

CITY OF LARAMIE
PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT
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CITY OF LARAMIE
PARKS, TRAILS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN AD HOC ADVISORY COMMITTEE
AGENDA

MEETING DATE: August 22, 2012

TIME: 11:30 AM

LOCATION: Recreation Center large conference room – 920 Boulder Drive

Consent Agenda

1. Approval of the minutes from the August 8, 2012 meeting.

Motion by _____, seconded by _____, that the consent agenda be approved and that each specific action on the consent agenda be approved as indicated. (Items listed on the consent agenda are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion in the form listed above. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Committee Member or citizen so requests, in which case the item will be removed from the consent agenda and will be considered on the regular agenda.)

Regular Agenda:

1. Analysis and discussion of Park Service Area 9 (continued)
2. Discussion on national trends in Parks and Recreation Services
3. Future meeting schedule/topics:
September 12th
September 26th
Preliminary park service area(s) review with identified deficiencies
Trial connections
4. Other business

New business:

Public Comments

Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, September 12, 2012 @ 11:30am

CITY OF LARAMIE
PARKS, TRAILS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN AD HOC ADVISORY COMMITTEE
August 8, 2012
Minutes of Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Amy Williamson, Bill Gribb, Dan McCoy, Dave Hammond, Peggy McCrackin, Vicki Henry, Amber Travsky

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Evan O'Toole, Mike Moeller, Joe Lord, Scott Mullner

GUESTS: None

CITY OF LARAMIE STAFF PRESENT: Derek Teini, Senior Planner; Paul Harrison, Parks & Recreation Director; Mel Owen, Administrative Assistant

The regular meeting was called to order by chair Dave Hammond at 11:35 a.m.

Consent Agenda:

1) Approval of the minutes from the July 25, 2012 meeting.

Motion by Williamson, second by Travsky, that the consent agenda be approved. Motion carried 6-0, McCoy absent.

Regular Agenda:

1) Discussion on classifications and standards for public schools and University of Wyoming facilities within the Master Plan.

Harrison presented staff recommendations for handling public school facilities and the University of Wyoming lands within the Master Plan. Elementary School playgrounds within the community should be designated as playlots. This recommendation is due to a variety of factors which all act to limit the utility of the school playgrounds, including the limited service hours, no guaranteed public access in the future and lack of facilities such as restroom access etc. These factors all support the recommendation of reducing the acreage to a general .3 acres under the playlot designation, regardless of the actual acreage of the school facilities playground.

Junior and Senior High School facilities should be counted in the overall number of recreation sites within the Master Plan; however no acreage calculation should be assigned and counted towards a specific service area. The recommendation of removing these acreages from the park service area calculations is due to the specific type of athletic pursuits these facilities are designed for and the same factors noted with the elementary school playground sites which limit access.

The University of Wyoming open green areas should be designated as natural areas, open space and the actual acreage of all such land added to the natural areas open space acreage calculations within the Master Plan; because they do offer limited recreation opportunities but are often utilized as natural areas, open space by UW students as well as community members.

Consent to use the above recommendations. The Committee also requested to revisit the topic of open spaces and natural areas to ensure the definition and acreage expectations are sufficiently developed and defined within the Master Plan.

2) Analysis and discussion of Park Service Area 9.

Staff presented a GIS map showing the designated park areas within Park Service Area 9. The Committee discussed the current situation within the service area and examined how best to plan for future parks; taking into consideration the area needs based upon type of park, a spatial analysis and the total acreage needed according to the population. Currently Park Service Area 9 needs 28 to 36 more acres of park land; using population projections for the year 2050, it is expected this shortfall would be 30 to 40 acres. The Committee noted a need for neighborhood parks and playlots within Service Area 9 and began discussing possible placement areas for future parklands. The Committee noted a desire to identify areas that maximize access and service for the largest number of people, which conforms

with the Laramie Comprehensive Plan goal of equal access to parks and recreation facilities. The Committee agreed to continue exploring central locations within underserved areas for possible park placement locations at the next meeting.

New Business

None.

Public Comments:

None.

Meeting adjourned at 1:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mel Owen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "M" and "O".

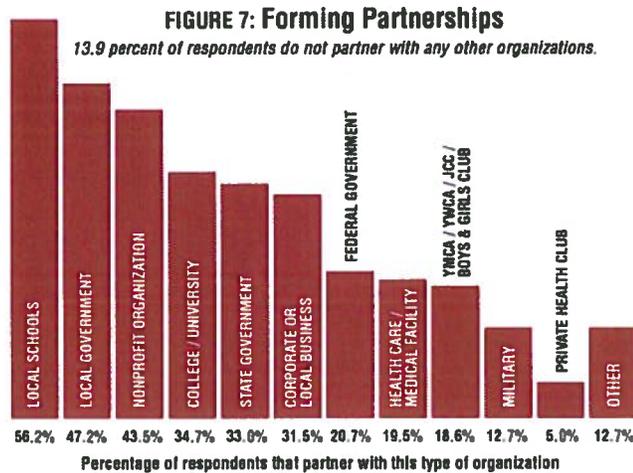
Mel Owen
Administrative Assistant
Parks and Recreation
City of Laramie

NATIONAL TRENDS IN PARK & RECREATION SERVICES

As the City of Laramie moves forward into the next 25 years of growth and advancement staff will need to consider several national/regional trends within Parks & Recreation to ensure we are meeting the needs of the citizens. Several trends that are occurring nationwide in terms of enhancing or supplementing parks services that would also fit nicely within the City of Laramie Parks and Recreation Master Plan are as follows:

ECONOMICS:

- **Sponsorships** – Whether looking at large corporations or individuals, the city needs to consider allowing sponsorships along with sponsorship recognition for new amenities within the parks system. Many communities look at this as a way to further enhance funding streams for replacement or new amenities such as playgrounds, picnic shelters or even total parks depending upon the support for the item. The city currently has accepted sponsorships within the Laramie Community Recreation Center for the picnic pavilions, water feature, concessions area and water slide for the outdoor pool. This enhanced revenue stream could potentially be a real advantage as the city budgets continue to contract due to the limited funding streams from taxes and the State.
- **Supplemental Tax Funds** – The Albany County Recreation Board fund has been an instrumental funding source for recreational programming and equipment since the construction of the Laramie Community Skate Park in 2000. Since then, the Parks and Recreation Department has relied heavily upon the Albany County Recreation Board to supplement the O&M budget as well as new projects and equipment for city projects and volunteer organizations to the tune of nearly \$350,000 per year. Without this supplemental funding, many future projects within the Parks and Recreation Department will not come to fruition.
- **Park In-Lieu Fee for Dedication and Improvement of Parks:** With the adoption of the Unified Development Code in July of 2010 the new UDC requires all residential subdivisions within the City of Laramie to dedicate land for parks or open space, or pay a fee in-lieu of land dedication. The fee for in-lieu of dedication of land for parks and open space is calculated by multiplying the amount of land that would be required to be dedicated (using the formula in section 15.14.070) by \$50,000 per acre. The in-lieu fee is placed in a park dedication fund, based upon the current park service area map. These funds must be used for acquisition or land for parks, trails or open space, or for the purchase or replacement of outdoor recreational equipment. Since July of 2010 the in-lieu fund has a balance of \$34,513 from four subdivisions that elected to pay the in-lieu fee.
- **Partnerships** – The city currently does have partnerships with the UW, The Laramie Rifle Range, The Laramie Barnstormers, the Laramie Dirt Riders, LCCC and Albany County School District for use and programming for athletic fields, parks, pools, and other amenities within the parks system and the recreation center. These partnerships allow community use of several athletic venues so the city and partners have access and do not need to duplicate recreation opportunities offered in the community. These agreements should be updated a minimum of every three (3) years to ensure that they encompass all known recreational areas and can be redrafted to meet current community demands. Other partnerships should be researched to enhance and grow recreational opportunities offered to the citizenry of Laramie. Some examples may include the Laramie Trap Club, Laramie Country Club, Albany County Fairgrounds, US Forest Service, WY Game and Fish, Wyo Tech, and BLM to name a few. In a 2012 Recreation Management magazine article titled "*State of the Managed Recreation Industry*," the majority of respondents to their 2012 survey—86.1 percent—indicated that they form partnerships with other organizations.



- Volunteers** – As budgets continue to contract for parks and recreation the use of volunteers to run specific programming needs along with maintenance for parks facilities should be explored. Many communities rely upon the actual user group for an athletic setting to assist with many of the maintenance items needed for their use. Some examples may include requesting the Laramie Youth baseball along with Legion Baseball to be responsible for the dragging and lining of the ball fields for games and tournaments. Some recreational programming could also potentially be performed by volunteers such as refereeing, score keeping and concession sales with a percentage of the revenues being dedicated to the volunteer groups. Working with volunteers on such a large scale can be problematic in that there will be issues of consistency along with not having as much control over their actions and/or inactions. This should be taken into consideration whenever considering utilizing a volunteer group in these programming or maintenance activities.

AMMENITIES:

- Sports Complex** – Currently the city utilizes most of the larger parks scattered throughout the city to support league soccer play. Nationally it is becoming more common to see recreation districts along with municipalities to construct large sport field complexes that support several athletic fields to enable these activities to all occur at one location which makes it more convenient for the user groups along with lowering the costs associated with the maintenance of these fields.
 - One example that the City of Laramie should consider is a soccer complex that would be large enough to support a minimum of six (6) full sized soccer fields. By being centrally located it would be a one stop location for families involved in soccer where players of multiple ages could play at the same time along with centralizing the required maintenance that now requires staff to transport materials and equipment throughout the city.
 - Another example would be a baseball/softball complex with a minimum of four (4) separate softball fields along with four (4) separate baseball fields of different dimensions that would support different age groups and classifications. Currently softball and baseball are located at four separate locations with three of them being located on UW property that's use and scheduling is governed by the agreement mentioned above in the **partnership** discussion. Two of these complexes (Little League and Cowboy Field) were both constructed in the 1950's are becoming somewhat dilapidated and difficult to maintain.
- Dog Parks** – The current off leash area within the parks system is a small fenced in area located in the natural area along the Laramie River Greenbelt Park. At this time a new design to relocate and construct a larger dog park with a separate area for large dogs and small dogs has been fully vetted and approved. This new designed dog park will meet the current recommended guidelines

that are seen in other communities along the Front Range in terms of size, configuration and materials. Dog areas nationwide in communities of all sizes continue to be more and more popular as citizens realize they can have an area within the urban environment that will allow them to exercise and socialize their pets. The city has recognized through discussions with council and citizens that the future expansion of these areas throughout the city is desirable. Care needs to be taken when determining future dog park sites so that the current green space in the current park inventory is not utilized to heavily for this activity where it effects the neighborhoods use of their neighborhood park.

According to Dog Fancy magazine, the first official U.S. dog park opened in Berkeley, Calif., in 1979. These days there are hundreds of dog parks across the country. The U.S. Humane Society reports that 39 percent of U.S. households owned at least one dog in 2009-2010, with around 77.5 million owned dogs across the country. Parks are increasingly looking to provide a place for these pups to have their own fun and exercise. According to the Marin Humane Society, an ideal dog park should be designed to include at least an acre, surrounded by a fence 4 to 6 feet high; a double-gated entry; shade and water; adequate drainage; parking; a grassy area that is routinely mowed; covered garbage cans; pooper scooper stations; benches; wheelchair access; a safe location; and regular maintenance; as well as concern for the environment. Manufacturers have increasingly been on board with the growing popularity of dog parks, and in addition to standard amenities like pooper-scooper stations, are now offering specially designed water fountains for dogs, agility equipment that can be installed in the park setting and more.

- **Monolith Ranch** – The City of Laramie does have a unique opportunity for exponential growth in terms of new parks, trails and recreation programming on the Monolith Ranch. These ranch lands encompass approximately 10,000 acres and is located to the south and west of the city and was obtained by the city in the 1980's to secure the oldest water rights on the Big Laramie River. The city is now close to fulfilling the requirements for these water rights in perpetuity and now needs to consider new uses for the ranch lands that would enrich the community. Staff and community leaders have long looked at the ranch for potential recreational uses such as:
 1. Trails – New recreational trails could be constructed that connected the current trail system or greenbelt with the monolith ranch. These new trails may be constructed in such a way that they have little impact upon the ranch by utilizing crushed fines instead of the traditional asphalt or concrete and be restricted in size so that they serve a specific use such as bicycling. Water bars and other flood control means should be utilized to keep maintenance of the trail system at a minimum on these “natural” trails. This type of construction for off street trails has proven popular along the Front Range in communities such a Colorado Springs as they offer a more challenging experience for the riders.
 2. Dog Parks – Several dog parks could potentially be constructed on the ranch that may incorporate specific themes for the users. Examples may include a training area for bird hunting/retrieving, a water park for dogs that incorporates the Laramie River and an agility course park.
 3. Community Park – The City of Laramie currently has two (2) designated community parks within the system with Washington Park and LaBonte Park. These parks do not meet the national standards for a true community park in relation to their size and offered amenities. A true community park in excess of forty acres could be constructed somewhere within the confines of the monolith ranch in such a way as to support community wide events such as Freedom has a Birthday, concerts and recreational competitions (sports complexes) that may bring in visitors from the region.
 4. Other recreational opportunities for the type of varied geographical landscape the Monolith Ranch offers are a bmx or motor-cross trail & track system, a municipal golf course, or even a possible outdoor educational cooperative.

At this time there are currently only two recreational opportunities that are offered on the ranch, a walk in area for antelope hunting in the fall, and public fishing access from HWY230 on the north

side of the Laramie River. These programs are offered through the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and are a partnership that the city has been involved in for several years.

- **Trails** – National trends show trails as one of the most commonly planned addition among parks.

The Laramie Greenbelt has been a huge success and has surprised staff with its frequency of use since its original construction in 1999 by a partnership with the Union Pacific railroad and the City. According to the 2011 Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report from the Outdoor Foundation, trail use is popular for youth and adults. Running, jogging and trail running was the most popular outdoor activity for youth ages 6 to 24, with 20.4 million participants, or 25.8 percent of youth.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALBANY TOURISM BOARD

Hiking was the fifth most popular outdoor activity for youth, with 9.7 million participants, or 12.3 percent of youth. For adults, running, jogging and trail running was the second most popular outdoor activity, with 30.9 million participants, or 14.7 percent of adults. It also was listed as a favorite adult outdoor activity, with 2.6 billion total outings, or 86.1 average outings per runner. Hiking was the fifth most popular, with 22.8 million adults participating (11.1 percent).

Other favorite outdoor activities for youth and adults commonly take place along the trail. For both youth and adults, bird watching is considered an outdoor activity on the rise, with 74 million total outings for youth and 464 million outings for adults. Wildlife viewing was another favorite for adults, with 453 million total outings.

- **Playgrounds** - In a time of growing concern over childhood obesity and lack of outdoor time for children, more playgrounds are a common trend in all cities. According to a Synopsis of 2010 Research Papers from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), a third of Americans report that their community does not have an adequate number of playgrounds to serve the children who need them. The problem is worse in poorer communities, the report states.

The trend toward adding more environmental education programs among parks respondents is also supported by anecdotal evidence of a growing interest in connecting people with the outdoors. For many, one of the easiest segues from the built environment into the natural world is via playgrounds. Perhaps for this reason, many playground manufacturers have added elements that serve this transition with not only natural colors, but also natural-looking elements, and even trailside elements that aim to educate children and families about nature.

Increasing inclusiveness has also been a growing trend in the playground space, with manufacturers and those who build playgrounds alike aiming to go beyond simple accessibility to ensure that children of different abilities can play alongside one another.

- **Pocket Parks** – Pocket parks (parks smaller than 2 acres in size) have been not recommended for several years in that the amount of maintenance and travel was deemed in excess of the perceived benefit to the neighborhood. This trend has since changed and now pocket parks are encouraged in developed or landlocked areas of a municipality to provide a recreational site for children specifically. As the national obesity rate continues to rise, it has become apparent to leaders within parks and recreation districts that the benefits of providing a playground or some other physical activity for our children ages 2 – 12 is imperative to combat this trend. The City of Laramie Ad Hoc Committee has identified several park service areas that are deficient in providing *any* type of amenity for the area's residents. When creating design standards for these pocket parks, the types of amenities along with any landscaping should be considered. Staff would recommend that traditional high maintenance turf be excluded along with poured in place resilient fall surface protection for any type of equipment. By setting standards that require less

maintenance these pocket parks can be constructed so that they do not become a fiscal hardship to the maintenance staff.

- **Splash Parks** – Splash play areas have been at the top of the list for planned additions at facilities of all kinds for several years running. More than a quarter of parks respondents to a 2011 poll (25.9 percent) said they currently include splash play areas among their facilities. They also are the most commonly planned addition among parks and recreation respondents, with 28.5 percent indicating they had such plans. Health clubs, camps and community centers were also among those most likely to be planning to add splash play areas.

Installed over zero-depth pads, splash play features offer facility owners many advantages. In addition to being highly popular elements in the communities they serve, they require far less maintenance than most aquatic facilities (though regular maintenance is required to ensure things are in working order), and have the added benefit of not requiring a lifeguard to be on staff to watch over the facility.

Recent developments in splash play features allow for theming with elements shaped like sea animals, plant life and other designs that go beyond the basic spray pole. In addition, features have been developed that have the ability to turn on when someone shows up to play, but turn off so as not to waste water when no users are present. Advances in water treatment also have come into play, helping ensure a safe experience for splash park users.

Laramie has seen these trends first-hand, as Laramie's splash pad at Undine Park is currently undergoing an additional phase II and phase III as a result of its popularity with families in the city. The Parks and Recreation Department staff notes that splash pads offer an aquatic experience without the life-risk and need for lifeguards that come with a traditional leisure pool with spray features. Although maintenance is similar for both aquatic features, the absence of daily labor costs in lifeguards, make splash pads an attractive amenity for future cost-sensitive projects for expanded offerings.

Splash Play



PHOTO COURTESY OF CITY OF LARAMIE

PROGRAMS:

- In 2012, the City conducted a survey, polling the users of the Laramie Recreation Center for input on possible areas of expansion to the Recreation Center and the Ice & Event Center from the SPT defeasance coverage. In that survey, relevant to programming, at the top of the results, showed that our local community would like laser tag or paintball programs inside the Ice & Event Center. The Recreation Center showed a climbing wall, and larger fitness studio as the second and fourth highest results, respectively, concluding that the Laramie community wants climbing and larger fitness programs offered in the future.
- Regionally, within the state of Wyoming and rural areas of Nebraska, Idaho, and Montana, roller skating is still a popular program offering. In 2012, the Laramie Ice & Event Center was able to acquire 64 pairs of roller skates for a new roller skating program for the off-season. Roller Skating ranked 5th on our SPT survey, with 10% labeling it their top desire to see at the Ice & Event Center. Although nationally, roller skating is fading as an offered-activity, the Laramie community, among others in the Mid-West, are requesting this safe, indoor, youth-driven activity as part of a viable off-season ice rink offering.
- Trending nationally for the top concern among most community centers is marketing and increasing participation at their facilities. Central to that mission is programming that will keep patrons coming back for more.

The top 10 programs included in most national facilities are:

1. holiday events and special events
2. fitness programs
3. mind-body/balance programs
4. day camps and summer camps
5. youth sports teams
6. educational programs
7. active older adult programs
8. sports tournaments and races
9. swimming programs
10. adult sports teams.

(according to Recreation Management magazine: Fall 2011)

The top 10 programs community centers are planning to add over the next 3-5 years include:

1. Nutrition and diet counseling
2. Teen programs
3. Mind-body balance programs
4. Fitness programs
5. Educational programs
6. Individual sports activities like running clubs or swim clubs
7. Active older adult programs
8. Sport training, such as golf instruction or tennis lessons
9. Day camps and summer camps
10. Sports tournaments and races

- **Extreme Sports and Activities** - Participation in recreation has shifted over the past couple of years and the demand for "extreme" sports has steadily increased. Sports such as inline skating, mountain biking and skateboarding are favorites. Demand for alternative amenities such as climbing walls and indoor soccer are also increasing. Many of these types of opportunities can be accommodated within our current parks and the Laramie Recreation Center and its programs. Parkour is a highly trending extreme sport within urban areas that has drawn the attention of many young adults everywhere for its athleticism and ability to facilitate the sport individually or as a group. The sport incorporates moving from one point to another without stopping, thus jumping over, climbing under, swinging across, any object that stands in the way. The more unique and acrobatic the athletic move, the better.

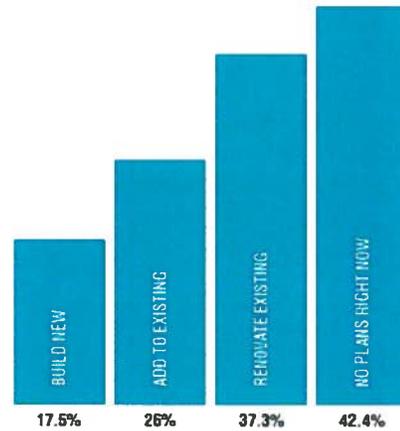
FACILITIES:

- From a 2011 survey taken by Recreation Management magazine, more than half (57.6 percent) of community center respondents said they had plans for construction in the next three years. This construction is dominated by plans for renovations. Some 37.3 percent of community center respondents said they had plans to renovate existing facilities. More than one-quarter (26 percent) were planning additions, and 17.5 percent were planning to build new facilities. (See Figure 60.)

The most common features currently included in community center respondents' facilities were:

1. Classrooms and meeting rooms (included by 66.7 percent)
2. Fitness centers (63.1 percent)
3. Bleachers and seating (61.9 percent)
4. Locker rooms (61.3 percent)
5. Exercise studio rooms (60.7 percent)
6. Concession areas (58.9 percent)
7. Playgrounds (58.3 percent)
8. Indoor sports courts (56.5 percent)
9. Outdoor sports courts (45.8 percent)
10. Open spaces, including gardens and natural areas (44.6 percent)

**FIGURE 60:
Facility Plans,
Community Rec/Sports Centers**



More than four in 10 (40.3 percent) community center respondents said they had plans to add more features to their facilities over the next three years. The most popular additions for these respondents were:

1. Splash play areas (planned by 26 percent of those who will add more features)
2. Synthetic turf sports fields (23.3 percent)
3. Park structures, such as shelters and restroom buildings (21.9 percent)
4. Fitness centers (20.5 percent)
5. Locker rooms (20.5 percent)
6. Concession areas (19.2 percent)
7. Playgrounds (17.8 percent)
8. Exercise studio rooms (16.4 percent)
9. Bleachers and seating (15.1 percent)
10. Trails (13.7 percent)

TARGET DEMOGRAPHICS:

- Youth** - Participation in out-of-school activities and programs offer support for youth and working families, as well as benefitting youth socially, emotionally, and academically. On a national level, after school programs have been proven to decrease juvenile crime and violence, reduce drug use, cut smoking, and alcohol abuse, and decrease teen pregnancy. Children often participate in team sports such as basketball, soccer and baseball over individual activities. After school programs, such as SACC (School Aged Child Care), as well as recreational sports programs that practice after school create a place for younger, elementary aged children to get active and learn new fundamentals in sports. Although today's youth continue to participate in outdoor activities, they are still not meeting recommended weekly activity levels. Even with higher overall outdoor recreation participation and a higher percentage of participants that take part in an outdoor activity at least twice a week (37%) than other age groups, outdoor activity among youth makes up only a small portion of the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) recommended "60 minutes of physical activity

on most, preferably all, days of the week". Although the quantity of activity is low, the most popular types of outdoor activities that youth do participate in involve a vigorous amount of activity. Laramie has already made strides to combat the absence of activities for youth with the construction of the skate park in 2000. As the city grows and demographics change, youth will always need to be a target for the future of Parks and Recreation.

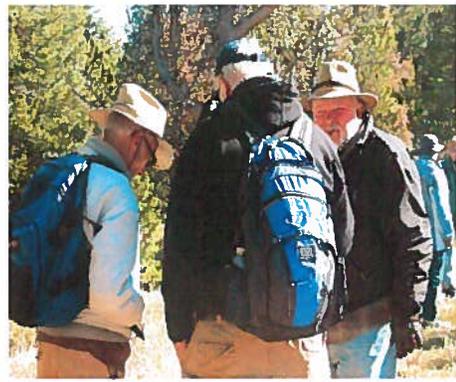
Young Adults – Unfortunately, national trends for outdoor activity show that young adults are even less active than youth. The frequency of outdoor activity starts to drop off from youth to young adulthood (around age 18) – the percentage of young adults who take part in outdoor activities twice a week or more drops to 25% for young adults, a 30% decrease from youth rates. The types of activities young adults participate in are the same, but there is a drastic decline in the number of outings. Just as with youth participants, young adults are not meeting CDC recommended activity levels.

Holding the only distinction in the state of a true "college town," Laramie obviously has a large percentage of its population that fit into this specific, young adult demographic. Although, the University of Wyoming offers multiple recreational activities, parks, and open space for their students in this Young Adult category, the city cannot plan for the University. It should always be the position of the city to include these student population numbers in our overall geographic population totals, to ensure that as a city we are offering adequate parks and recreational services to all citizens of the Laramie community.

FUTURE POPULATIONS:

- **Hispanics** – As Laramie grows, different demographic trends are taking shape. The transient fluidity of the Laramie community, in large part from the University, makes it attractive for many transient working families, such as Hispanics to live in Laramie. The three valued and influential aspects of Hispanic culture are family, community and personalization. Hispanics strongly value their interpersonal relationships within their families and within their communities. Therefore, it is common for Hispanics to live and participate in activities as a "multi-generational extended family". Hispanic outdoor recreation participants often:
 - Prefer to recreate in larger groups
 - Prefer forested sites with water features and amenities to support a day-long
 - Extended family social outing with on-site meal preparation
 - Are interested in an outdoor experience with a strong social recreation component, such as facilities and programs that involve families, programs for children and youth, and family-oriented entertainment events and festivals
 - Identify stress relief and having a good family experience as the most important features of a satisfying outdoor recreation excursion
 - Enjoy picnicking, day hiking, camping, and large family gatherings in outdoor settings
- **Senior Adults** – With the "Baby-Boomer" generation moving into their retirement years, our focus here, in a retirement-friendly Laramie, needs to cater to this demographic over the most immediate next 10 years of this Master plan. Older Americans' leisure time is increasingly being spent doing physical activities, in educational classes, partaking in adventure travel, and attending sporting events. It is our intention, to be mindful of these opportunities to come and program accordingly with the Parks and Recreation Department. These trends may be the result of the fact that for many, retirement is starting earlier than it has in the past. Approximately 70% of the current retired population entered retirement before the age of 65. These new retirees are younger, healthier, and have more wealth to spend for the services they want. These trends may explain the changing demands,

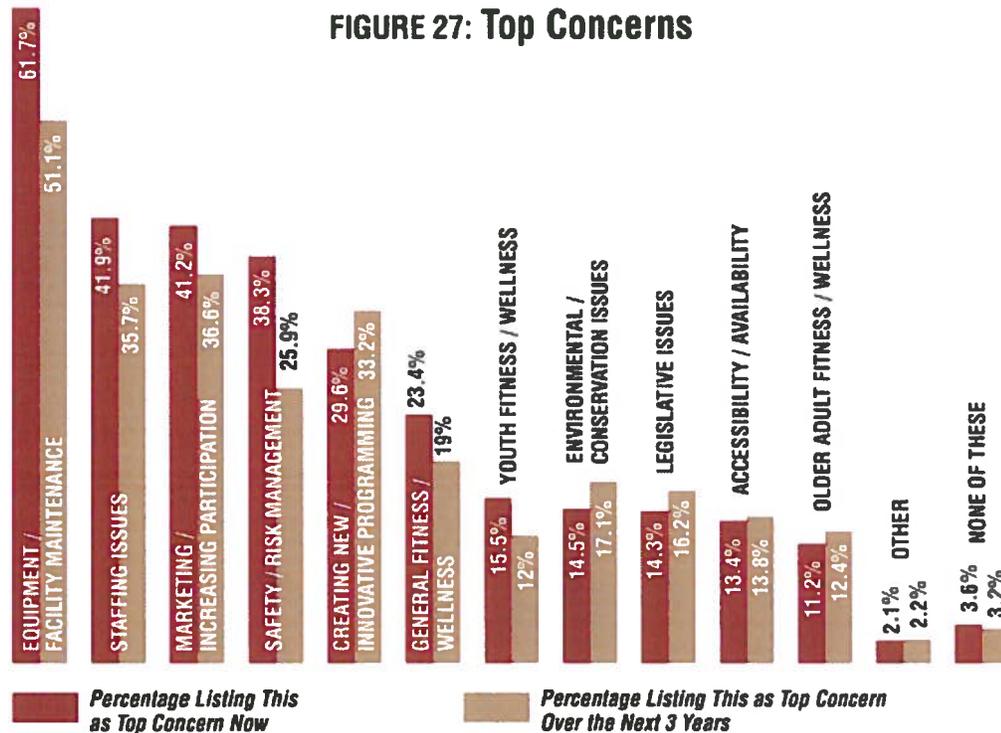
Laramie's "Seniors on the go"



nationally, from traditional low-cost social services, like bingo and board games, to more active programming for which older residents are willing to pay, like bike riding, running, and fitness classes.

FUTURE CHALLENGES:

- There's little doubt that the economy is still the primary challenge for most Parks and Recreation Departments. The City of Laramie has certainly felt the down tick in economic growth over the last five years. Equipment and facility maintenance becomes difficult or impossible when resources—including money and staff—for ongoing maintenance are reduced or eliminated. Staff within the City of Laramie have expressed a lack of funding to make improvements and needed renovations at their facilities in order to offer better service. Others mentioned that usage at the Laramie Recreation Center has increased, but the budget for new equipment is contingent upon grant funding from partnerships with the Albany County Rec board, which means equipment is getting worn out faster with no set budget line item for replacements. A 2012 report from Recreation Management magazine shows the top concerns for Recreation Centers across the U.S.



FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES:

- On a whole, the City of Laramie has some of the best parks and recreational offerings in the state. Future opportunities include continued partnerships with educational institutions within Albany County, acquisition of land for development of a consolidated sports complex, additional pocket parks in deficient areas and the development of current city buildings and land holdings for the encouragement of a greater active community within the City of Laramie.