

Parks & Recreation Master Plan



A comprehensive vision for the future of parks, trails,
open space and recreation in the Laramie community.



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Executive Summary

Laramie, which is located in Albany County at an elevation of 7,200 feet and home to the State's only four-year higher-education institution, the University of Wyoming, is a quintessential western community blended with a progressive and modern outlook. With a population of 30,816 people, Laramie is expected to grow by approximately 10,000 people by 2050, bringing Laramie's total population to 40,000. When examining the community more closely, a younger population, over half of the total, is between the ages of 15-34 years old with denser populations of people living around or in close proximity to the University of Wyoming campus.

The City of Laramie has a solid and rooted history in parks, recreation, trails and natural areas. With the creation of Undine Park in the 1880's, the Laramie River Greenbelt corridor, and the recent Laramie Community Recreation Center, it is clear that the City and community have committed to parks, recreation, trails and natural areas as a high priority. The rich history of Laramie's parks and recreation system demonstrates this commitment, further solidifying the importance of this plan for Laramie. A more detailed history is provided in Chapter 3.

The Vision

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan has been developed in order to achieve Laramie's vision for Parks and Recreation in the community. Based on the public comments, background information, other plans/codes and the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee's experience and expertise, the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee developed a vision for the plan. The vision is intended to provide the inspiration and framework for the plan, which includes generalized goals and direction.

The following vision was approved by the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee:

1. Provide equitable parks and recreation services and opportunities to all areas and people of the community.
2. Develop a parks, trails, recreation and natural areas system that is specific to Laramie and the surrounding community.
3. Establish new parks in conjunction with proposed development or in areas of park deficiency; parks should be considered no different than other vital infrastructure, such as streets, sidewalks and utilities.
4. Improve the visual appearance of our community through beautification of City-owned areas by improving their recreational and natural area qualities.
5. Provide for the future needs of the community in relation to parks, recreation, trails and natural areas through sound planning and visionary foresight.
6. Establish a funding mechanism that provides for parks, recreation, trails and natural areas that adequately serves the population, based on population growth and development pressures.
7. Provide for a continuous mobility loop around (and throughout) the community for off-street bike and pedestrian paths that allow users to access parks, recreation and natural areas.
8. City and Albany County should work together to secure permanent access east of the City to ensure preservation of the natural areas, and

at a minimum access to the National Forest.

With the City of Laramie's Parks and Recreation Master Plan being developed from a community vision that believed parks, recreation, trails and natural areas components of our community are important and require the long range planning vision that only a comprehensive plan could provide developing a plan is a must. For many communities, parks, recreation, trails and natural areas are an afterthought; Laramie is not one of those communities and does not want to be one of those communities. With the development of the 1982 Parks and Recreation Master Plan and many of the plans that followed it, one common theme was present: parks, recreation, trails and natural areas are the number one priority for community residents. This plan is necessary for the community and its leaders to work towards achieving the high expectations, visions, goals and standards established and outlined by the community through this process.

Although a community's desire may differ as to why a plan should be developed, all well-developed plans have inherent benefits to the community. The most apparent benefit a parks master plan can provide is the long term, community-wide planning needed to provide facilities for the entire community in relation to parks and recreation.

Aside from good general planning practice, one of the specific benefits of a plan is to help aid in budgeting. In any budgeting situation, especially in a government setting, short term budgeting often leads to inefficient expenditures. Albany County and Laramie do not receive large revenues from the State or other sources such as mining, thus development of these facilities must come from the general budget, typically over a longer period of time. Although the community has traditionally shown a commitment to these facilities, Laramie is not alone in feeling the difficulties of budget cuts. Long term planning make this plan an essential component of good stewardship. Managing the year-to-year budget keeps the long term vision within grasp. This long term approach also allows for small budget increases over a series of years to accomplish and implement objectives identified in the plan, instead of one-time, large increases that are difficult to obtain.

Across the country, parks and recreation amenities are now considered essential services to cities, and in fact, act as an economic generator to the community by increasing property values, aiding in business retention and attracting new business to the community. These quality of life improvements create a sense of place, preserve the environment and generate tourism dollars. No matter the reason, parks and recreation facilities provide widespread benefits to the community, making this plan even more important not only for the development of parks and recreation in Laramie but also for the general betterment of the community.

Wyoming Statutes gives the City the authority to make plans for the physical development of the City, including parks, recreation, trails and natural areas. Two distinct areas are addressed by this plan; areas inside City Limits and city owned property outside City limits. For areas inside City limits the full applicability and enforceability of the plan apply. Long range planning for the Laramie community remains of paramount importance; particularly as the City continues to grow by likely annexing new areas into the City. Once annexed, these areas will fall under the jurisdiction of the City and this plan.

For this plan, public participation was expected and was the driving force behind the development of the document. Opportunities for the public to participate included public meetings, stakeholder groups, a community survey, as well as unsolicited phone conversations and letters to the City, just to name a few. Public meetings like the biweekly Ad Hoc Advisory Committee, Planning Commission and City Council, plus many other board and commission meetings were opportunities for these boards and the public to comment and provide input on the plan. Additionally, a more focused approach was taken to collect public comments through stakeholder groups. These stakeholder meetings provided a focused look at specific issues related to specific interests and goals of each stakeholder group in relation to parks, recreation, trails and natural areas.

Another major public participation initiative was a community wide survey (Laramie residents and County residents within the one-mile boundary) completed by Wyoming Survey and Analysis Center

(WYSAC). The survey was developed by City of Laramie Staff, the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee and WYSAC personnel to assess preferences and attitudes about various parks and recreation related issues. The high response rate was invaluable in surveying the public's opinion on these matters. Finally, less formal and more modern methods such as a web site for the plan's development, newspaper ads, Facebook and Twitter were used to disseminate information such as meeting times, agendas and general information, providing an opportunity to comment through mail, phone or email and complete a survey if they were not mailed one. (See Appendix B, C and D for more information)

Updates and amendments to the plan are essential to keeping a plan relevant to the desires of a community. Every five years minor updates should be completed such as; general editing and map updates to reflect completed improvements, updates to goals and action statements. Other changes may reflect new codes or regulations which change how the plan is used. Every ten years major updates should be implemented including; new park plans or updates to the existing plans, revision of goals, updates to public comments/issues, Service Area modifications, updates to action statements as well as any other necessary updates. All updates shall follow the process as established by State Statutes and Laramie Municipal Code for updates to a master plan.

The goals and recommendations for parks, recreation, trails and natural areas have been outlined in many previous plans adopted by Laramie and its surrounding communities over the years. Because of the direction provided in these plans, City staff, the Ad Hoc Committee and the public looked to these recommendations for providing direction related to the development of this plan. This plan considered the following documents; Laramie Bikeway Study, Comprehensive Plan: Parks, Recreation, and Open Space, Land Use Element, Laramie Bicycle Facility Master Plan, Laramie Comprehensive Plan, Casper Aquifer Protection Plan & Ordinance, Albany County Comprehensive Plan, Unified Development Code, University of Wyoming Long Range Development Plan, A Downtown Development Plan for Laramie Wyoming, Management Plan for Water Rights on the Monolith Ranch & Monolith Ranch Agricultural Management Plan, Medicine Bow National Forest

Revised Land and Resource Management Plan, Wyoming Statewide Comprehensive Recreation Plan and Cirrus Sky Technology Park Master Plan. More information related to these plans can be found in Chapter 2.

Parks and Recreation Standards

A successful Parks and Recreation Master Plan requires a set of classifications and standards that provide a framework for the physical development and redevelopment of any community facility. Not only do these standards set an expected baseline for a community's size, type, location and amenities of its parks and recreation facilities, it establishes a community wide standard that can be used by the City, more specifically, the Parks and Recreation Department. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) published the Recreation, Park, and Open Space Standards and Guidelines (2009) to establish nationally applicable criteria for the provision of natural areas, parks and recreation facilities. These standards serve as a guide for parks and recreation planning and this plan, but do not replace reasonable judgment or specific local needs. The National Standards have been modified to specifically fit Laramie's needs and unique characteristics. For this plan four main groups of standards were generated: Parks, Trails, Recreation and Natural Areas.

For Parks, standards were developed that provide guidance related to the size, services, location and amenities that should be standard in each of the three main park types: Community, Neighborhood and Playlot Parks.

Recreation facilities and amenities standards were also developed that provided specifics for each of the facilities of note, but lacked the general standards like those developed for the parks, due to the specifics needed for each. Standards for the Recreation Center, Ice and Event Center, sports complexes, dog friendly off-leash areas, splash parks, playgrounds, skatepark, cemetery and Jacoby Golf Course were developed that provided background, location, size, funding and future issues.

Standards for Natural Areas were also developed, which provide direction to the community in relationship to areas that are set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, open space, unique topography,

visual aesthetics or some other resource that has been determined of value to the community. Two different types of Natural Areas were standardized; Open Space and Preserve. Open Space allows different levels of improvements and access, while Preserves limit or restrict improvements as well as the access to the areas. Proposed standards are provided in relationship to private versus public Natural Areas.

Trail standards were also developed for four main types; Bicycle Lanes, Shared-Use Paths, Rural Trails and Other. Generally, all bicycle lanes, shared-use paths and any other pedestrian routes noted in this plan or constructed in Laramie should conform to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) 2009, as well as other standards such as AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities 2012, Americans with Disabilities Act 1990 (as amended) and City of Laramie Engineering Standards. In addition to the general standards outlined in these documents, detailed standards such as location, width and painting/signage needs, as well as many other standards are addressed in Chapter 4.

In addition to some of the more commonly associated parks and recreation amenities, other standards were developed for: Recreation and Programming, Laramie Beautification Areas, University of Wyoming campus and Detention Areas. Standards varied between the different amenities and were tailored to meet the needs of each amenity and the community. Standards that were developed ranged from: how to accommodate different user groups, such as youth or seniors in recreation programming, how to improve gateways into the community through beautification areas and maximizing the potential of a detention area not only for stormwater management but also for recreation and beautification.

Parks and Recreation Analysis

With the importance of parks and recreation planning, developing standards for amenities, and programming and other key areas of this plan, the final component of this plan is the physical planning of the community. The physical development of the community was presented in two different ways: by Service Area (SA) and by each existing Park or major Facility. As noted above and throughout the plan, the community was divided

into Service Areas, which are based on area geography, major barriers to travel and other physical features. By dividing up the community in this manner, a more manageable approach to providing parks and recreation services for delineated areas of the community could be undertaken. Based on each Service Area, existing and future population was analyzed. Based on this analysis, the number, acreage and spatial needs for the SA in relationship to Parks (Community, Neighborhood and Playlot Parks) was given. Finally, a detailed analysis, goals and summary for each Service Area are then provided showing how the SA is currently serving the SA's needs and what is desirable for the future.

In addition to the analysis provided for each Service Area, each existing Park and major facility was also examined. Each analysis provided details related to existing and proposed needs for each park or facility. For many of the parks, existing amenities and future needs were similar, especially for parks in similar categories such as Community, Neighborhood or Playlot Parks. However, depending upon the size, population, location, and existing amenities, among other factors, the needs for each park varied. For instance, additional dog friendly off-leash parks, sand volleyball courts or a BMX/Cyclo-Cross course were all desired amenities by the public; however every park does not need all of these amenities. Based on public comment and input from the Ad Hoc Committee and staff amenities were distributed throughout these parks to accommodate needs of the area or community as a whole.

Similar to the study completed for each park, an analysis related to major facilities, such as the Recreation Center, Ice and Events Center and Cemetery, among others, was also completed. For the analysis completed for each of these facilities, the needs varied. For some facilities, future expansion, additional amenities and improvements were the common needs and desires, while other facilities such as the Cemetery, identified the need for a completely new site, due to the limited capacity of the existing facility.

This analysis is important in providing the community, staff and elected officials a plan as to how these facilities will need to develop in the future. As stated in the vision and throughout the plan, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the City is considered highly

important to the community. Parks and recreation amenities, Natural Areas, and Trails should no longer be considered secondary needs in Laramie, but instead should be considered a high priority within the goals of our community. Not only do these proposed features provide common benefits to a community such as places to play and recreate, but also benefit the community in other countless ways including the economy. This plan is a well thought out and all encompassing representation of what the Laramie community desires in relationship to parks, recreation, trails and natural areas.

The specific locations of any RECOMMENDED Parks, Trails and Facilities within this document are HYPOTHETICAL in nature and they are not intended for public use. Locations may change as development occurs.

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan, including all text, maps, figures and appendices as well as additional information such as public comments and survey results can be found on the City of Laramie's website at the following web address:

www.cityoflaramie.org/masterplan

Acknowledgments

The Laramie Parks and Recreation Master Plan was generated through the hard and dedicated work of various groups, citizens and staff. This plan is dedicated to those groups as well the countless citizens who have made the Parks and Recreation Master Plan a top priority for Laramie and the surrounding area. Without citizen support and input the development of this document would not have been possible.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Laramie has developed a Parks and Recreation Master Plan in order to implement and achieve the desired long range vision of the community. Additionally, the passage of the plan demonstrates the commitment of the Laramie community to the goals, ideas, and benefits of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The legislative authority given to the City to adopt a comprehensive plan is in Wyoming Statutes Sections 15-1-501 through 15-1-512, authorizing the City to prepare and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the City. For this plan, the City has chosen to exhibit areas inside the City limits and only plan for areas within the City limits and City owned property.

Two distinct areas exist within the Plan: areas inside City limits and areas outside of City limits but within the one-mile boundary from City limits. Based on the planning legislation provided by the State, any planning done outside of the City limits requires the concurrence of the county, if the Plan is to be applicable and enforceable in the areas outside of the City limits. As the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee developed the draft plan and received comments from the Albany County Planning and Zoning Commission and the Albany County Commissioners on the proposed extraterritorial needs outside the City limits but within the one-mile boundary, the Ad Hoc Committee removed all of the Plan elements shown outside of City limits and not on City owned property at the encouragement of Albany County appointed and elected officials. The Ad Hoc Committee has recommended within this Plan that Albany County follow the guidance in their own adopted Albany County Comprehensive Plan related to Parks and Recreation issues. Throughout the Albany County Comprehensive Plan multiple recommendations are given, including two of six key Implementation Actions referencing



A family at play in Harbon Park

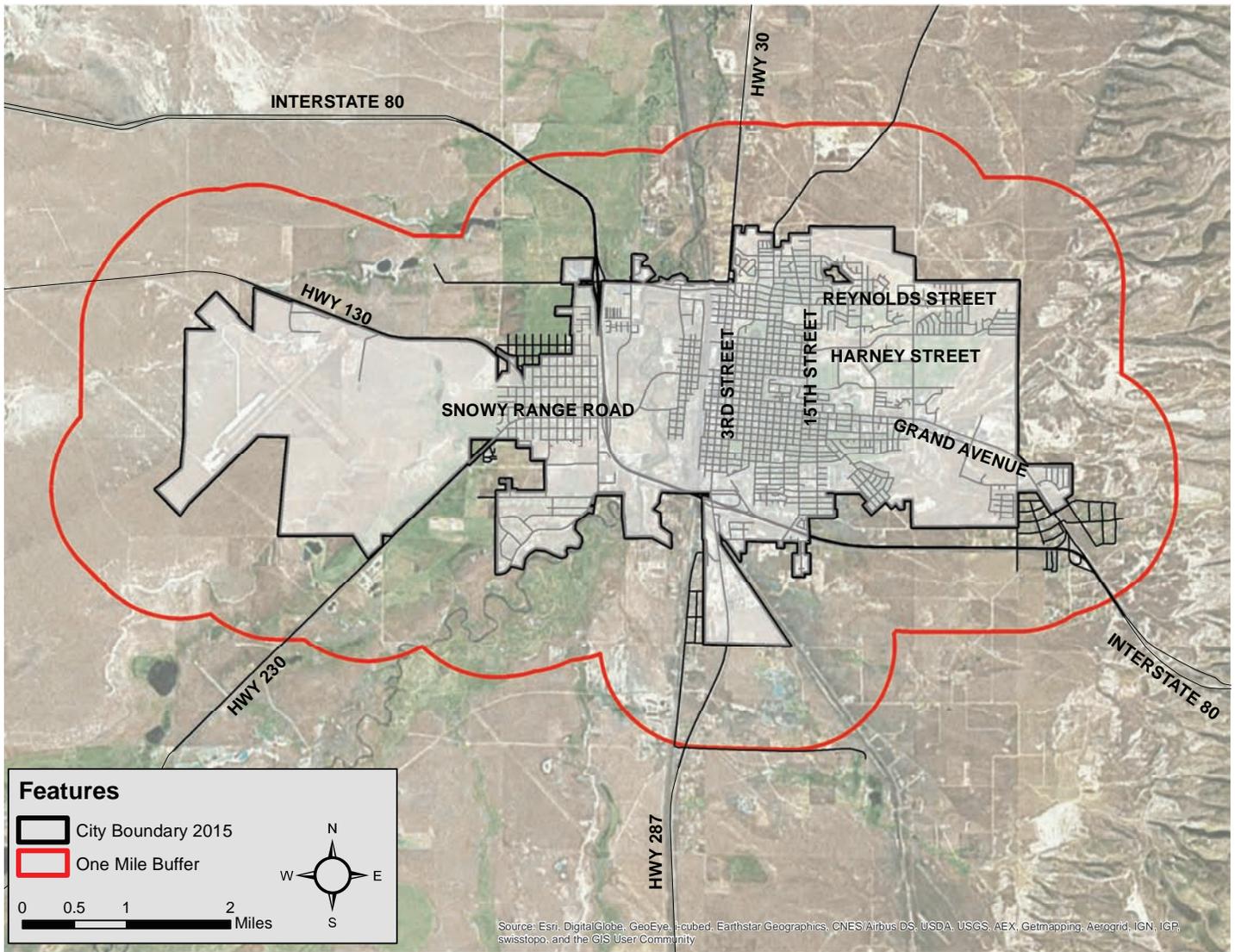
recreation opportunities and development of an open space and trails plan. Other implementation action items such as providing for recreational opportunities, open space and trails, and that plans be developed to support these initiatives are also found in the document.

It is recommended that Albany County follow these already adopted recommendations and goals related to the development of parks and recreation amenities in Albany County. The County should also consider development of a County Parks Plan, which if developed, the City's Plan should consider the County Plan in a 5 or 10 year update to its own plan or in conjunction with an update.

Although this Plan does not show any parks and recreation elements outside of City limits except for city owned property; long range planning for the Laramie community remains of paramount importance; particularly as the City continues to grow it will likely annex new areas into the City. Once annexed, these areas will fall under the jurisdiction of the City and

this plan. A long range plan, forty years, will allow for a well thought out and future-driven recreation system for Park, Trails, Bike Lanes, Shared Use Paths and all other facilities to develop over time. Without this long term vision in place, there will be little guidance for property owners, developers and the City on matters involving the park and recreation system that will serve future populations. Furthermore, a detailed plan should be in place for City owned properties outside of City limits, such as the Monolith Ranch. This plan provides important planning guidance for these properties as well.

Generally acquisition of Parks and amenities, such as trail or sporting fields, will rely on the Parks and Recreation Master Plan for guidance as to the location, importance



City of Laramie Boundary and one mile buffer, 2015

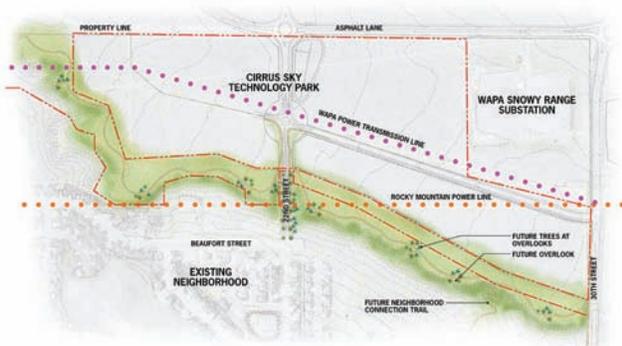


Monolith Ranch, public access area, just south of Laramie, WY and need within the community. When it comes time for acquiring these amenities many different methods may be used to acquire the needed properties or complete the needed improvements. One of the most common ways in Laramie is the requirement that residential development provide these parks or improvements based on the Park Dedication and In-lieu fees requirements adopted by the City and found in code. In conjunction with this requirement and with cooperation of the landowner, other common methods such as straight out purchase, trade/swap, donation or the establishment of easements may be used to accommodate the needed parks and amenities.

Not a new concept in Laramie, this long term planning approach and land acquisition process is common place and has been successful throughout Laramie’s history. Two examples of this successful long range planning are; the Cirrus Sky Ridgeline Trail and the Monolith Ranch. In regards to the Monolith Ranch, a major long range planning initiative securing water rights for future use by the City, was accomplished through the purchase and continued operation of the Monolith Ranch in 1982. This forward thinking, long range planning (going on 30 plus years) shows the importance of long range planning outside of City limits, ultimately resulting in sustained longevity of the community. In conjunction with this goal, and more specifically related to the Parks and Recreation goals, access to the Laramie River for fishing and recreation was secured in 1983. Although this is the most immediate benefit to Parks and Recreation now, as water rights are transferred to municipal use, the availability of the Ranch for additional recreational opportunities is highly likely. In the end this major planning effort has seen it’s first results within the first 30 years and with more results to be seen in the next 40 to 50 years and beyond.



30th and Plains Viewshed, Laramie, WY



Conceptual rendering of the future Cirrus Sky Trail

General Parks, Recreation, Trails and Natural Areas Issues and Visions

As with any plan, public input plays a substantial role in how a plan captures the vision of the community. Some of the main public comments received during the development of the 2007 Laramie Comprehensive Plan centered on parks, recreation, trails and natural areas. Because of the amount of comments received during that process, it was recognized that the community's involvement would play a major role in the development of this plan. In addition to the comments received during the development of the Laramie Comprehensive Plan, parks and recreation related comments are often the most discussed during other long range planning processes such as the Turner Tract Area Plan 2013 and the Cirrus Sky Technology Park Master Plan. This topic is also discussed at length in other current planning items such as plats and code development. Because of the continuing interest in the topic of parks and recreation, development of this plan became paramount.

In order to capture the public's vision for the plan, the Laramie City Council created an Ad Hoc Advisory Committee made up of citizens from Laramie and the surrounding area in an effort to help staff work on the development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. One of the main directives given to the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee was to capture the vision of the community. The Ad Hoc Advisory Committee acts as a sounding board not only for

the public, but for staff as well. By incorporating public comments into the process, a more unified community park and recreation vision was captured.

Public Process

An essential component of any planning document is the ability of the public to participate in the creation of the plan through the public process. For this plan, public participation was encouraged in a range of different opportunities which included public meetings, stakeholder groups, a community survey as well as unsolicited phone conversations and letters to the City, just to name a few. No matter the type of public meeting, any public comment received was considered by the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee and integrated into the planning process. In the following section, major methods of citizen participation are described; along with any information received and compiled that was used in helping shape the development of the plan.

Public Meetings

Public meetings are typically one of the primary ways in which the public is given an opportunity to comment on a plan. During the development of this plan, the public meeting process took many different forms. The most traditional form used was a public open house. Throughout the plan development process, four public open house meetings were held. At each meeting a short presentation was given that provided background information on the current status of parks and recreation

areas and the needs for future development. Maps were then reviewed by the public after the presentation. Following the presentation, the public was given an opportunity to interact with City staff and the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee members. They were also encouraged to discuss any topic or concerns and provide written comments, fill out surveys and/or comment on a series of maps that were made available which contained all existing and proposed parks, trails, recreation areas and natural areas. These meetings were held on the 27th and 28th of February 2013, at the Laramie Recreation Center, Fire Station #2 and the Lincoln Community Center. Noon and evening meeting times were scheduled on these two days for the convenience of the public.



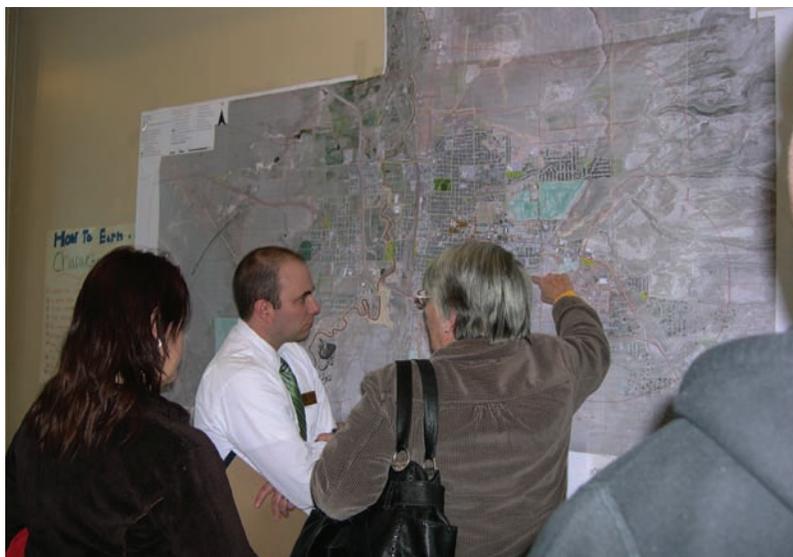
Ad Hoc Advisory Committee Meeting

Another type of public meeting which was used to garner public participation was through official governing bodies, committees or commissions. Although much more formal of a setting, participation in these meetings allowed Staff to present information directly to a group and receive official feedback as well as a position related to the plan. At these meetings the public was also allowed to comment and provide feedback to the governing body, committee or commission. Some of the different public groups included: the Parks, Trees and Recreation Advisory Board, the City of Laramie Planning Commission, the Laramie City Council, the Albany County Planning & Zoning Board, the Albany County Commissioners, the Laramie Traffic Commission, the Parks, Tree and Recreation Advisory Board, the Albany County Ranch Advisory Committee, the Environment Advisory Committee and the Laramie Beautification Committee.

Finally, one of the most consistent ways in which the public had the opportunity to comment was through participation in the biweekly or sometimes weekly Ad Hoc Advisory Committee meetings. The Ad Hoc Advisory Committee meetings were a consistent way in which the public could get involved. The meetings, held every other Wednesday of the month, some off Wednesdays, as well as some weekends, always included a public comment agenda item that allowed any member of the public in attendance to listen, participate or comment on scheduled agenda items or a topic of their choice. A summary of public comments can be found in Appendix C of this plan.

Stakeholder Groups

Based on previous planning processes completed within the Laramie community, Stakeholder Groups have been identified as a highly effective way to capture public comment. In past planning processes the comments received during these meetings provided valuable information. In contrast to comments heard during public meetings, through surveys or general public comments, Stakeholder Groups can help provide a focused look at specific issues related to specific interests and goals, in this case parks, recreation, trails and natural areas.



Public Meetings during the development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan

On March 23, 2012, Stakeholder Group letters and emails were sent out to eighty groups requesting their input on issues specific to their group in relation to parks, recreation, trails and natural areas. Each Stakeholder Group was given the opportunity to sign up for a 20 minute time slot (many of which ran longer than 20 minutes), during the week of April 16-20, 2012. During this time the Stakeholder Group was asked to answer six questions provided prior to the meeting and speak to any issues the questions did not address. The Stakeholder Groups were also given the opportunity to respond in writing if attendance was not desired or if the group was unable to attend. The outreach letter, stakeholder questions and responses can be found in Appendix E.

A total of 21 groups responded to the City's stakeholder questionnaire, with 15 groups attending an in-person meeting. Additional groups that participated provided a written response or set up meetings at a later date to discuss the questions. Overall, participation was considered good, however not as many groups participated as expected, despite follow-up calls and reminders sent by staff in an attempt to improve participation. No specific reason was identified that explained why some groups did not participate.

The Stakeholder Groups who did attend provided invaluable information that would have been difficult to attain otherwise. The participants who attended ranged from local bike groups, sports clubs and leagues, local

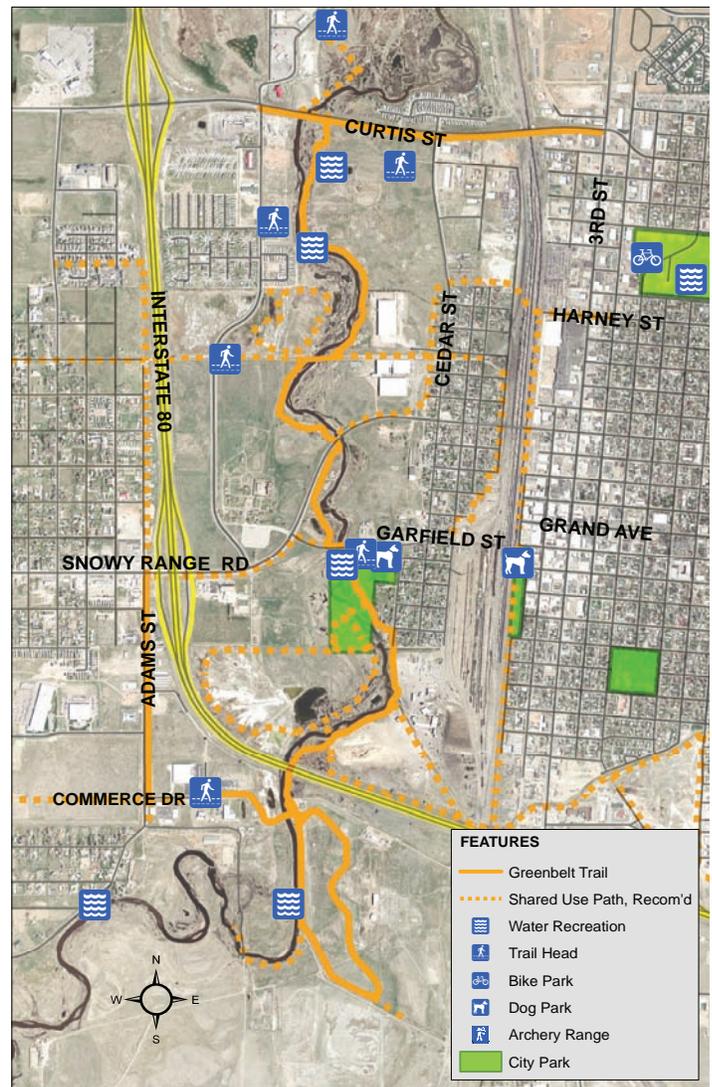
food growing clubs, state agencies, and members of the development community. A list of Stakeholder Groups and their comments can be found in Appendix D.

Comments varied widely from the groups who participated. Because of the different interests that each group represented, very specific comments were provided based on the stakeholder group's interests. However, through the diversity of interest groups, many common themes were noted:

- Access to the National Forest east of town is extremely important to the community. In addition to access, preservation of this area for recreation, wildlife, aquifer protection and improved livability in our community is desired. When access was discussed, the idea of access took many different forms; ranging from an all out purchase and unfettered access, to conservation areas with possible limited access, to the creation of easements that would allow connection to the National Forest.
- Cleaning up and putting to use the former BP Amoco refinery site located at Cedar and Curtis Street is highly desired. The use of the site as a future Community Park, greenbelt access, fishing area and sporting complex are all options that should be pursued. All of these uses are highly desired and advantageous due to its central location for the West Laramie community. Typically these facilities are located on the outskirts of town due to lack of space. Laramie has a unique opportunity to capitalize on its central location.
- Trails that connect Laramie to culturally important places are also desired. Access to locations such as the Wyoming State Park Territorial Prison or Depot Park as well as places located outside of town such as the old Railroad beds or the Plains Lakes, are important to preserve. The "Rails-to-Trails" concept was extremely valued by many different groups.
- The Greenbelt concept, a green space loop around the community that incorporates the existing Laramie River Greenbelt and the Spring Creek Channel Greenbelt, was highly desired. The Greenbelt would also include routes north and south of town that would provide a continuous

loop "around" and through the City. This concept would be instrumental in providing connectivity across the community. The walking and bicycle routes would provide access to Parks, recreation facilities and Natural Areas for those who do not have cars, those who can't afford cars or those who choose not to use motorized transportation to access the variety of recreational uses.

- Provide accessible and walkable (within one-quarter mile or four blocks) Parks, Natural Areas, Trails and recreational opportunities for residents. Recreational opportunities should be close to development, be easily accessible, have parking and include way-finding signage. Proposed and existing sites should attempt to provide



Current Greenbelt Trail

user-friendly access by improving intersections, adding crosswalks, installing shared use paths and bike lanes. It is also of great importance to improve access through integrating the parks with the public transportation system. Stops on the Albany County Transit Authority bus route should be at or near proposed parks, recreation, natural areas and trail facilities.



Community Garden in LaBonte Park, Laramie

- Riparian areas in and around Laramie should be protected and accessible to the community through shared use paths. Specifically, the Laramie River and the Spring Creek Channel should be preserved and protected as important wildlife and storm water management areas and be accessible to the public.
- Laramie’s parks and natural areas should provide educational opportunities when available. Opportunities such as preserved natural areas, rivers and streams, ponds, etc., can provide a myriad of educational locations for educators or the public to use. Additionally, community gardens, xeriscaping demonstration gardens, or edible landscape areas can provide more opportunities for someone to learn or simply grow their own food for a nutritious diet.
- Largely undeveloped Natural Areas were deemed important to the community. Having areas near the community remain undeveloped and left “as is” is desired. Natural and undeveloped areas provide opportunities for more passive recreational activities, for example, wildlife and bird watching, photographic expression, or landscape art.
- Providing locations within Parks, Natural Areas or any other place for community gardens was identified as very important.
- Many specialized groups expressed the desire to have a “place” in our parks system for specific facilities. Specialized groups such as the Barnstormers, BMX, Cyclo-cross, bocce ball and The Laramie Colts baseball club are just a few examples of the groups

requesting inclusion in the parks system with more access to facilities or improving their existing access.

- Improving the health of Laramie residents through access to Parks, Recreation, Trails and Natural Areas is a goal of many groups. General exercise in parks, walking/bicycling/jogging to and within parks, as well as opportunities for community gardens, contribute to an overall improvement in the health and nutrition of the community. Most developers believe that providing for parks is beneficial to their development, but reducing the cost to the developer providing the land or fee is important in achieving the balance between community and business. Any change in the development approval process that can make it easier for developers is important in the effectiveness of the requirements, this would include; donations, improvements and payments in lieu of dedications. It is also important that any fees, payments or lands contributed stay within the Service Areas for use by those within the Service Area or nearby. A “build and dedicate” option should also be considered for fulfilling parks requirements.

In addition to the common themes presented by Stakeholder Groups, many specific comments were provided that have been considered or incorporated into the plan:

- A common signage plan should be considered

for historic sites in and around Laramie such as the Overland Trail, Ft. Sanders site or the Railroad Wye on the west side.

- Help improve the public’s understanding of which Parks, Trails, Recreation and Natural Areas are available through the use of maps and informational publications. Water conservation and xeriscaping should be considered for all parks and facilities. Additionally, non-potable water sources/grey water for irrigation should be considered.
- Flood control through Parks and Natural Areas should be considered in the development of any of these areas.
- The City should consider a large production garden/farm, at least 5 acres in size for production of food for individuals, businesses or local organizations. For instance, the pivot sprinkler system at the Monolith Ranch should be considered as a future garden/farm location when water rights are transferred.
- More off-street parking should be provided at parks; specifically Community and Neighborhood parks.
- The creation of “park volunteer groups” similar to the group “Friends of Undine Park” should be considered for all parks as a way to maintain, provide feedback to City staff and give a sense of ownership to nearby residents or community members for each park.
- Issues surrounding dogs, such as those that are off leash, leaving dog poop and other problems need to be addressed, e.g., reduced or eliminated through enforcement.
- Access between the University of Wyoming campus and the Downtown needs to be improved for pedestrians and bicyclists. Use of Ivinson Street as the main route is preferred.
- Depot Park should remain largely open on the north side with the railroad centric portion of the park remaining on the south side.
- The use of alternative energy should be considered in all our parks. Use of solar or wind power to generate the needed electricity, pump water or light the park at night should be evaluated with new parks or when updates are made to existing parks.



Xeriscape Garden in LaBonte Park

- More soccer fields and general recreation fields are needed across the community.
- Education for the public is needed regarding trespassing on private property to access public recreation areas and facilities.
- Continue cooperation with the Wyoming Territorial Prison State Park regarding trails, access and education opportunities associated with the site. The proximity of the Prison in relation to the greenbelt and nearby parks creates a unique opportunity for the City and the State.



Laramie River Greenbelt Trail, adjacent to the Wyoming Territorial Prison State Park

Based on the above comments, it is apparent that common themes as well as many specific ideas were provided by the stakeholder groups for consideration. Although many issues were noted, not all issues raised were listed above, however, the major issues brought up were addressed or incorporated into this document by staff and the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee. In addition, staff and Ad Hoc Advisory Committee did have access to all comments which were considered in drafting the plan in one form or another.

Surveys

A community-wide survey was another way in which both staff and the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee felt it was necessary to engage the public. In the spring of 2012 the Wyoming Survey and Analysis Center (WYSAC) was hired to conduct a survey of Laramie and county residents within one-mile of City limits regarding Parks, Recreation, Trails and Natural Areas. The survey was developed by City of Laramie Staff, the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee and WYSAC personnel to assess preferences and attitudes about various Parks and Recreation related issues. The survey process was completed during July and August of 2012 and a final report was provided in October of 2012.

Overall, the survey data collected was helpful in understanding how area residents felt about Parks, Recreation, Trails and Natural Areas. In some cases new information was gathered through the survey, such as low satisfaction with on-street bike lanes, a lower priority for Natural Areas (except for east of town) compared to other

amenities such as Parks, Trails and Recreation facilities and that people would like more parks in Service Area 6.

In other cases presently known issues, conditions, attitudes and the direction of our Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Natural Areas were reaffirmed such as the need for more restroom facilities/being opened all year around, usage of our parks (times and specific parks) and desired amenities citizens wish to see such as trails, dog parks and shelters.

A summary of the survey and results, as well as any other information related to the survey such as response numbers, process and write-in answers can be found in Appendix B. The full survey and results can be obtained from the City.

Other

Aside from the traditional means such as the Stakeholder Groups, public meetings or surveys other methods were employed to gather comments and encourage participation. Many times these methods were less formal (i.e. not a meeting), but provided a way to acquire information from the public.

A web site was specifically set up for the development of the plan, which provided, agendas, maps and other information related to the process. Additionally, the website served as a way for draft documents to be made available to the public for review and comment throughout the process. Through information provided

on this site, mailed and emailed comments were provided by citizens as well as in person inquiries and phone calls. Many of these comments may not have been generated through traditional means. Other social networking techniques, such as Facebook and Twitter were used to disseminate information such as meeting times, agendas and information.

Staff also made available the questionnaire survey on the web site. Those who responded to the survey through the web-site were not counted in the WYSAC statistical analysis; however, the responses, 321 received, were reviewed and recorded as overall responses and were considered extremely valuable. These surveys have been incorporated into the overall public comments we have received on this project.

Newspaper ads were also used throughout the process to inform community members of events, meetings and new information. In this day and age the internet

plays an increasing role in informing the public, however, in an effort to be as inclusive as possible, it was recognized that not everyone uses or has access to the internet so reaching these groups through the newspaper remained key.

Appendix B, C and D contains the individual public comments, survey results, stakeholder responses and other background on the public process that helped provide the essential elements and visions for the plan.

Updates & Amendments to the Plan

With the development of any plan, making sure the plan remains current and reflects the desires of the community is essential to keeping a plan relevant. This need is no different for this plan, and regular updates must be implemented in order to achieve this goal. A regular update schedule should be established. Every 5 years minor updates should be completed. Minor updates would typically include; general editing needs, map updates to reflect completed improvements, noting completed goals and action statements and other changes that reflect new codes or regulations that may affect the Plan. Every 10 years major updates should be completed. Major updates would include any typical minor update as described above, but would also include new park plans or updates to the existing plans, revision of goals, Service Areas and action statements as well as any other update to the plan that is needed. During all major updates, a public involvement process shall be established in an effort to provide the public an opportunity to input on updates to the plan. This opportunity will help staff, the public and elected officials gauge the desires of the community and if the plan still reflects those desires.

Although updates to the plan should be scheduled regularly, it is likely that unknown issues or requests to update or make changes to the plan will come at times that are not every 5 and 10 years. Updates and amendments to the plan, whether or not they are on the 5 to 10 year schedule, shall follow the process as established by State Statutes and Laramie Municipal Code for updates to a Master Plan. All Parks and Recreation Master Plan updates should include Albany County participation and inclusion.

Visions for the Plan

Based on the public comments, background information, other plans/codes and the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee's expertise, the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee developed a vision for the Plan. The vision is intended to provide the inspiration and framework for the Plan, which includes generalized goals and direction. The following vision was approved by the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee:

1. To provide equitable Parks and

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Have an idea for a park or natural area?

Do you want a new park or trail in your neighborhood?

Do you have suggestions for new or existing recreation programs?

What Parks & Recreation opportunities would you like to see for your kids?

We are inviting everyone to take a survey that will be used in the development of a new Parks & Recreation Master Plan. The Parks, Trails and Recreation Ad Hoc Committee is currently working on a long range plan for parks and recreation services and are soliciting public opinions and suggestions as part of this process. Please consider taking a brief online survey to help us plan for the future.

The survey can be found online at the Parks & Recreation homepage or through the following direct link: <http://tinyurl.com/8jtsx6v>

Thank you in advance for your time.

A Place For All!
City of Laramie Parks & Recreation
920 Boulder Drive • 721-5269 • www.cityoflaramie.org

Advertisement from the Boomerang Newspaper



Playground with shade structure at LaBonte Park

Recreation Services and opportunities to all areas and people of the community.

2. Develop a Parks, Trails, Recreation and Natural Areas system that is specific to Laramie and the surrounding community.
3. Establish new parks in conjunction with future development or in areas of park deficiency; parks should be considered no different than other vital infrastructure, such as streets, sidewalks and utilities.
4. To improve the visual appearance of our community through beautification of areas owned by the City by improving their Recreational and Natural Area qualities.
5. To provide for the future needs of the community in relation to Parks, Recreation, Trails and Natural Areas through sound planning and visionary foresight.
6. Establish a funding mechanism that provides

for Parks, Recreation, Trails and Natural Areas that adequately serves the population, based on population growth and development pressures.

7. Provide for a continuous loop around (and throughout) the community for off street bike and pedestrian paths that allow users to access Parks, Recreation and Natural Areas.
8. The City and Albany County should work together to secure permanent access east of town to ensure preservation of the Natural Areas, and at a minimum access to the National Forest.

Chapter Two

Planning Principles

Why have a Parks and Recreation Master Plan? The City of Laramie's Parks and Recreation Master Plan was developed from a community vision that believed Parks, Recreation, Trails and Natural Area components of our community are important and require the long range planning vision that only a comprehensive plan could provide.

Throughout the adoption and development of the 1982 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the 1995 Land Use Element (Laramie's first master plan), and the 2007 Laramie Comprehensive Plan one common theme was present: Parks, Recreation, Trails and Natural Areas are the number one priority for community residents.

All three of these important planning documents present consistent recommendations, visions and goals that relate to further development of parks and recreation resources. The support of the community, as exemplified in the development of the plans noted above, was the impetus for the development of a long term master plan for Parks, Recreation, Trails and Natural Areas. The development of this document is simply the first step in achieving the high, but warranted, community expectations for Parks, Recreation, Trails and Natural Areas.

Parks, Recreation, Trails and Natural Areas are an afterthought for some communities; while these amenities are desired by the community they are unfortunately not a high priority. However, Laramie is different and is not willing to consider this need as an afterthought. Laramie is a community that is willing to commit to a Parks and Recreation Master Plan so



Freedom Has A Birthday Event, Washington Park

that these opportunities are at the forefront of decision making. This Plan is necessary for the community and its leaders to work towards achieving the high expectations, visions, goals and standards established and outlined by the community through this process.

Benefits of a Plan

Although a community's desire may differ as to why a plan should be developed, almost all well-developed plans have inherent benefits to the community. The most apparent benefit a parks master plan can provide is the long term, community-wide, planning needed to provide facilities for the entire community. In this case, the Laramie Parks and Recreation Master Plan has examined the community needs for the next 40 years. Although this timetable may seem daunting, this long term approach will help ensure that the overall goals and vision of the community are attainable. A

long term approach aids in planning, budgeting and acquisition of Parks, Recreation, Trails and Natural Areas as well as many other benefits that reach beyond providing for just parks and recreation facilities.

Aside from good general planning practice, one of the specific benefits of a plan is to help aid in budgeting. In any budgeting situation, especially in a government setting, short-term budgeting often leads to inefficiencies in the way a budget is expended; such as duplication and fiscal inefficiencies of funds. Although the community has traditionally shown a commitment to these facilities, Laramie is not alone in feeling the difficulties of budget cuts. Many times when budgetary cuts are being made parks and recreation facilities are targeted first since they are seen as “non-essential”. Long-term planning and the benefits it provides makes this plan an essential component of good stewardship. Managing the budget received year-to-year keeps the long term vision within grasp.

Another benefit of the Plan is the economic impact of a well-developed Park, Recreation, Trails and Natural Areas system to a community. The perception that parks are “non-essential” amenities within a community is no longer a reality. Across the country these “amenities” are now essential services and, in fact, act as an economic generator to the community. Parks, Recreation, Trails and Natural Areas have all been shown to increase

property values in all types of neighborhoods, including commercial and residential areas (See Bibliography: Crompton, John L., Enger, Susan C., Sherer, Paul M., Parks and Recreation Magazine, National Recreation and Park Association, McCormick, Dave and Manchester, Rick). However, for a community to capture these benefits financial resources must be budgeted and the Park, Recreation, Trails and Natural Areas must be viewed as essential and no different than other general services such as streets, water and sewer.

“The real estate market consistently demonstrates that many people are willing to pay a larger amount for a property located close to parks and open space areas than for a home that does not offer this amenity.” Paul M. Sherer

Continuing on the topic of economics, numerous studies have shown that these facilities are now a key factor related to economic development in a community (See Bibliography: Crompton, John L., Enger, Susan C., Sherer, Paul M., Parks and Recreation Magazine, National Recreation and Park Association, McCormick, Dave and Manchester, Rick). Companies looking to locate/relocate or those deciding if they should remain in a community are making decisions to stay or go based on the local amenities and the quality of life the community can provide to their employees. Companies that consider these factors typically employ well-educated individuals, with higher paying jobs, that ultimately create a higher tax base within a community.

By having a long-term parks and recreation plan substantial economic benefit can be realized that is far beyond the amount of money budgeted to create and maintain these facilities. In addition to bolstering the local economy, Parks, Recreation, Trails and Natural Areas have become a significant tourism opportunity especially for those communities who make their facilities a high priority and create unique visitor experiences.



Farmers' Market in Undine Park



Washington Park Wading Pool

Ultimately, all of these economic considerations result in one conclusion: a higher tax base for the community and increased visitor dollars, which in current difficult economic times, is highly desired and sought after.

Similar to the reasons why businesses are looking to communities with a well planned Parks, Recreation, Trails and Natural Areas system, residents look at these same amenities as creating a “community” or “place” that is a desirable place to live, raise a family and retire. Good parks, recreation, trails and natural areas play an important social role as a gathering place for leisure, recreational opportunities or community events. Parks and recreation amenities help to create community and they are often cited as a reason to put down roots. Although these amenities do not stop attrition, they do slow it and the benefits gained from long-term residents staying in a community is invaluable.

Beyond just providing places to play and recreate, better physical and mental health is also cited as an additional benefit to having parks and an integrated path system. As communities become more urban fewer areas are available and easily accessible for play and recreation. Because of this situation parks are playing an increasing role in providing locations for general physical activity. National trends indicate a lack of physical activity as a

major health issue across the nation. The lack of physical activity is attributed to premature death, heart disease and most notably, obesity. This lack of physical activity is often attributed to having minimal recreation opportunities. However, communities who provide accessible parks and recreation areas see increased physical activity and a lowering of these life-shortening conditions.

Another significant benefit, especially for Laramie and the surrounding area, is general environmental stewardship. Parks and recreation initiatives and programs promote the urban and surrounding rural environment by providing improvements that might not otherwise be accomplished by a community on their own. From the Laramie River Rehabilitation project (which Laramie recently completed), the improvements to the Spring Creek Channel, to the Casper Aquifer, the general environment has been improved in a way that contributes to the overall health and betterment of our parks and recreation system as well as our community as a whole.

The benefits of a Parks, Recreation, Trails and Natural Areas plan are widespread, thus it is important for the citizens and leaders of the community to understand the essential components of the Plan. A well planned and maintained park, recreation, trails and natural areas system provides a wide range of benefits to a community. These benefits include physical improvements to the community, efficient utilization of fiscal resources, improved physical and mental health and a possible



Enjoying the in-park path and fitness station within LaBonte Park

expanded economic base. In addition, parks are important in creating better places to live, work and recreate for the city and surrounding community as they provide free recreation opportunities for citizens at all income levels. Laramie will receive these benefits through the implementation of this Plan.

Relationship to Other Plans and Codes

Parks, Recreation, Trails and Natural Areas goals, actions and recommendations have been outlined in many previous plans adopted by Laramie and its surrounding community over the years. One of the most referenced and relevant plans related to the development of this Plan have been the Laramie Comprehensive Plan, specifically Chapter 4: Parks and Recreation. The plans, goals, visions, action statements, and recommendations of those plans have been summarized below and more specifically in Appendix A. *Laramie Bikeway Study (December 1978)*

The Laramie Bikeway Study provides the citizens of Laramie and the surrounding community with a comprehensive framework for the on-going planning and implementation of a community bikeway system. The system is meant to provide Laramie with an

urban transportation alternative to be integrated with pedestrian, automobile, and public transit systems. Ultimately, it should significantly increase bicycle rider usage and reduce reliance on the automobile.

Comprehensive Plan: Parks, Recreation and Open Space (June 1982)

Developed as a policy guide for providing leisure services and parks to the citizens of Laramie, the Plan was based on the needs and practical ability of the City to deliver those services. Reasonable levels of service for parks, leisure and recreational services were identified and planned throughout the community. The ultimate goal was a “complete system” of parks for current users as well as the future needs of the growing community. This plan was the first comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan adopted by the City of Laramie and provided the guidance and vision of the park system the City has today.

Land Use Element (February 7, 1995)

Laramie’s first comprehensive community development plan was adopted on February 7, 1995. The Plan analyzed existing conditions of the community and identified land use trends and factors anticipated to affect future land



Bicyclists along Ivinson Avenue

use. Typical of most comprehensive plans, a forecast for lands to be developed was given and management policies developed for those areas possibly affected by growth. Furthermore, specific guidelines were recommended that adequate park and open space be provided as development occurs and the community grows.

Laramie Bicycle Facility Master Plan (May 28, 1998)

Recognizing the need to develop alternative forms of transportation, the City of Laramie developed and adopted the Laramie Bicycle Facility Master Plan. The Plan's main vision, was to "...accommodate current bicycle use and promote and encourage the increase use of the bicycle as an alternative form of transportation and for recreation, within the fiscal constraints of the City of Laramie." By providing transportation routes connecting key places in the community and identifying further and existing system needs, a complete bicycle system plan can be provided.

Laramie Comprehensive Plan (August 21, 2007)

The City of Laramie Comprehensive Plan was adopted on August 21, 2007. Developed over an approximate two year process that involved over 60 stakeholder groups, hundreds of citizen participants and countless hours of community involvement, the plan was adopted. The Laramie Comprehensive Plan was adopted to coordinate decisions involving planning, land use, infrastructure and natural resources throughout the community. The plan is designed to be dynamic and responsive to changes of the community and its environment. Specific to the development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, a wide variety of goals, visions and action statements were identified specific to the development of parks, recreation, trails and open space. Furthermore, the most common comments received during the development of the Plan related to parks, recreation, trails and open space and the development of a Master Plan for these facilities. These public comments and the goals, visions and action statements have been a significant contributing factor in the development of this plan. The importance of the Comprehensive Plan should not be underestimated. A full list of all goals, vision and action statements within the plan can be found in Appendix A.

Casper Aquifer Protection Plan & Ordinance (June 3, 2008)

Adopted June 3, 2008, the Casper Aquifer Protection Plan provided a needed update to an adopted 2002 plan. The plan added enhanced protection of the aquifer and its recharge area through recommendations of increasing the protection area, updated information, protection measures and specific regulations for development. In conjunction with the Plan, the City adopted regulation that required development within the Aquifer Protection Area to complete a process called a Site Specific Investigation (SSI). The SSI details the specific impacts a development may have on the aquifer in relationship to the Aquifer Protection Plan. The Casper Aquifer Protection Plan and Ordinance exemplifies protection of sensitive areas, which is noted as a goal of this plan.

Albany County Comprehensive Plan (August 2008)

In 2008, Albany County adopted their first master planning document which serves as a guide for future land development in Albany County. As a foundation for land management in the County, one of the six "Goals from the Vision" in the plan was to provide for recreational opportunities in the County. Furthermore, natural and environmental resources, cultural resources and open space and public lands were also noted as one of six "Key Implementation Actions". The County Comprehensive Plan provides the County's vision for Parks and Recreation needs now and in the future. Because this was adopted by the County Commissioners, their plan has been relied on by the City for areas located near Laramie, specifically within the area outside city limits but within one-mile of city limits.

Unified Development Code (March 2, 2010; effective July 1, 2010)

A long awaited update to the City of Laramie's Municipal Code occurred in 2010. The Code, which regulates all forms of development, included many provisions which apply to the current Park and Recreation Master Plan. Most significantly, the adopted code requires new residential development to provide parks, trails or open space as part of the development proposal or the option for the City to consider in-lieu fees in exchange for land.

This provision is the first time the City of Laramie has required development to do this and it is the first time the Parks and Recreation Department has had a funding mechanism to reasonably provide for parks in the City.

University of Wyoming Long Range Development Plan (January 2010)

The University of Wyoming created the Long Range Development Plan (LRDP) as an update to the 1991 Master Plan and the 2002-2007 Campus Facilities Plan. The Plan is a guide for campus growth that integrates policy and land use. The Plan "...identifies the physical development, principles, guidelines and processes needed to support the academic goals of the University." Because the University provides recreational opportunities not only to their students, but to the community as well, their plan, goals and vision play an important role in how the community plans for its parks, recreation, trails and open space needs.

A Downtown Development Plan for Laramie Wyoming (February 19, 2012)

Although parks are not typically a major focus for downtown plans, the Laramie community has noted that parks and recreation needs should be addressed in our downtown. The Plan not only identifies the importance of existing parks such as Depot Park and the newly completed 1st Street Plaza Park, but also notes the importance of new areas for recreation and leisure through the establishment of plazas and green areas. In addition, the Plan emphasizes the importance of solidifying/creating/improving key connections to our bicycle pathway network.

Management Plan for Water Rights on Monolith Ranch & Monolith Ranch Agricultural Management Plan (May 2004)

Because the Monolith Ranch is one of the largest and richest City land holdings, in terms of size and resources, review of the property in the context of parks and recreation is significantly important. However, special consideration must be given to the primary role the Monolith Ranch plays; a future source of water for the City of Laramie, based on water surface and groundwater

water rights associated with the ranch. Although the current role of the ranch is related to water rights, future consideration following transfer of the rights to municipal uses, must be given to how the ranch will integrate into the parks and recreational needs of the community. Intermediate steps in using the ranch for parks and recreation should be explored, keeping in mind that these uses must not jeopardize water rights.

Medicine Bow National Forest Revised Land and Resource Management Plan (December 29, 2003)

Because of the recreational importance of the Medicine Bow National Forest, especially to the east of Laramie, information is provided in this plan related to forest management and the anticipated future of the forest. Although much of the information may be beyond the scope of this plan, the information can provide valuable insight into the National Forest's goals and how they can align with Laramie's goals.

Wyoming Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2009-2013

In addition to reviewing local planning documents, regional planning documents such as the Wyoming Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan play a role in understanding, coordinating and complementing statewide goals. Many times, local and state goals and resources can be combined to create an overall better product when it comes to providing for the recreational needs of the community and state.

Cirrus Sky Technology Park Master Plan (2012)

The City of Laramie has many assets and strengths that make it attractive to data center and technology-driven companies. These assets were recently realized in an area north of the City. With the development of the Cirrus Sky Technology Park Master Plan not only were land use changes made that maximized this potential, significant land use aspects related to the parks and recreation system as a whole were incorporated. The inclusion of Parks, Trails/Shared Use Paths, Bike Lanes, Sports Complexes and a Cemetery were all considered and relevant to the development of this plan.

Chapter Three

Community Profile

Laramie is located within Albany County in southeast Wyoming. Known as the “Gem City of the Plains”, the community is nestled in the Laramie Valley and surrounded by the Medicine Bow National Forest with the Snowy Range Mountains to the west and Laramie Mountains to the east. Laramie is considered a high plains steppe and has an elevation of 7,200 feet. The Laramie River flows through the community providing drinking water and abundant recreation opportunities.

Home to the University of Wyoming, the State’s only four-year higher-education institution, Laramie is renowned for its bustling school semesters and quiet mountain summers. The City is intersected by the Union Pacific



Laramie Regional Map



The University of Wyoming Campus

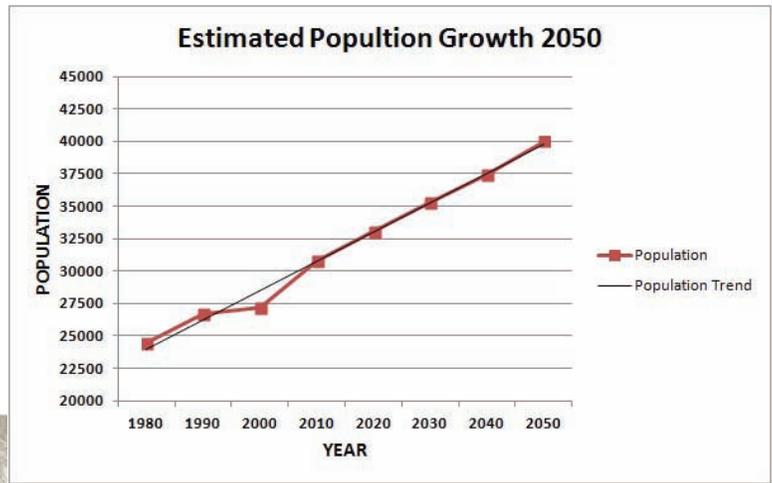
Railroad route and Interstate 80. Interstate 80 spans the southern half of the state providing access to Cheyenne, fifty miles east, and numerous Wyoming communities to the west. Laramie could be considered a northern anchor to Colorado’s Front Range with Denver located approximately two hours south.

Laramie is a quintessential western community that serves as a great example of Wyoming’s beauty. The community attracts outdoor enthusiasts as it is surrounded by recreation opportunities that include skiing, mountain biking, hiking, camping, fishing, nature/scenic viewing and photography. In addition, the Historic Downtown Laramie area attracts both a vibrant day and night life. Laramie has preserved its “western”

Wyoming feel while also attracting an eclectic mix of education and recreation interests and opportunities.

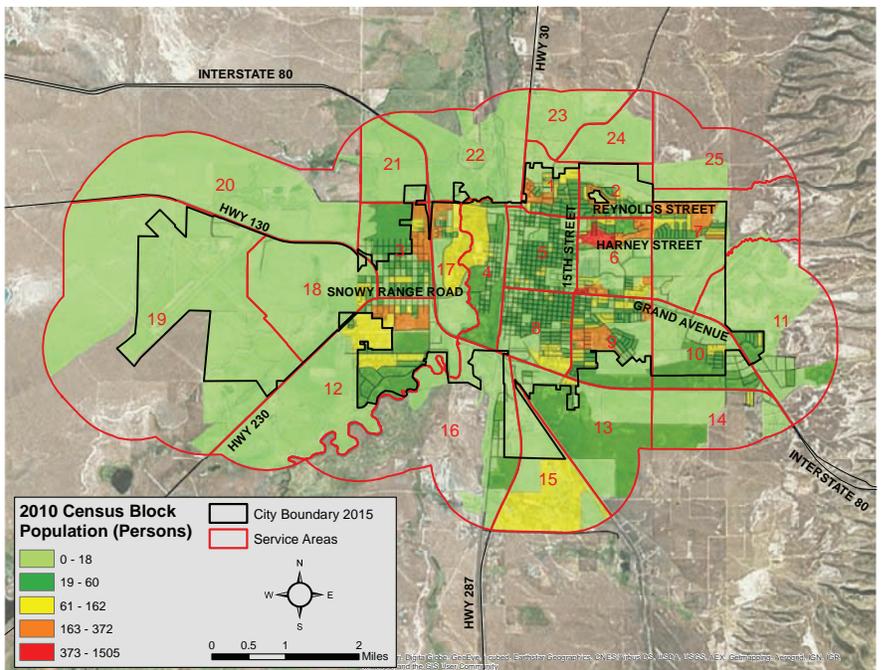
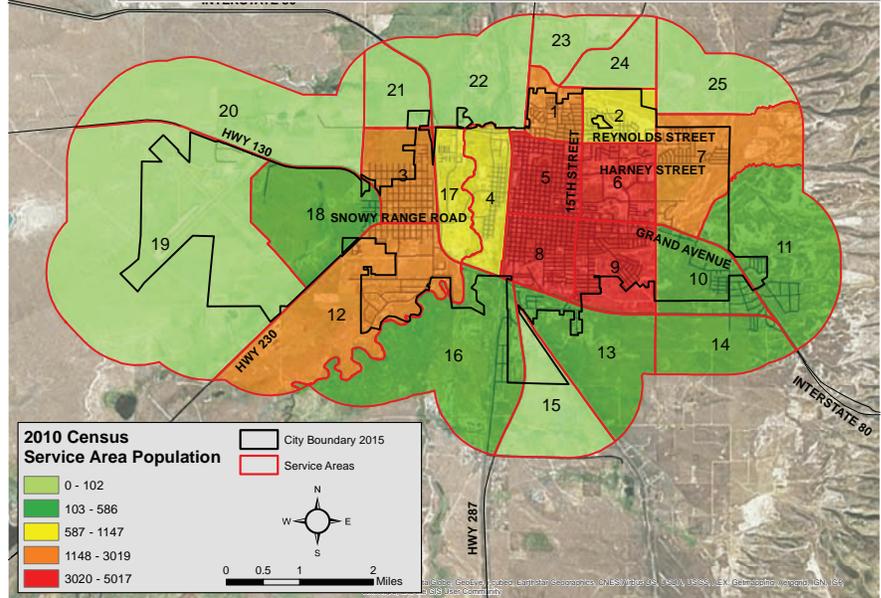
Population & Demographics

According to the 2010 US Census, the population of Laramie is 30,816 people. Laramie's population has continued to grow at a steady linear rate since the 1930's. Based on this steady growth, the population is projected to increase by 6,629 people over the next thirty years, and 10,000 over the next forty years, bringing the Laramie population to a total of 37,445 people by 2040 and 40,000 by 2050.



Using 2010 US Census Data, staff analyzed the distribution of population across the community. When analyzing the community's Park Service Areas, the highest populations are clearly located in the core of the community; generally east of 1st Street, west of 30th Street, south of Reynolds Street and north of I-80, and situated centrally around the University of Wyoming Campus. The higher populations correspond to Service Areas 5, 6, 8 and 9; the core of the community centered around the University.

When looking at the census block data, a more detailed picture of population distribution can be seen. Higher population numbers can be found in mobile home communities, twin home developments, multi-family development and the college dorms, as well as higher density single-family developments within the older parts of the community.



Future Growth Predictions

Laramie's future growth cannot be precisely predicted but can be reasonably estimated. Generally speaking, there are areas where residential development is more likely to occur than others. Factors such as the availability of infrastructure, topography, land availability, soils and geographic location all play a role in possible future residential development. Other factors impacting future growth are existing plats, development proposals, and future development plans. Estimating future growth areas is important because it can provide for long-term guidance in planning for parks and budget priorities based on projected population.

Based on the projected 10,000 person growth over the next 40 years, staff and the Ad Hoc

Committee has estimated where growth is likely to occur. Although this information is only an estimate, the information is helpful in guiding prioritization for acquisition of park land in and around the City.

Laramie's population is unique in that it is home to the University of Wyoming, the only four-year higher education institution in the state. Additionally, a branch of Laramie County Community College and Wyoming

Technical School (WyoTech) are also located in Laramie. These intuitions change the demographic makeup of the community in a manner that is not typical of most towns in Wyoming. Based on 2010 US Census data, a third of Wyoming's population is between the ages of 25-54 years old. In Laramie over half of the population is between the ages of 15 and 34 years old. Cohorts within this age range are more frequent users of parks, programming and recreation facilities, thus providing an even greater need for development of these amenities.

Service Area (SA)	Current Population (2010)	Staff's Estimate Population Increase per Service Area (in 2050)	Growth Description
1	3,019	200	Residential Development
2	1,147	200	Residential Development
3	1,749	1,000	Residential Development, Vacant Land
4	1,077	125	Residential Redevelopment, Some Vacant Property
5	4,549	100	Residential Redevelopment, Other Area Limited
6	5,017	2,000	Student Housing, Residential Development
7	1,915	400	Grove, Other Area Limited
8	4,371	500	Multi-Family Residential Development
9	4,442	400	Residential Development
10	371	1,500	Multi-Family Residential Development & Residential Development
11	586	50	Limited County Residential Development
12	1,961	500	Residential Development
13	302	500	Residential Development & County Residential Development
14	259	500	Residential Development & County Residential Development
15	102	100	Limited County Residential Development
16	252	50	Limited County Residential Development
17	725	100	Multi-Family Residential Development, Limited
18	379	100	Residential Development, Limited
19	25	150	Residential Development, Limited, County Commercial
20	18	500	Residential Development & County Residential Development
21	1	500	Residential Development
22	11	25	Limited County Residential Development
23	2	0	Technology and Office Development
24	1	0	Technology and Office Development
25	0	500	Residential Development
Total Increase		10,000	

Climate

Due to Laramie's high elevation of 7,200 feet the community experiences long winters and relatively cool summers. The average annual high temperature is 54°F and the average annual low is 25°F. The Laramie area receives an average of eleven inches of rain per year and has a short growing season lasting an average of ninety days. One persistent characteristic in Laramie is the presence of clean air and clear, sunny, blue sky days. The community records an average of 260 to 300 sunny and clear days per year.

History

Laramie was established as a railroad town in the mid-1860s due in part to the abundance of water needed for steam engines. The Laramie River and a local aquifer provided this important resource which allowed the town to grow and prosper during the burgeoning days of the railroad. As the railroad's importance lessened through the years, Laramie continued to grow and transformed itself from a lawless railroad town into a more modern and progressive community. Laramie was not only the first Wyoming town to hold a municipal election, but was also the first place a woman cast a legal vote in the United States.

Laramie further forged its identity as a progressive community by establishing itself as the education center of Wyoming (and the west) with the founding of the University of Wyoming in 1886. As the educational aspect of the community grew, business also grew. Laramie was home to wood mills, tie treatment plants, a brickyard, icehouses, a brewery and a plaster mill. Many of these industries do not exist today but proved essential to the community's growth. Over the years Laramie has transitioned from a western railroad town to an education center home to 30,816 residents.

History of Parks, Recreation, Trails and Natural Areas in Laramie

The City of Laramie has a solid and rooted history in parks, recreation, trails and natural areas. With the creation of Undine Park in the 1880's, the Laramie River Greenbelt corridor, and the recent Laramie Community Recreation Center, it is clear that the City and community have a commitment to parks, recreation, trails and natural areas as a high priority.



1st Street Plaza in modern downtown Laramie



Union Pacific Construction Crews reach the Laramie Hotel in 1868, Credit: American Heritage Center, Miscellaneous Collections

Undine Park was established in the 1880's when Laramie was part of the Dakota Territory. It was the community's first park and continued to be the only park in the area until 1929. The property was later sold to the City of Laramie for one hundred dollars by the original homesteaders of the property. The land was thought to be worthless because the Spring Creek channel flowed through the site making it a swampland. The University of Wyoming's "State Park" is located between 9th Street, Hoyt Hall, and Iverson Street. The City offered the site as an incentive to establish the University in Laramie, prior to Wyoming statehood. It has remained a park ever since. The park was officially set aside by the Wyoming Legislature from being developed at the same time a development restriction was put on Prexy's Pasture, also located on the university campus.



Laramie River Greenbelt Trail

Following Statehood in 1890, the City of Laramie acquired two additional parks, LaBonte Park and LaPrele Park in 1929. LaBonte Park is Laramie's largest Community park at 32 acres and now is comprised of a skate park, baseball fields, paved walking trail, and two playgrounds. LaPrele Park serves as green space and a natural area with a youth fishing pond, disc golf course and a playground. The Spring Creek channel cuts through the park often serving as a watering hole for antelope and other wildlife.

In 1947, Washington Park was established and now

serves as Laramie's most notable and heavily used parks. The 13 acre park has a nearly one-mile paved walking path around the perimeter of the park. Washington Park also contains many mature cottonwood trees in what Laramie residents call the "Tree Area".

In 1950, the City was able to obtain a section of land next to the Laramie River which is now the location of Optimist Park. The site was envisioned as an access point for a proposed trail system adjacent to the river. The Laramie Greenbelt corridor was acquired piece by piece and now extends over six miles in length containing a paved multi-use path which follows the Big Laramie River. The paved multi-use path is heavily used by a wide array of community members for a variety of recreational activities including walking, running, skating, and cycling. Additionally, the path plays host to numerous community fundraising 5K races. Acquisition of this land provided the community exceptional recreation and wildlife viewing activities near the Big Laramie River. During dawn or dusk it is common to see deer, fox, beaver, and otter. On occasions the stray moose or mountain lion wanders in for a visit. The paved multi-use path offers additional scenic views of the meandering river, Medicine Bow National Forest, and open prairie. Optimist Park is currently home to an off leash dog park which was redesigned, relocated and improved in 2013.



Community Event in Washington Park



Historic Snow Train located in Depot Park

As parks increased and recreation activities became more important to the community, the City of Laramie established the first Parks and Recreation Advisory Board in 1957. The board was tasked with establishing and planning proposed parks and recreation opportunities in the community. By 1960 this board had established the first year-round recreational event programming which was, at the time, on the cutting edge for any community this size.

In 1963, the City of Laramie leased the park areas surrounding the Union Pacific Railroad Depot and over the years has developed this downtown park into not just a recreation space but a living history of the railroad's influence on the development of Laramie.

Kiwanis Park, West Laramie's only park, was established in the 1980's. The park is comprised of nine acres of developed turf with soccer fields, a picnic shelter, and playground equipment. It also has a City of Laramie entrance sign along with a parking lot that welcomes travelers from Highway 130.

Throughout the years multiple outdoor sport fields have been created in Laramie including soccer fields, baseball/softball fields and many multi-purpose fields that accommodate multiple sporting events. In 2001,

the City acquired the indoor ice arena originally built by the Laramie Amateur Hockey Club; which later became the Laramie Community Ice and Events Center. The facility is used for a variety of recreation and spectator activities, including ice skating and roller derby. The City's most recently created facility is the Laramie Community Recreation Center that serves as a public place for indoor/outdoor swimming, basketball, weight lifting, running, child care, health fairs, sports competitions, and general health and recreation services not just for Laramie residents but for the region.

The rich history of Laramie's parks and recreation system demonstrates this community's commitment to parks, recreation, trails and natural areas. From the establishment of Laramie's first park prior to Wyoming statehood and the continued dedication shown today; Laramie has made parks and recreation facilities a priority. The majority of Laramie's parks and recreation facilities have been developed with community input and citizen grass roots efforts, which should continue into the future through the development of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Chapter Four

Parks, Trails, Recreation and Natural Areas Classifications, Standards and Services

A successful Parks and Recreation Master Plan requires a set of classifications and standards that provide a framework for the physical development and redevelopment of any community facility. Not only do these standards set an expected baseline for a community's size, type, location and amenities of its parks and recreation facilities, it establishes a community wide standard that can be used by the City, more specifically the Parks and Recreation Department.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) published the Recreation, Park, and Open Space Standards and Guidelines (2009) to establish nationally applicable criteria for the provision of natural areas, parks and recreation facilities. These standards serve as a guide for parks and recreation planning, but do not replace reasonable judgment or specific local needs. The current standard method is based upon providing a set number of acres or facilities per 1,000 people in population. This methodology was developed in the 1970s and 1980s and remains the basis for most parks and recreation master plans throughout the country.

Recently, the NRPA stated that communities should be cautious in using the national standards with no additional input, noting that all communities are unique, dynamic and ever changing, with varying climatic conditions, geographies, fiscal capabilities and demographics. Recognizing the inherent weaknesses in applying a national standard, the NRPA's current methodology strongly suggests that each community only use the national standards as a benchmark to develop their own standards or levels of service through research based citizen input and

community trends in parks and recreation services. While national standards are useful as a benchmark, it is important to ensure that they are reasonable for the community given other considerations such as participation trends, user characteristics, demographics, socioeconomics, climate, natural environment, public input among other considerations. Therefore, it is important that the standards represent the interests and desires of the community.

The Ad Hoc Committee agreed to use the NRPA standards as a benchmark. National standards were then modified specifically to fit Laramie's needs and unique characteristics. This method is not new for Laramie; the 1982 Master Parks Plan took a similar approach, noting that parks and recreation should "be sensitive to Laramie's characteristics rather than superimpose so called 'National Standards' which may have limited practical value." Both in the



Playground at Washington Park

past and today, this approach is preferred because it allows flexibility in how standards apply, while accomplishing the vision and desires of the community.

Although the standards in this chapter do not outline every conceivable scenario related to the improvements of every park and facility, an expectation is established that should be attained if possible. In those cases where specific standards have not been addressed, the “National Standard” as defined by the NRPA should be used for guidance in development of facilities.

Parks

Parks are arguably considered the most important and most commonly thought of amenity that is provided to any community. Because of the myriad of uses a park may have, from active to passive recreation, to the general aesthetic improvements it provides to the community and neighborhoods they are located in, parks play an important role in our community. The following element of this chapter provides a description of each park type and its corresponding roles and standards in the community.

In general all parks are recommended to consider the following:

- Neighborhood Parks and Playlots distributed by geographic region or park Service Areas (as defined in Chapter 5), are more desirable than fewer larger parks spread across the community.
- Parks, Recreational, Trails and Natural Areas should take advantage of being in proximity or connecting to one another in some fashion. For example, Parks and Trails should be situated adjacent to or near Natural Areas and near other recreational areas.
- Multi-modal access through bicycling, walking, driving and public transportation are all viable means to access parks.

- Maximizing the uses within our parks in order to do more with less is always desired. However, allowing all uses in every park is not required, considering some uses may not be compatible with each other. Unique uses such as beginner bicycle tracks, challenge courses and climbing walls as well as small scale uses such as mini-skate parks should be considered, however, not for every location.
- Natural water features should be considered in all parks, if available. Not only do these features provide for a unique park landscape, they may also provide specific uses such as fishing, ice skating or swimming opportunities.
- Sensitivity to the landscape, topography, climate and geography should always be considered when developing or improving a park.
- Partnerships, volunteer groups and sponsorships should be used whenever possible to help with improvements, construction and maintenance for all Parks, Trails, Natural Areas and other recreational areas.
- Bicycle racks should be located in all parks at convenient locations and be aesthetically pleasing,



Pedestrians and bicyclists near the University of Wyoming

with artistic racks considered over standard bicycle racks.

- Improve access to parks across major barriers such as roads and busy intersections through the use of crosswalks, traffic signals and other traffic control measures.
- Consider improvements or amenities that take advantage of Laramie’s cold and wintry climate.
- ADA access should be available for all activities and specialized uses in the Parks and Recreation system.



Basketball court in Washington Park, an example of a Community Park

- Some parks throughout the community should be considered as pesticide/herbicide free.

spaces for the neighborhood in which they are located.

Community Park Role

In addition to the general standards above, corresponding contextual maps for Community Parks, Neighborhood Parks and Playlots should be used for locating each park type within the community. Also specific standards related to each park type; Community Parks, Neighborhood Parks and Playlots should be considered and are found below.

In cities that are similarly sized to Laramie (30,816 people), a Community Park often serves as the principal focal point for civic gatherings and organized recreational programs, special events and sports league play. Moreover, a Community Park can often become a major landmark as a flagship park in a community, a symbol that enhances community identity and is beloved by residents. For Laramie, the primary need for additional Community Parks is based upon the need for large open turf areas for soccer, lacrosse and all types of youth and adult sports. Additional Community Parks should be a priority for acquisition and development.

Community Parks

Community Parks function on a large scale, serving the parks and recreation needs of an entire community, not just a specific Service Area or neighborhood. They are typically larger in size, 20-40 acres, and include facilities and improvements for area-wide activities and assembly events. Community Parks can have picnic areas, walking and jogging trails, athletic fields and other larger scale activity spaces. It is important that adequate off-street parking is provided. Community Parks also provide quiet spaces for enjoyment and may include local environmental features such as rivers, ridgelines, drainages or other topographical features. Community Parks, although traditionally serving a large geographic area, also serve as recreation

Community Park Standards

The size of Community Parks should be large enough to accommodate a variety of activities with adequate space for major activities. The NRPA standards for a Community Park are that they typically serve two or more neighborhoods and community members will travel one-half mile to three miles in distance to reach a Community Park. The size of a Community

Park is a minimum of ten acres, but generally contain between twenty and fifty acres. The standard for acreage is between three and five acres per 1,000 in population found within the community.

Recommended Community Park facilities and improvements might include:

- Picnic shelters with barbecue pits or grills
- Sidewalks, Shared Use Path or Rural Trail with exercise stations
- Off leash, fenced dog area
- Shade trees and native landscaping
- Security lighting
- Multi-purpose open play areas
- Multi-purpose courts
- Playground equipment and playscape (up to 50 children, ages 5 to 12 with a separate area for children 3 to 5 years old)
- Perimeter landscaping
- Trash and recycling receptacles, enclosed or with lids
- Community Gardens
- Curb cuts and crosswalks at standard locations and across major barriers
- Restrooms
- Off-street parking
- All public improvements (paved streets, drinking water, sewer, sidewalks, etc.)

Good examples of Community Parks in Laramie are LaBonte Park or Washington Park. Each serve as a location for multiple private and community events and contain most of the recommended improvements desired in a Community Park.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood Parks shall provide facilities and improvements that conveniently accommodate use by surrounding neighborhoods. Easy and safe access for nearby residents, central location and pedestrian/bicycle linkages are key considerations when developing Neighborhood Parks. They should be designed to accommodate the needs of all ages and should have a blend of passive and active facilities.

Neighborhood Park Role

Neighborhood Parks are intended to provide residents with ample opportunity for both passive and semi-active recreation activity. Most Neighborhood Parks are the foundation of a parks system and function as the center of activities within a neighborhood or subdivision area. For Laramie, Neighborhood Parks have been identified as highly important in providing recreation needs for the community, even more so than Community Parks.



Undine Park Playground

Neighborhood Parks are intended to meet the daily recreation needs of nearby residents within one-half mile. The level of activity is limited by the space available and the needs of the neighborhood. The size of Neighborhood Parks varies according to the availability of property, method and timing of acquisition and intended use. The NRPA standards recommend a minimum Neighborhood Park size of five acres, assuming an adequate and even distribution of this type of park. Although a 10 acre park may accommodate athletic fields and larger recreation and open space areas, two parks that are five acres in size will typically better serve the needs of the community, by providing a broader distribution of Neighborhood Parks.



O'Dell Mini Park a Playlot Park located in north Laramie, SA1

Neighborhood Park Standards

The ideal Neighborhood Park should be between five and ten acres, with the standard acreage at three acres per 1,000 in population found within the Service Area.

Recommended facilities and improvements might include:

- Picnic shelters with barbecue pits or grills
- Sidewalks, Shared Use Paths and Rural Trail
- Shade trees and native landscaping
- Security lighting
- Multi-purpose open play areas
- Multi-purpose courts
- Playground equipment and playscape (up to 25 children ages 5 to 12 with a separate area for children 3 to 5 years old)
- Perimeter landscaping

- Trash and recycling receptacles, enclosed or with lids
- Restrooms
- Curb cuts and crosswalks at standard locations and across major barriers
- On- or off-street parking
- All public improvements (paved streets, drinking water, sewer, sidewalks, etc.)

Good examples of Neighborhood Parks in Laramie are Kiwanis and Undine Parks. Although these parks are used by the entire community, a majority of the use is by nearby residents.

Playlots

Playlots are intended for active recreational use of nearby residents typically within a one-quarter-mile radius. There are no specific criteria to guide development of Playlots, but they should have facilities and improvements available to meet the identified needs of the population living in the immediate area. All age groups and abilities should be able to use the Playlot. Notable features that distinguish Playlots from Neighborhood Parks are a considerably smaller size that typically can only

accommodate active recreation, fewer uses and lack of restrooms. Another type of Playlot, uniquely different than a standard Playlot is a School Playlot. Often School Playlots, specifically elementary schools or schools with playgrounds and/or open fields, play a vital role in serving neighborhood recreational needs.

Playlots Role

Playlots provide a minimum play area within minutes walking distance of residents in the area. Unfortunately, Playlots in many communities are established to mitigate the need for a nearby Neighborhood Park. When this circumstance arises, the Playlot often sustains heavy use and requires considerable maintenance.



Spring Creek Elementary Playlot

Facilities that are less than one-half acre in area are usually considered inefficient, as they require nearly as much time for mowing and other routine maintenance tasks as Neighborhood Parks. For this reason, many communities discourage the acquisition and development of small Playlots. However, the City of Laramie believes that Playlots are useful and beneficial to the neighborhoods they serve.

Playlots Standards

As mentioned before, there are no specific size or facility standards for Playlots. For Laramie, the community has indicated that a Playlot should be at least 14,000 square feet (.33 acres), approximately two medium sized residential lots, per 1,000 in population found in the Service Area.

Recommended facilities and improvements might include:

- Picnic shelters with barbecue pits or grills
- Perimeter sidewalks
- Shade trees and native landscaping
- Security lighting

- Multi-purpose open play areas
- Playground equipment and playscape (up to 15 children ages 5 to 12)
- Perimeter landscaping
- Trash and recycling receptacles, enclosed or with lids
- Curb cuts and crosswalks at standard locations and across major barriers
- On-street parking
- All public improvements (paved streets, drinking water, sewer, sidewalks, etc.)

Good examples of Playlots in Laramie are O'Dell Mini Park and First Street Plaza. Each are uniquely distinct; however both serve the immediate neighborhood or area.

School Playlots

School Playlots and the open play areas, playgrounds and recreation aspects associated with them can meet the

needs of both the school systems and the community, particularly when located in areas that are not adequately served by a Neighborhood Park or Playlot. The location of School Playlots are primarily dependent upon the location of elementary schools which typically contain open areas for play as well as playgrounds. Although variable in size these areas typically do not serve areas much more than that of a standard Playlot and are represented throughout the plan as a Playlot.

School Playlots Role

The open areas, playgrounds, and recreation aspects of the Albany County School District #1 facilities function as Playlots for the surrounding neighborhoods.

School Playlots Standards

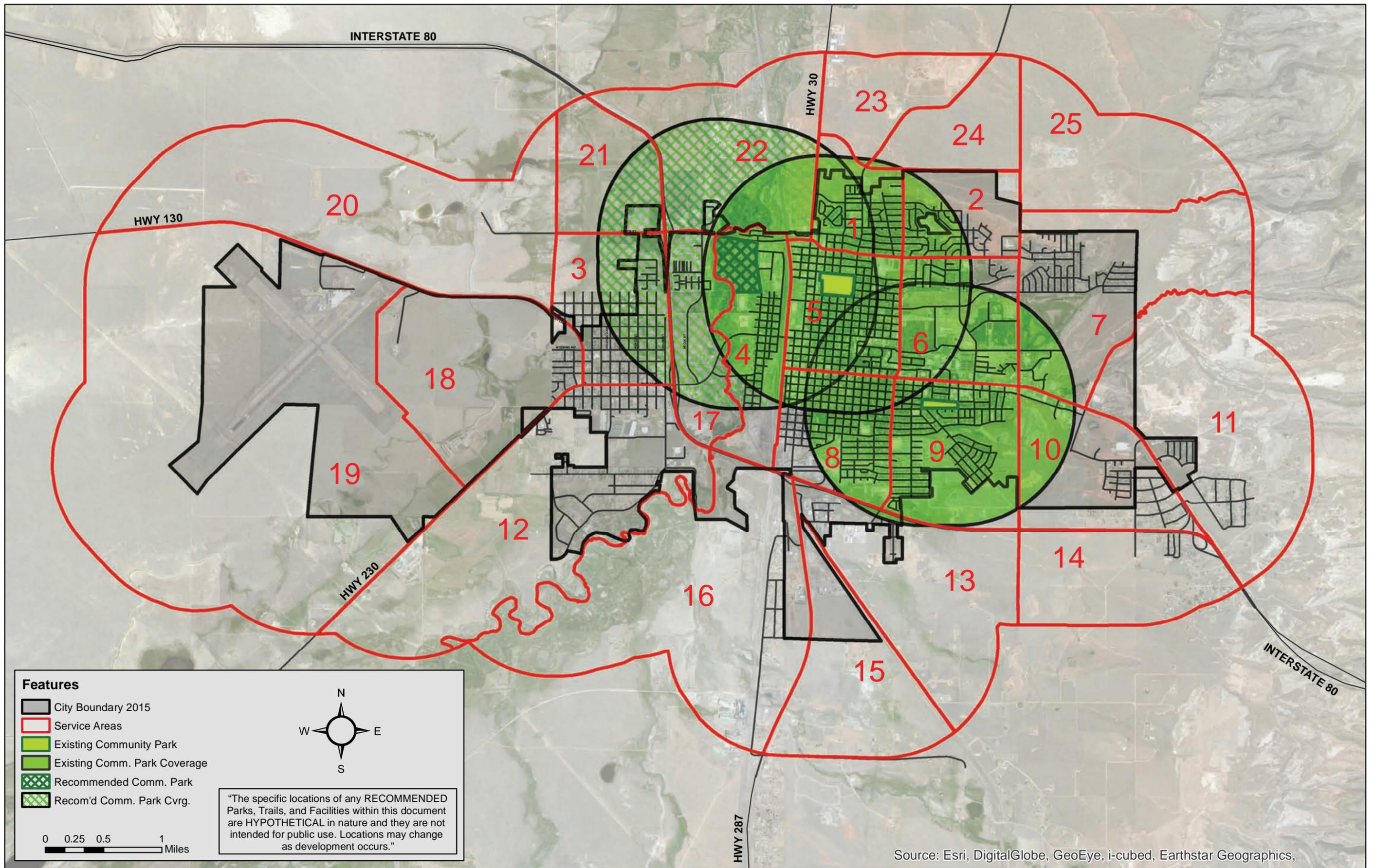
With School Playlots being the primary facilities of the School District, the establishment of development standards is not applicable. It should also be noted that School Playlots will not be applicable to the acreage needs in each Park Service Area.

Classification Standards for School Playlots

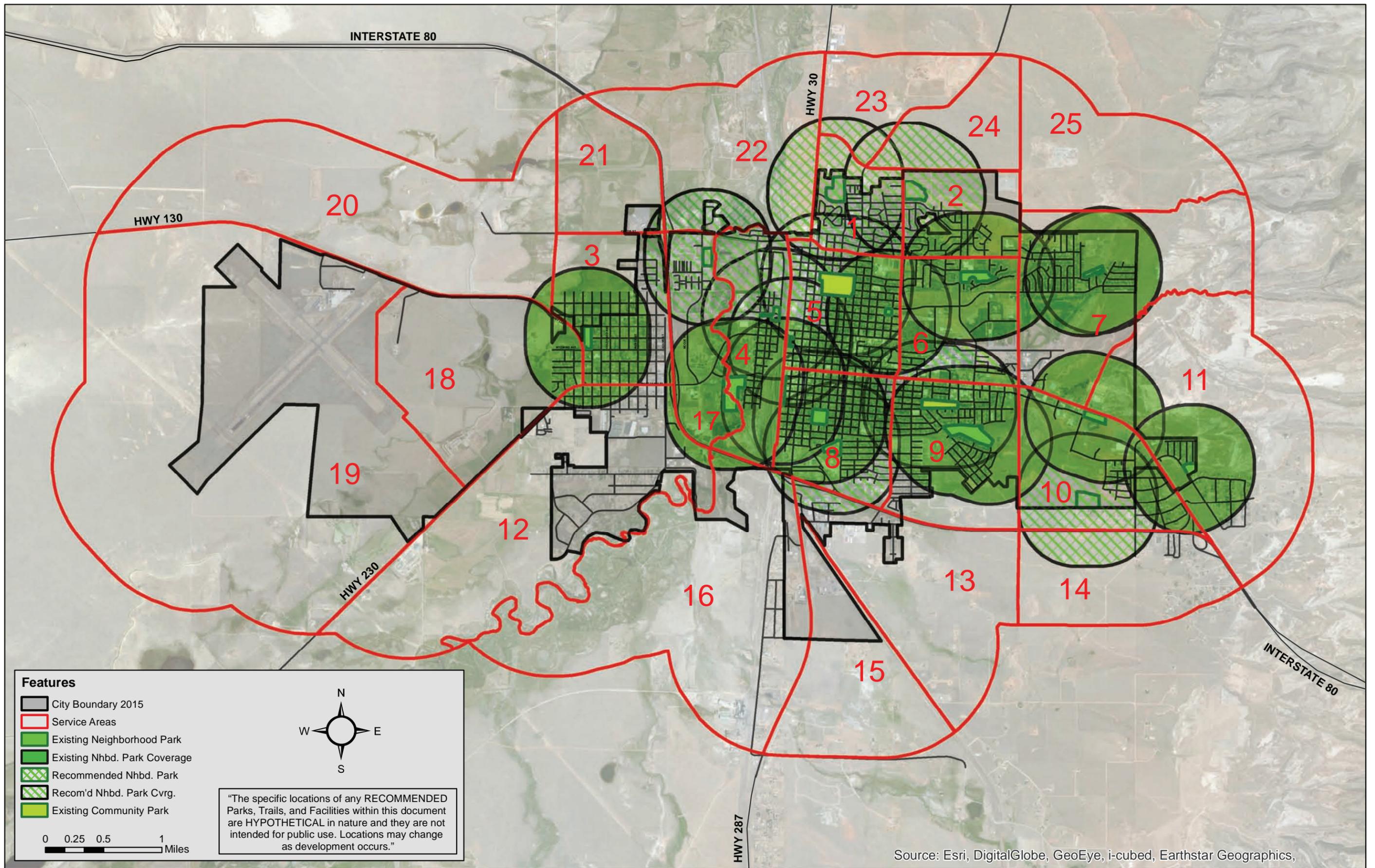
Elementary schools: With limited access and lack of City control, the local elementary school sites serve the immediate neighborhood (~1/4 mile radius), similarly to that of a Playlot. The total acreage of the elementary school site should not be used to meet the level of service within the park service areas. Using this rationale, all of the elementary school sites should be counted as one Playlot and have one-quarter mile spatial service radius. Middle, Junior High and High Schools: These sites do not serve the immediate neighborhood like the elementary school sites, due to the fact that no playground equipment is available for use and green areas are often limited on the sites. These larger sites serve the community in a recreational capacity with open turf areas and athletic facilities. Using this rationale, the junior high and high school should be counted in the overall number of recreation sites within the community, but not towards acreage calculation assigned within the specific service area.

Service Area	Total Acres	Community Park Acreage Needed (1 Mile)	Neighborhood Park Acreage Needed (.5 Mile)	Playlot Acreage Needed (.25 Mile)
SA 1	408	0	1	3
SA 2	482	0	1	4
SA 3	741	0	1	6
SA 4	639	0	1	5
SA 5	650	0	1	5
SA 6	691	0	1	5
SA 7	1443	1	3	11
SA 8	633	0	1	5
SA 9	867	0	2	7
SA 10	841	0	2	7
SA 11	1855	1	4	15
SA 12	2803	1	6	22
SA 13	1299	1	3	10
SA 14	853	0	2	7
SA 15	968	0	2	8
SA 16	2390	1	5	19
SA 17	539	0	1	4
SA 18	1292	1	3	10
SA 19	5631	3	11	45
SA 20	2303	1	5	18
SA 21	576	0	1	5
SA 22	1276	1	3	10
SA 23	449	0	1	4
SA 24	442	0	1	4
SA 25	860	0	2	7

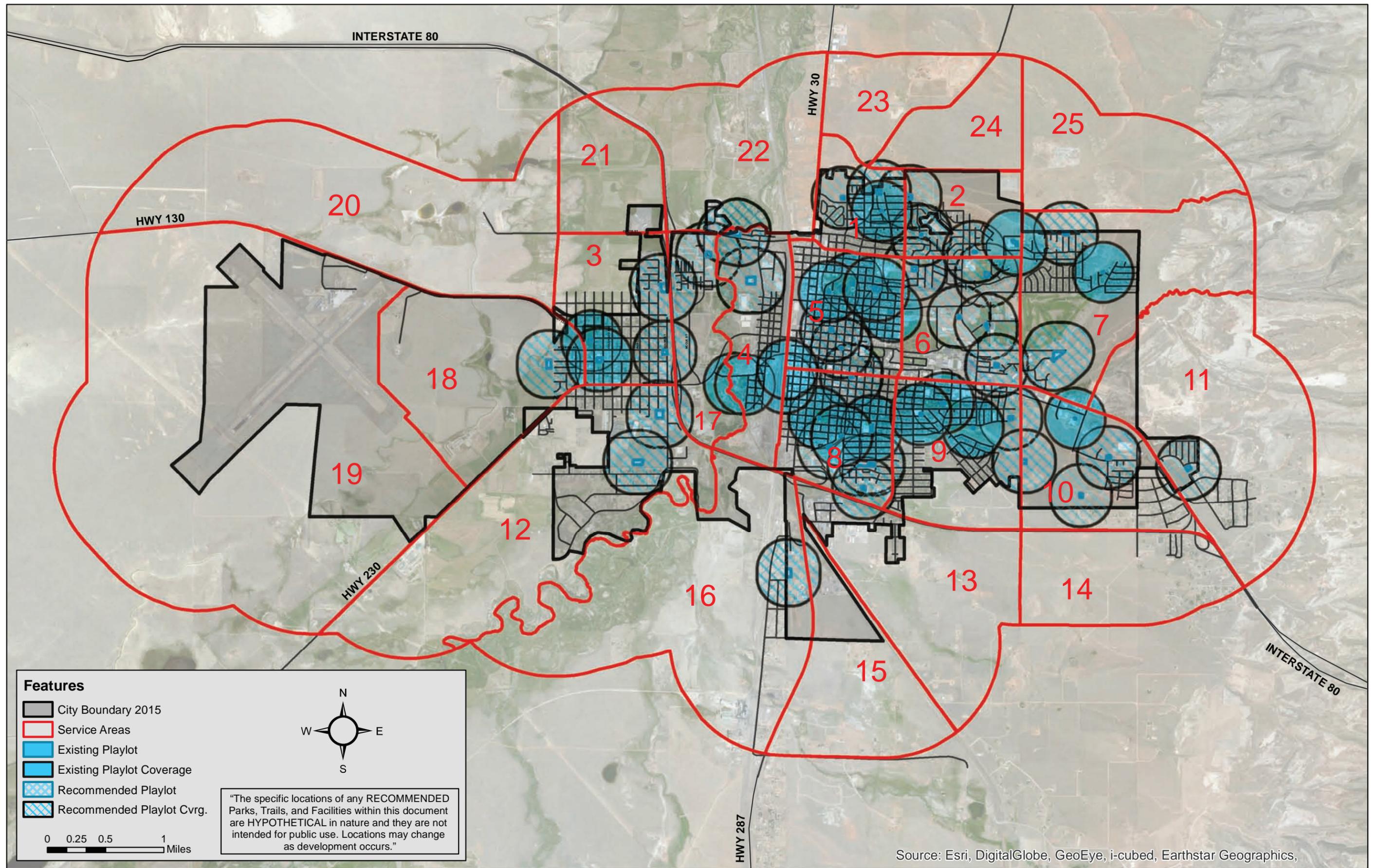
	Service Distance	Total Acreage Needed (City and 1-Mile)
Community Park	1 Mile	2010
Neighborhood Park	.5 Mile	503
Playlot Park	.25 Mile	126



Regional Map of existing and proposed Community Parks within the city limits and the areas they serve. Extraterritorial needs can be found within Chapter 5 for each SA.



Regional map of existing and proposed Neighborhood Parks within city limits and the areas they serve. Extraterritorial needs can be found within Chapter 5 for each SA.



Regional map of all existing and proposed Playlots within city limits and the areas they serve. Extraterritorial needs can be found within Chapter 5 for each SA.

Recreation Facilities and Amenities

Another of the other major recreation components is facilities and amenities. For Laramie and many other communities a Recreation Center is typically the most prominent and diverse facility a community can have. However, other facilities and amenities must also be considered as part of the recreation component for a community. Amenities and facilities such as Events Centers, Sports Complexes, Splash Pads and Skate Parks are just a few of the amenities that are common. In addition to serving the specific activities particular to each amenity, many of these facilities and amenities play a large role in recreational programming, community events and private events.

Laramie Community Recreation Center

The Laramie Community Recreation Center is the preeminent recreation facility in Laramie. It is well known, highly used and now plays an extremely important role in the community's recreational programming, health and fitness. Like many other facilities, standards for this facility are not as defined as other facilities; however the history and future of the Recreation Center will provide the needed "standards" for this facility. More defined goals and action statements can be found in the individual analysis of the Recreation Center found in Chapter Six.

The Laramie Community Recreation Center was completed in October of 2004 on time and under budget for a total construction cost of \$11,301,000 with



Laramie Community Recreation Center



Laramie Community Recreation Center Leisure Pool

approximately \$350,000 in remaining funds for FFE (furniture, fixtures and equipment) items. The Recreation Center is located on a 25 acre parcel of City-owned land, and contains 63,000 square feet of space, tailored to the community's needs and desires. The center contains many of the facilities typical of a Community Recreation Center, such as basketball courts, locker rooms, workout areas, pools and exercise rooms. However the facility also contains some more unique and specialized amenities such as an 8-lane pool with continuous gutter system, an indoor playground/babysitting room, an outdoor leisure pool, and indoor/outdoor waterslides.

In addition to the direct facilities the Recreation Center provides, many partnerships have evolved that allow for increased use of the Recreation Center. Increased use results in increased revenue which provides far more facilities, opportunities and programming through other means, that might not be available without these partnerships. For instance, a monetary partnership which helps maintain the pool through funding allows Albany County School District's use of the 8-lane pool for swim meets, and private businesses have agreements to use the facility for physical therapy for their patients. These are just a few examples of how these partnerships are vital to the Recreation Center and keep it fiscally operational.

Finally, these partnerships are not the only way the Recreation Center is funded. The Recreation Center operates on an operational pro-forma that was developed in 2003 with the design and construction of the Recreation Center, that had an annual projected cost recovery rate at 76%. The operational pro-

forma relates to project expenditures, revenues, staff requirements, cost recovery and operational deficit based upon the facilities program amenities equaling a 76% cost recover and the remainder being covered by the general fund. The Recreation Center has met or exceeded the operational analysis pro forma projections every year but one since the facility opened in 2004.

While the “standards” for the Recreation Center may not be as defined as other facilities such as parks; the standards below provide for a defined direction and baseline for operation of the Recreation Center into the future.

- Continue to “enhance the health and quality of life for Laramie citizens and visitors through parks and recreation services,” specifically the utilization of the Recreation Center.
- Evaluate the services provided by the Recreation Center through the analysis of participation numbers, surveys, interactions and community input.
- Modify services, facility usage and programs to meet the needs of the community based on evaluations and surveys.
- Continue to maintain/build/add partnerships that allow the facility to maximize usage and funding sources for long-term viability of the Recreation Center’s facilities and programming.
- Monitor and evaluate, and continue to meet and exceed the financial operation goals of the Recreation Center, specifically the pro forma operation related to expenditures, revenues, staff requirements, cost recovery and operational deficit based upon the facilities program amenities.

Ice and Event Center

Another major recreation facility in the City of Laramie is the Ice and Event Center. Similar to that of the Recreation Center, the need for the facility arose out of awareness and usage by the community and the inadequacies of the outdoor ice rink formerly located in Undine Park.

Though the outdoor rink established in the 1940s had

served Laramie well, a public process identified the need for an indoor ice facility and through fundraising done by the Amateur Hockey Club a rink was constructed in 2000 on a 3 acre property on the Turner Tract. In 2001 the City purchased the Ice and Event Center with Specific Purpose Tax monies and completed the construction of the lobby/lounge area, locker rooms and bleachers. At a total cost of \$850,000, the 30,000 square foot facility was constructed as a year around event center with ice for a minimum of six months a year.

October through mid-March, the Ice and Event Center maintains ice for ice skating, figure skating, instructional classes, curling, broomball and league hockey as well as UW Club Hockey. “Ice Time” demands especially during desirable time of the day have increased over the years, creating the need for longer ice season than six months as these activities continue to grow. The rest of the year, the center is used for other types of “summer” programming and events, such as roller skating, roller derby, and social events hosted by the City and private parties. The Ice and Event Center is also available for many types of activities ranging from weddings to circuses. Although, the primary season for this facility is winter, off-season should always remain a priority for at least two months.



The “Ice Follies” at Undine Park Ice Rink, 1945

Photo from the Allen Krafczik Collection, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming



Public Ice Skating at the Ice and Event Center

Unlike that of the Recreation Center, the main funding stream for the Ice and Event Center is through user fees, rentals as well as a general fund subsidy. Activity programs and rental fees are based upon the direct and indirect overhead costs to operate the facility. These costs are analyzed and compared with other ice arenas in the Rocky Mountain region to benchmark and establish the ice season activity program and rental fees. The off-season activity fees are based upon the recreation programming fees to cover one hundred percent of the direct costs for a program or activity with any indirect costs recovery based upon the specific facility and overhead requirements of the program or activity. The average recovery rate over the last 5 years has been over 50%.

While the "Standards" for the Ice and Event Center may not be as well defined as other facilities such as parks, the standards below provide for direction and a baseline for operation of the Ice and Event Center into the future.

- Continue to "enhance the health and quality of life for Laramie citizens and visitors through parks and recreation services," specifically the utilization of the Ice and Event Center.

- Evaluate the services provided by the Ice and Event Center through the analysis of participation numbers, surveys, interactions and community input.
- Modify services, facility usage and programs to meet the needs of the community based on evaluations and surveys.
- The winter season should be given priority over the summer season; however summer season should remain for a minimum of at least two months.
- Continue to maintain/build/add partnerships that allow the facility to maximize usage and funding sources for long-term viability of the Ice and Event Center's facilities and programming.
- Monitor and evaluate, and continue to meet and exceed the financial operation goals of the Ice and Event Center, specifically the pro forma operation related to expenditures, revenues, staff requirements, cost recovery and operational deficit based upon the facilities program amenities.

Sports Complexes

With only one true Sports Complex, Laramie relies on the use of fields and facilities found in most of the parks to support league play for multiple sports. However this scattered distribution is not optimal and creates difficulties on many levels in providing quality recreation service to the community for associated sports. Nationally it is becoming more common to see recreation districts, along with municipalities, construct large sport field complexes. These complexes support several athletic fields which enable activities to all occur at one location, making it more convenient for the user groups and lowering the costs associated with the maintenance of these fields.

Laramie should consider a Sports Complex that would be large enough to support a minimum of ten full sized soccer fields. Being centrally located would make it a one-stop location for families involved in athletic activities where players of multiple ages could play at the same time. Additionally, the centralizing of staff, materials and equipment, not to mention required maintenance, will improve staff efficiency and service for these activities. Two possible locations have been recommended for this complex; the BP Amoco site located in the west side neighborhood, or the area located south of the Recreation Center and north of the future Laramie High School athletic fields.

The City should also consider a baseball/softball complex



A summer night softball game at Sandy Aragon Softball Fields

with a minimum of four separate softball fields along with six separate baseball fields of different dimensions that would support varied age groups and classifications. Currently softball and baseball are located at four separate sites, with three of them being located on UW property, whose use and scheduling is governed by the agreement mentioned below in the partnership discussion. Two of the complexes (Little League and Cowboy Field) were both constructed in the 1950s and are becoming somewhat dilapidated and difficult to maintain, making a facility for a new Sports Complex evermore pressing.

Dog Parks

Dog Parks provide a space where canines can exercise and play in a controlled setting under the supervision of their owners. These areas are intended to be a worry-free zone, where design and space of the park work together to create an area that can accommodate numerous dogs and allow for a multiplicity of dog play and exercise. Dog Parks also provide a community setting in which people can gather and socialize and where they can observe the interaction of groups of dogs at play.

There are two sizes of Dog Parks that would meet the need of the community: Regional Dog Parks and Community Dog Parks. Regional Dog Parks are larger, more natural, areas where dogs have more freedom to roam. Community Dog Parks are a more traditional park space with a fenced-in area for dogs and can include other amenities or enhancements. Laramie is committed to creating more dog-friendly spaces throughout the community and is focused in particular on dedicating new areas designated for future Dog Park development. Ensuring access to spaces where dogs can exercise off leash in a larger area is particularly important in a community that has many residents living in communal dorms or in large apartment complexes where enclosed outside recreation space may be limited.

Regional Dog Park Role

The Regional Dog Park is generally larger in size and does not provide many services other than space. A Regional Dog Park is typically left as natural as possible, and provides a large space where dogs and their owners can recreate together.

Regional Dog Park Standards

The size of a Regional Dog Park is generally 10 acres or larger and does not have a set service area radius. With the Regional Dog Park's size, it should accommodate a wide array of uses for dogs and their owners.

Recommended Regional Dog Park Requirements:

- Signage shall be placed in all future Community Dog Park sites prior to development, alerting the neighborhood surrounding the land of a possible Dog Park.
- 11' wide Rural Path surrounding the boundary
- Informational signage around the park, including signage noting rules and the boundaries of the park.
- Grass and soil native to the area
- Benches around the path
- Tree planting where feasible
- One restroom accessible by all visitors
- Optional pond or water feature(s)
- Multiple dispensers for dog waste bags
- Trash and recycling containers

Laramie has no example of a Regional Dog Park.

Community Dog Park Role

A Community Dog Park is the traditional off leash area that is found in communities all over the United States. A Community Dog Park is created to provide an area for an owner to bring their dog to exercise in a controlled, fenced-in area. Typically separate areas for large and small dogs are provided. Community Dog Parks fill an important role in the community as they provide off leash space for dog-owners who might not have a yard of their own.



Dog Friendly Off Leash Area at Optimist Park

Community Dog Park Standards

A Community Dog Park is a minimum of 2 acres, but is preferably 3-5 acres and provides a service area of 5 miles. A Community Dog Park provides a play area for all types of dogs, large and small.

Recommended Community Dog Park Requirements:

- Signage shall be placed in all future Community Dog Park sites prior to development, alerting the neighborhood surrounding the land of a possible Dog Park.
- 6' high fence around the off leash area
- Regulatory informational signage at entrance way
- Separated areas with a 6' divider fence for large and small dog areas
- Double gated entry way with 12' x 12' paved area
- Surface material can be grass or non-organic material
- Separate drinking fountains for humans and dogs
- Multiple dispensers for dog waste bags
- Restroom accessible by all visitors

- Trees and other shrubbery
- Optional water feature for dogs (pond, canine drinking fountain or canine “showers”)
- Trash and recycling containers
- ADA accessible areas

Optimist Dog Park and Aragon Softball Field Dog Park are examples of Community Dog Parks in Laramie.

Splash Parks

Splash Parks have been at the top of the national list for planned additions at facilities for several years running. Because of the popularity and advantages Splash Pads have, communities desire these facilities, Laramie included.

Installed on zero-depth pads, splash parks allow features with themed 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. In addition to being highly popular elements in the



Undine Park Splash Pad

communities they serve, other advantages include far less maintenance than most aquatic facilities (though regular maintenance is required to ensure things are in working order), reduction in staff cost because a lifeguard is not required and eliminates safety and lighting issues.

Laramie has seen these trends first-hand, as Laramie’s Splash Pad at Undine Park has recently undergone expansion as a result of its popularity within the community. Additional Splash Pads should be considered for future park sites.

Playgrounds

Playgrounds, a common feature in almost all parks, provide children with an opportunity to exercise in ways that allow them to build skills, such as climbing and explore their imagination through play. In a time of growing concern over childhood obesity and lack of outdoor time for children, increased playgrounds is a common trend in cities as a measure to encourage children to exercise and be active. For most communities, playgrounds are an easily attainable amenity and can be placed in a wide variety of sized parks and locations, thus increasing access to an area which is highly used by this younger demographic as a primary means of exercise.

However, the concept of the traditional playground is no longer the only option communities have. Many playground manufacturers have added elements to traditional playgrounds such as slides and climbing areas that lend themselves to a more modern style including more natural colors, modification to traditional features and new features such as artificial boulders instead of stairs. Finally, 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 as well as providing access for disabled children. Providing playgrounds in parks across the city helps increase access to these highly used amenities, to those residents

who live close by. As the park system continues to grow, Laramie must incorporate playgrounds and other play structures within their parks, no matter the size, in an attempt to increase access across the community.

Most playgrounds are broken into two distinct categories; playgrounds for children ages 3-5 and for children 5-12. The main distinction between the two types of playgrounds relates to the skill level needed safely use the playground. Although only one component other differences between the two make it safer for each age group to use the facility as well as tailored to each age group by offering amenities that would be use by a younger or older population. Within most parks, depending upon size, location and type of park both categories of playground could be considered.



Skate Park in LaBonte Park

Skate Park

As the popularity of skateboarding has increased over the last twenty years, conflicts between skateboarders and property owners became commonplace in communities across the nation. In response many communities were faced with how to provide facilities for this activity; the skate park was the answer.

Laramie was not immune to this conflict; across the community, private businesses, schools and the University continued to have issues with skateboarders. However spurred by this conflict, a 1998 grassroots effort by Junior High and early High School age kids, in cooperation with the City and Albany County School District #1, the first ever Recreation Mill Levy was instituted to help construct the skate park. Driven by this grass-roots effort and financially supported by the Recreation Mill Levy and substantial private funding, a skate park in Laramie became a reality. The current skate park located in LaBonte Park, provides Laramie skateboarders a location for skateboarding to occur. Use of the facility is adequate for now; however, possible expansion or an additional

facility, such as a street style park, may be needed in the future if the popularity continues to increase.

Cemetery

Laramie's only cemetery, Greenhill Cemetery, is situated just east of the core of the University of Wyoming Campus, near the corner of 15th Street and Willett Drive. The cemetery, established in 1881, is centrally located within the community and has good views of both of the Snowy Range and Laramie Range Mountains. Aside from the burial plots, the cemetery grounds also contain a mature tree canopy, as well as a cemetery office, maintenance area, roads and community gardens.

One of the largest issues facing Laramie's cemetery in the upcoming years is the lack of space available for future burial plots and the need for an additional cemetery location. Although nationally the trend from burial plots to cremation is becoming more common, burial plots continue to be purchased and more space is needed for cremated remains. It is estimated that within the next 10 years the cemetery will be at capacity. An additional cemetery location has been proposed north of town that would accommodate the needs of the community for more than 40 years. With the addition of the new cemetery location, the Parks and Recreation Department will need to consider how it will manage both sites, one for perpetual



Greenhill Cemetery

maintenance and the new site in preparation for opening. Below are recommendations that will need to be considered in the management of the current facility and the future facility.

- Early purchase and development of the new cemetery location should be a high priority. The earlier trees, grass and other facilities (maintenance buildings and offices) are developed the better for the new cemetery location as well as for the overall budgeting and management of both sites.
- Continue to provide excellent services related to operations and burials.
- Continue to provide excellent service related to monument settings and grounds.
- Development of the columbarium as well as plans for a future columbarium in the additional cemetery location.
- Encourage uses outside of burial activities that are compatible with the space such as quiet and passive leisure activities like community gardens, walking paths, and meditation areas.
- Educate the Laramie community about cemetery history through improved burial records, walking tours as well as other educational opportunities.

Jacoby Golf Course

An important amenity based on citizen comments is the University of Wyoming, Glenn “Red” Jacoby Golf Course. As stated on the University of Wyoming’s web page,

“Jacoby Golf Course is located at the east side of the UW campus in Laramie. Jacoby Golf Course is one of the unique public courses in the nation. It is located 7,220 feet above sea level and measures 6,855 yards to play. Home to the UW Men’s and Women’s golf teams, Jacoby Golf Course is maintained by the University of Wyoming Physical Plant.”

As a public course, approximately 145 acres in size and maintained by the University, a highly desired activity is provided to all residents that may otherwise not be financially feasible for a community such as Laramie, without this partnership. In addition to the course, Jacoby Golf Course has completed an indoor driving range and practice center for year-round use, furthering the benefits this amenity provides to the community. Because of the major benefit this amenity offers Laramie, a continued partnership with the University of Wyoming in matters related to the future of Jacoby Golf Course should be considered. The regional detention ponds constructed on the golf course as part of the “East Campus Drainage Agreement” is an excellent example of cooperation and partnership between the City and the University. In this case, a major amenity was provided to the golf course, while dealing with excess stormwater for the City creating a win-win for the City, University and the community.



Jacoby Golf Course

Natural Areas

The Laramie community has noted throughout the development of this plan that Natural Areas are highly important to the community. Overall, it is recognized that we live in the middle of some of the region's greatest natural areas, but a blending of these natural areas into an urban environment to create a human connection is important.

Natural Areas are typically lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, open space, unique topography, visual aesthetics, access to other natural resources areas (State Lands, National Forest, etc.) or some other resource that has been determined of value to the community. There are no specific national standards for size or number of acres per population, rather the standards note that Natural Areas should be unique and variable to each community.

Natural Areas serve an important role in the parks and recreation system in preserving the natural ecosystem, wetlands, water bodies, forest or woodlands, geologic features, protection of rare, threatened or endangered species or endangered natural resources. They also serve as wildlife habitat, interpretive exhibits and educational opportunities, nature trails, as well as preserving historic and cultural sites and resources.

Because the definition of a Natural Area is so broad the Laramie community and the Ad Hoc Committee felt that two main types of Natural Areas should be considered: Open Space and Preserve.

Open Space vs. Preserve

Explained in more detail below, the main difference between Open Space and Preserve is the allowance of improvements to be made within Open Space areas, versus the lack of improvements allowed in Preserves. The community felt that some Natural Areas should have some allowance for improvements which allow residents to enjoy the area that has been designated



Laramie River running through the Monolith Ranch

for a set reason. However, it was also noted that some areas should be kept pristine, have limits or no improvements allowed and possibly limit or restrict access so that the area is kept as natural as possible. By creating two different sub-categories within the Natural Area, a clear definition for each area is given.

Open Space

Open Space for the Laramie Community preserves land (public or private) that allows for different levels of improvements such as, but not limited to, improved access through trails, play structures, benches or viewing areas, and serves one or more of the following functions: (1) preservation of natural areas and natural resources; (2) provision of outdoor recreation; (3) maintenance of Laramie's unique identity, geology or topography; and, (4) preservation or enhancement of the visual quality of entrance corridors to the Laramie community.

Open Space Role

The role of Open Space should be mainly focused on, however not solely, conservation and preservation, and connecting people with their natural resources and environment. Open Space can allow and encourages areas to be used to varying degrees. Depending upon each Open Space area, improvements or access will allow citizens to use this area much differently than a Preserve.

Because Open Space types widely vary, Open Space may allow a situation where only an improved dirt trail and access to the area exists, all the way up to paved trails, interpretive areas and playgrounds. The role Open Space plays will be dependent upon where and why each area has been designated as Open Space, with the primary focus remaining on conservation and preservation. Only when these factors are considered will the community be able to determine how the Open Space can be best used and what is appropriate in the Open Space area.

Preserve

A Preserve is open land that remains in a relatively natural state or use, void of any man-made development, can be public or private and serves one or more of the following primary functions: (1) preservation of natural areas and natural resources; (2) provision of outdoor or low-impact recreation; (3) maintenance of Laramie’s unique identity, geology or topography; and, (4) preservation or enhancement of the visual quality of entrance corridors to the Laramie community.

Preserve Role

Similar to Open Space, the emphasis or role of a Preserve area should clearly be on conservation, education and preservation, connecting people with their natural resources and environment through preserving our heritage, respecting our natural resources, defining our community, treasuring our future, and protecting what Laramie values. Because a Preserve’s main emphasis is preservation, typically most preserves will limit access, reduce impact and typically protect a specific feature or characteristic of the area. Each Preserve may play a different role, depending upon location, what is being preserved and the sensitivity of the area, which should also be a factor in determining what is appropriate for the area.

Public vs. Private Natural Areas

All Natural Areas, both Open Space and Preserve areas, can be either public or privately held. In many cases “Public” Natural Areas are held in City ownership, but they also could be held by another local government such as the County, or the State and/or Federal Government. Although held as “Public” this may or may not mean

that the property is accessible to the public. It is possible to have “Public” Natural Areas that have very limited or no public use, or restrictive public access/use, depending upon the topography or other natural resources that the City or other entity determines should be protected.

Natural Areas can also be held under private ownership as well. Private Natural Areas are typically associated with some sort of private entity, such as a person or limited liability corporation, or a conservation group or entity. Although held in private ownership, Private Natural Areas normally preserve the same types of areas that public Natural Areas preserve. Similar to public Natural Area, private Natural Areas, may or may not allow access or limit access/use, depending upon many of the same factors listed above. In many of these cases, some mechanism is in place that restricts development of the land over a long period of time or forever.

In any case Open Space or Preserve, public or private, consideration should be given to what the area is intended to preserve. When deciding between Open Space versus Preserve, consideration should be given to factors that address the long term needs of the community as well as the area that is being designated. If areas are to be truly protected, a Preserve may be more desirable. In cases where other benefits may be gained through access and improvements, Open Space may be the correct designation. Furthermore, if given the option of public versus private ownership for Natural Areas, consideration such as accessibility, long term protection, use, and long term management/maintenance should all be considered.

Open Space and Preserve Standards

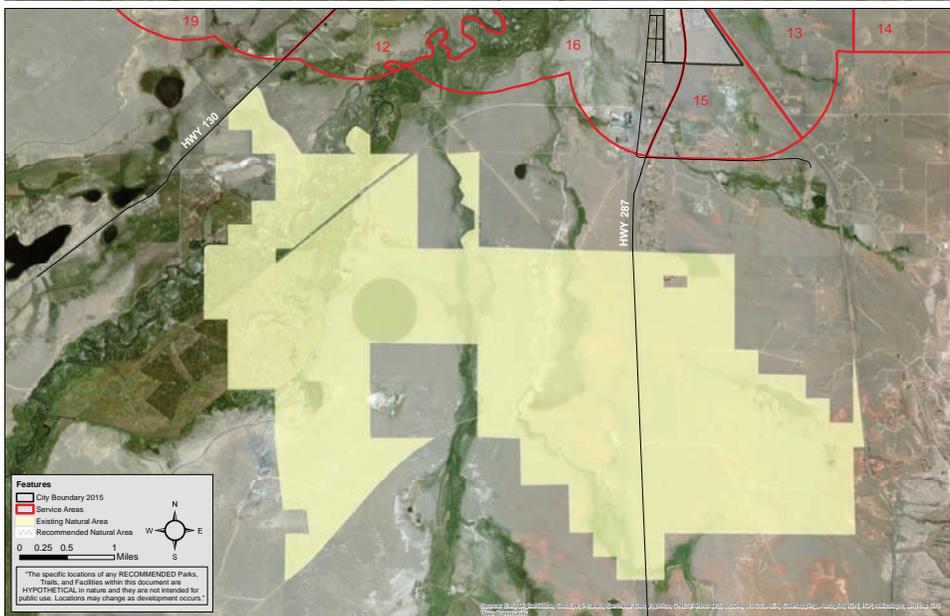
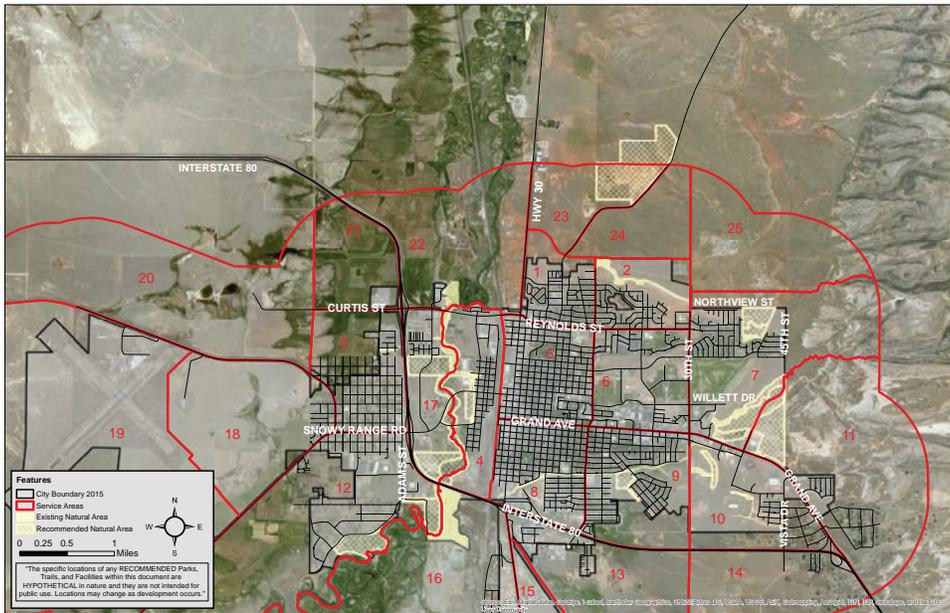
While there are no specific size or facility standards for Open Spaces or Preserves, the guidance provided above distinguishes between the two and must be maintained for each of the designated Natural Areas. Generally Open Space and Preserves should:

- Preserve natural areas and natural resources, including but not limited to, significant natural resources, open space, preservation of unique topography, visual aesthetics, environmentally sensitive areas, access to other natural resources (State Lands, National Forest, Parks etc.) or

some other resource that has been determined of natural resource value to the community. Provide outdoor or low-impact recreational opportunities such as walking, hiking, biking, animal exercise and passive recreation as well as other types of recreational opportunities, such as wildlife and bird watching in and surrounding the Laramie community.

- Maintain Laramie’s unique identity, geology or topography.

- Preservation or enhancement of the visual quality of entrance corridors to the Laramie community.
- Preserve the natural ecosystem, wetlands, water bodies, forest or woodlands, geologic features, protection of rare, threatened or endangered species or endangered natural resources.
- Encourage the development of both public and private Natural Areas.
- Provide opportunities within an urban setting for human interaction with resources found in Natural Areas.



Existing and proposed Natural Areas within Laramie and surrounding the City

- Shared Use Paths, Rural Trails and Natural Areas go hand in hand by providing access to other Natural Areas, public lands, facilities and parks.

- Natural Areas should consider their proximity to surrounding lands, both public and private, in an effort to make adjacent uses and activities as compatible as possible all while maximizing preservation. Consideration of uses limitations, times in which the areas are used, or through techniques such as wildlife fencing can all improve compatibility.

- Accessibility for everyone should be considered for all Natural Areas. Although access may be limited, every attempt should be made to encourage usage by everyone.

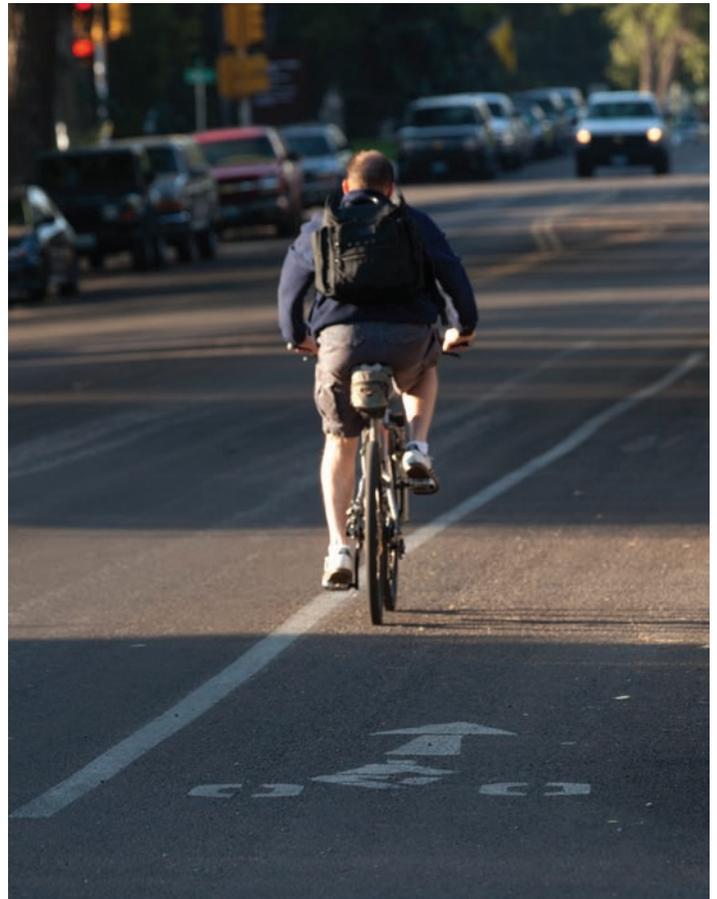
- Individual plans should be considered for each Natural Area to assess management, access, improvements, fire concerns and other issues associated with the area, if needed.

Trails, Bicycles and Pedestrians

Throughout Laramie, trails, bicycle and pedestrian routes are heavily used and regarded as important to the community as a means of accessing the park, recreation and natural area opportunities the City has to offer. Not only do these routes offer an alternative to driving, they provide a way for all segments of the population to access the amenities in an equitable fashion. In general, four main types of trails, bicycle and pedestrian routes exist; Bicycle Lanes, Shared Use Paths, Rural Trails and Other, which are further explained below.

Generally, all bicycle lanes and Shared Use Paths and any other pedestrian routes noted in this plan or constructed in Laramie should conform to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) 2009, published by the Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration and the Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities 2012 published by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). Furthermore, both of these documents address Americans with Disabilities Act 1990 (as amended) (ADA) requirements, as most Shared Use Paths, and Other types of pedestrian ways should always conform to these requirements.

In addition to the design and construction information provided by these documents, City of Laramie Engineering Standards as well as customary engineering standards shall be considered for all of these facilities. Laramie specific and/or good engineering practice may further dictate design and construction; including a focus on transition from one lane type to another, safety and overall network integration. Furthermore, alternative engineering design should also be considered when applicable, in order to provide a facility that works well in the Laramie community. Although many innovative treatments are possible and are widely accepted practices, standard design treatments should be explored first. Engineering studies, trial periods and analyses, related to traffic flow, safety, among other factors, should also play a role in dictating the location and design of these facilities. Finally, these facilities may require approval by City Council, Planning Commission or Traffic Commission prior to development.



Bicycle Lane on Iverson Street

With the possibility of new facilities and innovative designs, making sure all users understand how to best use these trails, bicycles and pedestrian ways should be important as well. Providing opportunities for facility users to learn “how to” use these new facilities or through educational materials in safe and proper use of these facilities could provide the necessary guidance in maximizing and easing the use of the facilities.

These documents provide general standards related to types of paths, design requirements, painting requirements, signage and safety among many other standards related to the development of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan. It should also be noted that as these standards are used, further study should be done, specifically related to an integrated transportation plan that includes these categories, not just the automobile. Although specific detail can be found in these documents, a summary of some of the common standards have been included within the plan for reference.

In addition to the general standards outlined in the above referenced documents it was made clear through the public process and by the Ad Hoc Committee that additional standards should be specifically addressed that would make Bicycle Lanes, Shared Use Paths and Other Routes more usable for the community. These standards should be used in conjunction with the standards above. Corresponding contextual maps have also been provided for Bicycle Lanes, In-Park Paths, Shared Use Paths and Rural Trails, which should be used for locating each path, trail, and lane type within the community. Finally, the Major Street Plan (see page 80) and routes identified on it should always be considered for future Trails, Bicycle Lanes and Paths.

Bicycle Lanes

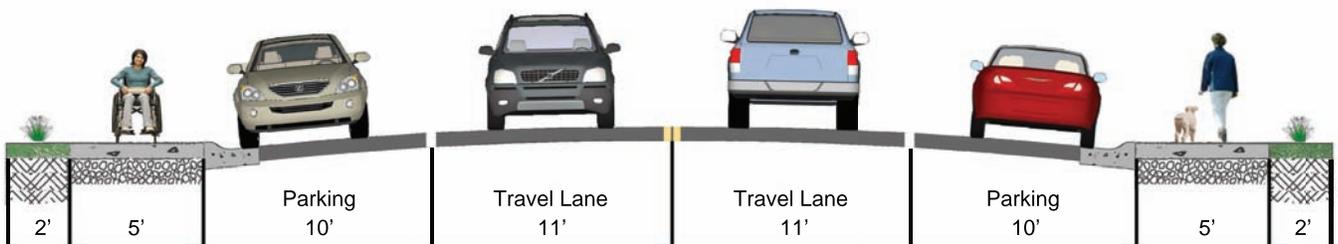
It was noted during the adoption of the Laramie Comprehensive Plan in 2007 as well as the public participation process for this plan that Bicycle Lanes were extremely important to the community. Although general satisfaction of the Bicycle Lanes was good, it was noted that improvements could be made that would dramatically improve the use of the lanes in and around the Laramie community. For this plan Bicycle Lanes and their locations were primarily noted for their

connectivity to other Parks and Recreation facilities throughout the community. However, it should be noted that although the primary function outlined in this plan is for connectivity to these facilities, these lanes also play a primary and larger role in a multi-modal transportation network. It is likely that in the future a bicycle plan that is transportation oriented will be developed to address the other component of the system.

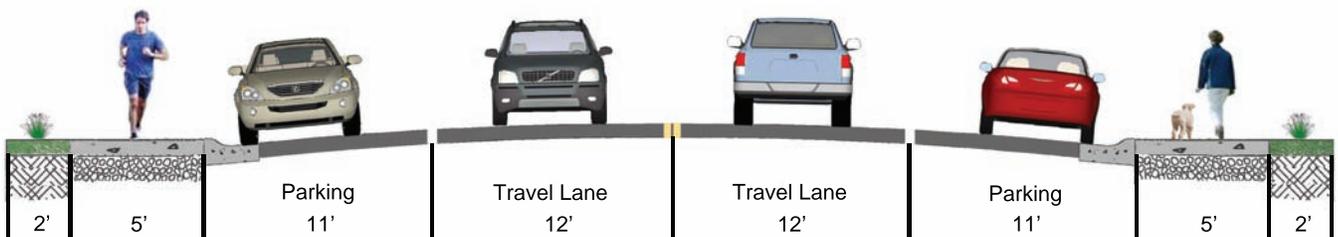
Bicycle Lane Standards

Recommended standards would include the following:

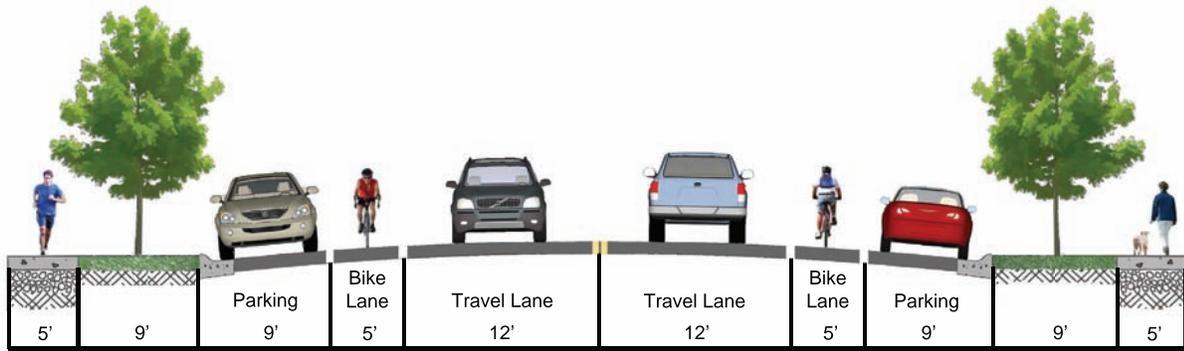
- A bicyclist's preferred operating width is 5 feet. In a busy or narrow parking lane with adjacent commercial uses, a wider bicycle lane of 6-7 feet is preferred. In a high bicycle use lane, a 6-8 foot lane is preferred to allow for side-by-side bicycle use. Standard City Street is 52 feet, curb to curb.
- Consistent and continuous painting/stripping of the bicycle on-road symbols shall be required. Special attention should be paid to the painting on the lanes up to and at the intersection (also see bike boxes section). Consideration of non-slip



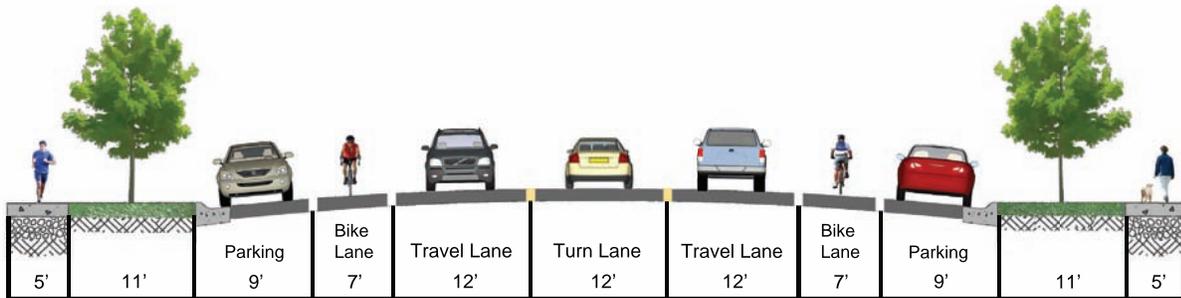
Typical Local Street 60' Right-Of-Way with 42' Roadway Width without Bike Lane



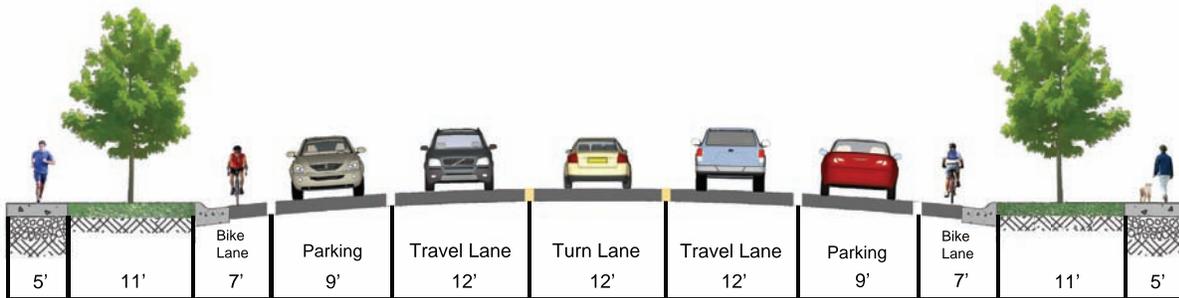
Typical Local Street 60' Right-Of-Way with 46' Roadway Width without Bike Lane



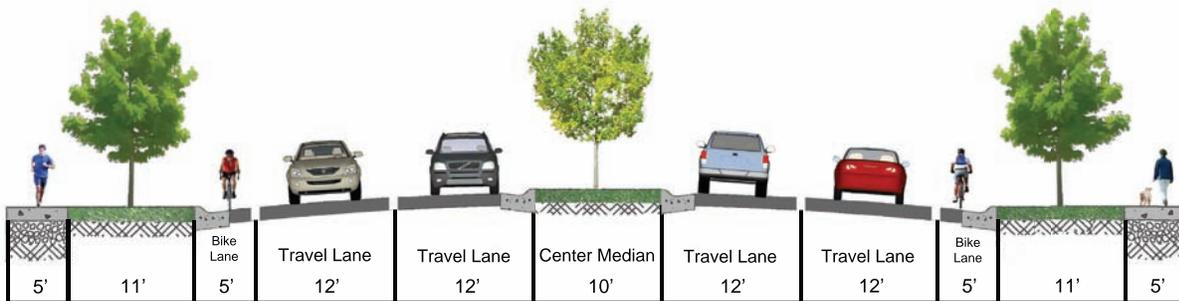
Typical Collector Street 80' Right-Of-Way with 52' Roadway Width with Bike Lane



Typical Arterial Street 100' Right-Of-Way with 68' Roadway Width with Parking Lane and Bike Lane



Typical Arterial Street 100' Right-Of-Way with 68' Roadway Width with Parking between Drive Lane and Bike Lane

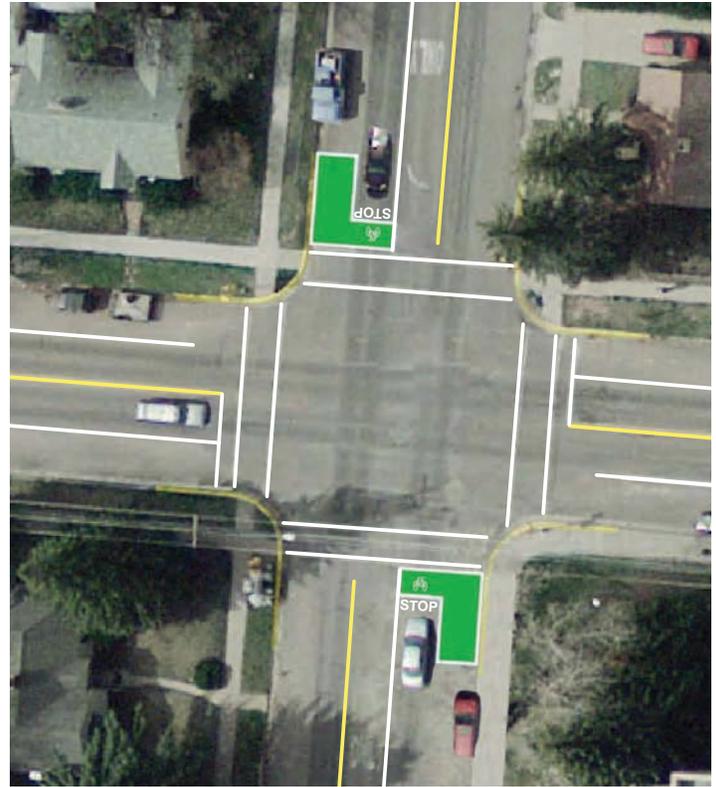


Typical Arterial Street 100' Right-Of-Way with 68' Roadway Width with Bike Lane and Center Median

colored lanes in high traffic areas should also be entertained, especially in and around intersections.

- Sharrows should be considered to denote shared bike and vehicle traffic on roadways.
- General maintenance of Bicycle Lanes should be increased, paying particular attention to the condition of the travel surface, the curb/asphalt interface and consistent sweeping of the lanes.
- In addition to general maintenance needs, winter maintenance and snow clearing should be incorporated into the overall snow removal plan, keeping routes across the community as open as possible.
- Bicycle Lanes at controlled intersections with traffic signals – cameras should be used to be able to detect bikers. When upgrading streets, cameras should be implemented to detect bicyclists.
- When upgrading streets, improvements should be considered to facilitate Bicycle Lanes. Improvements such as widening of the street, removal of parking, and separated lanes near intersections should be considered. In the case of new or upgraded traffic signals at controlled intersections, cameras, or other detection devices shall be implemented to detect bicyclists.
- A reduction in parking, along the block face or at intersections, through painting, signage or physical improvements (curbs) should be examined to provide for good street/bicycle lane interface. Bicycle Lanes shall not be secondary to on-street parking.
- All transportation studies should include deficiencies, needs, interactions, warrants and impacts, among other items in relationship to Bicycle Lanes as an integral part of the street
- A solid white line 4 inches wide on the inside and outside of the lane is preferred to delineate bicycle lanes. When warranted, such as in heavily used areas or on collectors and arterials, dual white line lanes shall be used.

- Supplemental directional arrows and bicycle pictures can enhance the bicycle lane for both bicyclists and motorists. As depicted, a painted bicycle rider should be 6 feet in length followed by a directional arrow of 6 feet in length. This allows for increased safety awareness between bicyclists and motorists.
- Bicycle lane signage can also indicate to motorists of



Bike boxes imposed on a standard Laramie street.



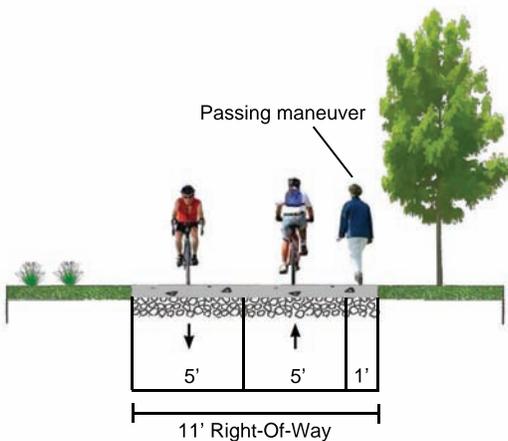
Bicycle Lanes on a typical residential street with parking and two way travel lanes.

an existing bicycle lane. Signs are often less effective on streets with on-street parking, however, bicycle street signs can be used periodically throughout a route to aid in times when painted lines are not visible. The signs should be clear and simple indicating when a bike route begins and ends.

- Bike boxes are implemented for increased safety between motorists/bicyclists at intersections. They also increase safer intersection crossings and create greater distances between the cyclist and motorist. Criteria should be developed in order to determine when bike boxes may be needed, which could include the need for engineering studies, usage counts, among other factors

Shared Use Paths

Shared Use Paths are multi-modal paths that are physically separated from motorized traffic. According to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), Shared Use Paths are commonly designed for two-way travel and serve a multitude of purposes from shortcuts in residential neighborhoods, school connections and commuting routes from job centers, schools and residential areas. Shared Use Paths are designed



Shared Use Path

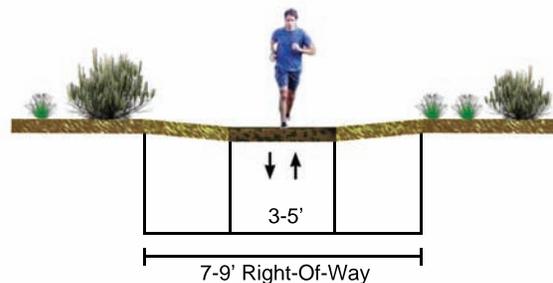
for bicyclists, inline skates and pedestrians. They are also considered a safer mode of travel for less confident bicyclists to learn and improve their skills.

Shared Use Paths Standards

- The City of Laramie will adopt the AASHTO standard of an 11' wide Shared Use Path for multi-directional bicycle and pedestrian travel.
- Striping of the Shared Use Path is not necessary to separate bicyclists and pedestrians. In areas with blind spots or high traffic, a solid yellow line can be used to indicate no passing in addition to signage.
- Bike racks, maintenance station (air, tools and work racks) and rest areas at locations where people may stop will be incorporated along Shared Use Path.
- Shared Use Paths will be constructed of concrete.
- Where applicable, adjacent gravel pathways will accompany shared use paths to accommodate equestrian and or jogging activities.
- For specific shared use design standards adjacent to neighborhoods, commercial properties, public right-of-ways, etc, the AASHTO guidelines will be followed.

Rural Trails

Rural Trails will be primarily used by pedestrians, bicyclists, hikers and equestrian users. Rural Trails will be established in more rural settings providing a more remote experience ideal for those user groups mentioned above. The trails will be designed to minimize soil disturbance and erosion. Other trails, such as standard Bicycle Routes or Shared Use Paths, can transition into a Rural Trail. While this plan does not address more broad ranging rural trail connections, linkages to public lands, wildlife refuges and similar locations should be attempted.



Rural Trail

Rural Trail Standards

- Standard Rural Trail guidelines suggest a clearing width of 7 to 9 feet, tread width of 3 to 5 feet, and the tread surface should be a natural material, such as crushed fines.
- Rural Trail improvements such as crushed fines can be used in heavily used areas (parking lots, trail heads) to reduce wear and prevent soil erosion.
- Rural Trail transitions, connecting to a different trail type, or vice versa, will be marked with clear signage indicating the change in surface or trails designated use.
- Signage will indicate trail type, difficulty, route and recommended uses.
- All Rural Trails shall be used for non-motorized use only.

Other Routes

Some routes proposed within the plan cannot be classified as one of the more traditional standards outlined above, however they play an important role in the parks and recreation systems as a whole. These “other routes” include Pedestrian Ways, In-Park Paths and Bicycle Routes.

Pedestrian Ways

Pedestrian Ways are found throughout the community and are generally, mid-block sidewalks that allow a “cut-through” for pedestrians in the area. Pedestrian Ways should be clearly marked, consistent, and uniform throughout the City. Shrubbery and hedges adjacent to the path should be maintained to provide clear walking paths.

Pedestrian Ways Standards

- New Pedestrian Ways are required in areas where the route has more than 600 feet without intersecting another route.
- Pedestrian Ways will be clearly marked with signage

- Walking paths shall be maintained for safe and clear passage.
- Improve existing Pedestrian Ways for ADA accessibility.

Bicycle Routes

On some streets within the community the ability to accommodate a Bicycle Lane or Shared Use Path may not be an option, due to many different factors. However, in instances where bicycle use is higher than normal, Bicycle Routes should be used to inform all users, both vehicular and bicyclist, that the road is being shared. Bicycle routes should be clearly marked on the road and include consistent and uniform signage throughout. Signage should be easy to locate, read and alert motorists that the route exists and cyclists could be present on roadways.

Bicycle Route Standards

- Clearly marked signage that is easy to read and indicates to the cyclists that he/she is on the



Bicycle Route Signage Example

correct route and is moving in the right direction

- Signage shall show motorists that the road is also a Bicycle Route.
- Bicycle Routes may go through or be incorporated into existing park or recreation facility routes. In these instances lanes should be clearly marked and denote that bicycle riding is allowed.

In-Park Paths

In-Park Paths are Shared Use Paths that are located within a park. Although similar to a Shared Use Path in the

terms that they are paved and serve pedestrians traveling in the community, path usage is much different. Because the path is located within the park and is used to primarily circumvent and navigate within the park, use should be limited to pedestrians walking, jogging, or running on the path. The path width should be 8 feet at a minimum and when applicable match the Shared Use Path standard.

Trail Heads

It was determined by the Ad Hoc Committee and the public that an extensive network of Bicycle Lanes, Shared Use Paths and Rural Trails be provided throughout the community. In addition, it was identified that Trail Heads should also be found throughout the City in an effort to provide a starting off point, resting point or as a place to locate services such as restrooms, parking and bicycle service stations.

Trail Head Standards

- Off-street parking shall be provided to accommodate parking for less than a 24 hour time period.
- Signage should clearly indicate the Trail Head and provide a map or other means of providing contextual location within the system.
- Co-location of Trail Heads with other facilities such as Parks, Recreation Center, or institutions such as schools should be encouraged.



In-Park Path at LaBonte Park

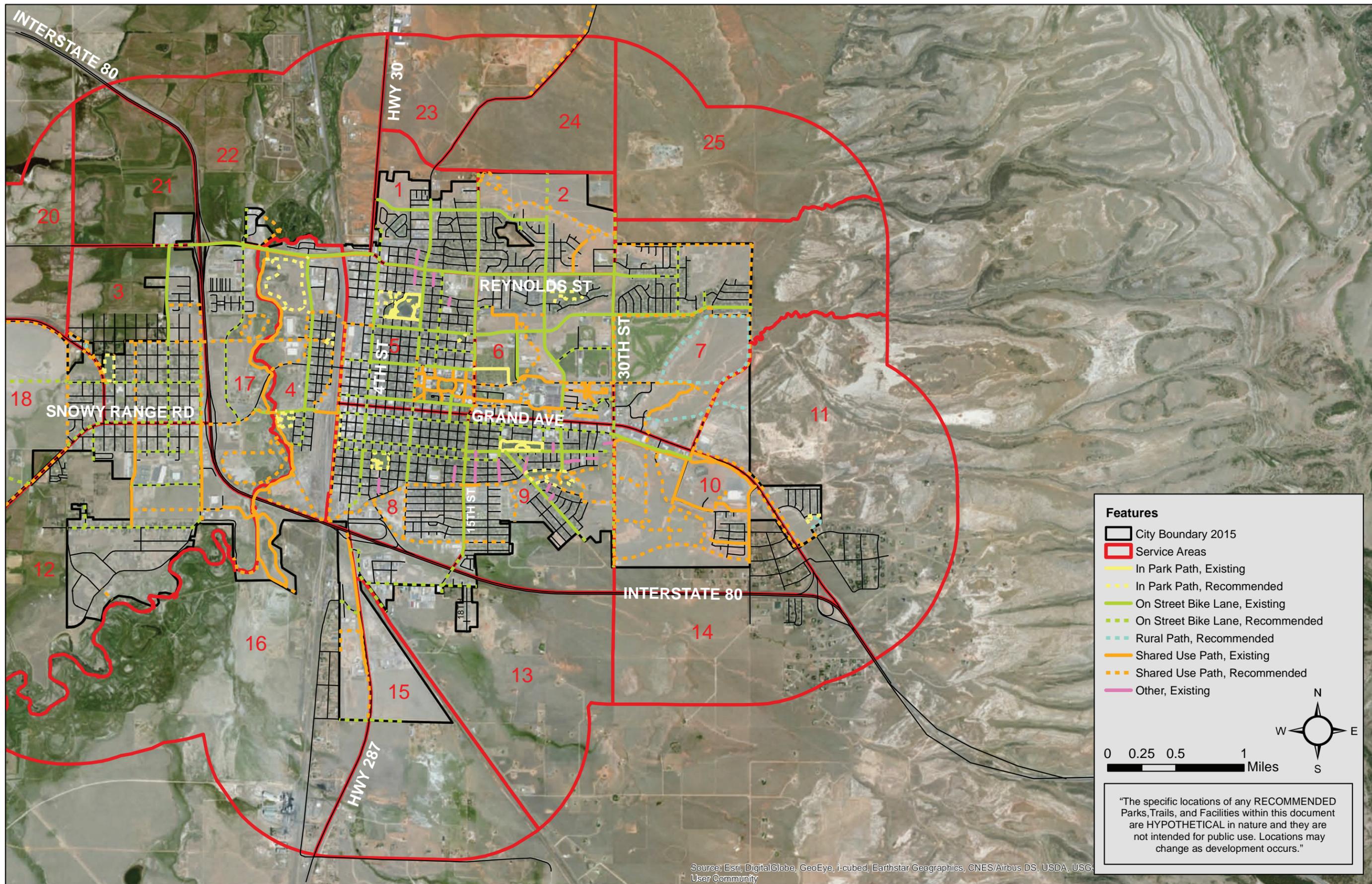
- Co-location of Trail Heads with other transportation networks such as bus routes should be encouraged.
- Provide amenities such as benches, water fountains, picnic tables, trash cans, donation/fee boxes, dog refuse bins/bags, bike parking, service stations, shelters and bathrooms depending upon the size, need and location of the Trail Head.

Recreation and Programming

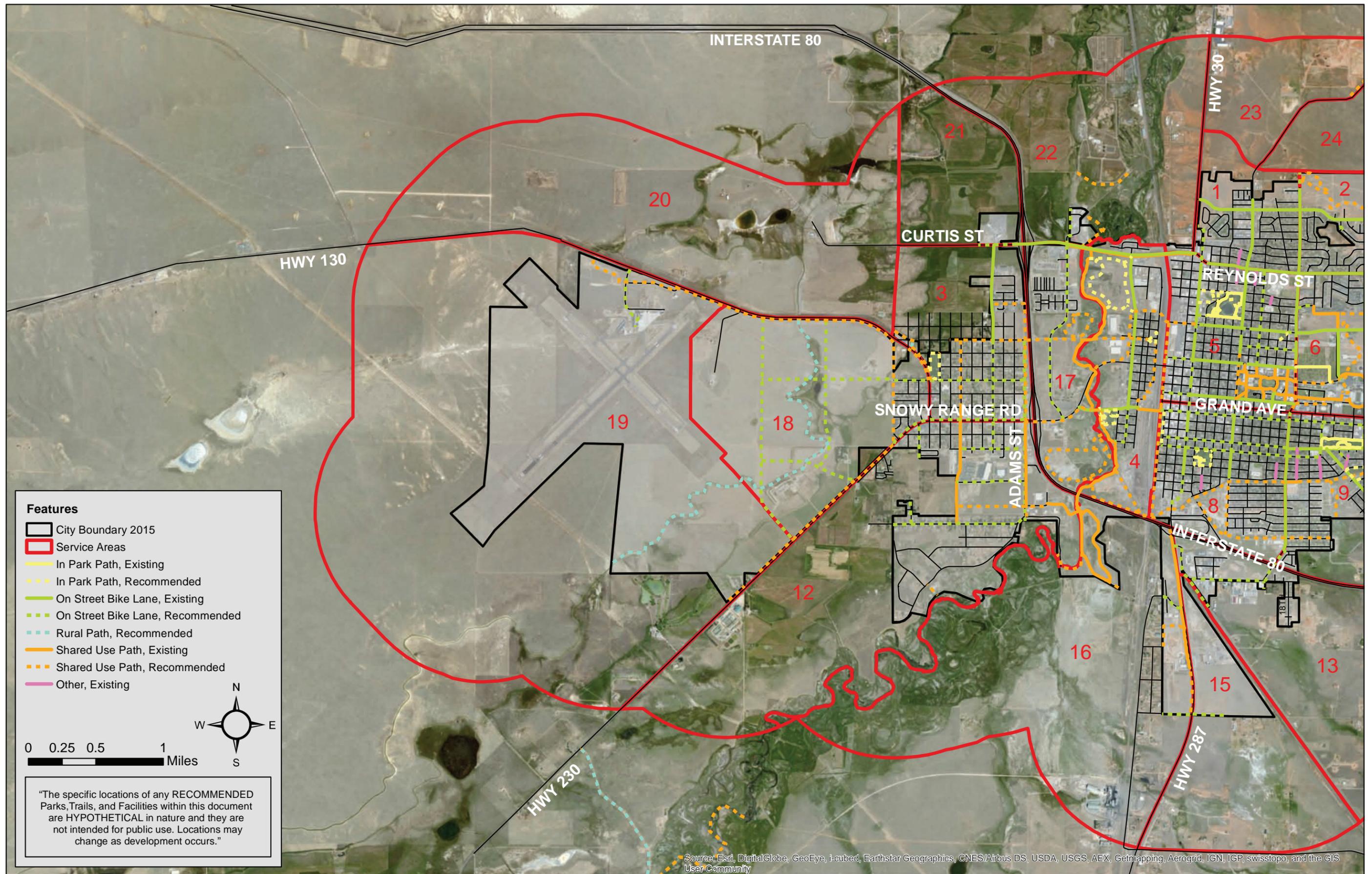
Recreation services and programming play a complementary and vital role to the Parks system.



The Laramie River Greenbelt Trail and the Trailhead at Optimist Park



Regional map of all existing and proposed In-Park Paths, Bike Lanes, Shared Use Paths, and Rural Paths, focal point east.



Regional map of all existing and proposed In-Park Paths, Bike Lanes, Shared Use Paths, and Rural Paths, focal point west.

The functions and activities that provide structured recreation, such as basketball, volleyball and other sports or those that provide an enrichment component such as pottery or art all fall within this type of service. As the City of Laramie continues to grow, and trends shift, staff, citizens and elected officials will need to consider regional trends, monitor and adapt recreational programming and fees to reflect the changing needs and desires of the Laramie citizens.

Although the recreation areas component does not provide for specific standards, many of the trends are used to shape the direction this component will take. Standard measures that should be taken include working with other “partnering” agencies, clubs and organizations to work together as a collaborative effort to provide recreation services to the Laramie community.

The recreation and programming standards component of this plan provides the criteria for decision making that will help shape programming and an appropriate fee structure that is in keeping with community values. Laramie is accustomed to utilizing a very public process for making decisions about Parks and Recreation items, creating a regular flow of information between citizens and staff that help shape programs.

In addition, staff regularly evaluates the financial aspects of programs and facilities to help set the rate structure. The proportion of program costs that is subsidized versus covered by fees is part of this discussion, and has historically been shaped by the public process as well.

Recreation - Programming

Several factors tie together to drive recreational programming in the community: community demographics, facilities and funding. The programming component exists to make the most of the facilities available for the citizens’ current needs according to their financial abilities. Programming is really the result of these factors and a quick look at recreational programming in Laramie makes this evident. Athletic activities for youth and adults such as softball, basketball, soccer and other sports have long been a mainstay of recreational programming. Recreational facilities in Laramie for many years

were limited to park amenities such as open space for field sports and eventually features were added for sports such as basketball and softball. These facilities were limited due to public interest, other available facilities at schools, the University and funding.

The City also had limited building space that was utilized for enrichment classes such as arts and crafts, theatre, pre-school activities, pottery and other activities that could be offered in a general purpose facility. Enrichment activities were offered year round at the Fort Sanders Center (which is no longer in operation) and also through partnerships with organizations and businesses. These partnerships enabled the City to make the most of limited staff and budgets while providing a variety of programs to the public.



Little Kickers Soccer Games at Undine Park

An example of the activities that form the foundation of the City's recreational programming is the School Aged Child Care (SACC) after school program. The SACC program is an enriching afterschool program for Kindergarten through 6th graders from 3:00 pm to 5:30 pm each day after the regular school day. The SACC program includes creative activities, recreational and physical activities, clubs for older children, homework opportunities, and a nutritious snack in an enriching environment. The SACC program was developed from the Latchkey Taskforce that recommended a need to provide an enriching recreation program for the supervision of children after school so they are not home alone.



Another foundation of the recreation programming is the youth sports programs that include the “Little Kickers” soccer program, the Jr. Cowboys and Cowgirls youth basketball program, the “Little Punters” flag football program and the “Little Sluggers” youth baseball programs. All of these youth sports programs are designed to introduce youth to sports activities while teaching the fundamentals of each sport in a format where everyone plays and fun is the key outcome for all participants.

SACC participants on the Recreation Center playground

When taxpayers passed the bond issue in 2001 that provided funding for the new Recreation Center and improvements to the community funded Ice and Event Center it sent a strong message about citizens' recreational priorities. When these facilities opened, programming naturally became focused on activities supported by the infrastructure. The City continued to program the fields similarly to past years, but now activities in the pools, gyms and on the ice became a focus as the City scaled back on the enrichment-oriented classes.

Now that these facilities have been in place for about ten years and the community continues to evolve the programming does as well. We now see more interest in activities for the baby-boomers who particularly appreciate fitness classes, the cardio equipment and fitness-oriented sports such as pickle ball. Additionally, as activities and organizations in the community change citizens look to the City to fill the void. The current

environment appears to be pointing back towards some enrichment activities. Several organizations that once offered these classes have ceased and citizens have begun to ask City staff where they can find these activities. As an example the City once offered pottery and ceramics classes, then a local business filled the niche when the City stopped offering this activity. Unfortunately the business ceased and now the City has partnered with the Laramie Plains Civic Center to help reinstate this class without expanding City investment.

In Laramie, as part of a 2012 Recreation Program Survey, Laser Tag and Paintball were noted as highly desirable, as well as a climbing wall and a larger fitness studio. Across the nation this trend is also true; with holiday/special events, fitness programs, mind-body/balance programs, day and youth sports camps and finally youth sports, rounding out the top five programs. In addition to the above mentioned programs, both regionally and locally, skating is still a popular offering (both ice and roller), although interest in both is declining across the nation.

This normal ebb and flow currently sees an environment where activities such as afterschool programming, fitness classes, alternative/extreme sports, social events such as birthday parties/weddings and senior activities among many others are a part of the programming environment.

The City objective for recreation programming is to

provide healthy activities for all ages, abilities and populations throughout three separate recreation program seasons, winter/spring, summer and fall. The City strives to offer programs that fill a niche different from other organizations in order to broaden the opportunities for recreation to the citizens. Staff aim to offer appealing class opportunities that will naturally have enough participation to be financially self-sustaining, but also to recognize that some activities are more suited to for-profit businesses and offer complementary programming, not competing activities. This enables City programs to continue to enjoy the support of citizens who value the benefits of recreation as a quality of life issue.

Understanding the community, as well as regional and national trends, must continue for the City to remain on the pulse of the community when it comes to programming citizens want. By providing programming tailored to the community, enrollment remains high and allows for the City to continue offering these programs. Routine surveys, similar to the survey done in 2012, should continue and remain integral in providing the service desired by the community, not just what is trending nationally or regionally.

Populations Served

The City's recreation programs are designed and tailored to suit a broad range of population and demographic areas. Parks and Recreation offers several "Learn to..." classes that are offered to all ages and abilities. These classes allow for broad-based participation and are offered throughout the year. The primary "Learn to..." classes are swimming and ice skating. The "Learn to Swim" program in particular strives to teach basic water safety skills to as many community members as possible. These "Learn to..." classes are offered throughout the year depending on the season. While the majority of the recreation programming focus is on adults and youth, there are a number of special events and programs tailored to other population groups. Examples of programs that are tailored to each community group are:

Infant/Preschool/Toddler:

The indoor playroom at the Recreation Center is

specifically designed for pre-school and toddler aged children. The indoor playroom allows children to play with development enhancing toys and equipment in a safe and warm environment. Having a separate play area for this age group also allows children to socialize and engage in co-operative play activities with others in their same age group. Child care is also offered in the playroom while parents utilize other areas within the facility.

Past recreation programs for this age group have included Gym Jam and Water Play. Both programs are designed for parents to participate with their children, creating an enriching environment in which young children can work on motor and social skills.

Supporting activities for this younger demographic also enables adults to participate in recreation for their age group while their children are supervised, enabling the programming to meet the recreational needs for both groups. This can also help support the programs financially because parents with easily available childcare are more likely to participate in other classes.

Youth

Various youth sports camps, instructional programs



Indoor Playroom at the Laramie Community Recreation Center

or competitive leagues are offered throughout the year. Little Kickers Soccer Program, Little Sluggers, Junior Cowboys and Cowgirls Basketball, and Youth Volleyball are all recreation program mainstays. Kid's Night Out is also offered to children in grades Kindergarten through 6th as a chaperoned night of fun at the Recreation

Center. A variety of skill-building sports camps are also offered as well as a state-wide, annual Youth Basketball Tournament.

The School Age Child Care (SACC) after-school program is a fun enrichment program designed for kids in grades Kindergarten through Sixth. SACC provides a safe environment for kids to spend their after school hours and helps to inspire learning through activities, field trips, tutoring, structured play and sports. During the summer, Parks and Recreation also offers Summer Fun Clubs. These day-long enrichment camps provide a place for kids in grades 1st through 6th to learn and grow in a safe environment.

A number of interpretive and enrichment programs are also offered to this age group, often through community partnerships with organizations such as the Laramie River Conservation District. Examples of such programming include youth pottery classes, bicycle safety courses and informational programs on a variety of outdoor or environmental topics. The LaBonte Outdoor Learning Center hosts many of these seasonal programs and boasts an instructional community garden, greenhouse and bee colony.

Tweens/Teens

The Recreation Center hosts a monthly Teen Night for this age group. Teen Nights are alcohol, tobacco, and drug-free events offered on weekend nights. These chaperoned events offer teens a safe place to hang out with their friends for a nominal fee. A meal is provided and several activities are offered throughout the evening. Instructional summer sports camps, the annual Youth Basketball Tournament and the Hershey Track Meet are also offered to this demographic. Junior Lifeguard camps are offered to ages eleven to fourteen as a leadership and skill building program for those interested in lifeguarding in the future.

Family

Special events comprise the majority of family focused



Municipal Band Concerts at the Edgar J. Lewis Bandshell in Washington Park

programming that Parks and Recreation sponsors. These special events include Ice Skating with Santa, Trunk'r Treat, Pumpkin Dunkin', the annual Recreation Center Free Day, annual Ice and Event Center Free Day, the Aquatic Easter Egg Hunt, Arts in the Park, Exhibition Ice Skating Shows, Turkey Curling, Free Summer Band Concerts, Speed Skating Ice Races, and Community Service Days. Additionally, the aquatics section offers "family float nights" which allow for the use of inner tubes in the Leisure Pool and will typically offer one of the large inflatable pool toys in the 8 Lane Pool at least twice a month.

Adults

A wide variety of fitness classes are offered to adults including Revolutions (spinning), Body Shock, Power Yoga, Pilates, Step, Sculpt, Zumba, Total Body Training, 6 Pack Attack, Taiji Fit, Yoga and Tai Chi. These fitness classes are offered throughout the week and individuals may drop in or sign up for weekly or monthly classes. Aquatic fitness offerings have been expanded in recent years including Water Aerobics, Hydro Core, Aqua Attack and Twinges in the Hinges.

Sport leagues are also offered in competitive, recreational and co-ed configurations. The primary adult sport leagues that Parks and Recreation offers are: Sand Volleyball, Basketball, Volleyball and Softball, Broomball and Curling. Swing Dancing classes and interval running training are relatively new forays into

alternative programming which breaks away from the more traditional sports and fitness based programs.

Seniors

Programs that are developed especially with the senior demographic in mind include Pickleball, Chair Yoga, Twinges in the Hinges and Tai Chi.

Special Needs

The Parks and Recreation Department believes that all individuals should have recreational opportunities that allow for performances at their highest level. All the recreation programs, activities and facilities are accessible to all populations and demographics. The recreation staff will make every reasonable accommodation necessary to meet the needs of all participants, including permitting a caregiver or partner at no cost in all programs and activities.

The recently developed Twinges in the Hinges aquatic fitness program is geared toward those with mobility issues or anyone recovering from illness or injury. Twinges is designed to ease individuals back into physical activity. Many of the adult fitness offerings provide opportunities for modifications allowing for those with decreased mobility to still benefit from physical activity.

Recreation Program Services

The Recreation Division offers recreation programming and activities in eight general services. The program services are divided based upon recreation programs and the associated recreation facilities. The program services are listed below with examples of recreation programs and populations served:

Recreation Center

The Recreation Center facility services encompass all of the various programs and activities that the facility can accommodate. This includes; childcare babysitting, open gyms, birthday party packages, cardio and circuit weights equipment, indoor walking/jogging track, and all of the aquatics services listed above.

Aquatics



Tai Chi Class at the Laramie Community Recreation Center Gym.

The aquatic program services encompass all the programs and activities within the aquatics facilities, which include; the outdoor leisure pool, the indoor leisure pool, the 8-lane competitive lap pool, the Jacuzzi, the Washington Park Wading Pool and the Undine Park Splash Pad. Some program examples are the learn to swim lessons, the family float nights, dive-in movie nights, the 8-lane pool inflatable nights, and the Dog Day in the Pool.

Enrichment Activities

The enrichment activities includes both organized activities and programs and open non-organized activities that include; youth garden club, summer enrichment clubs, theater workshop, model rockets, dance classes and lessons, and municipal band concerts. These activities are found throughout the community in many different locations and facilities.

Youth Sports

Youth sports activities are typically organized leagues, short term events or tournaments such as; Little Kickers soccer, golf, tennis, youth soccer, youth baseball, youth flag football, Kids Night Out, sport camps and clinics, archery, skiing, Hershey track meet, youth volleyball, and girls softball.

Adult Sports

Adult sports activities are typically organized

leagues, short term events or tournaments such as, tennis, indoor/outdoor triathlons, dance classes and lessons, volleyball, adult fitness classes, adult sports leagues, horseshoes, and pickleball league.

Adult Fitness

Adult fitness activities are typically routine daily and weekly classes or events that include the following examples; adult fitness classes, adult sports leagues, trainers and seniors on the go outdoor activities.

Special Events

Special events are typically organized around a historical event or day, or for a specific purpose or goal that includes the following examples, “Day of Play” special event, free days at the Ice and Event Center and the Recreation Center, Huck Finn Fishing Derby, youth basketball tournament, teen night special events, pool inflatable’s, indoor/outdoor triathlons, municipal band concerts, and turkey curling.

Ice and Event Center

The Ice and Event Center facility services encompass all of the various programs and activities that the facility can accommodate. During the ice season this includes public ice skating, ice skating lessons, ice speed skating, ice figure skating, broomball, all ages of ice hockey, ice figure skating shows, and special events. During the off season this includes roller skating, floor hockey, in-line skating, indoor soccer, scooter races, circuses, wedding

receptions and other special events.

Recreation Programming Cost/Fees/Funding

As with any Recreation System operation costs, fees and funding are critical factors concerning what a community can provide. The recreation program fee structure is based upon a business model that encourages and develops programming fees to cover one hundred percent of the direct costs for a program or activity with any indirect costs recovery based upon the specific facility and overhead requirements of the program or activity. The direct costs include the following elements:

- Part time/provisional staff costs
- Materials and supply costs
- Equipment costs
- Transportation costs
- Any direct fees, dues or rental costs
- Officials or Referee costs
- Participant certification costs
- Any other costs directly associated with the recreation programming.

Based upon this business model, the overall cost recovery for all recreation programs and activities throughout a fiscal year averages fifty to fifty-five percent.

Other Cost/Fees/Funding Considerations

In addition to the standard funding, recapture and fees typically associated with the following facilities and programs provide the best picture as to how these facilities are funded, however not all financing scenarios can be accounted. In unique cases and special circumstances the City has set up other ways in which citizens can have the opportunity to participate in community activities. As with all aspects of this plan, providing an equal and equitable opportunity for all to use and participate in what the community has to offer, is highly desired and a major recommendation of this plan.



Girls Youth Hockey at the Ice & Events Center

Recreation Scholarship Program

The Recreation Division offers partial activity and membership scholarships based upon the following guidelines: Scholarships are awarded to children, youth, adults, and seniors based on family income/financial need, family size, and highly extenuating circumstances. Scholarship income guidelines are based on the Wyoming Department of Family Services guidelines and are revised each year.

Recreation Center Multi-Pass Scholarship Guidelines

- Scholarship recipients will receive one (1) multiple pass good for 20 daily visits to the Recreation Center each recreation season (Winter/Spring, Summer, and Fall).
- Scholarship recipients must pay 30% of the applicable multiple pass fee for their age group.

Recreation Program/Activity Scholarship Guidelines

- All recreation activity scholarships are partial awards, covering 50% of the activity registration fee, with the total award not to exceed \$50.
- Scholarships may be applied for at any time. However, Activity Scholarship awards will be limited to a total amount not to exceed \$150 per any twelve (12) month period of time per individual.
- If a recipient is unable to attend the registered activity, it is the recipient's responsibility to notify Parks and Recreation staff at least 3 working days prior to the start date of the activity to cancel. The scholarship cannot be transferred to another program and the amount of the scholarship awarded will be counted towards the \$150 maximum allowed in a twelve (12) month period. Refund of the fee portion paid by the scholarship recipient will be processed and refunded within 3 weeks of notification.

Recreation – Disability Fee Schedule

The Recreation Center has established a fee schedule for disabled adults based upon the current senior membership



Recreation Center Basketball Courts

fee scale. The disability fee scale is applicable to all adults that have been medically determined to have a permanent disability that limits one or more major life activities. The disability fee schedule applies to all individual adult multiple pass, six month and annual memberships.

Volunteers

One of the greatest assets a community and a Parks and Recreation Department can have is volunteers. Using volunteers on a small scale to run specific programming needs or with the maintenance of parks facilities is encouraged. Many communities rely upon the actual user group of an athletic setting to assist with many of the maintenance items needed for their use, for example: requesting that the Laramie Youth Baseball along with Legion Baseball be responsible for the dragging and lining of the ball fields for games and tournaments. Some recreational programming could also be performed by volunteers such as refereeing, score keeping and concession sales with a percentage of the profits being dedicated to the volunteers' group.

Volunteers should also be used in nearby parks, trails or other facilities across the community. By using volunteers, individuals have a vested interest in the overall park, trail or facility. Not only do these groups provide “manpower” to projects such as spring clean-ups, special events or projects, these volunteers also provide the City with “experts” on a specific park, trail or facility. A park that has used this concept with great success is Undine Park. The Friends of Undine Park, a local volunteer group not only provided clean-up and help

during special events, but also provided guidance for staff related to improvements or recommended changes to the park throughout the group's existence. Although not an active group today, their participation was invaluable.

However, with the good come some other issues associated with volunteers. Working with volunteers on 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. Also, considerable staff time is often needed to organize, direct and provide guidance to the group. These factors, among others, should be taken into consideration whenever considering utilizing a volunteer group in these programming or maintenance activities.

Partnerships

Another option in reducing budgetary expenditures that would normally be incurred by the City is through partnerships. The City currently has partnerships with the University of Wyoming, Laramie County Community College (LCCC) and Albany County School District #1 for use and programming of athletic fields, parks, pools, gyms and other amenities within the parks system and use of the Recreation Center. The partnerships allow community use of several athletic venues, so the City and community partners have access, but do not need to duplicate recreation opportunities offered in the community. The agreements should be updated as needed to ensure that they encompass all known recreational areas and can be redrafted to meet current demands. Other partnerships should be researched to enhance and grow recreational opportunities offered to the citizens of Laramie. Some new and existing examples may include the Laramie Trap Club, Laramie Country Club, Albany County Fairgrounds, United States Forest Service, Wyoming Game and Fish, WyoTech, Laramie County Community College and United States Bureau of Land Management, just to name a few. Additionally, partnerships to create large sporting complexes for multiple sports and uses should also be employed. Commonly, large entities such as the University of Wyoming or the Albany County School District would be likely partners in creating a sporting complex that would serve not only the community, but also the region.

Sponsorships

Whether it be a large corporation, service group



Albany County Fairgrounds

or individual, the City should 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 of, or new amenities such as playgrounds, picnic shelters or even a complete park depending upon the support for the item. The City currently has accepted sponsorships within the Laramie Community Recreation Center for the picnic pavilions, water features, concessions area and water slide for the outdoor pool. This enhanced revenue stream is a real advantage as the City budget continues to decrease due to the limited funding streams from taxes and the State. Criteria for sponsorships should be developed in order to provide the City as well as those sponsoring a benchmark as to what is expected for a sponsorship.

Park Land Dedication Requirements and In-lieu fees

Although new to Laramie, park land dedication and in-lieu fees are not a new concept. Recently, with the adoption of the Unified Development Code (15.14.070 – Parks and Open Space, UDC) and associated resolution (City Council Resolution 2010-64), Laramie has employed this requirement for all new residential development throughout the community. During review by staff, either the dedication of land or the in-lieu fee is evaluated and the preferred option is chosen.

by City staff. In the event land is dedicated, that land then goes towards providing the needed park land for the area, recreation facility or other feature such as a natural area. In the event an in-lieu fee is paid, the collected amount is placed into a fund that must go towards parks and recreation facilities within the Service Area. Park land dedication requirements and In-lieu fees must continue to be required to keep pace with the growing need for parks and recreation areas. Furthermore the requirements should be frequently updated to keep pace with rising land prices and other economic factors, as well as the desires of the community.

Supplemental Tax Funds

Under Wyoming law (State Statute 18-9-201), County Commissioners and School Districts have the authority to enact a tax levy up to one (1) mil of assessed valuation specifically for public recreation. The County's authority to impose a tax levy of one mil for recreation lies within the 12-mil limit for County Commission funding. In Laramie, the Albany County School District #1 first imposed the one mil for public recreation in 1999, with the establishment of the Laramie Community Recreation Board. The first project completed with Recreation Board funds was the Laramie Community Skate Park in LaBonte Park. The Board revised their bylaws in 2006 to amend the makeup of the board members and to change the name of the Board to the Albany County Recreation Board. The board receives proposals each year for recreation projects from the City of Laramie, Albany County, Albany County School District #1 and the Town of Rock River, which may include facilities, construction, programs, maintenance and operation, and equipment to support recreation in Albany County.

The Albany County Recreation Board has been instrumental as a supplemental funding source for parks and recreational capital improvements, operations and maintenance support, programming and equipment replacement. The Parks and Recreation Department has relied heavily upon the Albany County Recreation Board to supplement the operations and maintenance (O&M) budget as well as new projects and equipment for City projects and volunteer organizations to the tune of nearly \$350,000 per fiscal year. Without this supplemental funding, many future projects within

the Parks and Recreation Department will not come to fruition. This funding mechanism must remain in place to accomplish the goals and direction of this plan.

Other Services

Aside from the many different types of Parks, Recreation, Trails and Natural Area uses already mentioned, some attributes and services that contribute to the overall Parks and Recreation System do not fall under one particular standard; however, each is important and vital to a system that serves the needs of the community.

Laramie Beautification Areas

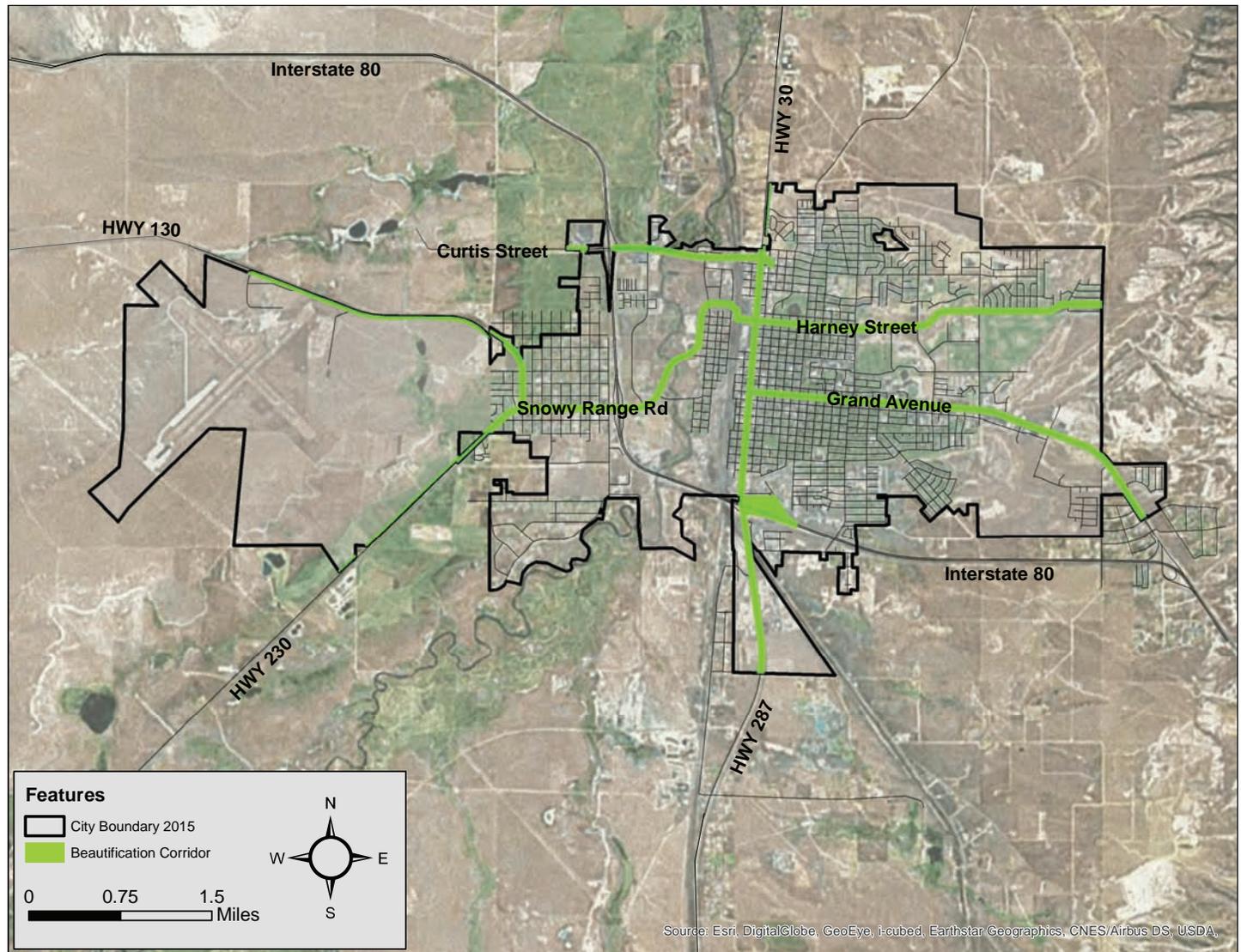
It was noted throughout the development of the plan, opportunities to improve major gateways into the community were of particular interest. Although typically not considered a major component of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the City of Laramie has specifically charged the Parks and Recreation Department with the task of improving these gateways, which in part is already underway. For over twelve years, the City of Laramie, through the Parks and Recreation Department has made improvements to gateways all over town. In the beginning these improvements centered on "Welcome to Laramie" signs and landscaping around these signs. As beautification goals began to evolve, landscaping near right-of-ways and near major entrances to the community became more extensive, including hundreds of trees being planted along major corridors such as Highway 130, Highway 287, and Grand Avenue. Other more specialized projects have also been completed that further the efforts of entrance beautification. One example of this specialized beautification was the "South 3rd Street Beautification Project" which created planting areas with trees, bushes and grasses, as well as sidewalk and drainage improvements in an area that lacked any vegetative interest and vital improvements like sidewalks.

Although most interstate entrances to the community have seen the bulk of the improvements specific attention was given to make sure that all interchange areas also be included in the Beautification Areas. As new interchange areas develop, or existing interchange areas are redeveloped, changed or altered, a higher level of design considerations shall be given to the structure

and areas around the interchange. Architectural details, art and murals should be incorporated into the structures themselves, such as the bridge, but also into secondary construction items such as pillars and retaining walls. The areas around these interchanges should also be incorporated into the overall design of the site through improvements to landscaping and the appearance of area that would go beyond just the typical re-vegetation of the area. These interchanges are the gateways to our community, and the community believes that these areas should be a showcase, not a deterrent, to what Laramie has to offer as a community.



Although most apparent, entrance corridors *Landscaping and welcome sign near the I-80 entrance to Laramie.*



Map showing Laramie's Beautification Corridors

coming into the community are not the only focus for the Beautification Areas. Through the public process and as recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee, extending the beautification areas through the community, not just focusing improvements near the interchanges, was considered just as important. By extending these corridors through the community as the community grows, consistency in appearance and enhanced visual appeal will be achieved. This concept was also noted as being important due to the fact that some of our major through-streets, Grand Avenue, 3rd Street and Snowy Range Road are all state highways, and thus carry additional traffic, including visitors, that might not otherwise be on these roads. Because of the larger size and more traffic these roads have, beautification enhancements will reduce the impact these thoroughways will have on the community as a whole, and in part making the best of these roads coming through our community for our residents and visitors.

University of Wyoming Campus

Generally, the UW campus includes six large open areas that are accessible to the public and serve the immediate neighborhoods. The areas identified are Fraternity and Sorority Mall, “The Green” area at 9th and Ivinson Streets, Prexy’s Pasture, Arts and Sciences Green (north and south of the building), the White Hall Green and the Cooper House area. Five of these areas are large open turf areas that serve the community in more of a developed “open space” capacity with informal play and athletic areas. However, Fraternity and Sorority Mall is



Paths adjacent to Prexy’s Pasture on the UW Campus

considered slightly different and plays a larger role in formal athletic activities such as soccer and rugby, and includes a basketball court on site. Because of the multiple uses of Fraternity and Sorority Mall, this area is classified as a Recreation Facility/Sports Complex versus an Open Space. Using this rationale, the five UW campus sites should be counted in the overall “Other” locations and one site as a Recreation Facility/Sports Complex. The acreage of these areas should not be considered towards park land calculations since the use of these areas could change as the campus continues to grow and evolve.

Detention Areas

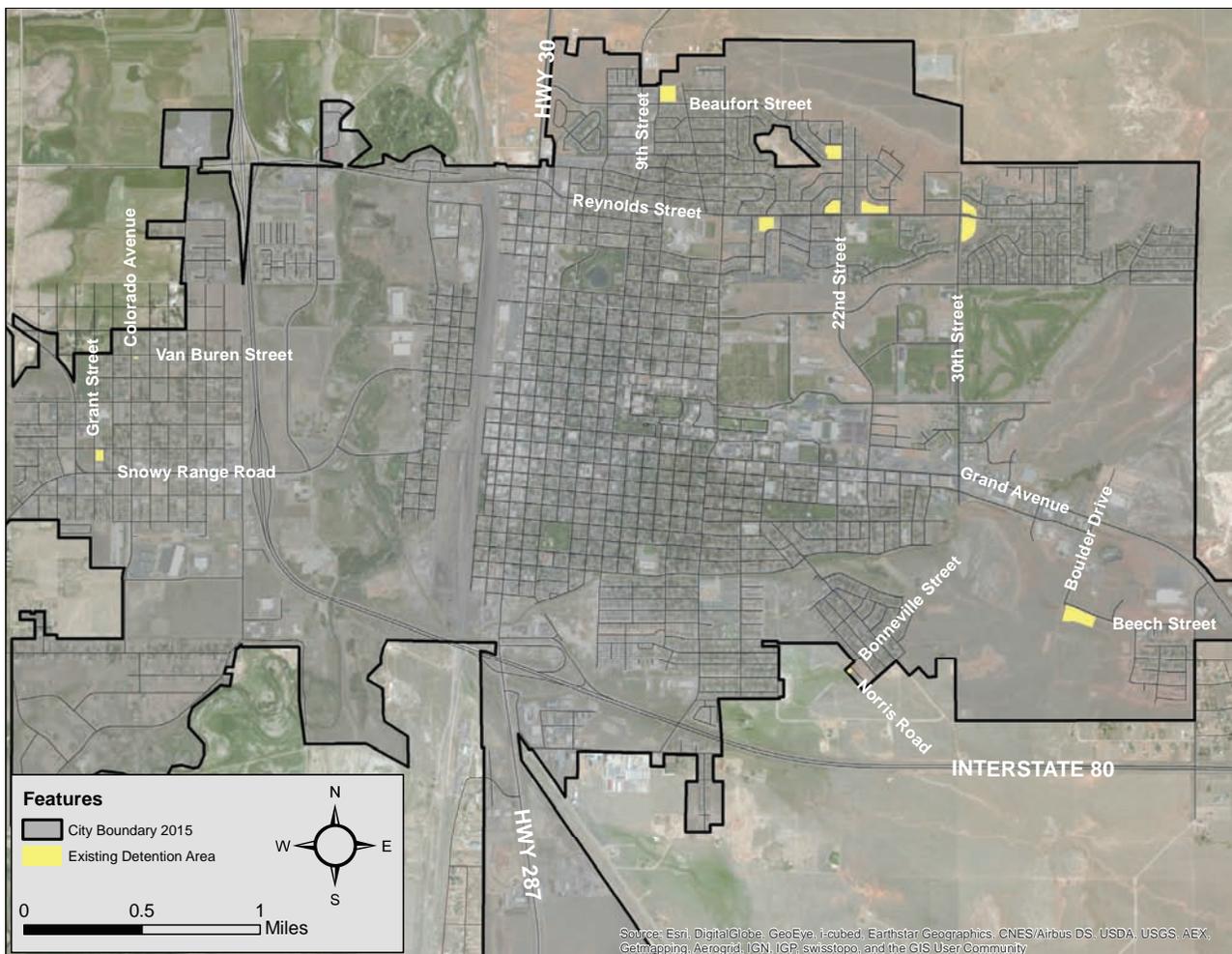
Throughout the Laramie area, stormwater management is an ever-present issue that often requires attention as new development occurs. Although some areas of town contain underground stormwater pipe which convey the water, many areas throughout the community rely on surface conveyance for stormwater (typically within the street) and the use of Detention Areas to regulate the release of the water in a controlled manner. Often these Detention Areas are undeveloped depressions that collect stormwater in a precipitation event and release the water at a regulated rate. Although these areas are inundated with water during the event and for some period of time after the event, typically less than 24 hours, the remaining time these areas are dry and under utilized. During the development of this Plan these areas were noted as possible opportunities for recreation and general beautification of Laramie. In terms of recreation and beautification, foremost consideration must be given to the original intent of the detention areas as stormwater facility. Any opportunities considered must first address any impacts it may have on the functionality of the facility. Once these impacts have been evaluated, opportunities can be considered.

Specifically focusing on recreation, consideration was given to a wide variety of uses within the detention area. Uses such as low impact (gravel or dirt) running trails around and or through the facility, benches or rest areas (if along Shared Use Path routes or streets with Bike Lanes) and improved turf in the bottom of the areas to accommodate passive recreation were just some of the ideas considered. Because of the varying size of some of the ponds, different uses may or may

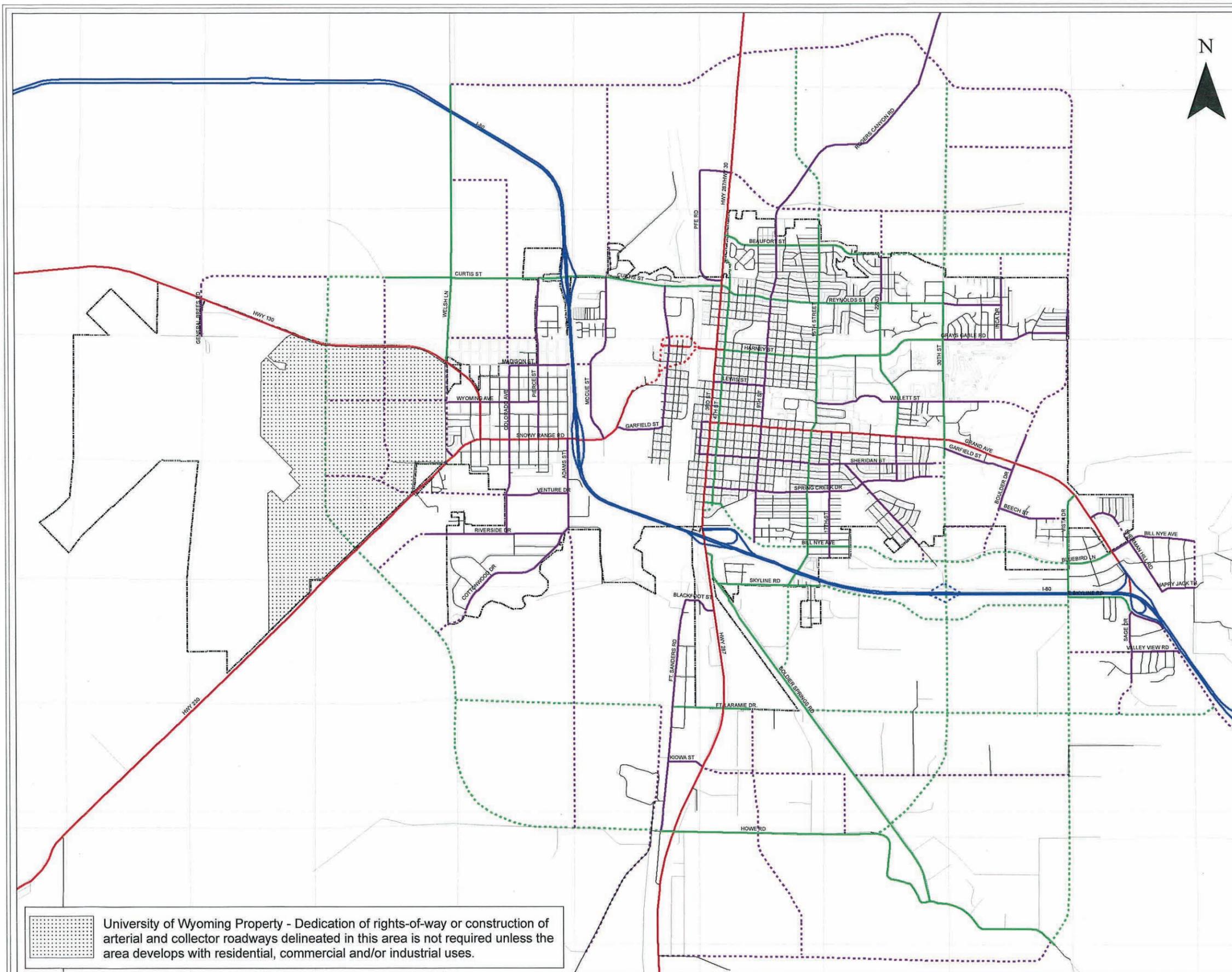
not be compatible. In some instances Detention Areas may be able to serve as a playlot, accommodating a play structure or other possible improvements. However, it was noted that any physical improvements could pose a potential hazard by snagging material, thus possibly impacting the function of the detention pond. Proper design must be considered in these instances. It should be noted, one use, Dog Parks, were considered the one incompatible use that should not be allowed in detention areas, due to pollution concerns associated with dog feces and potential smell from water and feces.

In conjunction with recreation, beautification of these areas, no matter the size or location should be considered. In many cases due to natural topography in the Laramie area these Detention Areas are often located along major corridors, such as our collectors and arterials. To the untrained eye, these areas are often considered ugly and lacking appeal. Although not a new

concept within the City, Laramie now has a few examples across the community where Detention Areas have been landscaped. In some locations irrigation and trees have been installed along the tops and perimeters of existing detention ponds in order to beautify them. Because of the size of many of the ponds a number of trees can be installed around the perimeter which create a positive impact. In addition to general landscaping other uses such as community garden plots, flower beds or other treatments should be considered. Finally, because these areas are not primary recreation facilities, maintenance of these areas should remain as low as possible so not to become a strain on budgets and staff time.



Existing Detention Areas throughout Laramie



Major Street Plan

City of Laramie & Albany County, WY

Legend

Existing Roads	Future Roads
Interstate	Interstate
Principal Arterial	Principal Arterial
Minor Arterial	Minor Arterial
Collector	Collector
Local	
	Other
	City Limits
	Section Lines



Wyoming Department of Transportation,
District I

P.E. District Engineer, Jay Gould 9/7/2010
Date

Approvals

City of Laramie Planning Commission

Chairman, Dave Paulekas 5-10-10
Date

Albany County Planning & Zoning
Commission

Chairman, Chris Nicholson 5-5-2010
Date

Laramie City Council

Mayor, Jodi Guerin 6/15/10
Date

Attest

City Clerk, Sue Morris-Jones MMC 6/15/2010
Date

Albany County Board of County
Commissioners

Chairman, Tim Sullivan 8-25-10
Date

Attest

County Clerk, Jackie Gonzales 08-25-10
Date

University of Wyoming Property - Dedication of rights-of-way or construction of arterial and collector roadways delineated in this area is not required unless the area develops with residential, commercial and/or industrial uses.