

# Park System Master Plan

Parks, Recreation, Trails, Open Space & Cultural Services

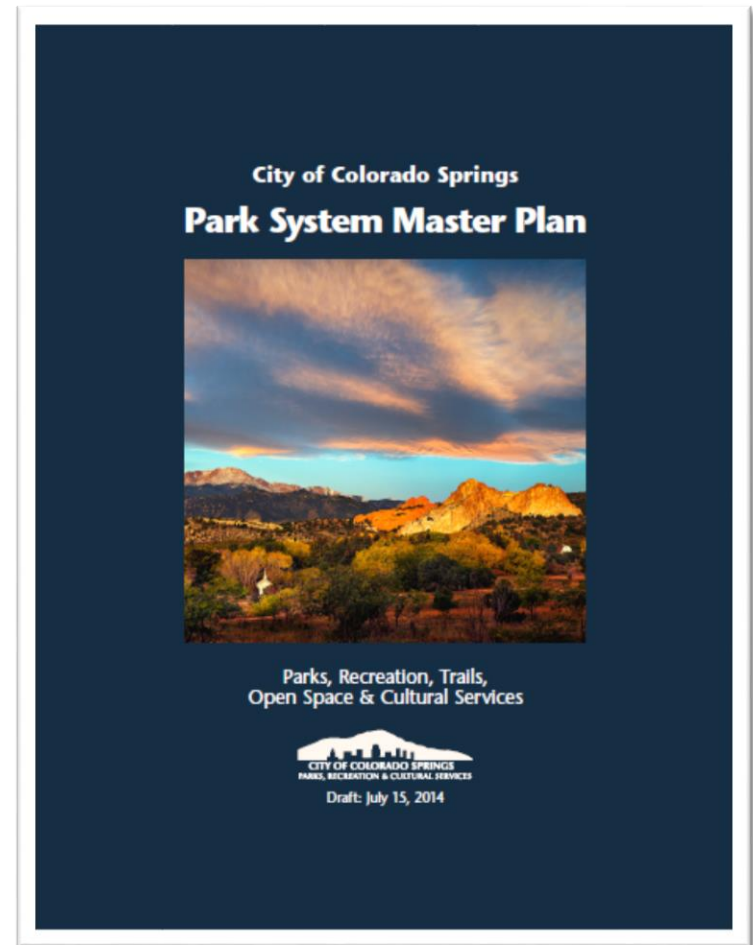
Chris Lieber

September 23, 2014



# Master Plan Document Intent

1. To be **visionary** and **inspire** the community to continually improve the park system, ensuring it suits community desires today and provides a legacy for future generations.
2. Provides concepts and **guiding recommendations** intended to help City leaders and community members make sound decisions and **take action**.
3. The means of achieving this vision will need to be **flexible**, allowing recommendations to be explored and adjusted based on changing circumstances.



# PROCESS & SCHEDULE



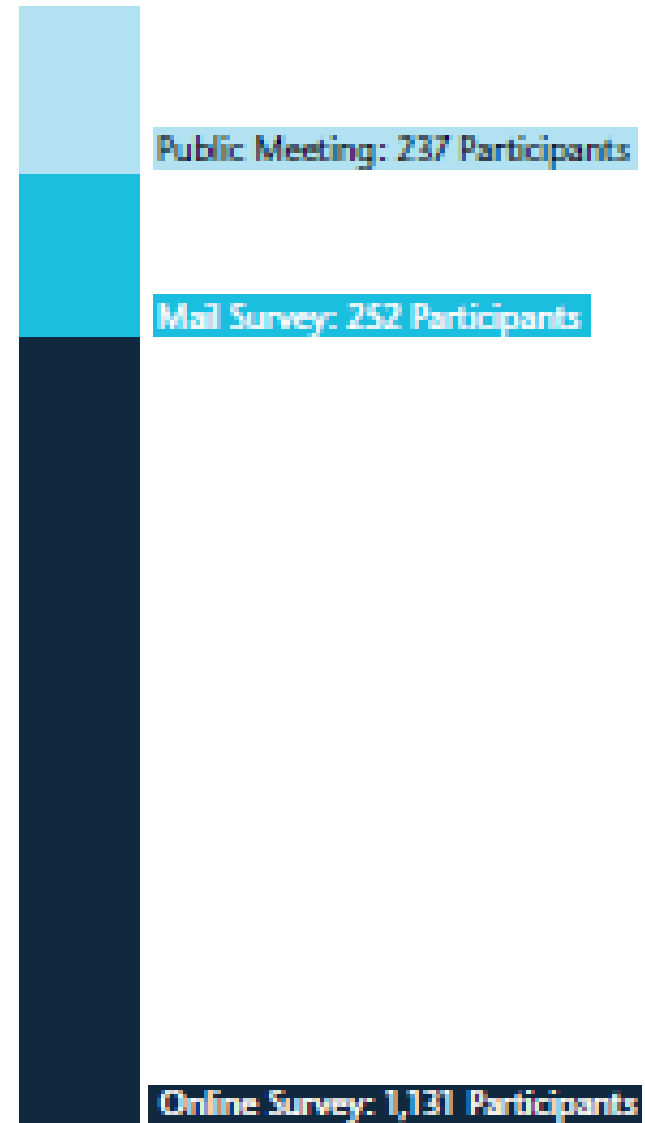
\*TOPS Working Committee – September 3, 2014

\*Parks and Recreation Advisory Board – September 11, 2014

\*City Council – September 23, 2014

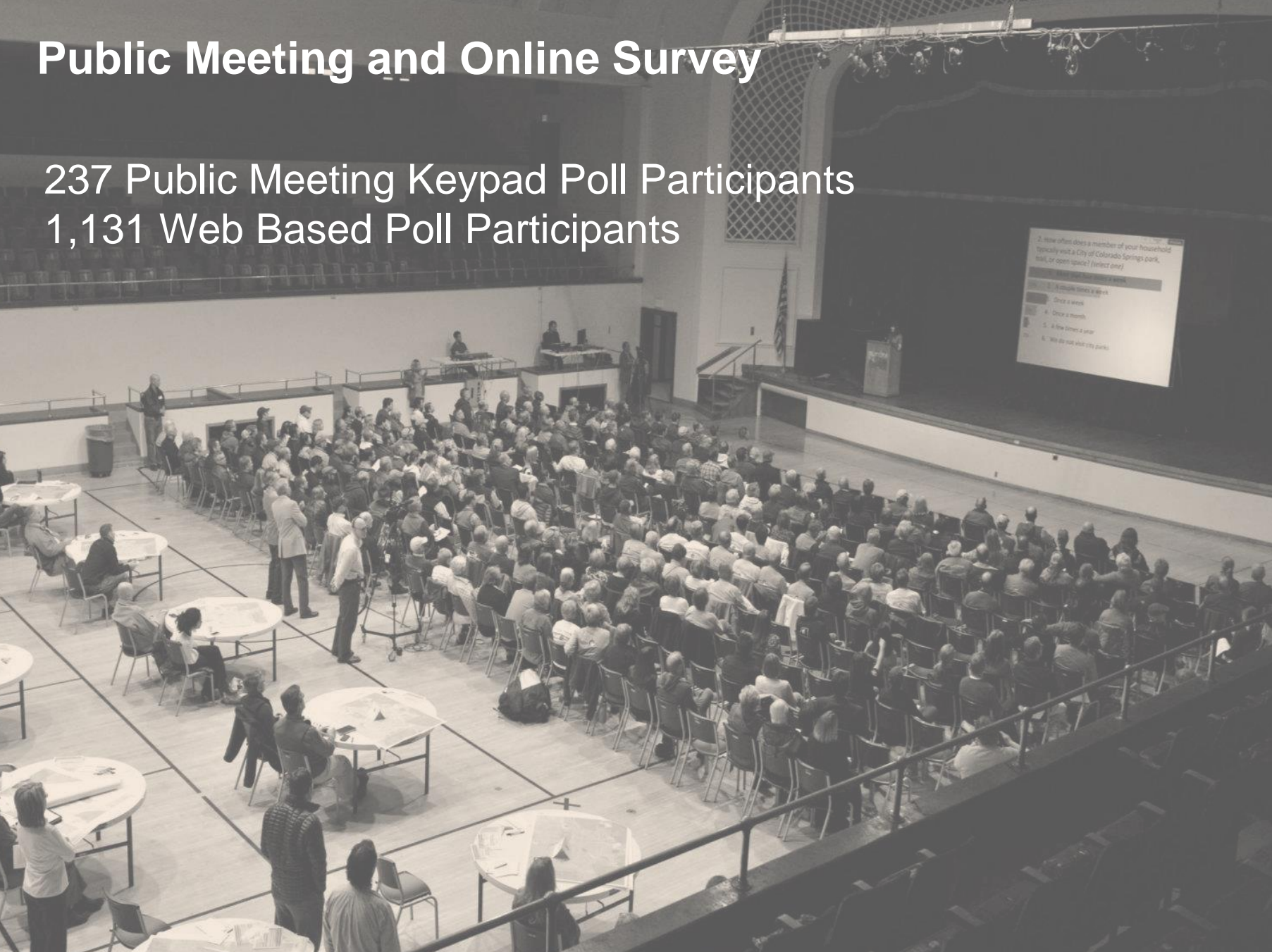
# A Plan Directed by Community Values and Vision

- 77 Roundtable Participants
- 40 Task Force and Technical Team Members
- Briefings with the Parks Board, TOPS Committee, Mayor, and City Council
- Random Selection Statistically Valid Community Mail Survey
- Public Meeting
- Online Survey
- Draft Document Comments

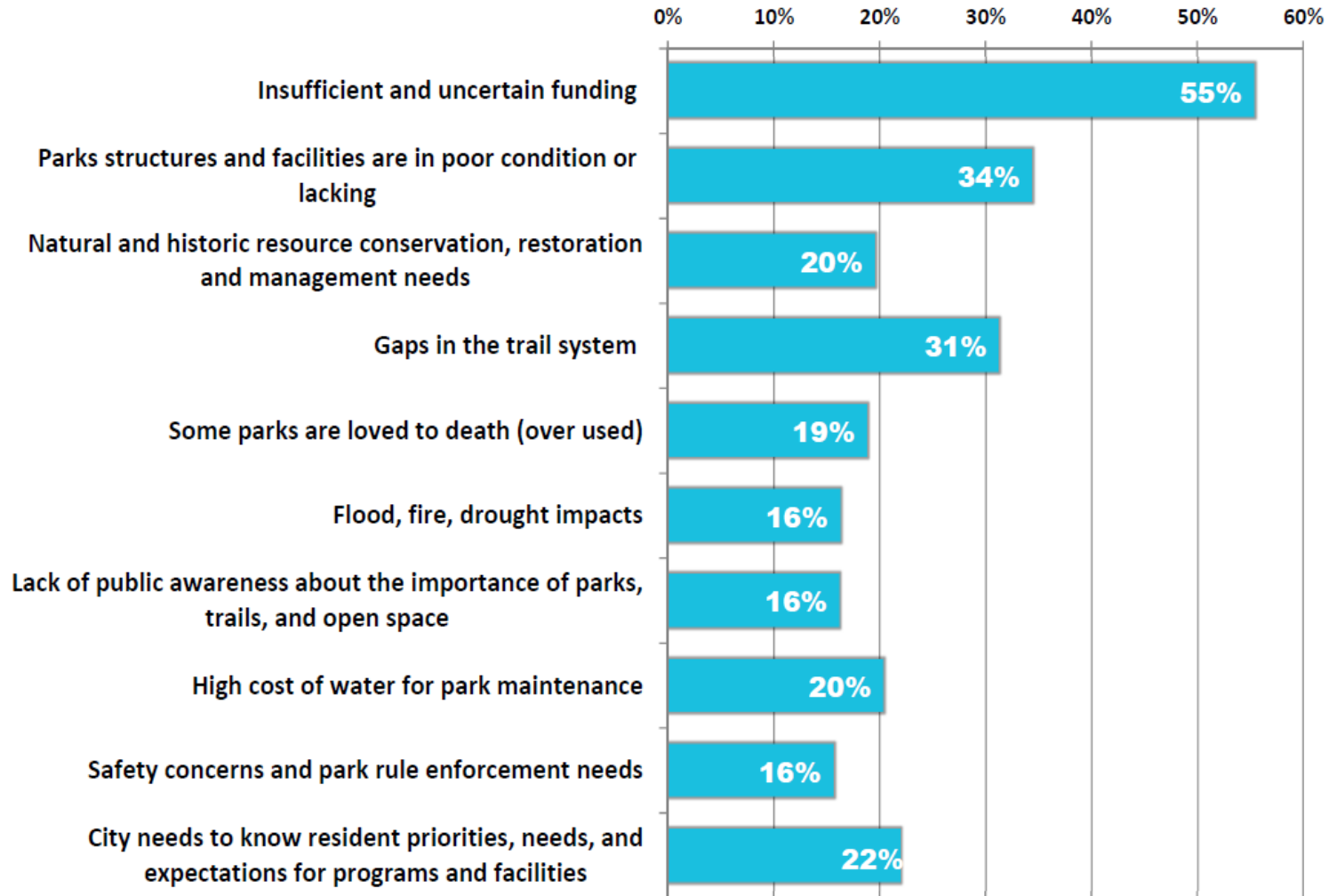


# Public Meeting and Online Survey

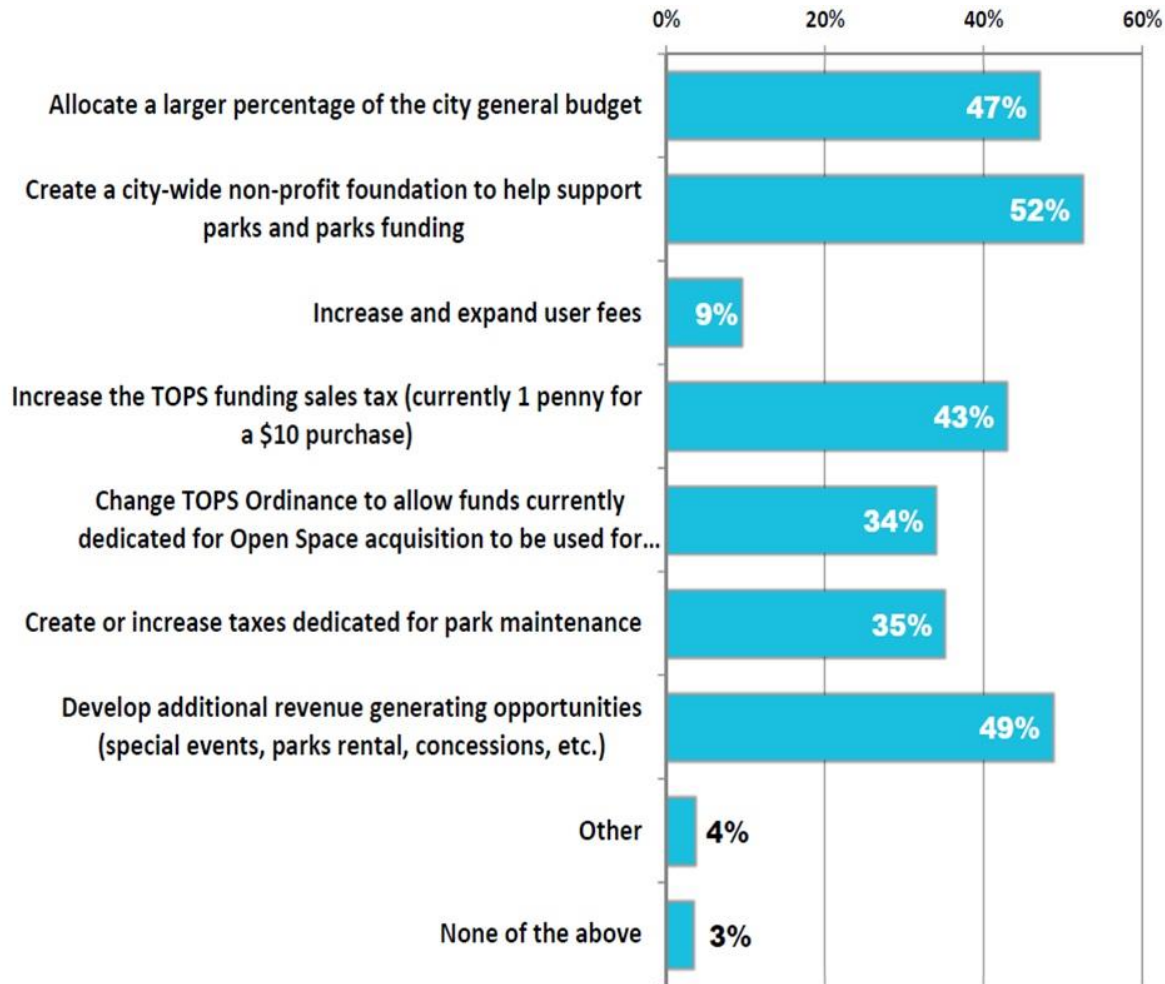
237 Public Meeting Keypad Poll Participants  
1,131 Web Based Poll Participants



## 6. Which do you believe are the most important issues for the Master Plan to address? *(select up to three)*

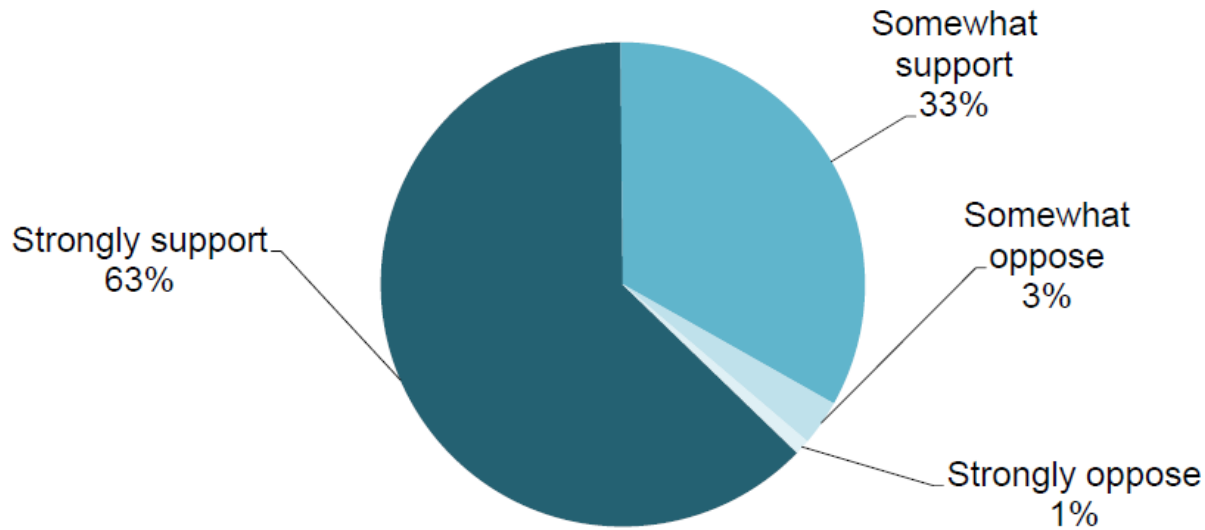


# 13. Which of these parks, recreation, open space and trail funding mechanisms would you like to see used in the future? *(select all that apply)*



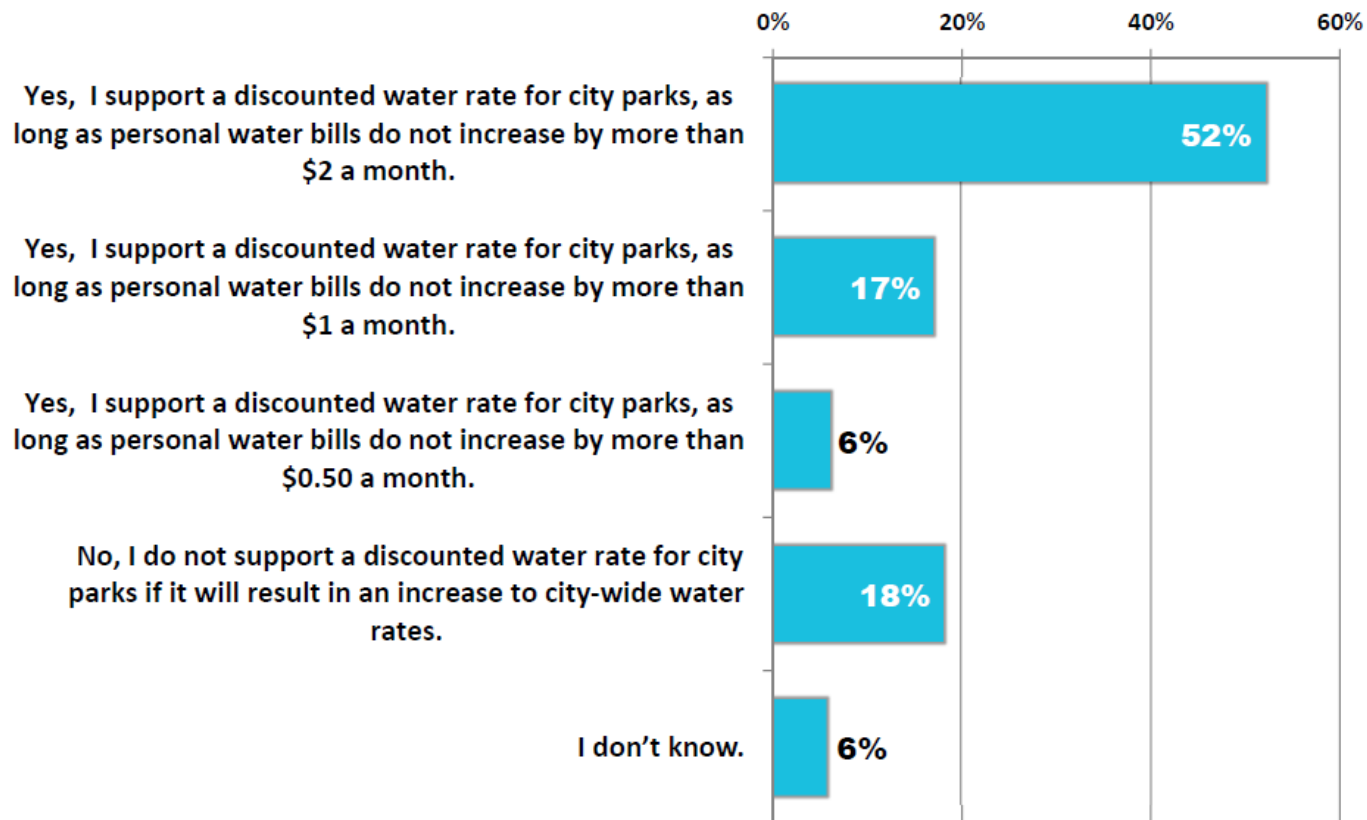
# Survey Findings | Results

To what extent would you support or oppose a future ballot measure to extend the TOPS program beyond 2025?





# 14. Would you support a discounted water rate for the City Parks Department irrigation water if it meant an increase in City-wide water rates resulting in an increase in the average homeowner monthly bill? (select 1)



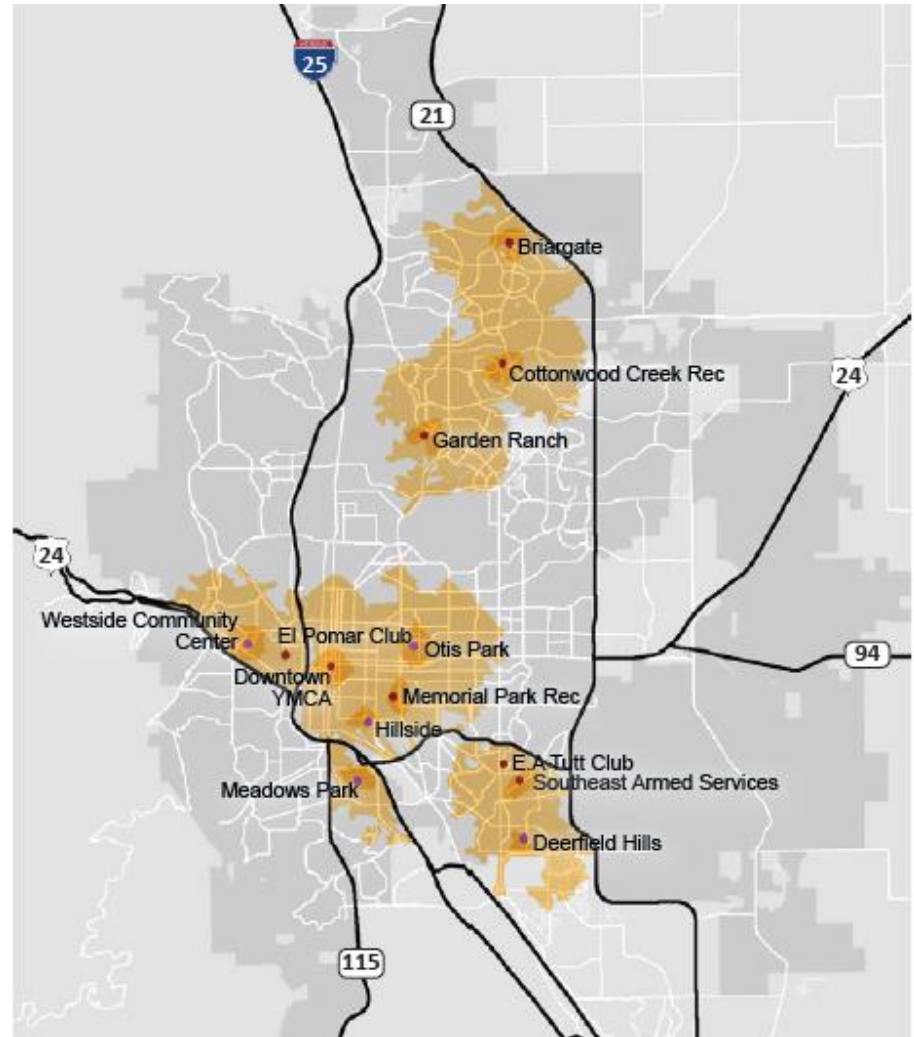
# Grounded In Expert Analysis and Recommendations

## Geographic Distribution Evaluation



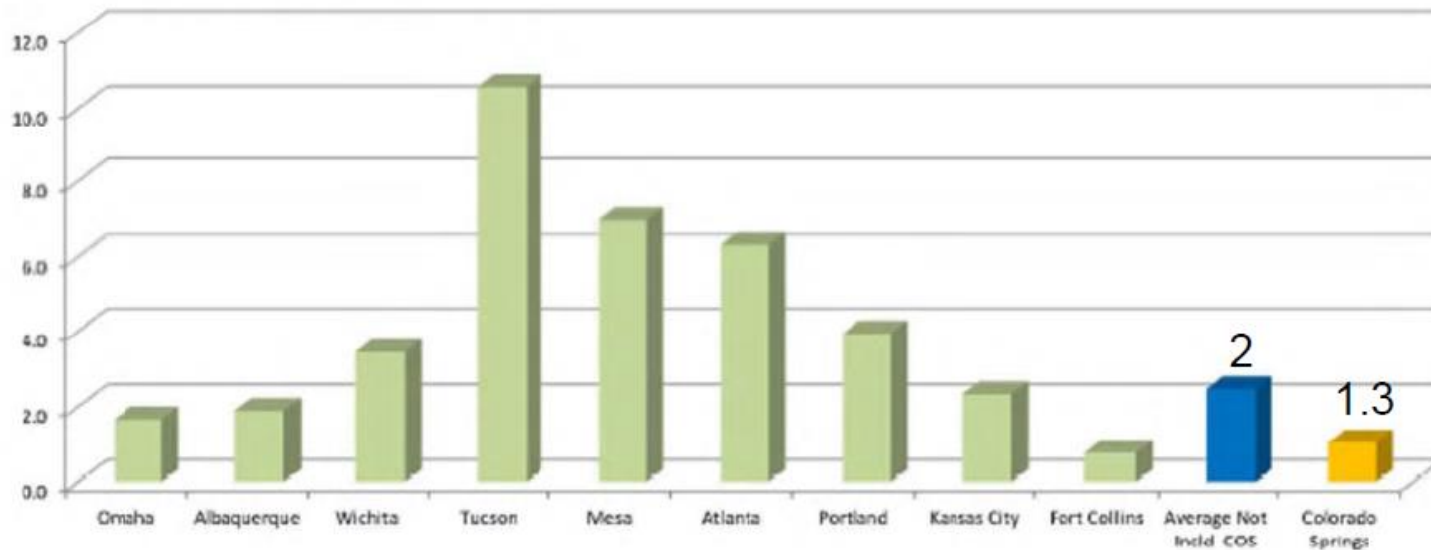
### Comparison Cities

Comparable Community	Population	Size - Acres
Portland, Oregon	603,000	85,000
Omaha, Nebraska	420,000	81,000
Albuquerque, New Mexico	555,000	120,000
Kansas City, Missouri	464,000	201,000
Tucson, Arizona	524,000	145,000
Atlanta, Georgia	424,000	85,000
Wichita, Kansas	385,000	102,000
Mesa, Arizona	452,000	87,000
Fort Collins, Colorado	141,000	68,000
<b>Colorado Springs</b>	<b>425,000</b>	<b>119,000</b>



# Benchmarking – Maintenance Staffing

## Employees Per Acre



The ratio of maintenance staff/acre in Colorado Springs is very low compared to other benchmark cities.

Note: Full-time and part-time employees, counted as full-time equivalent (FTE). Seasonal staff not counted.

Source data: The Trust for Public Land, 2012 City Park Facts. Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands, Boulder Colorado Key Benchmark Analysis

# Parks and Open Space Maintenance Expenditures Per Resident

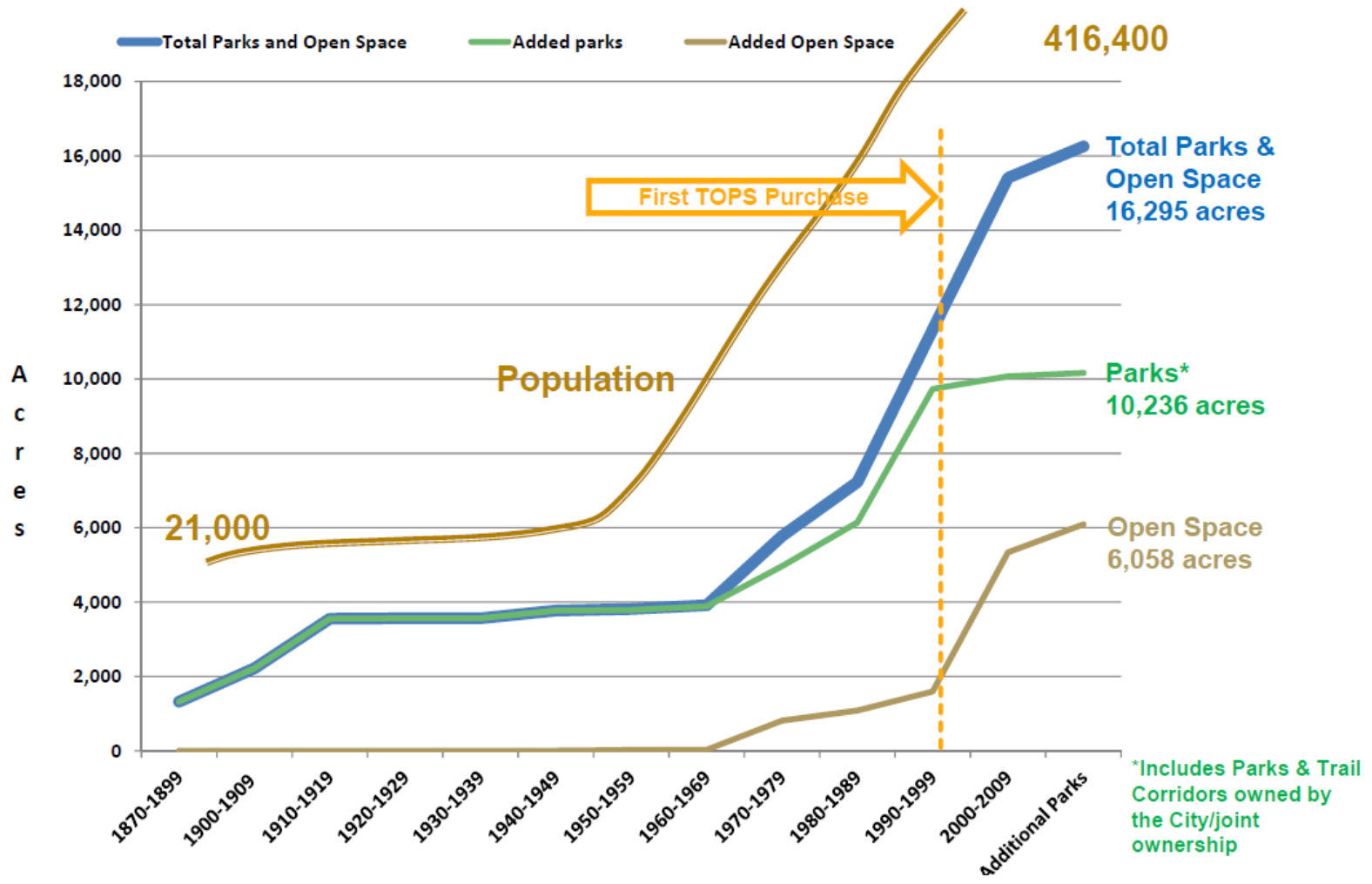


Colorado Springs maintains parkland and open space at a comparatively low cost per resident – \$37 per resident.

The average for comparable cities is \$91 per resident.

Source data: The Trust for Public Land, 2012 City Park Facts. Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands, Boulder Colorado Key Benchmark Analysis

# Parks and Open Space Over Time



# KEY THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS



# Major Issues for the Master Plan to Address

1. Insufficient and uncertain funding
2. Parks structures and facilities in poor condition or lacking
3. Natural and historic resource conservation, restoration and management needs
4. Gaps in the trail system
5. Some parks are loved to death (over used)
6. Flood, fire, and drought impacts
7. Lack of public awareness about the importance of parks, trails, and open space
8. High cost of water for park maintenance
9. Safety concerns and park rule enforcement needed
10. City needs to understand resident priorities, needs, and expectations for programs and facilities

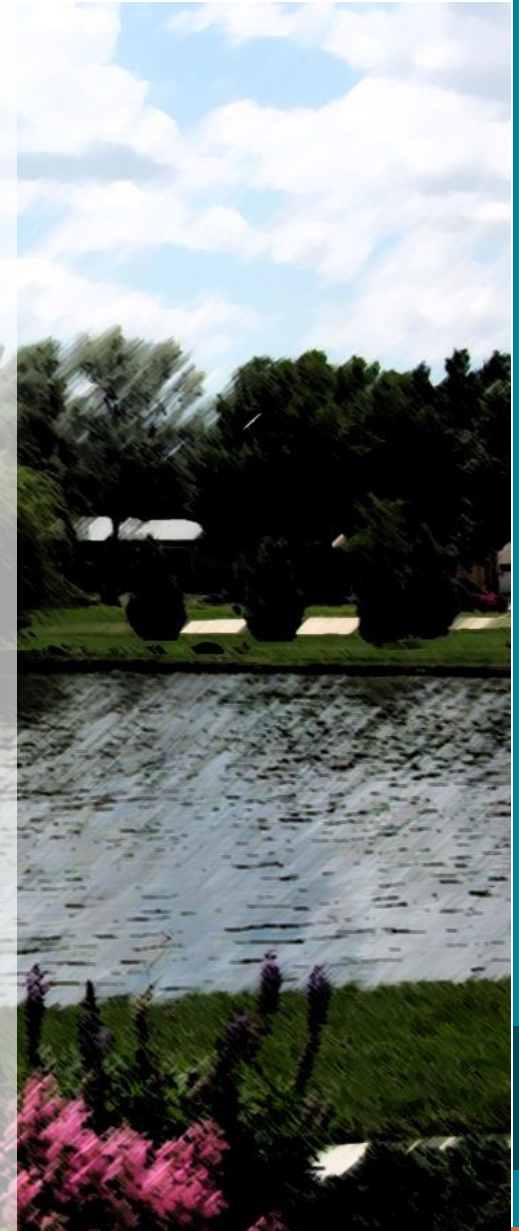
# VISION

- Face our financial challenges and **secure diverse funding sources** for the next 10 years to ensure resilience.
- Provide world-class **recreation** opportunities and act as **stewards** of the natural environment.
- Expand **mountain and nature-based** recreation opportunities.
- **Link trails** to complete connections between recreation hubs.



# VISION

- Address **deferred maintenance** and needed improvements to maintain our parks and recreation assets and legacy.
- Strengthen **safety and security** and address **flood, fire and drought** issues.
- Fill in the **gaps in the current open space** ring. Enhance the value of existing open space land assets by expanding conservation to the high quality natural lands surrounding them.
- Create **greenway** opportunities for **urban** open space and trails.



# VISION

- Address **population growth** and **changing demographics** with new parks, services and recreation opportunities.
- Provide **year-round recreation** opportunities to encourage community **health and wellness** for all residents.
- Recognize the value and purpose of the **arts, history and civic pride**.
- Promote and enhance **tourism opportunities** in parks and recreational areas.



# 7 Organizing Key Themes



**Take Care of What We Have**



**Diversify Financial Strategies including New Methods of Funding**



**Broaden, Enhance and Promote Recreation Opportunities**



**Continue Open Space Conservation in Advance of Development**



**Build our Community with the Understanding that Parks, Open Space, and Trails Create Great Neighborhoods**

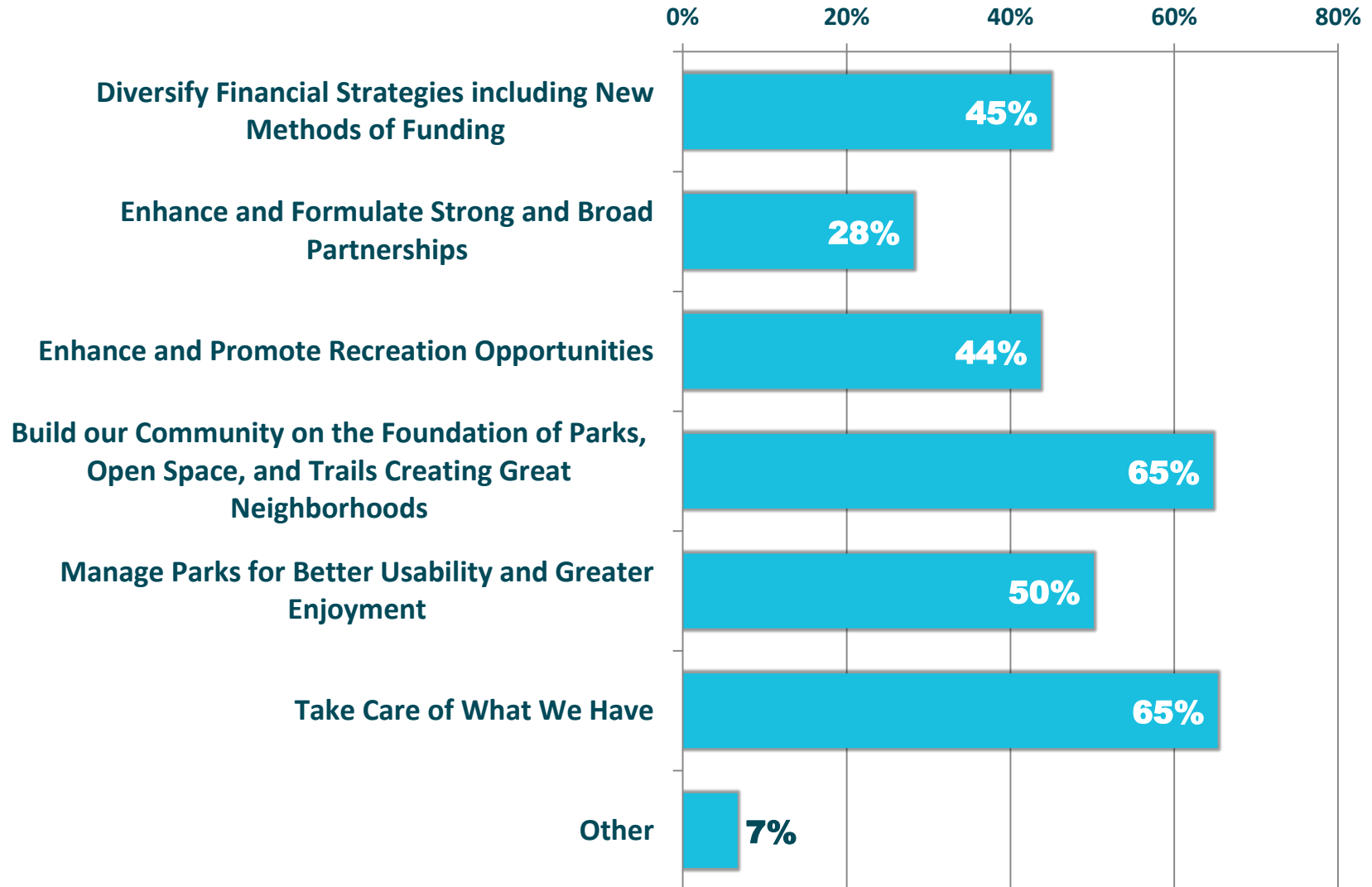


**Manage Parks for Better Usability and Greater Enjoyment**



**Enhance and Formulate Strong and Broad Partnerships**

## 7. Select the Key Themes that you support including in the Master Plan? *(select all that apply)*



# Response to Comments:

## Nearly 600 Individual Comments:

- Citizens
- Organizations
- TOPS Working Committee
- Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
- City Council

## Consistent Comments:

- Advocacy for Specific Recreation Interest
- Funding Alternatives
- Parks Foundation
- The Need for Further Discussion

# Revisions to Plan –

## Response to TOPS Committee and Parks Board Comments

### Overall Comments:

- Plan is “bigger” than a 10-year plan. The plan includes more than can be accomplished in 10 years. Master plan should be aspirational...
  - *Response: Language has been added to the plan that emphasizes that this plan reaches beyond the next 10 years. If the vision of this plan is to be achieved, action towards the overall vision in the next 10 years is critical before opportunities are lost.*
- Clarify interaction between Master Plan and Action Plan.
  - *Response: Language has been added to the plan.*
    - *Master Plan Purpose – Page 15 Vision: Long Term*
- *Action Plan Purpose – Page 3 Prioritization: Short Term*
- Need additional community input regarding Funding, PLDO Revisions, and Parks Foundation
  - *Response: Language has been added to plan that emphasizes the need for continued community dialogue to develop solutions and final recommendations.*

# Revisions to Plan –

## Response to TOPS Committee and Parks Board Comments

### Open Space Map

- Banning Lewis Ranch: Connect the candidate areas within the Banning Lewis Ranch; emphasize the west tributary of Jimmy Camp Creek
  - *Response: Open Space Master Plan has been revised*
- Plan should be broad enough to give flexibility. TOPS ordinance doesn't limit acquisitions to those shown in master plan.
  - *Response: Master Plan includes language that allows for additional areas to be identified through the TOPS process*
- Need a map to reflect existing AND proposed trails as well as proposed open space – a composite map.
  - *Response: A series of maps, including a composite map depicting trail and open space, has been added to the plan*

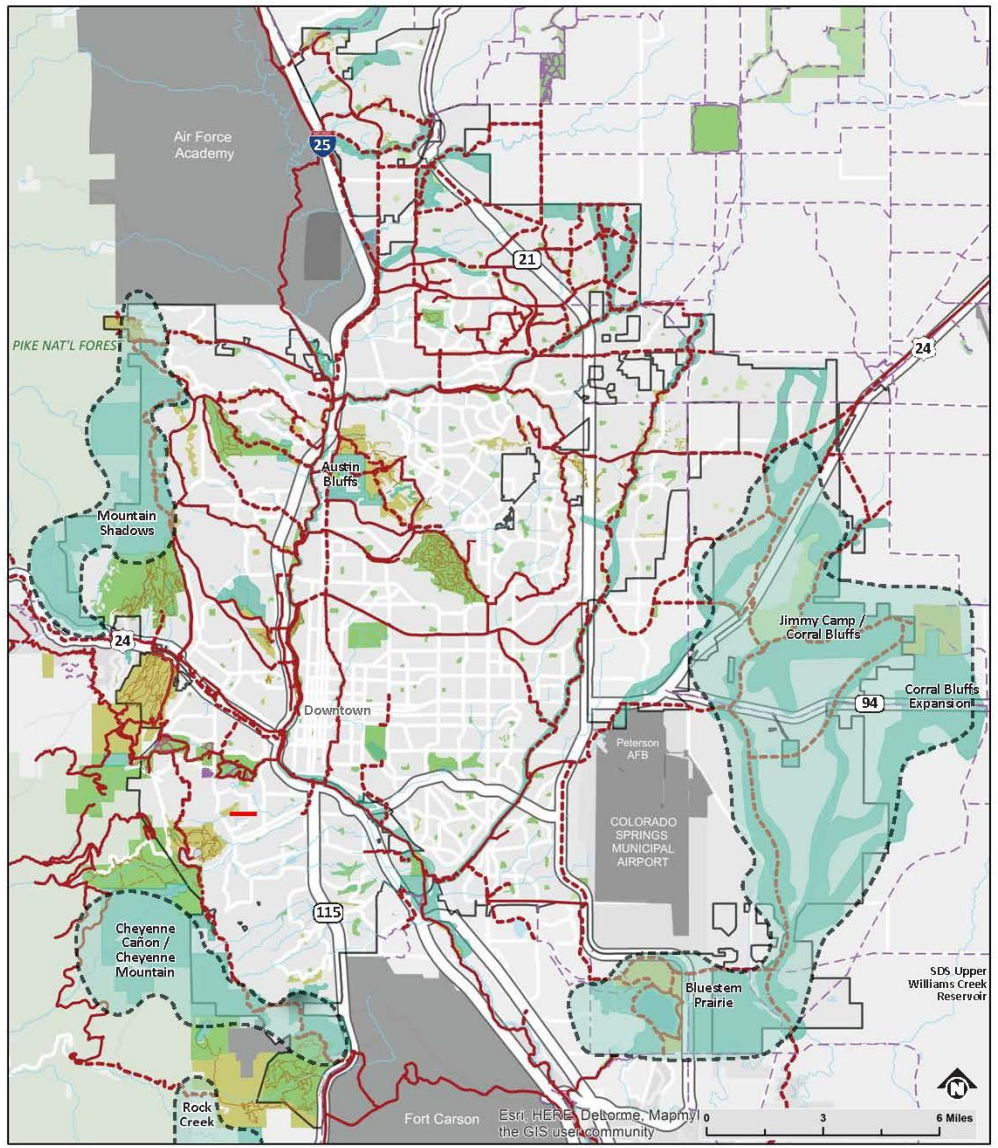
# Revisions to Plan –

## Response to TOPS Committee and Parks Board Comments

### Open Space Map

- Need a map to reflect existing AND proposed trails as well as proposed open space – a composite map.
  - *Response: A series of maps, including a composite map depicting trail and open space, has been added to the plan*





- |                               |                       |   |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Candidate Open Space Area     | Planned Urban Trail   | Pike National Forest                              |
| Conceptual Open Space Network | Existing Urban Trail  | Park Lands (City and Special District)            |
| Existing County Trail         | Proposed County Trail | Open Space/Special Resource Area/Greenway         |
| Existing Park Trail           | City Limits           | Undeveloped Park Land (City and Special District) |

# Revisions to Plan –

## Response to TOPS Committee and Parks Board Comments

### Funding:

- Need to provide a cost analysis for open space, trail and park projects.
  - *Response: The Park System Master Plan is intended to be a visionary document. The Action Plan will provide estimated costs for implementation. The Action Plan will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to reflect current costs and priorities. The Action Plan will be completed in the Winter of 2014.*
- Will the TOPS Ordinance percentages be changed?
  - *Response: The plan has been revised to recommend that the TOPS percentages be established based upon the projected funding needs. However, the plan continues to recommend that the TOPS Program remains the primary vehicle for open space acquisition and trail development.*
- Maintenance service levels are below 2008 levels. How much additional funding is necessary to return to pre-2008 maintenance levels?
  - *Response: It is estimated that an additional \$4 million for maintenance is needed to return to pre-2008 service levels. The Master Plan identifies a broad range of potential funding alternatives for the future. Additional analysis and stakeholder process would be needed to determine the appropriate mix of funding alternatives to fill this gap and return to pre-2008 service levels*

# Revisions to Plan –

## Response to TOPS Committee and Parks Board Comments

### Funding:

- Concerned that the plan is too specific when it comes to funding alternatives.
  - *Response: Language has been added to the plan that emphasizes the need for continued analysis and community dialogue when determining an exact plan of action. The Action Plan will include development of a process to determine next steps.*
- Consider bonding as a tool for advancing priority projects
  - *Response: Draft plan recommended bonding as a tool for open space acquisition. The suggested uses of bonding have been expanded to new park development and park renovation.*

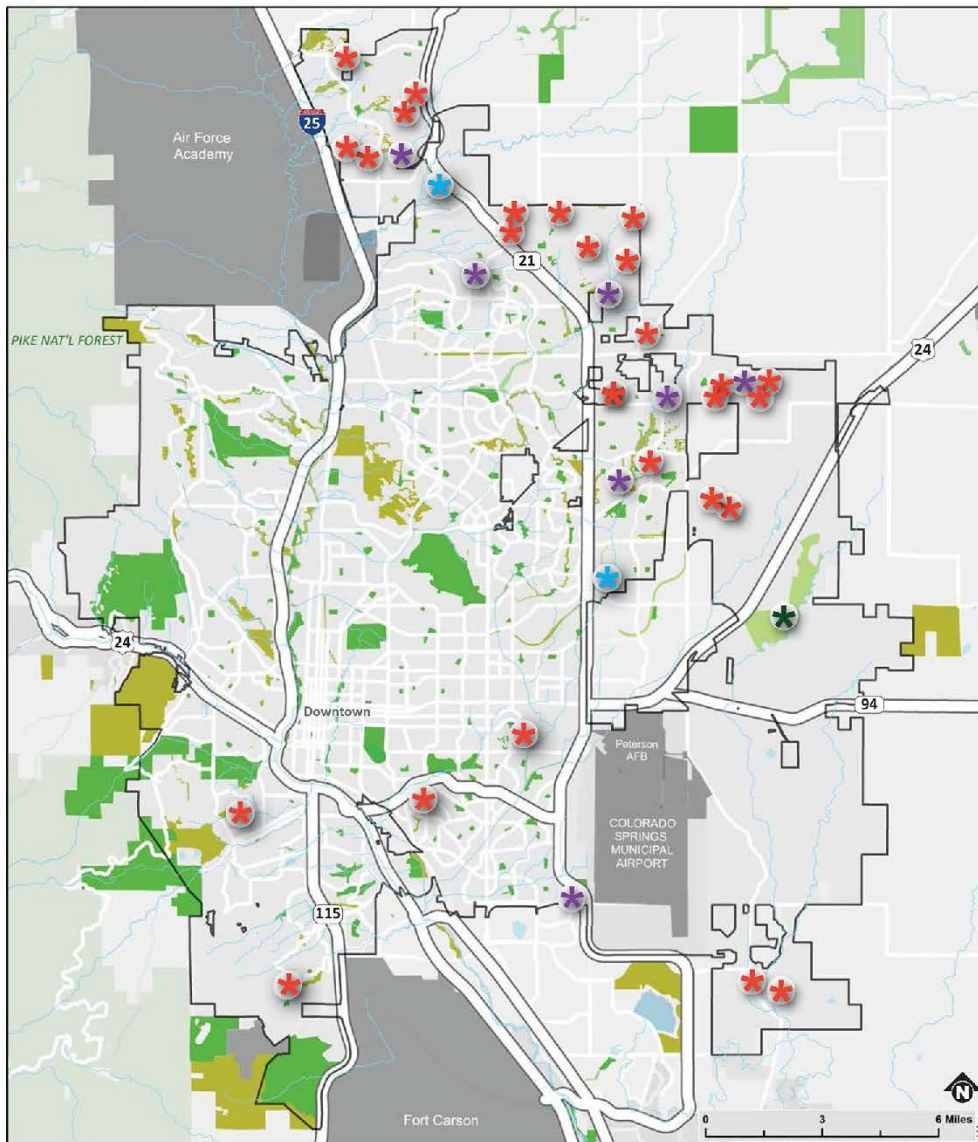
# Revisions to Plan –

## Response to TOPS Committee and Parks Board Comments

### TOPS Parks:

- Add future neighborhood and community parks to a composite map.
  - *Response: A composite map that depicts future neighborhood and community parks has been added to the plan.*
- Emphasize parks along greenway corridors and trails.
  - *Response: The plan has been amended to provide added emphasis on site selection for future park sites. Standards for community parks have been added.*
- *Parks need more emphasis in the plan*
  - *Response: Additional language has been added to bolster parks in the master plan. For added emphasis, new parks have been placed within the section of the plan entitled “Taking Care of What We Have” because the City has existing obligations to develop these park sites and provide services in these areas.*

Map 21: Undeveloped Future Park Properties



Additional Undeveloped Parks

- ★ Neighborhood Park
- ★ Community Park
- ★ Sports Complex
- ★ Regional Park

- Pike National Forest
- Park Lands (City and Special District)
- Open Space/Special Resource Area/Greenway
- Undeveloped Park/Open Space Land (City and Special District)
- City Limits

Master Plan | 115

# Revisions to Plan –

## Response to TOPS Committee and Parks Board Comments

### Parks Foundation Comments:

- Revise Park Foundation Language to keep existing Friends Groups autonomous and thriving.
- Existing Friends Groups should remain autonomous with their funds and fund raising goals.
- Park Foundation fundraising should not result in a corresponding decrease in General Fund dollars.
- Parks should not be dependent upon philanthropic giving.
- Foundation should be private and not part of the City organization.

# Revisions to Plan –

## Response to TOPS Committee and Parks Board Comments

### Parks Foundation Response:

- *Response: The Parks Foundation is envisioned as a stand alone, not-for-profit 501c3 organization. Existing efforts to develop and nurture Friends Groups and volunteers should be continued. However, the Master Plan also recommends forming a citywide Parks Foundation to coordinate and bring more focused fundraising efforts to park support. The Foundation is not intended to replace current funding sources or as a means for the City to abdicate responsibilities. Instead, the Foundation is to add support and fill a currently unmet role. Its mission would be to provide support for all city parks, particularly the smaller neighborhood parks that don't have any fundraising capacity, and to reduce the need for every non-profit or Friends Group to have organizational capacity for fundraising. Friends Groups would be encouraged to continue their successful fundraising efforts. The Parks Foundation would focus on large scale, collaborative fund raising efforts – providing opportunities for Friends Groups to leverage their resources for larger, community wide benefit....*

# Revisions to Plan –

## Response to TOPS Committee and Parks Board Comments

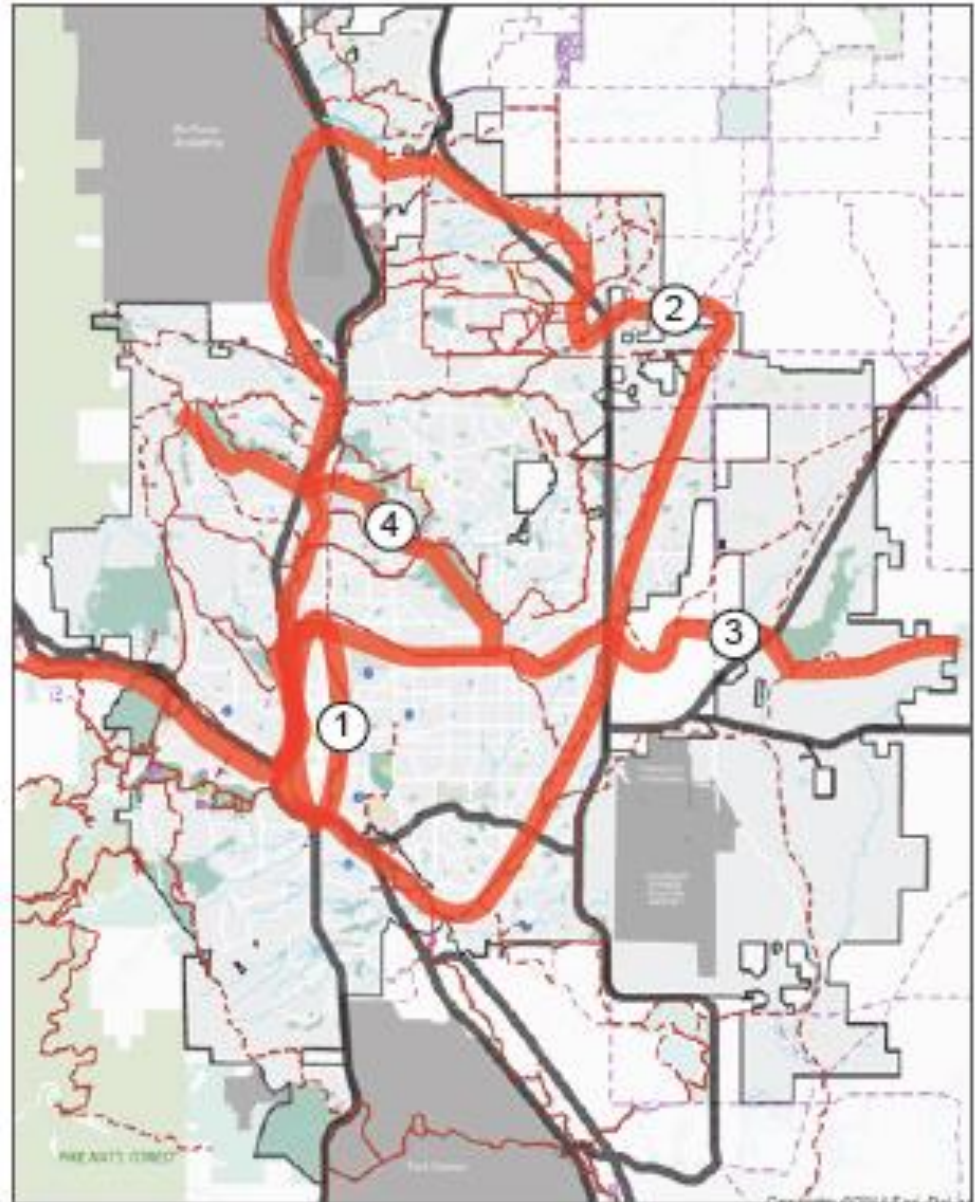
### TOPS Trails:

- Legacy Loop – Glad to see it included
  - *Response: Master Plan includes the Legacy Loop – no revision necessary.*
- Ring the Springs – Where does the actual loop go? How does it connect through the north east part of our community.
  - *Response: The Master Plan does not provide an exact alignment. The final alignment will be determined over time through further analysis and the development review process.*
- Strengthen east-west trail connections.
  - *Response: The plan included numerous east-west connectors. La Foret Trail, Skyline Trail, Cottonwood Trail, Woodmen Trail, Sinton Trail, Templeton Gap Trail, Rock Island Trail and Midland Trail. In addition, the City's Bike Plan includes numerous on-street east-west bicycle routes. No change to the plan is necessary.*

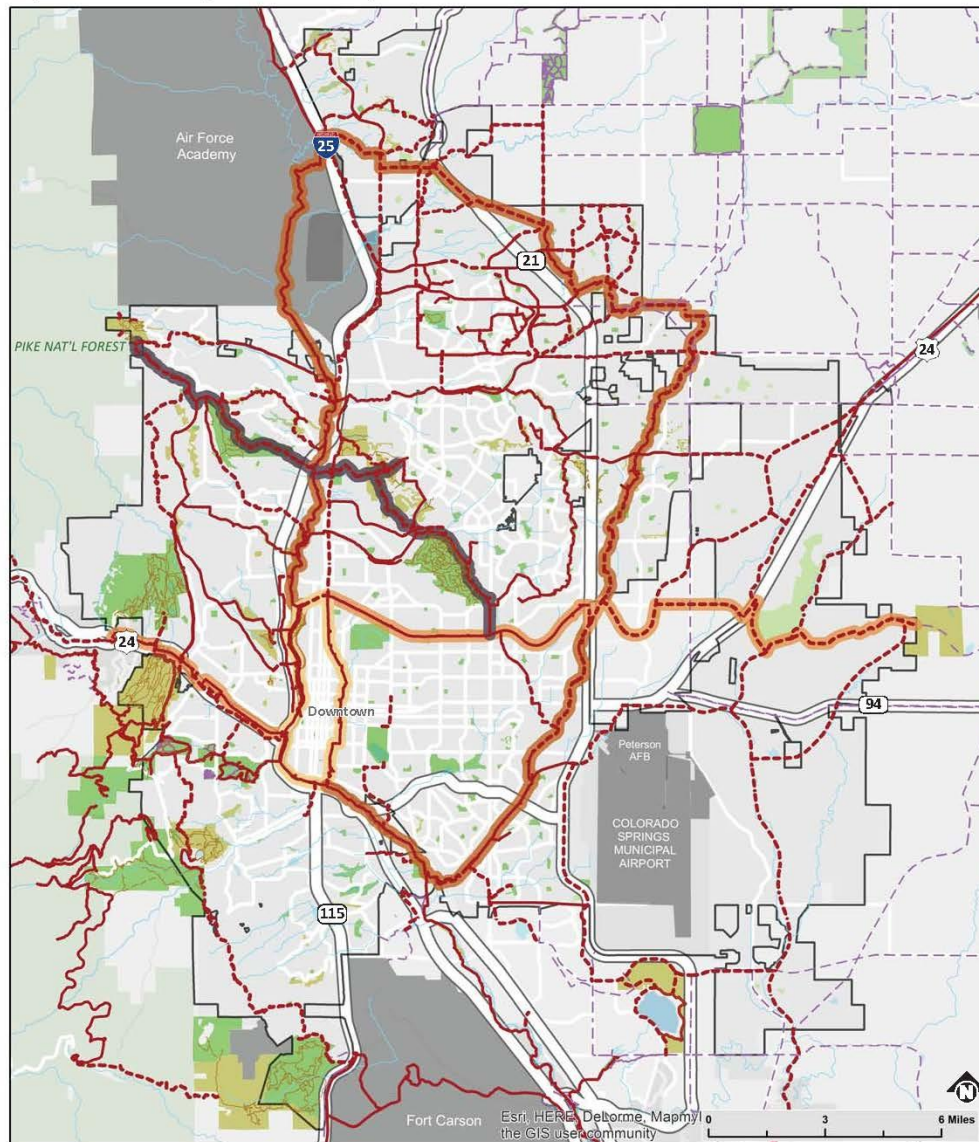


# Key Trail Linkages

1. Legacy Loop
2. Ring the Springs
3. East-West Connector
4. Park to Peak Connector



Map 24: Network of Primary Trail Routes and Loops



- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  Legacy Loop            |  Planned Urban Trail   |  Pike National Forest                              |
|  Grand Loop             |  Existing Urban Trail  |  Park Lands (City and Special District)            |
|  East West Connector    |  Existing County Trail |  Open Space/Special Resource Area/Greenway         |
|  Park to Peak Connector |  Proposed County Trail |  Undeveloped Park Land (City and Special District) |
|  |  Existing Park Trail   |  City Limits                                       |

Master Plan | 131

# Revisions to Plan –

## Response to TOPS Committee and Parks Board Comments

### TOPS Trails:

- Consider using existing gas line for trails through Cordera:
  - *Response: The approved Cordera Master Plan identifies existing and future trail corridors. If Cordera Master Plan is amended, staff will review trail corridors for consistency with Master Plan vision.*
- Provide a simplified trail map that indicates existing and future trail corridors.
  - *Response: An additional map depicting existing and future trail corridors has been added to the plan.*
- Consider using SDS corridor for future trails.
  - *Response: Few opportunities exist for trails along the SDS corridor within the City limits. More desirable corridors are identified on the plan. No change to the master plan necessary.*
- Provide a connection between Ute Valley Park and Blodgett Open Space.
  - *Response: Plan has been amended to graphically depict this connection.*

# Revisions to Plan –

## Response to TOPS Committee and Parks Board Comments

### City Council Comments:

- Asked a clarification question about safety in our parks. Is the safety issue real or perceived.
  - *Response: Our survey results suggest that safety concerns are both real and perceived. The plan emphasizes the need to address safety and enforcement in our parks.*
- Include “Ring the Peak” Trail
  - *Response– Plan will include Ring the Peak – with an emphasis on working cooperatively with other jurisdictions to accomplish.*
- Concerned about proposal to increase the TOPS Tax. Very supportive of existing TOPS Tax – wants continued success.
  - *Response: The plan includes a wide range of possible funding alternatives. Additional language has been added to the plan that states the need for additional community conversation and analysis to take place to determine the best mix of funding measures to put the park system on a sustainable path. Surveys and public input strongly supported the concept of increasing the TOPS Sales Tax.*

# Revisions to Plan –

## Response to TOPS Working Committee Comments

### City Council Comments:

- Concerned about recommendation regarding discounted water rates.
  - *Response: Discounted water rates were strongly supported by the vast majority of process participants through surveys and input. Discounted water rates remain in the plan as an alternative for future discussion and consideration*
- Concerned about “stabilizing” general fund contribution to parks. The City needs flexibility in the budget process to respond to emergencies and other priorities.
  - *Response: “Stabilization” of the general fund was strongly supported by the vast majority of process participants through surveys and input. The plan does not recommend any specific amount or percentage, but rather identifies “stabilization” as a general goal.*
- Plan is a good road map for the future – appreciates the work that has gone into the plan
  - *Response: Supportive comment.*

# Revisions to Plan –

## Response City Council Comments

### City Council Comments:

- Concerned about too much emphasis on downtown and infill. Wants more emphasis on new parks in the north and east.
  - *Response—added language on page 112 that discusses community expectations for park services. In some cases, neighborhoods have been waiting for their parks for decades. Plan has been amended to include a list of undeveloped park sites. Infill is identified as a strategic initiative in City Council’s Strategic Plan and the Mayor’s Strategic Plan.*
- Too much emphasis on sports and events – should be focused on resident quality of life.
  - *Response –The plan seeks to provide a balance between active and passive uses of the park system to encourage a wide variety of park uses and experiences. A full range of opportunities, including sports and events, were broadly supported in the public process.*

# Revisions to Plan –

## Response to City Council Comments

### City Council Comments:

- Need to clarify the requirement of park fees for infill areas.
  - *Response: Revised text has been provided in the plan regarding park requirements across the City. Revised language supports a stratification of requirements and fees depending on availability of park land and park services within the vicinity of the proposed development.*
- Consider removing references to “City for Champions” on page 6. Emphasize infill rather than “City for Champions”
  - *Response—The reference to City for Champions has been revised to read “A strong vision for downtown revitalization and infill”*

# Revisions to Plan –

## Response to City Council Comments

### City Council Comments:

- Add a list of undeveloped parks, include criteria to be used for prioritization.
  - *Response: The plan has been revised to include a list of undeveloped parks. The prioritization of parks projects will be a recommendation of the Action Plan.*
- Appreciation for the effort to bring lots of voices and ideas together through the planning process. The proposed Parks Foundation is a forward thinking idea.
  - *Response– Supportive comment*
- A prioritized list of all park projects should be included – with projected costs.
  - *Response– A prioritized list of projects will be a recommendation of the Action Plan. The Action Plan, along with priorities, will be revisited by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and City Council on an regular basis.*



# Next Steps

## Formal Review and Consideration of Master Plan

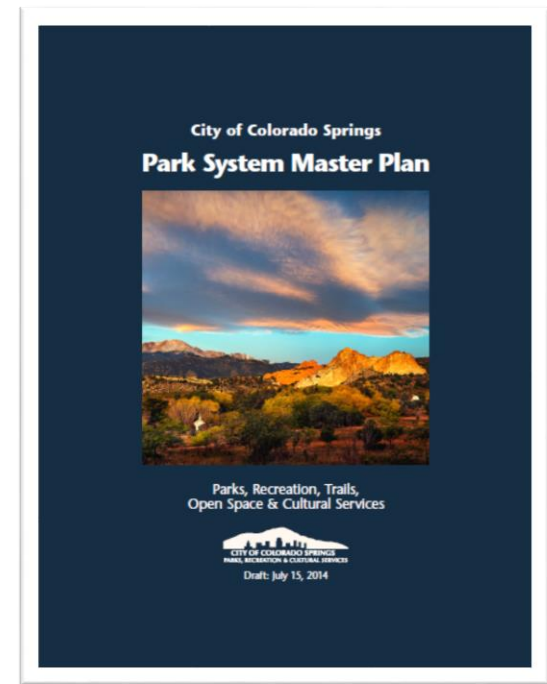
- TOPS Working Committee – Sept 3 (Approved)
- Parks and Recreation Advisory Board – Sept 11 (Approved)
- City Council – Sept 23

## Develop Action Plan with Priorities (Fall/Winter 2014)

- Stakeholder Review
- Parks Board and City Council Review
- Revisit Action Plan on Annual Basis

## Implementation of Priority Action Items

- Stakeholder Engagement
- Inform 2015 Budget and Beyond
- Implementation and Action!



# Park System Master Plan

Parks, Recreation, Trails, Open Space & Cultural Services

