



BUILDING COMMUNITY, PRESERVING OUR LEGACY

PARK SYSTEM ASSESSMENT

12/11/2025



Parks, Recreation,
& Cultural Services

INTRODUCTIONS:

Project is led by:
City of Colorado Springs
Parks, Recreation and Cultural
Services (PRCS)
Department Staff

And facilitated by:
Kimley-Horn staff
PROS Consulting
ETC Institute



Department Vision:

Building community and preserving our legacy to make Colorado Springs the finest place to live and visit.

Department Mission:

The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department is the steward of a diverse park system that enriches the community through healthy, active opportunities that engage and inspire.

PLANNING PROCESS + SCHEDULE

2-Part Process:

- **Part 1: Park System Assessment** – includes evaluation and assessment of existing system and extensive public engagement
- **Part 2: Strategic Planning** - includes long-range vision, guiding principles, and identification of actions for implementation strategies

Typically a 12-16 month process

Targeting April/May period for Draft Master Plan

PARK SYSTEM MASTER PLAN



- Evaluates and assesses parks, facilities, and open spaces
- Gathers input from the community through
 - Community workshops
 - Surveys
 - Pop-up Events
- Defines Long-Range Vision
- Establishes Implementation Strategies
- Outlines Actions Items



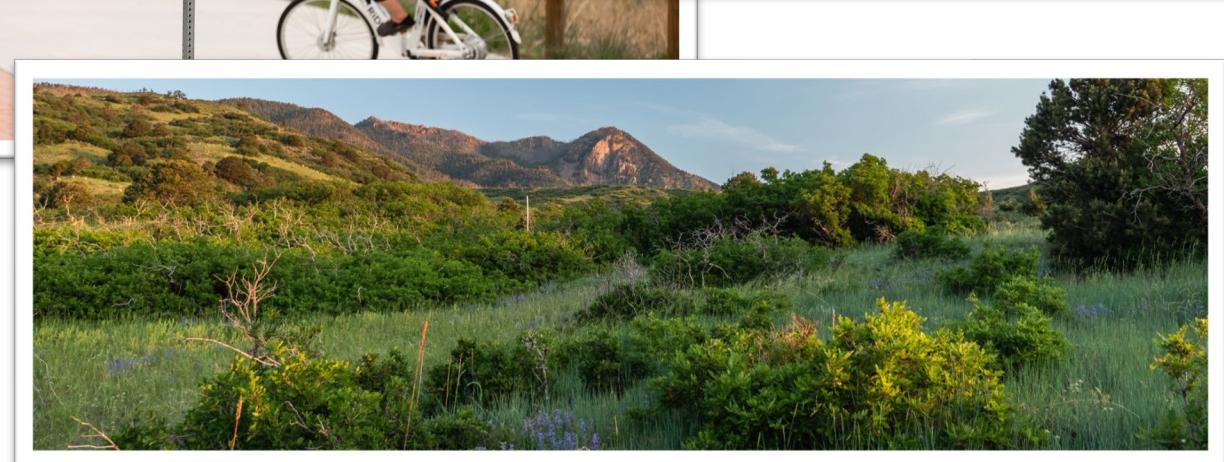
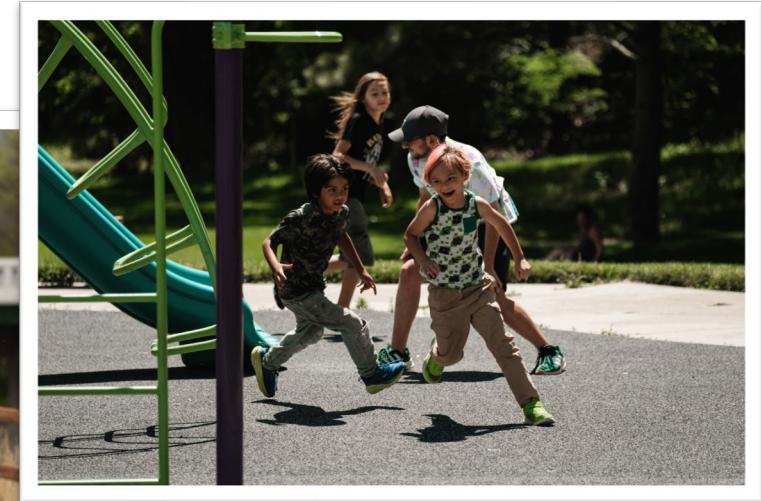
PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Park System Master Plan (PSMP) is to:

- 1** Identify recommendations to assist the city in meeting existing and future park, recreation, trail, open space, and cultural service needs.
- 2** Inform decision-making for the next 10-15 years through external and internal input and data analysis.
- 3** Ensure equitable access to the park system for everyone in Colorado Springs.

WHAT IS A PARK SYSTEM ASSESSMENT?

- A foundational assessment of conditions, needs, and input from the community
- Factually based findings
- Does not make recommendations
- Employs an approach to identify what 'bubbles' to the top consistently, not just the loudest voices in the community
- Balances community input with city staff and consultant assessments

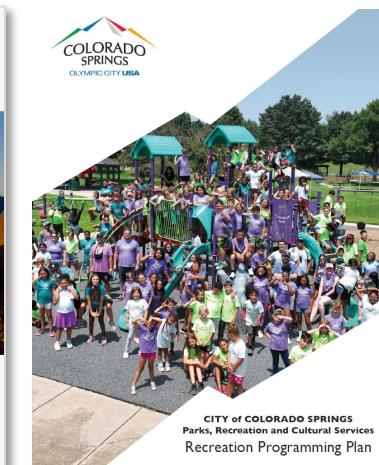
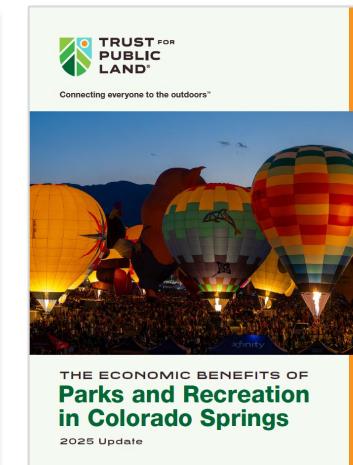
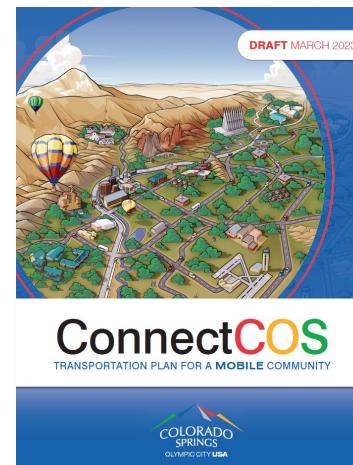
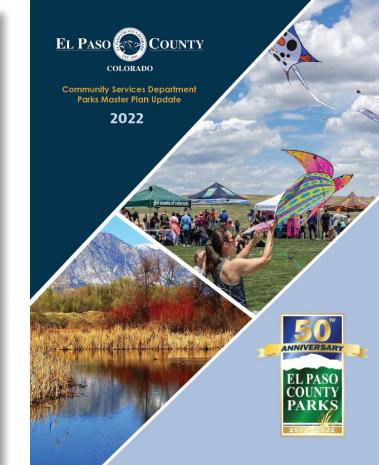
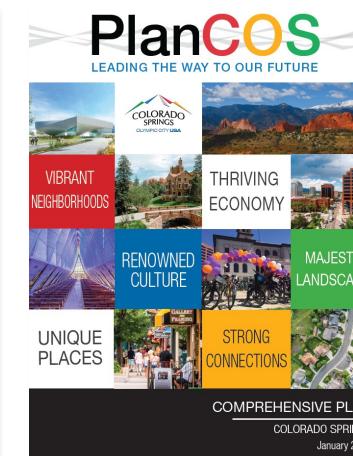
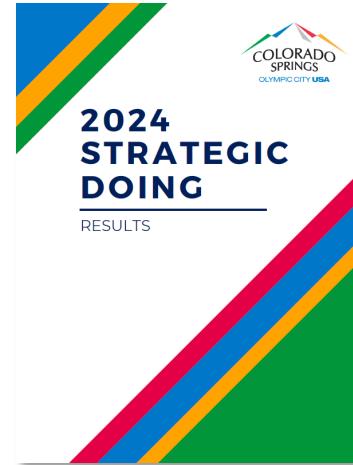


GUIDING DOCUMENT

Common themes include:

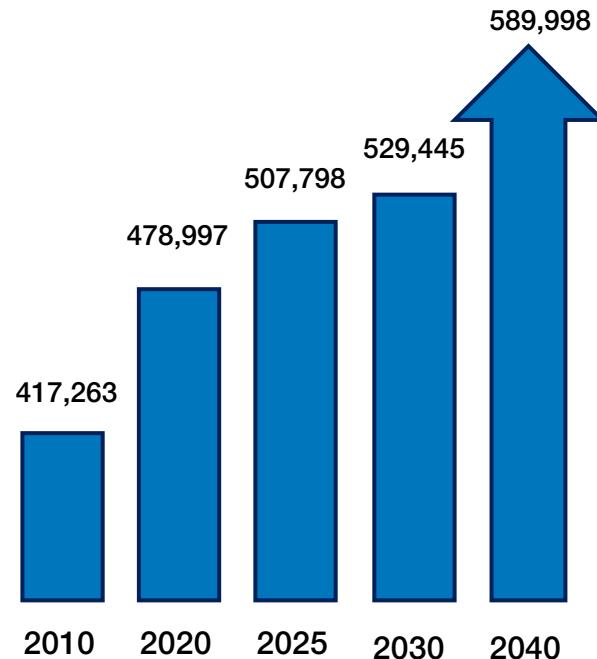
- 1. “Fix First” and Fund Sustainably:** Emphasizes deferred maintenance and long-term stewardship, supported by diversified funding strategies
- 2. A Connected, Multimodal Trail and Creek Network:** Reduce trail and bikeway gaps, enhancing first/last-mile access, and completing creek corridor greenways
- 3. Equity, Health, and Access as Core System Outcomes:** Recognizes parks and recreation as essential for delivering equitable access, and measurable public-health benefits
- 4. Natural Landscapes and Creek Corridors as Defining City Assets:** Identify the area's foothills, riparian corridors, mesas, and unique natural areas as core to ecological resilience, character, and long-term growth management
- 5. Economic Value of Parks, Recreation, and Trails:** COS park system is major economic infrastructure, enhancing property values, and generator of tourism revenue

Sample of Documents:



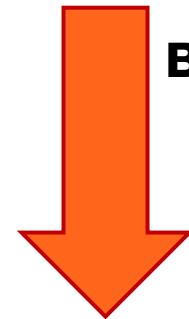
DEMOGRAPHICS TRENDS

Population Growth



Growth will continue to increase pressure on existing parks, open space and programming without expansion

Declining Young Adults Growing Active Adults



Between Ages 18-34

2010 – 29%
2020 – 26%
2040 – 22%

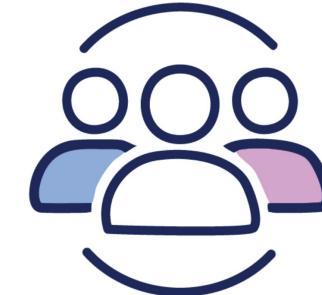
Ages 75+

2010 – 5%
2020 – 6%
2040 – 9%



Increases opportunities for multigenerational parks, facilities and program offerings

Diversity of Cultures



Two or More Races +8%
(2010–2020)

Hispanic/Latino
Ethnicity +5% by 2040



Increases opportunities for more culturally responsive parks, programming, outreach efforts and partnerships



TRENDS

Relevant themes in trends include:

1. Colorado Springs Residents Like to Participate:

City residents participate in above national average levels in sports, fitness, and outdoor recreation, increasing the demand for more facilities and opportunities.

2. Record High National Recreation Participation

Rates: Parallels COS' identify as an outdoor recreation destination

3. National Growth in Sports:

Rapid increases in all racquet and team sports with 20 of 24 youth sports increasing in participation

4. Outdoor and Trail Recreation:

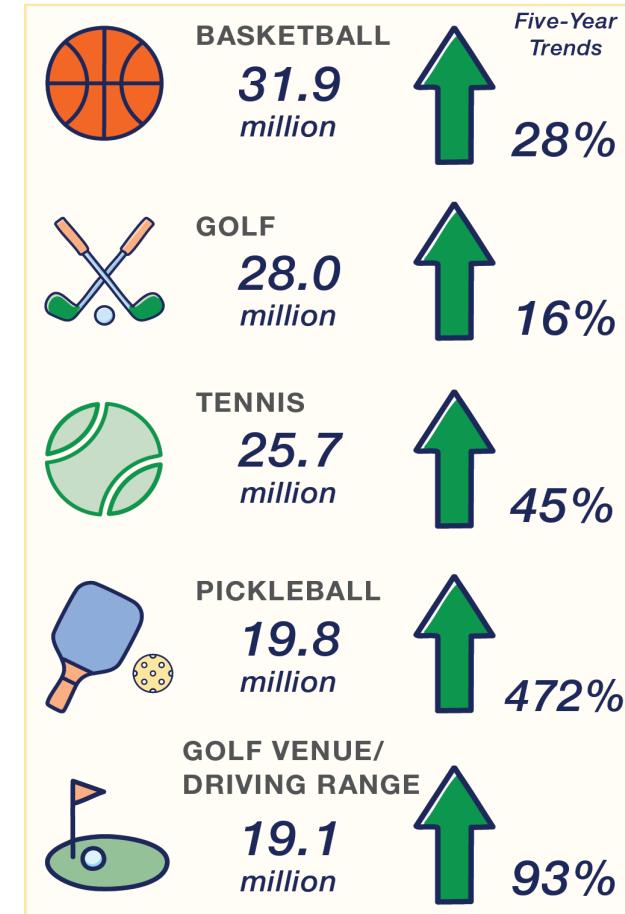
More people are hiking, camping, trail running, and participating in outdoor fitness

5. Life-Long Wellness:

Continued increase in wellness and class-based fitness; especially for an aging-yet active population

National Trends

TOP 5 MOST PARTICIPATED SPORTS:

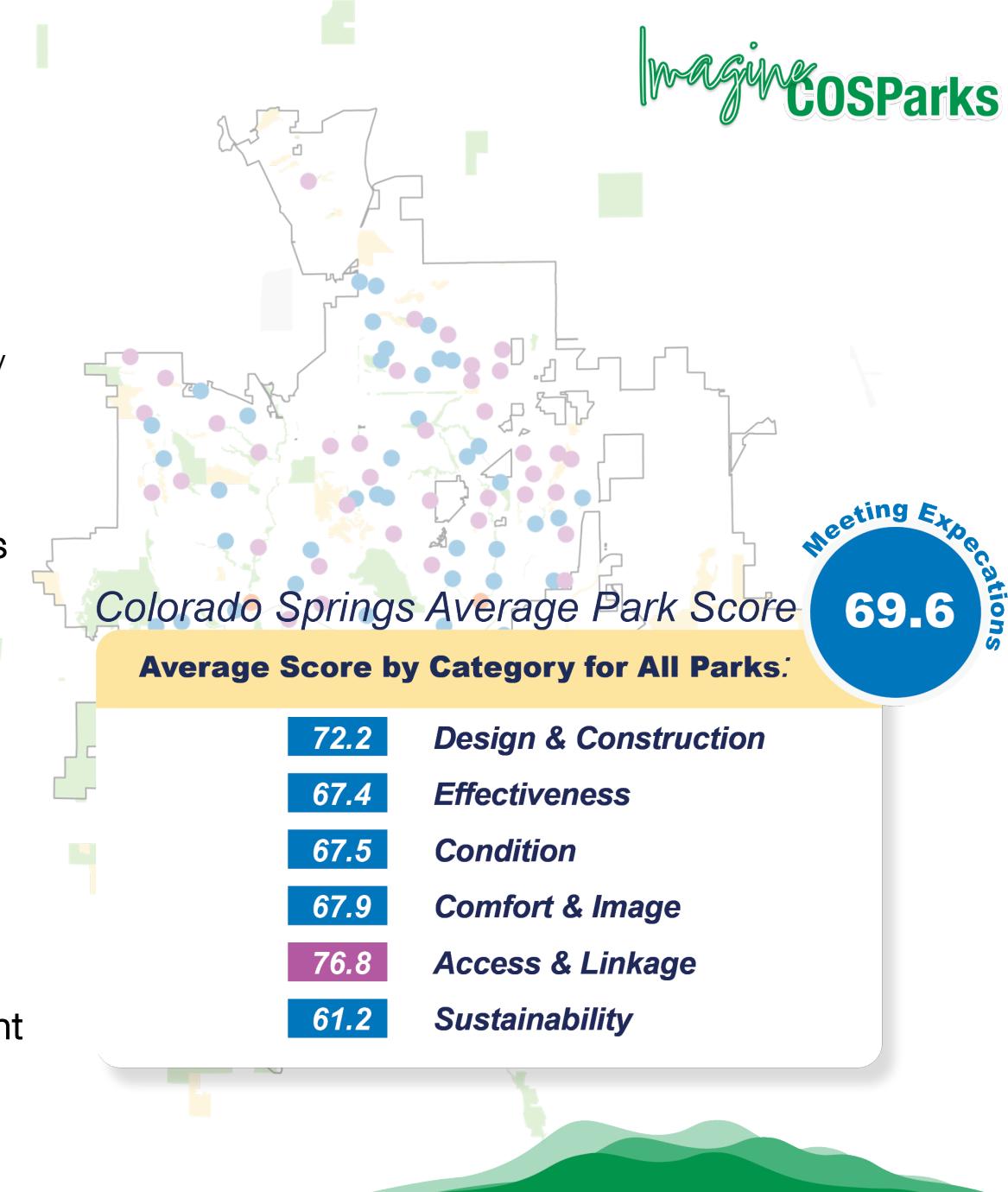


by Sports and Fitness Industry Association (2025)

PARK EVALUATIONS

Key findings include:

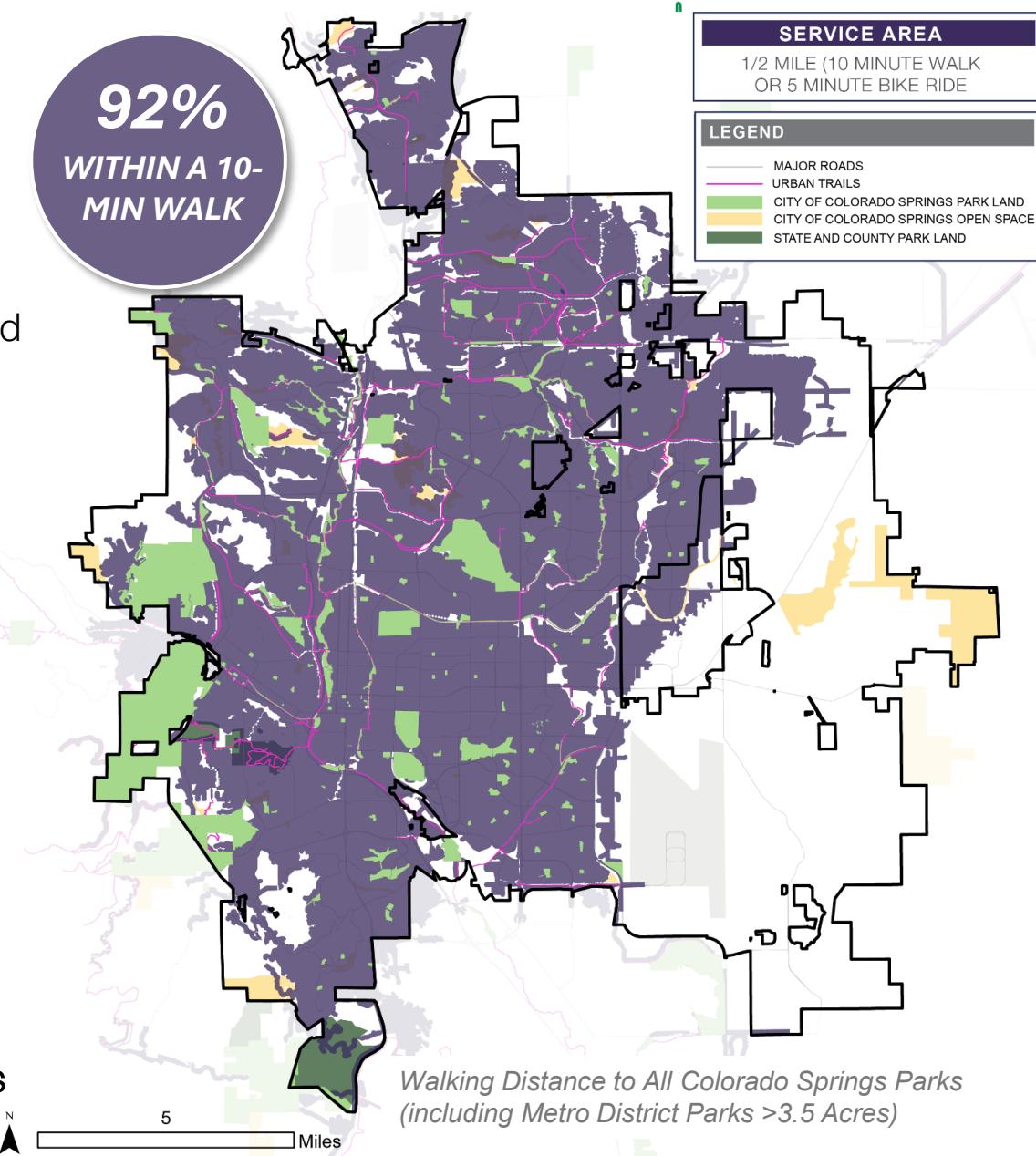
- 1. Strong Access and Connectivity:** Access and linkages are the best performing component for parks throughout the city
- 2. Sustainability Has Greatest Room for Continued Improvements:** Lowest scoring component, but has greatest potential to align with residents' conservation values
- 3. Park Comforts Lacking:** Recurring needs for restrooms, drinking fountains, benches, wayfinding, trailheads driven by increase in all-day recreation needs
- 4. Open Space and Developed Parks:** Growth in open space has met demand for natural experiences and trails while developed park land is slightly behind growth needs
- 5. Unique, World-class Open Spaces:** Elevates the system to world-wide prominence but does not fit into current classifications and standards well.



LEVEL OF SERVICE

Key findings include:

- 1. Extensive Trail Network:** Twice peer average in length and strongly reflects the outdoor culture of the area
- 2. Physically Accessible:** High level of access systemwide, but still pockets of gaps in east and southeast areas
- 3. Growing Acreage:** City has added nearly 6,000 acres of park and open space land since 2014, a 33% expansion of the park system
- 4. High Acreage Levels Driven by Open Space:** City has one of the highest overall acreage levels in the US West due primarily to abundant open spaces
- 5. Open Space Outpaces All Other Resources:** Reinforces the need to plan and budget for complete costs associated with acquisition and long-term stewardship needs of lands



LEVEL OF SERVICE

Acreage

Highlights:

- One of the highest Acreage LOS in the US West
- Added almost 6,000 acres of park and open space since 2014, growing the park system by 33%

	2014 TOTAL ACREAGE	2014 ACREAGE LOS*	2025 TOTAL ACREAGE	2025 ACREAGE LOS**	2014 TO 2025 DIFFERENCE IN ACREAGE	2014 TO 2025 DIFFERENCE IN LOS
① Mini Parks / Neighborhood Parks / Special Purpose Parks / Metro Mini + Neighborhood Parks / Future Neighborhood Parks	1,084.60	2.43	1,138.23	2.24	+53.63	-0.19
② Community Parks / Sports Complexes / Metro Community Parks / Future Community Parks	856.94	1.91	986.63	1.94	+129.69	+0.03
③ Regional Parks / All Open Space / Trail Corridors / Metro Open Space + Trails	16,258.20	36.41	22,072.24	43.47	+5,814.04	+7.06
Total Acreage	18,199.74	40.77	24,197.10	47.65	+5,997.36	+6.88

Note: *Based upon Colorado Springs GIS Database - Level of Service is based on the 2014 population estimate of 446,439. **Based upon ESRI ACS 2025 estimated population for Colorado Springs of 507,798. (green) = gain / (orange) = loss

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Multi-method + Inclusive

Key themes include:

1. Trails Were Most Consistent Priority:

Across all types of engagement, trail needs were strongly reflected.

2. Support for Taking Care of Core Infrastructure Gaps:

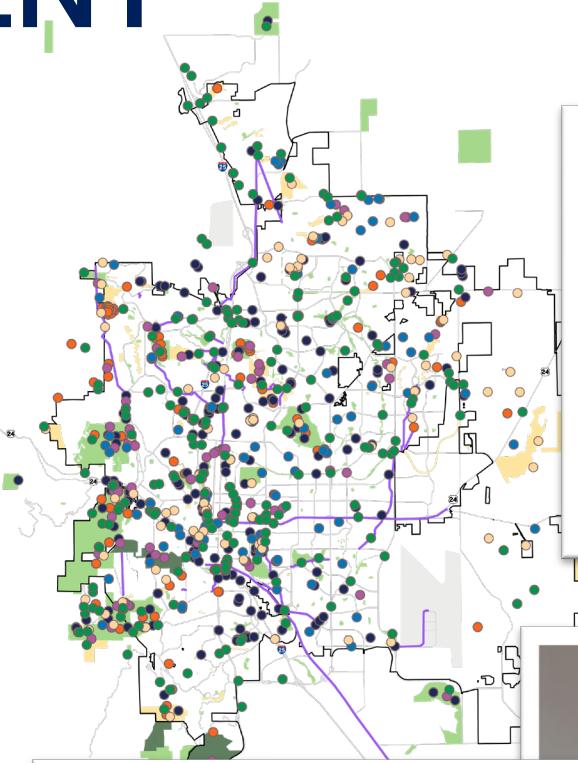
Needs for taking care of existing system correlated to high support for increasing funding

3. Safety is Most Common Barrier:

Safety concerns such as homelessness, lighting, and maintenance were consistently noted

4. Access:

Southeast and eastern areas of city are most impacted by physical barriers and affordable access



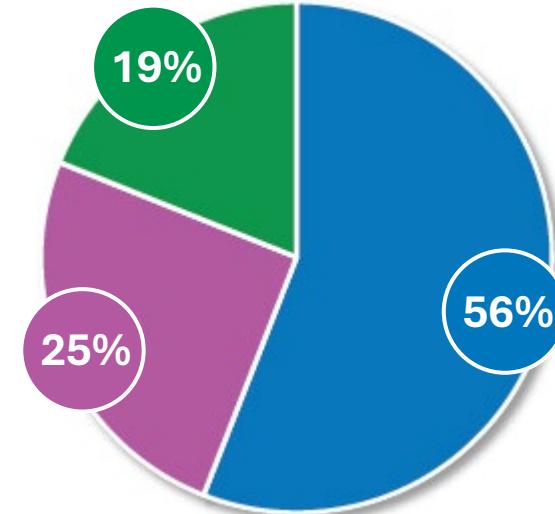
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Online Survey

Highlights include:

- Survey was available from June to August 2025
- Open to all citizens
- Offered in English and Spanish
- 1,375 total responses
 - 93% residents of the city
- All zip codes of the city represented
- Match Statistical Survey questions with a few additional

Support for following action:

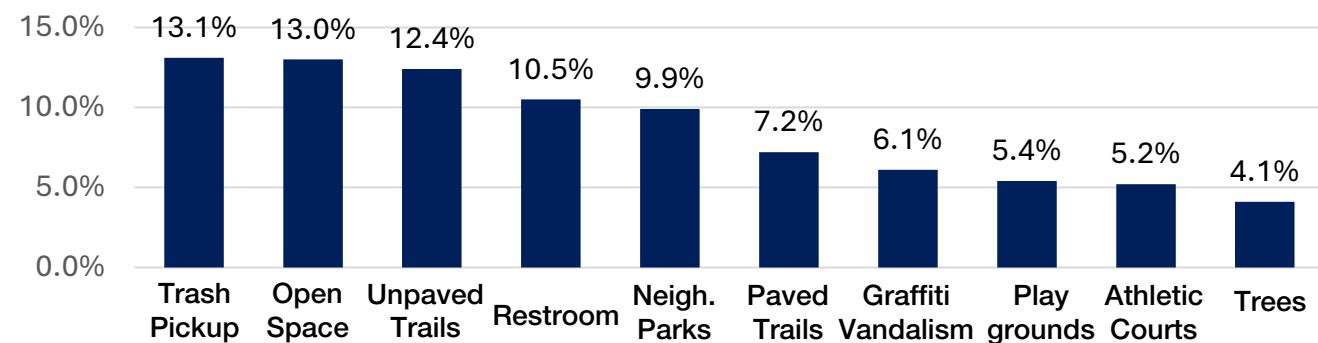


Taking care of existing infrastructure (minor)

Replace/Improve infrastructure (major)

Keep up with new growth (new)

Most Important Maintenance Activities



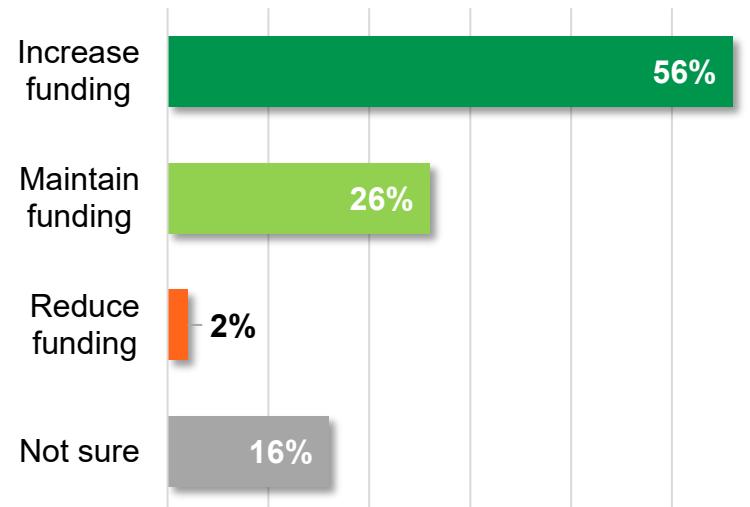
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Statistically Valid Survey (SVS)

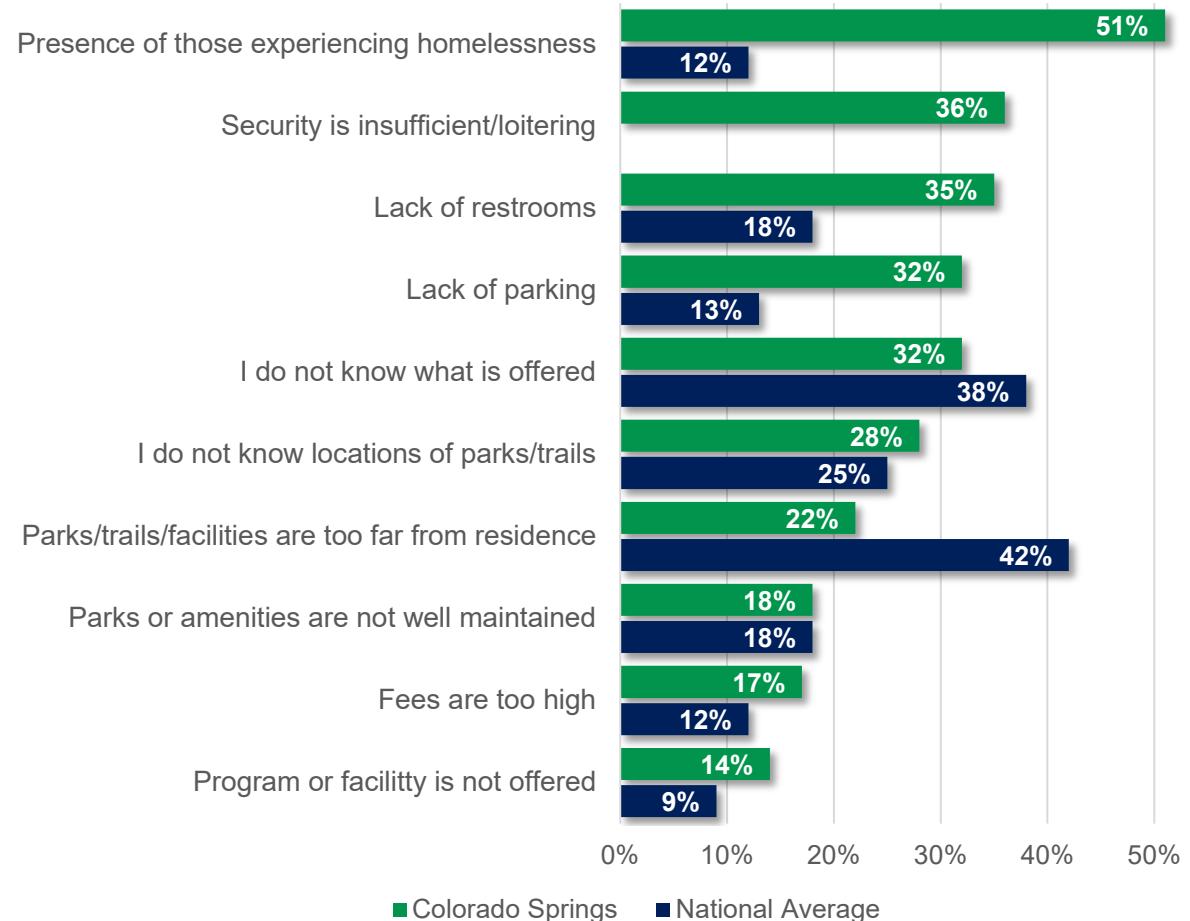
Highlights:

- Random and stratified to match demographics of city
- Multiple languages offered
- 1,016 total responses (all residents of city)
- Includes Council District level samples

Willing to Support with Funding



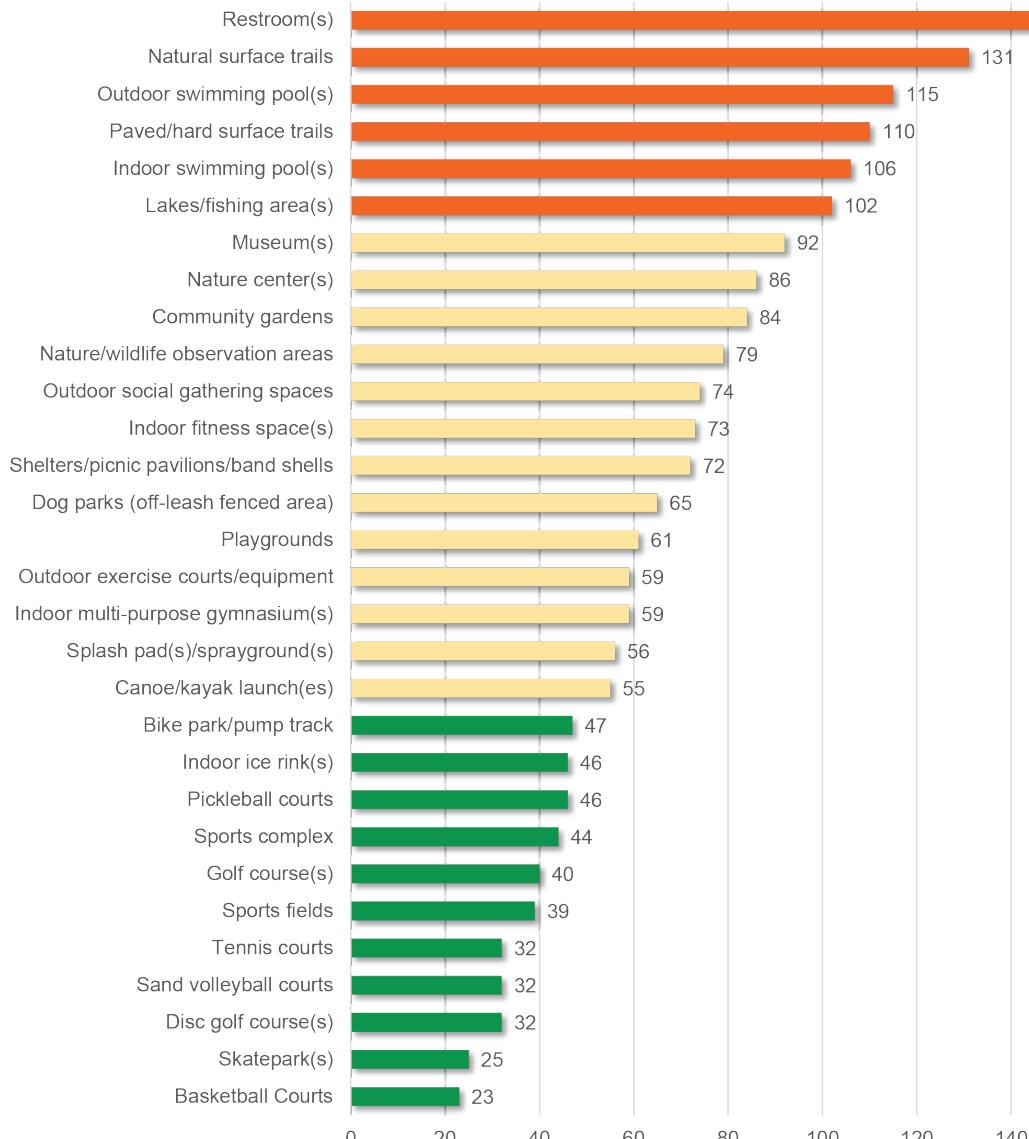
Top 10 Barriers to Use:



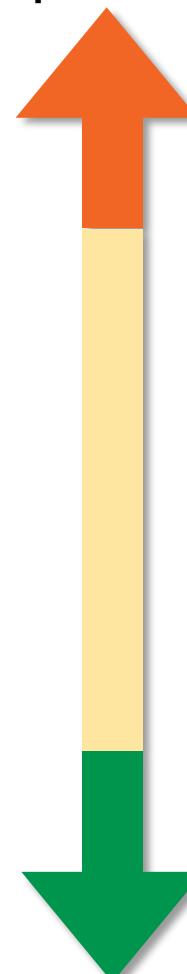
Statistically Valid Survey - Highest Need & Most Important Rankings



Recreation Facilities and Amenities:



Highest
Needs &
Importance



Lowest Needs
& Importance

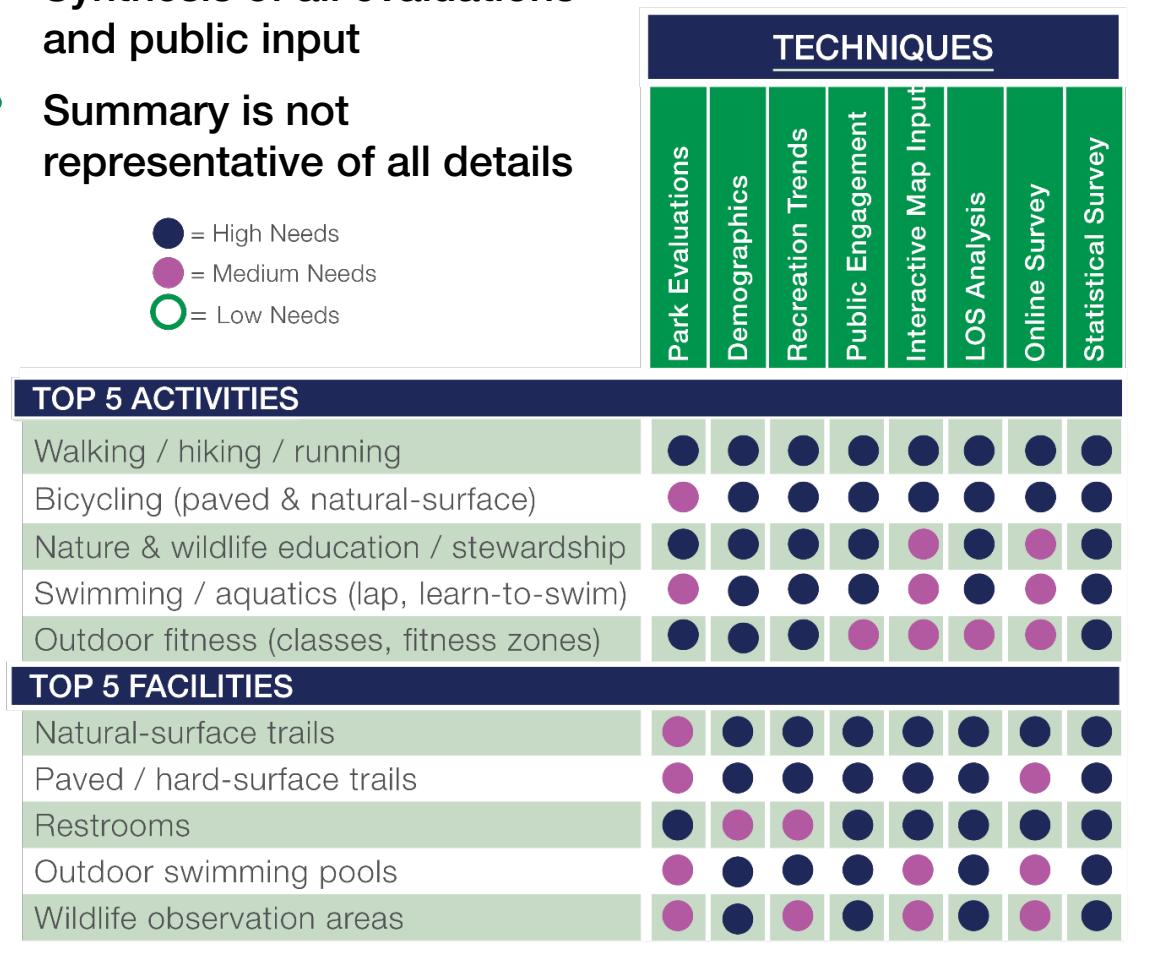
Activities and Programs



ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

- Synthesis of all evaluations and public input
- Summary is not representative of all details

- = High Needs
- = Medium Needs
- = Low Needs



Most Common Themes:

1. **Reinvestment in Existing Parks and Facilities:** 80% of participants favored take care of existing assets.
2. **Sustainable Funding:** Surveys indicate that a majority of households support increased sustainable funding for parks.
3. **Effective Communications of PRCS Needs:** Results indicate a need for more effective education of the public on system performance and resource gaps.
4. **Family, Cultural, and Nature-Focused Programming:** 69% of households express strong support for more family-oriented, cultural, and nature-based programming.
5. **Safety and User Comfort:** Common barriers include inadequate lighting, lack of restrooms, litter and issues related to homelessness.
6. **Equitable Access:** Affordability, scheduling, and geographic gaps are the most common challenges.
7. **Open Space and Developed Parks:** Open Space acreage meets demand for nature experiences and trails and exceeds benchmark cities while Developed Park acreage is slightly behind population growth..
8. **Core Comfort Features:** Residents strongly support restrooms, seating, drinking fountains, shade, and reliable trailhead parking.
9. **Trail Connections and Wayfinding:** Trails remain the most used and most supported facilities, but residents note missing or difficult connections and inconsistent wayfinding.
10. **Multi-Generational and Culturally Diverse Recreation Needs:** Respondents support a variety of programming and facilities for families, including significant aquatic needs.

NEXT STEPS



Items in progress (December – April)

- **Visioning** – Focuses on long-range goals and guiding principles
- **Strategic Planning** – Focuses on implementation strategies, phasing recommendations, cost estimates, and performance metrics in preparation for a draft master plan

Draft PSMP (Park System Assessment + Strategic Plan) by late April