

City of Casper
2014 Park and Open Space
Improvement Plan



February 2014

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1. PARK AND OPEN SPACE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Purpose of the Plan

The Casper Park and Open Space Improvement Plan is a review of the park properties, inventory of the improvements that have been made in the parks, and an assessment of the condition of those improvements. The way and extent to which the Casper parks are used is reviewed. When taken into consideration with the features within each park, the assessment of use helps determine which parks receive the most use and where investments should be made to provide as many residents of and visitors as possible with a positive recreational experience.

The properties that have become part of the Casper parks system were purchased by the City, deeded to the City by developers or gifted to the City by private individuals or businesses. The park properties are well distributed throughout the City. There are some inequities, however, where some property owners live more than a mile from a park while in other cases individuals live within 1/3rd mile of 2 or more parks. Another purpose of the plan is to gauge how many people live within a prescribed distance from a park. For a number of health and environmental reasons it is desirable to have park or recreational areas within walking distance of every resident of the community. Walking distance is defined as ¼ mile in some communities and ½ mile in other communities. The willingness of individuals to walk to a park is influenced by what the park has to offer, the amount of activity that takes place in the park, and the ease and comfort of the walk. The plan identifies those areas within the community without parks, and can be used to make decisions on where new parks are needed.



Casper parks have been defined in the past as those areas where the Parks Division staff provides maintenance. Applying that measure to the City of Casper resulted in properties like water storage tank sites, ground water well fields, old sewer lagoons, stormwater detention dams and vacant public land as parks. This plan provides a more accurate inventory of properties that actually serve a park or recreational space purpose. Not only are the properties being cataloged properly but the precise description of each property has been researched and is depicted in the

data. It is now possible to report the size and number of recreational properties defined as developed, undeveloped, and unimproved future park parcels.

The City of Casper utilizes Geographic Information System (GIS) technology to store, manage and apply information about the City's assets. The properties maintained by the Parks Division staff are currently reflected in the GIS map files. These files are being brought up to date so that the GIS information can be represented in an accurate manner graphically. Beyond the graphic representations of the data, tabular data about the parks, paths and their attributes is being recorded and will be available in the system for inventory, tracking and analytical work on the parks.

Finally, the Plan is to serve as a forum for those in the community to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the park system and establish goals and objectives to help guide future efforts on the creation of new parks and enhancement of current parks.

Past Casper Area Plans

The most recent comprehensive plan on Casper parks is the 1982 *Park, Recreation, and Leisure Services Masterplan*. The Plan applied an aggressive growth rate for the City of Casper and proposed the addition of numerous parks. Parks were addressed in the 1978 Neighborhood Land Use Plan and addressed in the 2000 *Casper Area Comprehensive Plan*. The Parks and Recreation part of the 1972 *Casper Communities Facilities Plan* provided a good summary of the parks and amenities in place at that time. The Plan concluded that Casper was not up to national standards regarding the acres of parks per capita and the distribution of parks. The downtown, Willard School area and Sagewood school areas were found to be lacking parks.

The path and trails systems have been addressed in a number of transportation planning documents including the 1987 Long Range Transportation Plan, and 2008 Long Range Transportation Plan. Studies have been done on specific recreational facilities like the Casper aquatic center. A facility plan that was quite broad in scope was the 1978 North Platte Park Facilities Plan. This plan covered a whole gamut of activities that were happening in the community that could be consolidated into North Platte River Park.

How the Plan was Developed

The Casper Planning Projects Analyst formulated the plan, established the scope and conducted the research. The initial focus was on the inventory of park, path, trail and open space properties and facilities. The inventory used the City of Casper Geographic Information System (GIS) extensively and in the process updated and expanded the information in the system. This effort



then expanded into an field assessment of park use, park service areas, and the condition of the facilities. Upon the completion of the inventory and assessment in 2012, goals and objectives were formulated with the aid of an oversight committee and an implementation strategy developed.

A public engagement process was executed in 2013. The oversight committee that was established, developed an online survey that

was used to determine how often individuals visited parks, what they based their decision on when they selected a park, and what the City should do to improve the park system. In addition to the online survey, two open house sessions were held and a focus group survey was conducted and the Senior Center. Information about the ways in which the public could participate in the planning effort was distributed through the media, with community flyers, and through the City of Casper website and Facebook.

Structure of the Plan

The objective of the plan is to provide direction on where to apply funds and manpower to enhance the Casper parks, open space and pathway system. To achieve that objective requires an understanding of what facilities for recreation now exist in Casper and how they are used. The significance of the level and type of park use is better understood when comparisons are made between parks and with other communities in the region and country. The focus is on meeting the recreational needs of Casper residents. Understanding what is generally available elsewhere can help decision makers anticipate future demands from current residents and newcomers to the community. Comparisons can help identify new improvements that may be warranted. An assessment of the condition of current improvements helps determine what resources are needed to keep what we currently have in good condition. A plan that outlines what should be repaired or replaced, and what should be added to enhance the Casper parks and pathway and what it will take can then be formulated.

Plan Use and Implementation

The broad purpose of the plan is to generate information about the park and open space facilities and establish goals and objectives on what the park system should be in the future. Achieving those goals and objectives requires the formulation of implementation strategies and actions that

must be executed to reach the objective. Once the required action is clear, the resources needed in terms of funds, staff, and materials can be assembled. Priorities must be set to best utilize the resources at hand.

The Geographic Information System is a powerful implementation tool. Having a comprehensive database on the park assets and established tools for tracking work performed on given tasks allows for a clear accounting of what is being done and if objectives are being met.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Casper has 2005 acres of park and open space properties which includes 43 formal parks. The formal or developed parks make up approximately 970 acres or 48% of the total parkland. This represents an exceptional park system when compared to 4 similar cities in Wyoming, Colorado and Montana, and 8 ICMA sister cities across the country.

The residents and visitors to Casper enjoy a full range of parks and facilities for outdoor recreation from small mini parks for quiet relaxation to North Platte River Park with shooting, racing, model airplanes, 36 holes of disc golf, paths and trails, and exceptional views of the North Platte River, the City and Casper Mountain. The 30 neighborhood parks which are scattered throughout the community represent the backbone of the park system. The average neighborhood park is 3.5 acres in size, serves a neighborhood of 2,000 households, and contains a shelter, 2 tables, 2 benches, a playground, open area for active play, a pair of swings and barbeque grill.

The industry standard for neighborhood park service areas is $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ miles which represents a comfortable walking distance. Applying a $\frac{1}{3}$ rd mile service area to each neighborhood and community park reveals that 77% of Casper's residents live within walking distance of one or more parks. Most schools offer playground or playing fields which complement the park system. When schools are added to the equation, 86% of Casper's residents can walk to a school or park. While the most direct route to a park for most people is along city streets, there are 23 parks that can be accessed through Casper's 35 mile path and trails system. Six parks have internal loops for walking.

Field Observations

For a park system to adequately serve a community, it must evolve and grow to meet the recreational needs of children, adults, families and seniors. As a community expands, more accessible neighborhood parks are needed to serve the new residents. Knowing what needs to be done to provide what the community wants can only be determined by systematically observing who is using the parks and what activities they are engaged in. Asking what they think of the parks, and what should be done to make them better, rounds out and assessment of community needs.

Field observations were made during the summer to find out who was in the parks and what they were doing. Three circuits were set up which made it possible to visit as many as 33 parks, schools and paths in one evening or weekend session. Multiple trips were made to each location

which added up to 665 total visits. The park users were not surveyed, simply observed. Based on the observations, conclusions were drawn on the age and sex of the users, the size of the group they were with, the duration of their visit, and how they spent their time.



There was someone in each of the 7 most popular parks each time they were visited. An additional 6 parks were in use 75% of the time and on average, parks in the system were in use 51% of the time. Children made up the largest group of users and seniors the smallest. Compared to the age breakdowns for the community as reflected in the 2010 Census, there were 3 times as many children in the parks as you would expect and less than half

as many seniors. Detailed assessments of park users are hard to find. It would appear that Casper has a significant number of active children and not enough seniors out enjoying our parks and paths. Further work would have to be done to see if these ratios are consistent across the country and how Casper differs from the norm.

With so many children in the parks it is not surprising that playground and open play areas received the most use. During the course of the study there were 5 playgrounds that were never in use. Ten playgrounds were in use more than 50% of the time and the playgrounds in Washington and Castle parks were always in use. The shelters were frequently in use for parties and picnics. On average, shelters are used by 25% of park users. Given the large number of group activities that are observed in the parks it is easy to assume that most park users are attending events. In actuality, 60% of park users were in groups of 5 persons or less.

Community Surveys

Community wide surveys intended to gauge the level of satisfaction Casper residents have with public facilities were conducted 6 times in the past 14 years. In these surveys, 75 to 85% of the residents reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with Casper's parks. These general surveys did not explore why they viewed the parks so favorably. Detailed surveys were conducted with this study to gain an understanding of why people favor certain parks. A total of 128 persons responded in to an online survey and provided input on what they look for in a park and how the City should use its resources to maintain or enhance the park system. A majority of the respondents stated that they wanted a park that was close to home, had a nice playground, shade, an open play area, and a place for their dog. They were drawn to popular parks where there were other people and wanted to have restrooms available. The fact that proximity was the most important factor suggests that neighborhood parks are important and need to be maintained.

This finding can be extrapolated to suggest that as the community grows, more neighborhood parks will be needed.

As far as where the City should dedicate the most effort, the respondents felt the City should direct (in rank order) resources to:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Maintenance | 6. Installing more tables and benches |
| 2. Equipment such as playgrounds and swings | 7. Building new parks |
| 3. The planting of trees | 8. Building one or more dog parks |
| 4. Building paths | |
| 5. Installing more shelters | |

Due to the relatively low number of seniors who responded to the online survey, an abbreviated survey was conducted during a lunch at the Central Wyoming Senior Center. The 78 seniors who provided comments felt the City should direct resources to:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. More tables and benches | 5. More paths |
| 2. More shelters | 6. Playgrounds and swings |
| 3. One or more dog parks | 7. Better maintenance |
| 4. More trees | |

It is not surprising that seniors are more interested in shady places to sit than playgrounds. Facilities for dogs are more important for seniors as well.

Principles, Goals and Objectives

With input from the public it was possible to formulate guiding principles, goals and objectives to direct this and future park system planning efforts. These principles are an expression of what the community believes to be important in the development and maintenance of park and open space properties, and paths or trails. Having a clear understanding of our collective views or values regarding the role of parks and paths in our lives can help in the development of clear and explicit goals and objectives. The 18 principles that emerged through this public process were split into three categories: wellness, community and environment.

Developing an extensive list of goals and objectives is a meaningful exercise and helps validate the values and principles of the community. Through the goal and objective development process the following goals and objectives have been identified:

Adopted Goals

- Make our parks appealing to motivate people to spend more time enjoying them;
- Ensure that every household is within 1/3rd of a mile (10 min. walk) of a quality park or school playground;
- Provide recreational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.

Specific Objectives

PARK SYSTEM

- Develop parks in areas of the community which lack a neighborhood park
- Provide convenient access to all public open space;
- Provide access to all parks for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders;
- Undertake a park masterplan effort to identify and implement improvements or upgrades to Washington, Mike Sedar and Highland Park;
- Coordinate the development of new neighborhood parks with developers;
- Introduce unique and inviting features to select parks to make them more interesting and appealing;
- Adopt design standards for features and improvements;
- Promote the well-equipped yet underutilized parks.

EDUCATION

- Do more to disseminate information about the City's parks, trails and open spaces;
- Collaborate with groups and businesses involved in recreation to make full use of the park facilities;
- Institute programs that help strengthen the relationship between residents and their neighborhood park such as a park clean-up day or neighborhood picnic;
- Implement a park, trails and open space wayfinding system.

ENHANCEMENTS/UPGRADES

- Plant more shade trees;
- Explore ways to reduce the acres of irrigated turf grass that must be mowed;
- Provide a wide range of amenities to appeal to as many different park or potential park users as possible;
- Install permanent, year-round restrooms in the busiest parks;
- Extend the time that portable restrooms are in select parks;
- Create additional dog parks or off lease area;
- Provide a wider variety of outdoor water recreation opportunities;
- Provide more facilities for tots such as swings;
- Add more benches and shelters;
- Provide outdoor courts for a variety of activities such as volleyball, horseshoe, pickleball and bocce ball;

- Create looped walks in select parks;
- Evaluate the options available to provide fall protection in playstructure fall zones and make any necessary operational changes;
- Investigate or develop ways to fund park improvements.

Condition Assessment

The field observations and public survey process provided insights on which facilities are used and what additional facilities may be desired. In addition to taking these factors into consideration, an assessment of the condition of the facilities in the parks must take place to identify units that should be replaced.

The condition assessment that was conducted focused on tables, shelters, benches, barbeques, playgrounds, swings and play courts.

The assessment revealed that 78% of the recreation facilities or amenities in the parks are in good or excellent condition. Swings were generally found to be in the best condition and barbeques the worst. Other than barbeques, playgrounds and tables were frequently found to be in only fair or poor condition. As expected, the newest parks had the best equipment and greatest variety. Sixteen of the parks require replacement or upgraded facilities and 10 parks had a limited number of amenities and need more.



Capital Plan

Making the necessary improvement projects a reality requires the development of a capital plan that establishes priorities and lists projected costs. With the creation of a rational capital plan, resources can be programed and an implementation process can be formulated to help upgrade the parks in a systematic manner.

In recent years, an estimated \$550,000 in capital funds has been expended on Casper's parks annually. This has covered not just recreation features or amenities but also infrastructure improvements like irrigation systems, lighting and hard surfacing. Using the 5 parks built since 2000 as a gauge, approximately 30% of the cost of a park is for recreational features or

amenities. Applying the ratio of amenity costs to total park capital costs suggests that the current level of funding would support \$170,500 per year in new or replacement recreation equipment.

The useful life of park amenities depends on the type of feature, its use, and level of maintenance. A barbeque grill that is not cleaned out regularly will only last a few years while a heavy duty bench may last many years. Generally, 15 to 20 years is considered an appropriate replacement schedule for park equipment. The proposed Capital Improvement Plan is structured around a 15 year replacement schedule. During that 15 year period it is recommended that the following amenities be purchased for the current parks:

28 benches	12 swings
26 tables	8 barbeques
17 playgrounds	4 shelters
12 bike racks	2 waste receptacles

These 97 improvements add up to an estimated \$841,000 in 2014 dollars. When spread out over a 15 year period, the annual investment in park amenities needed to meet the projected needs is \$56,000. If \$170,500 per year is available for amenities, there should be ample funds available. Clearly, more needs will be identified over time and costs are often higher than anticipated. There are also hidden or related costs that push overall project costs up. If future parks are to be built there will be a need for significant levels of funding. Programmed or earmarked funds that are not needed for amenities or equipment could be applied to the construction of new parks.

3. CASPER PARK SYSTEM

Parkland and Open Space

Casper area residents and visitors to the community are well served by the City of Casper parks and open space system. There are currently 103 recreational/park properties within the City that encompass 2,005 acres of developed parks, unimproved parkland and natural open space (Map 1). Developed areas include the formal parks with irrigated turf, playgrounds, picnic facilities, user group leased facilities, and athletic fields. An estimated 969 acres or 48% of the park system is developed property. An additional 1,036 acres are undeveloped park lands and open space areas that may see limited trail and picnic facility development and will likely remain in their current condition. There is also an estimated 64 acres of unimproved parkland that may become fully developed parks at some point in the future. Finally, Yesness Pond (3.5A.), Lake MacKensie (10.0A.), and the sections of the North Platte River which abut approximately 5 miles of City of Casper park property total approximately 82 acres of water available for recreational purposes.



There are additional properties that are owned or managed by the City of Casper that are generally not considered part of the City parks system. These include the municipal golf course, Hogadon Ski Area, Casper Mountain Park, Rotary Park and Ponderosa Park. These properties total 735 acres and are not included in the City park and open space totals stated above or addressed in this study.

Leased City Owned Properties

Properties owned by the City but leased to individual user groups are included as developed park properties. These are properties used by organized clubs or groups for special forms of recreation. The name of the group, leased facilities, purpose, and area is presented in Table 1.

Most of these facilities are located in North Platte River Park. The BMX and miniature golf facilities are located in Mike Sedar Park and the Stuckenhoff Sport Shooters Complex is located east of the City of Casper. North Platte River Park, as it was platted in 1979, is 1,208 total acres. This figure includes Riverview Park and North Casper Park on the south side of the North Platte River, Crossroads Park and Lansing Field, North Platte Industrial Park, the National Historic Trails Center, Casper Events Center and areas used for water tanks and irrigation ponds. When these properties as well as the leased facilities identified in Table 1, are removed from the total area as platted in 1979, an estimated 617.0 acres of natural prairie, bluffs and river bottom remains in North Platte River Park. This makes up the largest area of unimproved or native parkland within the City of Casper.

Table 1
Lease Area Acreages

Lease holder	Property	Estimated Acreage Leased
Casper Speedway Assoc.	Casper Speedway	60.00 A.
Casper Skeet Club	Pronghorn Skeet Range	22.00 A.
Casper Airmodelers Assoc.	Airmodelers Facility	8.00 A.
GWCMSCA	Equestrian Trial Facility	112.41 A.
Casper Dirt Riders	Prickly Pear Motocross Track	64.85 A.
Casper Shooters Club	Stuckenhoff Sport Shooter's Complex	172.13 A.
Putt'n Paradise Mini Golf	Putt-Putt Golf	0.6 A.
Mike Sedar Parents BMX Association	Mike Sedar Park BMX Track	1.6 A.
Total		441.59 A.

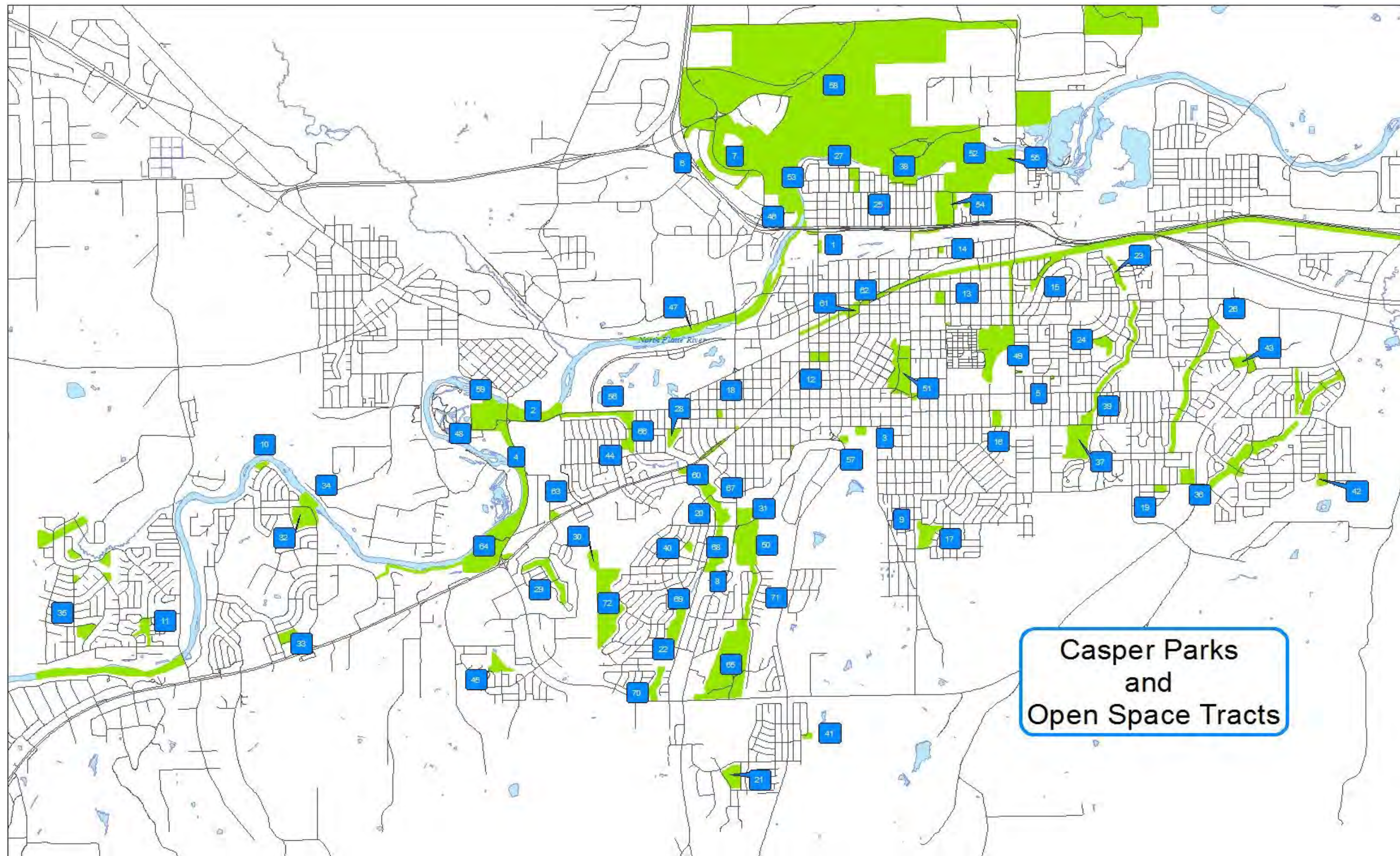
Two 18 hole disc golf courses have been developed in North Platte River Park. This 65 acre facility is not leased or managed by an established group and is available to the general public. This area is not used exclusively for disc golf but is also used by walkers, birders, runners and cyclists. It is considered a multiuse area with extensive trail development and is therefore considered part of the improved portion of the park.

Sports Complexes

The City of Casper maintains 38 athletic fields that are used by formal football, baseball, softball, and soccer leagues or clubs for practices, games and tournament play. The fields occupy 108 acres of land. The North Casper Park complex encompasses 12 soccer fields, 5 baseball/softball fields and one 4A/Legion baseball field. The midget and flag football programs use some of the fields in North Casper Park. At the present time the Field of Dreams contains two-2A fields and one-3A field. Another 2A field is under construction, and two additional fields are planned. The 18.5 acre park has room for future practice and support areas and places for families to relax between games.

Crossroads Park contains 3 softball fields, a baseball field, and Lansing field which is used by Legion baseball, collegiate baseball, and can support a professional baseball team. The remaining formal athletic fields are at Washington Park, North Mike Sedar Park, and the West 13th Street Baseball complex. The West 13th Street complex contains two-1A baseball fields. This facility is too be abandoned by the youth baseball program when the Field of Dreams fields are completed. The 3A field at North Mike Sedar Park is also to be decommissioned as a field for league play once the Field of Dreams complex is done. The 4A baseball field at Washington will remain even after the Field of Dreams fields are all ready for play.





Map Key

Map Number	Property/Park	Map Number	Property/Park
1	Interstate	37	Pratt No. 4
2	Patterson-Zonta	38	Riverview
3	Werner	39	Sage
4	Waterworks	40	Southridge
5	Tip Top	41	Stoneridge
6	North Platte Industrial	42	Suzie McMurry
7	North Poplar Pathway	43	Verda James
8	Adams	44	Westwood
9	Alta Vista	45	Wolf Creek
10	Begonia	46	Castle
11	Buckboard	47	Amoco
12	City	48	Centennial
13	Conwell	49	Highland
14	Dallason	50	South Mike Sedar
15	Eastdale	51	Washington
16	Fairdale	52	Wells
17	Falcon Crest III	53	Crossroads
18	Freedom	54	Field of Dreams
19	Fun Valley	55	North Casper
20	Garden Creek	56	13 th and Sycamore
21	Goodstein	57	Casper Skatepark
22	Green Meadow	58	North Platte River
23	Harden	59	Ft. Caspar
24	Huber	60	Nancy English
25	Marion Kriener	61	Beech Street Transit Plaza
26	Long	62	Veterans
27	Matt Campfield	63	CY Right of Way
28	Meadow	64	Morad
29	Meadowlark	65	Yesness
30	Mesa No. 3	66	Westwood Greenway
31	North Mike Sedar	67	Garden Creek Greenway
32	Paradise Valley	68	Adams Greenway
33	Paradise Valley Pool	69	Green Meadow Greenway
34	Platte View Bluffs	70	Sunrise Greenway
35	Prairie	71	Regency Valley Greenway
36	Pratt No. 2		

Casper Parks

Parks have been a part of life in Casper for decades. Ballfields and parks were platted as part of new subdivisions or just emerged on vacant lots throughout the community. The earliest park in terms of the date the ground was formally dedicated as parkland was Conwell Park which was platted in 1912. Washington Park is one of the first parks built and was to be the premier park in the City. It began as 3 small hillside tracts that were to be connected by a boulevard system. When planning for the park began in 1926 the opportunity to build something grand was realized. When it was built in 1932 it contained a pool, tennis courts, a baseball field and ample picnic facilities. Most of the original features remain which helps to make it the most popular park in the City. Other than Washington Park, the other early parks in Casper were Conwell Park, City Park, Riverview, and Highland. By 1941 there were 7 parks in Casper that added up to 744 acres. This grew to 24 parks in 1966 and 26 in 1971. Other parks were added as the community expanded.

Types of Parks

For assessment and comparison purposes the Casper parks have been split into mini parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, sports complexes, regional parks, interpretative parks, and greenways. In addition to park type, Appendix A outlines the park and recreation area locations, portions of the parks that are improved or unimproved, the date the park was created and then actually developed. The facilities included in all the parks and greenways are listed in Appendix B.

The division of parks by type helps the City establish facilities that meet a neighborhood, community or special needs, and describe the park system in a manner that affords the City the opportunity to compare our system to other parks in the state, region or nation to help gauge the adequacy of our parks system and promote its strengths.

A variety of labels are applied to different type parks including pocket parks, neighborhood parks, large urban parks, specialty parks, greenways, etc. For this study the following names are used to describe Casper parks and open spaces.

Mini

A mini park is generally less than one acre in size. They offer limited facilities which would generally include flower beds or planters, a table and perhaps a small shelter. They offer no off street parking. They are attractive to passersby but generally do not see

a lot of activity. The parks defined as mini parks include: Interstate, Patterson-Zonta, Tip-Top, Waterworks, North Platte Industrial Park and Werner Park. North Platte Industrial Park is a platted park lot lying between Wilkins Circle and I-25 . It is unlikely that this lot will be developed as an active park so is included here as an undeveloped mini park that may receive landscaping treatments in the future.

In addition to the mini parks described above, the City manages special landscaped areas along City streets or at certain street intersections. These landscape features or nodes along streets within the community could be viewed as mini parks however they don't include any facilities, only landscaping. These locations include:

Burlington Park	CY Ave. Islands,
E. 12 th Street and McKinley St.	CY Ave. and Fairgrounds Rd.
W. 13 th St. and W. Collins Dr.	Kiwanis Park
W. 15 th St. and S. Poplar St.	O'Dell Ct.
W. 17 th St. and College Drive,	E. 21 st St. Roundabout
"E" Street and N. McKinley St.	Viking Ct.
North Poplar Street	

Collectively these landscaped areas add up to 9.7 acres.

Neighborhood

Neighborhood Parks are not of any particular size but categorized as such by their use and facilities. The industry standard is 5 or more total acres. In Casper they range from 0.59 acres to 10.90 acres in useable or developed space with the average size being 2.32 acres.

The following 30 parks are considered developed Neighborhood Parks:

Adams	Green Meadow
Alta Vista	Harden
Buckboard	Huber
City	Marion Kriener
Conwell	Long
Dallason	Matt Campfield
Eastdale	Meadow
Fairdale	Meadowlark
Freedom	North Mike Sedar
Fun Valley	Paradise Valley
Garden Creek	Paradise Valley Pool

Platte View Bluffs
Riverview
Sage
Southridge

Suzie McMurry
Verda James
Westwood
Wolf Creek

There are an additional 12 platted park lots that are currently unimproved which may be developed as neighborhood parks in the future. They include:

Begonia
Falcon Crest III
Goodstein
Mesa No. 3
Prairie
Pratt No.2

Pratt No.4
Stoneridge
Trails West #5
Trails West #6
Trails West #7
Trails West #8

The key attribute of a neighborhood park is that they (as the name implies) serve a specific neighborhood. Neighborhood parks generally include a playground, tables with or without a shelter, open areas for active play, and quite often hard surface courts for basketball, tennis or other racket sports. They are intended to serve the active and passive needs of all segments of the neighborhood from children to mature adults.



Generally they are not used for events that involve large groups of people.

Typically, off-street parking is not needed to serve the immediate area. However, 12 of the parks have off-street parking. The off-street parking at Huber Park and Verda James Park also serves the adjacent schools.

Twelve Casper parks abut school property or are within 3 blocks of an

elementary school. The recreational facilities and open play areas at these schools are available for the use of the general public whenever school is not in session.

There are neighborhoods that are not well served by parks but do contain a school. An inventory of school facilities is not included in this study, however, user counts were made at the time parks were being assessed. Schools are included in the level of service

review in Chapter 7 when they help to expand the park or recreation space coverage for the community or fill in gaps in already developed neighborhoods.

Community

A Community Park serves a significant share of the community. The industry standard for a community park is 25 or more acres. Of the community parks in Casper which serve multiple neighborhoods, all have less than 25 acres of improved, useable space. The parks considered to be community parks include: Castle, Amoco, Centennial, Highland, South Mike Sedar, Washington, and Wells.

It is more important to look at the facilities these parks provide than just area. Generally they include all the features of a neighborhood park plus group facilities like large shelters or pavilions or areas designated for tents. These parks also include large or



multiple play areas, multiple picnic areas, special facilities, and ample on or off-street parking. South Mike Sedar and Washington Park have outdoor pools. The other three outdoor pools are at Kelly Walsh High School, Marion Kriener Park and on Iris in Paradise Valley. Highland Park is the home to the combined Recreation Center, Ice Arena and Aquatic Center with a

total area of 88,600 square feet. Washington Park contains the Shallenberger Bandshell. Amoco Park is associated with the white water park, and Centennial is associated with historic Ft. Caspar. The Adventure Playground (aka Castle Park) was constructed by community volunteers and is the most unique and expansive playground in the community.

Beyond the Casper City limits there are other parks and recreational areas the serve the entire Casper Community. The Town of Mills maintains 4 neighborhood parks including Freden, 1st Street Park, Norene Kilmer Park, and Memorial Park. The Town of Evansville has 2 parks (Reshaw, Stoneking), and Bar Nunn residents enjoys 3 parks (Ronnie Nunn Park, Antelope Territory, and Heritage Park).

Casper Mountain offers a number of recreational opportunities. Hogadon Ski Area is owned and operated by the City of Casper. The City also owns Rotary Park, Casper Mt. Park, and Beartrap Meadow. These parks are managed by Natrona County and offer hiking, camping, picnic, snowmobiling, snowshoeing and Nordic skiing opportunities. The County owns and operates Ponderosa Park and Crimson Dawn on Casper Mountain. Outside the Casper urban area yet close enough to provide easily accessible recreation is Edness Kimball Wilkins State Park. Located 6 miles east of Casper, the 362 acre Edness Kimball Wilkins State Park offers large picnic shelters, playgrounds, hiking trails and a pond.

Sports Complex

The City of Casper has three sport complexes; North Casper Park, Field of Dreams baseball complex, and Crossroads Park. Other than three outlying baseball facilities with a total of four fields, all organized or programmed sport activities take place at these venues. They are characterized as having both multi-purpose and single purpose fields, concession areas, ample off-street parking and park facilities. Castle Park, with associated picnic and large gathering facilities, is located within the Crossroads Sports Complex. Wells Park with its shelters and playgrounds serves the North Casper Sports Complex and Field of Dreams.

The Casper Skatepark located adjacent to the YMCA and Boys & Girls Club Skatepark are two specialty sports facilities. The Casper Skatepark has metal and special composite board ramps that can be moved, and the Boys & Girls Club Skatepark is a state-of-the-art concrete facility. Though they are small in size they are well used areas that serve a select group of young people within the community.

Regional

The City of Casper has a single Regional Park. North Platte River Park serves the entire urban area with specialty recreation and entertainment opportunities including the Casper Events Center, National Historic Trails Center, an equestrian facility, skeet range, radio control airplane facility, dirt oval track speedway, motocross track, 3.2 miles of paths and trails, and two disc golf courses. The Stuckenhoff Shooters Complex is not in North Platte River Park but does serve a specific user group. North Platte River Park does not offer passive or light recreation opportunities like shelters, playgrounds or picnic area. The park does, however, abut Crossroads Park and North Casper Park which offer such facilities. Individuals who wish to participate in or watch activities within the park come from throughout the state and in some cases neighboring states.

Interpretative

A few parks offer displays and information about the community or region. The four parks classified in this manner (Ft. Caspar, Nancy English, Beech Street Transit Plaza, Veteran's Park, and CY Avenue & Wyoming Blvd.) serve more than a single neighborhood and contain interpretative information about our history, Wyoming veterans, plants, and managing the environment. None of the parks offer formal sport facilities or many of the features found in community parks. They do serve the entire community and attract visitors from outside the area. The 5,500 square foot Ft. Caspar Museum within Ft. Caspar Park is a major draw in the community.



Open Space

The City of Casper enjoys a significant amount of useable open space. These are areas that have been left in their natural state. They are open prairie tracts, wetlands, river bottom areas, and drainageways which are not mowed or maintained by the City. They offer limited facilities which are restricted to tables or benches and river access points. Most of the tracts are in close proximity to or offer a direct link to a neighborhood or community park. Yesness Park, Morad Park and North Platte River Park are large and they draw from the entire community not just a single neighborhood. The 6 greenway tracts (Regency Valley and five areas along Garden Creek) serve walkers and cyclists from a more localized area.

Park Facilities

To gain an understanding of the adequacy of Casper parks it is necessary to first have an accurate count of the facilities provided in each park. It is then possible to determine how well each neighborhood is served and what facilities are available for the entire community to enjoy. Improvements or park elements run the full gamut from playgrounds to irrigation system, trees, and parking lots. Some improvements are essential functional elements that are a part of each park while others are the amenities or features that attract park users. In this review of the Casper park system, 12 features or park characteristics were used to gauge the quality or adequacy of the parks. These considerations are: the presence or number of shelters, tables, barbeque grills, benches, paved walks, playing fields, playgrounds, swings, tennis courts, basketball courts, flower beds or planters, and restrooms. Appendix B provides a summary the number of these facilities provided in each of the Casper parks and open space areas. The parks are groups by type and totals are provided by type and for the overall system.

Most of the eight Mini Parks have tables, 5 have barbeque grills, and 2 have shelters. The 30 Neighborhood Parks that have been developed are the backbone of the park system. Within these parks are 35 shelters, 52 tables, 74 benches, and 19 barbeque grills. In terms of facilities for play, there are 38 playstructures and 56 swings. Twenty of the parks have unobstructed areas considered large enough for active play such as football, soccer, Frisbee, and group activities. The nine Community Parks will handle events and large groups with their 17 shelters, 53 tables, 23 grills, and 10 open areas for play. The City of Casper parks system has only 14 tennis courts and 9 basketball courts. Four of the tennis courts are in neighborhood parks and all of the basketball courts are in neighborhood parks.



The neighborhood parks all offer the same basic services to residents in the area. When you compare all the parks you can determine that the typical Casper neighborhood park

has 1 shelter, 2 tables, 2 benches, 1 playground, 2 swings, an open playing field, and a barbeque grill. With this information it is possible to determine which parks offer more than the “typical” neighborhood park and which are lacking facilities. Identifying in which ways or on which measures a park exceeds the norm can help identify which parks stand out and which may need additional facilities.

Table 2 focuses on the 12 different amenities noted above that are considered significant in explaining the adequacy of parks or why parks are popular or unpopular. Identifying which developed parks deviate from the average neighborhood park in terms of facilities can help illuminate those that offer a lot to the neighborhood and those that offer little. Table 2 shows the number of times each park exceeds the average on the 12 key amenities.

Riverview, Paradise Valley, Conwell, Matt Campfield, Suzie McMurry, City, Sage, Huber, and Wolf Creek Park stand out as those that offer more than your typical neighborhood park. These parks were above average in 6 or more areas. At the other extreme, Marion Kriener, Meadow, Paradise Valley Pool, Buckboard, Dallason, Harden, Adams and Southridge fall short of the norm with less than 3 above average scores. Thirteen parks are in the mid-range and represent our typical neighborhood parks.

Table 2
Park Groupings by Number of Facilities

Neighborhood Park or Parks	Total Amenity Categories in which the Park is Above Average
Paradise Valley, Riverview	11/12
Conwell	10/12
Matt Campfield	9/12
Suzie McMurry	8/12
City	7/12
Sage, Huber, Wolf Creek	6/12
N. Mike Sedar	5/12
Platte View Bluffs, Verda James, Alta Vista, Westwood, Eastdale, Fairdale, Freedom, Fun Valley, Garden Creek, Green Meadow, Long, Meadowlark	3/12
Marion Kriener, Meadow, Buckboard, Southridge	2/12
Paradise Valley Pool, Dallason, Harden	1/12

This assessment can be viewed as a simple ranking of the neighborhood parks. However, if the residents of the community and City decision makers want to provide each neighborhood with the same recreational opportunities, this assessment reveals the basic improvements each neighborhood park should have. This also highlights which parks are well equipped and can accommodate more users. It may be prudent to promote these parks to distribute park users more evenly. To do so would extend the life of the facilities in the popular parks and take advantage of the investment made in the less well known parks.

Open Space and Greenways

Casper residents and visitors are blessed with ample open space areas which represent the full range of environments that can be experienced in the Casper area. These areas were formed through different geomorphologic processes resulting in a range of characteristics. Deposits or pediments from the eroding of Casper Mountain by streams and glaciers, formed Yesness Park, Sedar Draw (Regency Valley) and the areas along the Sunrise Greenway. Three of the open space tracts along Garden Creek represent a natural riparian area caused by a perennial stream that has cut into soft clay soils. This same type of environment was evident in Nancy English Park before the park was improved. Through a project funded by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the creek has now been restored within that park. The final segment or greenway tract along Garden Creek that lies north of Bellaire Street (the Westwood Greenway) has been channelized with levees constructed on both sides of the Creek. Some of the same riparian vegetation can be found in the Westwood Greenway though the character is very different.



Like the Westwood Greenway, the Long and Sage Creek drainageways in east Casper have been channelized. These two drainageways have an underdrain system that handles normal flows and the runoff from small storm events. These drainageways have been

contoured in a manner that provides for periodic mowing which eliminates most of the native plants that would have existed in these drainageways at some point in the past.

The 2013 *City of Casper Stormwater Management Master Plan* is an evaluation of the 28 major drainage basins that the City of Casper. Most of the basins begin at the top of Casper Mountain. The study recommends in favor of open channels has the most desirable way to convey water moving through the areas draiangeways.

The Stormwater Management Master Plan recognizes the value of drainageways and retention areas for recreation. One of the seven primary tasks of the study is to integrate draiangeways into parks and open spaces to create public amenities. The study further calls for coordination with park managers in the design of drainage facilities to ensure the recreation potential is realized. A significant number of watershed improvements may have opportunities for recreation. The study identifies six projects/improvements that have value as multi-use areas including Highland Park, Fun Valley Park, Elkhorn Creek, Emigrant Draw, Sage Creek and the Casper Municipal Golf Course. The drainage improvements could represent enhancements to the parks and golf course. Greenway trails and associated facilities could be developed along Elkhorn Creek and Emigrant Draw.

In addition to the draiangeways that bisect the community, the North Platte River floodplain offers substantial open space tracts that can be enjoyed for recreation. Morad Park and North Platte River Park are the two largest tracts. In addition to a riparian environment along the river, North Platte River Park also contains 125 foot bluffs that represent the historic limits of the North Platte River, and portions of the Casper Dune Field which lies north of Casper and extends from Shoshoni to Glenrock in an east/west direction. While the erosional forces that brought down the Casper Mountain sediment and cut the creeks and river channels have been at work for millions of years, the Casper Dune Field is a very young geological phenomena having been in existence for less than 14,000 years.

Relief

A number of the open space tracts have a substantial amount of relief which creates some impressive vistas overlooking the tract itself, portions of the City of Casper and Casper Mountain. The bluffs in North Platte River Park mentioned above provide a stunning view of the North Platte River, river bottoms, Downtown Casper and Casper Mountain. Yesness Park has an elevation range of 50 feet with the south end providing the user with an excellent view of the park and Casper Mountain. The Green Meadow and Adams

Greenways also exhibit elevation ranges of 70 and 80 feet respectively providing excellent views of the lower reaches of the tracts.

Access

Access to the greenway tracts ranges from excellent vehicular and pedestrian access to somewhat limited access. Morad Park and Yesness have parking lots and are served by improved paths and trails. Though there is no parking within the less developed portions of North Platte River Park, parking at Crossroads Park, North Casper Park and the Casper Events Center provides ample parking in close proximity.

Access to the greenway tracts along Garden Creek is more limited. Both the Sunrise Greenway and Green Meadow Greenway have paths with a bridge over the creek which bisects the tract. There are no lateral paths along the creek although there is an alley that runs parallel to the

Green Meadow Greenway that provides excellent views but poor access. The Adams Greenway can be accessed through a narrow path off of 25th Street or through Adams Park. There are primitive trails through the greenway and no bridges. Finally, there is no easy way to get through the Garden



Creek Greenway. The bridge from Garden Creek Park leads to a very poor trail along the east side of the creek. Encroachments by abutting property owners have made it virtually impossible to walk through the greenway on the west side of the creek.

Trees, Plants and Animals.

The amount of moisture available for plant growth varies widely from the sand dunes in North Platte River Park to the wetlands and river bottoms along the creeks and North Platte River. As a result, a broad range of plants, grasses, shrubs and trees can be found within the Casper public open space and greenway tracts. In turn, the vegetation provides

food and cover for a large number of insects, birds, and animals. Generally the vegetation is sparse and easy to traverse. This is not the case in sections of the riparian tracts along Garden Creek where some dense thickets are present. Table 3 provides a listing of the types of vegetation and wildlife that are common in the different public open space tracts.

Paths, Walks and Trails

The Platte River Trail is the largest and most well used pathway within the community. Most of the trail is on public property and traverses eight Casper parks (Platte View Bluffs, Morad, Waterworks, Ft. Casper, Amoco, Crossroads, North Platte River and North Casper). The remaining segments are within easements on private land (25 percent of the trail) and 20 percent are on land owned by the Platte River Trails Trust.

Table 4 summarizes the paths, walks and trails within the City. The other recognized pathways within the community, in addition to the Platte River Trail, are the Casper Rail/Trail and Westwood, Sage and Long pathways. The Casper Rail/Trail passes through the Beech Street Transit Plaza, Veteran's Park, and Eastdale Park. Sage Park anchors the Sage Pathway on the south, and Long Park is the northern terminus of the Long Pathway.

A number of Casper parks have looped paths within the park (Highland, Paradise Valley, Suzie McMurtry, Wolf Creek and Buckboard). Other parks have sidewalks around the perimeter that allow users to enjoy a walk around a park (City, Washington), or linear paths that run through the park (Nancy English, Conwell).

A few paths in Casper are on private property yet available for public use. The 4.3 miles of paths at the Platte River Commons maintained by the Amoco Reuse Agreement Joint Powers Board, is the second largest path system in the community. Paths have also been constructed by private developers in Centennial Hills Village and Vista Ridge. These private paths are included in the community totals.

Paths and walks are hard surface facilities for walking, running and wheeled modes of travel. Most of the paths and walks are 8 to 10 feet in width, they total 28.9 miles in length and make up 80 percent of the walkway/bikeway system in Casper. Aggregate trails that are more suited for walking, jogging and mountain biking are limited to Yesness Park, North Platte River Park and that portion of the Casper Rail/Trail from Curtis Street to Hat Six Road. The soft surface trails total 6.2 miles in length which places the total path, walks and trails system in Casper at 35.1 miles.

Table 3
Open Space and Greenway Characteristics

Area	Plants	Grasses	Shrubs	Trees	Birds	Mammals
Yesness Park, Sunrise Greenway, Sedar Draw	Twogroved milkvetch, White locoweed, Beesblossom, Scarlet globe mallow, Fuzzy tongued penstemon, Rocky Mountain penstemon, Miner’s candle, Evening primrose, Blue Flax Rush, Ball cactus	Smooth Brome, Wild Rye, Inland saltgrass	Silver sagebrush, Fringed Sagebrush, Big Sagebrush, Wyoming Sagebrush, Green Rabbit Brush, Rubber Rabbit Brush, Wild rose, Greasewood, Snowberry, Lilac	Ponderosa Pine, Plains Cottonwood, Narrowleaf Cottonwood, Lanceleaf Cottonwood, Purple Robe Black Locust, White Ash, Green Ash, American Plum, Willow, Siberian Elm, Russian olive	Redwing Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Common nighthawk, Redtailed hawk, Black-billed magpie, Horned lark, Lark bunting, Western meadowlark	Muskrat, Pronghorn Antelope, Prairie Dog, Richardson Ground Squirrel, Cottontail rabbit, Jackrabbit, Mule deer, Coyote
Green Meadow, Adams, Garden Creek Greenways	Wild onion	Orchard grass	Chokecherry, Wild rose, Wild currant, Honeysuckle, Virginia creeper or Woodbine, Red Osier dogwood	Narrowleaf cottonwood, Crabapple	Brown-headed Cowbird, Meadowlark, Wild turkey, Rock pigeon, Mourning dove, Great horned owl, Northern flicker, Black-billed magpie, Black-capped chickadee, House wren, American Robin, European Starling, House sparrow, House finch, American goldfinch	Muskrat, Beaver, Striped skunk, Raccoon, Mule deer
Morad Park, North Platte River Park Riverbottom	Twogroved milkvetch, Evening primrose, Cattail	Crested Wheat, Timothy	Willow, Skunkbrush sumac, Virfin’s bower, Golden current, Rubber rabbitbrush, Green rabbitbrush, Silver sagebrush, Big sagebrush, Wild rose	Boxelder, Plains Cottonwood, Honeylocust, Russian olive	Canada Goose, Double-crested Cormorant, Killdeer, Least sandpiper, Great horned owl	Muskrat, Beaver, mink, Mule deer, Raccoon, Cottontail rabbit
North Platte River Park Dune Fields	Western or Prairie spiderwort, Scurfpea, Lupine, White vetch, Miner’s candle, Buckwheat, Death camas, Prickly pear cactus, Wooly plantain, Wild onion, Yucca, Ball cactus	Crested wheatgrass, Mountain brome, Six weeks fescue, Prairie sand reed, Needle & Thread grass, Blue gramma grass, Buffalo grass	Silver sagebrush	Green rabbitbrush	Western meadowlark, Redtailed hawk, Lark bunting	Pronghorn Antelope, Cottontail rabbit, White-tailed jackrabbit, Prairie dog, Coyote

Table 4
Paths, Walks, & Trails

Path Name	From	To	Length (feet)
Platte River Trail	Platte View Bluffs Park	Bryan Stock Trail	49,700
Casper Rail/Trail	Oak Street	Walsh Drive	16,410
Platte River Commons	Loop		16,065
Sage Drainage	Casper Rail/Trail	E. 15 th Street	8,076
CY Avenue	Bellaire Street	Wyoming Boulevard	7,770
King Boulevard	Poplar Street	W. 13 th Street	6,870
Long Drainage	Long Park	E. 18 th Street	4,920
Highland Park	Loop		3,700
Vista Ridge	E. 12 th Street	Newport	3,111
E. "K" Street	Bryan Stock Trail	Elma Street	3,075
North Poplar Street	Wilkins Circle	Wilkins Way	2,925
Bryan Stock Trail	River	I-25	2,800
Gosfield Village	E. 21 st Street	Centennial Village Drive	2,600
Beverly Street	Rail/Trail	E. 4 th Street	2,180
Westwood Path	W. 13 th Street	Bellaire Drive	2,043
Events Center Path	N. Poplar Street	Events Center	2,020
Laramie Ditch	CY Avenue	Bellaire Drive	1,926
N. Forest Drive	E. 2 nd Street	Casper Rail/Trail	1,815
Yesness Park	Cresthill School	Lake Street	1,715
Nancy English Park	O'Dell Avenue	CY Avenue	1,650
Recluse Ct.	Blackmore Road	Vista Ridge Path	1,547
Suzie McMurry Park	Loop		1,520
Paradise Valley Park	Loop		1,420
Wyoming Boulevard	Blackmore Road	E. 12 th Street	1,400
Centennial Hills Village	Donegal Street	E. 21 st Street	1,220
Wolf Creek Park	Loop		1,000
Buckboard Park	Loop		880
Alta Vista Park	Saker Court	S. McKinley Street	878
Riverview Park	N. Lincoln Street	N. Jackson Street	800
Sunrise Walk	Coffman Avenue	Sunrise Drive	580
Hard Surface Paths & Walks (30)			152,616 (28.9 mi.)
Rail/Trail	Walsh Drive	Hat Six Road	11,440
North Platte River Park	Loop		5,300
Yesness Park	Wyoming Blvd	Granada	4,100
Sedar Draw	Vista Royale	Mike Sedar Park	1,100
Aggregate Trails (4)			32,695 (6.2 mi.)
Total Paths, Walks & Trails (33)			185,311 (35.1 mi.)

4. THE USE OF CASPER PARKS

The extent to which current facilities are being utilized must be assessed to determine the adequacy of existing parks and pathways. Too often facility investment decisions are made without objective knowledge about how current facilities are used. The decisions are based on industry trends, random daytime observations, equipment cost and availability, or facilities typically used in other parks. By formulating and executing a structured assessment process, meaningful information on facility use can be gleaned and sound improvement and investment decisions can be made.

Beyond information on the total number of individuals using a given facility, an attempt must be made to secure demographic information about the users, information on what activities they are engaged in, and an indication of their level of satisfaction with the facilities. Different techniques to acquire this information include counts, field observations, surveys and interviews. For this study, the focus was on observations and counts in the field. There were no contacts made with park users for the purpose of talking about their use of park facilities or satisfaction with the facilities and desired changes. Subsequent to the field assessments, an online survey was conducted to find out what Casper's residents valued about our parks and where they would like to see more resources placed.

Study Approach

Research was conducted on different approaches used to measure park use. It was discovered that the most common approach is to conduct mail or phone surveys of residents of a community to determine how and when they use park facilities or paths, and why they make the choices they do. Somewhat less common is to survey actual park users through face-to-face interviews, written surveys distributed with program or reservation information, or follow-up phone surveys. There were virtually no cases found where an individual or team of researchers observed the use of park facilities in a systematic manner to measure how parks are actually being used.

The different assessment methods each have strengths and weaknesses. General surveys rely on a respondent's accurate and honest recall of their use of parks during the past month, season or year. General surveys involve those who use parks as well as those who do not. This reveals why people opted to engage in activities for relaxation and recreation other than use public parks. With this knowledge it is possible to take steps to make improvements or changes in the parks to draw out more users. This information

would also help with the development of a marketing program to draw more residents to the parks.

Observing park use at key times yields valuable information on how parks are actually being used. This approach eliminates any inaccuracies or misrepresentation on how someone uses a park but it misses those who don't choose parks for some reason and doesn't answer why the users make the decisions they do on how they use the park, and why they pick a particular park, table, playground feature, etc. Nevertheless, the field observation approach was utilized in this study. The actual methodology used is presented in Appendix C.

Results

In the interest of maximizing the value of the investment in parks and the benefit to the health and well-being of residents of Casper it is desirable to have the parks in use a large



percent of the time. When the parks are busy it is an indicator the residents in the community value outdoor recreation and find our parks inviting and fulfilling.

There were 665 visits made to the parks and pedestrian facilities during the 6 survey

sessions that took place. There was activity observed at these locations 323 times and no activity 342 times, meaning there was nothing going on at the surveyed locations 51.4 percent of the time. Given that the survey times selected were to represent peak activity, overall there appears to be relatively low use at the parks and along the paths. This may be consistent with what is observed in other communities, however, comparative assessments of park activity are very hard to find. Based on this it would appear that our parks are underutilized and could accommodate a lot more people. This finding should

be taken into account when decisions are made regarding adding facilities versus improving or promoting our existing facilities. Future studies will show if use is going up or down and efforts will continue to find use information from other communities to use for comparisons.

Some parks are more popular than others. Activity was observed at 7 different parks every time they were visited. These parks include: Washington, S. Mike Sedar, Morad, Highland, Conwell, Amoco, and Castle Park. An additional 6 parks (Yesness Pond, Verda James, Suzie McMurry, Sage, Paradise Valley, and Matt Campfield) were in use at least 75% of the time. These are our busiest or most popular parks. At the other extreme, Yesness Park, North Mike Sedar Park and Southridge were in use less than 25% of the time. The ranking of parks by the level of activity during the survey period is presented in Table 5.

At the time the study was done Southridge Park adjoined Southridge School. The Southridge School playground was one of the busiest school grounds, however, no activity was observed at the park. The Natrona County School District recently enhanced this already inviting playground and has constructed a new school. The playground will remain intact and the District will be adding a level, grass play area and paved play courts to the grounds. The general public will be able to use the school grounds when school is not in session. It is anticipated that activity levels will increase significantly once the new and expanded recreation facilities are in place.

Table 5
Level of Park Activity in Rank Order

Park	Rank by use	Times in use (%)	Number of users	% of Total users
Washington	1	100	618	22.9
Conwell	3	100	199	7.3
S. Mike Sedar	4	100	194	7.2
Highland	8	100	102	3.7
Crossroads		100	56	2.1
Amoco		100	43	1.6
Morad		100	9	0.3
Wells		100	1	0.03
Verda James	2	91	393	14.5
Matt Campfield	7	90	108	4.0
Suzie McMurry	10	90	84	3.1

Paradise Valley		90	78	2.9
Yesness Pond		87.5	45	1.6
Sage	5	83	123	4.5
City		75	53	1.9
Riverview	9	73	95	3.5
Beech Street		72	20	0.7
Nancy English		71	25	0.9
Huber	6	68	117	4.3
Centennial		66	20	0.7
Wolf Creek		66	20	0.7
Adams		62.5	25	0.9
Alta Vista		60	22	0.8
Long		58	63	2.3
Meadowlark		57	9	0.3
Garden Creek		57	9	0.3
Fun Valley		54	12	0.4
Eastdale		50	35	1.3
Harden		50	15	0.5
Green Meadow		50	13	0.5
Interstate		50	11	0.4
Fairdale		45	31	1.1
Dallason		45	11	0.4
Westwood		44	12	0.4
Zonta		28	7	0.2
Freedom		28	4	0.1
Meadow		28	3	0.1
N. Mike Sedar		25	4	0.1
Veterans		18	3	0.1
Yesness Park		14	2	0.07
Southridge		0	0	0
Total			2,694	100%

While the City and School District are different entities their decisions on facility improvements impact one another. A subsequent review of activity on school grounds may be of value to the District. Some of the counts would represent baseline information at the schools where new playground equipment has recently been installed. Future counts could be conducted and conclusions on the benefit of the new playgrounds for the neighborhood made. The City may wish to analysis the school data on a neighborhood by neighborhood basis to see where school grounds are meeting the needs of the neighborhood and additional investments in new park facilities are not needed.

The pedestrian paths and walks in and around the parks received some use. There were 3 paths locations in use more than 50% of the time. Four of the paths in or around parks were in use less than 25% of the time and the remaining 7 between 25 and 50% of the time (Table 6). In that most of the path users in Morad Park were not within view of the parking lot, accurate numbers on the number of users are not available.

Effect of Weather

Weather conditions were tracked to see if they had any effect on park use. There was no rain or wind during the 25 hours the observations were made. As noted above, during 323 of the 665 spot checks there was nothing going on at the park or path. During 106 of those occasions, which is 30% of the time, it was at least 85 degrees and the parks or paths were empty. While warm temperatures may deter some from using a park or path, it should be noted that on 187 occasions, when there was activity observed, it was over 85 degrees which is 54% of the time. It can be concluded then that if high temperatures are a factor in park use, the effect is to draw more people to the parks rather than turn them away.

Table 6
Use of Paths and Walks in and Around Parks

Park	# of Observations	Frequency of Use	Total Users
Morad	9	100%	*
Washington	12	83%	56
Yesness	8	75%	19
Paradise Valley	10	50%	10
Amoco	4	50%	8
Long	12	42%	8
Suzie McMurry	11	27%	12
Matt Campfield	11	27%	7
Highland	11	27%	6
Sage	12	25%	3
Wolf Creek	9	22%	5
Beech Street	11	9%	2
Veterans	11	9%	1
Riverview	11	0%	0
Total			137

Peak Times

In formulating the methodology for the study an attempt was made to select survey times that represented the peak times for activity. Park observations were made between 9:00 and 4:00 on Saturdays and 4:30 and 9:00 on weeknights. Exact times were recorded for each observation which allows for the development of accurate bracketing. When the number of users per bracket was compared it became evident that the peak activity times on Saturdays are 11:30 to 2:30 and 6:00 to 7:30 on weeknights.

The peak time on Saturday clearly revolves around midday picnics. Spot park surveys were not done later in the day on Saturdays or at any time on Sundays. In the future surveys should be done at other times during the weekend to be certain the peak periods have been accurately identified. Knowing peak times on weekends can help trash and clean-up crews schedule their time in an efficient manner. Cleaning parks before 2:30 on a Saturday may be wasted effort and may create more instances where park crews could get in the way of park users.

Extended period user counts on the Long and Sage pathways revealed that there are no peak times on weekday mornings. The level of activity remained fairly constant from 5:30 am to 9:00 am. On Sundays the activity was late in the day. The two paths were their busiest after 7:30 pm. There was no drop in activity at the end of the evening, walkers were out on the paths until dark and in some cases after dark. The implication of this finding is that there are a significant number of users crossing the streets late in the evening and in many cases after dark. Steps should be taken to ensure that street/path intersections are well lit to reduce the risk of conflicts with vehicles.

Park and Path Users

A total of 3,433 people were observed in Casper Parks and on pathways in the City during the course of this study. Some of these individuals were counted two or more times if they were in a park for an hour or more and picked-up on successive circuit runs. Pathway users who passed the same point two or more times would have been counted more than once as well. It would be desirable to track each individual to get an accurate count on the number of total users. That was not possible under the parameter of this study. Still from a maintenance and operations standpoint, it is meaningful to know how much the parks are in use regardless of the time spent in a park by any single individual.

Age

Many of the facilities within a park are developed with a certain age group in mind such as playgrounds and basketball courts. Having an accurate read on the number of people who visit a park by age can help insure that a community is investing in the right type of facilities to address their needs. In the City of Casper the largest age cohort present in the parks and paths during the study were children (43%), followed by adults (29%), teens (14%), young adults (11%), and seniors (4%). Based on this summary alone, it would appear that more investment should be made in facilities like playgrounds for those under 11 than walks, benches and fitness courses for those over 30.

Table 7 shows the percent of children through seniors in the parks in percentage terms compared to the age splits in the general population, based on the 2010 census. As the table shows, a much larger number of children are using Casper parks then one would expect when looking at their share of the general population. At 14% of the total park users, teens are represented at about the same level as they are in the general population. Young adults are not found in the parks as often as you would expect. There would have to be a 28% increase in the number of young adults in the parks to match their position in the overall population.

Table 7
Relative Park Use by Age

Age Cohort	Percent of Park Users	Percent of General Population	Park Users Relative to General Population
Child (<11)	43%	13.7%	300% more
Youth (11-19)	14%	13.2%	106% more
Young Adult (20-29)	11%	15.2%	28% less
Adult (30-69)	29%	48.4%	40% less
Senior (>69)	4%	9.5%	58% less
	100%	100%	

Across the country concerns have been raised about children not receiving enough exercise and the incidents of childhood obesity increasing. Having 3 times the number of children visiting parks as one would hope for given their share of the general population would imply that activity levels in Casper are high. It would be valuable to compare park activity levels for children in Casper to other communities and state or national studies to see how successful we are in getting children to be active.

Adults and seniors are not using the parks as much as you might expect based on the general population. Looking at this comparison alone, you would hope to find 40% more adults in the parks and more than twice as many seniors as there are. At a time when there are serious concerns about activity levels for adults and seniors, it would appear that more needs to be done to draw those over 30 into the parks. Questions must be raised on why the numbers aren't higher. Do the parks not offer what adults and seniors are looking for? Do adults and seniors have more alternatives for recreation than younger residents? Are people over 30 not aware of what Casper parks have to offer? Surveys and results from other sources would have to be considered to address these questions.

There are variances in use by age from park to park within Casper. When comparing

Mike Sedar Park to Washington Park, for example, the percent of users that are children is about the same. There is a higher percentage of young adults in Washington Park but a lower percent of teens. During the circuit stops there were no seniors observed in Mike Sedar Park while 3.6% of the users in Washington Park were seniors. There are



indeed differences in park use by age. To determine what appeals to different age groups who use the parks surveys would again have to be conducted. The survey results would reveal what may need to be done to increase use by seniors, teens or any other age group.

The number of active teens and children drops significantly when you look at pathway use alone. While 43% of the park users are children, only 9% of path users are under 11. At 42% of the total path users, adults ranging in age from 30 to 69 use the paths at a level you would expect relative to the general population. Seniors and young adults use the paths in higher numbers than you would expect. This range in the level of use by age may be a function of a greater interest in fitness by young adults and seniors. Adults may have other priorities in their lives and choose to spend less time walking or bicycling. Children and teens may not find using a path very inviting. Again, the significance of this finding can be better understood when comparisons are made with regional or national statistics.

Gender

Men and boys use parks and paths more than women and girls. In the City of Casper males make up 49.1 percent of the total population based on census estimates while they make up 53.5 percent of the population in parks and on the paths. This may be an indication that women and girls are not as comfortable using parks on their own. To address the question of females' sense of security in parks, the use of parks by teenage girls was examined. A total of 349 teens were observed in the parks during the study. Football practice accounted for a significant number of boys observed in the parks. Those teens involved in tennis and x-country were more evenly split between boys and girls. When football is taken out of the equation, 55% of the teen park users are girls. While a significant number of girls are watching children at a playground an equally large number are just "hanging-out" in the parks. It should be noted that when the time of day comes into play girls are as comfortable being in the park later in the evening as boys. Fifteen girls were observed in the parks between 8:00 and 9:00 while only 9 boys were observed in parks at that time.

Group Size in Parks

Given the number of large events and gatherings observed in Casper parks one would assume that most of those who use parks are attending large events. During the survey only a few events occurred that were too large to count. A number of gatherings were parties with no more than 30 participants. One event was a state association picnic with as many as 100 participants. Band concerts and company or organization picnics do draw large crowds. While large picnics and parties are common place, far more park users visit parks as a family, with a friend, or by themselves. When splitting those observed in the parks by group size, over 60% of the park users are in groups of 5 or less.

Type of Activities

With the peak time on Saturdays being from 11:30 to 2:30 it stands to reason that the number one activity in terms of participants in Casper parks is parties and picnics (44%). The number engaged in the general categories of 1) play and light activity, and 2) sitting or lounging is 38% and 17% respectively. When looked at in broad terms, 62% of Casper park users are involved in passive activities while 38% are involved in play, sports and light activity.

Table 8 provides a rundown of the type of activities observed in Casper parks. For summary purposes, activities that took place in unobstructed turf areas like playing catch, soccer, kite flying, ultimate Frisbee, general play, etc. were all lumped under active play. It made sense to split out those activities like tennis and basketball that took place on facilities designed for that purpose. Participation in organized athletic or recreation activities like adult softball, little league baseball, or club soccer were not addressed in this study. Informal practice sessions for soccer and midget football were considered as they represent a common use for large, level play areas within various parks.

Passive activities included sitting in the grass, lying on a blanket, watching kids play, watching the river, sitting on a bench or table and holding a party or picnic. Watching people in the park, eating lunch or just enjoying a shady spot while sitting in a vehicle is a valid passive activity for a park. It was common in some more popular parks with off street parking lots like Washington, Morad and Highland to see individuals sitting in vehicles. In that it was difficult counting people in vehicles in a non-obtrusive manner, accurate counts of this type of passive activity are not available.

Table 8
Activities Observed within Casper Parks and on Pathways

Notable Physical Activities	Participants	Percent of Total Users
Playing	357	14.4
Tennis	156	6.2
Walking	119	4.7
Football practice	90	3.6
Dog walking	81	3.2
Playing Ball	78	3.1
Bicycling	68	2.7
Soccer practice	45	1.8
Swinging	43	1.7
X-country practice	40	1.6
Basketball	17	0.6
Other Activities		
Running, fishing, slack lining, Frisbee throwing, playing catch, playing with dog, using metal detector, operating radio controlled cars, shooting rockets, kite flying, skateboarding, riding scooters, riding Trikke, exercising, unloading raft, rollerblading, softball, volleyball, rolling down hill, slippery slide, picture taking, 4-wheeling, race walking, hakysac		
Total Physical Activities	1,245	50.2

Notable Passive or Sedentary Activities

Picnics	678	27.3
Sitting on ground or table	275	11.1
Watching	172	6.9
Birthday parties	60	2.4

Other Passive Activities

Sleeping, sun bathing, playing guitar, sitting in vehicle, watching the river, working on computer, group meeting, sitting in wheelchair, reading, wedding,

Total Passive Activities	1,235	49.8
Total Participants	2,480	100%

Facilities Used

Knowing what Casper residents and visitors do when they visit a park or open space enables the City to modify or enhance the parks to make them provide for the needs of the community. Table 9 lists those features within parks that receive the most use. With the amount of active play that takes place in the parks it is not surprising that open play fields receive the most use. Activities within open areas also include sedentary activities like picnics in the grass, reading or laying on a blanket as well as active play which push the numbers even higher.

Table 9
Facility Use within Casper Parks

Facilities	Number of Users	% of Total Users
Areas for open play	767	32.0
Shelters	607	25.3
Playgrounds	363	15.1
Tables	221	9.2
Tennis Courts	178	7.4
Walks or paths	156	6.5
Swings (bays)	66	2.7
Benches	18	0.7
Basketball Courts	17	0.7
Total for Selected Facilities	2,393	100%

Picnics and Parties

The frequent use of parks for picnics and parties is reflected in the high numbers for shelters and tables in Table 9. When combined, shelter and table use surpasses open turf areas as well used features within parks. Shelter use varies from park to park. At least one shelter was in use in Washington Park, Highland Park and Castle Park each time the park was visited. There were five additional parks with shelters in use at least 50% of the time. These include: Conwell, Paradise Valley, Matt Campfield, Riverview and South Mike Sedar. Finally, there were eleven parks where the shelters were never in use during the study including: Huber, Alta Vista, Dallason, Southridge, Green Meadow, Meadowlark, Westwood, Meadow, Garden Creek, Marion Kriener and Zonta Park.



Based on wear and tear on the shelters and tables, and the trash generated, these shelters clearly receive some use. However, based on the results of the study, the removal or relocation of some low use shelters could be considered when they reach the point where major repairs or replacement is needed.

Most shelters have a single table. When a group is looking for a venue with more than one table, shelters at Conwell, Matt Campfield, Paradise Valley, Sage, Wells, Beech Street, Centennial, Ft. Caspar, Highland, South Mike Sedar, and Castle Park have larger shelters with two or more tables. A few parks have what can be considered a picnic ground or picnic area. Centennial, Amoco, Washington and Yesness parks have groupings of tables that are not within a shelter which can be used for larger gatherings.

There were a number of occasions where individuals were sitting at tables but not eating or using the table surface. These individuals may be content sitting on a less expensive bench rather than at a table. It is worthy of note that benches were used by only 18 individuals over the course of the study. This raises questions on the need for more benches. Are the benches in poor locations? In a number of cases parents and siblings

watching children on a playground were lounging in the grass nearby. Would they prefer sitting on a bench to sitting in the grass? Are the benches not inviting to sit on because of their condition or the lack of shade? These questions should be addressed and the results should be considered before more benches are purchased and before they are placed.

It is appealing for many to picnic in the grass even when a table or shelter is available. On a couple of occasions, the tables in City Park were not all in use and individuals were having picnics on a blanket rather than at a table. This supports continued high levels of care of the turf areas within parks to make them inviting places to relax.

Playgrounds

Playgrounds received a significant amount of use. Swings were not used as frequently as playgrounds. Thirty-five of Casper's parks have playgrounds which appears to be warranted from a use standpoint. Some playgrounds receive a great deal of use and others are rarely used. Table 10 provides a summary of playground use by park. As is evident from the table, playgrounds in two of the parks were in use at all times and the playgrounds within an additional eight parks were in use at least 50% of the time. At the other extreme, seventeen playgrounds were in use less than 25% of the time and five (N. Mike Sedar, Green Meadow, Westwood, Nancy English, and Marion Kriener) were never in use during the study. Again the condition of the playground and fall material suggests that the playgrounds receive some use.

Chapter 9 of this report offers a summary of the condition of all the playgrounds in Casper. The condition of some playgrounds may offer some explanation for their low use. The apparent use of the playgrounds should be considered when deciding which playgrounds to replace, which to expand, and which to downsize when the time comes.

Other Notable Facilities

Tennis Courts and paths receive notable use. They were used by 7.4 % of the total park users in the case of the tennis courts and 6.5% for walks and paths. Though this level of activity may seem low, when compared to other communities the activity level at these facilities in Casper may be high. Limited activity may signify the lack of adequate facilities. Basketball courts, for example, are only provided in 5 areas and playing basketball was not observed much during the study. Would the availability of more basketball courts increase this activity? Would it be enough of an increase to warrant the construction of more courts? These questions need to be discussed further before more basketball courts are built.

Table 10
Playground Use by Park

Park			Frequency of Use		
	> 75%	50-74%	25-49%	< 25%	Never
Washington	X				
Crossroads Adventure Playground (Castle)	X				
Conwell		X			
Highland		X			
Sage		X			
Alta Vista		X			
Riverview		X			
Harden		X			
Suzie McMurry		X			
S. Mike Sedar		X			
Huber			X		
Fairdale			X		
City			X		
Matt Campfield			X		
Eastdale			X		
Fun Valley			X		
Long				X	
Paradise Valley				X	
Wolf Creek				X	
Centennial				X	
Beech Street				X	
Dallason				X	
Verda James				X	
Adams				X	
Meadowlark				X	
Meadow				X	
Garden Creek				X	
Marion Kriener					X
Nancy English					X
Westwood					X
Green Meadow					X
N. Mike Sedar					X

Many Casper parks offer a host of facilities that will support a range of activities. A review of the facilities available will reveal the capacity of our various parks. A review of facilities to actual activity will show where we have parks with surplus facilities in which increased use is desired. A consideration of the condition of facilities may help explain why certain parks get more use than others.

5. RESULTS OF CITIZEN SATISFACTION SURVEYS.

Approach

From 2000 to 2008, the City of Casper conducted biannual citizen surveys to gauge city residents' satisfaction with City Services. The surveys were administered by the ETC Institute and followed their DirectionFinder survey format. The surveys did not address residents' knowledge of City facilities or ask for comments on the adequacy of services or facilities, it simply asked if they were satisfied. A statement that someone is somewhat or very satisfied with the Quality of City Parks, for example, implies that resident likes what is offered or provided in addition to the condition the facilities are in.

In 2011, the City opted to switch to a citizen survey administered by the National Research Center and International City Managers Association (ICMA). The survey was administered to over 500 communities across the country. The communities selected which standardized questions they wished to use in their particular survey. While all 500 communities did not pick the same questions as the City of Casper, over 180 communities used the same questions having to do with parks, paths and walking trails.

Results

In 2000, 75% of the Casper respondents were somewhat or very satisfied with the quality of city parks. This level of satisfaction increased over time. While the level of satisfaction with parks in 2002 held at 75%, in 2004 it increased to 80%, 81% in 2006 and 82% in 2008. Specific questions were not asked about park features or elements. Respondents did have an opportunity to comment on the quality of facilities at the end of the survey. Only a few comments were received. The only needs mentioned were more picnic tables, playgrounds, walking and biking trails, and parks with open space.

In the 2011 survey, questions were asked on the availability of paths and trails, park visitation and the condition of Casper parks. Regarding paths and trails, 23% of the respondents stated that the availability of paths and trails was excellent and 39% said it was good. Casper was above average in this area among the 181 communities who used this question in their survey. A full 88% of survey respondents reported that they visited a Casper park in the past year. While this number seems high, it was in the average or similar range among the 229 communities who asked this question. The level of satisfaction with Casper parks was not measured in the 2011 survey, respondents were simply asked to rate the parks. While 82% of the respondents in the 2008 survey were satisfied with the parks, 85% of the 2011 respondents felt the parks were good or

excellent. This appears to represent a consistent level of satisfaction. This level of approval is consistent with other communities as well. Casper was considered similar to most of the 300 communities in the survey who used this question, and was ranked 126th in how well their parks were rated.

6. THE ADEQUACY OF CASPER PARK FACILITIES

Chapter 3 of this report outlined the facilities provided in each park. The review of the actual activities in the parks leads to questions on the adequacy of our park facilities by neighborhood and for the whole community. This section will look more closely at which facilities are being used, how accessible our parks are and how well the neighbors and residents of the entire community are being served.

Appendix B outlines the facilities provided in the improved parks in Casper. A meaningful application of the information in that table is to compare facilities to the population served. Units per population is a frequent figure used to compare a park system to national averages. While this provides a community with a reflection of how they stack up, it is up to the community to decide if the number of units or range of facilities provided for a community their size is adequate or not.

Use by Facility

Counting people actually using facilities allows for an assessment of the number of users per facility not just the number of facilities per total population. Table 11 presents a comparison of the relative number of facilities and the number of individuals who used those facilities. The comparison focuses on 9 of the amenity categories a park user would consider in deciding which park to visit. The use of barbeques and porta johns was not measured during the field survey sessions, and the draw that planters or flower beds represent is hard to measure.

Some facilities that are well represented in our park system do not get as much use as you might expect. As reflected in the table, the 33 benches that occur in City parks make up 7.6 percent of the total facilities to be considered key amenities or desired features. Only 0.7 percent of the observed park visitors used benches in parks. Based on that, one could conclude that we have more benches than we need in the parks. There are 63 benches along the Platte River Trail on City owned parkland that were included in the overall bench total for the community. Bench use along the trail was not measured however, so this review only considers benches within parks where observations were made.

At the other extreme, the table suggests that we have far more individuals using open play areas than we have available. It is important to note that all play areas are not the same size and many are large and can hold a significant number of users or multiple groups at one time. Without an assessment of the actual size of our open areas it is difficult to assess whether or not they are adequate.

Table 11
Principle Facility Use within Casper Parks

Facilities	Total in System	% of Select Facilities	Number of Users	% of Total Users	Ratio of Facilities to Users
Benches	33	7.6	18	0.7	10.8x
Swings	77	17.8	66	2.7	6.6x
Tables	122	28.2	221	9.2	3.1x
Basketball Courts	9	2.1	17	0.7	3.0x
Walks or paths	31	7.2	156	6.5	1.1x
Playgrounds	48	11.1	363	15.1	0.7x
Shelters	57	13.1	607	25.3	0.5x
Tennis Courts	14	3.2	178	7.4	0.4x
Areas for open play	42	9.7	767	32.0	0.3x
Total for Selected Facilities	433	100%	2,393	100%	

Swings and tables appear to be in ample supply. The comparison would suggest that we have 6 times and 3 times as many swings and tables respectively as we need based on the percent of park visitors who use these facilities. It is notable that we apparently have an abundance of tables but fewer shelters than may be desired. We may not need more tables for picnics just more that are covered.

The City of Casper only has a few basketball courts in the parks and a number are in poor repair. However, even though there are few courts there are even fewer users. As is reflected in Table 11, there are twice as many basketball courts as are needed based on users. It should be noted that 5 out of 7 of the quality courts are in Matt Campfield Park or Riverview Park, and there are no basketball courts in a community park. Having a few quality courts in other areas of the community may increase use significantly.

There is an apparent large demand for tennis courts. This is likely due to the fact that during the survey periods high school classes were using the tennis courts at Washington Park. There were also lessons being held at Highland Park. School and private tennis classes are significant court users. Early morning play and use after dark may be quite

significant as well when looking at overall tennis activities. These times were not assessed in the course of this study. The extent to which users travel across town to their favorite court rather than use the court closest to their home has not been assessed either. These questions would need to be addressed before it could be concluded that there is a need for more tennis courts.

Playgrounds and Shelters

Shelters and playgrounds may be the most inviting or sought after amenity within a park system. In Casper, playgrounds and shelters are indeed popular. Over 1/4th of the users within the park systems use a shelter when they visit a park, and about 1/7th of the users play on a playground. When you consider that amount of use it is not surprising that the relative number of shelters or playgrounds within the parks falls short of the number of users. At the present time 40 out of 43 parks have one or more



shelters and 32 out of 43 parks have one or more playgrounds. While it would appear that there are opportunities to increase the number of shelters and playgrounds, there may well be areas where these facilities are inappropriate and don't belong.

A comparison of shelter and playground use by parks helps to highlight where these facilities are adequate and underutilized and where more may be warranted. It was observed that the shelters in eight of the parks were in use more than 50% of the time. These parks include Conwell, Paradise Valley, Matt Campfield, Riverview and South Mike Sedar. The shelters in Highland, Washington and Crossroads, were in use more than 75% of the time, as noted in Table 12. At the other extreme, none of the 607 individuals who used the shelters during the survey sessions used the ones that were in Huber, Alta Vista, Dallason, Southridge, Green Meadow, Meadowlark, Westwood, Meadow, Garden Creek, Marion Kriener or Zonta-Patterson Park.

Like shelters, the playgrounds from park to park do not receive the same level of use. During the study period there were 363 individuals using the playgrounds. There was no one using the playgrounds in North Mike Sedar, Green Meadow, Westwood, Nancy English or Marion Kriener parks at any time during the survey sessions. The playgrounds in two of the parks, Washington and Castle, were in use more than 75% of the time. An additional 8 parks had children on the playgrounds more than 50% of the time (Conwell, Highland, Sage, Alta Vista, Riverview, Harden, Suzie McMurry and South Mike Sedar). The remaining parks that received limited use (less than 25% of the time) included: Meadowlark, Meadow, Garden Creek, Verda James, Adams, Long, Paradise Valley, Wolf Creek, Centennial, Beech Street Transit Plaza, and Dallason.

Table 12
Shelter and Playground Use

Facility	Frequent use (more than 75% of time)	Moderate Use	Never in Use
Shelters	Highland, Washington, Castle	Conwell, Paradise Valley, Matt Campfield, Riverview, South Mike Sedar	Huber, Alta Vista, Dallason, Southridge, Green Meadow, Meadowlark, Westwood, Meadow, Garden Creek, Marion Kriener, Zonta
Playground	Washington, Castle	Conwell, Highland, Sage, Alta Vista, Riverview, Harden, Suzie McMurry, South Mike Sedar	North Mike Sedar, Green Meadow, Westwood, Nancy English, Marion Kriener

7. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Level of Service

Parks are intended to provide needed or desired facilities within a reasonable proximity to all residents of a community. Gauging the adequacy of a park system in terms of park acreages or facilities provided relative to the number of residents of a neighborhood or community is a common measure of a park system. The extent to which our parks and the facilities within the parks meet those needs is an indication of the Level of Service (LOS) provided by our park system. While there are recognized standards on LOS, the local community must decide what is fitting for its residents.

Service Areas

The industry standard for neighborhood parks is a service area with a radius of $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile. At a steady pace of 3 miles per hour, this would equate to a 5 to 10 minute walk to a park for anyone in the service area. The willingness of individuals to walk to a park varies from community to community. The extent to which parents will allow their children to go to the park alone or with friends varies by community as well.

The industry standard for community parks is a 3 mile radius service area. The community parks in Casper are concentrated in the middle part of the community. Five of the eight community parks are within 3 miles of each other. In that Casper residents are comfortable driving across town to visit a full-service park, the entire community should be considered the service area of each community park.

The service areas could be limited to the City of Casper only or include the entire urban area since none of the surrounding towns have large, full-service parks. The only large park in the area other than the Casper parks is Edness K. Wilkins State Park, which is less than 4 miles from the center of Casper. Depending on the adopted service areas, the Casper community parks serve a population of between 55,316 and 75,400 people.

The online survey that was conducted, which is discussed in Chapter 8, asked the respondents how often someone in the household walked or bicycled to a park. Sixty two percent of those who responded indicated that a household member visited a park on foot or a bicycle at least twice a month. These individuals are willing to walk up to 10 minutes to get to a park.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the Casper parks system. In that overview, parks within Casper are categorized by function not size. A number of the larger community parks, such as Washington, Highland and Mike Sedar, function as the neighborhood park for nearby residents as well as a full service park for the whole community. When assessing the service areas of neighborhood parks, the improved portions of Washington, Highland, and Mike Sedar serve the whole community in addition to the nearby residents. Nancy English, Veterans, Beech Street, Wells, and Yesness serve the whole community and serve a local need and are included in the calculations. More remote community parks like Centennial, Amoco and Castle are not included since they do not serve a residential neighborhood.






Map 2 shows the service areas for Casper's improved neighborhood parks, select schools and future parks. Measuring a parks service following sidewalks and crosswalks would be challenging. Plotting circles on the map of parks that represent the service areas is a more feasible way of estimating the number of Casper residents who can walk to a neighborhood park. In that most park users follow an indirect route to their park, a service area radius of $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of a mile is being used to better reflect a 10 minute walk.

The population, based on 2010 census household size estimates, has been calculated for each $\frac{1}{3}$ rd mile park service area. Table 13 outlines the sizes of the parks, plus service

area dwelling units and population for each neighborhood park. This gives an indication of where a condition may exist where a relatively small park serves a significant population. Alta Vista, Sage, Green Meadow and Harden are examples of smaller parks that serve sizeable populations. Based on the use assessment presented in Chapter 6, none of these parks could be characterized as overused. However, a change in the appeal of these parks could produce a significant increase in activity.

Adding up the residents within 1/3rd mile of a neighborhood park as listed in Table 13 suggests that 42,160 or 77% of Casper's residents live within 1/3rd of a mile of a neighborhood park. The neighborhood parks provide 187.77 acres of developed parkland for the residents of the community. Comparing the neighborhood park acreage to the total population of 55,316 as listed in the 2010 Census, results in a figure of 3.39 acres of improved neighborhood parks per 1,000 residents. Compared to a national standard of 1 acre of parkland provided for every 1,000 population, the residents of Casper enjoy more than 3 times the amount of developed parkland as is generally considered adequate.

Map 2 Park Service Areas

-  Parks
-  Future Parks
-  Schools

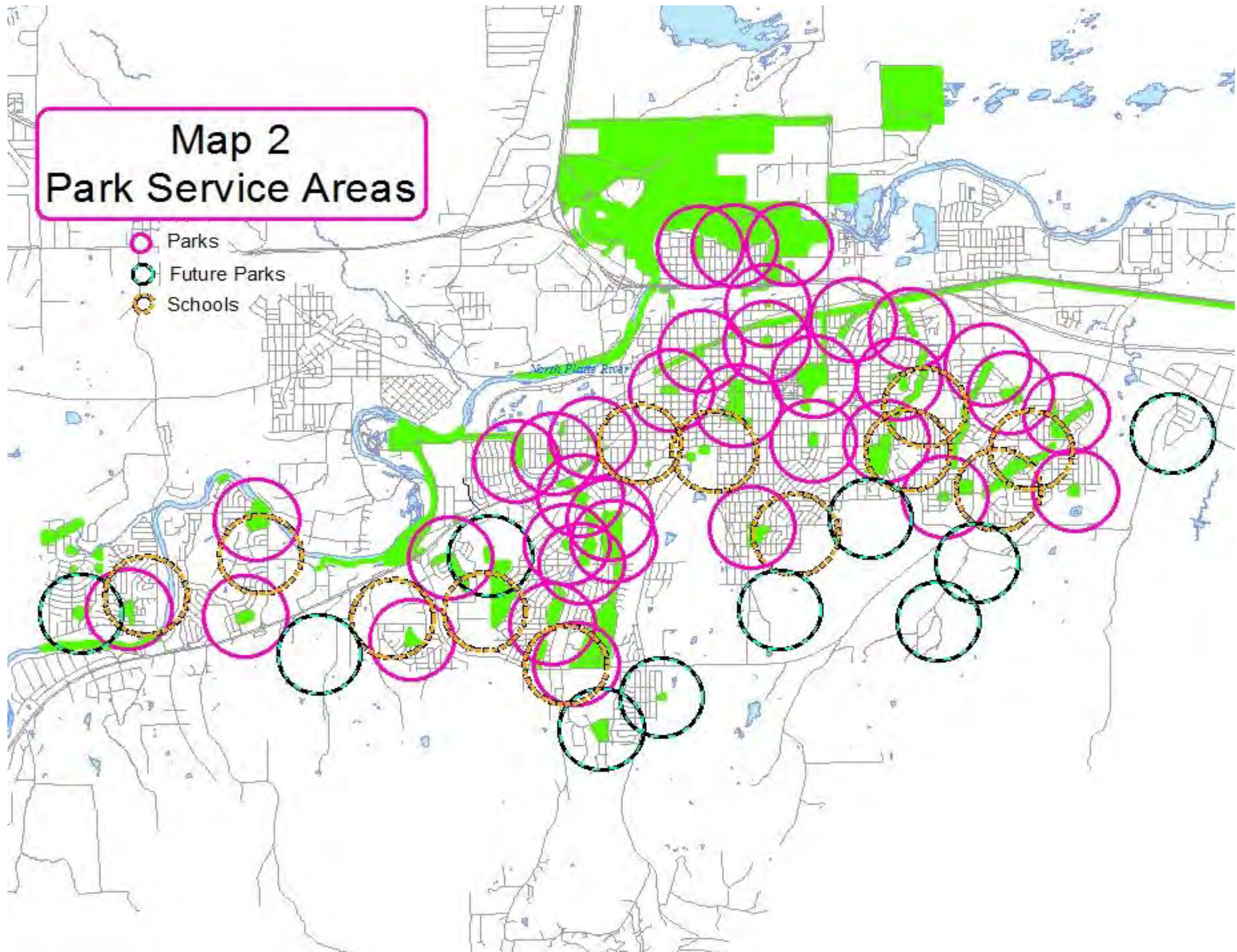


Table 13
Neighborhood Park
Level of Service

Park	Total Acreage	Developed Acreage	Dwelling Units within 1/3rd Mile Service Area	1/3rd Mile Service Area Population (residences x 2.38 persons per household)
Adams	1.96	1.40	858	2,042
Alta Vista	9.53	1.14	1,048	2,494
Beech Street Transit Plaza	2.72	2.72	1,124	2,676
Blackmore Vista*	0.80	0.80	219	521
Buckboard	3.75	2.30	796	1,894
City	4.09	4.09	1,268	3,017
Conwell	2.84	2.84	843	2,006
Dallason	0.59	0.59	573	1,364
Eastdale	4.77	4.77	865	2,058
Fairdale	3.14	3.14	1,356	3,228
Freedom	0.74	0.74	955	2,274
Fun Valley	1.97	1.97	582	1,386
Garden Creek	1.41	1.41	830	1,975
Green Meadow	0.67	0.67	758	1,805
Harden	0.78	0.78	673	1,602
Highland	33.92	25.94	1,155	2,750
Huber	4.78	4.78	1,141	2,716
Marion Kriener	1.34	1.34	811	1,930
Long	2.24	2.24	751	1,789
Matt Campfield	2.83	2.83	797	1,897
Meadow	3.36	3.36	964	2,295
Meadowlark	7.06	4.65	237	565
Nancy English	9.46	9.46	1,294	3,080
North Mike Sedar	9.41	5.89	652	1,551
Paradise Valley	10.94	10.94	558	1,329
Paradise Valley Pool	5.38	1.96	489	1,163
Riverbend	2.98	2.34	359	855
Riverview	9.42	7.69	774	1,842
Sage	2.96	2.96	1,707	4,062
South Mike Sedar	26.29	20.58	822	1,956
Southridge	1.10	1.10	951	2,264

Suzie McMurry	2.76	2.76	325	774
Verda James	4.08	4.08	1,076	2,561
Veteran's	0.55	0.55	1,141	2,716
Washington	26.98	24.83	1,601	3,810
Westwood	2.33	2.33	857	2,039
Wolf Creek	5.45	3.64	286	681
Wells	3.57	3.57	233	556
Yesness	71.07	8.59	880	2,095
Total Neighborhood Parks	290.02	187.77	NA	NA
Average Neighborhood Park	7.44	4.81	836	2,042

*The Blackmore Vista Park is a private park that is intended to serve the 521 residents of the Vista Ridge neighborhood but is open to the public.

In addition to neighborhood parks, schoolyards and playgrounds provide recreational space for residents of an area. All elementary schools within the community have playgrounds and most middle and high schools have open fields generally used for athletics. As noted in Chapter 3, 12 elementary schools either abut or are within 3 blocks



of a developed park. While individuals in a neighborhood may already be served by a park, a school in the area provides more space and recreation options.

In five different areas of the community, the nearby school is the only place for recreation within the neighborhood. There

are an estimated 1,575 individuals who don't have a developed park within 1/3rd miles of their home but do have a school. The schools that fill this void are Summit Elementary, Sagewood Elementary, Centennial Middle, Dean Morgan Middle and Kelly Walsh High

School. At the present time, it is a school district policy to have school yards open for use by the general public whenever school is not in session. Most school yards are fenced but the gates are not locked and in many cases left standing open.

Private parks, open space or commons are not the norm in the City of Casper. Other than recreation facilities installed for the enjoyment of residents of an apartment/condominium complex, the only private neighborhood parks are the pocket parks at the Cottonwood Village Estates and the Community Center at Vista Ridge. The Cottonwood Village Estate pocket parks are in close proximity to Buckboard Park and serve residents who already have other recreation options. Most of the residents in the Vista Ridge neighborhood, however, do not have a public park within 1/3rd mile of their home. The 0.8 acre private park constructed by the developer for this subdivision provides the equivalent of 1.53 acres of improved parkland per 1,000 residents of the subdivision.



Though this ratio is lower than enjoyed by most residents of Casper there are at least some recreational facilities for these residents.

An estimated 5,530 homes or 13,156 residents of Casper are more than 1/3rd mile from an improved neighborhood park. When the additional residents served by the 5 schools and Vista Ridge Community Center Park are

added to the equation, a total of 7,523 residents or only 13.6 % of the Casper population are more than 1/3rd of a mile from a neighborhood park or school. A majority of the residents who do not live close to a neighborhood park or recreational facilities are in the south half of Paradise Valley, south of Wyoming Boulevard, and in the Parkridge subdivision.

Future Parks and Open Space

As the community grows additional parks will be needed. Through the online survey that was conducted it became apparent that over 60% of the respondents visited a park at least twice a month and proximity is an important consideration when individuals decide on which park to visit. As was noted above, the community parks are located in the center

of Casper. When you apply the accepted 3 mile radius service area for community parks most of the City is covered as are the areas to the east, south and west where future growth is most likely. On the other hand, neighborhood parks with a 1/3rd mile service area radius will be needed in the future. The survey respondents did not call for more parks in the developed part of the community which says that the density of one neighborhood park for every 2,000 persons is an acceptable standard for Casper. Projecting where growth will occur in the Casper area is beyond the scope of this study. Based on past land use and transportation plans, it is anticipated that the City will grow largely to the southeast and southwest. Additional parks or recreational facilities are warranted in these areas. Specific recommendation on new parks is presented in Chapter 11 on replacement and expansion.

There are two dedicated park parcels south of Wyoming Boulevard in the Sunrise 7 and Stoneridge neighborhoods, a platted park in the Mesa No. 3 Addition, and six undeveloped park parcels in the Trails West neighborhood. The platted Trails West parks are small and it is unlikely that they will all be developed. One or two more sizeable and elaborate parks could be created through property exchanges with area developers or property owners. Building parks on existing parcels in these three sections of the community can provide neighborhood parks for up to 4,500 current and future residents.

There are no established park parcels south of East 21st Street in the Sage Creek drainage, south of Country Club Road in the Elkhorn Creek drainage, or in the Park Ridge neighborhood in east Casper. To accommodate future development in the Wolf Creek area an additional park will be needed. It is likely that as many as six more neighborhood parks will be needed to serve these areas. Developers are not required to provide parkland or build parks at the present time. Useable open space is required with Planned Unit Developments (PUDs), however, formal parks are not. Until such time as provisions are in place to establish park parcels or require the building of parks, it will be left to the discretion of developers in these areas to create neighborhood parks. A park intended to serve a small area may be a mini park with limited facilities. If a park is to be represented as a neighborhood park, it should be 3.5 acres in size and contain a shelter, 2 tables, 2 benches, a playground, 2 swings and a grassy area for open play, as outlined in Chapter 3 on the Casper Park System, to meet the expectations of Casper residents.

Open Space Service Areas

Morad Park and North Platte River Park are more than 1/3rd of a mile from most Casper residents. Those who use these open space areas generally do so by car or bicycle making these areas destinations for individuals from throughout the community. Yesness

Park, the Garden Creek Greenway tracts and east side drainageways all abut residential areas. When looked at individually, 2,653 households are within 1/3rd of a mile of one or more of the five Garden Creek greenway tracts. Yesness Park is within 1/3rd of a mile of 820 households, there are 1,713 households close to the Long Drainage, and 2,245 households or 5,343 residents are within 1/3rd of a mile of the Sage Creek Drainageway. These open space tracts serve the local residents and are generally not destinations for the entire community.

There are numerous cross streets or points of access along the Long and Sage drainageways making these combined paths easily accessible for as many as 7,560 individuals or 1/7th of Casper's residents. Though these open space areas are excellent places to walk, bike or run, they are not very interesting in terms of plants, animals or overall character. Yesness Park offers more natural diversity and has a north/south aggregate trail bisecting the park, a trail around the pond and an east/west paved path



crossing the park. There are 3,487 residents who live within 1/3rd of a mile of the park. Yesness Park abuts a high volume, high speed highway which serves as a significant barrier. Of the 1,953 neighboring residents, 206 live south of Wyoming Boulevard and are unable to easily access the park. There are a number of

situations where a major highway or arterial, a ridge, drainage, railroad, or the North Platte River creates a barrier between residents and the nearest park to their home. A more detailed assessment would have to be conducted to isolate those who are underserved due to a major barrier between them and the closest park or open space tract.

There are only two formal paths or trails in the five greenway tracts along Garden Creek and very few points of access into the greenway properties. The residents of Valley Hills can cross the Sunrise Greenway via a concrete bridge and paved path to the Sunrise Shopping Center and Cresthill School. Valley Hills residents in the vicinity of Carmel Drive can access Green Meadow Park via a wooden bridge and primitive path across the

greenway. The bridges in Adams Park provide access to the primitive trails in the Adams Greenway and a bridge in the Garden Creek Greenway provides access to Garden Creek Park for the residents on the east side of the creek. In total, there are thirteen points of access to the five greenway tracts. When measured from those points, an estimated 5,859 individuals can walk to a point of access to one or more of the greenways along Garden Creek within 10 minutes.

The asphalt path in the Sunrise Greenway and the concrete paths within Nancy English and Westwood Park are the only established paths in the greenway tracts, however, countless primitive trails exist. The 2004 *Garden Creek/Sedar Draw Conceptual Trail Design Study* outlined options for formal paths or trails within the Garden Creek and Sedar Draw drainages. In addition to paths or trails, the study advocated the installation of benches, tables and signage for area residents. This would mimic the pathway system along the North Platte River that serves the Morad Park and North Platte River Park open space tracts, and provide a means to access and enjoy the diverse Casper greenways.

Adequacy of Facilities

Actual facilities in terms of play areas, tennis courts, outdoor swimming pools, etc. per capita is the other measure that is typically used to evaluate the adequacy of a park system. Table 14 lists the 12 key park elements or amenities common in Casper in terms of actual numbers, the number of facilities per 1,000 population, and the number of users per unit, or in other words the number of residents who would be in the line if everyone in the city wanted to use a certain type of facility.

Casper's elementary schools offer additional recreational opportunities for the community. As noted above, in 5 separate areas of the community the local school is the only recreational facility located within 1/3rd mile. The policy of making school grounds available to the general public provides access to an additional 18 playgrounds, 224 swings, 24 basketball courts and 12 playing fields.

Sister Cities

When compared against other communities in the region and nationally (Tables 15 and 16), it becomes evident that Casper is above average in the number of playgrounds, athletic fields, swimming pools and miles of paths per capita, and below average in the number of basketball courts per capita compared to select national cities between 40,000 and 80,000 population. Casper is in fact ranked number one in the number of swimming pools per 10,000 people for these nine select communities. Regionally, comparisons have been drawn with 4 other comparable cities in Wyoming, Montana and Colorado.

On this more local scale, Casper is again above average in the number of playgrounds, athletic fields, tennis courts, swimming pools and miles of paths or trails per capita, and below average in the number of basketball courts. Casper is first or second in the region in the provision of all these amenities except for basketball courts. As noted above, there are 24 basketball courts on school grounds. If these courts are drawn into the equation, Casper would not be considered below average in the provision of basketball courts.

Table 14
Facilities Provided within Casper Parks

Facilities	Total in System	Number of parks with one	Number of parks with two or more	Number per 1,000 residents	Persons served per unit
Swings	140	0	22	2.53	395
Tables	117	21	22	2.11	473
Benches	96	4	24	1.74	576
Shelters	57	29	10	1.03	970
Portable Restrooms	57	10	15	1.03	970
Playgrounds	51	19	14	0.92	1,085
BBQ grills	50	17	9	0.90	1,106
Areas for open play	43	18	10	0.78	1,286
Walks or paths	30	25	2	0.54	1,844
Flower beds or Planters	25	13	5	0.45	2,213
Baseball/softball fields	14	1	3	0.25	3,951
Tennis Courts	14	0	5	0.25	3,951
Soccer Fields	13	1	1	0.24	4,255
Basketball Courts	8	5	1	0.14	6,915
Midget Football Fields	6	1	1	0.11	9,219
Swimming Pools	5	5	0	0.90	11,063
Fitness Courses	2	2	0	0.36	27,658
Horseshoe courts	2	2	0	0.36	27,658

Facilities within Service Areas

As noted above, most parks have a playground and picnic facilities. To address the question of accessibility to certain park elements or amenities for Casper residents, a representation of how many residents live within 1/3rd mile of a playground would closely match proximity to a neighborhood park. Less ubiquitous park or recreation improvements like tennis courts, basketball courts, swimming pools, or walks and paths, are only available in certain parks or certain areas within the community. Table 17 lists the parks with special facilities and the 1/3rd mile service area population. Based on this review it is evident that 19% of Casper residents can walk to a tennis court, for example. As would be expected, the more specialized facilities are less accessible and generally used by individuals who drive. Only walking paths or trails are within walking distance for a significant number of Casper residents.

Alternative Access

In addition to walking or driving to a park or path, users can opt to ride a bicycle or take The Bus. At this point the number of bikelanes are few, with only 3 parks served by bikelanes (City, Verda James and Suzie McMurry). As the number of bikelanes increases, well defined bike routes to more and more parks will emerge.

The Bus provides convenient service to most parks and pathways. Only 7 developed parks are not within 1/3rd mile of a bus stop. There are 12 parks or paths with a bus stop. In that all the buses are equipped with bike racks, individuals who wish to avail themselves of recreational opportunities at parks and on the paths can easily get there by bus.

Table 15
Area Cities Park System Level of Service

Community	2010 Population	Total Park Acres	Total Parkland Acres / 1000 Population	Percent of Parkland Developed	Playgrounds / 1000 population	Acres of athletic fields / 1000 population	Number of athletic fields / 1000 population	Tennis Courts / 10,000 population	Swimming Pools / 10,000 population	Basketball Courts / 1,000 population	Miles of paths/trail / 1,000 population
Greeley	91,000	1,065	11.7	55.3%	0.26	1.49	0.26	1.7	1.0	0.14	0.2
Cheyenne	57,000	802	14.0	70.6%	0.35	NA	0.63	1.9	0.35	0.24	0.27
Missoula	57,000	750	13.1	66.6%	0.54	NA	0.49	5.1	0.2	0.21	0.38
Casper	55,000	3,303	60.1	38.5%	0.70	1.95	0.68	2.5	1.08	0.15	0.43
Bozeman	27,000	471	17.4	63.7%	0.66	NA	0.96	1.8	0.37	0.22	1.66
Average	57,400	1,491.2	23.3	58.94%	0.51	1.72	0.61	2.6	0.6	0.19	0.59
Casper Rank	4	1	1	5	1	1	2	2	1	4	2

Table 16
ICMA Sister City Service Levels**

Community	2010 Population	Total Park Acres	Developed Park Acres	Developed Parkland Acres / 1,000 Population	Playgrounds / 1,000 Population	Acres of athletic fields / 1,000 Population	Number of athletic fields / 1,000 Population	Tennis Courts / 10,000 Population	Swimming Pools / 10,000 Population	Basketball Courts / 1,000 Population	Miles of paths/trail / 1,000 Population
Rock Hill, SC	67,339	392.8	392.8	5.8	0.37	1.21	0.66	2.5	0.59	0.28	0.35
James City County, VA	63,135	1,490.7	NA	NA	0.16	NA	0.36	0.95	0.79	0.16	0.33
Johnson City, TN	61,990	1,330.9	705.4	11.4	0.26	1.21	0.69	3.07	0.32	0.14	0.32
Casper, WY	55,316	3,303.0	1,272.2	23.0	0.70	1.95	0.68	2.53	1.08	0.15	0.43
Bowling Green, KY	55,097	970.4	815.1	14.8	0.40	1.37	0.76	3.09	0.0	0.29	0.27
Corvallis, OR	54,880	1,810.0	615.4	11.2	0.51	1.22	0.66	1.46	0.18	0.13	0.60
Albany, OR	48,770	734.5	426.0	8.7	0.45	NA	0.33	0.41	0.41	0.31	0.19
Danville, VA	44,660	574.0	327.2	7.3	0.49	1.09	0.69	4.71	0.0	0.27	0.64
Casa Grande, AZ	44,547	1,324.0	489.9	11.0	0.61	NA	0.79	1.57	0.22	0.36	0.06
Average	55,081	1,325.6	630.5	11.4	0.44	1.34	0.63	2.25	0.40	0.23	0.35
Casper Rank	4	1	1	1	1	1	4	4	1	7	3

**Cities with a 2010 population between 40,000 and 80,000 that are not within a metropolitan area.

Table 17
Distribution of Special Facilities

Facility/Amenity	Park/location	1/3rd mile Service Area Population	Percent of City Residents
Walk /Path	Suzie McMurry, Long, Sage, Paradise Valley, Matt Campfield, Conwell, Wolf Creek, Nancy English, Crossroads, Buckboard, North Casper, Riverbend, Riverview, Eastdale, Highland, Washington, Beech Street Transit Plaza, Veteran's, Yesness, Morad	22,759	41.0
Swimming Pool	Highland, Kelly Walsh High School, Washington, Marion Kriener, Mike Sedar, Paradise Valley	10,998	19.9
Tennis Court	Washington, Highland, Huber, Mike Sedar, Paradise Valley	10,760	19.5
Access to Pond or River	Yesness, Riverbend, Morad, Patterson-Zonta, Amoco, Crossroads, Riverview, North Casper	6,853	12.4
Basketball Court	Riverview, Matt Campfield, Dallason, Huber, Paradise Valley, Wolf Creek	6,041	10.9
Fitness Course	Paradise Valley, Matt Campfield	2,906	5.3
Horseshoe Pits	Matt Campfield	1,835	3.3
Handball Court	Riverview	1,722	3.1

8. THE PARK PLAN PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

It can be determined through field observations who is using the parks and trails and what they are doing while they are there. Gaining an understanding of why they are using a park or feature and how they would rate the facilities can only be gained through some form of survey method. Surveys can target individuals who are using parks or facilities and the general public. Users are able to provide feedback on the quality and adequacy of facilities and how they make their recreational choices. Drawing information from the general public through a survey can be valuable in reaching those who use parks and paths infrequently or not at all. Surveys can be conducted by telephone, used as a mailer, or offered online. Understanding what the general public wants can help a community provide the recreational facilities needed to get more people out and moving.

Approach

The Park Plan Advisory Committee decided to conduct an online survey and hold open house listening session to find out what our residents thought of the parks. A brief, ten question survey developed by the Committee was made available on the City of Casper website. The public was directed to the survey through the website, Facebook postings, press releases, television, the printed media, and flyers posted at locations active residents would frequent. The survey touched on household demographics, park visitation, an assessment of two key community parks, and where the City should direct dollars or manpower to improve our parks. A total of 128 individuals filled out the online survey.

Results

Families with children filled out the survey most often. Fewer seniors than you would expect filled out the survey based on their percent of the overall population. Most of the respondents were park users. Sixty percent of the respondents visited a park at least once a week and a significant number walked or rode a bicycle to the park. The respondents felt the City should direct (in rank order) resources to the following:

1. Maintenance
2. Equipment such as playgrounds and swings
3. The planting of trees
4. Building paths
5. Installing more shelters
6. Installing more tables and benches
7. Building new parks

8. Building one or more dog parks
9. Building more athletic fields

The survey respondents were asked to identify which parks they visit most often and why. The 10 top or most popular parks were:

1. Washington
2. Castle (Crossroads Adventure Playground)
3. Mike Sedar
4. Nancy English
5. Highland
6. Adams
7. Morad
8. Suzie McMurry
9. North Casper
10. Paradise Valley

Their decision on which park to visit was based on (in rank order) :

1. Close to home
2. Quality of the playground
3. Amount of shade
4. Open Area for play
5. Dog Friendly
6. Popular
7. Restroom

The importance of a park being close to home is significant and addresses the role of neighborhood parks. Observing more people in larger community parks raises a question as to the need for neighborhood parks. If there are limited dollars available to improve or maintain parks should more effort be put into the popular community parks rather than neighborhood parks. The fact that proximity was the most important factor suggests that neighborhood parks are important and need to be maintained. This finding can be extrapolated to suggest that as the community grows neighborhood parks are needed and valued.

Some parks with a full array of amenities such as Alta Vista and Centennial Park were not mentioned at all by survey respondents. This can mean that either these parks get little use or those who use the parks didn't fill out a survey. It does raise a question about how knowledgeable Casper park users are about the overall park system, and what

individual parks have to offer. Before funds are spent upgrading more popular parks, the City may wish to find ways to better educate the public about parks that may already have what they are looking for.

Finally, the respondents were given the opportunity to provide any comments that they wished. The most common comments were:

1. Expressions of appreciation for the quality of the parks
2. The need for quality restrooms
3. Adequate facilities for dogs
4. The need for a range of water recreation options

Survey of Senior Citizens

Due to the relatively low number of seniors who responded to the online survey, the Advisory Committee decided to make a direct effort to assess their feelings about the City's parks and paths. Members of the committee passed out an abbreviated survey during lunch at the Central Wyoming Senior Center and got 78 surveys back. The surveys revealed that only 20% of the seniors who responded visited a park or path weekly compared to 60% of the online survey respondents.

Regarding park needs, the seniors felt the City should direct resources to:

1. More tables and benches
2. More shelters
3. One or more dog parks
4. More trees
5. More paths
6. Playgrounds and swings
7. Better maintenance

Finally, the seniors were given the opportunity to share any comments about the parks. The most common comments were:

1. Expressions of appreciation for the quality of the parks
2. The need for more lighting
3. Adequate facilities for dogs
4. The need for clean restrooms
5. More places to rest (benches, tables)

The results from the focus group discussion with the seniors were not surprising. It was interesting that like the general respondents, the quality of the parks or effectiveness of the City's maintenance efforts was appreciated by the seniors. In that this was the number one comment made by both groups suggests that the parks are in good condition and offer what Casper's residents are looking for.

Listening Sessions

Recognizing that there is a segment of the population that will not respond to an online survey, opportunities were provided for individuals to submit comments or questions via telephone, e-mail or through open house sessions. All of the notices that went out regarding the survey included a telephone number and e-mail address that could be used to reach a City staff member. Also, two listening sessions were held, one in a tent in front of the senior center and the other at the Downtown Farmers Market. All told, less than ten telephone calls and e-mails were received. Fewer than 5 individuals visited the tent at the Senior Center, but over 30 individuals stopped at the Farmers Market booth. More of the direct comments received reflected a specific concern rather than a general observation as was the case with the survey. A significant number of the comments related to facilities for dogs. Other frequent comments dealt with specific features



needed such as zip lines, botanical garden, and pickleball courts. Restrooms were again an issue for the listening session attendees.

Relatively few comments were made about specific parks by survey respondents, seniors or those who made a direct contact. There was an expectation that detailed comments would be

received about what was needed on a park by park basis. In actuality, only 20 parks were mentioned by name by those calling for improvements. Again, this can be taken as an indication that the City is doing a good job meeting individual's park recreation needs and has not overlooked key problems or shortcomings.

9. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The preceding chapters of this report provide an overview of the City of Casper park, open space and pathway system and an assessment of the adequacy of those properties. An evaluation of the location of the facilities relative to established neighborhoods has been provided which shows a large number of Casper residents have recreational facilities near their home. The assessment has also demonstrated that the City of Casper is well served with a number of trails and paths and more than 250 acres of diverse open space.

Need for Goals and Objectives

Before a plan that addresses the addition of parkland, the replacement or addition of amenities within parks and the addition of more paths and trails is prepared, it is necessary to formulate and articulate the goals and objectives of the residents of the community and City leadership with regard to park system changes. Acquiring more parkland must be addressed and the type of improvements within new and existing parks needs to be decided. Over 77% of Casper residents live within 1/3rd of a mile from a park. When schools with playgrounds or fields are added to the equation, 86% of our residents have outdoor recreation facilities close to their home. Is that an acceptable level of coverage or is it reasonable and prudent to develop more parkland in poorly served neighborhoods? Improved pathways in generally good to excellent condition run along the North Platte River, the old Union Pacific Railroad line and in a number of drainageways. Do we have adequate paths and trails in the community or are more needed? If so, where. Finally, the community is changing and growing. What should be done to insure that the new areas of the community have adequate recreational opportunities?

The Goal Setting Process

Arriving at collective goals and objectives requires a process of public engagement whereby all segments of the population are granted an opportunity to share their concerns and recommendations regarding the development or redevelopment of parks, paths and open space areas. The process was formulated with guidance from the Advisory Committee made up of Leisure Services Advisory Board, and Planning and Zoning Commission members, City staff, and the general public. Outreach through the media and social networking tools was employed to educate the public about parks, pathways and the ways they can get involved in the planning process.

Four oversight committee meetings were held in addition to two Council work sessions and two public meetings. The committee discussed principles, goals and objectives to some degree but little feedback was received from the public or Council. Those who filled out a survey had an opportunity to share their opinions on what was important in building or maintaining a quality park and trail system. It is possible to extract principle, goals and objectives from the comments that were received from the survey respondents.

Principles, Parameters and Values.

Guiding principles must be discussed to help reach consensus on the basis for this planning effort to help narrow the goal setting process. These principles are an expression of what the community believes to be important in the development and maintenance of park and open space properties and paths or trails. Having a clear understanding of the collective views or values of Casper's residents regarding the role of parks and paths can help in the development of clear and explicit goals and objectives. The clearer the goals the more likely it is that they will be achieved.

Some examples of guiding principles that can lead to a highly valued park system include:

- fitness, exposure to the outdoors, plus environmental awareness and protection is important;
- beautifying public spaces is important;
- different demographics in the community have different recreational needs;
- outdoor recreational facilities must be located such that they provide convenient opportunities for as many residents as possible;
- recreational facilities should build on community assets like the North Platte River and Casper Mountain;
- marketing recreational facilities is necessary to maximize their use and benefit;
- open space areas offer educational opportunities to children and other segments of the population;
- park and pathway facilities should meet year round recreational needs;
- maximizing efficiencies in facility operations and maintenance is critical;
- quality recreational facilities have a significant economic impact on the community;
- parks and paths must be appealing and offer a sense of comfort and safety;
- accessibility to parks for pedestrians, cyclists and public transit users is important;
- sustainability in terms of plant selection, rest/recharge for vegetation, limited use of chemicals, low impact maintenance, and the use of green materials is important.

- parks and open spaces have value for stormwater management/retention and groundwater recharge.
- dedicated open space has value as areas that protect riparian corridors, wetlands, ridgelines, wildlife corridors and natural vegetation;
- seeking funds for capital improvements and maintenance through impact fees and other funding methods is appropriate;
- it is wise to purchase land or easements in areas where future development is anticipated in advance of the development;

Based on the feedback from the public and discussion held by the Advisory Committee, more focused principles were formulated. The principles that emerged through this process were split into three categories: wellness, community and environment. The specific guidelines that should drive the Casper parks system development/maintenance process are as follows.

Wellness

- providing opportunities for residents of the community to be active outdoors improves their health and fitness and overall community wellness;
- different demographic groups in the community have different recreational needs;
- parks and paths must be appealing and offer a sense of comfort and safety;
- access to parks for pedestrians, cyclists and public transit users is important;
- parks, trails and open space must be located such that they provide convenient opportunities for as many residents as possible;

Community

- beautifying public spaces is important;
- recreational facilities should build on community assets like the North Platte River, drainageways, and Casper Mountain;
- marketing recreational facilities is necessary to maximize their use and benefit;
- park and pathway facilities should provide year round recreational opportunities ;
- maximizing efficiencies in facility operations and maintenance is critical;
- quality recreational facilities have a significant positive economic impact on the community;
- parks and open space should be an integral of a comprehensive land use plan and special area plans;
- seeking funds for capital improvements and maintenance through impact fees and other funding methods is appropriate;
- it is wise to purchase land or easements in areas where future development is anticipated in advance of the development;

Environment

- natural open space areas offer educational opportunities to children and other segments of the population;
- dedicated open space has value as areas that protect riparian corridors, wetlands, ridgelines, steep slopes, wildlife corridors and natural vegetation;
- parks and open spaces have value for stormwater management/retention and groundwater recharge.
- sustainability in terms of plant selection, rest/recharge for vegetation, limited use of chemicals, low impact maintenance, and the use of green materials is important.

Goals and Objectives

Developing an extensive list of goals and objectives is a valuable exercise and helps validate the values and principles of the community. It is necessary to narrow the list at some point and establish priorities to be able to retain the focus and move on to the establishment of strategies and action plans that will bring the most important goals and objectives to fruition. Through the goal and objective development process the following goals and objectives have been identified:

Adopted Goals

- Make our parks appealing to motivate people to spend more time enjoying them;
- Ensure that every household is within 1/3rd of a mile (10 min) of a quality park or school playground;
- Provide recreational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.

Specific Objectives

PARK SYSTEM

- Develop parks in areas of the community which lack a neighborhood park
- Provide convenient access to all public open space;
- Provide access to all parks for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders;
- Undertake a park masterplan effort to identify and implement improvements or upgrades to Washington, Mike Sedar and Highland Park;
- Coordinate the development of new neighborhood parks with developers;
- Introduce unique and inviting features to select parks to make them more interesting and appealing;
- Adopt design standards for features and improvements;
- Promote the well-equipped yet underutilized parks.

EDUCATION

- Do more to disseminate information about the City's parks, trails and open spaces;
- Collaborate with groups and businesses involved in recreation to make full use of the park facilities;
- Institute programs that help strengthen the relationship between residents and their neighborhood park such as a park clean-up day or neighborhood picnic;
- Implement a park, trails and open space wayfinding system.

ENHANCEMENTS/UPGRADES

- Plant more shade trees;
- Explore ways to reduce the acres of irrigated turf grass that must be mowed;
- Provide a wide range of amenities to appeal to as many different park or potential park users as possible;
- Install permanent, year-round restrooms in the busiest parks;
- Extend the time that portable restrooms are in select parks;
- Create additional dog parks or off lease area;
- Provide a wider variety of outdoor water recreation opportunities;
- Provide more facilities for tots such as swings;
- Add more benches and shelters;
- Provide outdoor courts for a variety of activities such as volleyball, horseshoe, pickleball and bocce ball;
- Create looped walks in select parks;
- Evaluate the options available to provide fall protection in playstructure fall zones and make any necessary operational changes;
- Investigate or develop ways to fund park improvements.

Updating Goals and Objectives.

Overtime the needs of the community change. The Park and Open Space Goals and Objectives must be reviewed on a periodic basis to assess the effect of changes within the community. A cursory review should take place annually in conjunction with the capital improvement plan updates and a full review of the Plan should be conducted at least every 5 years. Changes in the community must be evaluated and the impact of the changes on the adopted goals and objectives must be examined. The order of goals and objectives will undoubtedly change with some goals no longer being pertinent and new needs emerging. The periodic review process will keep the plan up-to-date and help ensure that it will remain a helpful planning tool.

10. FACILITY CONDITION ASSESSMENT

Chapter 3 of this report provides information on the number of parks, their size and the amenities or improvements that are found within the parks. When combined with information on park use one can draw conclusions on overall improvement needs for the community and for individual neighborhoods. A determination of needs that would support a system expansion or replacement plan is incomplete without an assessment of the condition of facilities within the parks. As a part of this study, the amenities that affect the appeal a park may have were evaluated as to their condition. A summary of conditions coupled with a review of the number of facilities per park provides a meaningful assessment of where dollars would need to be spent to bring all Casper's parks to a uniform level.

Condition Rating

For this study, park improvement conditions were assessed. Though each type of amenity has unique characteristics, the same method or process can be used to evaluate the conditions. In this manner, sound, rational decisions can be made regarding expenditures on the numerous park improvements, and decisions can be made on where to apply additional maintenance efforts or replacement funds.

The field assessments that were made did not go so far as to test the strength or integrity of structures such as field lights, ornamental lights, flag poles, bridges, walls, fences, buildings and shelters. Periodic inspections must be made to determine if infrastructure repair or replacement is necessary. Replacing a deteriorated tennis fence or light pole would clearly be a priority over the replacement of a table or bench.

General Rating Measures

A four level assessment system was applied in this study. A four level system is sufficient to make distinctions between improvements or elements in terms of their condition. The ratings applied to the improvements are excellent, good, fair and poor. In general, a condition rating of excellent implies that the park improvement is essentially in new condition without any apparent wear or damage. Improvements that are in excellent condition do not require any repair, only cleaning and preventative maintenance.



Improvements in good condition require some minimal maintenance but no significant repair. Good condition implies superficial or cosmetic problems but nothing that limits the use or functionality of the improvement. Painting, coating and sealing are operations typically applied to improvements in good condition.

The functionality of improvements in fair condition has become a concern. The improvement is not dangerous and failure is not eminent, but significant work is needed to keep the improvement at a fair or better rating. At this level immediate replacement is not required and applying repairs is the cost effective approach to take. An improvement like a table or playstructure with one or more non-structural components to be replaced would be in fair condition. Rusting that has not weakened the unit but requires a significant amount of work to mitigate and make the unit presentable is a characteristic of a unit in fair condition.

An improvement in poor condition may be unsafe and should likely be removed or replaced. It may be possible to repair the unit but it is more cost effective to replace it. While the application of general ratings is helpful, a detailed assessment of the Casper park facilities requires a more fine-tuned rating system to help justify maintenance or replacement efforts. The detailed rating measures that were used are presented in Appendix E.

Results of Condition Assessment

Applying these condition standards while making field observations allows for an assessment to be made on a park by park basis and for the overall park system. In total, a majority of the key amenities within the Casper parks system are in good or excellent condition. As reflected in Table 18, 54.7% of the amenities that were evaluated in the

parks were found to be in good condition and 22.3% were found in excellent condition. Only 22.9% of the facilities were found to be in fair or poor condition.

The table provides a breakout of condition by amenity. Shelters and benches were found to be in top condition most often. Conversely, barbeque grills were in the poorest condition. When considering those facilities in fair condition, playgrounds and tennis courts stand out. Finally, swings were found to be in good or excellent condition more often than any other amenity.

Table 18
Park Amenity Conditions

Feature	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Total (%)
Tables	1 (0.8%)	21 (17.2%)	79 (64.7%)	21 (17.2%)	122 (100)
Shelters	2 (3.4%)	8 (13.7%)	29 (50.0%)	19 (32.7%)	58 (100)
Benches	2 (1.2%)	28 (17.6%)	69 (43.3%)	60 (37.7%)	159 (100)
BBQs	13 (26.5%)	2 (4.1%)	29 (59.3%)	5 (10.2%)	49 (100)
Playground	4 (7.8%)	25 (49.0%)	17 (33.3%)	5 (9.8%)	51 (100)
Swings	0 (0.0%)	10 (12.6%)	59 (74.6%)	10 (12.6%)	79 (100)
Tennis Ct.	0 (0.0%)	6 (42.8%)	8 (57.1%)	0 (0.0%)	14 (100)
Basketball Ct.	1 (11.1%)	1 (11.1%)	6 (66.6%)	1 (11.1%)	9 (100)
Total	23 (4.2%)	101 (18.7%)	296 (54.7%)	121 (22.3%)	541 (100)

Amenity Condition by Park

As was the case in the simple facility count, 9 neighborhood parks were adequate or better in terms of what they had to offer. From a park improvement standpoint, these parks serve the neighborhoods well. Focusing on facilities in good and excellent condition would again highlight those parks that are in good shape where improvements are generally not needed.

Focusing on those parks where there are problems helps identify where significant repair or replacement efforts are needed. Table 19 lists the parks where facilities in poor or fair condition are found. The table shows that on the day the assessment was made, the table that was in poor condition was in Fun Valley Park, the broken benches were in City Park and Green Meadow Park and the playgrounds in the worse condition were in Conwell, Green Meadow, City and Nancy English parks.

Table 19
Park Amenities in Poor or Fair Condition
by Park.

Feature	Poor	Park Location	Fair	Park Location	Priority Replacement or Upgrade	Remove or Downsize	Add
Tables	1	Fun Valley	21	Interstate, Yesness, City, Conwell, Eastdale, Long, Meadowlark, North Mike Sedar, Sage, Westwood, Amoco, Highland, Nancy English	Fun Valley, Conwell, Sage, Long, Interstate		Huber, South Eastdale, Long, Sage
Shelters	0		8	Conwell, Eastdale, Westwood, Nancy English, Green Meadow, Meadow, Crossroads, North Platte River	Adams, Nancy English		
Benches	2	Green Meadow, City	28	North Platte River, Fun Valley, Amoco, Paradise Valley, Suzie McMurry	Paradise Valley, Suzie McMurry	Green Meadow, City, Amoco	Garden Creek, Nancy English, Yesness
BBQs	13	Washington, City, Amoco, Freedom, Meadow, Meadowlark, Garden Creek, Huber	2	South Mike Sedar, Westwood	Washington, City, Conwell, South Mike Sedar, Amoco, Huber	Meadow, Garden Creek, Westwood, Freedom, Meadowlark	
Playground	4	Conwell, Green Meadow, City, Nancy English	25	Washington, City, Meadow, Meadowlark, Huber, South Mike Sedar, Westwood, Crossroads, Paradise Valley, Eastdale, Fairdale, Conwell, Beech Street Transit Plaza, Adams, Harden, Long, Sage, Meadow, Washington	Conwell, City, Washington, Green Meadow, Paradise Valley, Fairdale	Washington, Crossroads, Meadow, Eastdale, Nancy English, Paradise Valley, Adams, Marion Kriener	Paradise Valley Recreation Addition
Swings	0		10	Green Meadow, Meadowlark, South Mike Sedar, Freedom, South Mike Sedar	South Mike Sedar, Green Meadow, Meadowlark	Freedom	
Tennis Ct.	0		6	South Mike Sedar, Highland			
Basketball Ct.	0		1	Huber	Huber		Washington, S. Mike Sedar

11. FACILITY REPLACEMENT AND EXPANSION PLAN

The assessment of the condition of facilities within a park coupled with the inventory of the actual number of facilities by park or neighborhood, how well used the facilities are, and the expression of importance or needs voiced by the community, supports the development of a replacement and expansion plan. This plan will provide specific direction on where improvements should be made and the nature of those improvements. Certain improvements are very costly to make. Developing a detailed replacement and expansion plan helps to insure that investments of the right kind are being made in the right park.

Given the goals of the community, the level of use within a park, the depth there is in each park in terms of what it has to offer, and the condition of the improvements, recommendations can be made regarding where facilities should be replaced, where they should be upgraded and in some cases where they can be downsized or removed. The parks that had the least to offer the neighborhood were: Marion Kriener, Meadow, Paradise Valley Pool, Dallason, Harden, Adams and Freedom. In terms of usage, these all saw relatively low use with the exception of Adams Park. The other parks that had limited use were: Fun Valley, Garden Creek, Green Meadow, Meadowlark, North Mike Sedar, Westwood and Zonta parks.

Replacing facilities in high use parks that are in poor condition makes sense. Replacing barbeques in Washington, Highland, and Conwell parks is appropriate, as is replacing the playgrounds in City Park and Conwell. Conversely, replacing the barbeques in Meadowlark and Meadow parks would likely do little to increase activity in those parks. In addition to listing the amenities in fair or poor condition by park, Table 19 offers recommendations on facilities to replace or upgrade by park, amenities to remove or downsize and locations where certain amenities are lacking and would make a significant difference in the park and neighborhood.

The condition of the fall material comes into play in the rating of playstructures. Pea gravel is the most common type of fall material in the Casper parks. Shredded wood produced through a grinding process is being used more and more frequently. There are no Casper parks with crumb rubber or poured in place rubber. Pea gravel can become compacted and wood fiber decomposes and can blow away. Complaints have been received regarding children receiving slivers from the shredded wood. Though it is much more expensive, poured in place rubber may be worth using in a few of the most popular parks to ensure adequate protection without continual maintenance.

Most of the features in the replace or upgrade column are straight replacements. Given the poor performance of most barbeque grills the new replacement grills should be upgraded to a more substantial model. The playgrounds in Conwell and Paradise Valley do not offer much in the

way of inviting features and should be upgraded. Finally the basketball court in Huber should be upgraded with a quality playing surface.

Facility Removal

Because of the limited use, there are facilities in fair or poor condition that can be replaced with more modest facilities or removed all together. The broken benches in City and Green Meadow parks do not need to be replaced and barbeque grills are not needed in Meadow, Garden Creek, Westwood, Freedom or Meadowlark parks. The middle playstructure in Washington Park that is in fair condition gets limited use now that the new playground is in place and can be removed. The Marion Kriener playstructure is not needed with the very adequate facilities in Matt Campfield Park and North Casper Elementary School close by. A number of quality playgrounds exist at parks and schools in the vicinity of Nancy English Park. Therefore, a small tot-lot may be adequate as a replacement in Nancy English Park rather than a more extensive playstructure.

Facility/System Expansion

Based on the direction received through the development of the goals and objectives by stakeholders, and the review of the current recreational opportunities by neighborhood, some additions are recommended. In certain cases the acquisition of additional property or easements is warranted while in other cases property that is already held by the City should be developed. Finally, there are additional elements or facilities needed in parks or along paths where they don't currently exist.

Parkland

The City is the owner of a number of undeveloped parkland properties. These parcels are in the Sunrise area, Mesa Addition and west of Robertson Road in the Trails West area. Some of these parcels will eventually be developed as parks someday but others may not be needed for parks given their close proximity to more suitable park properties.

Through the 1/3rd mile service area assessment, some of the areas within the community that are not well served by parks were identified. As is indicated in Map 2, there are neighborhoods north of Casper College, south of Fairdale Park, east of Wyoming Boulevard and east of the Elkhorn Creek drainageway where a significant number of homes are more than 1/3rd of a mile from a neighborhood park. While property within these neighborhoods that would be suitable for a park may be difficult to find and costly to purchase, there may be other options to satisfy this need.

Dean Morgan Middle School and Centennial Middle School fall within areas without a neighborhood park. Both schools have over 3.0 acres of open space which is one of the most valued assets in a neighborhood park. Picnic facilities and playgrounds are the other key elements that make up a complete neighborhood park. While installing a playground at a middle school may be problematic, installing a picnic shelter could create an inviting area for recreation for the neighborhood which would be appropriate. A shelter could also be used by students, teams, and as outdoor classroom space. It is recommended that picnic shelters be installed at Dean Morgan Middle School and Centennial Middle School to help meet the park and recreational needs of those underserved neighborhoods.

As the community grows more parks will be needed. As addressed in Chapter 3 of this report, the City of Casper exceeds recognize national standards for the amount of both total and developed parkland per thousand residents. Though the total amount of parkland may be adequate, parkland will be needed in proximity to new subdivisions as they develop.



The Casper Area Vision and Comprehensive Plan projects community growth in the Allendale Area, Squaw Creek and the Mesa Addition. While there is a 4.4 acre parcel of dedicated parkland in the Mesa Addition there is no dedicated parkland in Squaw Creek or east of Allendale. At the present time developers are not required to provide property or funds in lieu of property for park improvements. Park impact fees have been considered, and the obligation of developers to assist with park development may change in the future. In the absence of an obligation to develop a park, the City may want to consider the acquisition of property for a park in advance of the development of a subdivision to secure the land at a lower cost. While achieving some connectivity with a park in the Squaw Creek area may be difficult, securing property along Sage Creek at the extension of Beverly Street could be readily served by the Sage Creek Pathway. Floodplain property along Sage Creek would be very suitable for a park yet costly to develop for housing. A parcel of property for a park could hopefully be acquired along this drainageway at a reasonable cost.

Parks

As noted above, there are existing park properties that that should be developed at some point and properties that may never be needed. Buckboard Park in the Cottonwood Addition west of Robertson Road was developed in 2011. This park serves over 700 households who had previously been without a neighborhood park. The Trails West area further to the west was platted with 5 park parcels. It is recommended that either the parcel platted as Park No. 6 or platted as Park No. 8 be developed since they are in a more central location and would better serve the existing and future homes in the area. The other park parcels could be vacated as parkland and sold or traded. The detention area in the Prairie Estates I addition has approximately 1.0 acre of flat ground that could be developed as a mini park.

Residential development is occurring in the Mesa Addition. At the present time a marginal path connects the Mesa Addition with Meadowlark Park. As development continues it will become necessary to develop the 4.4 acre parcel that has been dedicated for a park. In addition to, or in exchange for that parcel, a 7.9 acre parcel that is level but unsuitable for residential development could be developed into a park. Both of the parcels would be tied into the Mesa Pathway system that would eventually connect the CAP/Roosevelt School with the old CY Junior High property.

Goodstein Park and Stoneridge Park are undeveloped park properties south of Wyoming Boulevard in the vicinity of Mountain Road. In that the Stoneridge Addition is separated from the Sunrise addition by Mountain Road, it would be prudent to develop Stoneridge as a mini park. A 9.3 acres school/park lot was platted with Sunrise No. 7. A significant portion of the site is at a steep grade, limiting the amount of level ground that is the most desirable for a park to approximately 3.0 acres. Preliminary plans for the park suggest a picnic shelter, playground with a playstructure and swings, grassed open play area and a walking path. The unimproved portions of the park will be attractive for children and dog owners making this a very adequate neighborhood park.

Open Space

With North Platte River Park, Morad Park, Yesness Park, and the five greenway tracts along Garden Creek, the City has an ample supply of open space. While North Platte River Park, Morad Park and Yesness are open and easy to traverse the greenway tracts along Garden Creek are more inaccessible and less inviting. Native plants and animals flourish in the open space areas. There are issues, however, with certain types of invasive weeds and the all too common Russian olive tree. Other issues that come into play in the greenways and open space tracts are fire suppression, litter control, and stormwater management. Improving access to all areas can help significantly with fire suppression and litter control. Native riparian vegetation can be very

effective at slowing down stormwater flows. In areas where the channels or banks have been disturbed, erosion control measures may be warranted to replace lost vegetation and keep silt levels down. While removing extensive areas of vegetation is not wise or fitting, improving access can support the appropriate level of management.

As is the case with developed parks, there may be a need for open space in a growing part of the community. There are privately owned open space tracts within the community that are generally accessible to the public but are not under public control. The open space tracts in Centennial Hills Village, Vista Ridge and Elkhorn Valley are privately held. While the Centennial Hills Village and Vista Ridge tracts are formally designated as public open space, at this point Elkhorn Creek is not.

As noted above, the area east of Allendale is viewed as a likely future growth area in Casper. Two neighborhood parks or one community park within that area would be warranted. If parks are developed in the Sage Creek Drainage, it would be fitting to create a greenway along the creek south of E. 21st Street and add an extension of the Sage Creek pathway to the new park.

The greenway may terminate at the park or continue to Wyoming Boulevard. It is conceivable that a continuous greenway could be developed from E. 15th Street to Wyoming Boulevard and beyond.



Other than the Sage Creek pathway extension, greenway trails or paths are proposed in Yesness

Park, through Regency Valley, along Garden Creek, in the Elkhorn Creek drainageway and around Lake MacKensie. Soft surface aggregate trails have been developed in Yesness Park and North Platte River Park. Similar trails may be appropriate in some of the other greenway tracts. No additional trails or paths are proposed for the two Garden Creek tracts that lie south of Green Meadows Drive. It is proposed that trail segments be developed in the Garden Creek greenway running from Adams Park to W. 25th Street and from W. 25th Street to Nancy English Park. There are excellent street connections to the west and south of Adams Park making that an ideal trailhead for the Garden Creek Trail.

The owner of the area that makes up the Elkhorn Creek drainageway is considering the establishment of a pathway easement that can be used for the enjoyment of the community. Any development within the drainageway will likely be north of E. 12th Street. The Long Lakes or Knife River property across the North Platte River from the wastewater treatment plant has been viewed as a future recreational area by some. A previous owner offered to make the property available to the community once the sand removal operations were complete which prompted the Platte River Trail Trust to commission the writing of the *Long Lake Park Masterplan* in 1999. The ownership of the property has changed and sand removal operations are still continuing. Further discussions will need to take place before this area can be developed and the Platte River



Trail extend through the Long Lakes property and connected with Reshaw Park in Evansville.

As noted in Chapter 3, the City of Casper has an extensive pathway system.

Opportunities exist to extend current paths to serve growing areas of the community or close gaps in the

system and improve overall connectivity. While the Platte River Trail now extends from Bryan Stock Trail to Paradise Valley there is interest in eventually connecting to the Evansville riverside path to the east and Robertson Road to the west. Extending the paved portion of the Casper Rail/Trail to Curtis Street and establishing a connection to the Platte River Commons on the west end will essentially complete this important path that connects much of the community. Other than the Elkhorn, Sage and Garden Creek paths or trails previously mentioned, connecting paths are envisioned in the Mesa area and Wolf Creek/Mountain Plaza. In these sections of the community detached paths will play a role but most of the system will take the form of wide sidewalks. Finally, extensive paths are envisioned along roads which encircle the community like Wyoming Boulevard, Amoco Road, and Mountain Road. Constructing paths within the right-of-way but away from the roadway is desirable, however, in some situations a wide shoulder may be the only option.

Additional Park Amenities

There are locations where, based on assessments of use, comparisons of parks, and the views of staff and the public, additional park amenities are needed. Benches are recommended in a number of locations where they don't currently exist. The use of the existing benches was found to be low, however, it is believed that this may be a function of where they are located. For example, there are 19 benches in Matt Campfield Park. During the site observations there were some benches that were never used.

There are only 3 benches in Washington Park which includes the portable aluminum benches by the swimming pool. There are no benches near the second busiest playground in the City. There were also a number of instances observed where individuals were sitting on the top of the picnic tables in Washington Park. It is recommended that benches be installed around the playgrounds in Washington Park and at a few well shade, carefully selected locations in the Park where individuals would want to sit and relax.

In addition to Washington Park, benches are recommended in locations where individuals would like to sit in comfortable, relaxing surroundings, notably Nancy English Park, Garden Creek Park and Yesness Park. Benches are recommended at the street crossings along the Sage and Long drainageway paths and at key locations along any future paths to provide users with a place to rest, relax and watch.

Permanent tables on pads are warranted in a few locations. The parks where tables are recommended already have a shelter and table, however, they are distant from the street or parking lot. It is recommended that a table with pad be installed near the street at South Eastdale Park, Long Park and Huber Park and near the parking lot in Sage Park. In that most people are unwilling to carry picnic supplies any real distance, tables are not recommended along any of the new paths.

Play equipment is the most expensive amenity in a park. Most of Casper's developed parks have playgrounds. Most of the structures have been in place for more than 15 years and, as noted above, many should be replaced. The only existing park where a new playground is recommended is adjacent to Paradise Valley Pool. Less than 1/3rd of the homes in Paradise Valley are served by the playgrounds at Paradise Valley Park and Paradise Valley School. A playstructure and swing set at the Paradise Valley Pool would serve a significant number of families. Swings are an inviting and well used feature in many parks. Other than Paradise Valley Pool, swings are recommended at two community parks, Highland and Centennial.

The City of Casper has purchased playground equipment, benches, tables, and other improvements from a number of vendors. There is value in using all the same equipment from the same supplier from a maintenance, repair and replacement standpoint. High quality equipment can be procured from different vendors, and the City can enjoy a significant savings by accepting comparable equipment through the bidding process. In addition, the character of a park is strongly influenced by the improvements and more formal features can be justified in larger destination parks while basic facilities may be adequate in a small neighborhood park. Design standards that identify a number of bench types, for example, from a few key vendors can help develop an interesting yet easy to maintain park system.

12. PROMOTION AND WAYFINDING

Many communities adopt the “if you build it they will come” philosophy when it comes to promoting parks and outdoor recreation facilities. A few communities do little more than put identification signs at the parks, while others publish a matrix on parks and amenities in an activities guide or telephone directory. Many communities see the value of actively promoting their parks to encourage residents and visitors to use and enjoy the parks which the municipality has worked hard to develop and maintain. Interactive websites are used to allow people to perform a search by facilities or location and access maps and photographs of the parks to help them decide which one to visit. The City of Casper parks have been loading into Google-maps which enables potential users to search for a park and view it from an adjacent street. While it may not be feasible to post detailed information on each park in Google-maps, it is possible to create a map link on the City Parks webpage to display a specific park.

The City of Casper subscribes to the North Star Publishing ParksReviews program. Through this online and mobile service residents and visitors can learn about certain parks and access a map showing the location of the parks that are in the system, parks that were selected because they are convenient and popular with travelers. In 2013, 134 individuals accessed ParksReviews to learn about the 11 parks that are now in the system.

As noted in Chapter 6 on the adequacy of park facilities, some well-equipped parks see relatively low use. As an alternative to spending considerable dollars maintaining and upgrading popular parks, effort could be spent promoting less popular but comparable parks. In this manner, the longevity of the popular park can be increased and the overall capacity of the park system can improve when all the parks are used to their fullest.

Wayfinding

Wayfinding is the process of helping residents or visitors locate parks or other attractions or facilities. The system generally includes decision signs that let the public know what is available in the community or section of the community. Directional signs are placed on major arterial or collector streets to help direct users to the neighborhood where the park is located. Finally, a series of maps may be needed to lead the interested party to more secluded parks or open space tracts. Wayfinding signs are needed on streets and on bikepaths or trails. A motorist who gets lost is inconvenienced for a period of time. A walker, runner or cyclists may use up precious time and energy if they are unable to find their destination. Quality wayfinding systems can be more important along bike routes than streets.

A significant number of parks like Long, Conwell, Morad and Highland are located on major streets. Well placed signs that identify the park and direct the user to a parking lot or park entrance are adequate in these cases. Other quality parks like Matt Campfield and Centennial have a lot to offer but are difficult to find. Directional signage is warranted for all Casper parks. The destination parks that are the most difficult to find and the nearest major street where a directional sign would be most helpful are listed in Table 20.

Table 20
Difficult to Find Parks

Park	Address	Nearest Major Street
Matt Campfield	1219 N. Beech Street	“K” Street
Riverview	1032 East “L” Street	“K” Street
Centennial	4001 Ft. Caspar Road	Wyoming Boulevard
Eastdale	202 N. Minnesota Street	E. 2 nd Street
Huber	3031 E. 5 th Street	E. 2 nd Street and Country Club Drive
Alta Vista	2400 S. Jackson Street	S. McKinley Street
Adams	2925 S. Coffman Street	Wyoming Boulevard
Buckboard	6431 Buckboard Road	Robertson Road
Meadowlark	2324 Partridge Lane	CY Avenue and Wyoming Boulevard
Paradise Valley	31 Begonia	CY Avenue

13. CAPITAL PLAN

Numerous park improvement projects were outlined in Chapter 11. To make these projects a reality requires the development of a capital plan that establishes priorities and lists projected costs. With the creation of a rational capital plan, resources can be programed and an implementation process can be formulated to help upgrade the parks in a systematic manner.

Funding Levels

The City of Casper dedicates a significant level of effort to the maintenance and upkeep of the park system. The City Council has consistently supported the Parks Division with the funds needed to maintain a system of quality parks. In recent years, approximately \$2,500,000 has been spent on park operations annually. In terms of capital improvements, an average of \$550,000 per year is spent on park improvement replacements and upgrades. At that rate, an estimated \$8,250,000 will be spent on our existing parks over the next 15 years. An average of \$472,000 was spent on each of the 5 parks that were built since 2000. Adding as many as 9 new parks in the next 15 years will push the funding of a park program to over \$12,750,000. The development of a long term capital plan is essential if the amount of funding necessary to support an expanding park system is to be secured.

Range of Improvements

This study, including the public survey effort, has focused largely on park amenities. While the amenities are what is generally recognized by the public when they select a park and judge the quality of the park system, underlying costs which are overlooked such as irrigation, parking, walks and lighting are significant. The parks that were built after 2000 cost \$2,360,000. The park amenities, including benches, waste receptacles, tables, shelters, playgrounds, walking paths, and swings totaled \$731,285 or 31% of the total cost. The \$550,000 per year that has been spent on parks includes the infrastructure improvements like irrigation and lighting. Applying the ratio of amenity costs to total park capital costs suggests that the current level of funding would support \$170,500 per year in new or replacement equipment.

Table 21 outlines the park amenities that are in fair or poor condition which should be replaced. It also offers recommendations on additional improvements warranted in certain parks. When the few park specific suggestions that were received from the public are taken into account a prioritized capital improvement schedule can be prepared.

Table 21
Amenity Capital Plan

Park	Short Term (1-5yrs)	Mid Term (6-10yrs)	Long Term (10+yrs)	Cost
Adams		playground, shelter		\$57,000
Amoco	barbeque, 2 benches, bike rack	2 tables, 2 benches		\$8,960
City	playground, barbeque	3 tables	2 waste receptacles	\$42,260
Conwell	playground	2 tables, barbeque		\$39,160
Crossroads		shelter, bike rack	playground	\$58,000
Eastdale	table	playground	table	\$38,160
Fairdale		playground	playground	\$70,000
Fun Valley	2 tables	2 benches	bike rack	\$6,060
Garden Creek		2 benches		\$1,900
Green Meadow	2 benches, playground	table, 2 swings		\$41,480
Harden			playground	\$35,000
Highland	table, 3 bike rack	2 tables		\$7,740
Huber	table	barbeque		\$2,580
Long		2 tables, bike rack	playground	\$39,160
Meadow			shelter, playground	\$57,000
Meadowlark	2 swings	table	bike rack, playground	\$40,580
Nancy English	playground, 2 swings	shelter, 2 benches	2 benches	\$63,800
Paradise Valley	4 benches, playground	2 benches, 2 bike rack		\$42,700
Paradise Valley Pool		playground		\$35,000
Sage	bike rack	2 tables	playground	\$39,160
South Mike Sedar	barbeque, playground	barbeque, bike rack	6 swings	\$41,000
Verda James	table			\$1,580
Washington	barbeque, 5 benches	playground, barbeque	3 tables	\$46,490
Westwood	shelter		table	\$23,580
Yesness			3 benches	\$2,850
Cost	\$280,400 (\$268,830)	\$280,400 (\$286,200)	\$280,400 (\$286,170)	\$841,200 (\$56,093/yr.)

The useful life of park amenities depends on the type of feature, its use, and the level of maintenance. A barbeque grill that is not cleaned out regularly will only last a few years while a heavy duty bench may last many years. Generally, 15 to 20 years is considered an appropriate replacement schedule for park equipment. The Capital Improvement Plan as reflected in Table 22 is structured around a 15 year replacement schedule. During that 15 year period it is recommended that the following amenities be purchased for the current parks:

28 benches	12 swings
26 tables	8 barbeques
17 playgrounds	4 shelters
12 bike racks	2 waste receptacles

Only 25 of the City's parks are listed in the capital improvement table. This shows that a significant number of Casper's parks are well equipment with amenities that are generally in good condition. At the other end of the spectrum there are a few parks that need over \$50,000 in new or upgraded amenities. The new equipment has been categorized as short, mid or long term improvements. An attempt has been made to assign the same level of funding to each term.

Based on the funding levels that have been projected, it would appear that there are ample dollars available for the listed projects. Clearly, more needs will be identified over time and costs always seem to be higher than anticipated. There are also hidden or related costs that push overall project costs up. If future parks are to be built there will be a need for a significant level of funding. Programmed or earmarked funds that are not needed for improvements could be applied to the construction of new parks.

14. PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATE

Ongoing Review

For any plan to be effective it must be subjected to periodic reviews. The initial plan can be viewed as an assessment of the park system and community needs at a point in time. A database on park properties and improvements should be maintained so that at any point in time an accurate statement can be presented on the status of the park system. Such an assessment should be made on an annual basis. Conducting the assessment in the fall would provide the management staff and decision makers with good information that can be used to prepare operating budgets, equipment replacement plans and capital plans for the following year.

5-year Update

The character of the community and residents' needs and desires regarding recreation change over time. Unless there are significant events that warrant an immediate plan update, it is generally sufficient to do a comprehensive review of the community's needs every five years. Ideally this would involve an assessment of community growth trends and demographic changes. Engaging in a public survey or opinion process is very helpful though it can be time consuming and costly. The results of the public opinion process can be used to re-evaluate the principles, goals and objectives. Principles may not change to any real degree in a five year period, and more goals may be added while a smaller number are dropped. Plan objectives may change significantly. These then help drive the actions pertaining to investments or operations. While changes will be made annually through the planning and budgeting process, longer term changes involving more dollars and larger impacts will come about through the plan update process.

Engaging in a formal plan update process provides community leaders with clear direction on what the communities needs are. With the results of a sound assessment process to fall back on, it is possible to go forward with some needed initiatives that may be hard to justify without the backing of a plan update. The update would help guide internal program funding decisions. The update can also be instrumental in getting outside funding through foundations, agencies and the public. The update should identify when and where new parks or park expansions are warranted. This would be critical information if private developers are required to provide land or funding. The more solid the community assessment the easier it is for decisions makers to compel those who are obligated to fund certain improvements to do so.

APPENDICES

- i. Park Properties
- ii. Park Property Amenities
- iii. Field Work Methodology
- iv. Public Survey and Results
- v. Specific Facility/Improvement Rating Measures

Appendix A
Park Properties

Property/Park	Location	Classification	Total Acreage	Developed Acreage	Date Established	Date Improved
Interstate	N. Center St. and “E” St.	Mini	0.5	0.5	1950	1967
Patterson-Zonta	W. 13 th St. and SW Wyoming Blvd.	Mini	5.71	1.5	1965	1974
Werner Park	5021 E. 15th St.	Mini	1.75	0.0	1951	
Waterworks Park	SE Wyoming Blvd. at water plant	Mini	6.53	6.53		1996
Tip Top Park	E. 10 th St. and S. Missouri St.	Mini	0.13	0.13	1962	1962
North Platte Industrial Park	Wilkins Circle	Mini	2.65	0.0	1979	
North Poplar Pathway	North Poplar St.	Mini	6.29	6.29	1979	
Total (7)			23.58	14.95		
Adams	S. Coffman Ave. and Brookview Dr.	Neighborhood	1.96	1.40	1956	1969
Alta Vista	S. Jackson St. and S. 24 th St.	Neighborhood	1.14	1.14	1978	2007
Begonia	1800 Begonia	Neighborhood	1.21	0.0	1979	
Buckboard	Buckboard Rd. and Herrington Dr.	Neighborhood	3.75	2.50	1982	2011
City	S. Center St. and E. 7 th St.	Neighborhood	4.09	4.09	1928	
Conwell	E. 2 nd St. and Conwell St.	Neighborhood	2.84	2.84	1912	1923
Dallason	Burlington Ave. and N. Melrose St.	Neighborhood	0.58	0.58	1982	1970
Eastdale	Drake Place and Minnesota St.	Neighborhood	4.77	4.77	1950	1954
Fairdale	Glendale Ave. and E. 15 th St.	Neighborhood	3.14	3.14	1975	1978
Falcon Crest III	E. 26 th St. and S. McKinley St.	Neighborhood	8.39	0.0	2007	2008

Property/Park	Location	Classification	Total Acreage	Developed Acreage	Date Established	Date Improved
Freedom	W. 14 th St. and S. Willow St.	Neighborhood	0.74	0.74	1942	1969
Fun Valley	E. 21 st St. and Nottingham St.	Neighborhood	1.97	1.97	1987	1984
Garden Creek	2361 Coffman Ave.	Neighborhood	1.41	1.41	1950	1966
Goodstein	5901 S. Walnut St.	Neighborhood	9.29	0.0	1981	
Green Meadow	1520 W. 39 th St.	Neighborhood	0.67	0.67	1964	1979
Harden	Sun Dr. and N. Sinclair Place	Neighborhood	0.78	0.78	1969	1976
Huber	E. 5 th St. and Lion Ct.	Neighborhood	4.78	4.78	1956	1966
Marion Kriener	E. “K” St. and N. Kimball St.	Neighborhood	1.34	1.34	1967	1968
Long	Gannet St. and Shannon St.	Neighborhood	2.24	2.24	1975	1978
Matt Campfield	E. “L” St. and N. Beech St.	Neighborhood	2.83	2.83	2000	2006
Meadow	W. 15 th St. and S. Laurel St.	Neighborhood	3.36	3.36	1954	
Meadowlark	Meadowlark Dr.	Neighborhood	7.06	4.65	1975	1979
Mesa No. 3	Arrowhead St. and Central Blvd.	Neighborhood	4.33	0.0	1981	
North Mike Sedar	S. Poplar St. and College Dr.	Neighborhood	9.41	5.89	1965	1965
Paradise Valley	Paradise Dr. and Riverbend Rd.	Neighborhood	10.94	10.94	1982	1982
Paradise Valley Pool	Iris and Valley Dr.	Neighborhood	5.38	1.96	1987	1989
Platte View Bluffs	Paradise Dr. and Riverbend Rd.	Neighborhood	3.14	2.34	1979	2004
Prairie	Indian Scout Dr. and Whiskey Gap Rd.	Neighborhood	4.98	0.0	1979	
Pratt No. 2	E. 21 st St. and Wyoming Blvd.	Neighborhood	5.42	0.0	1977	
Pratt No. 4	E. 15 th St. and Bon Ave.	Neighborhood	20.95	0.0	1978	
Riverview	St. Mary St. and E. “L” St.	Neighborhood	9.42	7.69	1938	1932
Sage	E. 15 th St. and Derington Ave.	Neighborhood	2.96	2.96	1958	1968
Southridge	Knollwood Dr. and W. 29 th St.	Neighborhood	1.10	1.10	1958	1964
Stoneridge	5139 Stoneridge Way	Neighborhood	0.89	0.0	2002	
Suzie McMurry	E. 21 st St. and Newport St.	Neighborhood	2.76	2.76	1990	2003
Trails West #5	Remuda	Neighborhood	1.65	0.0	1982	

Property/Park	Location	Classification	Total Acreage	Developed Acreage	Date Established	Date Improved
Trails West #6	Village Dr.	Neighborhood	2.05	0.0	1982	
Trails West #7	Trappers Trail	Neighborhood	0.68	0.0	1982	
Trails West #8	Whispering Springs Rd.	Neighborhood	0.78	0.0	1982	
Verda James	Carriage Ln. and Bretton Dr.	Neighborhood	4.08	4.08	1975	1978
Westwood	Desmet St. and Sheridan Dr.	Neighborhood	2.33	2.33	1956	1968
Wolf Creek	Kodiak and Otter	Neighborhood	5.45	3.64	1983	2005
Total (42)			157.75	90.92		
Average			3.76	3.03		
Adventure Playground	1081 N. Poplar St.	Community	1.57	1.57	1979	2004
Amoco	1155 W. 1 st St.	Community	9.62	7.71	1987	1987
Centennial	Stewart St. and Miller St.	Community	1.81	1.81	1920	1989
Highland	E. 4 th St. and S. Beverly St.	Community	33.92	25.94	1897	1973
South Mike Sedar	College Dr. and S. Oak St.	Community	26.29	20.58	1956	1965
Washington	E. 10 th St. and S. McKinley St.	Community	26.98	24.83	1929	1970
Wells	1610 E. "K" St.	Community	3.57	3.57	1968	1968
Total (7)			103.76	86.01		
Crossroads	1101 N. Poplar St.	Athletic Facilities	43.48	35.75	1979	1980
Field of Dreams	1355 E. "K" St.	Athletic Facilities	18.49	10.67	2002	2008
North Casper	1610 E. "K" St.	Athletic Facilities	68.42	63.79	1968	1969
13 th and Sycamore	2151 W. Collins Dr.	Athletic Facilities	3.66	3.66	1999	1970
Casper Skatepark	E. 15 th St. and S. Durbin St.	Athletic Facilities	1.04	1.04	1997	1997
Boys & Girls Club Skatepark	1701 E. "K" St.	Athletic Facilities	0.98	0.98	2007	2007
Total (6)			136.07	115.89		
North Platte River Park	Events Dr. and East Rd.	Regional	978.09	350.06	1979	1975
Stuckenhoff Sport Shooters Complex	Metro Road	Athletic Facilities	173.60	173.60	1985	1987

Property/Park	Location	Classification	Total Acreage	Developed Acreage	Date Established	Date Improved
Total (2)			1,151.69	523.66		
Ft.Caspar	4001 Ft. Caspar Rd.	Interpretative	31.58	19.79	1960	1969
Nancy English	S. 23 rd St. and Odell St.	Interpretative	9.46	9.46	1952	1970
Beech Street Transit Plaza	Beech St. and E. 2 nd St.	Interpretative	2.72	2.72	2002	2009
Veterans	Park St. and E. 2 nd St.	Interpretative	0.55	0.55		1933
CY Right of Way	CY Ave. and Wyoming Blvd.	Interpretative	0.63	0.63		2004
Mormon Trail Park	Wagon Master Road	Interpretative	11.08	0.0	1982	
Total (6)			56.02	33.15		
Morad	2800 Morad Park Rd.	Open Space	38.96	10.13	1965	1974
Yesness	4100 Yesness Park Rd.	Open Space	71.07	8.59	1960	1970
Westwood Greenway	Desmet St. and Sheridan Dr.	Open Space	1.69	0.0	1953	
Garden Creek Greenway	2361 S. Coffman Ave.	Open Space	5.55	0.87	1950	
Adams Greenway	S. Coffman Ave. and Brookview Dr.	Open Space	10.48	0.0	1966	
Green Meadow Greenway	1520 W. 39 th St.	Open Space	11.25	0.26	1964	
Sunrise Greenway	Sunrise Dr. and W. 44 th St.	Open Space	5.31	0.0	1977	
Regency Valley Greenway	Granada Ave. and Vista Royale	Open Space	3.90	0.0	2003	
Lake MacKensie	Bryan Stock Tr. and Emigrant Tr.	Open Space	36.70	6.14	1953	1993
Ridgecrest	West of Valley Hills	Open Space	38.99	0	1967	
River Lots	Trevett Ln. and Robertson Rd.	Open Space	24.59	0	1979	
Asbell Lot 7	W. 1 st St. and Nichols St.	Open Space	6.64	0	1973	
Total (12)			255.13	25.99		
Burlington	501 N. Center St.	Landscaped Areas	0.45	0.45	1980	1984
12 th and McKinley	E. 12 th St. and S. McKinley St.	Landscaped Areas	0.47	0.47	1997	1999
13 th and Collins Drive	W. 13 th St. and W. Collins Dr.	Landscaped Areas	0.71	0.71		
15 th and Poplar	W. 15 th and S. Poplar St.	Landscaped Areas	0.08	0.08		

Property/Park	Location	Classification	Total Acreage	Developed Acreage	Date Established	Date Improved
17 th and College	W. 17 th St. and College Dr.	Landscaped Areas	0.10	0.10	1944	
“E” and McKinley	E. “E” St. and N. McKinley St.	Landscaped Areas	0.06	0.06		1998
CY Islands	CY Ave. and Westridge Pl.	Landscaped Areas	1.10	1.10		1973
CY and Fairgrounds Road	CY Ave. and Fairgrounds Rd.	Landscaped Areas	1.36	1.36		2001
North Poplar Street	Wilkins Way to Wilkins Circle	Landscaped Areas	6.29	6.29	1979	1996
Kiwanis	E. 4 th St. and Conwell St.	Landscaped Areas	0.13	0.13	1920	1970
O’Dell Court	S. Beverly St. and O’Dell Pl.	Landscaped Areas	0.08	0.08	1972	1972
Roundabout	E. 21 st St. and Waterford	Landscaped Areas	1.85	1.85	2003	2003
Viking Court	Viking Ct. and Blackmore Rd.	Landscaped Areas	2.66	2.66	1994	2006
Total (13)			15.34	15.34		
Platte River Parkway	Riverbend Rd. to Bryan Stock Tr.	Pathway Corridor	5.15	5.15	2002	2006
Casper Rail Trail	N. Center St. to Hat Six Rd.	Pathway Corridor	63.6	34.8	2000	2002
Sage Creek	Sage Park to E. 2nd St.	Pathway Corridor	6.34	6.34	1954	1998
Long Creek	Long Park to E. 18 th St.	Pathway Corridor	10.58	10.58	1997	2001
Gosfield Village	Centennial Village Dr. to E. 21 st St.	Pathway Corridor	2.85	2.85	2009	2006
Centennial Hills Village	E. 21 st St. to Donegal St.	Pathway Corridor	11.43	7.14	2005	2006
Goen Addition	Donegal St.	Pathway Corridor	3.92	0.0	1997	
Blackmore Vista	Gladstone St.	Pathway Corridor	6.16	0.0	2006	
Vista Ridge	Recluse Ct.	Pathway Corridor	2.58	2.58	2006	2007
Total (9)			112.61	69.44		
Grand Total (104)			2,011.49	975.35		

Appendix B
Park Property Amenities

Park	Table	Shelter	Play Structure	Swings	Bench	BBQ	Flower Plantings	Tennis Court	B Ball Court	Loop Walk	Open Play Area	Porta Johns
<i>Mini Parks</i>												
Tip Top	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Interstate	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Patterson-Zonta	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Total Units	4	2	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	1	0
Total Parks	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Average Units	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Neighborhood Parks</i>												
Adams	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Alta Vista	1	1	1	4	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Buckboard	1	1	1	4	5	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
City	4	1	2	4	4	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Conwell	2	2	2	4	6	1	1	0	0	1	1	2
Dallason	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Eastdale	1	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Fairdale	1	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Freedom	1	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Fun Valley	1	1	1	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Garden Creek	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Green Meadow	1	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Harden	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Huber	1	1	1	2	0	1	0	2	1	0	2	2
Marion Kriener	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Long	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
Matt Campfield	10	4	2	4	19	5	0	0	3	3	0	1
Meadow	1	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Meadowlark	1	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0
North Mike Sedar	3	1	1	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	2

Park	Table	Shelter	Play Structure	Swings	Bench	BBQ	Flower Plantings	Tennis Court	B Ball Court	Loop Walk	Open Play Area	Porta Johns
Paradise Valley	4	3	2	4	4	3	0	2	1	1	2	2
Paradise Valley Pool	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Platte View Bluffs	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Riverview	3	3	2	4	4	1	1	0	2	1	1	2
Sage	2	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
Southridge	1	1	5	20	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0
Suzie McMurry	2	2	2	6	9	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
Verda James	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	1
Westwood	1	1	4	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Wolf Creek	2	0	2	0	5	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
Total Units	52	35	43	78	74	19	5	4	11	15	26	19
Total Parks	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Average Units	2	1	1	2	2	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
<i>Community Parks</i>												
Amoco	5	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	1	1	2
Centennial	8	1	2	0	8	6	1	0	0	1	0	0
Highland	6	2	1	0	5	3	1	4	0	1	2	2
South Mike Sedar	3	2	2	4	2	2	1	2	0	0	3	2
Washington	9	3	3	4	3	4	1	4	0	1	3	4
Crossroads/Advent Play	10	5	1	10	11	4	0	0	0	1	0	2
North Casper/Wells	6	2	2	7	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	0
Morad	1	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Yesness Pond	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Total Units	53	13	11	25	35	23	4	10	0	9	10	14
Total Parks	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
Average Units	6	2	2	3	4	2	1	1	0	1	1	2
<i>Sports Complexes</i>												
Crossroads	7	1	1	12	9	2	2	0	0	0	0	3
North Casper	0	0	0	7	3	0	1	0	0	0	3	15
Field of Dreams	4	0	0	0	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Total Units	11	1	1	2	17	2	5	0	0	0	3	20
Total Parks	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Average Units	4	0	0	1	5	1	1	0	0	0	1	6

Park	Table	Shelter	Play Structure	Swings	Bench	BBQ	Flower Plantings	Tennis Court	B Ball Court	Loop Walk	Open Play Area	Porta Johns
<i>Interpretative Parks</i>												
Ft.Caspar	2	1	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	3	0
Nancy English	1	1	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	1	2	2
Beech Street Place	4	1	1	0	10	0	2	0	0	1	0	0
Veterans	2	0	0	0	5	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Total Units	9	3	2	0	21	1	4	0	0	3	5	2
Total Parks	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Average Units	2	1	1	0	5	0	1	0	0	1	1	1
Total All Units	129	54	57	105	147	46	21	14	11	27	45	55
Total Parks	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49
Average Units	3	1	1	2	3	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
Units per 1,000 population (55,300)	2.33	0.98	1.03	1.42	2.9	1.90	0.38	0.25	0.20	0.49	0.81	0.99

Appendix C

Field Work Methodology

Studies have shown, and our personal experiences confirm, that parks and paths receive their greatest use on weeknights and weekends. To get a meaningful read on the amount and type of use, it was deemed necessary to observe parks during these peak times. With ample time and resources it would be desirable to sit and observe each Casper park during these times. In that there were more than 40 parks involved in the study, it was impractical to spend a significant amount of time in each park. Between the option of spending short amount of time in each park or selecting a sample of parks where more time could be spent making observations, it was decided to cover all the parks. With this being the first objective study conducted, the selection of representative parks for the sample would have to be based on anecdotal information which would not be very reliable. While the results of this study will help to identify “typical” parks where more extensive observations can take place in the future, it was necessary to cover all the parks in this initial effort.

Dates

To cover the numerous parks, the community was split into 3 sections to make the observations more manageable. In that parks may be used by different demographic groups engaged in different activities on weekends relative to weeknights, it was viewed as necessary to visit each park at both of these times. More visits to a park yields better information. Due to the time constraints it was decided that visits to each park on one weeknight and one weekend would have to suffice. With a single researcher, it was viewed as unworkable to spend the entire weekend in the parks making observations. To hit peak activity times on weekends it was decided that midday on Saturdays would be the most likely peak time. It was decided that each location would be visited at least once between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm on a Saturday and 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm on a weeknight.

Expectations were that some parks would experience very little activity and the larger, popular parks would see more. Waiting in a little used park all night for people to show up did not make sense. Also, spending an extended period of time in each park would require field work each night of the week and would bring into question the validity of a Tuesday night observation in park A being comparable to Thursday night observation in park B, for example. As an alternative, visiting the 8 to 18 parks per section of town for 10 to 22 minutes each on a given night was considered. Getting meaningful results in that manner would assume that those who choose to use a park on that particular evening would be there during the brief minutes the researcher would be in the park. The likelihood of that taking place was questionable. Further, spending 10 minutes in a small neighborhood park where little activity is anticipated would be a

waste of time when a full range of activities may be underway in a more popular park. To maximize the number of observations per park a circuit was set up in each section of town whereby the researcher would travel from park to park and do a snapshot assessment at each one. In the case of a park with no activity a simple notation of time, date and weather conditions was made. When people were present, enough time was taken to record all the activity and demographic information. In this manner more time was spent recording activity in busy parks and time was not wasted in empty parks.

In that counts could not be taken at the Crossroads Adventure Playground without walking through the facility this park was not included in a circuit. The amount of time that would have to be dedicated to this one park would affect the number of times all the other parks on the circuit could be visited. Instead, ½ hour extended counts over the noon hour were done to get information on those using the facility. The pavilion was never in use during the visits to the park. Reservation information would have to be reviewed to determine how much the pavilion is used.

School Yards

Six Casper parks adjoin school property (Verda James, Huber, Highland, Yesness, Southridge, and Westwood). In that the school facilities compliment the parks and work to serve the needs of the neighborhood, it was prudent to make note of school ground activity as well. A total of 18 schools were assessed along the three circuits that were run. The information on the schools was entered into the database but is not included in the analysis portion of this study.

Times

In that this study focuses on path and walkway use in addition to park use, path intersections along the circuits were checked to see what activity was occurring. In total, the number of parks and pedestrian locations visited per section were 29 on the eastside, 22 in the center of the city, and 29 on the westside for a total of 80 locations. Figure 1 lists the locations covered and the routes used. On average it took 50 minutes to complete the eastside circuit, 40 minutes for city center circuit, and 60 minutes for the westside. The sessions did not necessarily end at 9:00 pm or 2:00 pm. The researcher always ran complete circuits to keep the observations as consistent as possible. Most parks were visited once per circuit between 4:30 and 9:00 pm on a weeknight and 9:00 am and 4:00 pm on a Saturday. Some paths were crossed numerous times per round resulting in more observations. In total, each location was visited at least seven times over the course of the study. Some were visited more often due to the layout of the circuit. Long Path, for example, was crossed a total of 47 times during the study. In all, 665 stops or location drive-

bys took place during the course of the study. This involved 6 sessions with a total commitment in terms of hours in the field of 25 hours.

Data Gathered

Ten bits of information were gathered at each location. This information included:

- Park or Path Name and location (cross street)
- Date
- Time
- Day of the week
- Weather conditions (temp, sky conditions, wind)
- Number of users
- Sex of users
- Estimated age of users
- Principle user activity
- Area or feature within the park being used
-

In most cases the information could be gathered in a very objective manner. This was not the case with age. Without actually asking the user his or her age the researcher had to make a best guess on age. Though this is highly subjective, it is viewed as very important to consider the age of users to understand why certain parks, areas, features are being used and the activities that take place. The researcher made his best attempt to group the users into those under 11 (child), 11-19 (youth), 20-29 (young adult), 30-69 (adult), and 70 or over (senior). This was particularly difficult from a distance or in failing light but nevertheless an attempt was made.

Park and Path Field Survey Locations

	East Side	City Center	West Side
1	Beverly walk at 4 th	Pioneer Park	South Mike Sedar
2	Huber Park	Interstate Park	North Mike Sedar
3	Pineview School	Marion Kriener Park	Sedar Trail
4	Sage path at Swanton	Matt Campfield Park	25 th Street
5	Long Path at 8 th	North Casper School	Southridge School
6	Verda James School	Riverview Park	Southridge Park
7	Verda James park	Dallason Park	Adams Park
8	Wyo. Blvd. overpass	RT at Jackson	Green Meadow Park
9	Wyo Blvd. east sidewalk	Conwell Park	Cresthill School
10	Vista Ridge walk	Willard School	Yesness Park
11	Blackmore Rd.	Beverly Walk at "A" Street	Yesness Pond
12	Suzie McMurry	Beverly Walk at 4 th Street	Wolf Creek Park
13	21 st Street	Highland Park	Ft. Caspar School
14	Centennial JR	Fairdale Park	PV School
15	Centennial path	Sagewood School	PV Park
16	Long path at 15 th	Alta Vista Park	Parkway trail head
17	Fun Valley	Grant School	Meadowlark Park
18	Manor Heights	Washington Park	Morad Park
19	Sage Park	Park School	Centennial Park
20	Sage path at park	City Park	Zonta Park
21	Sage path at 12 th	RT at Beech Street	13 th Street trailhead parking
22	KW playing fields	Joy of Life	Westwood Park
23	Long path at 12 th	Veteran's Park	Westwood School
24	Verda James Park	RT at Family Motors	Meadow Park
25	Verda James School		Cottonwood School
26	Long path at 8 th		Freedom Park
27	Long Park		Dean Morgan JR.
28	Woods		Nancy English Park
29	Sage path at 2 nd		Garden Creek Park
30	Harden		
31	University Park school		
32	Eastdale Park		
33	Beverly walk at "A"		

A tape recorder with a clip-on microphone was used to record the information. This method was found to be quite efficient. In the case of an empty park or park with only a few users the researcher was able to simply drive by and make verbal observations. A paper copy of the summary matrix developed for data input and analysis was carried in the vehicle. The matrix served as a checklist when making the observations. In the busier parks the researcher would stop and fill in the matrix as a back-up to the recording. Upon returning to the office the written and recorded information was entered into an Excel spreadsheet. Having all the data in a spreadsheet format allowed for a full range of assessments on a park by park, use, or facility basis.

Appendix D
Public Survey and Results

City of Casper Parks Survey

*

1. In which city or town do you reside?

- ☐ In which city or town do you reside? Casper
- ☐ Evansville
- ☐ Mills
- ☐ Bar Nunn
- ☐ Out of town

*

2. What are the ages of the individuals who live in your household and how many individuals are in each age group?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7+
Under 11							
11-19	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20-29	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30-69	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over 69	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*

3. How often does someone in your household visit a park?

- ☐ How often does someone in your household visit a park? Often (1 or more visits per
- ☐ Occasionally (2 or more visits per month)
- ☐ Seldom (a few visits per year)
- ☐ Never

4. Casper, Mills, Evansville and Bar Nunn have a total of 55 parks. Which park(s) do you or someone in your household visit most often and why? (Name or Location)

*

5. How often does someone in your household walk or ride a bicycle to your neighborhood park?

- ☐ Often (1 or more visits per week)
- ☐ Occasionally (2 or more visits per month)
- ☐ Seldom (a few visits per year)
- ☐ Never

6. Washington Park is the most well used park in the area. Why do you think it is so popular? Please be specific.

7. Highland Park is the large park behind the Casper Recreation Center. It receives limited use. What should be done to make this park more appealing?

*

8. There are more than 200 acres of formal turf in Casper's parks (excluding athletic fields). It is costly to water, mow and treat formal turf. Would you agree with a policy to replace a significant amount of formal turf with lower maintenance native vegetation?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Why?

*

9. If you had \$100 to contribute to the parks system please rate where you would like to see your funds allocated with 1 being the most important and 9 being the least important.

- 1 Maintenance
- 2 Building new parks
- 3 Adding recreational equipment like playgrounds, swings, etc.
- 4 Planting trees
- 5 Installing more shelters
- 6 Installing more tables and benches
- 7 Building more trails
- 8 Building more athletic fields
- 9 Building one or more dog parks

10. Thank you for completing our Parks Survey! What other comments or suggestions do you have regarding the park systems in the Casper area?

Done

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Park Survey Results

Question #4: What park do you use and why? (Summary)

Washington – 34

playgrounds (6), shade (6), close by (6), large (3), concerts (3), popular (2), grass, toilet, tennis courts, enjoyable, good for parties, variety, events, pool

Crossroads, Adventure Playground, Castle Park – 23

good playground (3), popular (3), safe (2), shady, low traffic, toilet, shelters, close to trail, enjoyable

Mike Sedar – 17

close by (2), clean, un-crowded, good for dog walking, team practices, playground, safe

Nancy English – 15

attractive (2), close by (2), low traffic

Highland – 14

tennis (2), toilet (2), path (2), close by, play on hill

Adams – 12

close by (2), kids can play in water, paths

Morad – 12

dog friendly (4), numerous paths

Suzie McMurry – 9

playgrounds (5), close by (3), nice, looped walk

North Casper – 6

walk the dog

Paradise Valley – 6

close by

Platte River Trails – 5

walk dog

Fun Valley – 5

playground (4), grass (2), close by, shelter, low traffic

Verda James – 5

playground (2), close by (2), clean, grass, toilet

Conwell – **4**

close by

Buckboard – **4**

close by (2), kids like

Sage – **3**

close by (2), grass

Wolf Creek – **3**

playgrounds (2), quiet, safe

City – **3**

toilet (2), playground (2), less crowded, tables, shade

Cresthill – **3**

close by (3), big playground (2)

Fountain (NIC) – **2**

Farmers Market, Wednesday Nite Live

Garden Creek – **2**

BBQ, volleyball

Huber - **1**

tennis courts near playground

Long - **1**

close by

Sagewood - **1**

close by, nice playground

Park Survey Results

Question #10: Other Comments (Summary)

Like Parks – 19

- Thanks for all you do
- Parks are: treasure, awesome, great, fantastic
- Enjoy, love, appreciate - parks
- Glad they are used
- Well maintained
- Well designed
- Love the trails

Restrooms - 17

- More
- Open more of the year
- Need formal bathrooms
- Restroom at Wolf Creek
- Restroom at Buckboard

Dogs - 14

- Build dog parks
- Clean-up after dogs
- Allow dogs on athletic fields
- Outlaw certain dog breeds

Pools, spray parks - 9

- More variety
- Splash pads
- Waterpark
- Competition pool

Drinking fountains - 5

- More shade - 4
- More walks in parks – 4
- Build Goodstein Park – 3
- Use rubber/foam fall material – 3
- More shelters – 2
- No smoking in parks -2
- Maintain what we have – 2
- Fences around some parks - 2
- Accommodate young kids at Hogadon – 2
- More benches - 2

Fix Adams Greenway Trail
Forestry program, tree farm
Update play equipment
Pickleball courts
Create park maps
Upgrade website
Fix equipment promptly
Regular park clean-up days
Build Whiskey Gap Park
Parks in new neighborhoods
Buckboard Park too limiting
Clean trash out of playgrounds
Install power outlets
More courts (horseshoe, bocce ball)
Create botanical gardens
Don't need more parks
Spending too much on landscaping
Open Rotary Park year round
Replace PV playstructures
More native vegetation
Need a park plan
Basketball Courts
Volleyball courts
Build park at Nine Irons
Park Plan won't change things
Skating, sledding at golf course
Summer trails at Hogadon
Toddler swing at Fun Valley
Dedicate more 1% funds to parks
Better care of ballfields
Indoor skate park
Promote parks more
More neighborhood parks
Multiple picnic areas in parks
Another park in Bar Nunn
More flower beds
Thin bushes at NIC
Mike Sedar parking lot off Poplar
Wash concrete tables
Promote responsible park use
Have landscape architect design parks
Create downtown plaza

Abbreviated Park Survey
Frequent Senior Citizen Comments
11/13/2013

Question #3. What could be done to our parks or trails to make you want to use them more often?

1. Enjoy Parks and Trails (7)
2. Install more lighting (6)
3. Make people with dogs keep them on leashes and clean-up after them (4)
4. Clean, portable toilets (4)
5. More shade / resting areas (4)
6. Keep parks cleaner (3)
7. My problem is finding the time to go (2)
8. Make senior friendly (2)
9. I don't know. I used to use the parks when I had small children but do not know now
10. Wish I could. Can't walk very well. Keep them clean and attractive is my thought
11. Maybe bleachers at the Bandshell and better parking
12. User friendly and they all seem to be now that the bridle trail is accessible
13. We can't walk very well so it is difficult for us to use the park but I think they are important to have
14. Activities, birthday parties, etc. should be allowed
15. Take down all the "don't" signs
16. Clean-off snow and branches. Not having special interest groups for charity almost every weekend
17. Picnic tables for families
18. Kill the animals digging holes by the graves
19. We would like Garden Creek from 23rd to 25th cleaned up and a better trail
20. Music recorded while we run, walk, jog, dog-walk, dance in the park!
21. Handicap accessible to get on trails
22. More places to get on trail with parking
23. Shade covers up handicap parking. Volleyball, horseshoes or Frisbee areas
24. Have more walking trails near the area of 21st and Fairdale
25. Add more walking trails in areas where there are none
26. More dog parks
27. More railings
28. Put up more roofs over food area & put games in play areas for all to join in
29. Be 20 years younger
30. Improve pedestrian crossings and educate motorists. Try something "new" yield to pedestrians, don't try to run them over
31. Make trail for motorized carts and walkers
32. We live out of town

Question #4. Highland Park is the large park behind the Senior Center. What could be done to make you want to use this park more often?

1. Add picnic tables (8)
2. More benches (7)
3. Highland is a nice park (6)
4. Add Shelter (4)
5. More playsets, games, play areas (3)
6. Put horseshoe pits back (3)
7. Lighting to improve walking in the evening (3)
8. Can't walk so don't use the park (3)
9. More trails for handicapped folks (2)
10. More trees (2)
11. Stricter pooper enforcement (2)
12. Area for volleyball or Frisbee (2)
13. Have picnics, sports events and walks around park
14. We use to bring our grandchildren to the play area and also the trail to ride their bikes. Our Mended Hearts group has used the gazebo for picnics in the summer
15. Better parking nearer to the space
16. Need to check grass over graves
17. Parking for handicaps! porta-pots
18. Cleaner
19. Recorded or live music as we dance, jog, dog-walk along the trail
20. and barbeques for the seniors
21. Make a dog park
22. Be 20 years younger
23. Make wind stop blowing

Question #6. What other comments of suggestions do you have regarding the parks and trails in the Casper area?

1. The parks look beautiful. Your crews do a good job. (20)
2. Dog Park (5)
3. Lighting (4)
4. The portable restrooms need emptied way more often than they are!! Need toilet paper on days like parade day, etc. (2)
5. Many of the parks and trails need more parking (2)
6. I enjoy the non-grass areas where dogs can go freely. (2)
7. Enforce dog leash and feces laws! (2)
8. Need things for handicap people (2)
9. Use is dependent on weather which you can't control
10. Police them when parties get out of hand (drugs and drinking)
11. Get the workers off their cell phones and computers, and get them back to manual labor. This is not only for the parks department but all businesses
12. More playground equipment like Rotary Park My neighbor goes to Arizona in the winter but she walks the river trail every day when she is here. She feels they do a terrific job in supplying this but feels the walk at Beverly and near Yellowstone was over spent and that should not have been built.
13. Too many dogs running loose

14. Have enough ball and soccer fields already, do not need any more.
15. We need more doggy clean up areas and garbage barrels.
16. Operate Hogadon on snow not on a time schedule
17. More places to put trash from your picnic
18. Areas that you can play volleyball, Frisbee/Frisbee golf/Pollock Frisbee and horseshoes
19. Making sure that handicap people has plenty of access to the parks. Wheelchair friendly. More trails on eastside
20. Love Washington Park concerts. Anxious for new pool at Mike Sedar. Need more swings at Mike Sedar
21. In response to the first inquiry, this time of year the parks are not used nearly as much, especially with little kids. Summer or warmer weather they use the parks a lot
22. Nancy English Park should have play areas and covered areas.
23. Handicap accessible fishing spots next to river
24. At North Beverly go east (on rail/trail) no bench on trail by University Park
25. I use Washington Park for snowshoeing

Appendix E

Specific Facility/Improvement Rating Measures

Excellent (4)

- Asphalt paths – no cracks, no heaving or subsidence. Good drainage
- Concrete walks and paths – no cracks, no movement at joints, no spalling
- Park Improvements
 - Shelters – new paint, no rust, no rot or blemishes, no vandalism
 - Tables – no scratches or marks, level with no indentations
 - Playgrounds – little wear. A few scuffs on plastic surfaces, no paint scratches. Newly conditioned fall material at a specified depth in place.
 - Swings – new seats, new paint, clean and rust free hardware
 - BBQs – never used or would look like new with thorough cleaning
- Courts – no cracks or displacement, good drainage, markings clear and in excellent condition, supports and nets straight and in excellent repair. Fencing straight and rust free. Basketball backboards showing little wear and nets like new.
- Parking lots and drives. No cracks, no heaving or subsidence. Good drainage.

Good (3)

- Asphalt paths – some ½ inch longitudinal cracks, little or no raveling, ½ inch transverse cracks more than 20 feet apart. No patching or very few patches that are in excellent condition
- Concrete walks and paths – limited cracking, displacement of less than ½ inch. Evidence of limited scaling or spalling
- Park Improvements
 - Shelters – paint in good condition. Evidence of past damage. No rust spots or wood rot evident.
 - Tables – minimal scratches and evidence of past scratches being repaired. Some minor damage to concrete tables. Possible spots of surface rust on expanded metal tables with indentations that are not noticeable by most users.
 - Playgrounds – Evidence of wear to plastic components but limited evidence on metal components. No gouges. No broken or loose components. Fall material still effective with limited compaction but displaced in high traffic locations.
 - Swings – seats are not new but show limited wear or deterioration. Hardware shows limited wear and the structure may have scratches and spots of surface rust

- BBQs – the BBQ has been used a number of times. The surface is scalded and there is some surface rust. The unit is vertical and grate level. The adjustments work as designed.
- Courts – some minor cracks appear with no vertical displacement. Evidence of standing water but no failure of the surface coating in those areas. The condition of the court does not adversely affect play. Markings are functional and in good condition. Supports may not be straight but they are adjustable and will still hold the net at the correct height. The fencing is showing the effect of continual impacts from the balls but is intact and rust free. Basketball backboards and nets are showing wear but the pole and backboard is still vertical.
- Parking lots and drives – some ½ inch longitudinal and transverse cracks, little or no raveling. No patching or very few patches that are in excellent condition.

Fair (2)

- Asphalt paths – ½ inch longitudinal cracking and transverse cracking less than 20 feet apart. Clear evidence of raveling and wear on the surface. The path is structurally sound but crack sealing and a surface coating is needed. May have a significant amount of patching.
- Concrete walks and paths – noticeable cracking with displacement in excess of ½ inch. Cracking, scaling or spalling over 25% of the surface. There is an occurrence of depressions greater than ½ inch where water is impounded. Less than 10% of the panels in any given block displaced.
- Park Improvements
 - Shelters – Evidence of rust or rot which goes beyond the surface and can't be easily abated. Replacement of some members may be needed. Clear evidence of vandalism. The shelter is still structurally sound.
 - Tables – clear scratches. May have cracked or broken boards. Extensive cracking of supports on concrete tables. Noticeable rust on expanded metal table with a clearly uneven surface.
 - Playgrounds – extensive gouging on plastic pieces and clear wear on metal components. Rust and corrosion evident. Components are missing or have been removed. The structure is safe and there are no loose components or sharp surfaces. The fall material is compacted and out of place and providing limited protection.
 - Swings – the seats are clearly worn and deteriorated. They don't match. The hardware is clearly worn but sound. There is clear evidence of rust on the structure.

- BBQs – the unit has had extensive use. There are spots where the metal is rusted through. The unit is not perfectly level. The grate is bent but usable and the grate can be adjusted. The unit can be used but with difficulty.
- Courts – extensive cracking with up to ¼ inch of displacement adversely affecting the quality of play for the users. There would be two or more areas where standing water has caused the failure of the surface coating. The net supports are no longer true and the adjusters may not be fully functional. The fencing is no longer in good condition nor straight and true. There is rust and balls may slip under or through the fence in places. Basketball backboards and nets are showing significant wear, the pole and backboard may be leaning, the basket may no longer be at the specified height, and net may be torn or missing.
- Parking lots and drives – numerous ½ or greater cracks and clear evidence of raveling and wear on the surface. The lot or drive is structurally sound but crack sealing or an overlay is needed. There is a significant amount of patching.

Poor (1)

- Asphalt paths – significant structural problems affecting the functionality of the path. Extensive block cracking, extensive patching, rutting and potholes. This path should be rebuilt.
- Concrete walks and paths – extensive cracking with displacement of more than ½ inch common. Clear evidence of thrusting or settling often due to tree roots or excavations. Numerous locations where depressions result in impounded water more than ½ inch in depth. More than 10% of the panels in any given block are displaced. This sidewalk should be rebuilt.
- Park Improvements
 - Shelters – severe rot or rust. Some boards rotted through or missing. Roof/shingle failure and leaking. The structural integrity of the shelter may be in question.
 - Tables – boards broken off or missing. Sharp or jagged breaks. Table not level and subject to rocking. Expanded metal surface is dented and so irregular that a drink will not stand up. Significant chunks of concrete table missing.
 - Playgrounds – one or more of the components are missing or have been removed. All surfaces are badly worn. Rust and corrosion is clearly evident. Constant maintenance is required to keep the structure safe. The fall material provides little or no protection.
 - Swings – one or more of the swings have been removed. A seat is broken and that swing can't be used. The structure rocks when it is in use. Hardware is badly worn and could fail. The structure may be weakened by rust and corrosion

- BBQs – this unit can't be used. The unit is way out of plumb, loose or off the post. The grate is missing or badly bent. The height of the grate can't be adjusted. The unit is rusted out.
- Courts – The court is basically unplayable. There is extensive cracking with displacement of more than ½ inch. The coating is gone or deteriorated over more than 10% of the surface to the point where it affects a players footing. The supports are leaning and nets difficult to adjust. Nets may be in poor repair. Balls do not bounce in a true manner off the surface. The fencing is weak with holes or gaps that let balls through. There is extensive rust. Basketball backboards and baskets are broken and do not function properly. The net is most likely missing.
- Parking lots and drives – significant structural problems affecting the functionality of the lot or drive. Extensive cracking, patching, and potholes. A lot or drive that is not paved is considered poor. This lot or drive should be built or rebuilt.