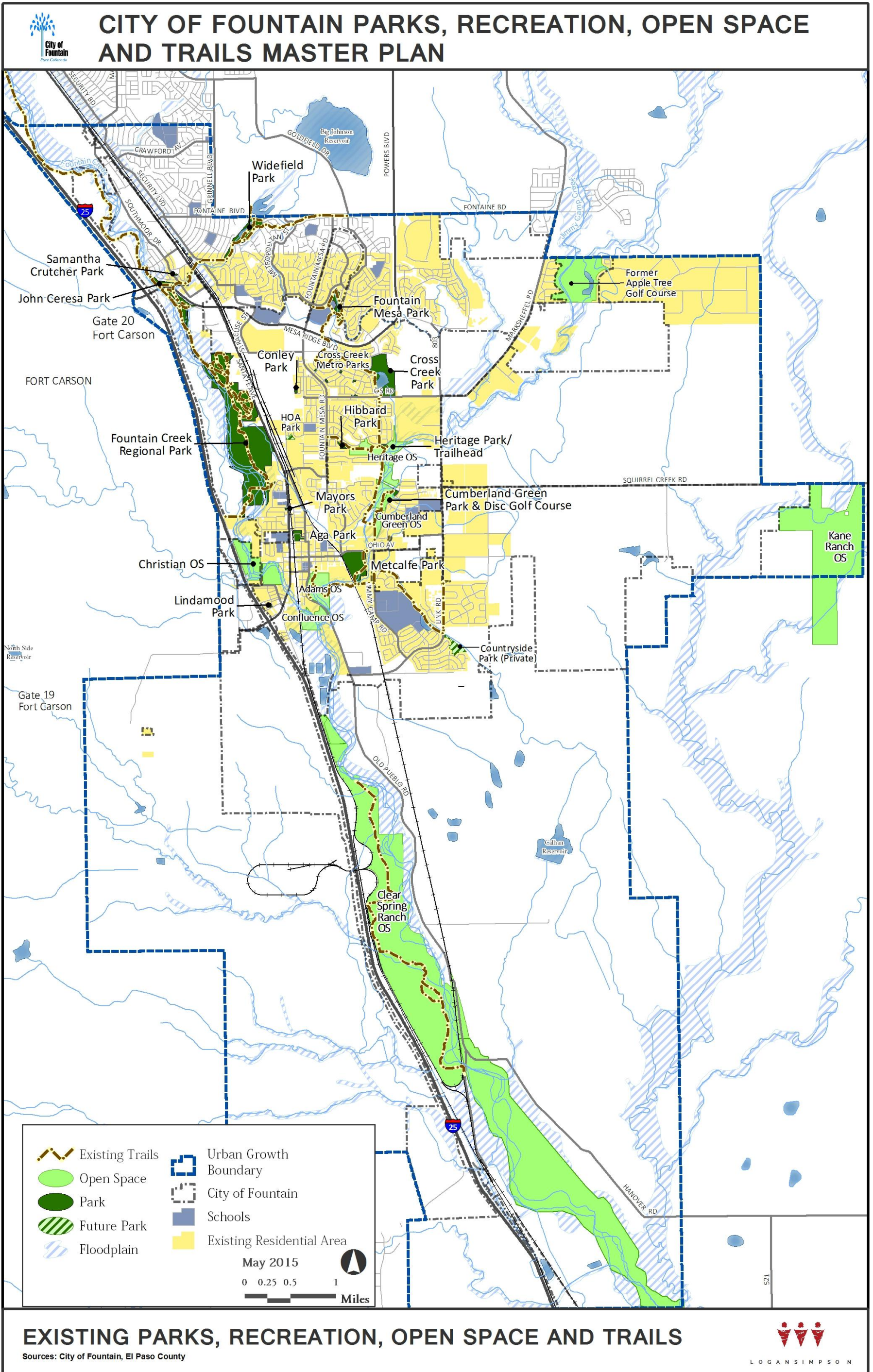
| Fountain Parks and Open Space Inventory (draft) | | Baseball/Softball Field | Basketball Court | Climbing Wall | Disc Golf Course | Fishing | Horseshoe Pit | Multi-use Field | Nature Center | Picnic Tables | Picnic Shelter | Playground | Restrooms | Riding Area | Skateboard Park | Tennis Courts | Trails | Volleyball Court | Acres Developed | Total Acres | Notes |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|---------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------|---------------|--------|------------------|-----------------|--------------|--|
| Park Name | Administration | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Neighborhood/ Mini Parks | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Aga Park | City of Fountain | 1 | 0.5 | | | | 1 | 1 | | 4 | 3 | Y | Y | | | 1 | | | 4.79 | 7.04 | 2 potential soccer fields, splash pad |
| Conley Park | City of Fountain | | | | | | | | | 1 | | Y | | | | | | | 1.23 | 1.23 | |
| Heritage Park/Trail | City of Fountain | | | 1 | | | | | | | | Y | | | | | Y | | 2.63 | 2.63 | Exercise stations |
| Hibbard Park | City of Fountain | | 0.5 | 1 | | | | 1 | | | 1 | Y | | | | | Y | | 4.00 | 4.80 | Small practice area |
| Lindamood Park | City of Fountain | | 0.5 | | | | | | | | 3 | Y | | | | | | | 0.61 | 0.61 | |
| Mayors Park | City of Fountain | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0.38 | 0.38 | Area to relax with benches |
| Samantha Crutcher | City of Fountain | | 1 | | | | | | | 1 | | Y | | | | | | | 0.35 | 0.35 | |
| Countryside Park | Privately owned | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0.00 | 11.00 | Potential to be public park someday |
| Ceresa Park | El Paso County | 1 | | | | | | 1 | | 3 | | Y | Y | | | | Y | | 9.91 | 9.91 | Potential for baseball/softball fields |
| Cross Creek Park 1 | Metro District | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0.49 | 0.49 | Turf area, small practice area |
| Cross Creek Park 2 | Metro District | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0.45 | 0.45 | Turf area |
| Cross Creek Park 3 | Metro District | | | | | | | | | | | Y | | | | | | | 0.49 | 0.49 | 1 slide, 3 benches, small turf area |
| Cross Creek Park 4 | Metro District | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0.56 | 0.56 | Turf Area |
| Cross Creek Park 5 | Metro District | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0.48 | 0.48 | Turf area |
| Cumberland Green | Metro District | | | | | | | | | 6 | | Y | | | | | | | 2.38 | 2.38 | Trail and open space with turf area |
| Neighborhood Park | Metro District | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0.00 | 2.31 | Turf area |
| Totals | | 2 | 2.5 | 2 | | | 1 | 3 | | 15 | 7 | | | | | 1 | | | 28.75 | 45.11 | |
| Total Neighborhood Parkland for Level of Service Analysis | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Includes 5 acres each from Cross Creek, Metcalfe and Fountain Mesa Parks that contribute to neighborhood park needs. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 43.75 | | |
| Level of Service (Acres per 1,000 population) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1.55 | | |

| Fountain Parks and Open Space Inventory (draft) | | Baseball/Softball Field | Basketball Court | Climbing Wall | Disc Golf Course | Fishing | Horseshoe Pit | Multi-use Field | Nature Center | Picnic Tables | Picnic Shelter | Playground | Restrooms | Riding Area | Skateboard Park | Tennis Courts | Trails | Volleyball Court | Acreage Developed | Total Acreage | Notes |
|---|------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|---------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------|---------------|--------|------------------|-------------------|---------------|--|
| Park Name | Administration | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Community Parks | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Fountain Mesa Park | City of Fountain | | 1 | | | | | 2 | | | 2 | Y | Y | | | | Y | Y | 10.00 | 17.40 | Large turf open space and potential future fields. |
| Metcalfe Park | City of Fountain | 4* | 1 | Y | | | 2 | 2 | | Y | 9 | Y | Y | 1 | 1 | | Y | Y | 36.49 | 41.44 | Four baseball/softball fields with concession. Private riding/roping club. Several open fields for soccer/flag football. |
| Widefield Park | El Paso County | 1 | 1.5 | | 1 | | | 2 | | 2 | | Y | Y | | | 1 | | | 17.00 | 33.51 | Not within the City of Fountain |
| Cross Creek Park | Metro District | | | Y | | | | 2 | | 4 | 4 | Y | Y | | | | Y | | 19.00 | 59.20 | BMX course and multi-use fields. Hale Reservoir has potential to be a fishing attraction. |
| Totals | | 5 | 3.5 | | 1 | | 2 | 8 | | 6 | 15 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | 82.49 | 151.55 | |

* Indicates lighted field; **12 acres of multiuse fields

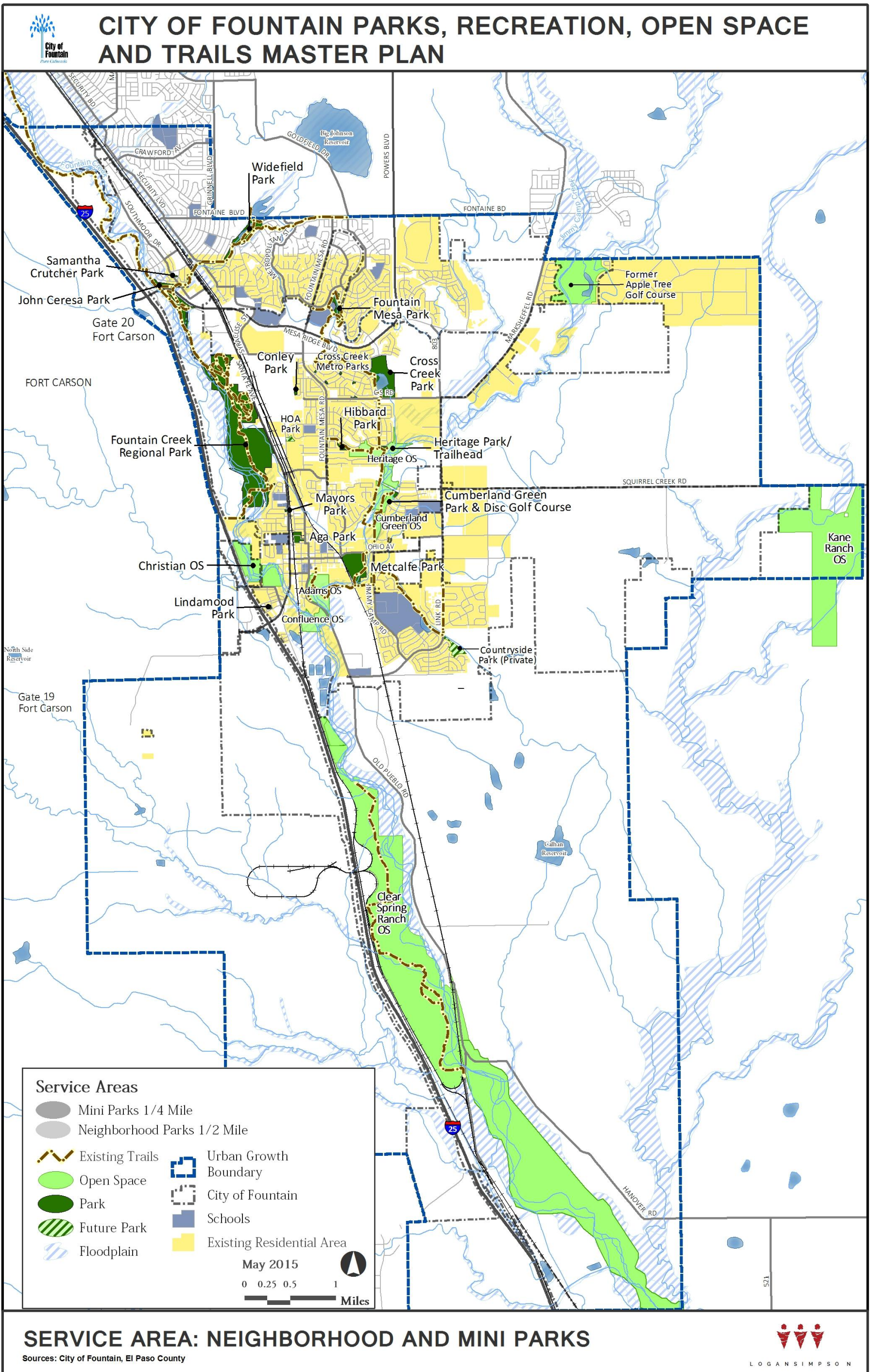
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| Regional Parks | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Fountain Creek | El Paso County | | | | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y** | | Y | | Y | | | | Y | Y | 25 | 465.07 | County-owned and maintained. Includes Christian Open Space |
| Totals | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 25 | 465.07 | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|---|--|----------------|--|---|
| Natural Areas/Open Space | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cumberland Green | City of Fountain | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | Y | | 60.55 | | 18 hole disc golf course. Conservation easement on northerly parcel |
| Clear Spring Ranch Connector Trail | City of Fountain | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 22.5 | | Includes trail easement |
| Adams Open Space | City of Fountain | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Y | | 48.48 | | Conservation Easement |
| Heritage Open Space | City of Fountain | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Y | | 53.85 | | |
| Clear Spring Ranch Open Space | El Paso County | | | | | | | | | | | | Y | | | | Y | | 930.5 | | |
| Confluence Open Space | City of Fountain | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 33.58 | | |
| Total Natural Areas/Open Space | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1149.46 | | |



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Map 3 Service Area for Neighborhood and Mini Parks



SERVICE AREA: NEIGHBORHOOD AND MINI PARKS

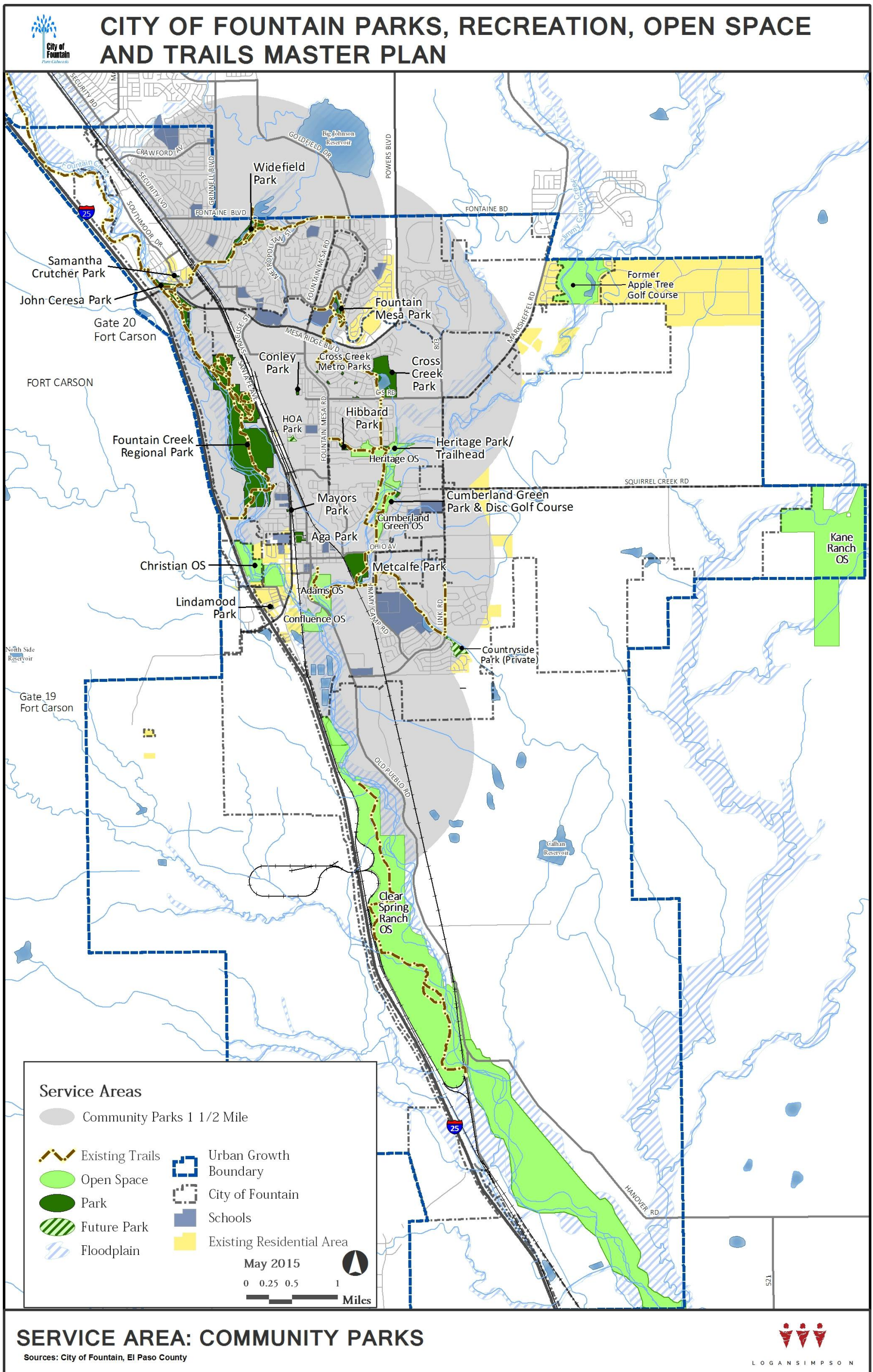
Sources: City of Fountain, El Paso County



LOGANSIMPSON

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Map 4 Service Area for Community Parks



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B. Existing School District and Private/Non-Profit Recreation Facilities

Fountain-Fort Carson School District #8 serves the majority of Fountain residents. It includes 8 elementary schools, 2 middle schools and 1 high school.

Residents of the northern part of Fountain are served by 2 schools that are part of Widefield School District #3 - Janitell Junior High School and Mesa Ridge High School. Widefield is a special district in unincorporated El Paso County that operates schools and manages Widefield Community Education and Recreation Services, better known as the Community and Recreation Center. This district overlaps portions of the City of Fountain and a significant portion of the northern area within the Urban Growth Boundary. The Widefield Community and Recreation Center, which includes 4 baseball/softball fields, a swimming pool, 4 tennis courts and a soccer field, is located on Aspen Drive, just north of the Fountain Urban Growth Boundary. Many Fountain residents participate in programs and use the facilities provided by this special district. Sports programming provided by the Widefield Community Center uses the Janitell Junior High School gym for basketball and volleyball games; Janitell and Watson Junior High School gyms are used for basketball and volleyball practices. Other school facilities throughout District #3 are also used for practices and include baseball/softball fields, soccer fields and gymnasiums.

The Fountain Valley YMCA, located at Lorraine Community Center, provides some sports programming in addition to child watch, strength and conditioning equipment, and gymnasium space. The Teen Center is located at the Welte Education Center and includes a recreation room, computer lounge, sound studio and opportunity center. The YMCA also offers swim lessons and open swim sessions at the School District #8 pool, located at Fountain/Fort Carson High School.

D. Existing Open Space

The City currently has 5 natural areas/open spaces consisting of approximately 219 acres of open space lands. El Paso County manages Clear Springs Ranch Open Space, a 930-acre area on Fountain Creek, approximately half of which is located within Fountain's Urban Growth Boundary.



C. Existing Trails

The City currently has approximately 28 miles of primary, multi-purpose trails located within the Urban Growth Boundary. These trails are gravel based, typically 8 to 10 feet wide, and are intended to accommodate a variety of uses including biking, walking, jogging, equestrian and in-line skating. The majority of the existing trail system is located along Fountain Creek and was constructed by El Paso County while other City trails are located along Jimmy Camp Creek.

The trails along Fountain Creek collectively make up a regional and statewide system that will eventually link communities along the Front Range, from the southern to northern Colorado borders. This trail is known as the Colorado Front Range Trail (CFRT). The CFRT, when complete, will stretch almost 900 miles through 14 counties linking diverse communities, scenic landscapes, cultural and historic points, parks, open space and other attractions. Portions of this trail are already built through the City. A trail connects the City of Colorado Springs to Fountain Creek Regional Park in the northern part of the City. Through the southern reaches of the City the trail passes through Clear Spring Ranch Open Space via a trail easement. Connecting a trail from Fountain Creek Regional Park to the Clear Spring Ranch Trail is a priority for the City and other governmental entities and regional trail advocates in the region.



E. Environmental Considerations

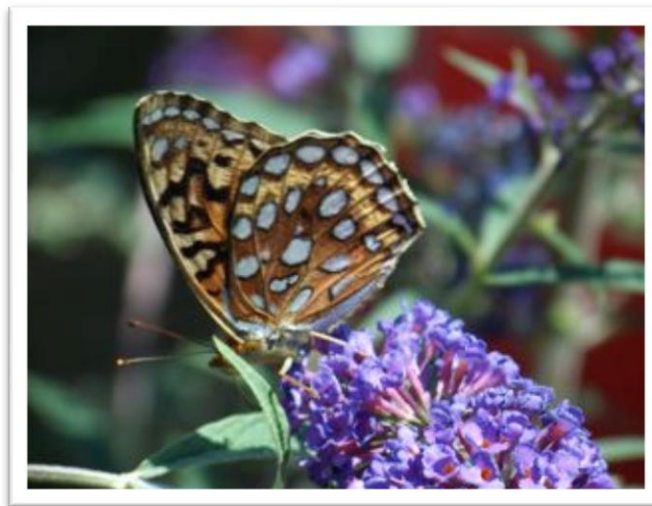
Natural Communities

Natural communities in the Fountain area are associated with riparian and wetland communities along Fountain Creek and Jimmy Camp Creek drainages, and small remnant upland shrubland communities. These natural communities are important to the areas' wildlife, act as natural buffers, provide a measure of ecological diversity and add aesthetic value.

The natural riparian communities along Fountain and Jimmy Camp Creeks vary in width, from several hundred to several thousand feet wide. Both of these drainages are prone to overbank flooding, which promotes the establishment of new stands of plains cottonwood trees along their banks and on newly established sand bars. The riparian area of both creeks is dominated by plains cottonwoods, which have an understory of willows, various grasses and forbs. The

natural habitat found along Fountain and Jimmy Camp Creeks is very important to a variety of wildlife species. Fountain Creek Regional Park Nature Center, located in the Fountain Creek corridor, is an important area for nesting great blue heron; currently, over 50 active nests have been established in the rookery. A variety of raptors, including red-tailed hawk and great-horned owls also frequent the area. The Fountain Creek site includes 3 areas that are known to be used by wintering Bald Eagles for roosting and feeding. The abundant habitat supports a wide variety of passerine birds, including finches, cardinals, grosbeaks, warblers, vireos, woodpeckers and many others. Water birds, including diving and dabbling ducks and wading and shore birds are also found in the riparian areas. The area is also important to a variety of mammals. Colorado Parks and Wildlife has mapped much of the Fountain Creek corridor as a mule deer concentration area. Deer are drawn from the surrounding uplands to the riparian area for water, food, cover and thermal protection. As a result, approximately 1 mile of Interstate 25 has been determined to be a mule deer highway crossing danger zone. Other animals such as muskrat, red fox, raccoon, skunk and various small rodents also use riparian areas.

Natural wetland communities are also associated with the Fountain Creek and Jimmy Camp Creek riparian areas, as well as along smaller tributaries associated with these drainages. The major wetlands correspond to the riparian corridors and additional wetlands can be found around the margins of numerous small ponds and lakes and in areas with high water tables. National Wetland Inventory (NWI) mapping indicates that riverine, palustrine and lacustrine wetlands are scattered over wide parts of the growth management area. Dominant species in wetland areas include broad and narrow leaf cattail and a variety of sedges and rushes. Wetlands are important for providing habitat for a variety of mammal and bird species, attenuating flood flows, improving water quality, and helping to discharge or recharge ground water.



In the past, upland natural areas have been highly fragmented due to development. Historically, this area was dominated by mid-grass prairie species and primarily used for livestock grazing. Dominant species in the mid-grass prairies were sideoats grama, galleta, foxtail barley, western wheatgrass, bluebunch wheatgrass, little bluestem, New Mexico feathergrass, green needlegrass, and needle and thread. Mid-grass prairie communities are found in upland areas

east of Fountain Creek and interspersed as patches along the Fountain and Jimmy Camp Creek riparian corridors. Along the western region of the Fountain area, primarily the area immediately adjacent to either side of Interstate 25, small remnants of short grass prairie may also exist.

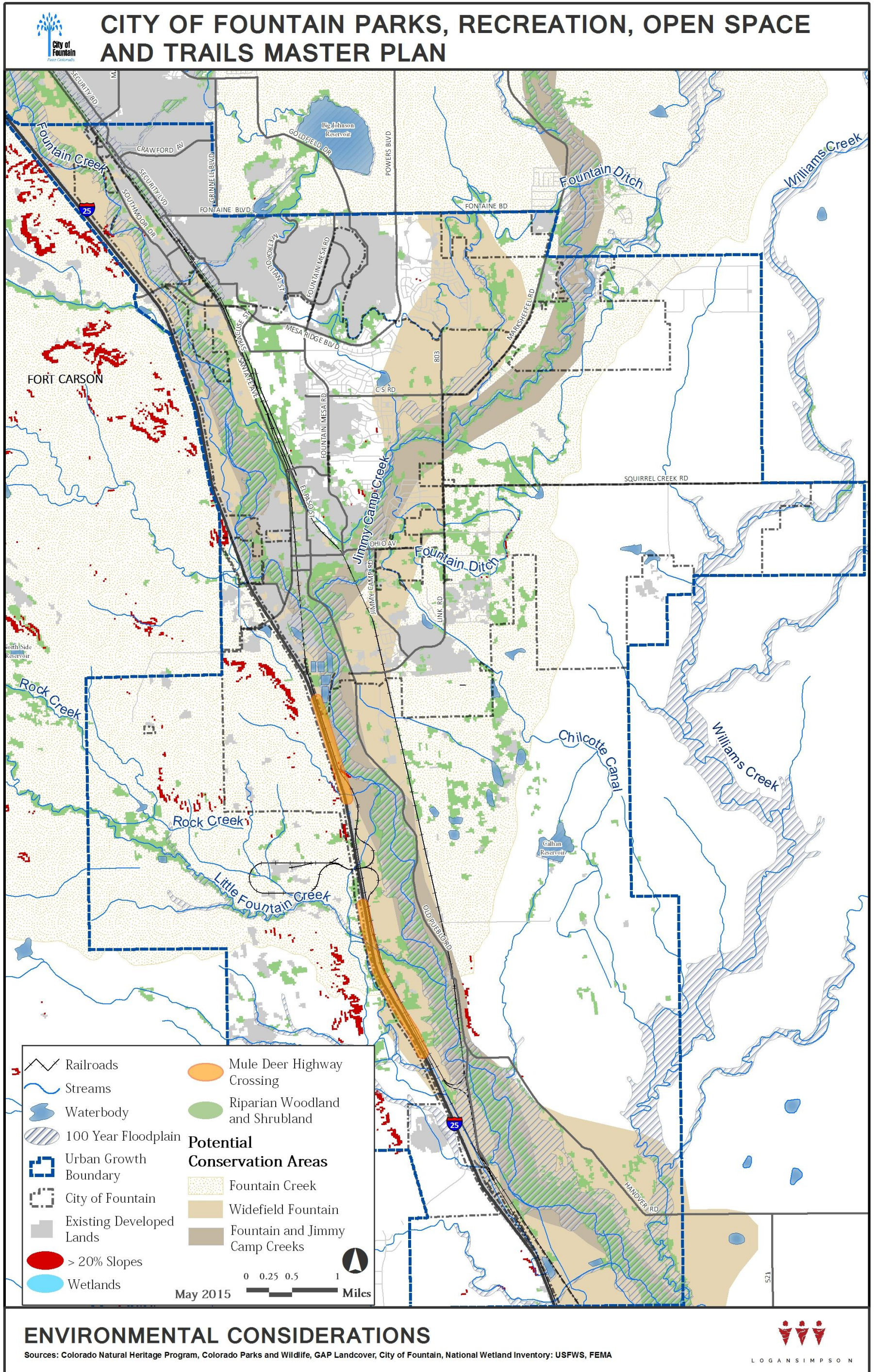
Species here would be dominated by buffalograss and blue grama. Grass prairie natural areas are important to several bird species, including mountain plover and burrowing owl. Upland natural areas also support communities of prairie dogs and can act as buffer to riparian areas. Map 5 shows the areas combined from 2 sources of data regarding upland grass areas - one identifies upland associated with major drainage basins, and another specifically maps the upland grass complex along the creeks themselves.

Development-Restricted Areas and Hazards

In Fountain, there are areas where development should not or cannot occur, resulting in potential opportunities for open space, parks and trails, as well as preservation of wildlife habitat. Map 5 shows the 100-year floodplain², which is not advisable for development. Other potential hazard areas, which may occur but are not documented in Fountain, are wildfire-prone areas, steep slopes, contaminated areas, ground subsidence and expansive soils.

Map 5 shows the 2 major FEMA floodplains in the City: Fountain Creek and Jimmy Camp Creek. The Fountain Comprehensive Plan of 2005 states that the City should "Prohibit development within the 100-Year Flood Plain of Fountain and Jimmy Camp Creeks and continue the practice of integrating the Flood Plain areas of Fountain and Jimmy Camp Creeks with the County's regional park and trail system." Other smaller floodplains and storm water conveyance channels associated with secondary drainages have not been delineated by FEMA and are not shown. However, they too should be considered as opportunities for open space connections.

² FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Authority) 100-year floodplain.



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Chapter Three - Issues and Needs

A. Population and Demographic Characteristics

In 2014, the City of Fountain had a population of 28,310³. According to the City Planning Division, the City's population is expected to increase by 8,670 by 2025, resulting in a population of 36,980. This large increase in population over the next 12 years means that the City must be proactively planning for new parks, trails and recreational facilities to meet the needs of new residents in addition to the needs of existing residents.

Currently, the average household has 2.91 people, which is somewhat higher than the state average of 2.51, higher than the El Paso County average of 2.58, and higher than the Colorado Springs average of 2.48. This number is important when applying level-of-service standards for parkland (discussed later in this chapter) and calculating development fees, which is discussed in the chapter containing implementation tools.

The ethnic makeup of the community is mixed and representative of the U.S. as a whole. Whites comprise 71.9% of the population⁴. A significant number of people (19.4%) are of Latino or Hispanic descent. Blacks represent 10% of the population and Asians represent 2.4%⁵. In 2010, the percentage of the Fountain population born outside the United States was 4.9%. The cultural diversity of the community should be acknowledged when planning for specific facilities in parks so that people of all cultures have the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors, individually or as part of a larger family or social group.

Approximately 27% of the population is under age 20; with 18.3% (4,702 people) age 5 to 14, the predominant age of children who are most active in programmed recreational sports leagues.

Five point four percent (5.4%) of the total population in Fountain is age 65 or older. Twenty four percent (24%) are age 18 to 34 and 32% are age 35 to 64. Of course, people of all ages use city parks, trails and recreational facilities. Recent trends are that many young adults are participating in recreational team sports activities into their 20's and 30's as well. The reason that this is significant is that sports fields (e.g., baseball, softball, soccer, football, lacrosse) take the largest amount of space in parks, and communities need to plan adequately for these demands. The relationship between facility needs and acreage of parkland is



³ 2012 American Communities Survey (ACS)

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

discussed later in this chapter.

Additionally, children and adults who live outside city limits near Fountain are also potential participants and users of community facilities. The population of the greater Fountain service area has not been officially determined.

Based on Transportation Analysis Zones supplied by El Paso County for growth between 2010 and 2035, it is apparent that the greatest growth will happen at the eastern and southern portions of the Fountain city limits. The main portion of Fountain shows a steady pattern of 50 to 75% growth through 2035, which while not as high as the other areas, is still a significant increase. This growth is attributable to infill development. Another important pattern to note is the high percent of growth outside the city limits, as these non-Fountain residents will likely be utilizing park amenities within the city limits as well.

B. Community Survey

The City of Fountain commissioned a survey of Fountain residents regarding their perceptions, use patterns and priorities for recreational programs and facilities. The survey was conducted by Left Brain Concepts, Inc., a Denver-area market research and consulting firm. The results from this survey are summarized in the sections that follow.

It is important to note that this survey was administered a few months after the City formed its Recreation Division in response to expressed needs from its citizens, and had just begun to provide a few youth recreational programs.

Survey Goals and Objectives

The objectives of the survey were to determine:

- Use of parks and recreation activities and facilities in the City
- Satisfaction with Fountain's park system
- Interest in potential parks and recreation activities and facilities
- Input on how the City should allocate budget for parks and recreation
- Reaction to raising sales and/or property taxes for additional park and recreation areas

Methodology and Respondents' Characteristics

The survey was conducted via U.S. postal service in November, 2014. Residents were also given the opportunity to respond electronically from a link that was printed on the survey. The City of Fountain printed and mailed the survey to 2,000 households (including individual units in multi-family housing) from an exhaustive list of residential dwelling units in Fountain which was provided by Fountain Utilities.

The survey asked a head of household, 18 years or older complete the survey. A total of 192 surveys were completed, 179 via mail and 13 electronically. The maximum margin of error for a sample of 192 is $\pm 7\%$ at the 95% level of confidence. Due to a lower response from residents under the age of 30, responses were adjusted to virtually mirror the demographics of Fountain as reported in the 2010 U.S. Census, as is customary in reporting results of community surveys.

Key Findings

Satisfaction with parks, trails, maintenance, programs

Residents were asked how satisfied they are with various aspects of the City's parks and recreation system. Approximately two-thirds of the respondents are satisfied with the overall quality of Fountain's parks or the trail system. Half (51%) are satisfied with the maintenance of the parks. However, only 35% are satisfied with the recreational programs that are available to Fountain residents (Table 2). The city has already begun to address these results by creating the Recreation Division and offering new programming for area residents.

Table 2 Satisfaction with Parks, Trails, Maintenance, and Programs

| Satisfaction | Agree | Disagree | Not sure |
|--|-------|----------|----------|
| I am satisfied with the overall quality of the City's park system | 66% | 19% | 15% |
| I am satisfied with the City's trail system | 60% | 25% | 15% |
| I am satisfied with the level of maintenance in the City's parks | 51% | 27% | 22% |
| I am satisfied with the types of recreational programs that are available for Fountain residents | 35% | 36% | 29% |

Sample size – 185

Condition of Fountain parks

Two-thirds (64%) of the respondents rated the condition of Fountain parks as good and a quarter (24%) rated them as fair. Three percent (3%) rated the condition of the parks as poor, and 9% rated the condition as excellent (Table 3).

Table 3 Condition of Fountain Parks

| Condition | % of respondents |
|-----------|------------------|
| Excellent | 9% |
| Good | 64% |
| Fair | 24% |
| Poor | 3% |

Sample size - 182

Activities and facilities

Respondents were asked if they (or any person in their household) participate in various activities or utilize facilities. Then, for each activity in which household members participate, respondents were asked if they think there are too many, about the right number, or not enough of these facilities in the Fountain area. Finally, they were asked if they would engage in each activity (or engage in it more) if there were more of these types of facilities in Fountain. These questions were intended to show what activities residents participate in and how many people use the recreational facilities in the area, as well as what activities require additional facilities/opportunities. Table 4 summarizes their responses.

Thirty four (34) activities were evaluated by respondents in the survey, including indoor and outdoor activities ranging from volleyball and basketball to fishing, natural areas, and performing arts. Two of the top 11 activities in which people participate are indoor activities. The top 11 activities consist of passive parks, natural surface trails, wildlife and natural areas, playgrounds, paved trails, dog parks, fishing ponds, indoor swimming, outdoor water play areas, performing arts venues and outdoor swimming.

Overall, the survey showed that residents feel there are not enough facilities in Fountain for the activities in which they participate. The exceptions are passive parks, natural surface trails, wildlife and natural areas, playgrounds, disc golf, baseball fields and senior centers, where people feel that facilities/opportunities are at about the right number.

Of the respondents to the survey, 35% or more indicated that more facilities are needed for all types of activities. Seventy percent (70%) or more of respondents indicated that Fountain does not have enough dog parks, fishing ponds, indoor swimming, outdoor water play areas, performing arts venues, outdoor swimming, weight training/fitness, arts or crafts, climbing walls, fitness classes, archery, indoor running tracks, tennis, dance classes, soccer, golf, outdoor basketball, community meeting and event rooms, indoor basketball, or indoor volleyball facilities. Other facilities that more than half (>50%) of the respondents who used the facilities rated as "not enough" include paved trails, football, outdoor volleyball, softball, outdoor skating at skate parks, senior centers, equestrian facilities, and lacrosse.

For the following listed activities, 40% or more of the respondents said they would engage in the activities (or engage in them more) if facilities (or more of them) were available in Fountain:

- Passive parks – 60%
- Fishing ponds – 59%
- Natural surface trails – 56%
- Wildlife, natural areas – 55%
- Indoor swimming – 54%
- Paved trails – 53%
- Outdoor swimming – 52%
- Dog parks – 51%
- Weight training / fitness equipment – 51%
- Performing arts venues – 48%
- Fitness classes – 48%
- Outdoor water play area – 47%
- Arts or crafts classes – 47%
- Playgrounds – 43%
- Climbing walls – 41%
- Indoor running track – 40%

Table 4 Activity Participation and Number of Facilities

| Type of facility | Participate in this activity? | | Are there too many, about the right number, or not enough in and around Fountain? | | | Engage in activity if more facilities were available? | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----|---|-------------|------------|---|-----|
| | Yes | No | Too Many | About Right | Not Enough | Yes | No |
| Passive parks | 61% | 39% | - | 60% | 40% | 60% | 40% |
| Natural surface trails | 55% | 45% | - | 51% | 49% | 56% | 44% |
| Wildlife, natural areas | 55% | 45% | - | 59% | 41% | 55% | 45% |
| Playgrounds | 54% | 46% | - | 63% | 37% | 43% | 57% |
| Paved trails | 46% | 54% | - | 37% | 63% | 53% | 47% |
| Dog park | 37% | 63% | - | 16% | 84% | 51% | 49% |
| Fishing ponds | 36% | 64% | - | 13% | 87% | 59% | 41% |
| Indoor swimming | 33% | 67% | 4% | 12% | 84% | 54% | 46% |
| Outdoor water play area | 32% | 68% | - | 22% | 78% | 47% | 53% |
| Performing arts venues | 31% | 69% | - | 6% | 94% | 48% | 52% |
| Outdoor swimming | 29% | 71% | - | 8% | 92% | 52% | 48% |
| Weight training / fitness equipment | 27% | 73% | - | 11% | 89% | 51% | 49% |
| Arts or crafts classes | 26% | 74% | - | 19% | 81% | 47% | 53% |
| Climbing walls | 25% | 75% | - | - | 100% | 41% | 59% |
| Fitness class | 24% | 76% | - | 9% | 91% | 48% | 52% |
| Archery | 21% | 79% | - | 5% | 95% | 37% | 63% |
| Disc golf | 18% | 82% | - | 54% | 46% | 22% | 78% |
| Indoor running track | 18% | 82% | - | - | 100% | 40% | 60% |
| Tennis | 17% | 83% | - | 7% | 93% | 27% | 73% |
| Dance classes | 17% | 83% | - | 5% | 95% | 35% | 65% |
| Soccer | 16% | 84% | 9% | 20% | 71% | 21% | 79% |
| Football | 15% | 85% | 10% | 26% | 64% | 19% | 81% |
| Golf | 15% | 85% | - | 4% | 96% | 24% | 76% |
| Outdoor volleyball | 14% | 86% | - | 47% | 53% | 27% | 73% |
| Outdoor basketball | 14% | 86% | - | 14% | 86% | 24% | 76% |
| Softball | 13% | 87% | - | 34% | 66% | 18% | 82% |
| Outdoor skating at skate parks | 13% | 87% | - | 36% | 64% | 21% | 79% |
| Baseball | 12% | 88% | - | 65% | 35% | 14% | 86% |
| Community meeting and events rooms | 12% | 88% | - | 24% | 76% | 23% | 77% |
| Indoor volleyball | 10% | 90% | - | 30% | 70% | 18% | 82% |
| Indoor basketball | 9% | 91% | - | 15% | 85% | 17% | 83% |
| Senior center | 9% | 91% | - | 50% | 50% | 16% | 84% |
| Equestrian facility | 8% | 92% | - | 41% | 59% | 18% | 82% |
| Lacrosse | 4% | 96% | - | 33% | 67% | 7% | 93% |

Sample size - 191

The highest level of participation (25% or greater) was indicated for the following facilities:

- Passive parks
- Natural surface trails
- Wildlife/natural areas
- Playgrounds
- Paved trails
- Dog park
- Fishing ponds
- Indoor swimming
- Outdoor water play areas
- Performing arts venues
- Outdoor Swimming
- Weight training/fitness equipment
- Arts or crafts classes
- Climbing walls

It is typical in all communities that specific outdoor and indoor sports have a fewer number of participants than self-directed outdoor recreational activities, such as walking, biking, use of a playground, and fishing. Interestingly, high levels of participation in an activity did not correlate to the need for more facilities in all instances. Existing high levels of participation did correlate well to an increase in participation in an activity if additional facilities were available.



The intent of that portion of the question is to indicate where Fountain can increase participation among its residents by providing specific types of recreation facilities and programs. Approximately 20-25% who do not currently participate would participate if there were additional indoor facilities (swimming, weights/fitness, performing arts, dance, arts/crafts, climbing). The greatest increases in participation for outdoor facilities include passive parks, paved trails, dog parks, fishing ponds, outdoor water play.

Table 5 shows both indoor and outdoor facilities that 80% of respondents think are in short supply.

Table 5 Additional Facilities Needed

| Need More Facilities (80%+) | Outdoor | Recreation Center |
|-----------------------------------|---------|-------------------|
| Dog park | x | |
| Fishing ponds | x | |
| Indoor swimming | | x |
| Performing arts venues | | x |
| Outdoor swimming | x | |
| Weight training/fitness equipment | | x |
| Arts or crafts classes | | x |
| Climbing walls | | x |
| Fitness class | | x |
| Archery | x | |
| Indoor running track | | x |
| Tennis | x | |
| Dance classes | | x |
| Golf | x | |
| Outdoor basketball | x | |
| Indoor basketball | | x |

For recreation center needs, the City of Fountain must look at a combination of indoor activities that collectively would serve a large proportion of the population. Table 6 lists the activities that survey respondents feel are needed most in the community.

Table 6 Indoor Activity Participation

| Type of facility | Participate in this activity? | | Are there too many, about the right number, or not enough in and around Fountain? | | | Engage in activity if more facilities were available? | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----|---|-------------|------------|---|-----|
| | Yes | No | Too Many | About Right | Not Enough | Yes | No |
| Indoor swimming | 33% | 67% | 4% | 12% | 84% | 54% | 46% |
| Performing arts venues | 31% | 69% | - | 6% | 94% | 48% | 52% |
| Weight training / fitness equipment | 27% | 73% | - | 11% | 89% | 51% | 49% |
| Arts or crafts classes | 26% | 74% | - | 19% | 81% | 47% | 53% |
| Climbing walls | 25% | 75% | - | - | 100% | 41% | 59% |
| Fitness class | 24% | 76% | - | 9% | 91% | 48% | 52% |
| Indoor running track | 18% | 82% | - | - | 100% | 40% | 60% |
| Dance classes | 17% | 83% | - | 5% | 95% | 35% | 65% |
| Community meeting and events rooms | 12% | 88% | - | 24% | 76% | 23% | 77% |
| Indoor volleyball | 10% | 90% | - | 30% | 70% | 18% | 82% |
| Indoor basketball | 9% | 91% | - | 15% | 85% | 17% | 83% |

Most important activities and facilities

As defined by respondents, the eleven most important activities and facilities, shown in Table 7, are the same as the top eleven activities in which people participate. Dance and performing arts were highlighted as priorities for respondents who currently participate in the activities, as well as those who do not.

Table 7 Most Important Activities & Facilities

| Activity/Facility | % of respondents |
|---|-------------------------|
| Natural surface trails (horseback riding, jogging, mountain biking, etc.) | 45% |
| Dog park | 35% |
| Fishing ponds | 32% |
| Passive parks (sitting, reading, gardens, picnicking, etc.) | 29% |
| Outdoor water play area | 29% |
| Playgrounds | 28% |
| Performing arts venues (concerts, opera, ballet, symphony, etc.) | 28% |
| Paved trails | 26% |
| Wildlife, natural areas | 25% |
| Outdoor swimming | 21% |
| Indoor swimming | 20% |
| Weight training/fitness equipment | 18% |
| Arts and crafts classes | 15% |
| Fitness class | 14% |
| Climbing walls | 14% |
| Archery | 13% |
| Dance classes | 11% |
| Golf | 10% |
| Equestrian facility | 10% |
| Indoor running track | 8% |
| Lacrosse | 5% |
| Soccer | 5% |
| Disc golf | 4% |
| Softball | 3% |
| Baseball | 3% |
| Football | 3% |
| Indoor basketball | 3% |
| Tennis | 3% |
| Outdoor skating at skate parks | 3% |
| Indoor volleyball | 2% |
| Outdoor basketball | 2% |
| Senior Center | 2% |
| Community meeting and events rooms | 1% |
| Outdoor volleyball | - |

Sample size – 172

Priorities for new facilities

Often people will say they would like more of something, but when it comes to paying for it their support may wane. In order to test if monetary support was likely, respondents were asked to share their level of support for additional sales taxes and/or additional property taxes to have more of the following types of facilities provided by the City of Fountain:

- Recreation/community center
- Indoor pool
- Trails
- Natural open space
- General use public park
- Outdoor pool
- Playgrounds
- Sports facilities
- Dog parks

Residents were given a list of 6 possible priorities for Fountain Community Services to support. The highest priority according to respondents is building an indoor recreation/community center (23%), followed by an aquatics facility (17%) and building/improving parks (17%). Preservation of open space/natural areas (15%), construction of trails (12%), and building of sports fields (9%) were rated as lower priorities. In addition, residents were given a list of 9 parks and recreation facilities (trails, natural open space, sports facilities, general use park, playgrounds, recreation/community center, indoor pool, outdoor pool, and dog parks) and asked to indicate if they would support additional sales taxes for the facilities and if they would support an increase in property taxes. Survey results indicate that a majority of residents would support an increase in sales taxes for all of the facilities except for sports facilities and dog parks. Property taxes were not supported by the majority of the respondents for any of the proposed facilities.

Demographics

Respondents' demographics were adjusted and thus, virtually mirrored 2010 U.S. Census data for Fountain.

- The median age was 39.
- Most were Caucasian (74%), Hispanic / Latino (9%) and African American (5%).
- The median household income was \$55,500.
- Respondents were roughly split between women (55%) and men (45%).
- Half (55%) had children under the age of 18 living in their households.

Conclusions

- The park and recreation facility that would address the greatest need, and increase participation the most, is a recreation center with an indoor pool. Residents also indicated that this facility is their highest priority for funding, and there is strong support for using sales taxes to fund the facility.
- Many of the activities that 40% or more of Fountain residents said they would engage in could be accommodated in a recreation center - indoor swimming, weight training/fitness

equipment, fitness classes, arts and crafts classes, climbing walls and an indoor running track. Far fewer people define a recreation program as team sports.

- Although only 29% of the respondents said they are satisfied with the types of recreational programs that are available in Fountain, almost all of the activities in which these respondents participate are outdoor activities. However, this does not take into account the new recreational programming being offered by the City. Most of the activities that people said they would engage in (or engage in more) if they were available in Fountain were outdoor facilities such as parks, ponds, trails and natural areas.

Other Comments

Respondents were asked if they had additional comments about parks and recreation in Fountain. Approximately half (47%) of the respondents provided additional comments for the City of Fountain. Those who provided comments reiterated issues addressed on the survey, such as their support for additional facilities in Fountain, the types of facilities they would like to see, their support for additional taxes, and their interest in seeing activities and facilities geared towards children.

Additional Surveys

A separate volunteer survey was conducted on Labor Day 2014. This survey was not considered statistically valid; however it shows trends in the community that are similar to the results of the community survey. The volunteer survey shows that more than 70% of respondents rated as important (4 or 5 on a 5 point scale) playgrounds, walking/hiking, indoor swimming pool, outdoor swimming pool, trails, natural areas, recreation center (implying indoor activities/sports), and natural areas/open space. These results are similar to the survey results from the most recent survey conducted by LBC.

C. National Trends

The Sports and Industry Association produces an annual report that assesses level of activity and identifies key trends in sports, fitness and recreation participation. The Topline Report⁶ is a partnership of the Physical Activity Council which includes 6 of the major trade associates in US sports, fitness and leisure industries. Early in 2014, a total of 19,240 online interviews took place across the nation with individuals and households and responses are balanced to reflect U.S. Census parameters for age, gender, race, household income and geographic region. The responses reflect people age 6 and above.

For the first time since 2008, levels of inactivity have decreased slightly to 27.6%. Inactivity trends by age group shows that the 13 to 17 and 25 to 34 age groups continue to become inactive. Older adults ages 55 and over had the largest decrease of inactivity. However, 80.2 million people still report no physical activity (or participation in the 19 sports/fitness activities that require minimal to no physical exertion) in 2013.

⁶ The Sports & Fitness Industry Association, 2014 Sports, Fitness and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report, 2014

Gen Z, ages 2 to 12, have the highest participation rates in team and outdoor sports. Racquet and water sports continue to be a millennial activity and fitness sports are most popular with older generations. Swimming, bicycling and hiking are the most popular "aspirational" sports.

Overall, individual sports have declined. However, while activities like horseback riding, roller skating, and martial arts have decreased; adventure racing and triathlons have skyrocketed with an increase in participation of 20% over the past 5 years. Participation in team sports continues at a steady pace. Football and baseball show a decrease in participation but lacrosse, beach volleyball, field hockey and ice hockey have increased.

Motorized water sports, such as water skiing, show a decrease in activity but kayaking and stand up paddling have increased in participation over the past year. Table 8 shows the top 10 activities across the United States in 2013. Walking and jogging are the top ranked activities. Working out with either free weights or weight machines is also popular. Basketball is the only team sport that ranks in the top ten.

Table 8 Top Ten Activities

| Activity | Core participant | # of core participants |
|---|------------------|------------------------|
| Walking for Fitness | 50+ times/year | 79.8 million |
| Running/Jogging | 50+ times/year | 29.8 million |
| Stretching | 50+ times/year | 26.5 million |
| Treadmill | 50+ times/year | 26.4 million |
| Free Weights (Hand Weights) under 15 lbs. | 50+ times/year | 25.7 million |
| Bicycling (Road/Paved) | 26+ times/year | 21.4 million |
| Weight/Resistance Machines | 50+ times/year | 21.4 million |
| Free Weights (Dumbbells) over 15 lbs. | 50+ times/year | 20.6 million |
| Fishing (Freshwater/Other) | 8+ times/year | 17.7 million |
| Basketball | 13+ times/year | 16.7 million |

Source: The Sports & Fitness Industry Association, 2014 Sports, Fitness and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report, 2014

In the more progressive recreation departments in the United States there has been a great boom in recreation programming in the last 10 years. However, during the economic downturn of the last few years, many departments have been shifting some of their programming to other entities. Most full-service departments still offer a full complement of activities in the following areas but they may not be the actual provider of the programs themselves. The categories of programs generally align with the activities listed in the community survey.

Recreation departments often serve as a coordinating agency and a clearinghouse for multiple recreation agencies and providers in an effort to bring a comprehensive scope of recreation programs to a community. This approach has increased the number of partnerships that are needed to deliver a broader base of programs in a more cost effective manner. These may include public/private partnerships, YMCA's, School Districts, and in some cases, youth sport associations are providing developmental, basic recreation services, in addition to their competitive leagues. There is also a much stronger emphasis on revenue production and

raising the level of cost recovery to minimize the use of tax revenues to offset expenditures for recreation programming.

Trends in Recreation Centers

The majority of community centers that are being built today are between 65,000 and 75,000 square feet. Most centers include three primary components A) A pool area usually with competitive and leisure amenities, B) Multipurpose gymnasium space, and C) Weight/cardiovascular equipment area. In addition, most centers also have group exercise rooms, drop-in childcare, and classroom and/or community spaces.

For most centers to have an opportunity to cover all of their operating expenses with revenues, they must have a service population of at least 50,000 and an aggressive fee structure.

Most centers that are between 65,000 and 75,000 square feet have an operating budget of between \$1,500,000 and \$1,800,000 annually. Nearly 65% of the operating costs are from personnel services, followed by approximately 25% for contractual services, 8% for commodities, and 2% for capital replacement.

For centers that serve a more urban population and have a market driven fee structure, they should be able to recover 70% to 100% of operating expenses. For centers in more rural areas the recovery rate is generally 50% to 75%. Facilities that can consistently cover all of their operating expenses with revenues are rare. The first true benchmark year of operation does not occur until the third full year of operation.

The majority of centers of the size noted above and in an urban environment average daily paid attendance of 800 to as much as 1,000 per day. These centers will also typically sell between 800 and 1,500 annual passes (depending on the fee structure and marketing program).

It is common for most centers to have a three-tiered fee structure that offers daily, extended visit (usually punch cards) passes, and annual passes. In urban areas it is common to have resident and non-resident fees. Non-resident rates can cost 25% to 50% higher than the resident rate and are usually a topic of discussion amongst elected officials. Daily rates for residents average between \$3.00 and \$6.00 for adults, \$3.00 and \$4.00 for youth and the same for seniors. Annual rates for residents average between \$200 and \$300 for adults, and \$100 and \$200 for youth and seniors. Family annual passes tend to be heavily discounted and run between \$350 and \$800.



Most centers are open an average of 105 hours a week, with weekday hours being 5:00 am to 10:00 pm, Saturdays 8:00 am to 8:00 pm and Sundays from noon to 8:00 pm. There is now a trend to open earlier on Sundays as well. Often hours are shorter during the summer months.⁷

D. Recreation Program Participation and Needs

Until recently, the City of Fountain has not had a formal recreational sports program. All programmed sports opportunities have been primarily available from 5 organizations in the Fountain area: The Fountain Valley YMCA; Widefield Community and Recreation Center; Fountain Valley Youth Baseball Association (FVYB); the Police Activities League (PALS), and the American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO). These programs included youth baseball, softball, basketball, volleyball, soccer, football, tennis, swimming, rodeo (roping and riding), in-line hockey, and cheerleading.

There has been an increasing demand for organized baseball for youth in Fountain. There has been a fairly high demand for organized basketball leagues. The demand for soccer programs has been higher than can be accommodated by available fields in Fountain. Interest in football leagues appears to be strong. Swimming programs have been a very popular activity for Fountain youth, with more participants than any other youth program.

Results from the community-wide survey conducted as part of the planning process for this plan clearly point out strong support for indoor sports and activities in Fountain from the survey respondents.

In 2014, the City of Fountain created the Recreation Division that offers a variety of programming for children 4 years of age through eighth grade and open to the entire area. Youth recreation programs currently offered by the City include the following:

- Basketball
- Soccer
- Baseball/Softball
- Flag Football
- Volleyball

Expanding the types of recreation programs and the overall number of programs is important to Fountain residents. Determining the priorities for the recreation programs will be critical. The City will need to find proper locations for programs and services to take place as the City does not have adequate indoor space to meet the current program demand. For the short term, the City of Fountain should utilize other available facilities to maximize the potential to deliver recreation services to residents and seek collaborative opportunities with other agencies to provide recreation programming. Fountain already depends on recreation programs offered through other agencies such as the Fountain Valley YMCA and Widefield Community and Recreation Center. Adequate resources (staff and funding) will be necessary to develop a basic recreation division. In order to continue growth in the recreation programs and services that are offered, adequate staffing is necessary to not only conduct the program itself, but also to

⁷ *Ballard King Recreation Report - these statistics vary by regions of the country*

supervise and administer the activities. As the Fountain Parks Division and Recreation Division continue to grow the City will be creating local jobs, especially for young adults, which helps contribute to the overall economic health of the community. However, with staffing costs being the single greatest expense item for parks and recreation divisions, and an increasing emphasis on cost recovery, consideration should be given to minimize the number staff by contracting for certain programs, or partnering with other providers for services.

The City will need to develop a fee structure with the goal of covering most operational expenses (instructor and other staff costs, all equipment, and most materials). The basic requirement for the provision of recreation programs and services is a funding commitment associated with the development of facilities to support programs and staff to manage and provide the programming. The community survey conducted in support of this plan shows that there is support for sales tax to fund recreation programs.

E. Recreational Facility Needs

New recreation facilities are needed in Fountain to support the recreation programs. The vast majority of outdoor related recreation programming currently takes place in public parks, with Fountain-Fort Carson School District No. 8 facilities providing the other main venues. Actively programmed facilities are best located in community parks, rather than neighborhood parks, in order to minimize impacts to local residents associated with parking, lights and noise.

For indoor recreation programs, school buildings are the primary location for most activities in the absence of a public recreation center. With the demand for recreation programs and services expanding, the City of Fountain should partner with Fountain-Fort Carson School District No. 8 to secure more access and develop an agreement to expand usage of school facilities, or explore partnering with private facilities (fitness centers, dance studios, etc.), non-profits (YMCA's, Boys & Girls Clubs, cultural arts centers, etc.) and even private schools for certain activities.

In addition to the need for a recreation center in Fountain, the greatest recreation facility needs based on the community survey include the following:

- Fishing Pond(s)
- Soccer / Multi-purpose Fields
- Baseball/ Softball Fields
- Skate Parks
- Outdoor Water Play
- Outdoor Swimming
- Tennis Courts
- Passive Parks / Neighborhood Parks
- Trails
- Dog Parks

F. Existing and Future Parkland Needs

Neighborhood Parkland

Currently the level of service for neighborhood parks in Fountain is 1.55 acres/1,000 population. This is based on 28.75 acres of developed neighborhood and mini parks, 15 acres of community parkland that serves local neighborhood needs (total 43.75 acres), and 28,310 people. This level of service is comparable to that of many communities along the Front Range, but is short of the neighborhood parkland standards that communities typically adopt. This plan

recommends that the City of Fountain adopt a standard of 2.0 acres/1,000 population, which would provide a better distribution of parks throughout Fountain and areas for sports practices, playgrounds and other neighborhood amenities. This recommendation is discussed further in the next chapter. Table 9 calculates the Neighborhood Parkland need for the years 2015 and 2025 based on current levels of service and recommended standards.

Table 9 Neighborhood Parkland Need

| | 2015 Need Based on Recommended Level of Service (2 acres per 1,000 population) | 2025 Need Based on Current Level of Service (1.55 acres per 1,000 population) | 2025 Need Based on Recommended Level of Service (2 acres per 1,000 population) |
|---|--|---|--|
| Existing Developed Neighborhood Parkland | 43.75 | 43.75 | 43.75 |
| Parkland Need According to Standard | 56.62 | 57.32 | 73.96 |
| Additional Neighborhood Parkland Needed | 12.9 | 13.57 | 30 |
| Number of New Neighborhood Parks | 2 | 2 | 4-6 |

Based on 2.0 acres/1,000 population, each square mile that has approximately 750 to 1,000 residential units (2,000 to 3,000 population) will need a 6 to 8-acre park. Between now and 2025, that translates into approximately 4-6 new neighborhood parks, depending on how the City develops and the level of service standard the City adopts. There is currently 1 undeveloped neighborhood park (11 acres) that is owned by a homeowners association that could be developed.



Community Parkland

Currently, the level of service for community parks in Fountain is 3.8 acres/1,000 population. This is based on 107.49 acres of parks and 28,310 people. This standard is achieved by including 25 acres of Fountain Creek Regional Park, which is used like a community park. The current level of service is similar to that offered in other communities. This plan recommends that the City adopt a standard of 5 acres/1,000 population, which is similar to standards that have been adopted in other Front Range communities and is adequate to meet the needs for active recreational sports facilities and other programmed and self-directed community activities. This recommendation is discussed further in the next chapter. Table 10 calculates

the Community Parkland need for 2015 and 2025 based on current and recommended standards.

Table 10 Community Parkland Need

| | 2015 Need Based on Recommended Level of Service (5 acres per 1,000 population) | 2025 Need Based on Current Level of Service (3.8 acres per 1,000 population) | 2025 Need Based on Recommended Level of Service (5 acres per 1,000 population) |
|--|--|--|--|
| Existing Developed Community Parkland | 107.49 | 107.49 | 107.49 |
| Parkland Need According to Standard | 141.55 | 140.52 | 184.9 |
| Additional Community Parkland Needed | 34.06 | 33.03 | 77.41 |
| Number of New Community Parks | 1 | 1 | 1 |

Based on 5 acres/1,000 population, Fountain will need to acquire and develop approximately 77 acres of community parkland by 2025. This parkland need can be translated into the need for acquisition and construction of 1 new community park in this time frame.

G. Trail Needs

Time and again when Colorado residents are surveyed, the most frequent activities in city parks, trails and open space systems are walking, nature observation, bicycling, picnicking and jogging. For example, in Arvada, 80% of residents surveyed walked/hiked on a trail system, 79% observed nature or walked in an open space area, and 66% bicycled on a trail system. Comparatively, 20 to 25% of residents played soccer, golf, softball, outdoor basketball or tennis. Colorado Springs' and Fort Collins' survey results show similar trends. Fountain residents are not using trails to the extent that many other communities are: 55% use natural surface trails, and 46% use paved trails. This may be a result of not having a connected, looped paved trail system through the community. The survey indicated a high level of support for additional paved and unpaved trails.

Chapter Four - Recommendations of the Master Plan

A. Parks

Park Classifications and Standards

Classification standards define site and program requirements for parks. The value of these classifications and standards is to provide guidance in the development of various types of parks, and to promote the development of a parkland system that offers consistent service to City residents. This plan recommends the following classification of parkland as stated in Table 11.

Table 11 Park Classifications and Standards

| Classification | Desirable Acreage | Purpose/Function | Site Characteristics | Level of Service |
|-------------------|-------------------|--|---|--------------------------|
| Community Park | 30-100 acres | Provides opportunities for community-wide activities and facilities. Should maintain a balance between programmed sports facilities and other community activity areas (such as gardens, water features, performance areas, festival spaces, plazas, etc.), and have features that appeal to the broader community. No more than 50% of a community park should be developed as active, programmed sports area in order to preserve this balance. Community parks should generally be located to provide all residents access to a community park within 1.5 miles of their home. Community parks may also serve as the local neighborhood park for residential areas within 0.5 mile. | Portions of the site should be relatively flat to accommodate fields and facility development. Special site features, such as streams, lakes, forests, rock outcrops, historic or archaeological sites and other interesting elements may add to the unique character of the park. Ideally, will have good access from a collector or arterial street. Direct access to regional trail system desirable. | 5.0 acres/ 1,000 pop. |
| Neighborhood Park | 5-12 acres | Provides nearby recreation and leisure opportunities within walking distance (0.5 mile) of residential areas. Should serve as a common area for neighbors of all ages to gather, socialize and play. Typically, would include a paved, multi-purpose area for court games/in-line skating or 2 tennis courts, a multi-purpose play field with backstop, play equipment, ADA accessible trails, and shaded areas for picnics and sitting within a landscaped setting that is a blend of full irrigation for active uses and xeriscape. Features such as interpretive signs, water bodies and | Locate adjacent to elementary or junior high schools when possible. Centrally located within area served. Accessible via walkway or urban trail. Portions of the site should be relatively flat to accommodate fields and facility development. | 2.0 acres/ 1,000 pop. |

| Classification | Desirable Acreage | Purpose/Function | Site Characteristics | Level of Service |
|-----------------------|-------------------|--|--|---|
| | | <p>areas of natural vegetation may also be included where appropriate. In most cases, programmed sports activities should be limited to practices. On-street parking is typically adequate, unless a rental picnic pavilion or other feature, which generates a large volume of automobile traffic that cannot be accommodated on the available street frontage, is included.</p> <p>School/Park facilities include many of the same neighborhood standards, except that school/parks should include: game fields (preferably 2), off-street parking that is situated for school and park purposes, and a playground designed for age groups not served by school playgrounds.</p> | | |
| Mini-Parks | 3 or fewer acres | <p>Serves a neighborhood where opportunities for a larger park site are unavailable. Typically considered to serve residents within 0.25 mile of the park.</p> <p>Due to limited size, may only contain a few of the elements typical of a standard neighborhood park.</p> | Similar to those required for neighborhood parks. | Not applicable. Part of neighborhood park standards. |
| Special Purpose Parks | Varies | Serves a singular or very focused community need, such as a horticulture center, environmental education center, working farm, performance area, urban plaza, equestrian center and civic park. | Varies | Not applicable |
| Regional Park | Varies | <p>Provides facilities and recreational amenities intended to serve City residents as well as the surrounding region. As such, regional parks typically involve partnerships with several jurisdictions that come together to provide a service or benefit, which they cannot individually afford or which they can provide more economically through a partnership.</p> <p>Typically, regional parks contain a mix of active sports fields, open space and other amenities.</p> | <p>Portions of the site should be relatively flat to accommodate fields and facility development.</p> <p>Special site features such as streams, lakes, forests, rock outcrops, historic or archaeological sites and other interesting elements may add to the unique character of the park.</p> <p>Direct access from an arterial street.</p> <p>Direct access to regional trail system.</p> | Not applicable, but some park acreage may be used to satisfy community park needs and therefore be calculated into the total community parkland available in the City |

Park Projects

Additional parks will need to be developed to meet existing and future needs of the approximately 8,670 new residents expected in Fountain by 2025. Neighborhood and mini parks are shown in approximately every square mile that is planned for future residential development. Specifically, 1-2 community parks (13 acres) are currently needed and a total of 5 to 6 neighborhood parks (30 acres) will be needed in the next 10 years based on projected population growth. Map 6, Master Plan, shows conceptual locations of parks to enhance service to existing neighborhoods and provide neighborhood-scale parks for proposed residential areas. The Master Plan map should be used as a guide to acquire these sites in advance of imminent development, wherever it is to occur, and develop these sites as needed.

Map 6 also shows the conceptual location for three new community parks. Norris/Apple Tree Community Commons would be located southeast of the former Appletree Golf Course.

Jimmy Camp Creek Community Park would ideally be located somewhere between Marksheffel Road and Squirrel Creek Road along Powers Boulevard, adjacent to Jimmy Camp Creek. Park development should avoid sensitive environmental areas along the creek, but can capitalize on the attractive natural environment the riparian area presents. Kane Ranch Community Park would be located in the southern part of the Kane Ranch Area near the junction of several planned trails.

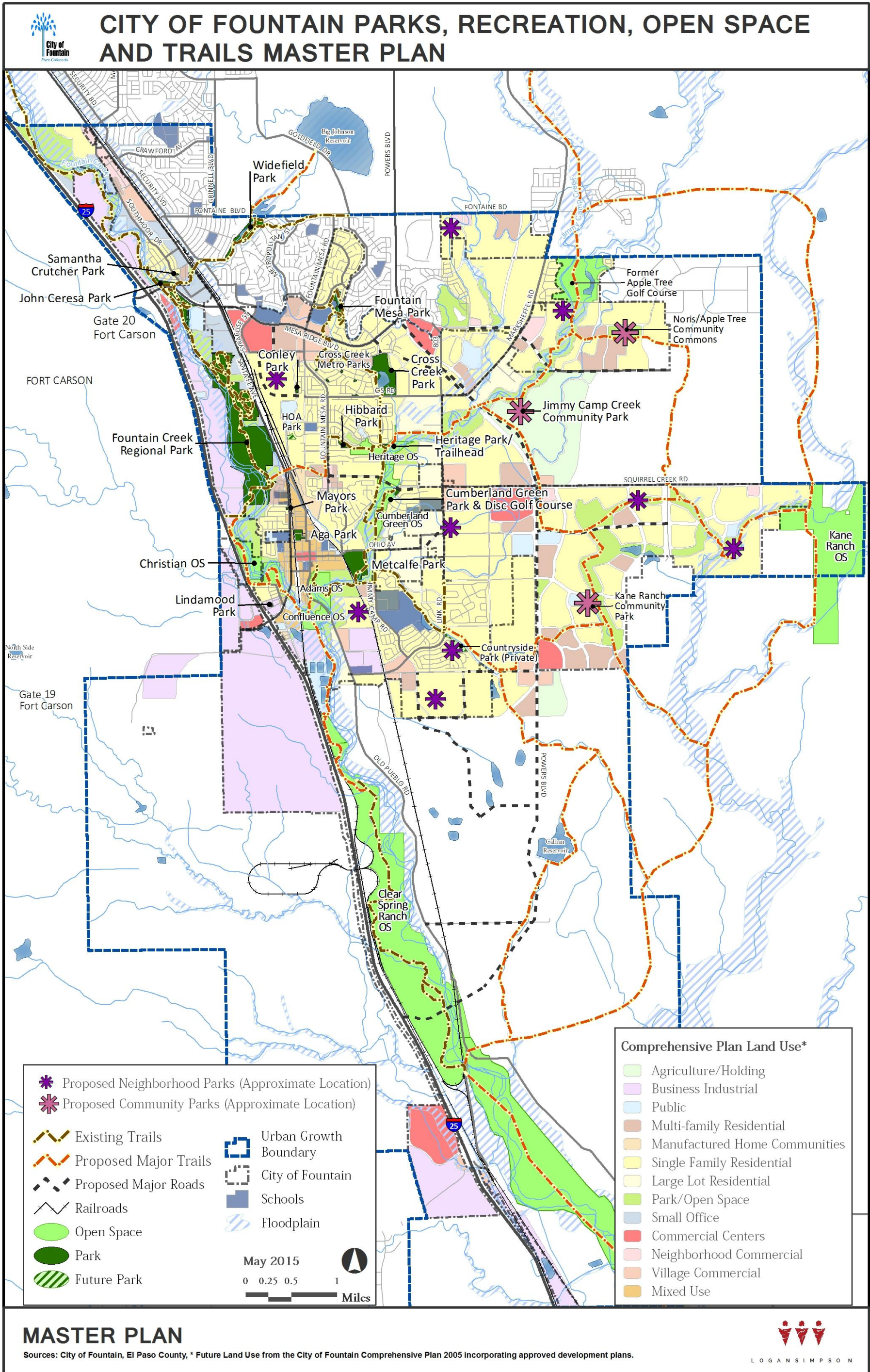
Currently the City is providing 3.8 acres per 1,000 population if the 25 acres of Fountain Creek Park are included. The City is currently short approximately 34 acres of community parkland. A total of 77 acres is needed by 2025 based on projected population growth. This could include completing Cross Creek Park and a constructing a second large community park.

B. Open Space

There is no population-based standard for open space. The need for open space in Fountain is based on hazards or conservation goals, and connectivity for wildlife, community buffers or trail connections. Several areas are identified as candidates for open space conservation on the Master Plan Map, including along Fountain Creek, Jimmy Camp Creek, Kane Ranch area, and planned open space along other small tributaries. Table 12 describes the various types of Open Space classes

Table 12 Open Space Classifications

| Classification | Acreage | Purpose/Function | Management Guidelines |
|-------------------------|----------------------|---|---|
| Park Preserve | 100 acres or greater | Protects large areas with natural resource values of community-wide significance. Provides opportunities for nature-oriented, outdoor recreation. | Emphasis is on achieving an appropriate balance between resource protection and public use. |
| Public Natural Areas | 10 acre minimum | Protects natural values on smaller parcels than the park preserves; often located along stream corridors; provides opportunities for nature-oriented, outdoor recreation, which often includes multipurpose trails. May be lands associated with trails if the trail corridor is adequate width to preserve the properties natural resource values. | Emphasis is on resource protection with some public access provided; no more than 10% of site area should be dedicated to park-like uses, including roads, parking, trails, environmental education/interpretive areas, picnic sites, and visitor support facilities. |
| Special Resources Areas | Varies | Protects areas with important natural, cultural, historic and other community values. These may include areas of significant vegetation, important and sensitive habitats, scenic areas, or areas that contribute to the urban shaping and buffering goals of the community. | Emphasis is on protection of the values that qualify the area for designation as a special resource area. In some cases, public access will not be provided and no facilities will be developed. If public access is not desirable or needed, conservation easements may be a suitable preservation tool. |



MASTER PLAN

Sources: City of Fountain, El Paso County, * Future Land Use from the City of Fountain Comprehensive Plan 2005 Incorporating approved development plans.



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C. Trails

There is no population-based standard currently for trails. The need for trails in Fountain is based on providing connectivity and ideally 3-5 mile trail loops. Trail widths and design standards can vary based on anticipated level of use and desired experience.

Trail Classifications and Standards

This plan contains trail design guidelines and standards that are supplemental to those contained in the 1996 Trails Plan. These off-street trails are primarily recreational in nature, versus bike transportation corridors that are part of the higher speed, on-street bike lane system. Recreational trails may link to schools, public parks, recreational facilities and open space areas; to other neighborhoods; or to work or shopping destinations.

The construction of a trail invariably results in some ecological impact. Whether it is vegetation that is removed in the process of building a trail or the creation of new ecological conditions prompting a shift in the composition of wildlife and plant species, biological diversity is impacted. Disturbance along a trail can also cause some wildlife species to abandon their nests, decline parental care, shorten feeding times and/or move away permanently. It is therefore imperative that trail corridors be designed from a regional perspective in an effort to balance the needs of the landscape and wildlife with that of recreational users.

With these thoughts in mind, the following design considerations are recommended:

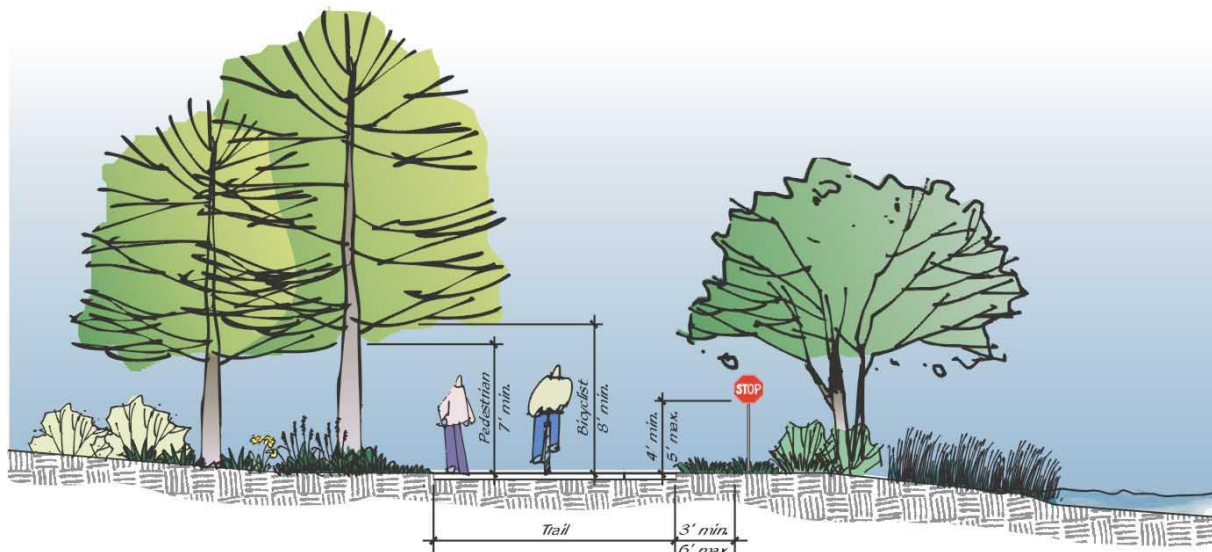
- Minimize the zone of influence by reducing the width of the trail so that a balance is achieved between the development of a multi-use trail system and the preservation of wildlife habitat.
- Align a trail along or near an existing human-created ecological edge rather than bisecting undisturbed areas or large areas of wildlife habitat to minimize habitat fragmentation.
- Primary trails should be located within a greenway or minimum 50-foot easement to provide a scenic environment, and to provide adequate room for both a paved and non-paved trail where appropriate.
- Provide an adequate buffer, up to 100 feet, between trail development and wetland areas where feasible.
- Locate trails, where feasible, in scenic locations, but not within or immediately adjacent to sensitive vegetation or significant wildlife habitat.
- Minimize cut and fill slopes adjacent to the trail.
- Restrict the density of trails within and near high quality wildlife habitat areas.
- Select degraded areas with potential for restoration.
- All graded slopes should be re-vegetated and measures taken to control storm drainage, weed invasion and erosion.
- Re-vegetate upland areas disturbed by trail development, as appropriate, for continuity with the surrounding natural vegetation communities.

The following is a description of the 2 community trail types in Fountain with their respective design standards. All trails should be designed and constructed to current ADA standards, to the extent possible, and City of Fountain construction specifications.

Primary Multi-Purpose, Off-Street Trails. Paved multi-purpose, off-street trails form the major trail spines through the City. They should accommodate a variety of trail users, including walkers, joggers, recreational bikers and sometimes, commuter bikers within the same trail corridor. The preferable location of these trails should be along drainageways or other linear features, connecting parks, open space areas, recreational facilities and major destination nodes. Environmentally sensitive areas should be avoided. Primary trails that must be located adjacent to roadways should incorporate a 50-foot easement where feasible and appropriate. A 3-foot wide, soft surface shoulder on one side of the trail should be provided for joggers and walkers who prefer a softer surface. Figure 1 illustrates the cross-section of a primary multi-purpose, off-street trail and includes trail widths, trail shoulders and clearance requirements.

Table 13 lists the specific design standards for primary and secondary trails.

Figure 1 Primary Multi-Purpose Off-Street Trail Cross-Section



Secondary Multi-Purpose, Off-Street Trails. Secondary trail links should be provided through development areas to the primary trail system, as well as to parks and open space areas that are not on the primary system. These paved multi-purpose, off-street trails should be provided by the project developer and be an integral part of the circulation and open space system of the development. Like primary trails, the secondary trails should be located in an open space corridor and accommodate a variety of trail users, including walkers, joggers and bicyclists. Primary trails that must be located adjacent to roadways should incorporate a 30-foot easement where feasible and appropriate.

Table 13 lists specific design requirements.

Table 13 Trail Design Standards

| | Primary Multi-Purpose Off-Street Trails | Secondary Multi-Purpose Off-Street Trails |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| Definition | Trails for walking, jogging, skating, bicycling and other non-motorized uses that are part of the City of Fountain Primary Trail System, and that are constructed and maintained as part of the City's recreational facilities. | Trails for walking, jogging, skating, bicycling and other non-motorized uses that provide connections to the primary trail system, or to attractions, employment areas, shopping and services, and between neighborhoods. These trails should be privately owned and maintained, and required as part of the City development process. |
| Right-of-Way | 50 feet minimum width where feasible, designed as naturalized open space or parkland as determined by the City. | 30 feet minimum width, designed as naturalized open space or parkland as determined by the City. |
| Trail Width | 10 feet. | 8 feet. |
| Trail Surface | Concrete. No openings greater than ½ inch per ADA. | Concrete. No openings greater than ½ inch per ADA. |
| Parallel Trail Width | 3 feet if present. | NA |
| Parallel Trail Surface | Crushed gravel if not used by equestrians. Natural surface if used by equestrians. | NA |
| Sight Distance | 130 feet minimum. If unattainable, provide adequate signage. | 90 feet minimum. If unattainable, provide adequate signage. |
| Grades | 5% maximum preferred. In special circumstances, up to 8.33% may be allowed, not to exceed 200 feet in length. | 5% maximum preferred. In special circumstances, up to 8.33% may be allowed, not to exceed 200 feet in length. |
| Cross Slope | 1-2 % typical. 3% maximum. | 1-2 % typical. 3% maximum. |
| Vertical Clearance | 12 feet preferable, 10 feet minimum. | 12 feet preferable, 10 feet minimum. |
| Shoulders | 3 feet mowed and clear of hazards on each side of trail. Design for pruning and occasional mowing for 10 feet on each side of trail. | 3 feet zone, clear of hazards either side. |
| Trail Centerline Radius | 40 feet minimum at tight corners and switchbacks. 100 feet minimum elsewhere. Adequate signage where radius is shorter. | 30 feet minimum at tight corners and switchbacks. 100 feet minimum elsewhere. Adequate signage where radius is shorter. |
| Radius at Intersections of Trails | 15 feet to accommodate maintenance vehicles. 8 feet where vehicles are not anticipated. | 8 feet minimum |
| Separation from Roadway | 20 feet minimum where feasible. | 8 feet minimum where feasible. |
| Striping | 4 inch wide, dashed white center lane striping. Yellow solid line where site distances prohibit safe passing. | None |
| Underpass Width | 12 feet minimum. 14 feet preferable. | 10 feet minimum. 12 feet preferable. |
| Bridges | 10 feet minimum. | 8 feet minimum. |
| Guardrails | Guardrails or fencing along steep drops within 5 feet of trail. | Guardrails or fencing along steep drops within 5 feet of trail. |
| Trail Markings and Signage | As needed for safety, regulations and as desired for interpretation and wayfinding. Designs to meet <i>Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)</i> standards and as recommended in <i>AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, 2012</i> . | As needed for safety, regulations and as desired for interpretation and wayfinding. Designs to meet <i>Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)</i> standards and as recommended in <i>AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, 2012</i> |
| Amenities | Restrooms and drinking fountains/water jug fillers at strategic trailheads and as provided by nearby commercial uses. Benches, approximately 2 per mile. Trail markers, every 0.1 mile. Picnic tables as appropriate. | As appropriate. |

Proposed Trails

This plan recommends acquisition of the right-of-way and construction of trails throughout the community and Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). Map 6 shows the location of existing and proposed Primary Multi-Purpose, and Off-Street Trails. This entire system consists of approximately 28.2 miles of proposed new trails that are high priority inside the UGB and 54.4 within the greater region. The locations of trails should be coordinated with El Paso County and the City of Colorado Springs to ensure that complete connections can be made. Priority should be placed on constructing the primary trail links to the regional trail system, especially along Jimmy Camp Creek and Fountain Creek. Trails along roadways should be constructed for those segments as part of the roadway improvement package.

A key regional priority is to complete the proposed Clear Spring Ranch Connector Trail. This trail, and acquisition needed to complete the trail, seeks to connect existing open space amenities in El Paso County through the property acquisition of land ultimately to serve as a corridor for the Colorado Front Range Trail. The proposed trail alignment will be adjacent to Fountain Creek, a desirable location for both adjacent property owners and trail users alike. Development includes 1.5 miles of multi-use trail being planned for hikers, equestrians, bikers, and birders alike. The City and its regional partners should apply for GOCO and State Parks grants to construct this trail connection.

It may not be feasible for the City to construct all 28.2 of the trail system in the next 10 years, but a reasonable goal is to reserve all the trail corridors within the anticipated development areas and construct at least half of the system within the City (14 miles). If accomplished, the City would have a spine system from Fountain Creek along Jimmy Camp Creek to the conceptual future community park sites at Jimmy Camp Creek Community Park and Norris/Apple Tree Community Commons.

This system could provide major connections north and south of this trail to existing and planned park sites.

Constructing these trails would provide a level of service for City-constructed trails of 1 mile per 1,000 population. This level of service could be translated into a standard and used in calculating a development impact fee if desired. This implementation tool is discussed further in Chapter Five.



D. Recreational Facilities and Programs

The focus for the City of Fountain should be on expanding its recreation programs over the next 3 to 5 years to efficiently and effectively provide basic services and functions. Outdoor facilities in parks, such as ball fields and multi-purpose fields, can be scheduled by the City for City of Fountain and non-profit recreation providers programs. The need for additional recreational facilities based on Fountain's population was discussed in the previous chapter, and they should be constructed in community parks as they are acquired.

Until the City can support the construction, operation and maintenance of its own recreation center, it is anticipated that indoor recreation programs and services will be offered in school district facilities or in facilities that are available from other community partners in the area.

The City should develop a strong recreation base of programs and activities while utilizing other community resources to provide space. After 1 to 3 years of successful operation of a broader recreation program, consideration should be given to conduct a needs assessment and feasibility of developing a community center in Fountain. There is a number of existing community centers in Colorado that serve a population base similar to Fountain.

Table 14 provides a benchmark summary case study of other Colorado agencies that have been successful in developing a community center.

Table 14 Community Center Benchmark Comparison

| | Louisville | Erie | Lafayette | Fruita | Brighton |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------|-----------|---------|-------------|
| Population | 19,074 | 19,272 | 25,733 | 12,696 | 34,636 |
| Year Built | 1990 | 2008 | 1990 | 2011 | 1993 |
| Center Size | 57,400 | 63,764 | 43,500 | 55,000 | 54,200 |
| Center Cost | \$5.6M | \$18.8M | \$4.3M | \$12.1M | \$4.8M |
| Operating Cost | \$1.83M | \$2.60M | \$2.45M | \$1.30M | \$1.84M |
| Operating Rev | \$1.57M | \$1.10M | \$1.72M | \$2.10M | \$1.27M |
| Adult | \$420/\$480 ⁸ | \$365/\$455 | \$365 | \$750 | \$225/\$290 |
| Family | \$708/\$768 | \$719/\$899 | \$715 | \$1,345 | \$470/\$595 |

The community center study should include a detailed market analysis that involves a detailed demographic study, assessment of alternative service providers in the area, and soliciting public input through various tools to assure Fountain residents have an opportunity to share their vision, interest and opinions. The information gathered during the market analysis will help guide the program recommendation for an architect to develop concept plan, site evaluation and capital project cost estimates. Lastly, a feasibility study is needed to identify the operating costs, revenues and overall impact to the City of Fountain to assure the project is sustainable long-term for the City.

⁸ Denotes difference between resident and non-resident rates. Not every center polled has resident/non-resident rates.

Part of the study and assessment for a community center should include discussions with Widefield School District #3 over expansion of their existing Community Center. At the very least pursuing a collaborative with SD3 to provide more indoor space for developing recreation opportunities in the community makes sense.

Specific actions the City should consider include the following:

- Convert the existing part-time position of Recreation Coordinator to a full-time position in order to more effectively develop year round programming. Part-time staff will also be required to expand to bring additional resources to recreation programming.
- Hire additional full-time employees in the Parks Division. Under the current park acreage, an additional 5 FTE positions are needed to provide a level of service equal to the national median based on a study by the National Parks and Recreation Association.
- Develop of a 5-year recreation program plan that identifies key program areas on which to focus, as well as providers or partners that will be involved to develop and deliver each program.
- Initiate discussions to develop a joint use agreement with the Fountain-Fort Carson School District for use of school buildings and fields after school hours for recreation programming.
- Continue to offer core recreation programs, and expand as more school space is secured, while monitoring recreation desires and program demands of the community. Focus should be on developing youth programs to not only help combat the childhood obesity epidemic through recreation program and encourage the development of healthy lifestyles, but also reduce crime rates, and develop the Fountain youth into contributing members of the community. Specific programs should meet the core interests of the community including grade school soccer, grade school basketball, middle school basketball, youth baseball and T-Ball, youth football, and adult softball.
- Publicize to the community where recreation opportunities (both facilities and services) are available in the greater Fountain area (including public, private and non-profit providers).
- Establish a yearly operating budget with the expectation that most recreation programming will cover a significant percent of the total cost of operation.
- Expand programming to include summer youth programs, dance classes, group fitness, disc golf, arts and crafts programs, cycling classes and self-directed fitness, after-school youth activities, basic cultural activities, and 2 to three community based special events.
- Encourage youth sports organizations to establish Fountain-based teams or leagues.
- Provide a significant volume of programs by using contract employees and via a contract with other organizations.

E. Estimated Costs for Parks and Trails

The cost for trail and park construction varies widely, depending on the specific elements to be included in each park, the terrain, necessary road crossings and other physical features that require more extensive design solutions. For the purposes of assigning an order of magnitude cost to the master plan recommendations, we have assumed costs that are in order with the costs Logan Simpson has experienced in designing and overseeing the construction of similar facilities. They are approximate and are intended to illustrate order of magnitude, not detail. Actual costs for land acquisition and development should be developed more specifically. Costs are in 2015 dollars and must be escalated yearly to compensate for inflation.

| | |
|---|---|
| Neighborhood Parkland | \$120,000/acre for design, development and fees |
| Community Parkland | \$160,000/acre for design, development and fees |
| 10' Wide Concrete Multi-Purpose Trail | \$220,000/mile for grading and paving |
| Trail Corridor Amenities and Drainage..... | \$60,000/mile for benches, signs and culverts |
| Grade-Separated Crossings..... | Costs not included at this time |

Chapter Five - Implementation

A. Recommended Implementation Strategies and Sources of Funding

Fountain currently uses multiple sources of funding and cooperative arrangements to finance its park acquisition, development, operations and maintenance activities, and to provide recreation facilities and programs. The City of Fountain General Fund, park development impact fees through the subdivision process, Colorado State Conservation Trust Fund and Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) grants provide funds for capital projects and maintenance, while Fountain-Fort Carson School District #8, Fountain Valley YMCA, and El Paso County are partners in providing recreation programs and public use of their facilities. Additional strategies should be considered to meet the expressed needs of existing residents as well as the needs of future residents.

The following list of strategies and funding sources should be considered when developing a specific implementation plan for City projects and programs. The plan should include capital, operations and maintenance costs for existing parks as well as new projects.

Sales Tax Increase

According to the community survey, the residents of Fountain may support up to a sales tax increase for a multi-purpose recreation center. Fountain's current municipal sales tax rate is 3.75%. Three percent can be used for any General Fund purposes. Of the remaining 0.75%, 0.25% is for transit costs, 0.15% is for street resurfacing, and 0.35% is for transportation capital costs. The 0.35% for capital projects sunsets in 2019, which will then leave a sales tax of 3.4%. Net taxable sales for 2014 were \$207,500,000, using the State's definition of taxable. The City collected about \$7.78 million in sales tax revenue (3.75% x \$207,500,000) in 2014. If in 2019 voters approve increasing the sales tax to the maximum of 4.0%, it would generate approximately \$1.2 million annually for city projects. A portion or all of this could be applied specifically to a community recreation center, and other parks, trails and open space initiatives, if desired by residents.

There are at least three cities - Erie, Loveland and Greeley - that assess impact fees for other recreational facilities, including trails, recreation centers and open space. This also remains an option for Fountain.

Subdivision Ordinance Requirements

Currently, there is no dedicated funding source for trail corridor acquisition and trail construction. Along with the subdivision ordinance that requires adjacent developments to dedicate the master planned trail corridors to the City, the City should implement an impact fee for new home construction that provides funding for regional trails.

Conservation Trust Fund

This is a revenue source from the Colorado lottery. Funds are distributed annually by the State, based on population. Many other communities dedicate their annual Colorado Lottery funds to trail corridor acquisition and trail construction projects. Currently, the City receives

approximately \$212,000 annually (5 year average), which has historically been used for operations and some improvements to the parks.

Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Trust Fund

This is a statewide pool of revenue from Colorado Lottery proceeds. Funds are available on a competitive grant basis for park and open space land acquisition and development, outdoor recreation, environmental education and capacity building. Fountain should submit for GOCO grants with partners in order to maximize the probability of receiving funding, and include grant submittals for conservation of critical open space areas and trail development.

State Trails Program

Established in 1971, this program is funded with revenue from Great Outdoors Colorado, the Colorado Lottery, the Federal Highways Administration Recreational Trails Program and the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) registration Fees. Funds are available for OHV and Non-motorized trails on a competitive basis. The maximum grant request for planning grants is \$45,000. There is no maximum for the total project cost. State Trails will not fund more than 70% of the proposed project's eligible costs up to the maximum amount of the grant awarded. A minimum of 3% of the total trail grant award must be a cash match from the grantee and/or partners (e.g. 10% of the 30% required match provided by the grantee). Since the State funding pool is relatively small, this resource is proposed for a small component of the trails system. The City has difficulty with current budget constraints and TABOR limitations making matching funds a challenge.

State Historical Society Funds

A portion of state gaming revenues are transferred to the State Historical Fund and administered by the State Historic Society. Grants are available for projects of historic significance. Trail improvements that highlight the historic significance of Fountain Creek and Jimmy Camp Creek should be considered.

B. Planning, Recreation Programming, Operations and Maintenance Considerations

As the City continues to grow, additional staff will be needed to plan, operate and maintain the new parks and facilities required to serve its new residents.

At the present time, the City operates and maintains the parks system through the Community Services Department. The Parks Division has 4 full-time employees and 3 regular part-time employees along with three seasonal workers (summer staff is equal to 0.3 FTE⁹ per employee) responsible for maintaining 60.5 developed acres of parkland. However, 2 of the seasonal employees are devoted to mowing City street rights-of-way. This equates to a total of approximately 6 FTE dedicated to park maintenance, and a ratio of this works out to a ratio of 1 FTE per 10 acres of parkland.

There is no national or regional standard for acres of maintained parkland per FTE, However, a number of benchmarking studies have been completed by the National Parks and Recreation

⁹ FTE=full time equivalent staff

Association. The general trend of reporting agencies shows that the number of acres to be maintained is increasing for each employee available to maintain them. Table 15 shows that Fountain has far less employees to maintain park acreage than the median community with 250 or fewer acres to maintain. To meet the national median (5.4), with the current park acreage, an additional 5 FTE would need to be hired.

Table 15 Maintenance Staffing Levels - Communities with 250 Park Acres or Less

| | Highest Staffing Levels (Upper Quartile) | | Median Staffing Levels | | Lowest Staffing Levels (Lower Quartile) | |
|----------------------|--|------|------------------------|------|---|------|
| | 2013 | 2014 | 2013 | 2014 | 2013 | 2014 |
| Acres per FTE | 2.7 | 3.7 | 5 | 5.7 | 9.8 | 16.6 |

Source: NRPA's 2015 Field Report, National Recreation and Park Association.

If the current staff to acres ratio of 1 person per 10 acres is continued, development of the approximately 107 acres of neighborhood and community parkland would require 10 additional full-time maintenance staff positions. To provide a level of service equivalent to the national median, another 20 additional FTE positions would need to be hired. Additional staff may also be required to maintain additional open space areas and trails. The ability to increase staffing would be dependent on the budget for the Parks Division.

Until 2014 when the City established a Recreation Division, the City relied mostly on other public and non-profit organizations to provide recreation programming for its residents. Although there are many different programs currently offered; residents clearly desire safe places for youth to congregate, additional arts and crafts opportunities, an outdoor swimming pool, and various other recreational facilities. After 1 to 3 years of successful operation of a broader recreation program, the City should consider conducting a needs assessment to determine the feasibility of developing a community center in Fountain. The community center study should include a detailed market analysis that involves a detailed demographic study, assessment of alternative service providers in the area, and soliciting public input through various tools to assure Fountain residents have an opportunity to share their vision, interest and opinions.

As the City of Fountain begins to provide recreation programs, a user fee policy should be developed that defines the anticipated percentage of costs for operations and maintenance that should be recovered. The fee structure can vary by type of participant or type of program. Many models exist in communities along the Colorado Front Range.

C. Annual Review

In an ever evolving economic and growth climate, it is vital to review the actions being taking to achieve this plan and adjust if necessary. Staff and the Park and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) should conduct a detailed review of this master plan on a yearly basis. The purpose of an annual review is to ensure the achievement of the Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Master Plan recommendations and so that the city and community can better understand the work being completed.

Implementation of the Master Plan will require the support and effort of the entire City of Fountain. Elected officials, City Departments, and other government and non-government organizations all have specific roles. The PRAB members serve as a key connection between the broader community and the City Council. The Master Plan should stay relevant to the times and changing needs of the community. Keeping the plan in front of the public and decision makers and soliciting for new ideas can keep the Plan relevant. Each year, the PRAB should review and present the following to the community and city staff:

- Review progress towards achieving the Plan's recommendations;
- Determine the actions to be included in an annual work plan for the next year; and
- Present the actions and recommendations to the community and City Council.