

# CITY OF EVANS PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN



*Adopted October 2000*

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# 1 WHY WE NEED A PLAN

At some point in its development, every community realizes growth is turning the small town into a city. As this transition occurs (often quite suddenly) it becomes apparent that new parks are not being built as fast as the new homes. New residents feel they do not have adequate access to parkland. Long-time residents sense that existing parks are becoming over used and over crowded. There is a need for more sports fields for organized sports, more areas of open grass for informal play and a trail system allowing for easy off-street access. There is a sense in the community that a strategy is needed to address this and other issues related to the citizen's current and future recreation needs. The City of Evans is at such a crossroads.

This Parks, Trails and Recreation Master Plan has been commissioned by City Council as a response to these concerns. It will provide a long-range strategy for meeting the community's desire for high quality parks and recreation facilities. It has included a concerted effort to reach out to the residents of Evans in order to understand and quantify their needs. In the end, it is the community's plan. It is an expression of the residents' desire to maintain and improve the quality of life for every person in Evans.

*"It was a democratic obligation to provide such public facilities, for no individual could or would make available the necessary land. It was in public spaces – parks, streets, campuses, and hospital grounds – that citizens would experience the reality of democratic life."*

Frederick Law Olmsted (1822 – 1903)  
and the American Environmental  
Tradition., Albert Fein, 1972

## 1.1 The Purpose of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Recreation needs span an almost bewildering range. Recreation activities vary by age, some are done individually, some in groups – and they range from quiet contemplation to vigorously active sports. Some activities are linear (bike riding), some are confined to a specific facility (softball) and some are very general (picnicking and kite flying). Some are best enjoyed in a natural setting (fishing, hiking) and some have structural requirements (tennis). And still there are many other recreation needs and activities that fit in between these extremes.

For a number of years the Parks and Recreation Department has planned its operations primarily through an annual 5-year capital improvements program (CIP) budgeting process that is developed by the staff with input from the Parks and Recreation Commission and approved by the City Council. In 1996 the City adopted an updated Comprehensive Plan<sup>1</sup> that included a chapter addressing parks, recreation and open space. While the Comprehensive Plan was an important step forward in identifying Evans' long range needs, it was very general in nature regarding parks and recreation. It did not address long-term needs of the City, nor did it provide the detail necessary for specific annual budget forecasting and implementation. This Master Plan refines and implements the general direction established in the Comprehensive Plan. It is intended to become a stand-alone element of the Comprehensive Plan that will guide park and recreation development over the next 10 to 15 years.

As Evans continues to grow, the City's park and recreation facilities will be subject to greater use. It will be important that the park and recreation facilities keep pace with community needs. In order to do so, this plan addresses a number of important park and recreation questions:

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<sup>1</sup> The Parks, Recreation and Open Space chapter of the Comprehensive Plan only analyzed current park acreages, the recreation programs being offered, and the organization and responsibilities of the Parks Department.

- *Are (or will there be) enough facilities to meet current and future needs?*
- *Are the facilities located in the right places? (To be accessible to most residents.)*
- *Do the dedication requirements for new development adequately provide for their own residents?*
- *Can the City, School District and private resources be integrated so as to avoid costly duplication and still provide a well-rounded spectrum of recreation choices?*
- *If choices or trade-offs must be made, what should the priorities be?*

The purpose of this Master Plan is to identify the needs of today’s residents, to anticipate those of tomorrow, and to assure they will be met through proper planning. This plan is not intended to be a static document. Even as it was drafted, circumstances changed necessitating revisions to its conclusions and recommendations. This state of change will continue and updates of the plan will be required in response to new conditions.

### 1.2 Planning for the Needs of the Future

Any analysis of park and recreation needs must take into account Evans’ specific population dynamics and the City’s overall projected growth. Projecting population growth over the life of the plan (10 to 15 years) will allow the City to plan its park system to keep pace with population growth.

The 1996 Comprehensive Plan showed a growth for the years 1990 to 1995 of approximately 3.2% per year. For the purpose of establishing an order-of-magnitude future projection, this plan will use the average growth rate established by Community Development. This projected growth rate is 2.8% per year over the next 15 years (Figure #1), which yields a 2015 population of approximately 13,350. This represents a cumulative increase of 56% over the estimated 1999 population of 8,580. This increase alone will demand a significant increase in public recreation facilities. Once the 2000 census figures are released, a more accurate current population can be established and the future population estimates adjusted accordingly.

This population estimate is conservative. It is based on the assumption that the current high level of growth will level off due to a slowdown in the economy sometime in the future. This will result in an average population growth that is lower than the rate of the last 10 years. A number of factors will influence the growth rate including interest rates, housing conditions and costs in adjacent communities, the economy in other parts of the country, etc. It is important that the population projections be updated every three to five years and the master plan adjusted accordingly.

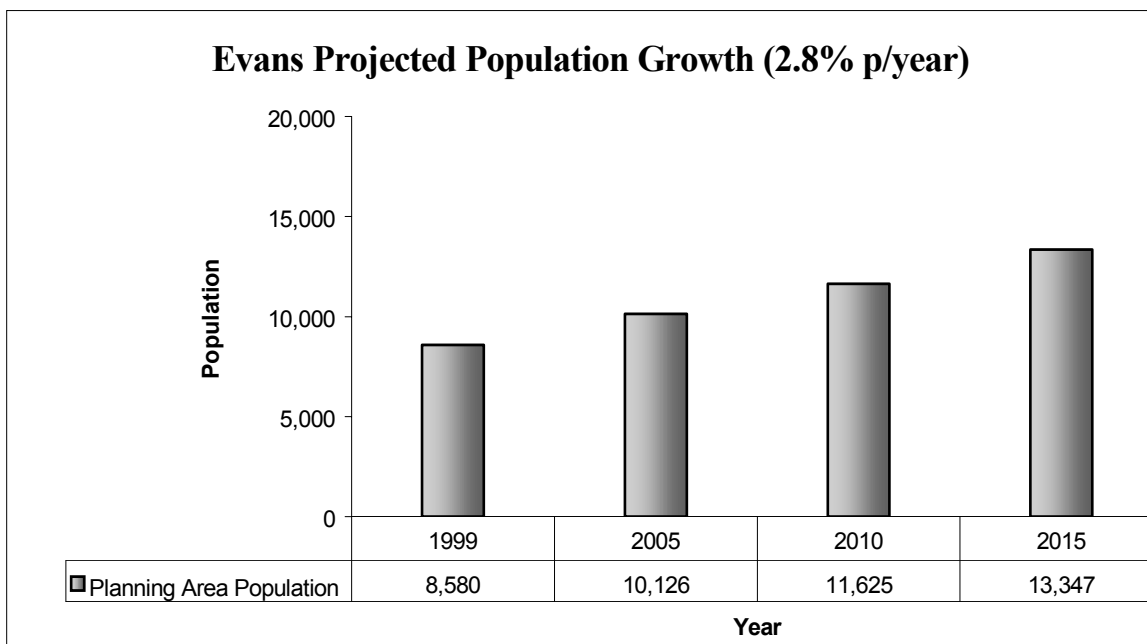


Figure 1: Projected growth for the City of Evans through the year 2015

## 2 EXISTING FACILITIES INVENTORY

### 2.1 Overview of Facilities

The Evans Department of Parks and Recreation manages and maintains a city-wide system of neighborhood parks and playgrounds, as well as a major regional recreation complex (Riverside Park), a Historical Museum, and a multi-purpose recreation center. With an operating budget of approximately \$604,000 annually, the Department provides a fine variety of recreational programs and activities within its various recreation facilities.

### 2.2 Review of Facilities

Each of the recreational facilities in Evans was visited and an audit of each site conducted with the focus being to assess the following quality categories:

- Visual Quality – the overall image portrayed to the park visitor.
- Accessibility – to citizens at large, from a driving or walking point of view and to disabled visitors utilizing the site.
- Signage – quality of directional signs, park identification signs, and on-site rules and regulations signs.
- Design Capacity – how well the park lends itself to a variety of activities.
- Landscaping – extensiveness, quality, and a variety of landscaping materials.
- Lighting – security lighting, type of fixtures and overall coverage.
- Fixtures and Equipment – variety, appropriateness, and general condition of park fixtures and playground equipment.
- General Conditions and Cleanliness – overall field and turf conditions and on-going maintenance practices.

In the case of the Historical Museum, the Parks Maintenance Building and the Recreation Center, a review was made of staffing levels, cleanliness, program offerings,

customer service efforts and pricing strategies.

- General observations and specific recommendations for each of the sites visited is incorporated in this report. A rating scale was used which included:
  - Excellent – meets all the expectations of the public, staff, and program needs
  - Good – on-going maintenance has kept the facility in good repair
  - Average – although some areas were being maintained at a proper level, some areas within the site have been neglected and are in need of repair
  - Fair – signs of vandalism, apparent lack of effort, some broken equipment, etc.
  - Poor – the overall impression is one of neglect or failure to comply with expectations

### 2.3 Overview of Observations of Outdoor Facilities

The following is an overview of the existing park and recreation facilities in Evans. Detailed summaries for each facility are included in the Appendix. Map 1 shows the existing parks and their service areas. The service areas (or radii) for the parks represent the portions of the city each park can realistically serve.

In order to provide variety and balance in the park and recreation facilities, the master plan is proposing the Park Type Standards described in Table 1. Each park is classified as a Mini-Park, Neighborhood Park or a Community Park. These standards have been derived from the existing conditions in the city and will be used to guide the design and location of future parks. They also suggest size, functions, facilities and a service area of population that each park is intended to serve. (Table 1 provides additional detail on each park type).



Mini-Parks and Neighborhood Parks are intended to be walk-to facilities and therefore have a smaller service area. Mini-Parks can serve homes within a ¼ mile radius while Neighborhood Parks will serve homes within a ½ mile radius. Since these are walk-to facilities, the service areas are truncated at major barriers to pedestrian movement such as railroad tracks, the South Platte River, Highway 85 and arterial roadways. While it is true that arterial roadways can be crossed, most parents would not feel comfortable allowing an elementary to middle school age child cross a busy road to meet a friend at the park. Ideally, these smaller parks should be planned to allow younger children to safely reach the park on foot or bike. The Denver Street

Table 1: City of Evans Park Type Standards

<b>City of Evans Park Type Standards</b>			
<b>Type of Park</b>	<b>Optimum Size</b>	<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Use</b>
<b>Mini Parks</b> (Such as Denver St. Playground)	.1 to 3.9 acres	Residential neighborhoods within ¼ mile radius	A walk-to facility that provides play and passive recreation for the immediate vicinity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Playground equipment</li> <li>➤ Picnic tables, shelter</li> <li>➤ Open turf</li> <li>➤ Natural Areas</li> </ul> <p>Note: Mini Parks will <u>only</u> be constructed in developed areas that are currently underserved for Neighborhood Parks and where adequately sized vacant lots are unavailable.</p>
<b>Neighborhoods Parks</b> (Such as City and Village Parks)	4 to 19.9 acres	Residential areas within 3/8 to 5/8 mile radius	A walk-to facility with amenities that are predominantly neighborhood-oriented (not generally to be used for competitive sports): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Picnic tables, shelter</li> <li>➤ Playground equipment</li> <li>➤ Trails</li> <li>➤ Basketball courts</li> <li>➤ Open field for casual, multi-use play</li> <li>➤ Restrooms</li> <li>➤ 10 to 20 parking spaces (off-street and/or on-street)</li> <li>➤ Lighting</li> </ul>
<b>Community Parks</b> (Such as Riverside Park)	20 – 40 acres	1¾ to 2 ¼ mile radius	A drive-to facility that serves multiple neighborhoods and includes both competitive sports and passive recreation facilities that are typically not provided in neighborhood parks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Active sports facilities, grouped for efficiency where possible (three to four tennis courts, two or three basketball courts, etc.)</li> <li>➤ Broad areas of open turf</li> <li>➤ Lighted sports fields with bleachers</li> <li>➤ Small passive areas for neighborhood park functions</li> <li>➤ Community center for indoor recreation including kitchen, meeting rooms and large open exercise area</li> <li>➤ Natural area with trail</li> </ul>
<b>Specialty Facility or</b>	40 – 150 acres	5 mile radius	A city-wide drive-to resource primarily for nature-oriented activities and/or major sports

<p><b>Regional Parks</b> (None currently exist in Evans)</p>			<p>facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Large children’s playground (with theme)</li> <li>➤ Lighted active sports facilities (tennis, baseball, soccer, etc.) grouped for efficiency</li> <li>➤ Significant dedicated natural areas with trails and passive park uses</li> <li>➤ Recreation center, ice arena or other major community facility.</li> </ul>
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Playground is the City's only Mini-Park and City Park and Village Park are the City's Neighborhood Parks.

Riverside Park is the City's only Community Park. Community Parks are intended to serve a larger portion of the city, up to a 2-mile radius. These are intended to be drive-to facilities and often include dedicated sports fields for team play. Riverside Park is an excellent example of this type of park. It should be noted that Community Parks also serve as a Neighborhood Park for the adjacent neighborhood, assuming facilities such as picnic shelters, play equipment and informal sports facilities such as horseshoes and volleyball are provided.

In addition to the City's existing parks, Map 1 also shows service radii for the two existing school sites (Dos Rios and Chappelow) and a proposed school site just east of 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue. School sites can be used as Neighborhood/Mini Parks but typically cannot take the place of Mini-Parks/Neighborhood Parks. This is due to the fact that school sites typically lack the picnic facilities and pre-school age play equipment these parks require. School sites should only be counted as small parks if they include these facilities and if there are agreements between the School District and the City clearly defining access/use, maintenance and liability.

## **2.4 Visual Quality**

The overall impression projected to park visitors is of a well-maintained, good quality park system that is well used. The color scheme for the play equipment is well planned and attractive to the youngsters visiting the park. One element noted at several sites is the lack of uniform litter receptacles. The department should acquire covered trash containers and permanent holders or bases upon which the containers would be placed. The variety of steel barrels, wire baskets, wooden slatted containers, etc. detracts from the overall quality of each facility. The type of containers used in the southern portion of Riverside Park are very attractive and should be adopted for use throughout the park system.

## **2.5 Accessibility**

The existing neighborhood parks can be accessed by the surrounding neighborhoods either by car, bikes or on foot. The lack of neighborhood parks and playgrounds on the western side of the City preclude many residents from walking or riding bikes to a recreational facility. The Evans Swimming Pool is located in a central location, and is reasonably accessible to all residents.

Although the department has made a good effort to make all facilities and equipment within any given park site accessible to disabled citizens, additional provisions should be made, particularly in the play equipment areas. These could include handicap accessible swings, accessible soft surfacing, transfer decks, more play events at ground level, etc. This would ensure greater compliance with the requirements of the *American with Disabilities Act (ADA)*.

## **2.6 Landscaping**

Considering the high cost for irrigation systems and water, the Department has made a good effort in appropriately landscaping the majority of its outdoor facilities. Perhaps some consideration could be given to the creation of planting beds at the entrances to the parks as budget and personnel allows. This would create an immediate positive impression upon the park visitor. Continue with tree-scaping throughout the city to maintain "Tree USA" status through the National Arbor Foundation.

## **2.7 Fixtures and Equipment**

Overall, the quality of the majority of park benches, light fixtures, play equipment, drinking fountains and picnic shelters is good. The exceptions to this statement can be noted in the individual site audits. Some of the lighting fixtures in the neighborhood parks appear to be very susceptible to vandalism and if this is an on-going problem, consideration should be given to replacing these fixtures. Play equipment for pre-school age children should be planned and

constructed in new parks and in existing parks as old equipment is replaced.

Where new chain link fencing is installed in the future, it is recommended that consideration be given to black or green vinyl

clad fencing materials. This would greatly enhance the visual quality of the facility. Consideration should be given to painting existing galvanized fence fabric and line posts either black or green for the same reason.

MAP #1: EXISTING PARKS MAP

## **2.8 Design Capacity**

The smaller neighborhood parks such as Evans Park and The Village Park are absolutely at maximum design capacity. It appears as though public demand for additional recreation opportunities within these parks has led to a very intensive array of recreational spaces and equipment at these locations.

Conversely, the master plan for Riverside Park provides for a more appropriate design capacity with a systematic approach to building these facilities.

## **2.9 Signage**

Consideration should be given to mounting parking lot signs and park regulation signs on wooden posts rather than the typical Public Works steel posts. This would add to the overall park appearance. The major signs identifying the parks are well done and appropriately framed and mounted. As more and more park regulations become effective, a greater effort should be made to consolidate the rules and regulations on one sign appropriately located within the park. Again, where practical, planting beds should surround the park identification sign. The mural on the Swimming Pool building is very attractive.

## **2.10 General Conditions and Park Cleanliness**

The Parks maintenance staff is to be commended for a fine effort in maintaining the park facilities with limited manpower and equipment. Generally speaking, the overall cleanliness and ground conditions at all of the outdoor areas are very satisfactory, although, some park benches and picnic tables are in need of repair or replacement, and there are occasional signs of vandalism. These site furnishings should be scheduled for regular maintenance by permanent and/or seasonal

staff, as time permits. Obviously, serious/dangerous damage should be addressed immediately.

## **2.11 Recommendations**

The key recommendations of this section are:

- Play equipment for pre-school age children should be planned and constructed in new parks and in existing parks as old equipment is replaced.
- Continue with tree-scaping throughout the city.
- Create planting beds at the entrances around signage to the parks as budget and personnel allows.
- When new chain link fence is installed, use black or green vinyl-clad fencing materials
- Mount parking lot signs and park regulation signs on wooden posts and consolidate the rules and regulations on one sign.
- The trash receptacles used in the southern portion of Riverside Park should be adopted for use throughout the park system.
- Site furnishings should be scheduled for regular maintenance, as time permits
- Existing play equipment should be upgraded to enhance accessibility for the disabled including handicap accessible swings, accessible soft surfacing, transfer decks, more play events at ground level, etc.

## 3 PUBLIC INPUT

Identifying the needs and desires of the citizens of Evans is one of the primary goals of the *Parks, Trails and Recreation Master Plan*. The planning process gave the public ample opportunity to comment on the plan and make suggestions. These included mail back surveys and phone surveys, focus group interviews, public meetings, and public review of the draft document and public hearings. The priorities and suggestions gained from this public input are summarized below. The recommendations described in subsequent chapters are a direct reflection of the public input process.

### 3.1 Public Opinion Survey

RRC Associates conducted a public opinion survey as an integral element of the needs identification element of the master plan. The survey was conducted May through July 2000. Current satisfaction levels with existing facilities were measured, as was the relative importance of specific new facilities needed by the community. Results from the research will help guide the development of the recreation master plan for the City of Evans.

The survey was conducted utilizing two separate methodologies: a mail back survey and a telephone survey. The mail back version was sent to a random sampling of approximately 2,000 households in the city, of which 213 completed questionnaires were returned. To further boost sample sizes and increase the accuracy of the results, an additional 159 surveys were completed by telephone. Combining the mail and telephone responses yielded a total sample size of 372 completed questionnaires. The mail and telephone surveys yielded very similar results, adding another level of confidence in the data. The Appendix contains a detailed summary of the survey results including a sample questionnaire, detailed breakdowns in graph and table form and “write-in” responses.

The survey yielded a number of responses that will be used to guide the master plan. Key findings include:

- **Current satisfaction levels** tend to run relatively high. Evans is doing a good job of meeting resident needs in the areas of parks and recreation facilities as well as programs and activities (particularly for a town its size and growth rate). Responses are somewhat lower for trails with more residents indicating unmet needs.
- **Keeping teenagers and adolescents out of trouble** clearly surfaces as an important issue throughout the survey. Residents cite “promoting activities to keep adolescents and teenagers out of trouble” as the most important recreation and parks services goal.

If You Had a \$100 to Spend on Improvements, How Would You Distribute It?

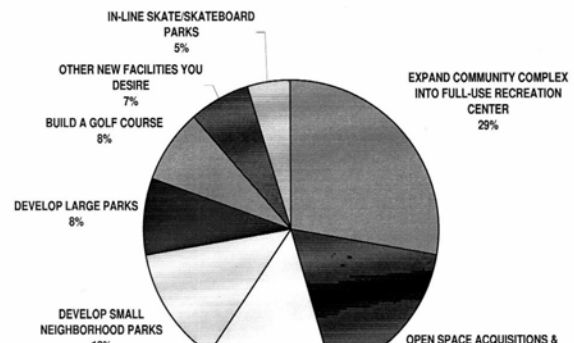


Figure 2: Distribution of funds for City improvements

- **When asked to rank the most important recreational facilities**, the results were as follows (Figures 2, 3, and 4):
  - The expansion of the Evans Community Complex with an indoor aquatic center, resource & technology center (with computer access, library, reading room), and



teen activity area is the clear “number one” improvement desired.

- Trails and bike paths, large parks for general park use, and open space acquisition were the next highest ranked facilities.
- Construction of small neighborhood parks, large parks dedicated to organized sports, and an additional outdoor pool formed the third tier of desired improvements.

- **Most important future programs desired:** youth activities, computer classes, fitness classes, after school child care, year-round swim lessons, and all day childcare.
- **Evans Parks and Recreation rates** very high for communication in reaching residents, as well as for the quality of the Community Brochure.

- **The Evans Community Complex,** specifically programs for seniors, rated the highest of the city’s recreation facilities. Evans Municipal Pool and Riverside Park athletic fields also scored well. Riverside Park trails, Riverside Park overall recreation facilities, and the Evans Historical Museum received the next highest rankings.

It should be noted that the City completed another opinion survey in April and May of this year, just prior to the survey distributed for this master plan. While only a few of the questions in that survey related to parks and recreation, the responses validated some of the data summarized in this section.

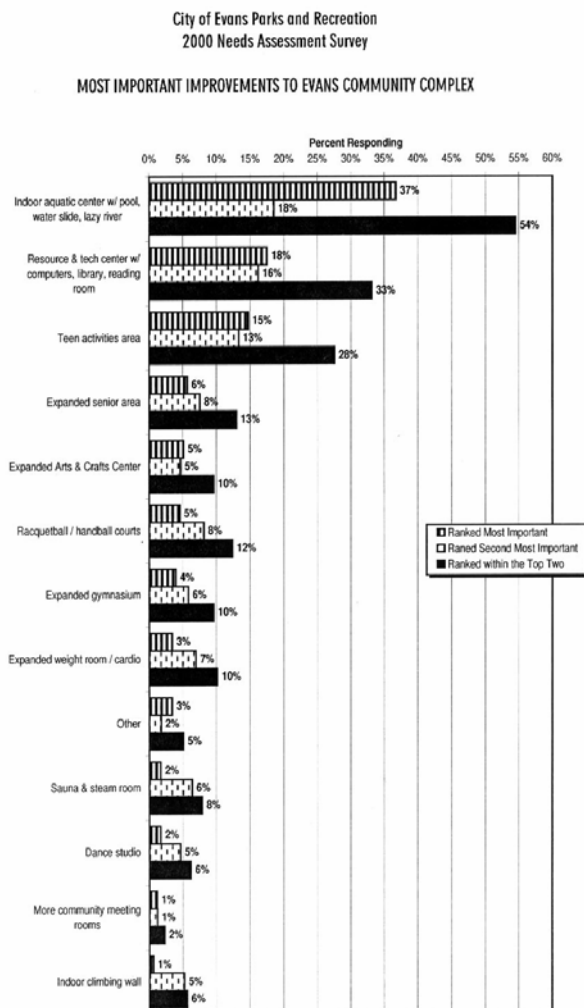


Figure 3: Improvements to Community Complex

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ige

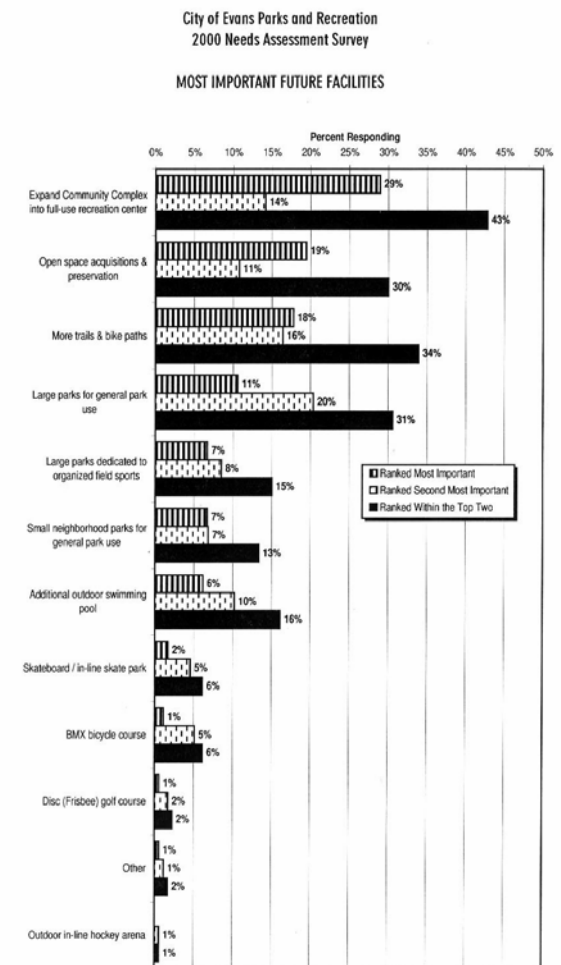


Figure 4: Importance of future facilities

- In the master plan survey, programs were either “mostly meeting the community’s needs (44%) or “Completely meeting the needs” (19%). In the April/May survey the average ranking for youth, adult and senior recreation programs was “Good” (49%) or “ Very Good” (30%), an even higher rating.
- The Evans Community Complex received a “Good” ranking (43%) with “Excellent” being selected by 33% of those responding. In the April/May survey the ECC was rated “Good” (42%) or “Excellent (45%). Both surveys showed similar rankings, with the April/May survey giving the ECC higher marks.

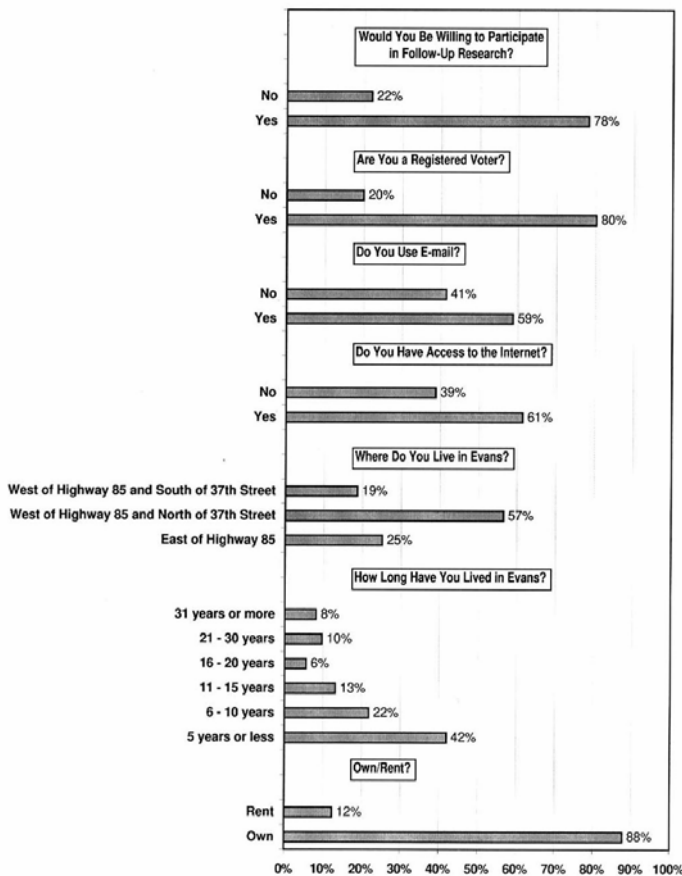
### 3.1.1 Respondent Demographic Profile

The average age of respondents was 42 years old, and the largest proportions of respondents were residents in their twenties (20 percent), thirties (30 percent), and forties (20 percent). Twelve percent were in their fifties, and 14 percent were over 60.

As a general observation, the demographic profile of respondents East of Highway 85 tends to be older (average age of 44), longer length of residency (14 years), and consists of more empty nesters (26 percent) and fewer family profiles (42 percent). Residents West of Highway 85 are correspondingly younger, consisting of more families with shorter length of residency in the area, clearly reflecting the construction of new homes on the west side of town. As such, consistent with its younger family profile, support for new improvements/facilities tends to be strongest among residents living West of Highway 85 (and North of 37<sup>th</sup> Street); the largest percentages of responses of “definitely/probably not needed” for the various improvements comes from residents East of Highway 85. Support is still strong East of Highway 85; it’s just not as strong or enthusiastic as compared to residents West of Highway 85.

The largest proportion of respondents have kids at home (51 percent—43 percent are couples with children plus 8 percent are single with children), followed by those whose children are grown and no longer living at home (“empty nesters”—20 percent), singles without children (17 percent), and couples without children (13 percent). Respondents who did have kids were especially likely to have one or two children (77 percent combined).

Respondent Characteristics



Respondent Demographic Characteristics

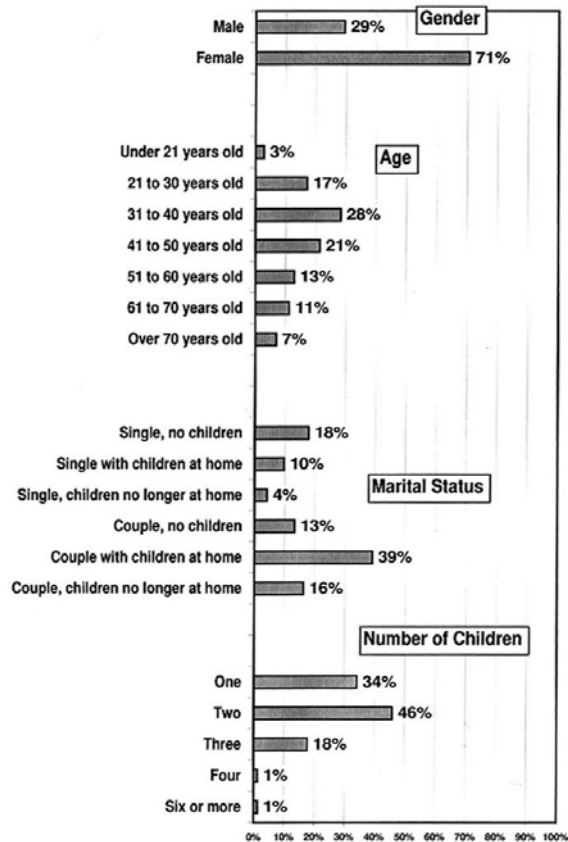


Figure 6: The characteristics of respondents were diverse

Figure 5: Demographic numbers for respondents

Respondents have lived in Evans approximately eleven years, on average, and a majority (85 percent) own their home (15 percent rent). Forty-four percent have lived in Evans five years or less. Based on the survey data, the largest proportion of respondents lives West of Highway 85 and North of 37<sup>th</sup> Street (53 percent), followed by residents East of Highway 85 (26 percent), and those who live West of Highway 85 and South of 37<sup>th</sup> Street (21 percent).

### 3.1.2 Current Recreation Patterns

Overall, 89 percent of residents surveyed said they currently use parks, recreation facilities, and/or programs in Evans. This compares to 82 percent among residents East of Highway 85, and 91 to 95 percent of residents West of

Two-thirds of residents have used both Riverside Park (66 percent) and Evans City Park (63 percent) in the last twelve months. More than half have been to the Evans Community Complex (56 percent). The same percentage (56 percent) has used the trails at Riverside Park. Between 40 and 50 percent have used picnic shelters and pavilions in the city, Evans Municipal Pool, Village Park, and the fishing lake at Riverside Park. All other facilities have usage levels below 40 percent, and as low as 15 percent for the Denver Street Playground and 18 percent for Green Meadows Park. It is worth noting that 28% of residents have been to Gimmetstad Memorial Park in the last twelve months (City of

## Park Systems Improvements

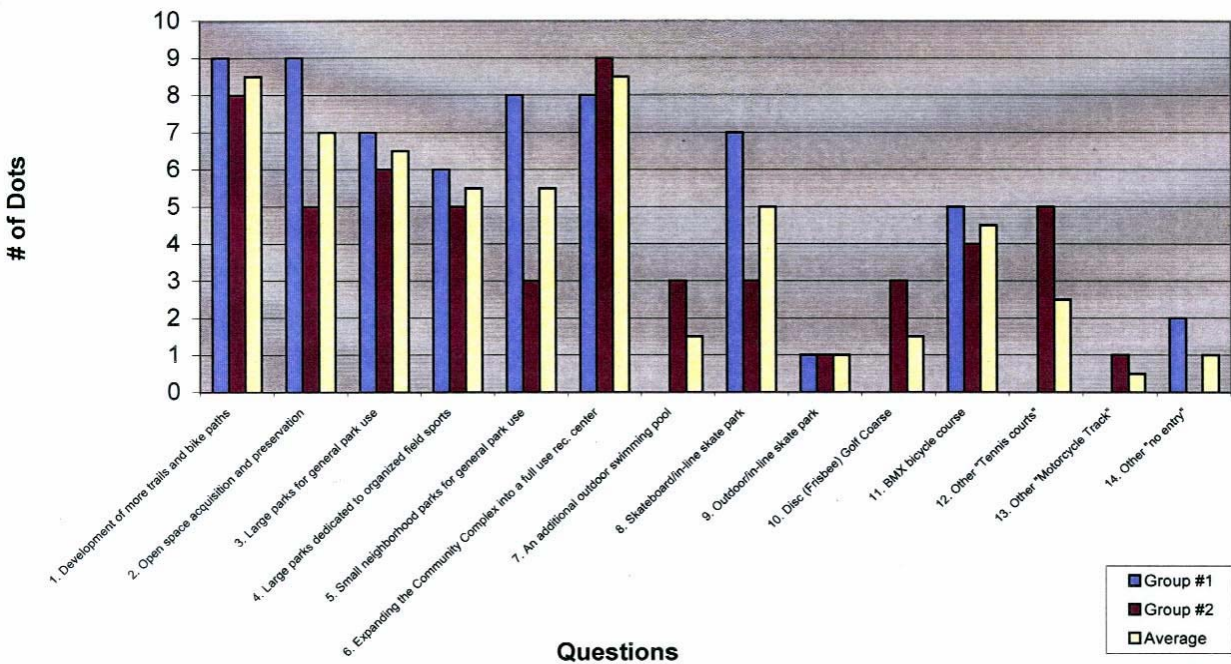


Figure 7: A list of possible improvements for the City's park system

Highway 85. The largest segment of respondents (62 percent) use city facilities one to three times per month (or less). Twenty-eight percent are relatively frequent users, using facilities at least 1 or 2 times a week (14 percent use facilities three or more times per week).

Greeley) due to its proximity to Evans.

Generally speaking, residents living West of Highway 85 are more likely to use City facilities, as compared to residents East of Highway 85 (except for Riverside Park and Evans City Park, which has similar utilization rates on both sides of the highway). An

interesting pattern to note is the relative barrier of Highway 85. Residents East of it are less likely to venture West of the highway to use recreation facilities while residents living West of Highway 85 frequently use facilities East of the highway. One of the comments noted in the data was a need for better pedestrian access across Highway 85, perhaps an overpass footbridge or pedestrian tunnel.

### **3.2 Focus Groups**

Focus groups were used to further quantify the residents' needs and concerns. A focus group is a structured discussion that is held with a small group of randomly selected citizens as well as invited representatives of groups or teams who typically use the parks. Personal invitations were sent out to individuals recommended by staff, City Council and the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Understandably, the opinions raised during the focus group meetings represent only a small segment of public opinion. However, the scripted nature of these sessions can identify attitudes and values regarding parks and recreation in a way an opinion survey will not allow. Two focus groups were conducted during the master plan process. Some of the questions used in the opinion survey were repeated, as well as a series of new questions. The focus groups were composed of two groups of nine adult residents. The eighteen citizens who attended included the full range of Evans demographic profile, from young adults to retirees (residents under voting age were represented by the parents in the group). Length of residency ranged from 1 to 17 years. The majority had children at home, while a number were empty nesters. Two to three of those attending were single parents.

Where questions from the opinion survey were posed to the focus group participants, the responses were similar.

- The focus groups' most desired parks system improvements (Figure 7) were "more trails and bike paths", "open space acquisition and preservation" and "large parks for general park use". In the survey, the top three choices were identical, further validating these rankings.
- When the focus group participants were asked to rank their choices for improvements to the Evans Community Complex, "an indoor aquatics center", "racquetball/handball courts" and "teen activities area" were one, two and three respectively. In the opinion survey the aquatics area ranked first with the teen center second; once again very similar. The key difference was that racquetball/handball ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the opinion survey with "expanding the weight room/cardio area" getting the third ranking. This probably reflects the personal interest of the focus group participants in racquetball/handball.
- Other notable comments from the focus groups included a need for drinking fountain/restrooms at Riverside Park, opening the weight/cardio room earlier in the morning, more programming for older children and teens and a high rating for the City's parks maintenance and programming.

### **3.3 Public Meetings**

As a part of the master plan process, a series of public meetings were held along with presentations to City Council and the Parks and Recreation Commission. These meetings were designed to provide everyone in the community with an interest in parks and recreation an opportunity to speak. Not every meeting was well attended by the public, but the input that was received has contributed to the recommendations of the master plan.

One issue raised in both the focus groups and the Parks Commission meetings was the need for restrooms in parks. Everyone seemed to agree restrooms were needed in the City's parks. But there was concern expressed about the cost of constructing and maintaining restrooms, relative to the need. While no consensus was reached, most seemed to agree that some type of restroom should be planned in future city parks and, if possible, they should have running water.

It is also important to note that when the results of the public opinion survey and focus groups were presented in a public forum, the results were typically not questioned. Past experience on other master plans has shown that if the responses did not ring true with an individual's sense of the community's priorities, the rankings would have been challenged. This further bolsters the confidence in the quality of the public input received during the master plan.

### **3.4 Key Findings**

The key findings of the public input process are:

- Evans is doing a good job of meeting resident needs in the areas of parks and recreation facilities as well as programs and activities.
- Keeping teenagers and adolescents out of trouble clearly surfaces as an important issue throughout the survey

- Expansion of the Evans Community Complex with an indoor aquatic center, resource & technology center and a teen activity area is the clear "number one" improvement desired
- Most important future programs were youth activities, computer classes, fitness classes, after school child care, year-round swim lessons, and all day childcare.
- The Evans Community Complex and specifically, programs for seniors rated the highest of the city's recreation facilities
- Evans Parks and Recreation rates very high for communication in reaching residents.
- There is a need for drinking fountain/restrooms at Riverside Park.
- Better pedestrian access across Highway 85, (an overpass footbridge or pedestrian tunnel) is needed.
- Upgrade existing restrooms where necessary and provide restrooms in each new park (except mini-parks).

## 4 BENCHMARK SURVEY OF COMPARABLE CITIES

In order to better understand the effectiveness of the programs and services offered by the City of Evans, a comparison was made with five similar communities: Ft. Morgan, Woodland Park, Craig Windsor and Cortez. These cities were selected because they have similar demographic and economic profiles and represent a cross section of cities across the state. The purpose of this analysis is to determine if Evans is providing its residents with recreation programs and facilities in a manner that is appropriate and cost effective. The best way to make this determination is to look at other communities with similar demographic and economic characteristics. Another goal of this analysis is to learn new ways of serving the community.

Detailed questionnaires were sent to the benchmark communities to review revenue sources, staffing levels, types of facilities maintained and operated, size of the park system and the administrative practices of the departments canvassed. All responses were based on the last full year (1999), and do not reflect any departmental or staffing changes which occurred in the last nine months. Detailed summaries of the responses are included in the Appendix.

### 4.1 Pricing Strategies

Pricing strategies involved an evaluation of the price elasticity of each of the program fee areas, based on the following criteria:

- Cost of the program divided by the number of classes, games and/or hours against the other benchmark providers.
- Subsidy levels for each program area based on the direct and indirect costs.
- Evans' pricing practice against the national trends.

#### 4.1.1 Adult Athletic Leagues

Slow-pitch Softball - Cost per game for teams fluctuated from a low cost of \$20 per game in Craig, to a high cost of \$48 per game for a

team in Windsor. Evans team cost per game is \$37.50, which is in the median range.

Basketball - A low cost of \$17 per game for a team was recorded by Ft. Morgan, with a high cost per team of \$49 noted in Woodland Park; Evans has an average cost of \$30 per team per game that again falls in the median sector.

Indoor Volleyball - A range from \$7 per team per game to \$21 per team was noted, with Evans charging the highest fee of \$21.

#### 4.1.2 Youth Sports Leagues

Soccer - The cost per person per game to participate in youth soccer ranged from a low of \$2 per game in Cortez to a high of \$4 per game in Woodland Park. Non-profit groups provide soccer programs in the Evans area. It should be noted that a youth soccer program was started by the City of Evans in the fall of 2000.

Basketball - The cost for a young person to play in organized basketball leagues ranged from a low of \$1.75 per game in Ft. Morgan to a high of \$4.50 in Woodland Park. The cost per Evans participant is approximately \$2.50 per game.

Softball - The cost per participant per game ranged from a low of \$2 in Craig to a high of \$5 in Windsor. Evans charge is in the upper-end of the scale at \$4.50.

T-Ball - Cost ranged from \$2 per game per participant in Evans, to \$4.50 in Windsor.

Volleyball - None of the cities surveyed conduct youth volleyball leagues. It should be noted that a youth volleyball program was

started by the City of Evans in the fall of 2000.

#### **4.1.3 Outdoor Facility Rentals**

Softball Diamond (unlighted) - Most cities reported a rental cost per day in the range of \$65 to \$100, with Cortez charging a very low fee of \$25. The charge in Evans is \$75 per day.

Softball Diamond (lighted) - Additional charges above the fee for an unlighted field ranged from \$15 per hour to \$35 per hour. Evans does not operate any lighted softball or baseball diamonds.

Soccer Field - Craig was the only city reporting a charge for soccer. The fees ranged from \$40 a day for youth play to \$65 for adults and \$100 for non-resident rentals.

Outdoor Pool - The cost per hour for pool rentals ranged from a low cost of \$50 in Cortez to a high cost of \$87.50 in Evans.

Picnic Shelter - The average per day cost was approximately \$25, with Evans charging \$20 to \$30, depending upon shelter location and size.

#### **4.1.4 Indoor Facility Rentals**

Recreation Center - Ft. Morgan and Evans were the only cities with recreation center operations. Ft. Morgan charges \$125 per day for rental of the gymnasium and Evans charges \$65 per hour for the use of its gymnasium.

#### **4.1.5 Special Facilities Fees**

Outdoor Pool - Evans charges slightly lower daily fees (\$1.50) for youth ages 6-17 than other cities that average between \$2.00 and \$2.50. Adult fees ranged from a low of \$1.50 in Ft. Morgan to a high of \$3.00 in Craig and Windsor. Senior fees ranged from free (Craig) to \$2.50 (Windsor and Cortez). Evans fee for seniors is \$1.50 per day.

Multi-visit passes for pool use - Considering that the general operating season for outdoor

pools is a maximum of 90 days, the Evans multi-visit pass charges of \$18.75 for 15 visits and \$30 for 30 visits equates to a seasonal charge for youth of approximately \$90, if used on an every day basis. This compares to a seasonal charge range of \$24 in Ft. Morgan to \$90 in Windsor. The adult range is from a low of \$36 in Ft. Morgan to a high of \$110 in Windsor. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the Evans charges for multi-visit passes are well within the range of comparable cities.

Recreation Centers - The fees charged in Ft. Morgan and Evans (the only two cities with recreation centers) are very comparable.

#### **4.2 Recreation Facilities within Communities**

Outdoor Pools - Craig and Ft. Morgan operate two outdoor pools while Evans, Windsor and Cortez reported one operating pool.

Golf Courses - Ft. Morgan and Cortez are the only reporting cities operating an 18-hole golf course.

Recreation Centers - Only Evans and Ft. Morgan have a recreation center operation.

Soccer Fields - Cortez operates and maintains 8 soccer fields for youth and the other cities offer 2 to 4 fields (Evans). Most cities reported 1 soccer field available for adult play.

Softball Fields - Evans provides 4 fields for adult play and 1 field for youth play, while other cities have 2 or 3 fields available to adults and 1 field for youth play (exception being Windsor with 3 youth fields).

Tennis Courts - Ft. Morgan and Cortez offer 8 courts while Craig, Woodland Park and Evans provide 2 courts to their constituents.

Volleyball Courts - all cities operate one or more courts.

Trails - Evans reported 2.5 miles of trails, as did Ft. Morgan. Cortez and Woodland Park have 4 miles of trails, Windsor 5 miles, while Craig does not provide any public trails.

Skateparks - Ft. Morgan, Cortez, Woodland Park and Craig operate skateparks, while Windsor and Ft. Morgan provide in line skating rinks. Evans does not operate either facility.

#### **4.2.1 Parks**

Total park acreage reported was: Ft. Morgan (269), Cortez (201), Evans (104), Craig (100), Woodland Park (63), and Windsor (46). Park acres maintained in each city ranged from a low of 32 in Windsor to a high of 125 in Cortez. Evans maintains 34 active acres of parkland. Individual parks provided by each city ranged from a low of 3 in Evans to a high of 10 in Woodland Park. The number of playgrounds reported ranged from 3 in Woodland Park to 6 in four other cities. Evans has 4 playgrounds. Only Evans and Woodland Park have cemetery maintenance responsibility.

#### **4.3 City Facilities Used by Schools**

City owned facilities are used by all school districts except in Woodland Park

##### **4.3.1 School Facilities Used by Cities**

All cities reported the use of school facilities for the provision of recreation programs.

##### **4.3.2 City/School Written Agreements**

Four of the six cities surveyed have a written agreement for cooperative use of facilities. Evans and Craig do not have such an instrument, and consequently do not have guaranteed priority use of school facilities.

#### **4.4 User Groups**

All cities reported that they provide maintenance and some support services to outside groups utilizing park facilities.

##### **4.4.1 User Group Charges**

Evans and Cortez are the only cities not charging outside groups for the use of park facilities. All other cities reported revenues of up to \$10,000 for facility uses. Likewise, Evans and Craig do not have a written fee policy for user groups while the other cities do.

##### **4.4.2 Cost Recovery Percentages**

Swimming Pools - Cost recovered from fees ranged from a low of 50% in Craig to a high of 89% in Evans.

Program Costs - Most cities appear to recover approximately 50% of the cost for youth recreation programs and approximately 100% of adult program costs.

#### **4.5 Parks and Recreation Staffing Levels**

Administration - All cities reported having two full-time administrative employees except Evans and Woodland Park, which have one.

Recreation Staff - Evans has two full-time recreation employees and one senior coordinator. Three other cities have one or two full time recreation staff.

Parks Maintenance Staff - Ft. Morgan has a high of 8 full-time employees, Cortez and Woodland Park have 6 and Evans has two full-time employees in parks and two custodians at the Recreation Center. *(Note: in August of 2000, a third full-time parks employee was added)*

#### **4.6 Annual Budget and Revenue**

Annual Operations Budget Comparisons:

- Cortez reported the largest operating budget of \$1,664,657
- Ft. Morgan was at \$943,000,
- Windsor at \$855,448,
- Woodland Park at \$605,402, and
- Craig at \$759,925.



- The 1999 operating budget for Evans was \$603,871.

Revenue Production – Revenue from all fees in each city were::

- Cortez - \$437,806,
- Windsor - \$235,250,
- Woodland Park - \$205,602,
- Evans - \$187,263,
- Craig - \$126,961, and
- Ft. Morgan - \$45,000.

#### 4.7 Capital Budget

All cities reported having long-range capital budgets of five years duration, with most cities having a one-year allocation of actual funds. Sources of capital expenditures ranged from General Obligation Bonds to Dedication Fees and Sales Taxes. All cities reported some allocation from the Conservation Trust Fund.

#### 4.8 Maintenance Operations

All cities appear to have limited written policies pertaining to parks maintenance. Most have policies related to playground safety inspections and general maintenance procedures.

Three of the six cities mow grass on a weekly basis and three on a twice-weekly basis.

Trash pick-up occurs daily in four cities and twice weekly in the remaining cities.

Most departments have responsibility for maintaining boulevards and median strips as well as public building grounds maintenance. The percentage of time spent on these non-traditional functions ranged from 5% in Craig to 20% in Evans and Woodland Park.

Four cities out-source (contract) some of the park maintenance responsibilities, with tree maintenance and herbicide spraying the most prevalent contracts. Expenditures for contract

maintenance fell into the \$10,000 to \$25,000 range.

All cities reported that they allowed dogs within their parks.

#### 4.9 Key Observations and Recommendations

**Adult Sports Fees** – Evans is at, or slightly above, the market rate for the comparable cities. Nationally, departments attempt to recover 100% of all direct and indirect costs for adult recreation programs. Staff may desire to do a full activity based costing of adult sports program expenses to determine the level of fees to be charged if full cost recovery is a continuing desired objective.

**Youth Sports Fees** – It appears as though there may be some price elasticity (ability to increase fees) in the area of youth basketball and youth t-ball, with Evans charges being at or below the median for comparable cities.

**Outdoor Facility Rentals** – Evans is at the high end of the outdoor pool rental fee range. Other cities’ pool rental charges range from a low of \$30/hour to a high \$63/hour with Evans’ hourly rate at \$87.50/hour.

**The softball field rental rates** present an opportunity for raising the hourly charge \$10-15 per hour, depending upon a review of actual expenses to maintain the fields and to administer the fee program.

**Indoor Facility Rentals** – With only two reporting cities operating recreation centers, a true comparison of rental charges was not adequate to establish bona-fide comparisons.

**Special Facility Operations** – Evans has been extremely successful in recovering 89% of its swimming pool operating costs while other cities reported a range of 50% to 75%.

**Program Costs Recovered Through Fees and Charges** – The Evans Parks and Recreation Department does not currently

have an activity based accounting system, which would allow it to track actual staff and logistical costs for each specific program offered. The City’s finance department establishes the accounting requirements for each department and, as of this report, has not recognized the need for a more detailed accounting system. The department could establish a sample activity based accounting system, in a non-official manner, to periodically track any given activity or program. This methodology would, however, require additional staff time and may not be desirable. The department currently has the ability to track all costs for senior programs and the aquatics program, which has undoubtedly influenced the high cost recovery rates for these programs. Perhaps the finance department may be willing to expand this type of cost accounting to other program areas.

**Recreation and Park Facilities** – While the specific Level-of-service goals for Evans are discussed in another section of this Master Plan, some general observations resulting from the Benchmark Survey would include:

- Evans is one of two cities providing a Recreation Center for the citizens of the community, a key component of a high quality recreation system.
- Evans would appear to be lacking in the provision of neighborhood parks and playgrounds, when compared to the other cities surveyed.
- Evans, with the recent addition of Riverside Park, provides sufficient softball fields for youth and adults.
- Consideration should be given to the development of additional soccer facilities for both adults and youth.
- Consideration should be given to the provision of in-line skating facilities, either in the form of a skatepark or a skating rink.
- The current provision of two tennis courts may need to be increased by

two to four additional courts, considering population growth.

- Expanded neighborhood parks should be considered, particularly in the western portion of the city.

**Parks and Recreation Staffing Levels** –

Evans, while having sufficient full-time staff for its recreation center operation, appears somewhat deficient in full-time personnel for its parks maintenance operation. Comparing the number of acres of active park land being maintained in each community surveyed, the following ratios of manpower levels was noted:

Windsor: One full-time maintenance person per 6.4

acres

Ft. Morgan: One full-time maintenance person per

5.75 acres

Cortez: One full-time maintenance person per 11.36

acres

Woodland Park: One full-time maintenance person

per 5.12 acres

Craig: One full-time maintenance person per 10

acres

Evans: One full-time maintenance person per 11.3

acres

Considering that the average acreage maintained per worker is 8.32, including a high proportion of higher maintenance athletic fields, it can be logically concluded that Evans’ **full-time maintenance staff should be increased by a minimum of one full-time worker, additional part-time hours and a parks superintendent.**

Annual Budget and Revenue – When comparing the total operating budget for each city to the population base served, the following cost -per-capita is noted:

(See Table 2 below)

surveyed.

Therefore, the Evans per-capita expenditure of \$71 is the lowest of the five cities

*Table 2: Comparable City Analysis*

<b><u>City</u></b>	<b><u>Population</u></b>	<b><u>1999 Operating Budget</u></b>	<b><u>Cost –per-Capita</u></b>
<i>Windsor</i>	10,000	\$855,448	\$85
<i>Ft. Morgan</i>	12,000	\$943,000	\$78
<i>Cortez</i>	9,000	\$1,664,657	\$185
<i>Woodland Park</i>	7,500	\$605,402	\$81
<i>Craig</i>	10,000	\$759,925	\$76
<i>Evans</i>	8,500	\$603,871	\$71*
* In order to keep the comparison consistent, the third full-time parks employee Evans added in August of 2000 is not included			

# 5 PROPOSED PARKS PLAN

## 5.1 Existing Level -Of - Service

A level-of-service (LOS) is the ratio of parks or facilities to the population and is expressed in the form of facilities-per-thousand population (e.g. 3.0 acres of neighborhood parks for every 1,000 residents). Since a LOS analysis is population based, it relies on the demographic profile of Evans presented in Section 1.2 and last official population estimate (1999) of 8,580. For the purpose of accuracy, we have estimated an increase in population of 4% for 2000, making the estimate 8,900. As these population projections are modified by the year 2000 census and other subsequent population updates, the following LOS will need to be updated.

Defining levels-of-service for park facilities is based on the concept of setting standards for public facilities to assure adequate capacity. Initially, city planners and engineers set minimum service standards for public utilities, police and fire protection. School districts also adopted this philosophy to establish service areas for schools. Park planners then began to quantify the minimum number of parks and park facilities required

to adequately serve the population. Using LOS as a basis for comparison allows for a more detailed evaluation of the park system than the National Parks and Recreation Association's (NRPA) historic standard for 10 acres of parks and open space for every 1,000 people. While the NRPA now recommends setting standards based on surveying levels of use for parks and park facilities, such an

Table 3: Existing Level-of-Service numbers are not only important for planning, but also for projecting growth

EXISTING LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS) ANALYSIS				Table 3
City of Evans June 2, 2000				
	Park Type	Developed Acres	Undeveloped Acres	Acres per 1,000 pop.*
<b>COMMUNITY PARKS</b>				
Riverside Park	Community	22.00		2.47
<b>Community Park Totals</b>				
Developed		22.00		2.47
Undeveloped			0.00	0.00
<b>Total: Developed/Undeveloped</b>			<b>22.00</b>	<b>2.47</b>
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS</b>				
Aschroft Park Site	Neighborhood		10.00	1.12
City Park	Neighborhood	3.30		0.37
City Shop Site	Neighborhood		5.00	0.56
Riverside Park**	Neighborhood	3.00		0.34
Village Park	Neighborhood	3.30		0.37
<b>Neighborhood Park Totals</b>				
Developed		9.60		1.08
Undeveloped			15.00	1.69
<b>Developed/Undeveloped</b>			<b>24.60</b>	<b>2.76</b>
<b>MINI PARKS</b>				
Denver Street Playground	Mini Park	0.07		0.01
<b>Mini Park Totals</b>				
Developed		0.07		0.01
Undeveloped			0.00	0.00
<b>Developed/Undeveloped</b>			<b>0.07</b>	<b>0.01</b>
<b>Current City-wide LOS Total</b>				
Developed		28.67		3.22
Undeveloped			15.00	1.69
<b>City-wide Developed/Undeveloped</b>			<b>46.67</b>	<b>4.91</b>

\* Level-of-service ratios are based on the current estimate 8,900 for Evans

\*\* Riverside Park serves both as a community park and a neighborhood park for the residents in the immediate area. To avoid being double-counted the neighborhood park acres for Riverside Park above are not counted in the city-wide total.

evaluation is typically beyond the means of small communities such as Evans. Therefore, the LOS recommendations contained in this master plan are based on the input of the community and the observations of the Parks and Recreation Commission and staff.

### 5.1.1 Analysis of Existing LOS

In the following table (Table 3), the LOS has been computed for Neighborhood and Community Parks (a description of the parkland classifications is covered in Section 5.2). The LOS for individual facilities such as tennis courts, softball fields, etc., is calculated separately. Other facilities such as District or Regional Parks only apply to large cities and have not been included in the LOS calculations for Evans. It should be noted that a LOS calculation is based on developed parkland and open space or natural areas. Therefore, the Fishing Pond and the surrounding natural area at Riverside Park have not been included in the LOS analysis for Evans.

The following observation can be made regarding the existing level-of-service for parks in Evans:

- Riverside Park is the only Community Park in Evans at this time. The 22 acres of developed parkland, including the four ball fields and one full-size soccer field (with four youth soccer fields cross-striped), is currently meeting the majority of the recreation needs for the community at 2.47 acres/1,000. Most communities use a 2.0 to 3.0 acres / 1,000 ration for Community Parks, so this LOS is in the acceptable range. However, the current level of use and shortage of un-programmed open turf areas indicate a need for additional Community Parks land in Evans. The City does not currently own any undeveloped land that is suitable for a Community Park.
- There are two existing Neighborhood Parks in Evans: City Park and Village Park. In addition, a portion of Riverside Park (assumed to be 3.0

acres) serves as a Neighborhood Park for the residents who live nearby. This results in a total of 9.60 acres of Neighborhood Parks and a LOS of 1.08 acres / 1,000. This figure is significantly lower than the 2.5 to 3.5-acres/1,000 ratio most communities use as an acceptable ratio for neighborhood parks.

- There are 10.0 acres of undeveloped Neighborhood Park land at the Ashcroft Park Site and another 5.0 acres at the City Shop Site. If these sites are developed, the LOS for Neighborhood Parks would be 2.86 acres / 1,000, much closer to the standard.
- There is one Mini-park in Evans, the Denver Street Playground. This is a very small park site and can only serve the immediate neighborhood. Because of its small size it only makes a minor contribution to the total LOS calculation.
- The total LOS for developed parkland in Evans is 3.22 acres. This is well below the typical standard of 5.5 to 6.5 acres / 1,000 most communities use. The majority of the shortfall is in the area of Neighborhood Park / Mini Parks. Even if all the undeveloped park sites are constructed, the LOS would still only reach 5.08 acres / 1,000. This shortage of parkland in Evans was verified by the public input, especially the focus groups.
- Another aspect of the existing LOS is distribution. If the LOS for Neighborhood Parks/Mini Parks were broken down by area, the area east of Highway 85 would be very well served, while there would be a severe shortage west of Highway 85. This unequal distribution for Neighborhood Parks should be addressed.

## 5.2 Proposed LOS

As a part of the public input and the Parks Commission/staff review, the adequacy of the current level-of-service in Evans was carefully examined. As this evaluation progressed, it became clear that the current LOS is not meeting the needs of the community and that new LOS targets should be established. The proposed LOS for Community and Neighborhood/Mini Parks is based on the demand for parkland observed by the Parks and Recreation Commission and staff, the input from the public in the focus groups and surveys, the experience of other similar communities and the experience of the master plan consultant team.

The Sports Complex is falling just short of meeting the current level of use for organize sports. Most of the programmed sports activities can be accommodated at the park, but the facility is currently at capacity with no room to grow. Additional parkland is also needed to address the need for un-programmed turf activities such as practices and pick-up soccer, football, etc. The consensus was that the 2.47 acres/1,00 LOS provided by the Sports Complex was meeting approximately 90% of the city's current need for Community Parks. Therefore, the recommendation was to raise the LOS for Community Parks by 10% to 2.75 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents. The shortage of Neighborhood/Mini Parks is more acute. The 1.08 acres/1,000 was identified as a serious shortfall in the analysis of the existing park system. This was borne out by the input received from the public, especially in the focus groups. The most serious shortage for parks is on the west side of town and the northeastern corner of the city. At least six new Neighborhood and Mini parks are needed just to serve the current population. If these six parks were constructed at an average of 5.0 acres each, an additional 30 acres of parkland would be available, resulting in a LOS of 4.45 acres/1,000. Since many of these new areas are not fully built-out, the current population number of 8,900 is low. This means the LOS should be adjusted downward, reflecting the

additional residents that would be added from the build-out in these emerging residential areas. The consensus was that a target LOS for Evans for Neighborhood/Mini Parks was more appropriate at 3.0 acres/per 1,000 residents. This is consistent with the typical ratio of neighborhood and mini-parks many smaller communities have set for these types of parks.

## 5.3 Where Are New Parks Needed?

Planning for new parks in Evans requires an analysis of where new residential development is likely to occur. It is also important to understand where commercial and industrial development will happen, as parks will not be a priority in these areas. Map 2 shows where residential development is expected in the next ten to fifteen years and where the commercial and industrial zoned land can be found.

### 5.3.1 Where Will Growth Occur?

The majority of the new residential development will occur west of 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. Areas of higher density will occur between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue, south of 37<sup>th</sup> Street, in the Tuscany development area, on the southeast and northwest corners of 37<sup>th</sup> Street and 47<sup>th</sup> Street north of Ashcroft Draw. Lower density development will occur northwest of 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 37<sup>th</sup> Street and northwest of the intersection of 49<sup>th</sup> Street and 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue. New park construction should be focused in these areas.

Commercial/industrial development will continue to be focused on either side of Highway 85, south of 32<sup>nd</sup> Street between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Avenues and along both sides of 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue. These zones should be low priority areas for future neighborhood parks.

### 5.3.2 New Community Parks

The Existing/Proposed Parks with Service Areas Map (Map 3) shows the addition of a second Community park in Evans. This 20 to 30 acre park can be located anywhere in the vicinity

of 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Ashcroft Draw and it will adequately serve the west side of town. Because Riverside Park is focused on meeting the needs of organized sports in the community, this park should be planned to include more un-programmed open turf area. Only 25% to 35% of the park should be dedicated to organized sports.

### **5.3.3 New Neighborhood Parks**

The locations of Neighborhood Parks are also shown on Map 3. A number of these future park sites are already owned by the City or will soon be dedicated as a part of a proposed development. These include:

- The Vaughn Park Site is a 5.0-acre parcel southwest of the existing City Shops on 40<sup>th</sup> Street. The City is currently negotiating to purchase this parcel. It could help meet the needs of the residents south of 37<sup>th</sup> Street and west of the Evans Ditch. The parks maintenance shops site, city shops site and this new park should be master planned together to maintain appropriate linkages.
- The Sears Farm Park Site will be dedicated when the subdivision is platted. This site is located in the center of the proposed subdivision just north of 42<sup>nd</sup> Street/Prairie View Drive and will serve the new homes north of Prairie View Drive. A park owned and operated by a private homeowners association will serve homes to the south.
- Another 10.0-acre neighborhood park will be dedicated in the Ashcroft Subdivision, which is north of 37<sup>th</sup> Street between 35<sup>th</sup> and 47<sup>th</sup> Avenues.
- A Mini-Park can be constructed in the detention area on the northwest corner of 37<sup>th</sup> Street and Harbor Lane. This park could serve the needs of the Bay at the Landings Subdivision. A Mini-Park is adequate to serve this neighborhood as the north half of the area is zoned commercial.
- There is an existing Weld County Park in the Carriage Estates Subdivision that is east of 35<sup>th</sup> Street. The Horii Farm property just to the east of this subdivision up to 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue is also being subdivided. The City should seek a parkland dedication adjacent to the existing county park to maximize the benefit the two parks could provide. This park could be a Neighborhood Park.

Map #2: Growth Patterns/Commercial  
Industrial Zones



Map #3: Existing/Proposed Parks with  
Service Areas

- Tuscany I has a series of mini parks planned (well head setback areas) that will be dedicated to the City. It will also include an elementary school site. A portion of this school site may be credited toward the neighborhood park requirement.
- Tuscany II will require a neighborhood park per the City's standards.
- When the new Community Park is constructed on the west side of town, it will also serve as a Neighborhood Park for the residents in the Tuscany III Subdivision.
- Another future Mini-Park site is shown in the Neville's Crossing Subdivision northwest of 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 49<sup>th</sup> Street. Once again the land for this park will be dedicated, at final plat. This mini park could be paired with the proposed equestrian center and would be adequate to serve this large-lot subdivision.
- A Neighborhood Park is called for east of Highway 85 and north of 37<sup>th</sup> Street. This older neighborhood is currently underserved as all of the existing eastside parks are south of 37<sup>th</sup> Street, a major arterial for the city.
- Other service radii are shown for future neighborhood parks. These sites are lower priority, based on the projected growth for the 10-15 year life of this plan. They would only be developed if growth patterns change.
- There are approximately 100 oil wellheads and tank batteries in the undeveloped land of the planning area.
- A 150' setback for habitable structures is required from all wellheads and a 300' setback is required from all tank batteries. At 1.62 per wellhead, this translates into +/- 160 acres of open land that will need a minimal level of maintenance. (This would nearly double the amount of parkland shown on the Master Plan if all of the potential park sites are developed). If the Parks Department accepts maintenance for all of these sites, it would be in addition to the parkland and detention basins it is already responsible for maintaining.
- Historically, developers have counted this land as open space and, in some cases, parkland. While some of the setbacks may be used as parkland, there are limitations that must be considered.
- Unless the setback area is associated with a park, the subdivision's homeowner's association should always maintain it.
- Although park uses (open turf areas and walkways) are compatible with these setback areas, structures such as playground and picnic shelters should not be built within the setback area.
- The City will need clear policies for accepting any oil facilities setback areas as parkland and for the maintenance of these areas.

#### **5.3.4 Oil Extraction Facilities**

One condition unique to Evans is the number of oil wells, wellheads and tank batteries found across the City. A number of companies have oil extraction facilities in Evans including Patina Oil and HS Resources. Map 4 shows the existing oil extraction facilities in Evans and its growth area. This map makes it is very clear that there are a large number of these facilities that must be accounted for in the parks plan. The setbacks for the wellheads will create a pattern of open space across Evans that will provide a relief from development, which is beneficial. But, they also have the potential to create a long-term maintenance problem if the City is responsible for maintaining them.

#### **5.4 Dedication Ordinance**

While the City of Evans has a Park Impact Fee, a formal park dedication ordinance has not been adopted. This means that as new homes are planned and constructed in the Evans' growth area, neither the developer nor the City has a clear expectation of what will be required. If there is to be adequate park land available to new residents as Evans grows, a dedication ordinance will be needed.

This will assure that new development is, at a minimum, meeting the basic recreation needs of the residents who will live in these new homes.

The first step in establishing a parkland dedication ordinance is to review the current Park Impact Fee. Is the fee currently being collected adequate to construct the new parks that new residents need? The following analysis will determine the cost to the taxpayers for building new parks.

The City of Evans currently requires a \$1,300 Park Impact Fee for each new unit constructed (raised from \$900 July 1, 2000). The process in determining if this fee is adequate is to establish how many dwelling units are needed to generate 1,000 people and a cost per dwelling unit for the acres of

Map #4: Existing/Proposed Parks with Oil Wells

parkland 1,000 residents will require. The following method is used to establish the number of dwelling units for 1,000 people.

Number of Dwelling Units per 1,000 Population		
Residents	Residents /Unit	Homes
1,000	2.80*	357

\* The average household size for the City of Evans as established by Community Development

The current level-of-service (LOS) for developed parks for the community is 3.22 / 1,000 people (this figure does not double count Riverside’s Neighborhood Park acres in the total developed parkland). However, one of the recommendations of the master plan (Section 5.2) is to increase the current Community Park LOS from 2.47 acres/1,000 to 2.75 acres/1000 in order to meet current demand. A similar recommendation has been made to increase the current LOS for Neighborhood/Mini Parks of 1.08 acres/1,000 residents to 3.5 acres per 1,000. Therefore, the total target LOS for all parks is proposed at **6.25 acres for every 1,000 people.**

What then is the cost of constructing 6.25 acres of parkland?

Cost to Construct 6.25 Acres of Park (Excluding Cost of Land)		
Park Acres	Average Cost/Acre	Total Cost
6.25	\$100,000*	<b>\$625,000</b>

\* Based on the average cost to construct parks on the Front Range (year 2000 dollars). Costs assume the use of professional design consultants and construction by a licensed contractor

The assumption for this analysis is that land for new Neighborhood/Mini Parks will come from the Park Land Dedication Ordinance. This means only land for Community Parks

(2.75 acres/1,000) will need to be purchased. The cost to purchase the raw land for the Community Parks is estimated as follows:

**2.75 acres of land @ \$10,000 per acre = \$27,500**

This figure is intended to be an allowance, acknowledging that the cost of land will vary with location, availability of water rights, proximity to city services and physical characteristics.

By adding the cost of construction and the purchase of Community Park land, the cost per 1,000 residents for 6.25 acres of park is \$652,500. Dividing the cost of park construction by the number of homes for 1,000 people yields cost per home to provide the target LOS.

**\$652,500 for 6.25 acres of parkland / 357 homes = \$1,827 per new housing unit**

Therefore, the current \$1,300 Park Impact Fee covers only +/- **71%** of the cost of constructing the new Neighborhood and Community Parks. The City will need to increase current Park Impact Fee to provide an adequate level-of-service for parks. In addition, this figure will need to be reviewed every one to two years and adjusted for inflation using the Consumers Price Index.

**5.4.1 Fee Collection and Park Construction**

Even with an adequate Park Impact Fee, residents in new areas of town could experience a lag time for constructing a Neighborhood Park in their area. This is based on the following analysis:

1. Approximately 48% (or \$877) of the \$1,827 Park Impact Fee is used to build Neighborhood Parks.
2. The Park Impact Fee is paid at the time of pulling the building permit for each home.
3. Smaller developers may only build 30 - 40 homes per year. If two developers were building in the ½ mile service area for a

- proposed neighborhood park, 60 to 80 homes would be built per year.
4. It would take the construction of 342 homes, at \$877 per home, to collect enough money to build a 3-acre neighborhood park (at \$100,000 / per acre). This assumes the developer dedicates the land.
  5. Based on the rate of growth described above, it would take over 5 years to collect enough fees to build the park.

6. Another year to two years would be needed for the park's design and construction.

Therefore, a total of **six to seven years** may be required to build a neighborhood park (from the time the first residents move in until the park is constructed).

## **5.5 Other Park Development Issues**

There are a number of other factors that must be addressed as a part of the Master Plan process. Some of these issues are specifically related to park construction while others relate to policies

### **5.5.1 Restrooms in Parks**

In meetings with the public, it became very obvious that the average citizen places a high value on having restrooms in public parks. The consensus from the focus group input and Parks and Recreation Commission was that each park should have a restroom, and preferably with full domestic water service. This is not unusual; most other communities who have completed master plans have received similar input. While this request is totally understandable, there is no one way for cities to respond. Vandal resistant restrooms are the most expensive public facility to construct (\$150 - \$200/square foot) and very expensive to maintain properly. It's no wonder that many cities (Westminster, Colorado for example) have policies to only construct flush toilets in community parks and to install porta-johns in all neighborhood parks. Other communities, such as Brighton, have a policy to install flush restrooms in community parks and composting toilets in neighborhood parks. Grand Junction, on the other hand, has committed to build fully plumbed restrooms in all parks.

The City of Evans needs to adopt a consistent policy on this issue. It is a difficult decision that should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis against the City's financial capabilities, for both construction and maintenance. At the very least, the developer of new residential areas should be required to stub in the necessary utilities for proposed park sites. In addition, restrooms in Village Park and Riverside Park South also need to be upgraded

### **5.5.2 Park Naming Policy**

With the rapid growth Evans is experiencing, it is conceivable that a number of new parks could be constructed during the life of this master plan. With new parks comes the challenge of finding an acceptable name. This can be a challenging and often controversial process. Most communities have adopted policies for naming new parks. Many cities will not name a park after a living person. Others adopt theme names for their parks. Westminster, for instance, uses British names for all its parks. Still other communities hold contests to name new parks with passes to park facilities as the prize. Shortly after the adoption of the Master Plan, Council should establish a procedure for naming parks in Evans with input from the public, Parks and Recreation Commission and staff.

### **5.5.3 Park Standards and Specifications**

Currently, the City is proposing to construct all new parks with fees collected from development. However, there may come a time where a private developer offers to build a neighborhood park as a sales amenity in order to have the park in place for the new residents. It is critical that the City be prepared for this possibility by developing and adopting park construction standards and specifications. These standards should address all materials and fixtures Evans would like to use in its parks such as turf design, planting details, acceptable play equipment and site furnishings and irrigation system design/materials. This will have the added benefit of simplifying maintenance by allowing staff to stock replacement parts for the types of materials used in Evans' parks. Even if City Staff directs future park design and construction, standardized materials and details will result in continuity, even if there is staff turnover.

#### **5.5.4 Parks and Detention Facilities**

Detention facilities can be paired with city parks, but should never be the entire area set aside for parks. If detention areas are combined with parkland, the following guidelines should be followed:

- Programmed (scheduled activities for organized sports) and built structures (picnic shelter, play equipment, etc.) should never be combined with detention facilities.
- Detention areas used for parks should be finished with irrigated turf grasses and 4:1 maximum side slopes.
- Only the higher ground of detention basins should be counted as parkland (upper ½ to 2/3rds of the basin) as the lower areas will be inundated too frequently.
- Proposed parks should be coordinated with citywide detention master plans.

#### **5.5.5 Parks Maintenance Shop**

In the focus groups, participants indicated that it was critical for the city to “maintain the parks it has first”. In order to achieve this goal, it is critical that the parks maintenance staff is given adequate facilities. A parks maintenance shop has been proposed adjacent to the current city shops site. An architect will need to be hired and a master plan completed. Construction of this facility should be high priority on the list of proposed improvements.

#### **5.5.6 Old City Hall Building**

The Parks Department is currently responsible for the Old City Hall building and grounds. An architect recently evaluated the structure. The determination was that the expected life of the building is only 10 – 15 years, unless a major renovation is completed.

The City is fast approaching a point where a decision will need to be made on the structure. Possible options include:

- Sell the building as is to a private entity or sell it for a token amount to a public/semi-public entity such as the Chamber of Commerce.
- Convert the structure to affordable housing units.
- Demolish the structure and convert the area to open turf. This open turf area could be maintained as a small park and used for museum functions/expansion, special events and a badly needed practice field for sports teams.

The final determination will need to take in account the cost of bring the structure up to current standards, remodeling it for another use , the current and long term maintenance costs as well as the cost of demolition.

#### **5.6 Recommendations**

The primary recommendations of this section are:

- Raise the LOS for Community Parks by 10% to 2.75 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents.
- The target LOS for Neighborhood/Mini Parks should be 3.5 acres/per 1,000.
- Plan and construct a new community park on the west side of town.
- This park should include mostly un-programmed open turf area.
- Plan and build new neighborhood parks on the west side of town in emerging neighborhoods and in the northeast side of the city.
- Raise the Park impact fee to cover the cost of constructing the park demand generated by new development, from \$1,300 to +/- \$1,827 per unit.



- Adopt a policy for constructing restrooms in city parks and plan restrooms in new parks accordingly.
- Adopt a park naming policy.
- Develop and adopt park development standards and specifications.
- Adopt policies for development of parkland with detention facilities.

- Coordinate planning of regional detention facilities and parks.
- Require developers to stub in utilities for proposed park sites.
- Construct a parks maintenance shop adjacent to the current City Shops site.

## 6 TRAILS MASTER PLAN

The 1996 Comprehensive Plan called for development of a greenbelt system along Evans Ditch and preservation of the South Platte River's floodplain for open space and recreation. This system will "provide a cross community route" and will be "used for commuter purposes as well as recreational". These systems will not only make up the recreational and commuting spinal column of the city, they will also serve as primary connections to the larger outlying matrix of regional systems. The long-term objective of this plan is to "Promote the usage of alternatives to automobile travel by providing facilities and a planning framework for a multi-modal transportation system."

While the inventory of trails has increased since 1996, the result is still a fragmented system. This fact is reflected not only in the results of the 2000 Needs Assessment Survey, but also in the results of the focus groups. Both of these indicated that construction of new trails and bike paths should be one of the top priorities for the City of Evans. This input, combined with the input that 56 percent of the respondents use the trails at Riverside Park specifically, clearly illustrates that a concise plan for trails needs to be a top priority for this Master Plan.

### 6.1 Trails Research Highlights

City of Evans Parks and Recreation 2000 Needs Assessment Survey: Evans is doing a good job of meeting resident need in the areas of parks and recreation facilities, programs and activities (particularly for a town its size and with its growth rate). In contrast, responses were somewhat lower for trails, indicating unmet need. Of those responding, 20% said the trails provided by the city are not meeting their needs very much or at all (this compares to 6% to 8% not meeting their needs for parks, facilities, and programs). The number of residents who say their trail needs are not being met is highest west of highway 85 and north of 37<sup>th</sup> Street (24 percent say trails not meeting need). This is

an area where there is new development and no existing trail system.

#### 6.1.1 *Desired Trail Improvements*

In the public opinion survey, residents were asked to prioritize park facilities. Those responding "5 – Very Important" to development of more trails and bike paths represented 40 percent of the total, or the third highest priority. On a scale of 1-5 (Definitely not needed – Very Important), Development of More Trails and Bike Paths averaged a ranking of 4.0.

#### 6.1.2 *Priorities Based on \$100 To Spend*

Respondents were asked, if they had \$100 to spend on improvements, how they would distribute it. On average, the largest proportion of funds would be spent by residents to expand the community complex into a full-use recreation center (\$29 of the \$100 available, or 29 percent). The next priority for expenditures would be open space acquisitions and preservation (\$18), followed by developing new trails and bike paths (\$14).

#### 6.1.3 *Focus Groups*

During the focus group sessions, respondents were asked to indicate which park system improvements they thought should be the City of Evans top priorities out of a list of eleven. Out of the two focus groups, Development of More Trails and Bike Paths averaged the highest response (8.5 responses) along with expanding the Recreation Center.

### 6.2 Existing Trails

Over the past fifteen years, Riverside Park has been developed creating the existing trail system at Riverside Park. This is the only existing formal recreational trail within Evans, equaling approximately 2.5 miles in length.

### 6.3 Future Trails

There are a number of factors that will help the trail system grow over the life of this plan. Some examples include:

- New residential developments that include off/on-street trail systems.
- Extending the trail to Highway 85 in 2000/2001
- Recognition on a regional level of the importance of developing the South Platte River Trail (American Discovery Trail). Opportunities for trail construction along the Platte River will increase once construction of the Highway 85 trail underpass is completed.
- If the Evans Ditch Trail is developed as planned, it will be possible to construct a large system of trails as new development grows in the western parts of town. The extent of the ditch is shown in Map 5. The Evans Ditch generally follows the Big Thompson River and continues to the confluence of the American Discovery Trail.

#### 6.4 Regional Connections

There are a number of opportunities for connecting to outlying regional plans. They include:

*St. Vrain Valley Trail and Open Space Lands Project.* This project utilizes the abandoned Union Pacific railroad as a rail-trail (abandoned rail line converted to a bike trail). The project limits extend to Hwy 66, which is approximately 15 miles south and west of Evans. The remaining active rail line extends north to the Town of Milliken and then northeast to Evans. The cities of Evans and Milliken should monitor the status of this rail segment and, if abandoned, secure permission to convert it to a “Rails-to-Trail”. A “Rails-with-Trails” option should also be considered.

*Northern Colorado Regional Planning Study, 1995:* This plan identifies critical regional connections, potential linkages and a proposed regional framework. The critical regional linkages identified include the convergence of the Little Thompson River with the South Platte River to the southwest of Evans. They also include the convergence of the Cache la Poudre with the South Platte River to the northeast of Evans. These Linkages include regional corridors along the Platte River American Discovery Trail connecting Evans to the Town of Milliken and

Johnstown to the south, and Greeley, Windsor and Fort Collins to the north. The Hwy 85 underpass, once completed, will be a critical beginning for this plan.

*On-Street Connections to Greeley:* Greeley’s existing trail system includes possible connections to Evans. These connections consist of an on-street bike lane along 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue and a attached 5’ sidewalk along 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

#### 6.5 Trails Master Plan Map

The Trail Master Plan (Map 5) illustrates the proposed alignments for an integrated trail system for Evans. Solid blue, green and red lines depict existing trails. Dotted blue, green and red lines depict proposed trails. The proposed American Discover Trail is depicted by purple dots. Major destinations such as existing and proposed parks are also shown. The trail alignments take advantage of a number of opportunities.

- Trail alignments are shown along the entire length of the Evans Ditch and the Ashcroft Draw.
- Drainage Channels are used extensively as trail corridors (e.g. Ashcroft Draw). Typically, Urban Drainage will help fund trail construction in drainage ways.

#### 6.6 Trail Specifications

The City’s standard specifications should define the materials and installation requirements for trails. These specifications should be coordinated with those established by Weld County and Urban Drainage.

- The primary recreational trails should be 10’ to 12’ wide and constructed in concrete.
- Three to four foot wide crusher fine trails are best suited for naturalized areas.
- Five to eight foot wide bike lanes should be included in each direction on all major arterials. Striped bike lanes could be added to streets in developed areas of town (where there is adequate width) to provide connections to key destinations. Major arterials should also include ten foot detached sidewalks on both sides.
- Amenities such as benches, picnic opportunities and lighting should be provided in key areas.

- The trail system should be grade separated when crossing major arterial roadways where possible, utilizing underpasses or overpasses. High volume collectors may be upgraded to signalized cross walks. Pedestrian crossing signs should designate cross walks for collector streets and below.

Map #5: Trails Master Plan

## 6.7 Recommendations

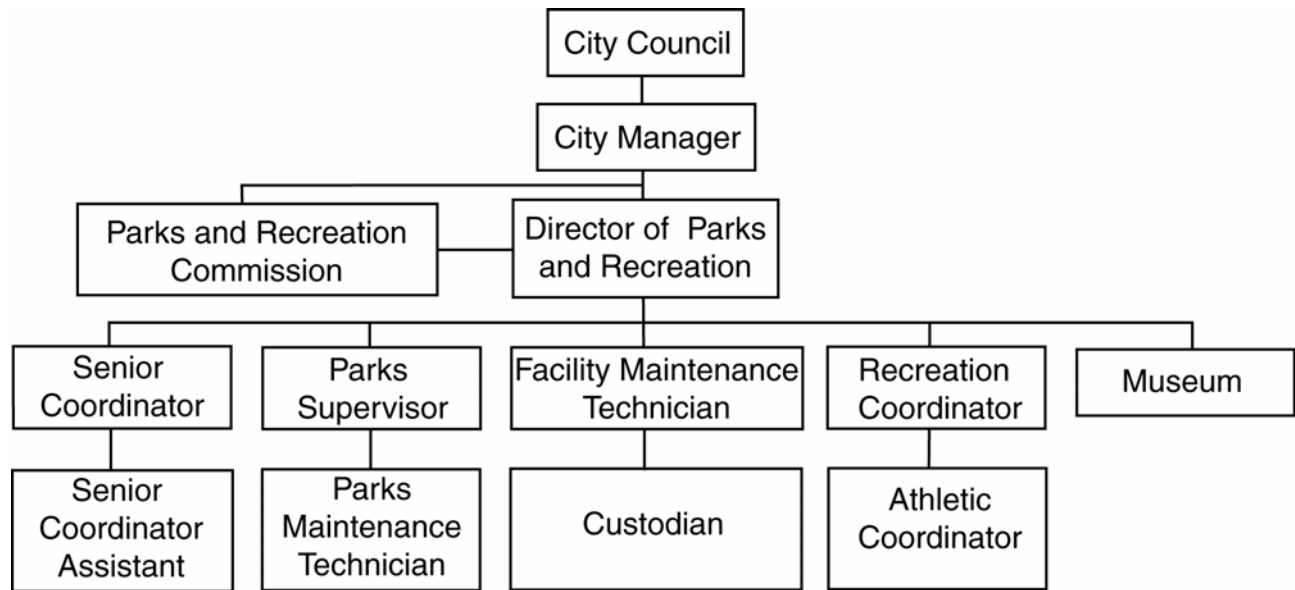
A critical element of this document is a coordinated summary of the actions recommended in this Master Plan for trails. Each of these actions is prioritized below.

- Development of the maintenance road along Evans Ditch as a multi-use recreational trail. This trail should not be constructed without the cooperation of the ditch-rider in order to minimize interference with their routine maintenance activities. This trail should connect to the Big Thompson and Platte River (American Discovery) Trails to the southwest.
- Once construction of the Highway 85 underpass is finalized, planning for the next trail segment of the American Discovery Trail, known as "Tract A", should begin.
- Once the Tract A trail segment is in place, negotiations for the missing gap between Highway 85 and Tract A should be finalized.
- Negotiations with the owner of the auto salvage yard northeast of Riverside Park should begin in order to continue the trail connection to Brower State Park Wildlife Area and the Cache la Poudre convergence.
- Improvements should begin on key arterials. Streets with adequate width for bike lanes should be painted,
- Connections to existing/proposed parks via bike lanes or detached sidewalks should take precedence in terms of intercity systems. These connections/parks are shown on Map 5.
- Connections to Greeley's existing system should be developed. These connections consist of an on-street bike lane along 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue and an attached 5' sidewalk along 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- Any new development should incorporate the existing/proposed trail system into its layout.
- Construct the Landings Trail connection (37<sup>th</sup> Street to 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue).
- Construct the proposed additional Riverside Park sidewalk/trails.

# 7 OPERATIONAL PLAN

## 7.1 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The existing organizational structure is properly designed to accomplish the current mission of the department, with all supervisors reporting directly to the Director of Parks and Recreation and subordinates to the supervisors properly aligned.



### 7.1.1 Director

The Director of Parks and Recreation is ultimately responsible to the City Manager for the administration of the full-service department, including planning, organizing and administering all facilities and programs desired by the citizenry. He is directly answerable to the City Manager on day-to-day matters. City Council appoints the seven member Parks and Recreation Commission, which is advisory in nature, and acts as a sounding board to the Director's recommended programs and services.

Responsibilities include budget preparation and execution, maintenance of all parks and recreation facilities, recruitment and staff development, revenue production, land acquisition, planning and construction of facilities, marketing, and the development of department goals and objectives.

### 7.1.2 Recreation Coordinator

Under the direct supervision of the Director, schedules, directs and supervises a comprehensive leisure program for the community. General responsibilities include:

- Coordination of all activities with the Director, the Chamber of Commerce, School District 6 and interested citizens.
- Plans, develops, implements and evaluates a wide variety of recreation classes and programs for the citizenry.
- Develops, coordinates and distributes recreational and other promotional brochures and relative information
- Coordinates hiring and training of all recreation and aquatics personnel.
- Assists in keeping maintenance schedules and inventory of all facilities, supplies and equipment for the community center and pool
- Assists the Director in budget preparation and monitoring of the budget.
- Scheduling and rental of the Evans Community Complex.
- Maintains computerized registration of all programs

#### **7.1.3 Senior Coordinator**

Under the direct supervision of the Director, the Senior Coordinator is responsible for the organization and direction of a varied and comprehensive program for senior citizens, including information and referral services, nutrition programs, advocacy, recreation activities, and transportation needs. General responsibilities include:

- Plan, promote and conduct a variety of senior activities
- Coordinate services and activities with appropriate agencies and groups
- Recruit and train volunteers
- Work with Senior Advisory Board to implement programs
- Publicize and market senior programs through all appropriate media
- Solicit financial support through donations, grants, etc.
- Recruit, train and supervise part-time staff, assists the Director in budget preparation and monitoring of expenditures

#### **7.1.4 Park Maintenance Supervisor**

Works under the direct supervision of the Director. General responsibilities include:

- General park maintenance operations such as mowing, sports field maintenance, park cleanliness, installation and repair of irrigation systems, cemetery maintenance, tree, shrub, and plant maintenance, swimming pool preparation and maintenance, and maintenance of assigned public spaces and buildings
- Recruitment, training and evaluation of all parks personnel, both full-time and seasonal
- Assists the Director in budget preparation and monitoring of expenditures

#### **7.1.5 Athletic Coordinator**

Under the direct supervision of the Recreation Coordinator, plans and directs a wide variety of sports and athletic programs including aquatics activities. General responsibilities include:

- Scheduling of all athletic facilities, indoor as well as outdoor
- Oversight of computerized registration systems
- Planning and coordination of special events
- Development and distribution of program brochures and flyers
- Coordination of the hiring and training of officials, field/gym supervisors and aquatics staff.
- Coordination of seasonal aquatics facility.

#### **7.1.6 Building Maintenance Technician**

This individual is responsible for the maintenance, repair and cleanliness of the Evans Community Complex and the Evans Historical Museum.

#### **7.1.7 Critique of Organizational Structure**

The general structure of the existing full-time staff is appropriate and allows for the proper chain-of-command, which results in well



defined areas of responsibility and the ongoing supervision of all personnel. Two recommendations would be the addition of a superintendent to oversee parks and facility maintenance and to combine the Museum Curator with the Senior Assistant position under the Senior Coordinator

Generally, the full-time staff is keenly aware of individual responsibilities, and the department is fully energized and enthusiastic about its mission. A positive attitude is a prevailing factor.

### **7.1.8 Department Goals and Objectives**

A review of the department goals and objectives for each full-time staff member suggests that a reasonable effort is being made by the Director in the development of appropriate goals and objectives for his staff. One observation would be the need for further refinement of these goals and objectives through the implementation of performance measures attached to each objective. This would allow for more definitive measurement of program efficiency and effectiveness. As suggested in the publication A Practical Guide for Measuring Program Efficiency and Effectiveness in Local Government, published by the Innovations Group in 1994, “a practical program performance measurement system (PPMS) involves two vital factors in measuring program performance, these being effectiveness and efficiency. Effectiveness is shown by the degree to which a program is meeting the needs of the public (doing the right thing) and efficiency is measured by the relationship of service quantity to the cost to produce the services (doing things right).”

Good performance measurement will help the department to determine how well it is doing in the delivery of services. Examples of performance measures used in parks and recreation systems would include measures such as:

- Cost per participant for a selected recreation program

- Cost per acre to maintain a park or facility
- Number of attendees at any given program
- Cost of recreation center maintenance per hour or per sq. ft.
- Average daily attendance at a recreation center or pool

An example of the application of performance measures to the current goals and objectives of the department would be to further refine the goal of the Recreation Coordinator to “Continue to evaluate low attendance programs and make adjustment as needed”. The performance measure would be: “To evaluate the cost-per-participant for each program with an attendance level of 20 participants or less, and to eliminate any program with a cost-per-participant which exceeds (select a cost level which is break-even).”

Performance measurement should also include a date at which the objective will be accomplished.

To evaluate the effectiveness of program services, a customer satisfaction survey should be utilized at the conclusion of each program offering. This will assist the Director in determining whether or not the department is “doing the right thing.”

## **7.2 REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF PROGRAM SERVICE**

### **7.2.1 Indoor Facilities**

The advent of the Recreation Center within the Evans Community Complex has greatly enhanced the level of recreation program services available to the citizens of Evans. The availability of two full-sized gymnasiums, a full-service fitness center, a large multi-purpose room with food service capacity, an arts studio, small activity rooms, and an attractive lounge/game room, provides for varied and comprehensive programming opportunities.

In addition, the department has a good working relationship with School District 6, utilizes Centennial Elementary School, Chappelow Elementary School, and Dos Rios Elementary School for program activities.

### 7.2.2 *Indoor Programs*

**Youth Sports** – A good variety of basketball programs are offered to the youth of the community during the winter months, including a one-time clinic for aspiring players. These programs are designed for various age categories, from kindergarten through eighth grade levels. Other sports opportunities include karate and open gym.

**Recommendation:** Sports such as volleyball, indoor floor hockey, and games of low organization would greatly enhance youth sports opportunities.

**Adult Sports** – The availability of the open gym program provides residents with many opportunities to utilize the gymnasium. In addition, co-ed volleyball and organized basketball leagues are established for adult residents.

**Recommendation:** Women’s sports opportunities include co-ed volleyball, women’s softball and a proposed women’s basketball program. Perhaps these opportunities will be expanded with the recent hiring of the Athletic Coordinator.

**Senior Sports** – Open gymnasium and shuffleboard are currently the only available athletic programs for seniors.

**Recommendation:** The national Senior Olympics program has proven the viability of volleyball and badminton as readily acceptable sports activities for seniors. An effort should be made to develop these programs during the senior open gymnasium time now scheduled at the Center. This will undoubtedly require additional part-time

personnel to introduce and implement these programs.

### 7.2.3 *Fitness and Wellness Programs*

**Youth** – Equipment training and weight training are the only programs available to young people 14 years of age and older.

**Recommendation:** Aerobics for teens would be a possible addition to the program, as would yoga for teens. Teen hiking programs have also proven to be successful at recreation centers in the metro-Denver area.

**Adults** – The availability of the well-equipped, modern fitness center in the Community Complex provides excellent fitness opportunities to Evans adults. Also available are the contractual Jazzercise classes as well as yoga classes for adults.

**Recommendation:** One suggestion, offered by a participant in the focus group session, would be to consider an early morning (6am-6:30am) weekday opening of the fitness center, which would allow for work outs prior to the normal workday of the participant. The new opening time was implemented September 1, 2000 in response to this comment.

**Seniors** – The fitness center is available to the seniors, and a senior aerobics session is scheduled three times each week. A walking program and a nutritional program are also offered. Many health-related classes are made available to interested seniors.

### 7.2.4 *Cultural Programs*

**Youth** – After-school arts programs are offered in the fall and as a component of the summer day-camp program. A pottery class and art class are also offered at the Center. Creative dance classes are offered for children of elementary school age as well as teens 16 years and older.

**Recommendation:** Perhaps uniquely designed teen programs could be offered. Ideas could include pottery or programs designed and directed by the teens themselves. Similarly, musical activities could be coordinated with the music department of the school system.

Adult – Ample cultural activities exist for adults and senior at the Community Center, including a good variety of arts and dance programs.

Seniors – Sufficient cultural opportunities exist for the senior population.

#### **7.2.5 Outdoor Activities**

The opening of the Riverside Park facilities has resulted in an extensive variety of competitive softball leagues for youth, adults and seniors, including a co-recreation softball league. Youth baseball and soccer programs are also scheduled at the park during the summer months. Tennis lessons are available to youth 7 through 15 years of age at the Village Park courts.

#### **7.2.6 Special Events**

The department schedules special events throughout the year including Teen Nights at the Rec, Halloween Happening, Evans Day, Punt-Pass-Kick Competition, Easter Egg Hunt, Cake Walk, and Arbor/Earth Day. In addition, Colorado Avalanche tickets are available on certain dates and Hunter Safety courses are offered.

#### **7.2.7 Senior Programs**

As evidenced by an estimated 2000 senior registrants, the program offerings for seniors at the Community Center are extensive and significantly varied. A participant can chose from activities such as fitness programs, art classes, health related classes, card games, table games, bus and train trips, photography classes, etc. Between 700 and 800 seniors take advantage of the Senior Nutrition Program each Tuesday at the Center.

Numerous special events are also scheduled throughout the year.

#### **7.2.8 Teen and At-Risk Youth Programs**

Very few program opportunities are currently made available to teens at the Recreation Center, with the exception of some basketball programs and the somewhat limited Teen Night at the Rec programs. Interestingly, the Evans Police Department conducts a variety of community-based programs for at-risk youth, such as D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education), GREAT (Gang Resistance Education and Training), and the Summer Youth Program that develops responsibility and citizenship in at-risk youth through positive interaction with law enforcement officials.

#### **7.2.9 Aquatics Program**

A very extensive aquatics program is offered at the Evans Community Pool each summer. Swim lessons are scheduled for all ages, from infants (6-36 months old), through adults who are offered individualized lessons. Open swimming sessions are scheduled from 1:00pm to 8:00pm on weekdays and from noon to 6pm on weekends. Open lap swims are also scheduled each day and private lessons are available for a fee.

### **7.3 General Program Observations and Recommendations**

#### **7.3.1 Youth and Teen Activities**

Throughout the parks and recreation movement across the U.S., the issue of how to effectively provide meaningful and timely recreational activities for teens has been a topic of extensive discussion, research, and training. One continuing theme in these discussions has been the need for teens to play an active role in planning and conducting their own activities and programs. If the Evans staff is not currently involving teens in a significant manner in program planning, perhaps a committee of teens could be established to work with the staff (the

Recreation Coordinator and Athletic Coordinator) in program development.

Additionally, the City of Evans should consider taking advantage of national, state and local programs for teens. Opportunities include *America's promise – The Alliance for Youth* program, a national program for youth, chaired by General Colin Powell and the Colorado Parks and Recreation Association's *Assets in Action, Colorado*.

With the teen advocacy program of the Evans Police Department already in place, the communication link between the departments should be enhanced with direct responsibility for the development of teen programs resting with the Recreation Coordinator.

The Summer Program for Kids, sponsored by the Weld County Department of Social Services, offers financial assistance with registration fees for all types of recreation and educational programs for eligible children between the ages of 5 and 15. The County lists the Evans recreation programs as eligible programs. This unique program should be made available to eligible youth.

#### **7.3.2 Adults**

Indoor sports opportunities for women, with the exception of co-ed volleyball, are not currently made available to Evans residents. A women's basketball league is being offered for the first time in the winter of 2000/2001. Perhaps a women's volleyball program could also be offered in the fall and winter seasons under the direction of the recently hired Athletic Coordinator.

#### **7.3.3 Seniors**

The comprehensiveness of the senior program suggests that any additional programs would require additional staff hours. These staff hours can be a combination of contracted instructors/leaders and part-time recreation workers. Part-time staff is now limited to 14 hours per week, and the Senior Coordinator

has recommended a minimum of 30 hours weekly, if program expansion is to occur. The Museum Curator and the Assistant Senior Coordinator positions should be combined to create one full time position.

With the vast array of federal and state senior funding assistance programs available, one of the principal goals of the Senior Coordinator should be to actively seek out additional grants and sponsorships for senior programs.

#### **7.3.4 Program Marketing Efforts**

The department is to be commended for its wide-ranging marketing effort, highlighted by the excellent seasonal brochures, which are distributed to all residents twice yearly. The individualized program flyers are professionally attractive and very informative.

#### **7.3.5 Use of School Facilities**

The department has a good working relationship with School District 6 personnel and has made good progress in soliciting reasonable use of school facilities for conducting recreation programs. Current uses include the Dos Rios, Centennial, Chappelow and John Evans facilities and grounds.

An effort is currently being led by the Director of Parks and Recreation to develop a written Joint-Use Agreement between the City of Evans and the Greeley-Evans School District 6 for the reciprocal use of school and parks and recreation facilities. It is important that the Department of Parks and Recreation receive high priority use of school facilities, second only to school sponsored functions, if this joint agreement is to succeed.

### **7.4 REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF OPERATIONAL BUDGET**

A review of the operating budget indicates that the overall level of expenditures for recreation and parks services is slightly below that of similar cities surveyed during the benchmarking process. The per-capita expenditure of \$71 is approximately \$6 to \$15

per-capita less than four of the five cities surveyed during the benchmarking process and substantially less than the \$185 per-capita expenditure level for the community of Cortez. When considering that Evans is one of only two cities surveyed which operate a recreation center, the spending level of \$71 per-capita seems significantly low.

#### **7.4.1 Recreation Services**

The 1999 level of spending for all recreation programs, other than Senior Services, was \$186,029. The revenues derived from program registration fees, facility rentals and advertisements sold, totaled \$128,597, representing a cost recovery factor of 69%, which is a very commendable figure. Considering the number of youth programs offered at significantly reduced fees in order to accommodate youngsters from low-income families, the cost recovery rate becomes even more significant. In addition to actual revenues derived from program fees, the Recreation staff received extensive contributions of in-kind services such as gift certificates, donated food and products for program participants from a variety of sponsorships underwritten by thirteen different commercial establishments within the Evans Community.

#### **7.4.2 Senior Services**

The 1999 level of operating expenditures for senior citizen program services was \$92,420. The senior division took in \$53,498 in revenues from activity fees assessed to the participants. This cost recovery rate of almost 58% is very commendable, considering the lower level of income of most senior citizens and the need to offer programs at a very reasonable cost.

#### **7.4.3 Parks and Cemetery Operations**

The 1999 expenditure level to maintain all of the parks and the Evans Cemetery was \$164,135. The annual cost-per-acre to maintain the parks and cemetery properties,

based on total park and cemetery acreage of approximately 38 acres, was \$4,319.

Depending upon the level of care or standard of maintenance practiced by a parks and recreation agency, the recognized per-acre-cost to maintain parkland could range from a low of \$1,800 to a high of \$6,000. As noted in the section of this report entitled "Resource Management Plan", the highest level of maintenance (the \$6,000 figure) would include factors such as mowing of turf every three (3) days, less than 5% of the playing surface in weeds, daily litter pick-up, diligent tree pruning and fertilizing, extensive floral plantings, etc. The lowest level of maintenance, Level Four, would include work such as litter control on an "on-call" basis, no fertilization practices, no pruning of trees unless a safety issue exists, turf areas left in natural state, etc.

In reviewing the four levels of maintenance standards in the Resource Management Plan, it would appear as though the current practices of the Evans park maintenance staff fall within the realm Level Two of the maintenance standards. On a national scale, this level of maintenance should cost approximately \$4,500 per acre. The Evans spending level of \$4,319 is well within this suggested cost.

#### **7.4.4 Evans Historical Museum**

The 1999 cost to maintain and operate the museum was \$10,331. No revenues were derived to offset any of the operational costs and approximately 350 visitors were registered in the guest book (\$29.50 per visitor). Obviously the museum is considered a valuable resource to the community as City Council, renews the subsidy for the museum's operation each year, even with this high per visitor cost. In an effort to reduce visitor costs, a broader effort should be made to market the Museum, perhaps through a more active role of the Museum Advisory Committee. The school district should also

be contacted in order to find a way to involve elementary school children in the museum programs. In addition, the Museum Curator position should be combined with the Senior Assistant, under the Senior Coordinator, in order to create a full-time position, if possible. The building is certainly an integral part of the community and its continued operation is recommended.

## **7.5 Recommendations**

In addition to the recommendations listed in each sub headings above, these following additional suggestions are provided.

- The addition of a superintendent to oversee parks and facility maintenance.
- Refine departmental goals and objectives through implementation of performance measures attached to each departmental objective.
- A women's volleyball program could also be offered in the fall and winter.
- Involve teens in a significant manner in program planning.
- Take advantage of national, state and local programs for teens.
- The Museum Curator position should be combined with the Senior Assistant, under the Senior Coordinator, in order to create an eventual full-time position.

## 8 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The following “Objectives” are guideposts that facilitate the realization of the goals established in this master plan update. The “Policies” are position statements that help achieve the Objectives. Objectives and policies can only be successful if there is general agreement within the City on their meaning and intent, and a commitment to follow the direction they provide.

In a general sense, progress toward meeting the objectives is measurable and can be quantified in annual evaluations. They can also be used to identify the future needs of the Parks and Recreation Department.

Policies are “decisions made in advance.” Often policies are created as a result of issues encountered in a controversial decision (“From now on it will be our policy to . . .”). Policies can also be created through independent deliberation. Regardless of how they are generated, the purpose of policies is to bring consistency to decision-making, generally about recurring issues. The following policies are intended to guide the design and use of park facilities.

### **Objective I.**

- Provide a broad range of recreational experiences for Evans’ residents.

#### *Policies:*

- A. Provide recreation facilities and programs for all ages in the community.
- B. Re-evaluate programming yearly. Programs will be added or eliminated based on increases or decreases in demand.

### **Objective II.**

- New parks will be developed to meet minimum design standards.

#### *Policies:*

- A. Minimum size for neighborhood parks will be 4.0 acres.

- B. Minimum size for community parks will be 20.0 acres.
- C. Neighborhood and mini-parks should provide for the basic park needs of the surrounding community including, but not limited to, picnic shelter(s) and picnic facilities, play equipment for pre-school and school-age children, bike racks, minimal off-street parking, and at least 50% of the park area in open turf.
- D. Restrooms will be constructed in all new neighborhood and community parks per adopted city standards.
- E. Community parks will be focused on meeting the community’s need for organized competitive sports, or broad areas of unprogrammed turf (like Washington Park in Denver), or a combination of the two use patterns. Community parks will also be the primary sites for other city-wide facilities such as recreation centers, outdoor pools, skate parks, etc.

### **Objective III.**

- Provide convenient public access to all recreation sites and facilities.

#### *Policies:*

- A. Neighborhood Parks will be located within walking distance of the neighborhoods they serve (+/- 1/2-mile radius from the park) and will not be less than three acres in size.
- B. The primary mission for a neighborhood park will be to serve the residents in its service area. Use of neighborhood parks for organized competitive sports is discouraged. Facilities for organized competitive sports will typically not be included in neighborhood parks.
- C. School sites can be used as neighborhood parks (especially in areas not currently served by a mini or neighborhood park), provided they include neighborhood park facilities (picnic shelter, play equipment for small children, etc.).

- D. Mini-parks should only be constructed in large-lot subdivisions (2.5 acres per unit or larger) or in existing neighborhoods that a neighborhood park does not adequately serve and where sufficient land for a 4-acre park site is not available.
- E. If an existing neighborhood park adequately serves an area and a new park is proposed as an amenity for a future development, that park should only be constructed if it is built to City standards, open to all citizens of the community and maintained by the Home Owners Association (again to City standards).
- F. Community parks are intended to serve residents within a +/- 2-mile radius from the park.
- G. Community parks will be located along major roadways and recreational trails.

**Objective IV**

- Maintain and upgrade existing parks to achieve a high level of quality, safety and attractive appearance.

*Policies:*

- A. Continue to improve / develop city-owned parklands.
- B. Existing park facilities will be reevaluated yearly and equipment or facilities replaced as needed.
- C. An individual certified by the National Playground Safety Institute, at intervals recommended by the manufacturer and governing safety standards, will inspect play equipment.
- D. All existing parks will be improved to current adopted standards.
- E. Develop diverse recreation features within the park system.

**Objective V.**

- Detention basins can be combined with parkland where necessary and a portion of the detention basin counted toward the minimum park acreage requirement.  
Provided:

*Policies:*

- A. Side slopes for the basin must not exceed 4:1.
- B. The bottom of the basin must be sloped between 2% and 3%.

- C. Only the upper 2/3rds of the basin and associated side slopes can count toward the minimum park acreage.
- D. All portions of the basin to be counted toward the required parkland dedication must be planted in irrigated turf grasses.
- E. The narrowest dimension of the basin must be no less than 100’.
- F. Detention areas will only be maintained by the Parks Department if they are next to a City-owned and maintained park. The Homeowners Associations or Public Works should maintain small and/or isolated detention basins.

**Objective VI.**

- Expand the supply and diversity of parks and leisure facilities in Evans to meet the needs of the current and future population.

*Policies:*

- A. Buying land for future parks is a high priority for the City. Land for parks will be acquired ahead of development. Implement the recommendations of the master plan through the CIP, the fees paid as a result of the Parkland Dedication ordinance, grants or other funding sources approved by the voters.
- B. Continue and expand programs and services that represent Evans multi-cultural/multi-demographic profile.

**Objective VII.**

- Assure that private development fully adheres to the standards for the park, open space and recreation needs of the residents it brings into the community.

*Policies:*

- A. All new development will provide the minimum amount of open space/park facilities required by the Land Use Code.
- B. If a development’s parkland dedication does not result in a neighborhood park meeting minimum standards, a “cash-in-lieu” payment will be required.
- C. Utility connections should be stubbed into future park sites by the developer.



**Objective VIII.**

- Coordinate with other public agencies to meet parks and recreation needs as efficiently as possible.

*Policies:*

- A. Utilize intergovernmental agreements to gain/provide access to Greeley/Evans School District(s) facilities on a time-available basis and avoid unnecessary duplication.
- B. Cooperate with Greeley/Evans School District to plan and build parks adjacent to new school sites.
- C. Coordinate with Weld County to plan for regional parks and trails within the City of Evans growth area.

**Objective IX.**

- The cost of recreation programs should be borne by the participants.

*Policies:*

- A. Wherever possible, the operating costs for recreation programs will be borne by the users.
- B. Programs and services for youths and seniors will be provided at costs within means of low-income families.
- C. Where possible, scholarship programs will be made available for qualifying participants in cooperation with Weld County Social Services.

**Objective X.**

- Coordinate new park/facility construction with the trail master plan so that pedestrians, bicycles and other non-motorized users can easily reach the City's park facilities.

*Policies:*

- A. Use pedestrian bridges where necessary to provide access to park facilities for neighborhoods isolated by ditches.
- B. Plan future parks and recreation facilities near existing or future trails where possible.

**Objective XI.**

- Provide convenient opportunities for people with disabilities to use and enjoy the amenities of the park system.

*Policies:*

- A. Construct new park facilities (including any upgrades to existing facilities) to meet or exceed ADA requirements for accessibility.
- B. Establish a mechanism for reviewing accessibility of designs for new construction through an accessibility committee or coordinator qualified to review proposed plans.

**Objective XII.**

- Provide convenient opportunities for people with disabilities to use and enjoy the amenities of the park system.

*Policies:*

- A. Construct new park facilities (including any upgrades to existing facilities) to meet or exceed ADA requirements for accessibility.
- B. Establish a mechanism for reviewing accessibility of designs for new construction through an accessibility committee or coordinator qualified to review proposed plans.

**Objective XIII.**

- Operate programs and services to established national or local standards.

*Policies:*

- A. Officially adopt relevant standards as goals for Department operations and distribute to staff/post in appropriate locations.
- B. Evaluate nationally recognized or adopted programs for the applicability to Evans.

**Objective XIV.**

- Maintain adequate staffing levels in order to sustain, or improve on, recreation programming and parks maintenance.

*Policies:*

- A. Increase parks maintenance staff proportionally as new parks are constructed.
- B. Increase the parks maintenance staff by at least one full-time person.
- C. Review staffing levels on a yearly basis.

***Objective XIV.***

- Actively promote the benefits of Parks & Recreation to area residents and the community as a whole.

*Policies*

- A. Use multiple media outlets to reach the public (e.g., the Department brochure, newspaper(s), cable TV public access channels, web site, etc.).
- B. Use construction signage to announce each new park or park improvement project.
- C. Establish community education/outreach programs.

***Objective XV.***

- Oil well heads and tank battery setback zones can be counted as parkland in some instances.

*Policies*

- A. Up to 49% of the setback zone for well extraction facilities can be counted toward the parkland dedication provided that the wellhead or tank battery is adjacent to, but not actually on the park property.
- B. The City will maintain the entire setback zone if it is dedicated to the City and adjacent to the park property.
- C. The Homeowners Association will maintain well extraction setback zones not adjacent to parkland in newly developed subdivisions.

## 9 THE MASTER PLAN AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

How does the City of Evans make the Parks, Trails and Recreation Master Plan a reality? What should the priorities be and how should they be paid for? This section of the plan will address these, and other questions. The goal is to develop a coordinated action plan that Council and Staff can use to implement the plan's recommendations.

While many of the actions listed below appear elsewhere in the report, the Implementation Plan provides the opportunity to see the full scope of the plan's recommendations. Using this checklist, actions can be prioritized/scheduled in the Capitol Improvement Plan (CIP), and then checked off as they are accomplished.

The recommended actions are listed in four categories: *Parks, Trails, Programs and Operations*. The actions are prioritized in each of the four categories shown below. The annual CIP budgeting process will be the primary tool that Council, the Parks and Recreation Commission and staff will use to prioritize the Master Plan recommendations.

### 9.1 Action Plan

#### 9.1.1 Parks and Recreation Facilities

##### Short-term

- Adopt the Parkland Dedication Ordinance.
- Raise the Park Impact Fee to the point where new development is covering the cost of building the new parks needed to serve its residents.
- Adopt a parks naming policy.
- Develop and adopt parks standards and specifications.
- Bring in potable water to Riverside Park and install drinking fountains.
- Build the Riverside Park north pavilion and restrooms.

- Asphalt overlay and trail maintenance at Riverside Park.
- Complete the landscape design and construction for the Evans Cemetery entry and replacement of the chainlink fence (with an ornamental metal fence).
- Complete irrigation design for the Evans Cemetery. Upgrade the existing irrigation system.
- Re-tile wading pool.
- Replace light poles at City and Village Parks.
- Re-finish the gym floor at the ECC.
- Continue with the implementation of the non-potable irrigation water projects.
- Buy raw land for the new Community Park.
- Buy raw land for high priority Neighborhood Parks, especially in areas likely to see development.
- Develop master plans for new neighborhood parks.

##### Long-term

- Construct an aquatics area for the Evans Community complex (ECC).
- Install additional Riverside Park playground equipment (swings, toddler play equipment and resilient surfacing). Plan for handicap accessibility.
- Complete Park and irrigation design for Chappelow Detention Pond.
- Design and construct a neighborhood park at the Carriage Estates/Horii Property.

- ❑ Plan and construct play equipment for pre-school age children in existing and new parks.
- ❑ Install Back-up generator for the ECC.
- ❑ Design and construct a mini park at the Harbor Lane detention area.
- ❑ Design and construct a neighborhood park at the Ashcroft Subdivision property.
- ❑ Design and construct mini parks at Tuscany I.
- ❑ Design and construct a neighborhood park at the Vaughn Property (near the City Shops site).
- ❑ Explore construction of a skatepark.
- ❑ Add sports field lighting to the Riverside Park ball fields.
- ❑ Design the west side Community Park.
- ❑ Construct the west side Community Park.
- ❑ Design and construct a neighborhood park at the Birts property.
- ❑ Explore remodeling the existing wading pool with an outdoor water play structure.
- ❑ Pave the Cemetery Road and add lighting.
- ❑ Upgrade/replace the Village Park restroom.
- ❑ Upgrade/replace the Riverside Park south restroom.
- ❑ Connect the north and south sections of Riverside Park via an internal roadway.
- ❑ Explore a second outdoor pool/water play facility on the west side of town.
- ❑ Design and construct a neighborhood park at the Sears Farm park site.
- ❑ Design and construct neighborhood park, Tuscany II

- ❑ Design and construct neighborhood park, Tuscany III
- ❑ Design and construct a mini park in the Neville's Crossing Subdivision.
- ❑ Determine continued use/disposition of the Old City Hall Building and property.

### 9.1.2 *Trails*

#### Short-term

- ❑ Complete construction of the trail extension under Highway 85.
- ❑ Trail development and clean up of Tract A.
- ❑ Construct the concrete trail in northeast section of Riverside Park.

❑

#### Long-term

- ❑ Construct the Evans Ditch trail.
- ❑ Landings Trail connection (37<sup>th</sup> Street to 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue along drainage ditch.
- ❑ Plan and construct extensions of the American Discovery Trail to the northeast and southeast of Riverside Park. (Connect Tract A to Highway 85 trail)
- ❑ Construct trail segments shown in the master plan as development occurs.

### 9.1.3 *Programs*

#### Short-term

- ❑ Form a teen programming committee to develop and market additional teen programs. Ideas include aerobics, hiking, pottery, yoga, etc.
- ❑ Enhance youth sports opportunities.

- ❑ Add a Senior Olympics program (volleyball and badminton) during the senior open gym time.
- ❑ Market the museum through partnerships with local schools.
- ❑ Offer pre-school programs during the daytime hours at the Evans Community Complex.
- ❑ Increase revenue-producing programs within the senior population to offset subsidies.
- ❑ Develop indoor aquatics programs at the Evans Community Complex once expansion is complete.
- ❑ Continue to expand cultural program offerings.

Long-term

- ❑ Start a fall/winter women’s volleyball program.
- ❑ Implement national and state programs for teens.

**9.1.4 Operations**

Short-term

- ❑ Construct the Parks shop building and site improvements.
- ❑ Add a fourth park maintenance employee.
- ❑ Add a parks/facilities superintendent
- ❑ Lease/purchase a 15-passenger van.
- ❑ Replace trash receptacles in parks with a standard unit.
- ❑ Purchase a third mower and skid loader.

- ❑ Combine the Museum Curator and Senior Assistant positions.
- ❑ Purchase a skid loader.

Long-term

- ❑ Add parks maintenance staff proportionally with park development.
- ❑ Add additional parks administrative offices and conference room with the expansion of the Evans Community Complex.

**9.2 Implementation/Funding**

The implementation of the Master Plan’s recommendations will depend on available funding and the pace of residential development. With the enactment of the ordinance and dedication fees recommended here, the funds for constructing new neighborhood parks will be recovered. The issue becomes how to pay for the remaining improvements.

All proposed Neighborhood Parks where new subdivisions are being planned should be paid for via the Parkland Dedication Ordinance and the Parks Impact Fee. In addition, funding for the west side Community Park should also come from these sources if they are adopted as recommended.

The main concern is that the City is already behind in collecting adequate dedication fees due to the previous years where the Impact Fee covered only a fraction of the actual cost of developing new parks. The funds for constructing parks in new residential areas currently under construction will need to come out of the Parks Department General Fund allocation and the GOCO grants/Lottery Funds.

The Parks Department’s General Fund allocation, GOCO grants and Lottery Funds will also need to be used for

upgrades/improvements to the existing parks. This means that all future park upgrades and construction of new parks in established areas of town will need to compete for funding. This may reduce the number of projects that can be completed in the early phases of the plan's life.

One idea to help speed the process of developing parks in new neighborhoods is to work with the developer to help fund a portion of the Neighborhood's Park's improvements up front. If the developer participates in constructing the neighborhood park, in addition to contributing the land, the five to seven year waiting period could be shortened and the park could be used as an amenity to help market the project. An equivalent portion of the Parks Impact Fee could be waived.

Other potential funding sources for parks and recreation facility construction include:

- ***Energy Impact Assistance Grant.*** Because of the high number of oil extraction facilities in Evans, the city is in a unique position to secure these grants. One such grant for \$100,000 was awarded under this state program for the Evans Community Complex.
- ***Colorado State Trails Grant.*** A state program for funding trail construction.
- ***Transportation Efficiency Act of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (formerly the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act or ISTEA).*** TEA 21 is a Federal program for encouraging multi-modal transportation and transportation improvements such as bike trails, pedestrian bridges and underpasses, highway beautification and a wide range other potential transportation improvements. These grants are disbursed through the North Front Range Transportation and Air Quality Grant (NFRTAQ)
- ***Community Block Development Grant.*** A Federal program for community improvements.
- ***Land and Water Conservation Fund.*** A Federally funded program for park

improvements that has not been authorized by Congress since 1995. The current Congress has indicated the funding may be reinstated in the near future.

- ***Grants from Foundations*** such as the Gates Foundation and Boettcher Foundation.
- Obviously, if the **Weld County Land Preservation Initiative** passes this November, those funds would also be available to Evans.

Each of these funding sources can contribute to improving Evans park system, however, they typically require matching funds and often require a great deal of staff time to coordinate the submission of the application(s).

#### ***9.2.1 Funding Major Projects***

The Park Impact Fee and the Parkland Dedication Ordinance will not generate the funding to construct major new facilities such as the aquatic area for the Evans Community Complex. The current City funding for parks and GOCO/Lottery funds could only contribute a portion of the \$3.0 to \$5.0 million the expansion will require. Therefore, the City will have to find a source of revenue that will allow the sale of bonds to fund the expansion. This will almost certainly mean the public will need to vote to increase property taxes, the mill levy or to increase sales taxes to fund the expansion.

The addition of an aquatics area to the ECC was the top rated parks and recreation facility in the public opinion survey. Clearly there is support for this project in the community. However, there is always a base level of opposition to tax increases, of any type, in each community. It will take a well planned grass roots effort from the residents to build the support necessary to pass the ballot issue. A number of Front Range communities have been successful in passing this type of ballot issue in the last two years, so there are good models to follow.



