



Imagine COS Parks

BUILDING COMMUNITY, PRESERVING OUR LEGACY

PARK SYSTEM ASSESSMENT

12/11/2025

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

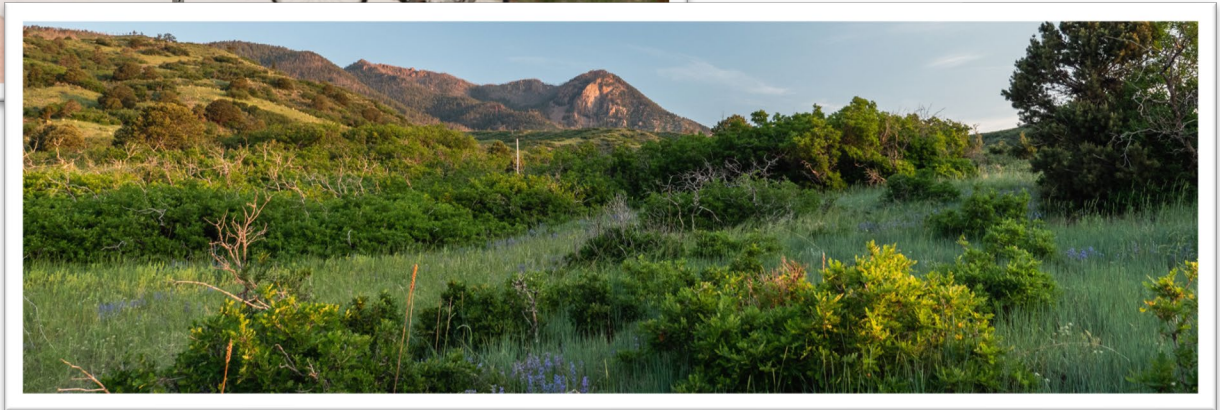
PURPOSE:

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

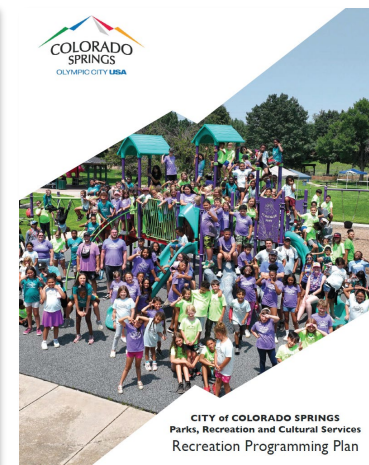
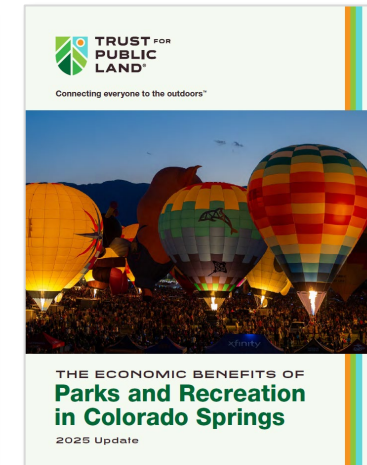
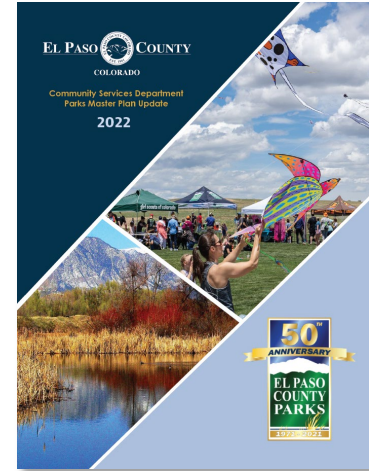
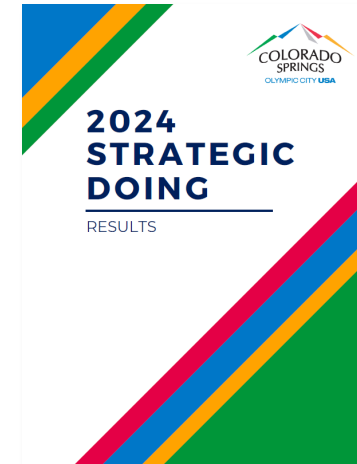


GUIDING DOCUMENT

Common themes include:

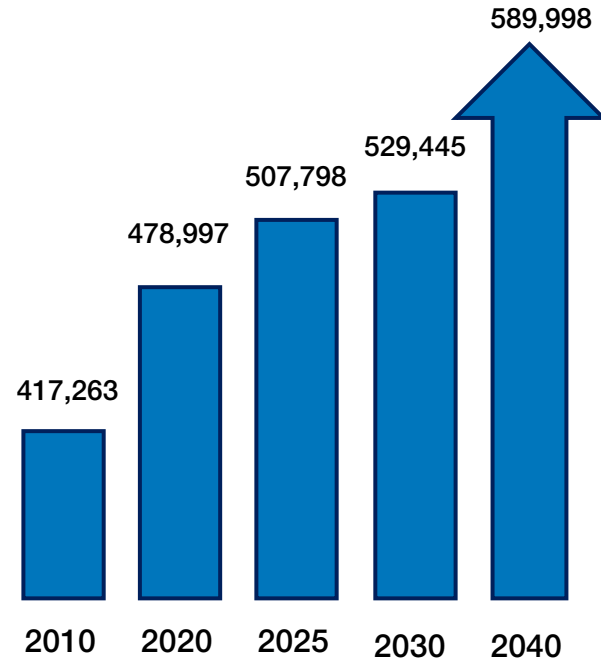
- 1. “Fix First” and Fund Sustainably:** Emphasizes deferred maintenance and long-term stewardship, supported by diversified funding strategies
- 2. A Connected, Multimodal Trail and Creek Network:** Reduce trail and bikeway gaps, enhancing first/last-mile access, and completing creek corridor greenways
- 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:



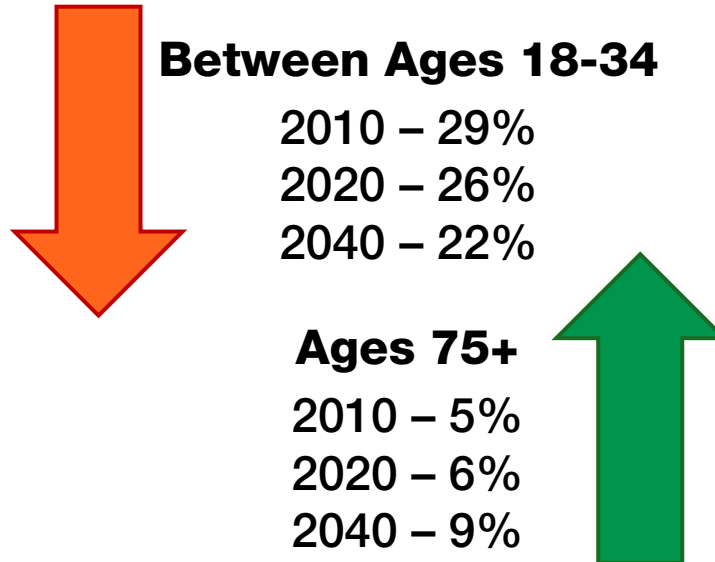
DEMOGRAPHICS TRENDS

Population Growth



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

Declining Young Adults Growing Active Adults



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:

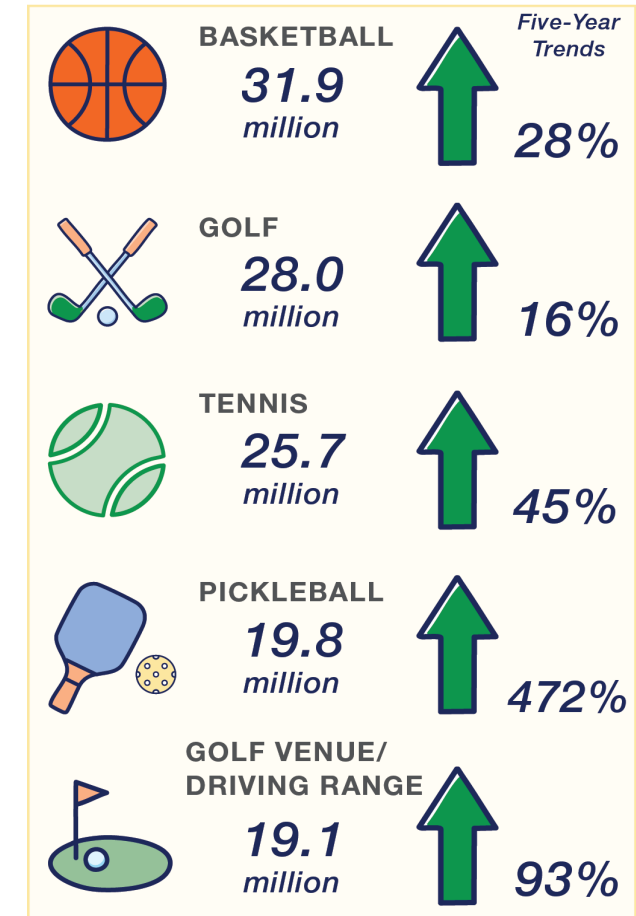
More people are hiking, camping, trail running, and participating in outdoor fitness

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:

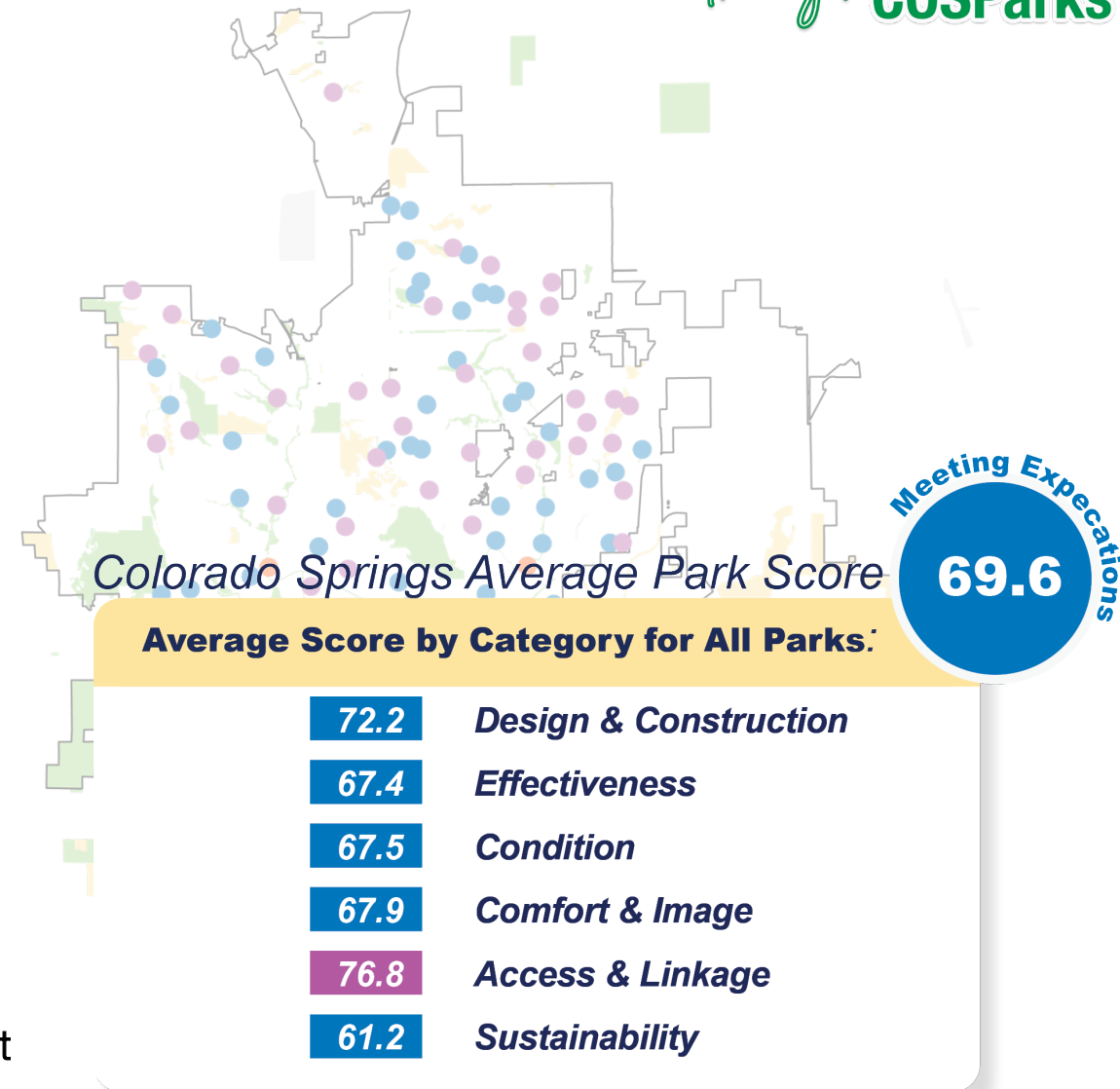


by Sports and Fitness Industry Association (2025)

PARK EVALUATIONS

Key findings include:

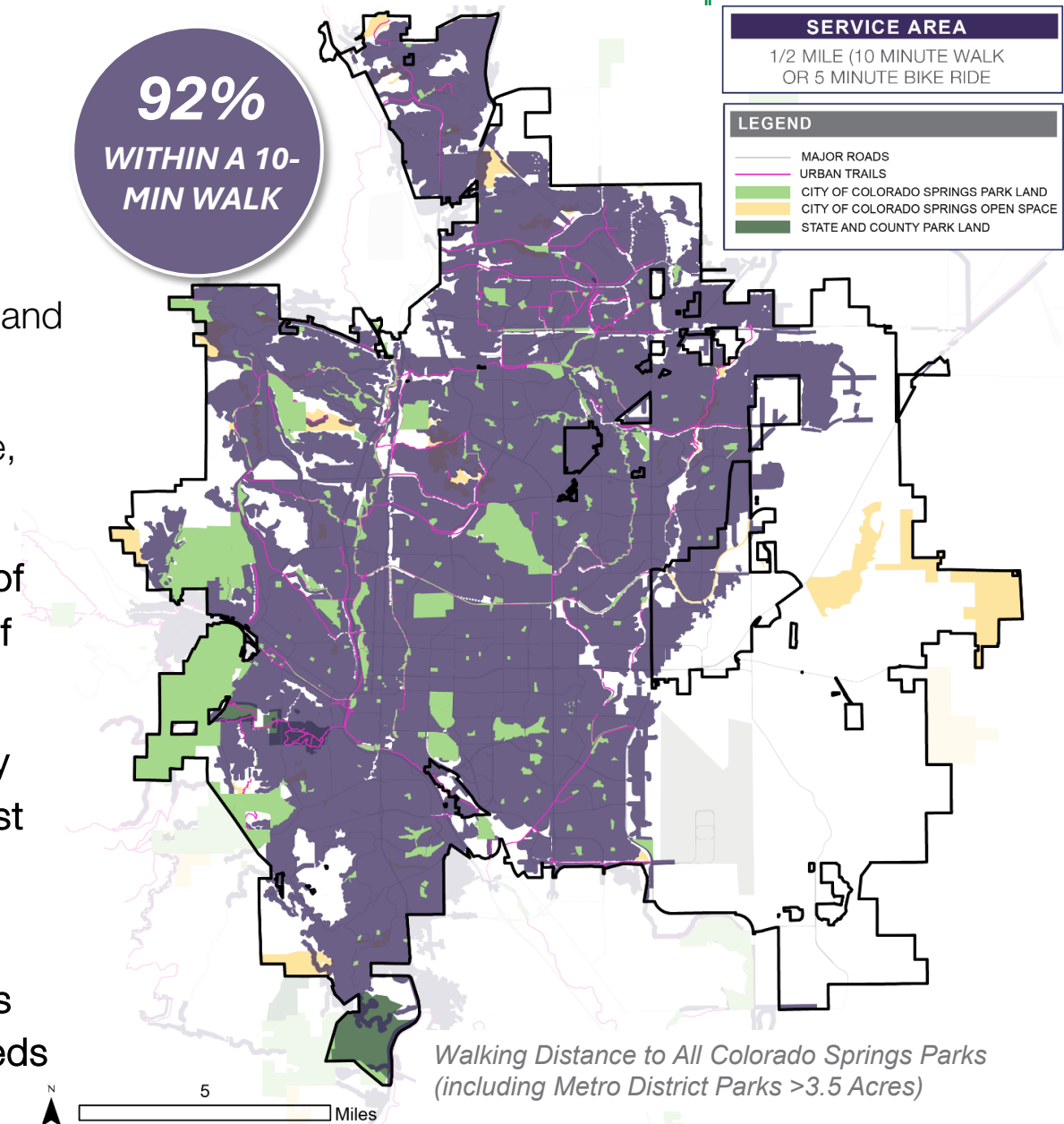
- 1. Strong Access and Connectivity:** Access and linkages are the best performing component for parks throughout the city
- 2. Sustainability Has Greatest Room for Continued Improvements:** Lowest scoring component, but has greatest potential to align with residents' conservation values
- 3. Park Comforts 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

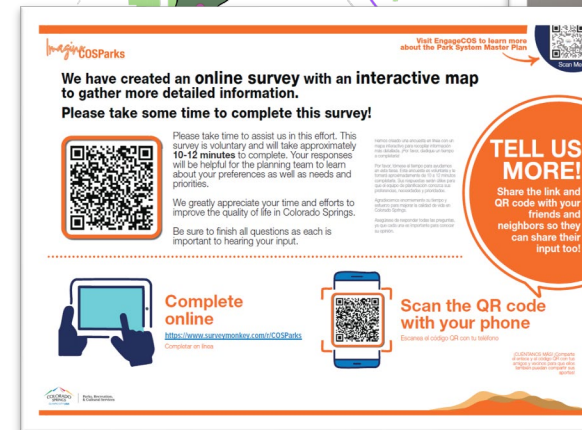
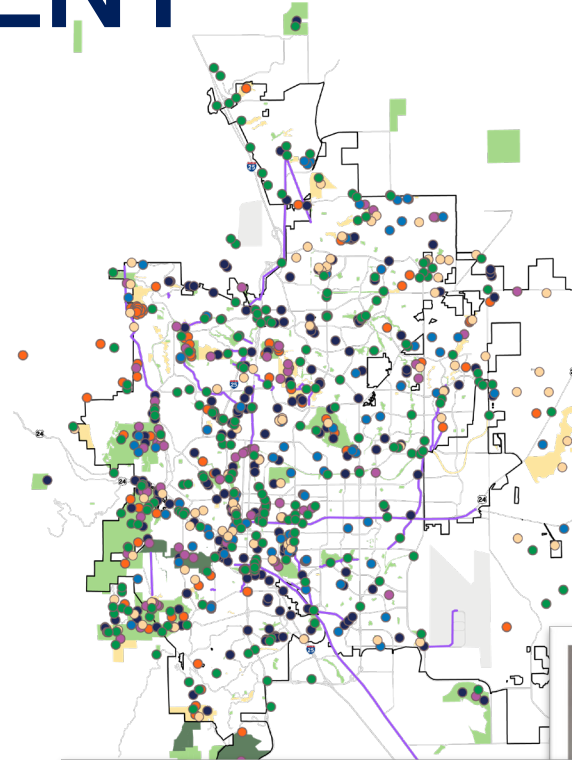
Infrastructure Gaps: Needs for taking care of existing system correlated to high support for increasing funding

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



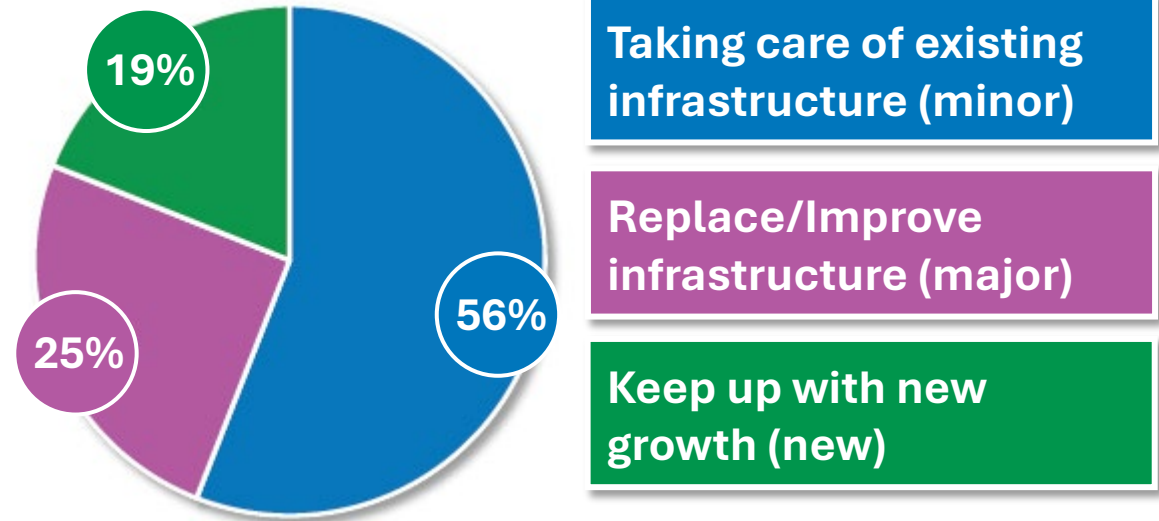
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Online Survey

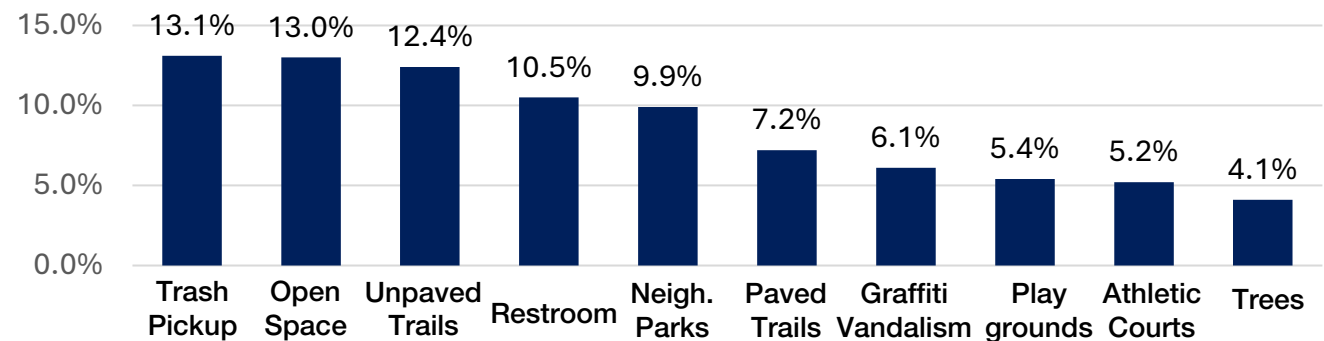
Highlights include:

- 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:



Most Important Maintenance Activities



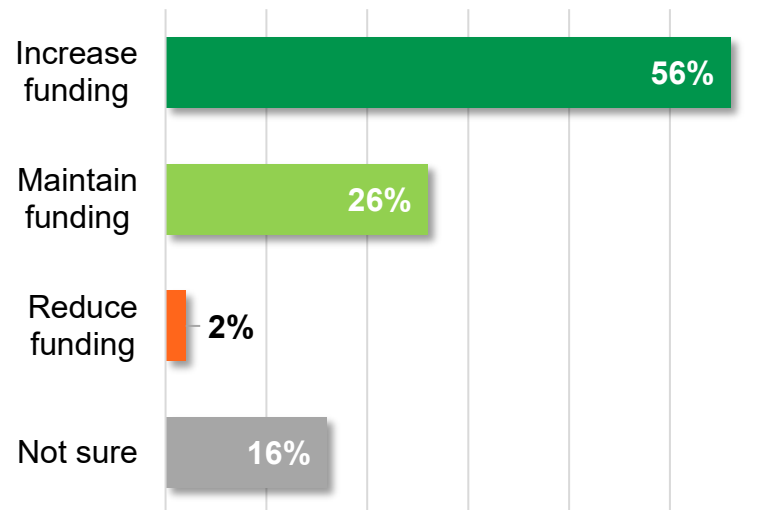
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Statistically Valid Survey (SVS)

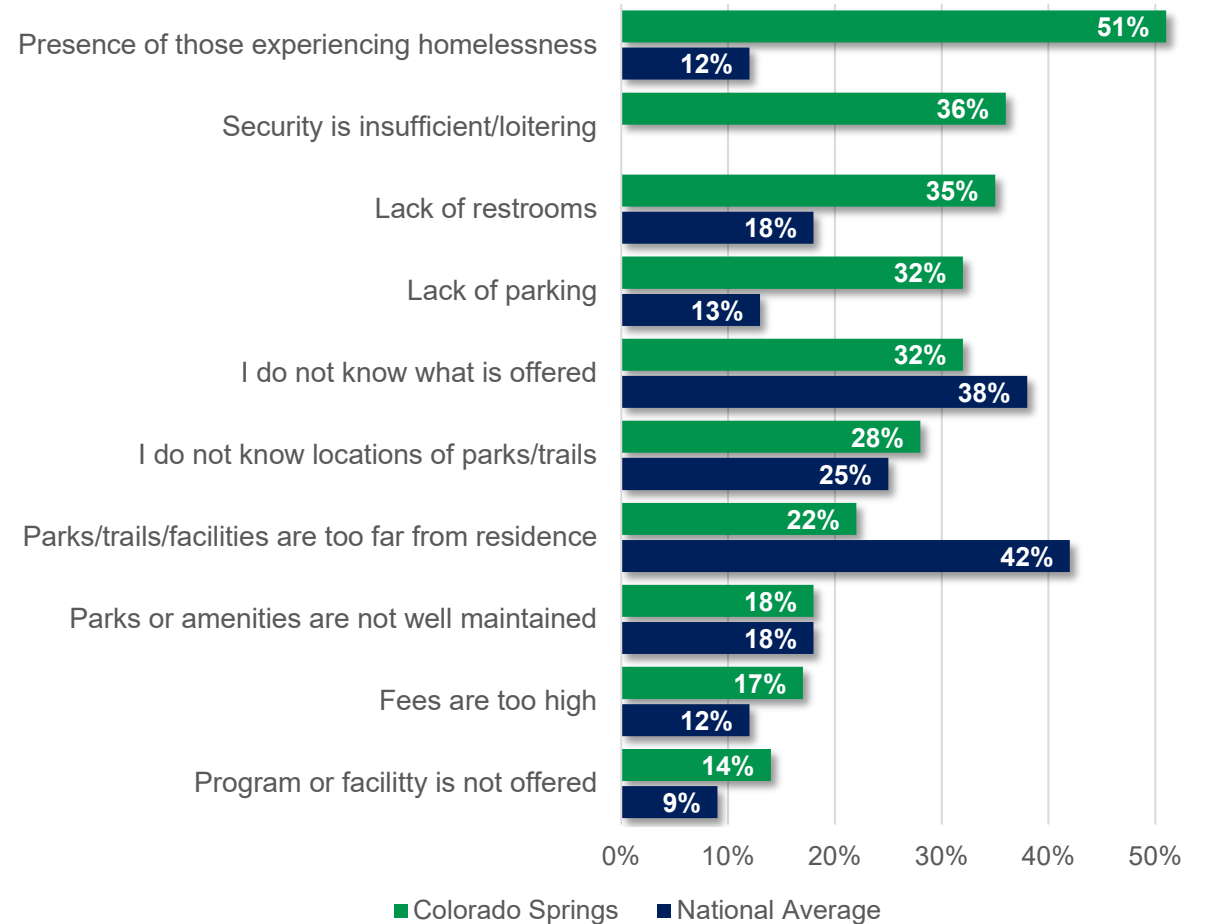
Highlights:

- 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

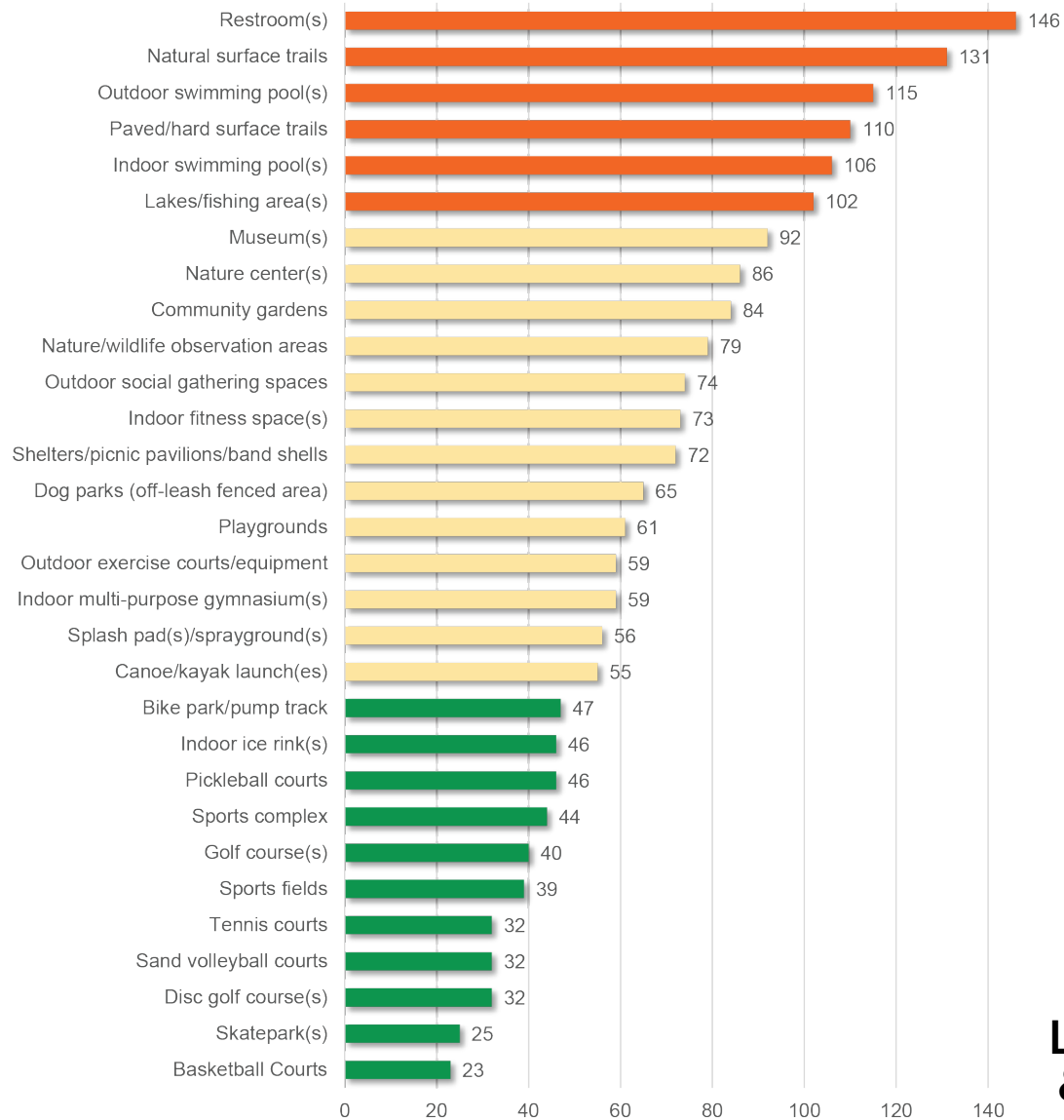


Top 10 Barriers to Use:



Statistically Valid Survey - Highest Need & Most Important Rankings

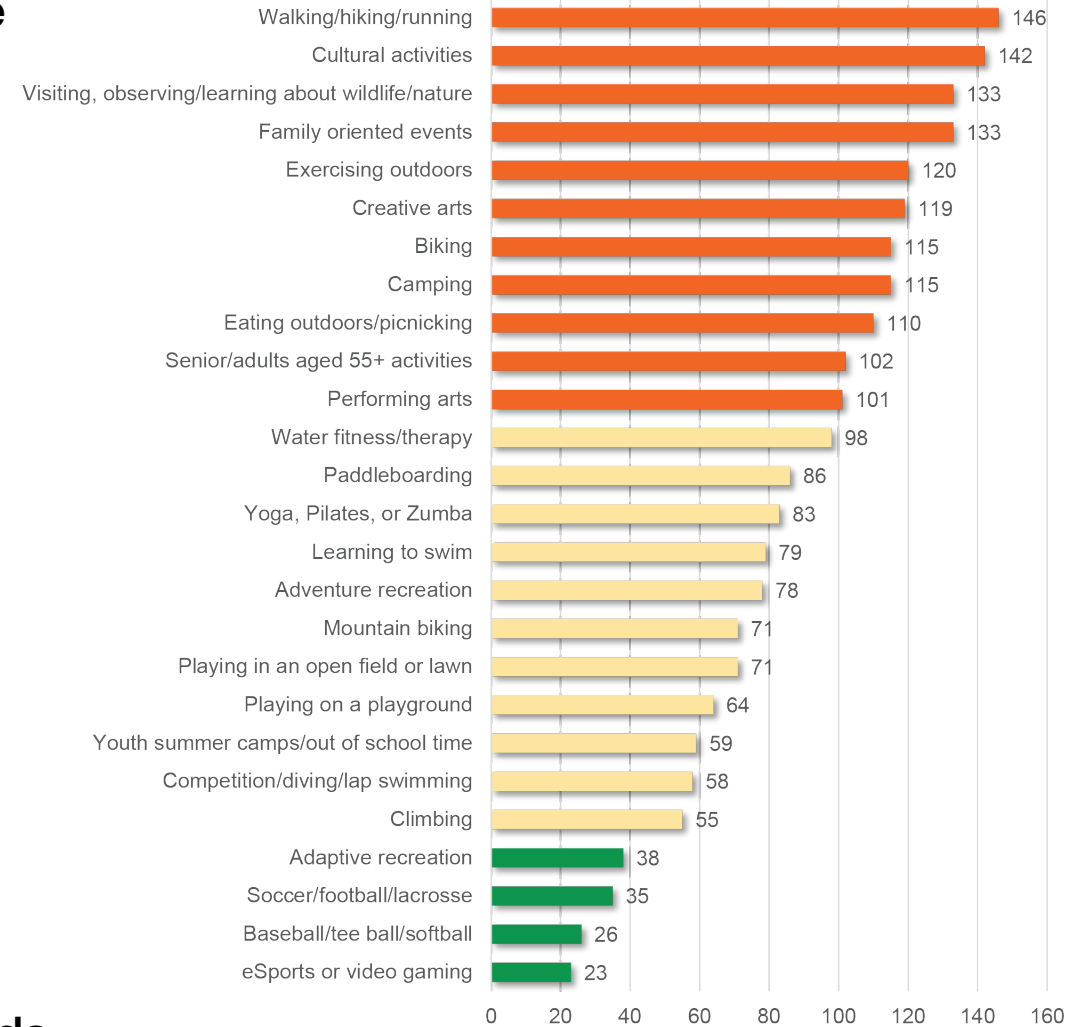
Recreation Facilities and Amenities:



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

TECHNIQUES							
Park Evaluations	Demographics	Recreation Trends	Public Engagement	Interactive Map Input	LOS Analysis	Online Survey	Statistical Survey

TOP 5 ACTIVITIES

Walking / hiking / running	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Bicycling (paved & natural-surface)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Nature & wildlife education / stewardship	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Swimming / aquatics (lap, learn-to-swim)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Outdoor fitness (classes, fitness zones)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

TOP 5 FACILITIES

Natural-surface trails	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Paved / hard-surface trails	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Restrooms	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Outdoor swimming pools	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Wildlife observation areas	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

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