

*Parks Master Plan*

# **CITY OF WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS**



June 2025



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## Parks Master Plan

Adopted on July 7, 2025

Prepared for the:  
City of White Sulphur Springs

Prepared by:



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the residents of the City of White Sulphur Springs, the White Sulphur Springs Parks Advisory Committee members, and the City Council for the development of this Parks Master Plan. A list of the contributors can be found below.

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- » Rick Ellison
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The White Sulphur Springs Parks Master Plan outlines the strategic vision for developing, enhancing, and maintaining the City's park system. This comprehensive plan addresses the diverse recreational needs of the City's residents.

## INTRODUCTION

Parks play a vital role in enhancing the well-being of White Sulphur Springs' residents and visitors by providing safe green spaces for recreation, relaxation, and social interaction. They promote physical activity through walking, jogging, and sports, contributing to healthier lifestyles. Parks also foster community cohesion by serving as gathering places for events, picnics, and cultural activities, helping to build connections among residents. Additionally, green spaces improve air quality and enhance biodiversity, creating a more pleasant and sustainable environment. Overall, parks enrich the quality of life, making neighborhoods more vibrant and inviting.

The residents of White Sulphur Springs currently enjoy approximately 9 acres of parkland within the City limits. The City currently has six park sites, three of which have been recently renovated. The City's parks see heavy use by both residents and visitors to the community.

Several key opportunities and challenges have led to the development of this Parks Master Plan:

- » The City accepted a donation of land for the purpose of developing a nature park.
- » There is a need for improved strategies for managing and maintaining the parks.
- » There is a rising need for improved recreational opportunities for all ages and demographics in the City.

## PLAN GOALS

The following goals guided the development of this plan:

- » Ensure the adequate maintenance of existing parks.
- » Identify park projects that the public needs, wants, and will support, along with their associated costs.
- » Develop a plan that will improve competitiveness for grant funding opportunities.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Preparation of this plan has been funded through a Community Development Block Grant Planning Grant from the Montana Department of Commerce and the City of White Sulphur Springs.

## *Key Elements*

The Master Planning process consists of the following general steps:

- » Inventory and evaluation of park infrastructure and facilities
- » Advice and guidance from residents on priorities
- » Prioritization of needs
- » Identification of funding options to meet the needs
- » Matching funding sources with improvements
- » Formal adoption and use by the City Council

Through the Master Planning Process, the identification of long-term improvements and funding strategies helps a community stay on top of needed replacements or repairs before potentially catastrophic events occur within the City's parks infrastructure. Additionally, the City can implement the guidance included in the Master Plan to apply for grants and loans for improvements. Finally, the Master Planning process makes parks' capital expenditures more responsive to the needs of residents by informing them of, and involving them in, the process.

## RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANNING DOCUMENTS

- » Consolidated White Sulphur Springs- Meagher County Growth Policy (2021)
- » Capital Improvements Plan (September 2024)
- » Community Outdoor Recreation Revitalization Report (2021-2022)
- » Montana Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

When planning for parks and recreation projects, it is important to consider and understand how proposed projects relate to the policies, regulations, and guidance in the City's other adopted planning documents. This ensures compatibility with and application of consistent design criteria and assumptions between plans.

## CITY/COUNTY GROWTH POLICY

In February 2021, the City of White Sulphur Springs and Meagher County adopted a Consolidated Growth Policy. This policy serves as a comprehensive guidance document that captures the vision for coordinated development for the City and County.

The Growth Policy included objectives and actions for Parks and Recreation Facilities as identified below.

### *Objectives:*

Provide quality, cost-effective, properly designed City facilities and services, including streets, water, sewer, fire protection, parks and recreation, and law enforcement; and provide adequate ongoing maintenance of those facilities and services.

Utilize cash in lieu of parkland dedications from future subdivisions to help develop and maintain City and County parks and recreational facilities.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Actions:

Develop a County-City Park and Recreation Plan for the development and maintenance of existing and future facilities.

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN

In September of 2024, the City of White Sulphur Springs adopted a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP), which serves as a prioritization and budgeting tool to update and maintain the City's infrastructure. The table below outlines the Parks and Recreation projects identified in the Plan.

▼ Figure 1 - Excerpt from the White Sulphur Springs Capital Improvement Plan

Project Name	Estimated Fiscal Year	Total Estimated Project Cost	Potential Funding Sources
Parks and Recreation Master Plan	2025	\$31,170	CDBG, Local Funds
Vaulted Toilets at Springs and Rader Parks	2025	\$25,000 per each	SLIPA(1), LWCF, MT Tourism Grant, Private Foundations, Local Funds
Future Ice-Skating Rink (hockey-sized box type)	2027	\$17,000	LWCF, MT Tourism Grant, Private Foundations, Local Funds
Spike's Happy Trails Development	2028	\$80,000 to \$100,000	LWCF, MT Tourism Grant, Private Foundations, Local Funds
McStravick Court Surface	2029	\$20,000 to \$35,000	LWCF, MT Tourism Grant, Private Foundations, Local Funds

(1)State-Local Infrastructure Partnership Act (HB 355) of 2023

## COMMUNITY OUTDOOR RECREATION REALIZATION (CORR) REPORT

In 2021 and 2022, the public and Parks Committee members participated in the Community Outdoor Recreation Realization process, facilitated by the University of Montana's W.A. Franke College of Forestry and the Montana Access Project, and funded by the USDA Forest Service. CORR is an eight-step process designed to provide guidance to communities throughout Montana to support the planning, vision, and implementation of outdoor recreation.

During the CORR process, stakeholders identified the following vision statement for recreation in the City of White Sulphur Springs:

*To create and enhance economically sustainable recreation opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.*

During the CORR process, stakeholders created a ranked list of possible recreation projects and priorities. From the top six priorities, the group selected three priorities to move forward to Action Planning. These projects were:



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Develop Spike's Happy Trails
2. Provide for Safety and Accessibility at Springs Park
3. Wayfinding signs and park information on the city website
4. Develop a Skate Park \*

\* At the time, a Skateboard Users Group was formed whose goal was to build a skate park. The City had agreed to set aside a piece of land behind City Hall for this park, but made the User Group responsible for raising the funds for the development and long-term maintenance of this project. This group has not been active since 2023.

The stakeholders of the CORR process included a cross-section of age groups and interests in the community: high school youth, local volunteers, recreational business owners, and others. Other projects proposed during which strong feasibility and support had included soccer opportunities (multi-sports field), community garden, walking trails, and disc/frisbee golf.

The CORR process was designed to be a precursor to a formal Master Planning Process.

The City Council adopted the CORR Report in December 2023.

## MONTANA STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN (SCORP)

The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) serves as a guide for local, state, and federal agencies in the development of future outdoor recreation opportunities. It is legally mandated and required under Chapter 2 of the Land and Water Conservation Fund State Assistance Program, Federal Assistance Manual. A SCORP is necessary for the State to receive funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Local projects funded by the LWCF must meet SCORP objectives.

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks will have an updated SCORP within the year. When completed, the City should consider the priorities of the new statewide plan in its parks planning process. The alignment of the City and County plans to the goals of the SCORP increases the community's success in receiving competitive recreation project grant funds.



# OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

## PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

White Sulphur Springs established an advisory board in 2019. The Parks Advisory Committee makes recommendations regarding parks to the Mayor and City Council. The Committee has been proactive in its efforts to apply for grants and improve the parks for the community. The Parks Master Plan will help sustain and guide these efforts.

## COMMUNITY SURVEY

The City staff and Parks Advisory Committee distributed a community survey in November and December of 2024. This survey received 182 responses. The respondents to the survey indicated that Springs Park was the most used and visited of the city parks. Below are the top three parks and recreation priorities identified by the respondents:

- » The development of summer recreational opportunities, such as a splash pad and other water recreation opportunities.
- » The development of winter recreation opportunities, such as an ice-skating rink and cross-country skiing.
- » The development of walking trails and a nature park at Spike's Happy Trails.

Some respondents also stated that they would take full advantage of fitness and wellness programming. There were also a large number of written responses in the survey that said an off-leash dog park would be a great benefit to the community.

## OUTREACH EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Parks Advisory Committee attended several events to solicit community feedback on the community outreach survey. Outreach undertaken by Parks Committee members included the following:

- » Social Media Advertising
- » Lions Club and Meagher County Chamber of Commerce Meetings
- » Stevens Youth Center
- » Thanksgiving Dinner at Community Center
- » Christmas Stroll
- » Community Expo

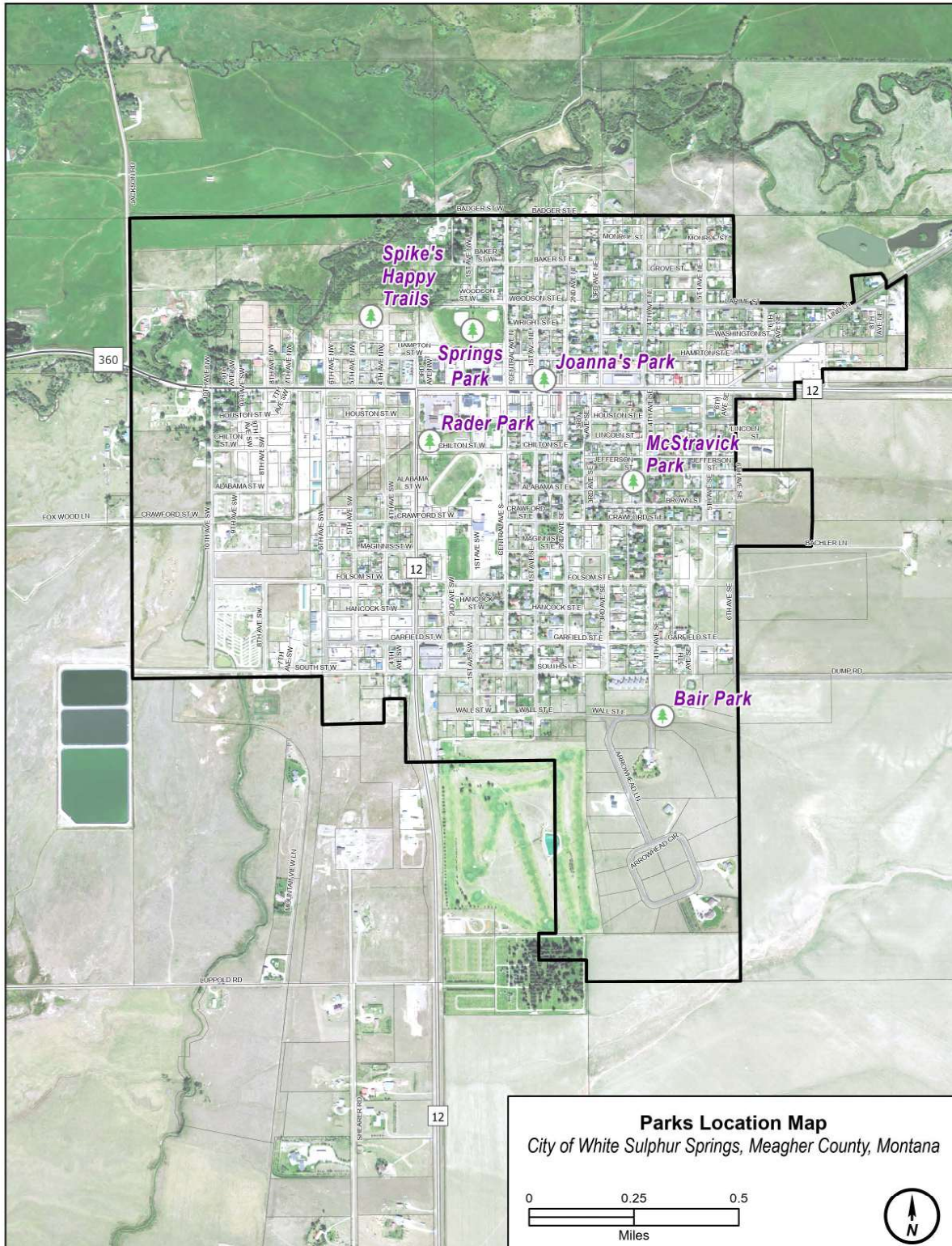
The Parks Advisory Committee also held an open house at the Senior Center on May 13th, 2025. The results of the open house mirrored previous community outreach events fairly closely in terms of public comments. There were a few additional comments that were made that were not discussed in previous community events. These items were City-provided pickleball lessons and a zipline in the City parks.



# PROJECT LOCATION AND FOCUS

The White Sulphur Springs Parks Master Plan includes the incorporated boundaries of the City of White Sulphur Springs, as shown on Map 1.

## ▼ Map 1 - Parks Location Map



# PROJECT LOCATION AND FOCUS

## WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS AT A GLANCE

The City Park’s vision statement includes creating and enhancing “economically sustainable recreation opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.”<sup>1</sup> Therefore, it is important to understand the demographics of the City’s residents.

The City of White Sulphur Springs is a community located in central Montana and serves as the county seat of Meagher County. The city, located within the Smith River Watershed, was named after the white deposits that were formed by the hot springs. The area is known for its rich history in agriculture, tourism, mining, and recreation.

The City of White Sulphur Springs and surrounding agricultural land are located within the foothills of three forested mountain ranges, the Castle Mountains to the east, the Little Belt Mountains to the north, and the Big Belt Mountains to the west.

Developed areas within the city limits of White Sulphur Springs are composed primarily of intermixed low-density residential and commercial areas. Land use outside of the city limits, within two (2) miles of White Sulphur Springs, consists of multi-acre housing developments. Land outside of this buffer is primarily agricultural. Areas not cultivated for crops are generally sagebrush shrubland or foothill grasslands, used for cattle grazing.

The North Fork of the Smith River borders the north portion of the city limits and converges with the South Fork of the Smith River to form the Smith River just northwest of the city. There is a portion of the northwestern corner of the city limits within the 100-year floodplain of the North Fork of the Smith River. Major transportation routes in the area include US Highway 12, US Highway 89, and State Highway 360. The topography in the area is primarily gently rolling hills that slope to the northwest.

Historic populations for Meagher County and the City of White Sulphur Springs are shown in Table 1. Once known for its timber and milling industry, the community suffered a great loss in the early 1980s with the closure of local sawmills. Until recently, the population has remained relatively unchanged since the 1980s. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the 2023 population of White Sulphur Springs is listed as 1,022, which is a seven percent increase over the 2020 population. The population of Meagher County has exhibited a similar trend to that of the city.

▼ Table 1 – Historic Population Data, U.S. Census Bureau

Year	Meagher County		White Sulphur Springs	
	Population	Total Growth Period	Population	Total Growth Period
1980	2,154	-	1,302	-
1990	1,819	-16%	963	-26%
2000	1,932	6%	984	2%
2010	1,891	-2%	939	-5%
2020	1,927	2%	955	2%
2023	2,071	7.5%	1,022	7.0%

The Mountainview Medical Center is the largest employer in the city. Other significant employers include White Sulphur Springs School District, Bank of the Rockies, and tourism-related businesses (hotels, restaurants, etc.). The City and Meagher County governments, along with State and Federal agencies, also support a significant number of employees.

<sup>1</sup> Community Outdoor Recreation Realization (CORR) Report, 2022



# PROJECT LOCATION AND FOCUS



According to the 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year estimates, the median household income in the City of White Sulphur Springs is \$55,775 and 7.1 percent of its residents live below the poverty level. The low to moderate income (LMI) percentage for White Sulphur Springs is 45.5 percent, based on the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) 2020 low- and moderate-income data.

White Sulphur Springs also provides services for tourists and travelers visiting the area. The area is abundant in recreational opportunities due to access to extensive public lands, natural mineral hot springs, proximity to a nearby downhill ski area, and the famed Smith River. The Smith River is a blue ribbon trout stream renowned for its scenic beauty and is a popular destination for recreation and fishing. The river is only floatable through a permit process, making it unique.

Two major natural resource-related development projects are in the planning stages near White Sulphur Springs. The Black Butte Copper Mine and Gordon Butte Pumped Hydro Project are expected to come online in the coming years and have a major impact on the population within the city and county. The Black Butte Copper Mine is estimated to add 225 people to the population of the City, while the Gordon Butte project is estimated to add 60 residents to Meagher County. Although these development projects have been identified, they are in the early stages of development, and many details remain uncertain.

The City operates under the Mayor-Council form of government comprised of four council members and the Mayor. Municipal services provided to residents include drinking water and treatment, wastewater collection and treatment, streets, police, fire, parks, and other facilities.

# EXISTING PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

## PARKS AND RECREATION MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

- » The City's park maintenance responsibilities include irrigation, mowing, trimming/removal of trees and bushes, spraying weeds, trash and litter removal, and maintaining playground equipment and property.
- » The responsibility for park maintenance currently falls to four City public works employees, who also oversee the upkeep of the City's other buildings and infrastructure, such as the water and sewer systems and streets. While these employees work year-round, their capacity is limited due to the broad scope of their duties. No City employee holds playground inspector, weed treatment, or arboriculture certifications.
- » The park's maintenance practices have limited written standards or operating procedures
- » There is minimal to no maintenance at several undeveloped city parklands. Basic mowing and haying are conducted on open lands near Bair Park. Minimal maintenance is completed at Spike's Happy Trails.
- » The City recently replaced the essential parks equipment and will purchase a new maintenance vehicle in the future. That vehicle could also be used for other City activities.
- » Historically, due to a lack of resources and staff, City parks improvements have been organized, paid for, and completed by community service groups. In the future, the Parks Advisory Committee will be actively involved in coordinating parks improvements with these groups, with the City, and with others who may propose parks development projects or activities.

## PARKLAND INVENTORY ASSESSMENT

In September of 2024, a site visit was conducted to assess the condition of each of the City's parks. Those attending included Parks Advisory Committee members, City Council members, City Public Works staff, and Great West Engineering. This collaborative team visit proved beneficial in gaining perspective on the current conditions of the parks and city-owned parkland that has not yet been developed. Opportunities and challenges were discussed based on the conditions of each of the parks. Stakeholders provided insight on the users, maintenance, and history of the parks.

The team noted the absence of basic design characteristics, including the lack of:

- » Proper signage, including but not limited to hours of operation, playground rules, and equipment use or restrictions, as applicable
- » Accessibility that complies with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act
- » Posted speed limit signs and traffic calming measures
- » Safety railings
- » Sidewalks, crosswalks, curb cuts, and ramps
- » Trails and bike routes to the park
- » Restroom facilities
- » Up-to-date and safe equipment
- » A program that ensures the inspection and maintenance of park playground facilities is carried out by certified playground inspectors

A detailed report, by park, of this asset review is as follows.

# EXISTING PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

## *Springs Park*

Springs Park is a 6.23-acre public space located at 105 West Hampton Street, adjacent to residential neighborhoods, wetland/open space, and City Hall. The heavily used park is easily accessible, with a sign displaying its name on West Hampton Street near the parking lot. While there is no formal entryway or threshold, access to the park is possible from multiple directions. Visitors can reach the park via West Hampton Street, North Central Avenue, or West Woodson Street, with on-street parking and a parking lot available on West Hampton. The roads surrounding the park have stop signs but no sidewalks.

▼ Figure 2 - Springs Park Drone Photo



## *Springs Park Quick Facts*

Size: 6.23 acres

### Existing amenities:

- » Two Ball fields
- » Slide
- » Swings
- » Play structure
- » Dinosaur
- » Teeter Totter
- » Climbing Wall
- » Spinners
- » Balance Beam
- » Pavillion with electricity available
- » Restrooms

The playground at Springs Park includes a slide, swings, a teeter-totter, two spinners, a play structure, a climbing wall, a dinosaur climbing toy, and a balance beam. This park was renovated in late 2024 and early 2025. This renovation included groundwork to address drainage issues, the installation of new ground covering and playground equipment, and improving ADA accessibility.

There is no fence around the play area, though it is separated from the roadways by distance and landscape topography. Safety barriers will be installed between the parking area and the playground.

The baseball fields at Springs Park are functional but in need of maintenance, particularly regarding





# EXISTING PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES



weed control in the infield. The dugouts are also in need of maintenance, and one needs to be rebuilt as it was destroyed by a windstorm.

Springs Park's green space is in good condition and has a few provided benches, tables, and a picnic shelter for public use. The park allows leashed pets outside the playground area. Rules are posted, and dog waste bags are not available.

At Springs Park, vandalism has been an issue, with dog waste bag boxes and lights being destroyed or stolen. Public restrooms are available, but have also experienced vandalism.

Northwest of City Hall, the park includes horseshoe pits.

The open grass area near the baseball fields in Springs Park is a prime area for the development of recreation facilities, whether that be multi-use grass fields, soccer fields, or development into a different type of use.

The pavilion building at Springs Park was donated to the City by the WSS Rotary Club and is the location of many community events, barbeques, birthday parties, family and class reunions, and the like. Vandalism to lighting has been an issue, with new wiring and anti-tamper lighting to be installed in 2025.

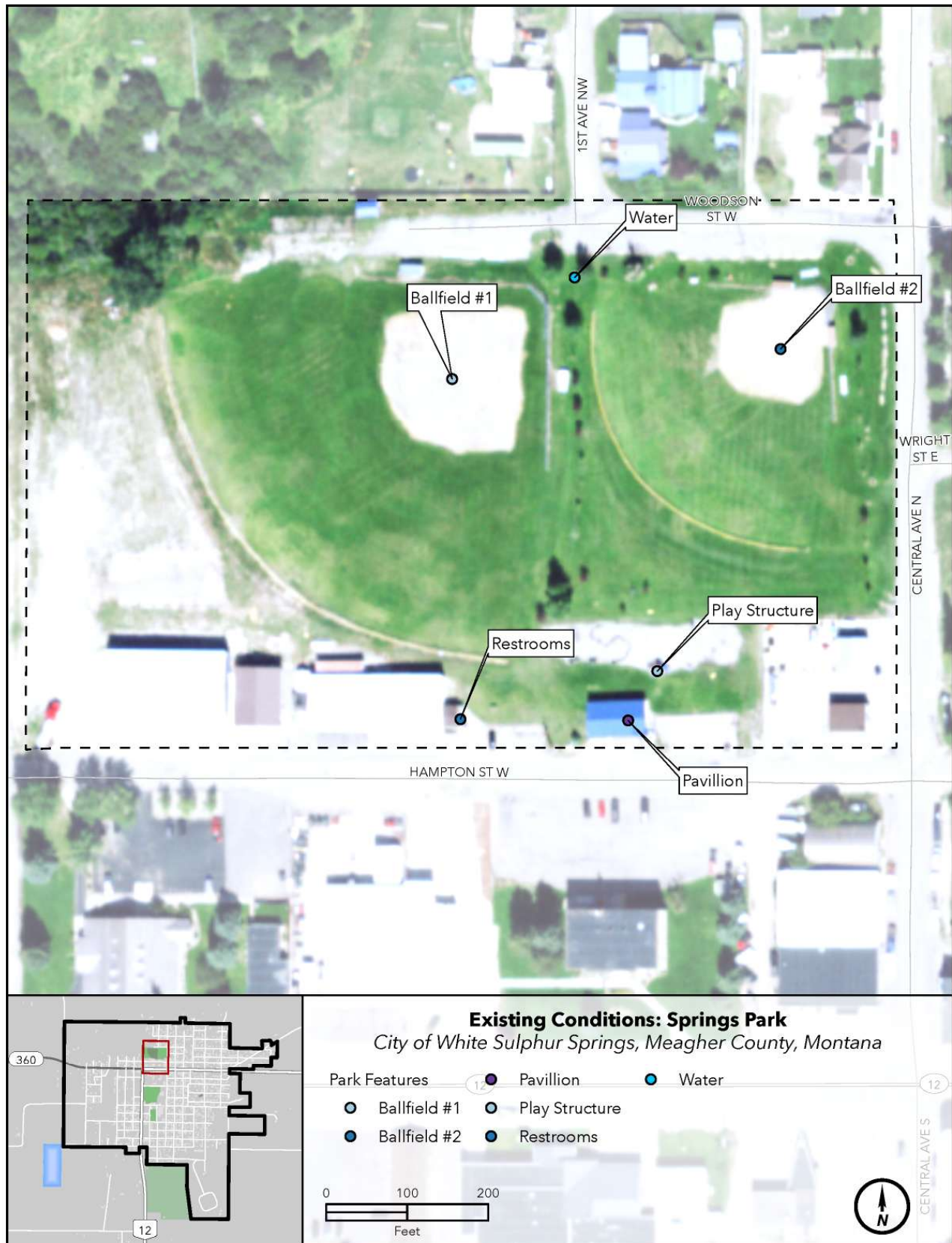
Springs Park may be a candidate for additional site-specific master planning to coordinate the development of this site.





# EXISTING PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

▼ Map 2 - Springs Park Existing Conditions Map

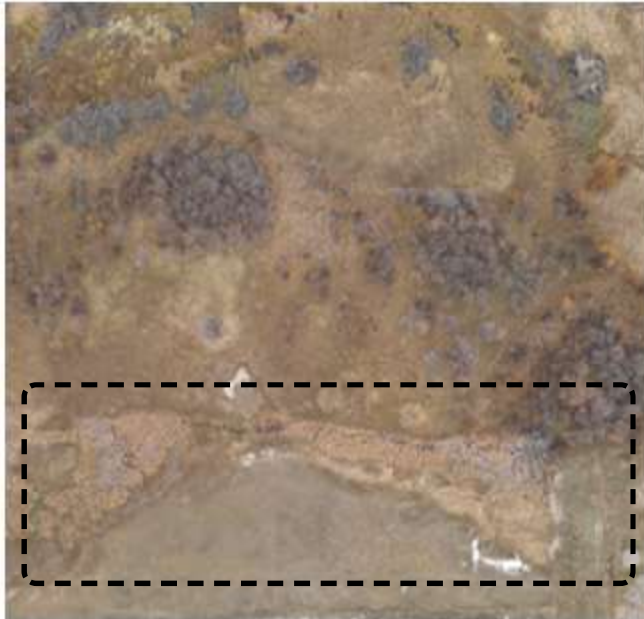


# EXISTING PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

## *Spike's Happy Trails*

Spike's Happy Trails is an undeveloped park located near the North Fork Smith River. This park was donated to the City by the former landowner. Currently, the area consists of hilly terrain with sections of wetlands. Uneven landscaping and the lack of fencing on the north boundary make navigating the property challenging.

▼ Figure 3 - Spike's Happy Trails Drone Photo



Spike's Happy Trails is adjacent to undeveloped city property west of Springs Park and northwest of the Fire Department/ Ambulance facilities. Currently, the undeveloped park is accessed by City property. Access needs to be developed before the land is used as a nature park. Platted but undeveloped city streets within and adjacent to the donated property may need to be abandoned to accommodate development. This area would be a candidate for an additional site-specific master planning process to coordinate development.



## *Spikes Happy Trails Quick Facts*

Size: Approximately 1.37 Acres, excluding the platted streets

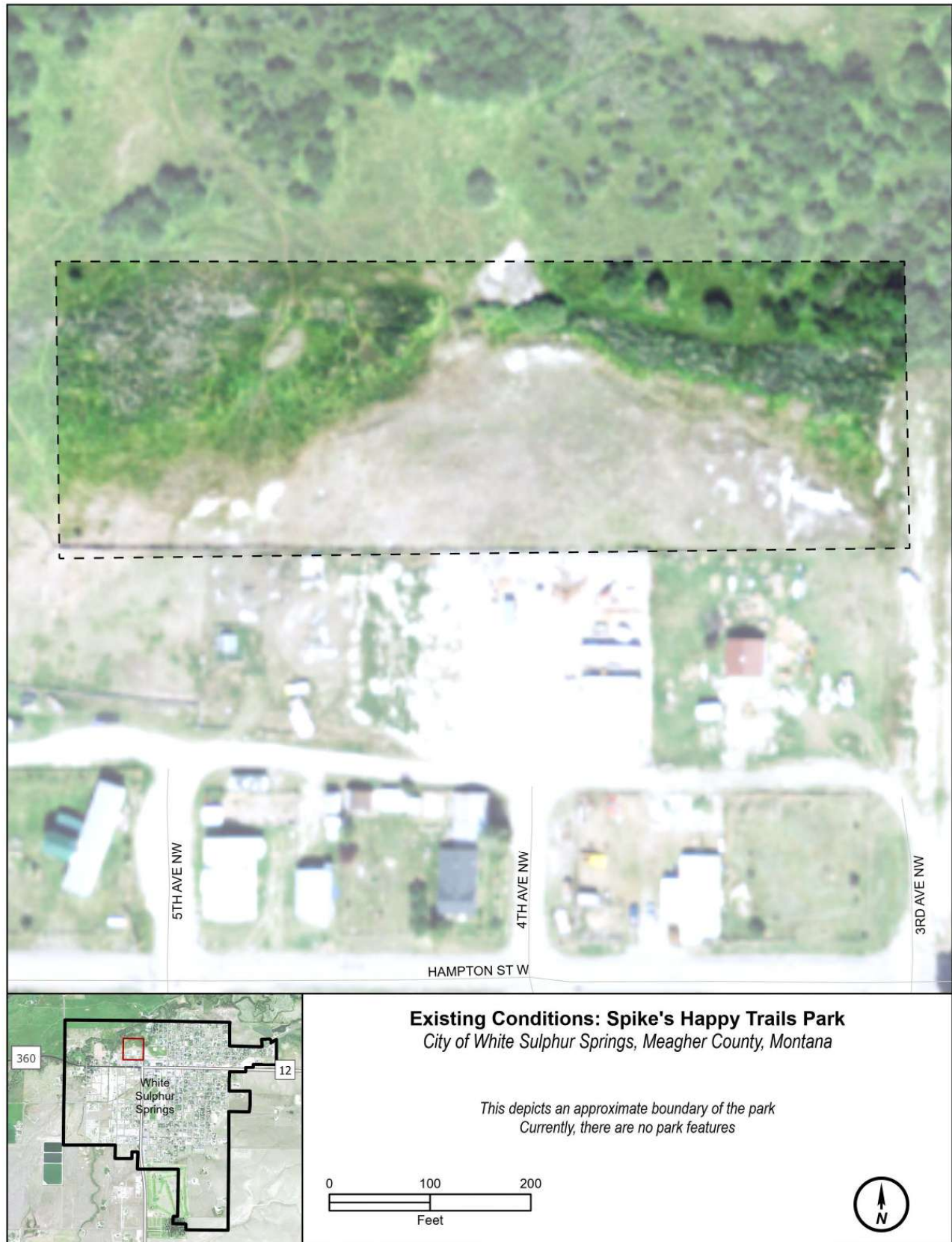
Existing amenities:

- » None, undeveloped land
- » Old boundary fencing along the southern boundary.
- » Barbed and woven wire fencing that needs to be removed



# EXISTING PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

▼ Map 3 - Spike's Happy Trails Existing Conditions Map



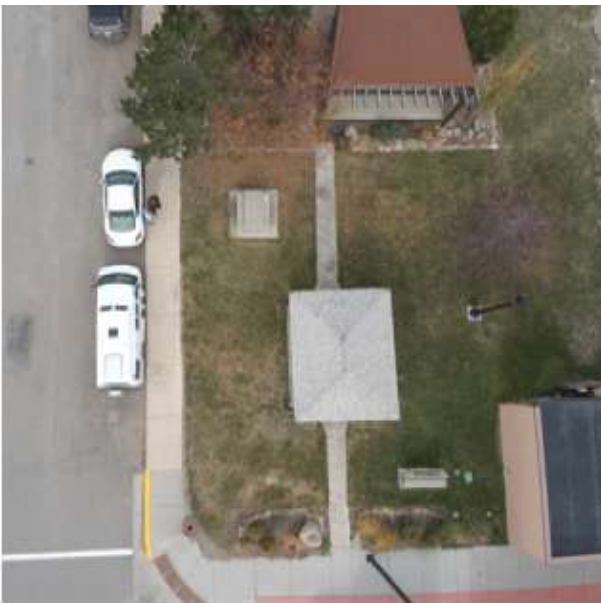
# EXISTING PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

## Joanna's Park

Located at 101 E Main St, Joanna's Park is dedicated to the memory of an active community member. The park is easy to find and accessible, with multiple points of entry and on-street parking available. It is the location of many community events.

Sidewalks and curb cuts border the park, ensuring convenient access. While there are no trails or bike routes nearby, the surrounding roads are equipped with traffic signs allowing safe pedestrian access to the park. The park is surrounded by a mix of residential and commercial properties. These nearby commercial areas sometimes contribute to excessive litter and overflowing trash cans within the park. The property lines displayed on Map #4 were created using data obtained from the the Montana Department of Revenue through the Montana State Library. These property lines are not survey grade, and are only for graphical representation.

▼ Figure 4 - Joanna's Park Drone Photo



## Joanna's Park Quick Facts

Size: Approximately 4,486 square feet

Existing amenities:

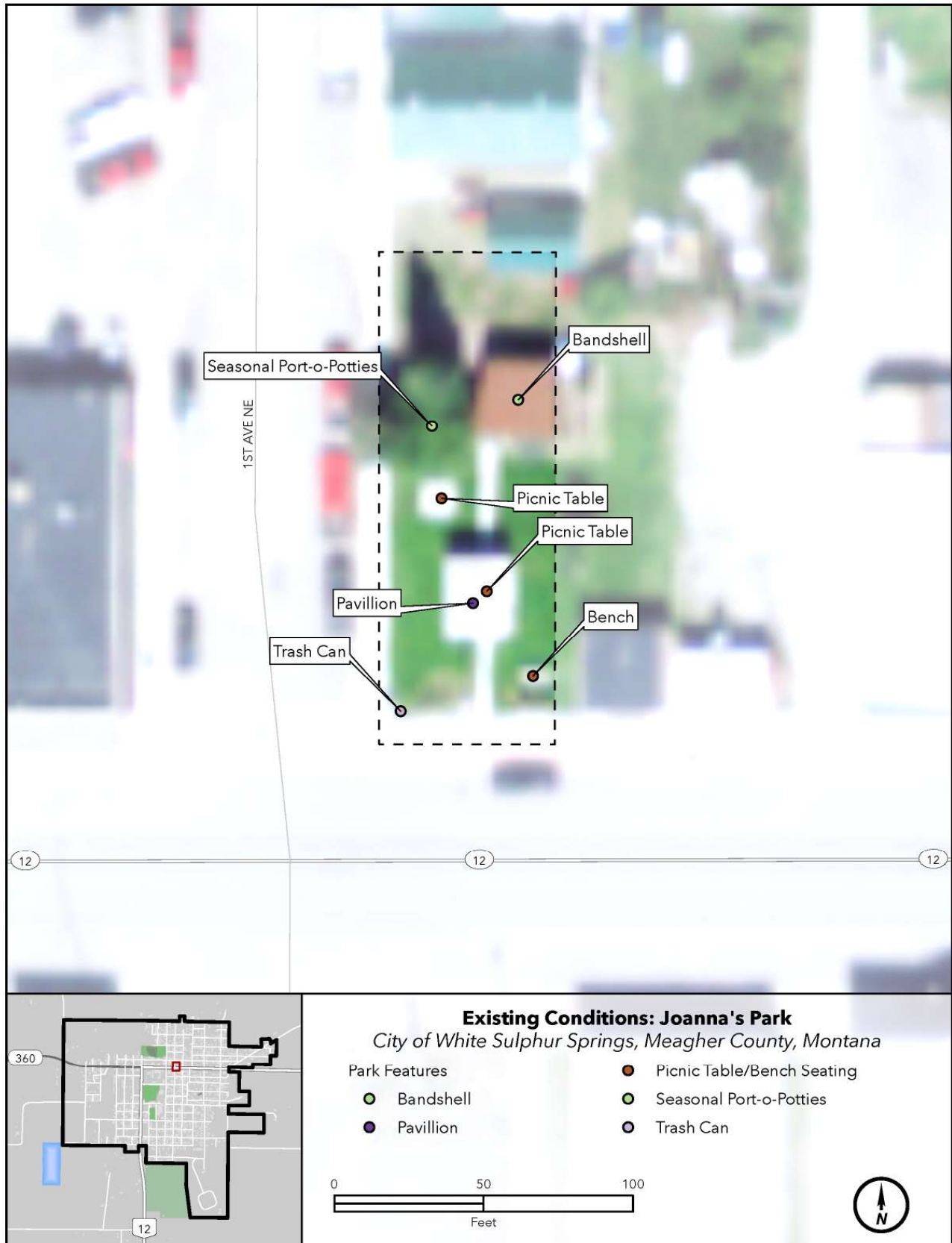
- » Lighting
- » Shade structure with tables
- » Seasonal portable restroom
- » Mural
- » Bandshell which serves as a small event venue
- » Electricity at the bandshell





# EXISTING PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

▼ Map 4 - Joanna's Park Existing Conditions Map



# EXISTING PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

## McStravick Park

McStravick Park is located at 205 4th Ave SE and is easy to find and access. The park features tennis and pickleball courts, which are in excellent condition. Traffic signs are present for safety. The park is located in a residential area, and there are no safety concerns.

▼ Figure 5 - McStravick Park Drone Photo



### McStravick Park Quick Facts

Size: Approximately 0.35 acres

#### Existing amenities:

- » Signage
- » Landscaping
- » Benches
- » Accessible Table
- » Portable toilet
- » Multi-Use netted sport court
- » Practice Wall
- » Equipment loan box
- » Trash cans
- » Donation Box

The park includes signage displaying the park's name, hours, and rules. The park is nicely landscaped, and has small trees. The benches and table are in good condition, a portable toilet is available on-site, as well as a water faucet in the northeast corner of the property, just south of the power pole.

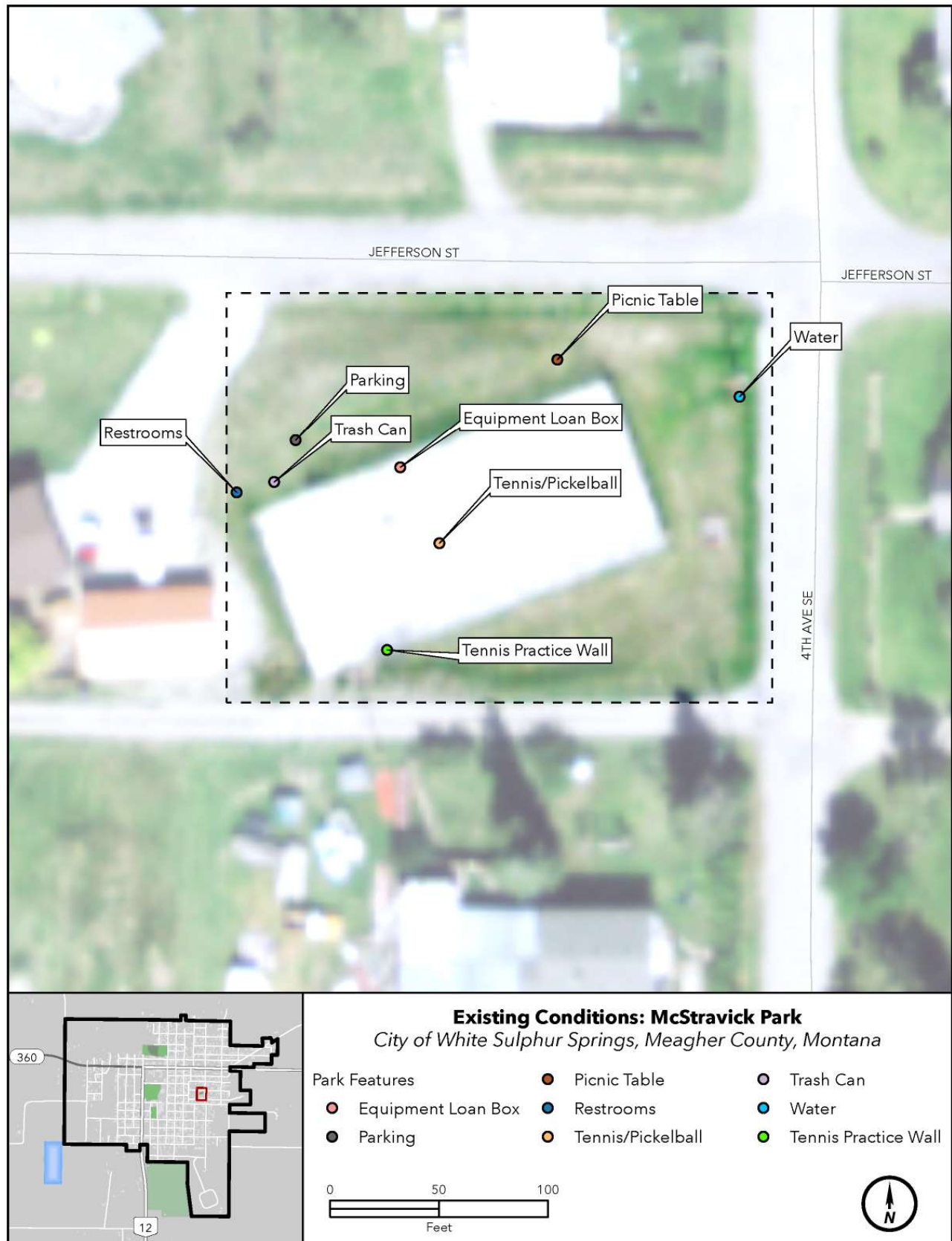
The court was donated to the City, with the stipulation that it remain a court. The Park was recently renovated with grants and City funds.

The court play surface is a panelized system that will exceed its useful life in the next five to ten years, so the City will need to start planning for its eventual replacement. Replacement options include another panelized surface or a cushioned playing surface. ADA parking upgrades will occur in the summer of 2025.



# EXISTING PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

▼ Map 5 - McStravick Park Existing Conditions Map





# EXISTING PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

## Bair Park

The Charles M. Bair Family Memorial Park (Girl Scout Park), located at 903 4th Avenue SE, is a 2.32-acre park which was deeded to the City during the 1980's as an annexation. The park includes a developed playground, and undeveloped open space. There is a sign displaying its name, and both on-street parking and a parking lot are available.

▼ Figure 6 - Bair Park Drone Photo



### Bair Park Quick Facts

Size: Approximately 2.32 acres

#### Existing amenities:

- » Dinosaur climber
- » Playground structure
- » Swings
- » Monkey Bars
- » Benches
- » Large and small trees
- » Portable restroom
- » Trash cans
- » Grill

The playground at Bair Park features colorful equipment, benches. About half of the benches and tables are in good condition. A portable restroom and trash cans are provided for visitors. The park also includes a grill and boasts landscaping with trees and natural grass.

Challenges at this park include gopher holes, noxious weeds, wildlife damage to trees, and vandalism. The City has been working to address the gopher population, and recent development in the area should reduce the amount of this vandalism.

In 2025, this park will be renovated with a new footprint to correct drainage issues, and will be reconfigured with the installation of new and re-purposed playground equipment. Safe ground covering will also be installed and ADA accessibility will be improved.

Flanking the developed area of Bair Park are two undeveloped public land areas. East of the developed Bair park, and within the same parcel was a historic bump track that has recently been decommissioned as well as a grassy area. The grassy area is mowed by the neighboring HOA to reduce fire risk.

Northwest of Bair Park, across Fourth Avenue, is a strip of undeveloped land that was deeded to the city during the 1980 era annexation. The strip of land is approximately 0.92 acres and borders an apartment complex for seniors.

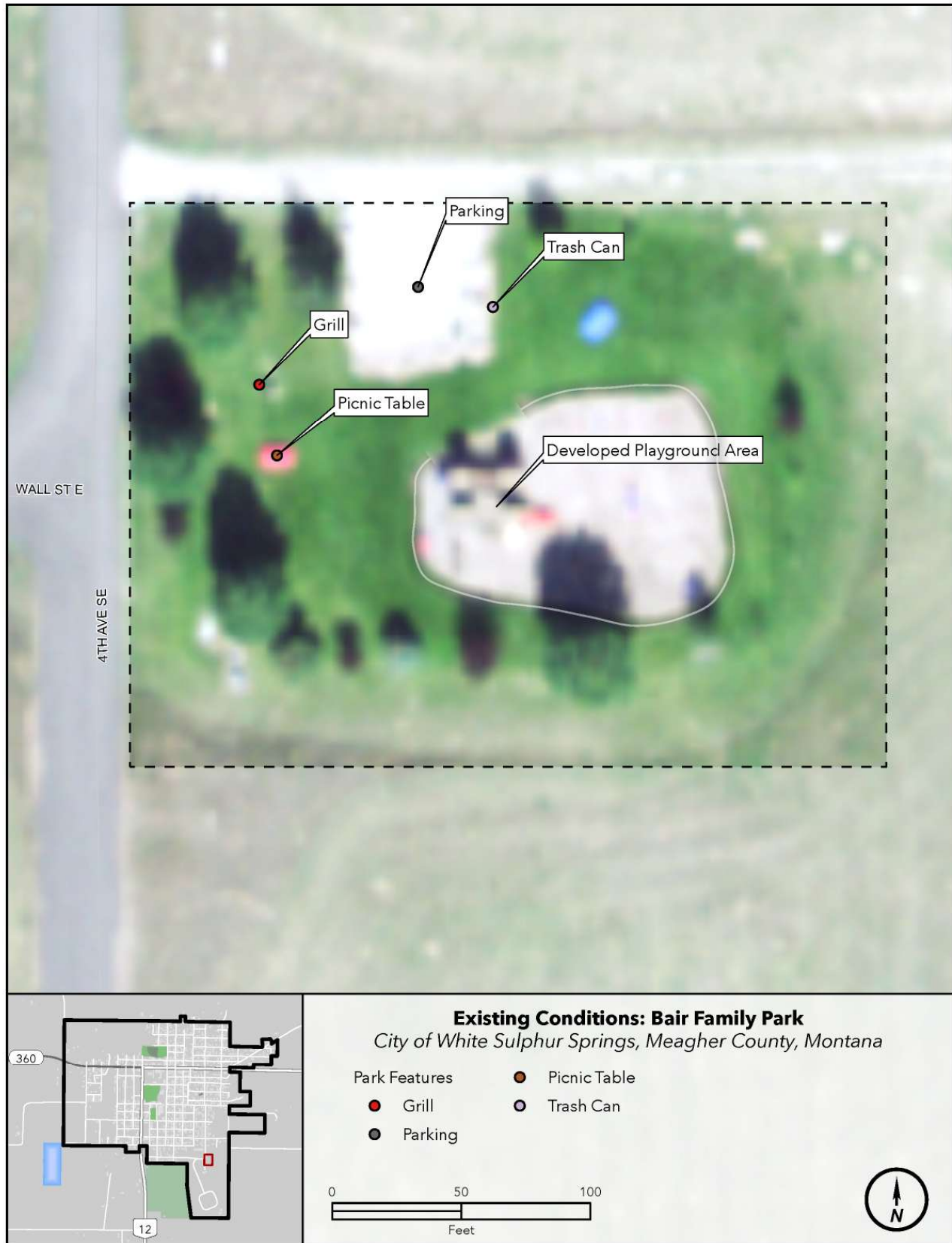
Both of these areas have the potential to be developed in the future.





# EXISTING PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

▼ Map 6 - Bair Family Park Existing Conditions Map



# EXISTING PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

## Rader Park

Located on Chilton Street, and Highway 12/89, the park is easily identifiable with signage displaying the park's name, but the park hours are not prominently displayed. It offers multiple points of entry, two parking lots, and on-street parking. While a sidewalk and paved path are present along the highway, there are no sidewalks, curb cuts, ramps, bike routes, or external trails adjacent to the park. The surrounding roads are equipped with traffic signs, but there is no crosswalk between the two sides of the park. Nearby, you'll find commercial properties and a school.

▼ Figure 7 - Rader Park Drone Photo



### Rader Park Quick Facts

Size: Approximately 0.781 acres

#### Existing amenities:

- » Lighting
- » Shade trees
- » Restrooms
- » Grills
- » Picnic tables and Benches
- » Two shelters
- » Water faucet on the northern edge of the park
- » Trash Cans

Concerns such as litter (especially animal waste) and camping are present. Vandalism and heavy traffic also pose challenges at the park.

A vault toilet is planned to be installed in Rader Park in late summer 2025.

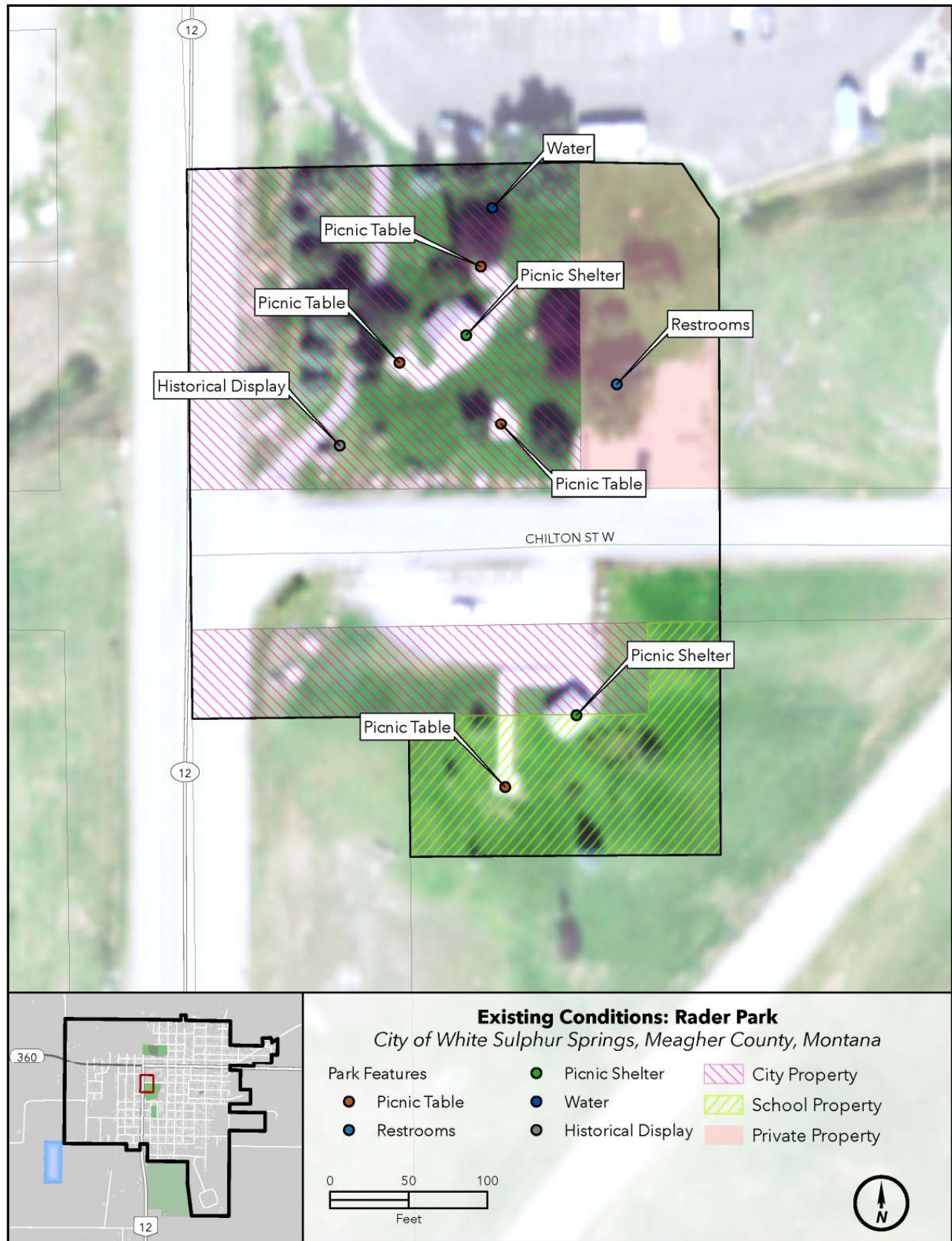
The property lines displayed on Map #7 were created using data obtained from the the Montana Department of Revenue through the Montana State Library. These property lines are not survey grade, and are only for graphical representation.





# EXISTING PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

▼ Map 7 - Rader Park Existing Conditions Map



# EXISTING PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

## ADOPT A SPOT PROGRAM

The Parks Committee created a program where residents can pick a spot within the City and maintain that location for two years. Maintenance includes pulling weeds, planting flowers and shrubs, staining buildings, etc. Several existing parks are Adopt a Spot sites, as are other sites within the City, including the welcoming signage into the City, the gardens at City Hall, the Senior/Community Center, and the Castle Museum. In return for their hard work, volunteers are acknowledged with a sign bearing their names at the adopted location.

## ACCESSIBILITY TO PARKS

Residents who live farther from a park are often deterred from utilizing the park system. According to the National Recreation and Parks Association's Park Access Report, users are 47% more likely to walk if they have easy access to parks. Typically, being within 10 minutes or less from a park is deemed easy access. When the distance to a park doubles, the use of the park by residents decreases by 50%.

This data emphasizes the importance of having parks equitably spread out to provide parks and open space to every demographic in the City.

The parks in White Sulphur Springs are highly accessible due to the smaller size of the City. There are various methods that the City could employ to continue to improve accessibility for all user groups. Common accessibility upgrades are found below in Table 2.

▼ Figure 8 - Crosswalk with Pedestrian Flashers



### Common Accessibility Upgrades

- » Ramps and pathways
- » Accessibly parking
- » Trail construction, sidewalk construction/improvements
- » Traffic control measures (i.e., stop signs, crosswalks, etc.)
- » Bike lanes

▼ Figure 9 - Sharrow in Ennis, MT. Source: Federal Highway Administration's Small Town and Rural Design Guide



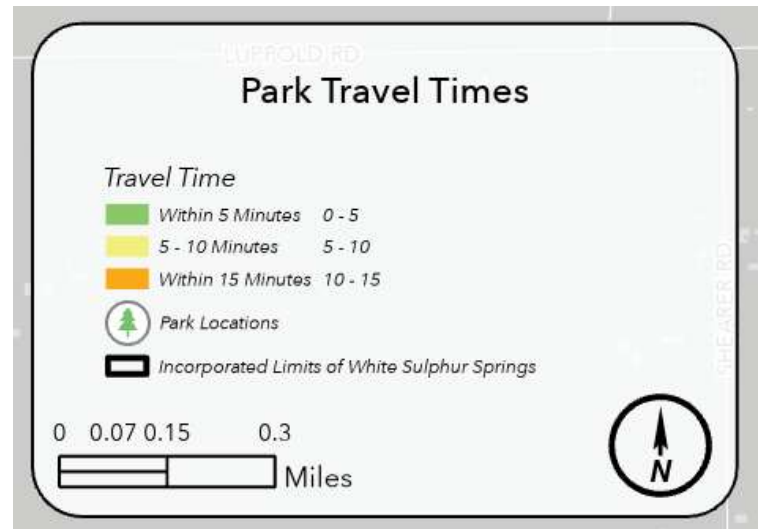


# EXISTING PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

The maps below detail the bike and walk times to each park from within White Sulphur Springs. As you can see, all of the park locations are highly accessible to the community by bike. Improving bike connectivity throughout could help disperse park usage across the City.

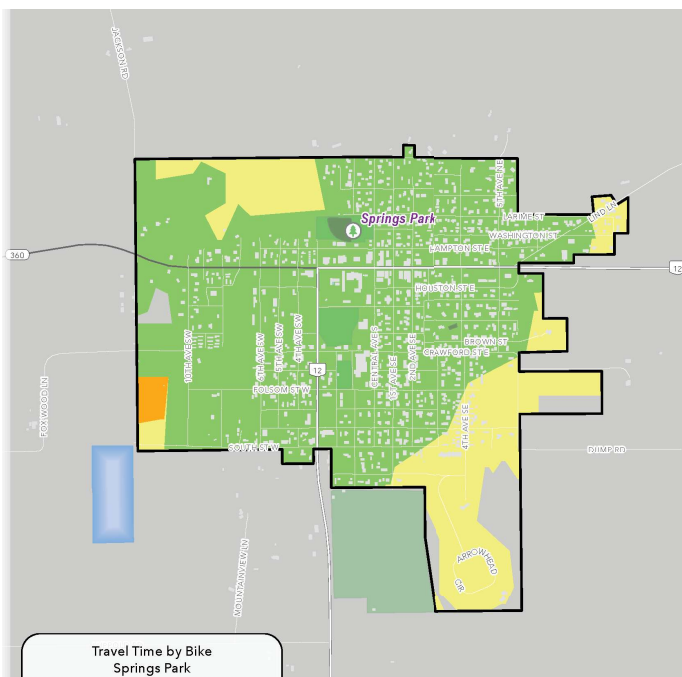
Bair and Springs Parks feature the only developed playgrounds maintained by the city. While it is ideal to have developed parks on the north and south sides of the highway, residents west of Highway 12/89 and south of Highway 360 are cut off from these parks and have the most difficult access to the City's parks.

Areas in green on the map below indicate a walking and bike time of 5 minutes or less, yellow indicates a 5-10 minute bike and walk, and orange indicates a 15-minute or longer bike and walk to any of the parks (a larger image of the legend can be found below)

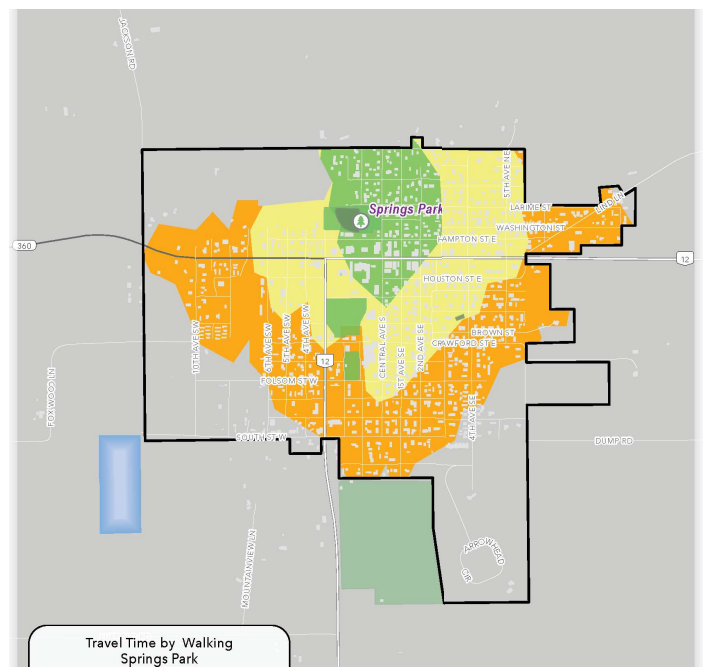


## Springs Park

▼ Map 8 - Springs Park Travel Time by Bike Map



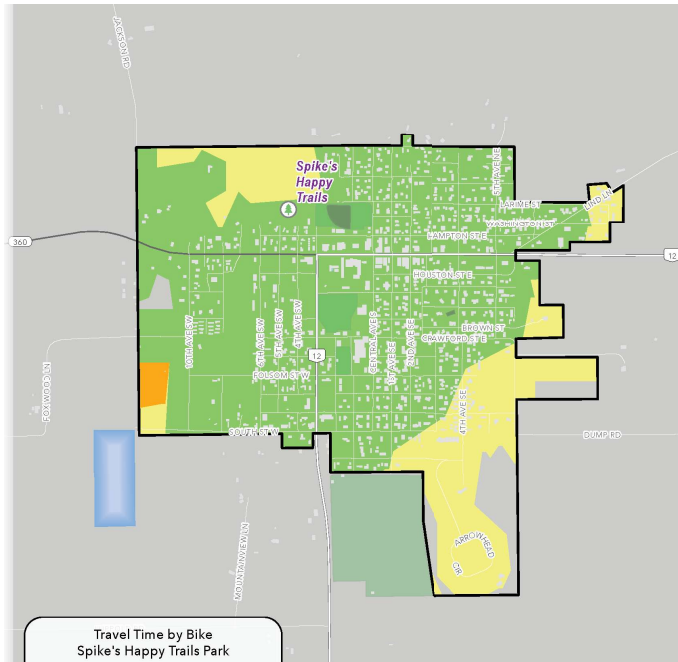
▼ Map 9 - Springs Park Travel Time by Walk Map



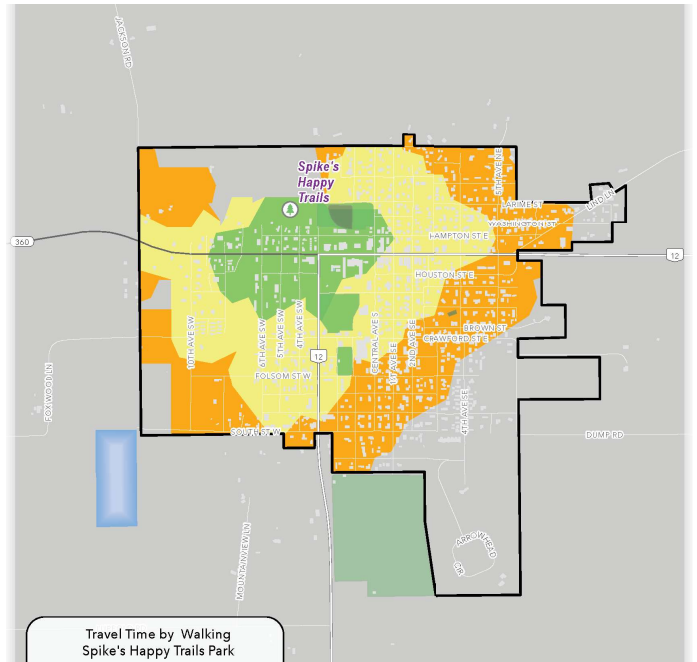
# EXISTING PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

## *Spike's Happy Trails*

▼ Map 10 - Spike's Happy Trails Park Travel Time by Bike



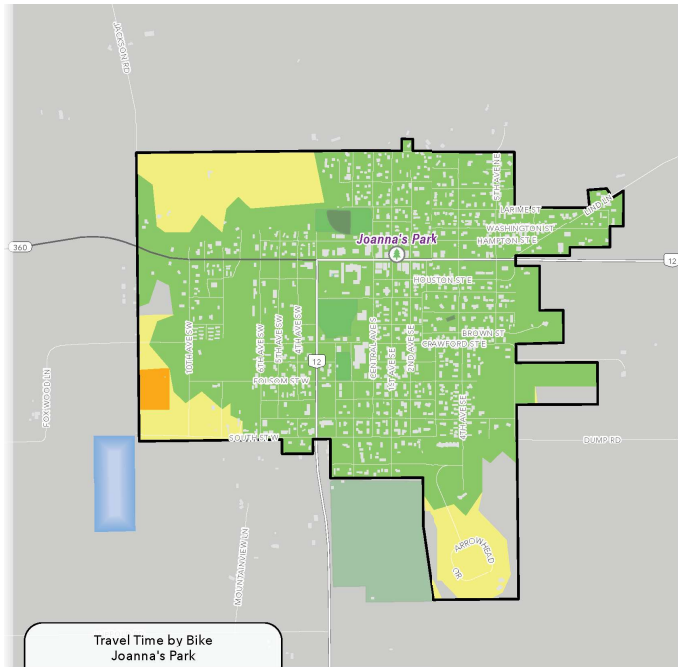
▼ Map 11 – Spike's Happy Trails Park Travel Time by Walking



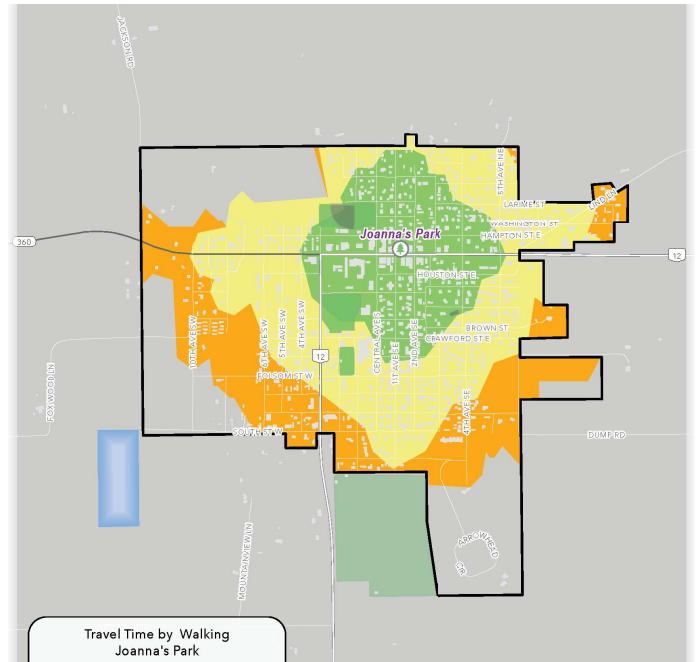
# EXISTING PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

## Joanna's Park

▼ Map 12 – Joanna's Park Travel Time by Bike



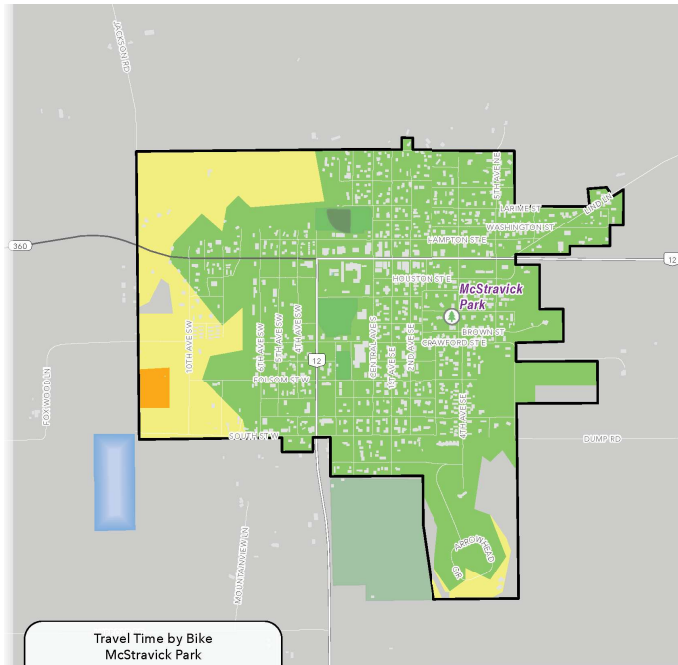
▼ Map 13 – Joanna's Park Travel Time by Walking



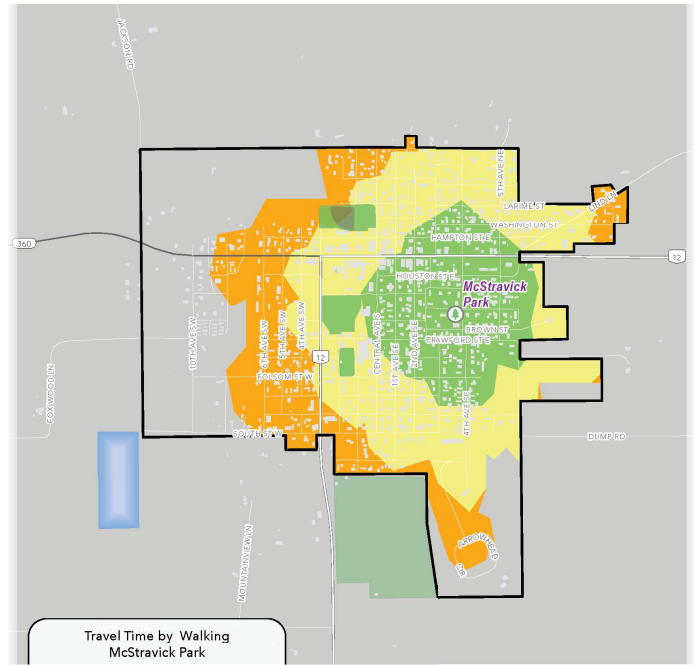
# EXISTING PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

## McStravick Park

▼ Map 14 – McStravick Park Travel Time by Bike



▼ Map 15 – McStravick Park Travel Time by Walking

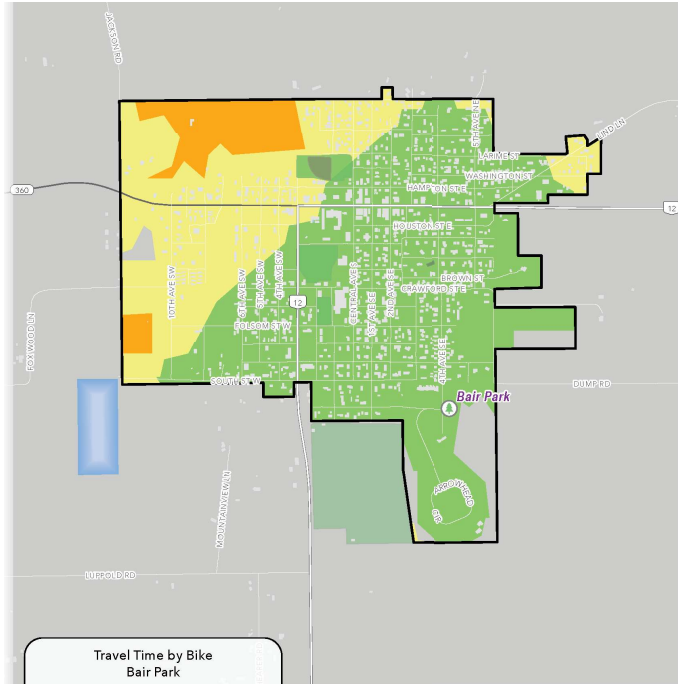




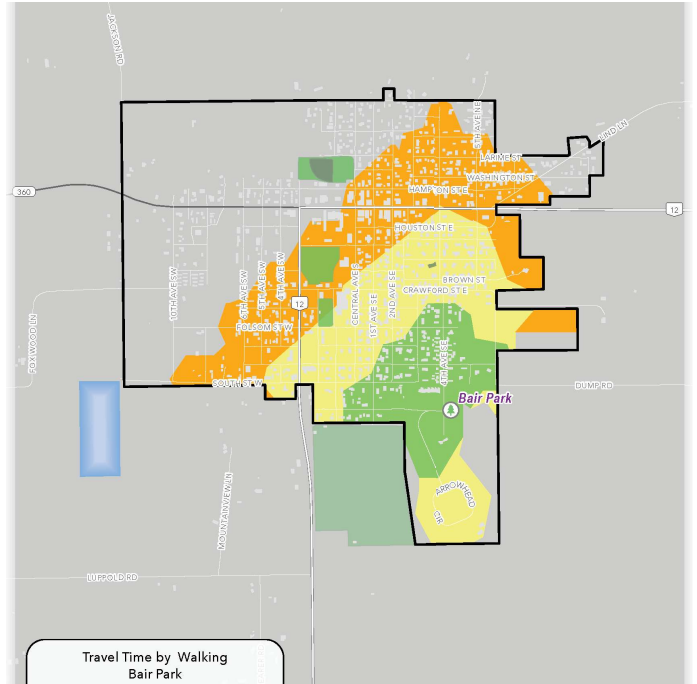
# EXISTING PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

## Bair Park

▼ Map 16 – Bair Park Travel Time by Bike



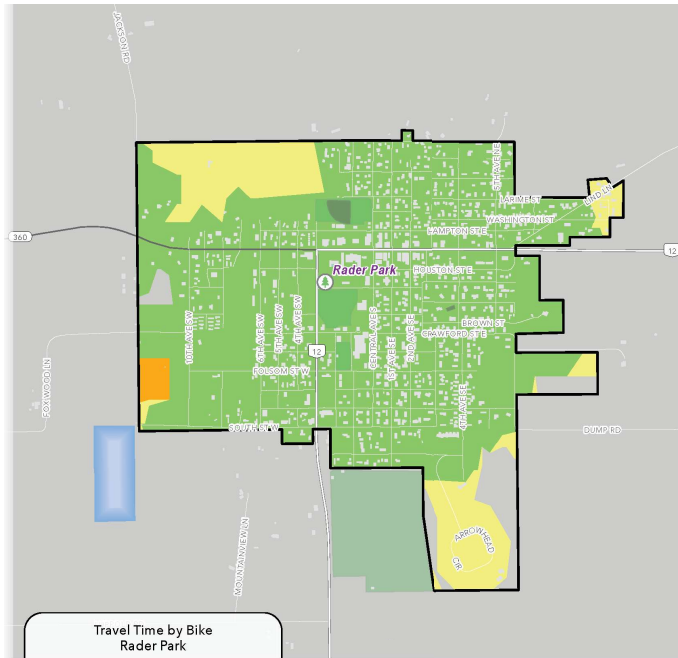
▼ Map 17 – Bair Park Travel Time by Walking



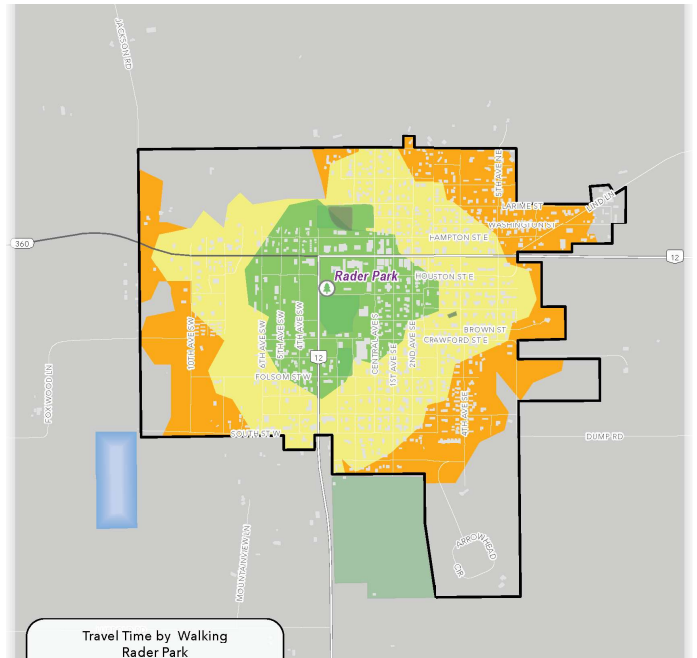
# EXISTING PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

## Rader Park

▼ Map 18 – Rader Park Travel Time by Bike



▼ Map 19 – Rader Park Travel Time by Walking



# CRASH AND SAFETY ANALYSIS

Crash and safety analysis can be a key component of park planning, as it helps identify potential hazards and areas where accidents are more likely to occur and can be used to ensure the safety of park visitors.

In White Sulphur Springs, Highway 12/89 divides the City, north, south, east, and west. Highway 360 further divides the City's west side of town, separating its northern and southern halves. Map #20 shows Montana Department of Transportation crash data for all state routes and average daily traffic counts. This map does not take into account any accidents that occurred on the local collector streets within the City, or any accidents on highways 12/89 or 360 that were investigated by local law enforcement.

A significant barrier for residents when traveling to City parks is the lack of safe and accessible routes. Between 2019 and 2023, there were four crashes along Main Street/Highway 12/89. In addition, traffic volume along Main Street/Highway 12/89 varies, with average daily trips ranging from 1,000 to 5,000 vehicles. Community members have previously voiced concerns to the Parks Committee members about the safety of children crossing Main Street.

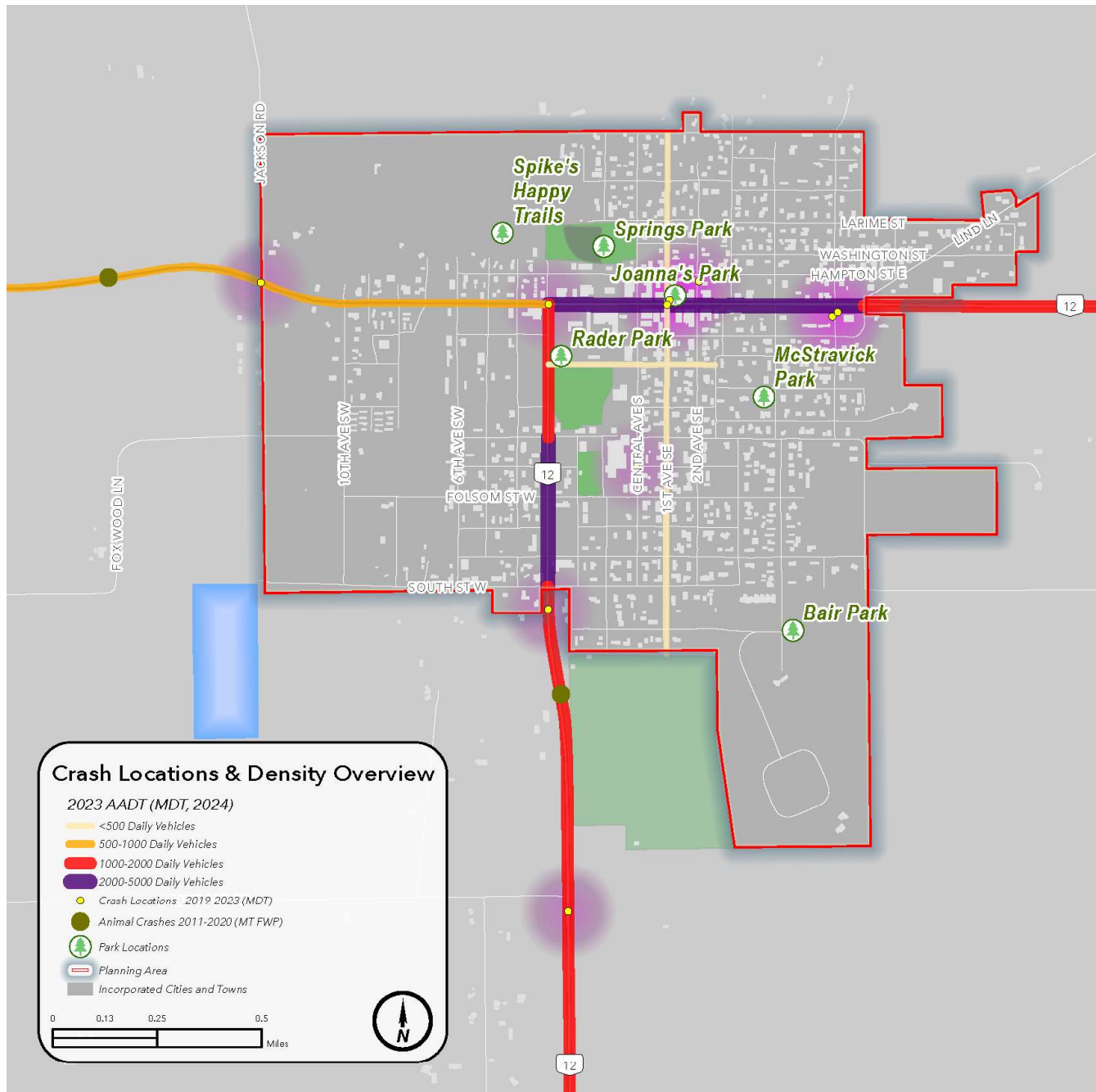
There are a few outlying crash locations that are on the East side of the City. Though these do not directly impact the current parks, as they are far enough away, they do provide valuable insight on traffic safety measures for potential future City growth to the east. These points should be used as a planning tool in the event of future parks expansion to the east side of the City.





# CRASH AND SAFETY ANALYSIS

▼ Map 20 - Crash Locations & Density Overview Map



# CRASH AND SAFETY ANALYSIS

Recommendations to increase the safety of people crossing Main Street/Highway 89 are the following:

- » Work with the Montana Department of Transportation to install bump-outs at intersections and add pedestrian flashers at crosswalks.
- » Determine a clear bike route throughout the City, either by using signage or by painting bike lanes, that leads to crosswalk intersections on Main Street.
- » Maintain sidewalks so residents feel safe walking to the parks.
- » Ensure that the routes to the parks are ADA-compliant so everyone can safely and easily access the parks.
- » Evaluate other traffic control methods, such as speed bumps or reduced speed limits adjacent to parks, to ensure that vehicles travel at a safe rate of speed near the City's parks.

Implementation of traffic safety control measures would potentially allow an increase in non-motorized travel throughout White Sulphur Springs, which would create a healthier lifestyle for the residents and would promote the usage of all parks by all of the residents, by connecting all of the parks with walking and biking routes.

▼ Figure 10 - Example Bike Route Signage



▼ Figure 11 - Intersection Bump-outs



# OPPORTUNITIES AND ISSUES

When asked, “What should the City’s priorities for parks and recreation planning be?”, survey respondents identified:

- » Offer summer recreational opportunities
- » Offer winter recreational opportunities
- » Develop Spike’s Happy Trails
- » Paved/gravel surface walking paths
- » River access to the North Fork of the Smith River
- » Community Garden
- » Skate Park <sup>2</sup>

In addition, respondents frequently suggested the following parks/recreation planning needs:

- » Dog Park, fenced dog area
- » Soccer fields
- » Restrooms

As noted above, the CORR vision statement supports the creation and enhancement of “economically sustainable recreation opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.

The survey asked respondents to identify in one of seven age groups. The following chart shows the number of age groups expressing an interest in the most requested priorities.



\* Includes combined responses to Develop Spike’s, Natural areas/open spaces, and access to the Smith River, as all would be accomplished with the development of Spike’s Happy Trails.

<sup>2</sup> A skate park user’s group was created in 2023. The City Council set aside some property near City Hall for a skate park, but directed the User’s group to come up with a plan for the park’s design, development, and maintenance. That group has not been active since 2023.



When asked to provide specific comments:

- » Summer recreational opportunities included a splash pad, a community garden, and other water recreation opportunities.
- » Winter recreation opportunities included an ice-skating rink, a sledding hill, and cross-country skiing.

Some respondents also indicated they would take full advantage of fitness and wellness programming.

## OPPORTUNITIES

With input from the community through surveys and open houses, the Parks Advisory Committee developed the following list of potential improvements to the City's recreational offerings, and the location of those improvements. This list is not final or exhaustive. It does not determine where development will ultimately occur, and additional opportunities may arise in the future based on further public input.

### *Springs Park*

- » Bike Rack
- » Soccer fields
- » Paved/graveled surface walking paths, connecting to Spike's Happy Trails
- » Splash Pad
- » Ice Skating Rink
- » Candidate for additional site-specific master planning to coordinate development at this site.

### *Spike's Happy Trails*

- » Paved/graveled surface walking paths, connecting to Springs Park
- » Access to the North Fork of the Smith River
- » Natural areas and open spaces
- » Educational/historical/cultural signage

### *Joanna's Park*

- » Bike rack
- » Kiosk for community information

### *McStravick Park*

- » Sledding hill

### *Bair Park*

- » Community Garden
- » Walking path with exercise equipment
- » Splash pad
- » Sledding hill
- » Ice Skating Rink

## *Rader Park*

- » Vault toilet
- » Small sledding hill on the south side, on the adjacent school lands
- » Kiosk for community information

## RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING

The need for recreational programming was a common response to the Community Survey. This included winter and summer programming for youth and adult age groups. As the City grows with the potential development of the Black Butte Copper Mine, construction of the new hospital campus, and the increased interest in living in small communities with fiber internet, it may lead to a higher demand for recreational programming.

The City has successfully partnered with a community organization in the operation of a youth baseball program. A formal User Agreement provides for the maintenance of the City-owned baseball facilities. This model of community partnership could provide the opportunity for additional recreational programming in White Sulphur Springs.

The City has two options to meet the public demand for recreational programming.

1. City directly provides recreational programming– This is a human and financial resource intensive proposition, and is not a likely alternative given the available resources.
2. The City assists outside agencies in the provision of recreational programming by:
  - » Allowing potential recreation program providers access to the community survey data for business planning purposes;
  - » Assisting outside providers in keeping the cost of offering recreational programs down by:
    - Offering the use of City facilities for recreation programming through User Agreements - Springs, Bair, and Mc-Stravick parks offer space for outdoor sports programs or camps. The shelters at Springs, Joanna's, and Rader parks are potential sites for arts and crafts and other classroom-based recreational programming.
    - The City should regularly review its user agreements to determine compliance with the provisions of the agreements and to determine whether any fees charged are appropriate.
  - Including these providers as named insureds on the City's liability policies. The City's policy may be less expensive than a policy purchased on the open market by a for-profit entity.

## PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

In response to the public comments, the Parks Advisory Committee has identified certain activities that may be fulfilled through partnerships. These partnership opportunities include:

- » White Sulphur Springs School District #8: The existing track could be upgraded and included in a community trail and exercise system, and the District may be available to provide wellness classes through its continuing education fund.
- » Private Sector: To offer summer and winter recreational programming, as described above.
- » Non-Profit or Public Sector: County Extension services may be available to sponsor wellness programs.
- » User groups that may be formed to coordinate with the City to plan, develop, and maintain recreation opportunities include:
  - Skateboard Park User Group
  - Hockey/Ice Skating Rink User Group
  - Community Garden User Group
  - Dog Park User Group

# OPPORTUNITIES AND ISSUES

- Swimming Pool User Group
- Netted Sports Court User Group

## ISSUES

This section identifies potential barriers to the improvement, upgrade, or replacement of existing parks:

### *Springs Park*

Important recommendations for Springs Park are to install signs and security cameras to address vandalism issues with the restroom, pavilion lights, and dog waste stations.

### *McStravick Park*

McStravick Park has been recently updated. Accessible parking and a path to the Court will be completed in the spring of 2025. Recommendations for this park include moving the picnic table to make it more usable for all users.

### *Rader Park*

Rader Park has two sides, North and South Rader, which are separated by Chilton Street. Currently, there is parking on both sides of the street. There are amenities on both sides of the park, and it is heavily used by highway travelers, stopping for a break or simply visiting the area.

There is currently no crosswalk, and the creation of a crosswalk between the two sides of the park would improve safety for pedestrians and also remind drivers of the possibility of pedestrians, as it is adjacent to a heavily traveled area. It is recommended that the funding opportunities are identified in order to determine the payment of a crosswalk painting.

Dog waste is an issue at Rader Park due to its proximity to the nearby hotel and highway. It is recommended that the City continue to supply the public with means to dispose of dog waste properly within the park.

### *Spike's Happy Trails*

The area known as Spike's Happy Trails is currently an undeveloped park located near Springs Park baseball fields. The property has areas of wetlands, and some of the property is included in the current floodplain map. Walking the property can be difficult due to its hilly terrain.

The land was gifted to the City with the requirement that the land be used as "a public park/ wilderness walk/ nature area, with an emphasis on the use, education, and enjoyment of children of all ages." The northern boundary of the property needs to be fenced in accordance with the deed.

A survey of the park was completed in 2024, which identified the exact lot lines about the river, City-





# OPPORTUNITIES AND ISSUES

owned property, undeveloped city streets, and private property. This will assist in the development of this property with trails that will be accessible to all residents.

The physical characteristics of the land, including wetland vegetation and its location next to the North Fork of the Smith River, create some constraints for development that will need to be taken into account during the planning process. These include:

## *Access to the Smith River*

The Community Survey results show a desire by residents to have some form of walking access to the North Fork of the Smith River. Access to the river is possible through platted, undeveloped streets adjacent to the property, which may need to be abandoned to accommodate development. The City may also want to consider the acquisition of additional property or easements near Spike's to expand access.

## *Permits*

Any outdoor recreation development within the floodplain and wetlands area of the North Fork of the Smith River must be properly permitted. Applicants would be required to have their application reviewed by the Conservation District, Montana Department of Environmental Quality, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (for governmental applicants only), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the local Floodplain Administrator for compliance with local, state, and federal laws. It is recommended to reach out to these agencies early in the planning phase of this project.

## *Planning Process*

Spike's Happy Trails is adjacent to Springs Park. If possible, consideration should be given to master planning the entire Spike's Happy Trails/Springs Park complex.

# FACILITY & PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

This section discusses ways for the City to effectively maintain and upgrade its existing facilities and includes recommendations for projects to be pursued during the planning period.

## PARKS AND RECREATION MAINTENANCE

The City's park maintenance responsibilities include irrigating, mowing, trimming trees and bushes, spraying weeds and insects, trash and litter removal, and replacing trees and playground equipment as needed.

The responsibility for park maintenance currently falls to four City public works employees, who also oversee the upkeep of the City's other buildings and infrastructure, such as the water and sewer systems and streets. While these employees work year-round, their capacity is limited due to the broad scope of their duties. As such, any new park projects or developments should be designed with consideration given to the available maintenance resources, aiming to minimize maintenance needs in the future. This will help ensure that the maintenance workload for the City's park facilities remains manageable without overwhelming the existing staff.

### *Vegetation Management*

Vegetation, tree, and weed management is essential for maintaining the health, safety, and usability of parks. Proper management helps preserve native ecosystems, supports biodiversity, and ensures that trees and plants remain healthy and free of disease. It also reduces fire hazards, prevents the spread of invasive species, and enhances the aesthetic appeal of park spaces. In addition, routine maintenance improves visibility and safety for park users by keeping trails, pathways, and recreational areas clear and accessible. Effective vegetation and weed control contribute to a well-maintained, welcoming environment that encourages community use and protects the long-term sustainability of the park system.

The City should continue to coordinate with the County Weed Supervisor for weed management in the parks, and should pursue further accreditation for one or more public works employees to become a certified arborist. This would ensure that the City protects its investment on the trees, and reduces any liability from broken tree limbs or downed trees.

### *Playground Maintenance*

In 2024- 2025, with the assistance of a T-Mobile Hometown Grant, both of the City's playgrounds underwent significant renovation. To protect these assets, a City staff member should receive playground inspector certification through the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and should be responsible for ensuring that the playground and equipment maintenance meet relevant standards. Alternatively, the City may wish to contract with a certified playground inspector to conduct the appropriate inspections and make any necessary repairs. The NRPA website has a list of consulting inspectors.

### *Existing Facilities Updates*

Almost all attractive and useful parks provide certain services and amenities to users. This generally includes adequate parking areas, clean restroom facilities, benches to allow users to rest, trash cans, appropriate crosswalk designs, and other features. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), the National Playground Safety Institute (NPSI), and the Center for Outreach, Research & Education (CORE) offer parks planning guidance.

When planning upgrades or evaluating future improvements to existing facilities, the City should consider these standards and guidelines as well as the goals established by the Parks Advisory Committee.

# FACILITY & PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

## FUTURE PARKS

Community survey comments encouraged the City to focus on maintaining and improving existing parks, rather than acquiring new parkland. However, as the City grows through annexations or subdivisions, the City may acquire new parks through the process. The Parks Advisory Committee has discussed the need to develop a park on the southwest side of town, which is landlocked by highways 12/89 and State Highway 360. As the City grows, additional parks may be needed.

The City should adopt a formal procedure for the approval of a request to set aside City property for a future park or proposed project to an existing park.



### *Park dedication requirement- Cash in lieu (76-3-621.)*

The Montana Subdivision and Platting Act provides that certain subdivisions have a Park Dedication Requirement and must dedicate land to park space or pay a fee (cash in lieu of parkland) instead of providing dedicated parkland. This is found under 76-3-621 MCA. The amount of land required of a subdivider for park land is specified by statute. Cash-in-lieu of parkland is typically determined through an appraisal of the fair market value of the land being developed. Ultimately it is up to the governing body to decide whether they wish to accept parkland or cash in lieu. It is important to note that depending upon the type of subdivision, park land dedication may not be required. For example, a subdivision that create lots larger than 5-acres, create condominiums, non-residential uses or are first minor subdivisions are exempt from park land dedications. The goal of the parkland dedication requirement is ensure that new subdivisions have public spaces and recreational facilities available to.

The City Council may accept cash in lieu of requiring the parkland, as long as the city meets the criteria found in 76-3-621(5)(b) MCA such as having a formally adopted parks plan that establishes the needs and procedures for use of the money. The governing body may use the dedicated money to acquire, develop, or maintain, within its jurisdiction, parks or recreational areas, or for the purchase of public open space or conservation easements. It is important to note that cash in lieu of parkland must realistically serve the residents of the subdivision and only 50 percent of the dedicated monies can be used for park maintenance. Again, the criteria in 76-3-621 MCA provides guidance on this.

The following describes the criteria for the use of cash in lieu of funds, as required under MCA 73-3-621. In general, the City will consider the use of cash-in-lieu funds to:

- 1) Address needed improvements due to deferred maintenance to parks within reasonably close proximity to the annexation (no more than 50% of funds will be used);
- 2) Be used as matching funds for projects in reasonably close proximity to the annexation;



- 3) Perform first-time improvements to parks within a reasonably close proximity to the land being annexed; and
- 4) Perform needed upgrades to equipment, facilities, and parkland.

## ***Cash in Lieu Procedure***

The following procedure is recommended for determining whether to accept parkland or cash in lieu funds for a proposed subdivision and for how proposed cash in lieu funds would be used.

1. Sub divider submits proposal for park land dedication to the City, whether actual land or cash-in-lieu. Any cash-in-lieu proposal must be based upon a fair market appraisal of the undeveloped land.
2. The proposed parkland dedication and/or cash in lieu proposal is reviewed by the Parks Advisory Committee.
3. The Parks Advisory Committee forwards its recommendation to the City Council.

City Council makes a final decision as to what type of dedication is appropriate and, if cash-in-lieu is part of that dedication, the value of the cash in lieu contribution and its intended use.

While cash in lieu of parkland can be a source of funding for parks, the City of White Sulphur should not rely heavily on cash-in-lieu to fund the City Parks. Though it can be a good tool, different types of development, such as condominiums, minor subdivisions and larger lots, may exempt a developer from cash-in-lieu or parkland donation requirements. The City is encouraged to develop a procedure for this process in the event that either land or money is donated.

# IMPLEMENTATION

The City of White Sulphur Springs has created this Master Plan to ensure that its project priorities reflect the public's needs. The Council will consider this document when setting the city's annual parks budget. The document will be updated on a 5-year schedule or as projects are completed and priorities change.

## PROGRAMMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- » Any new park projects or developments should be designed considering the availability of human and financial resources, and should aim to minimize future maintenance needs. This will help ensure that the maintenance workload for the City's park facilities remains manageable without overwhelming the existing staff.
- » As City staff and the Parks Committee consider future parks updates, data from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) National Playground Safety Institute (NPSI) and the Center for Outreach, Research and Education (CORE) should be used to assist in the decision-making process.
- » The Parks Advisory Committee is frequently approached to consider parks projects involving the use of capital funds. A decision matrix, such as the sample included in Appendix B, should be adopted to assist the City in making consistent decisions regarding whether a proposed project moves forward in the development process.

## UNRANKED PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the information received during the planning process, Table 2 identifies:

- » The projects and estimated costs (excluding manpower) to maintain the city's existing parks for the next 3 - 5 years;
- » The projects and estimated costs to undertake a variety of short-term projects which would enhance existing facilities at a minimal cost; and
- » The projects and estimated costs to complete longer-term projects, which could be undertaken as funding becomes available.

▼ Table 2 – Unranked Projects

Projects Necessary to Maintain Existing Parks			
Project	Estimated Fiscal Year	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources for Development and Maintenance Costs
McStravick Park surface replacement	2029	\$15,000 to \$35,000	Private Foundations, City Funds
Short-Term Projects to Enhance Existing Facilities at Minimal Costs			
Bike Rack – Springs Park (2), Joanna's (1)	2025-26	\$250 to \$500	City funds
Multi-Sports opportunities at Springs Park	2025-26	\$500.00 for sports equipment	City Funds, Private Foundations
Cross Country Skiing	2025-26	\$500.00 for directional signs.	City Funds, Private Foundations
Ice Skating Rink	2025-26	\$500 for a natural ice rink to \$10,000 for a 60'x100' rink in a box.	Private Foundations, City Funds

# IMPLEMENTATION

▼ Table 2 – Unranked Projects - continued

Longer-term projects that could be undertaken as funding is available			
Project	Estimated Fiscal Year	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources for Development and Maintenance Costs
Vaulted Toilet at Springs Park	TBD	\$40,000	LWCF, MT Tourism Grant, Private Foundations, Local Funds
Spike's Happy Trails Development (with Master planning and development)	TBD	\$80,000 to \$100,000	LWCF, MT Tourism Grant, Private Foundations, Local Funds
Community Garden	TBD	\$1,000 to \$10,000	Bair Grant, Donated Labor and Material, User fees
Explore the feasibility of creating a looped walking trail within the City limits.	TBD	Based on design and length	CDBG Planning Grant, PILOT Tourism Grant, MDT Transportation Alternative Grant
Water feature	TBD	Splash pad: \$15,000-\$35,000	LWCF, Bair Family Trust Grant, City Funds



# FINANCING PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Determining how to finance a project is one of the most difficult and important parts of completing a capital improvement project. The City's analysis to fund projects is meant to keep user/tax rates stable and maximize state and/or federal loan and grant funds for capital expenditures. Incurring some debt is expected with large capital projects, and annual evaluations will be needed to balance debt service and operating expenditures. The City also needs to determine its debt capacity and acceptable debt service levels.

The following is a brief description of the most common funding sources used by Montana communities to fund capital improvement projects for parks and recreation development. Funding options include bonding, special improvement districts, capital improvement funds, service charges, as well as federal, state, and private grant and loan funding. Many communities are often successful by looking at partnerships with private and non-profit foundations that focus specifically on types of recreation. This is not an all-inclusive list of funding opportunities. The City's financing will depend on the scope and budget of the selected project(s). Each option should be carefully evaluated based on the community's project, needs, and financial capacity.

▼ Table 3 - Grant Program Lists, Source: Great West Engineering

Grant Program	Maximum Award	Required Match
Montana Recreational Trails Program (RTP)	\$100,000	20% of the Total Project
Montana Trail Stewardship Grant Program (MTSGP)	\$75,000	10% of the Total Project
Summer Motorized Trail Pass Grant Program	\$100,000	10% of the Total Project
Off-Highway Vehicle Program Grants	\$120,000	10% of the Total Project
Community Pond Program Grants	\$40,000	30% of the Total Project
Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)	\$250,000	50% plus Indirect Costs
Northwestern Energy's Missouri-Madison River Fund Grant Program	\$250,000	Not applicable
Community Development Block Grant Program (Department of Housing and Urban Development)	\$750,000	25%
US Bank Community Possible Grant Program	No more than 1% of the total capital is required for the project	99% of the Total Project
KABOOM! Grants	\$15,000	Not Applicable
Treacy Foundation	\$10,000	Not Applicable
Lion's Club	TBD	TBD
Rotary Club	TBD	TBD
Bair Family Foundation	TBD	TBD
Red Ants Pants Foundation	\$10,000	Not Applicable
Diamond City Lodge #7	TBD	TBD
AARP Grants	TBD	TBD
Meagher County Community Foundation	TBD	TBD
Race for this Place	\$15,000	TBD
Montana Skatepark Association	TBD	TBD

# FINANCING PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Local businesses and organizations may provide private funds for specific developments if applicable.

Along with grant applications, there are additional taxing options to help facilitate the funding of any park improvement projects. A few of those options can be found in the table below. Taxing districts typically involve thorough public input, voting, and/or property owner consent before they are created.

▼ Table 4 - Special Tax Option List, Source: Great West Engineering, State of Montana, Montana Code Annotated

SPECIAL TAX OPTION LIST		
Taxing Option	State Statute	Examples
Rural Improvement Districts	7-12-21 MCA	No Examples
County General Obligation Bond	7-7-22 MCA	Missoula County Open Space Bond
Special Districts	7-11-10 MCA	Big Sky Meadow District

## SOURCES

City of White Sulphur Springs

Centers for Disease Control

Headwater's Economics, Economic Profile System

Montana Cadastral

Montana Code Annotated

Montana Department of Transportation

National Program for Playground Safety

National Recreation and Park Association

State of Montana Library

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wetland Mapper

U.S. Census Bureau



# APPENDIX A

## *Community Survey Results*



# White Sulphur Springs Parks and Recreation Master Plan Survey

December 2024

**182 Total Responses**

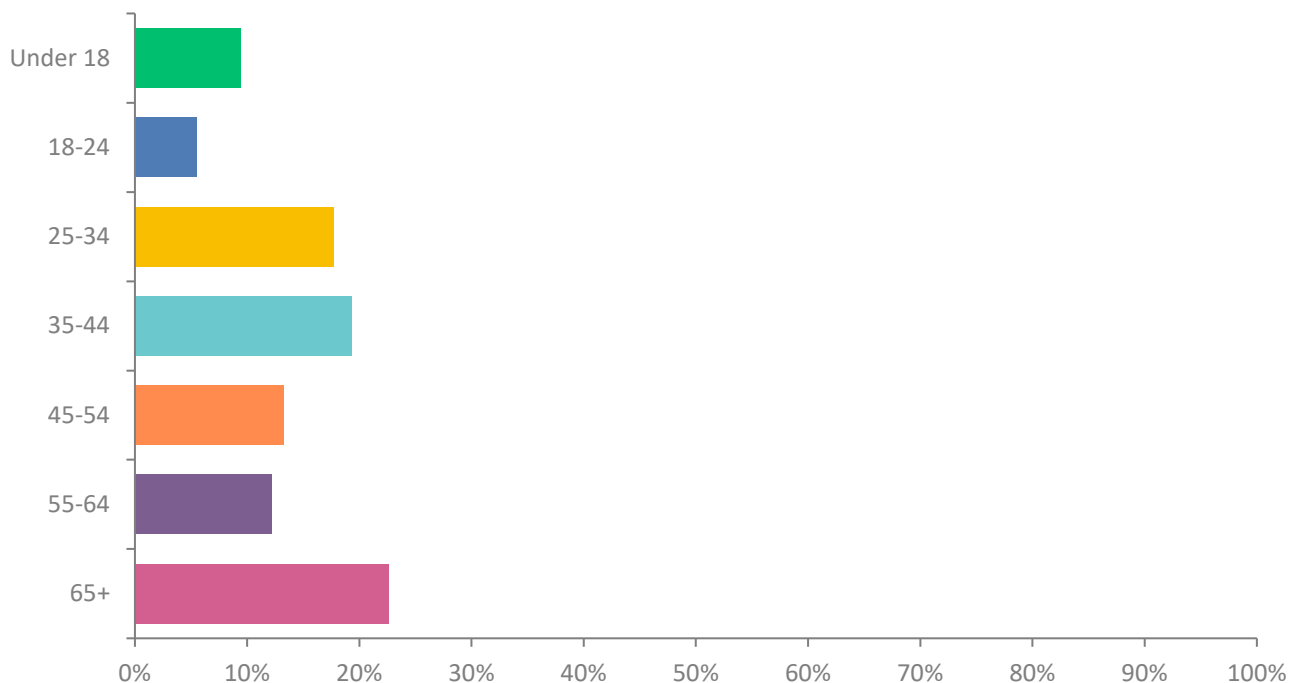
Date Created: Thursday, October 31, 2024

Complete Responses: 182

## Question 1: What is your age?

Answered: 181 Skipped: 1

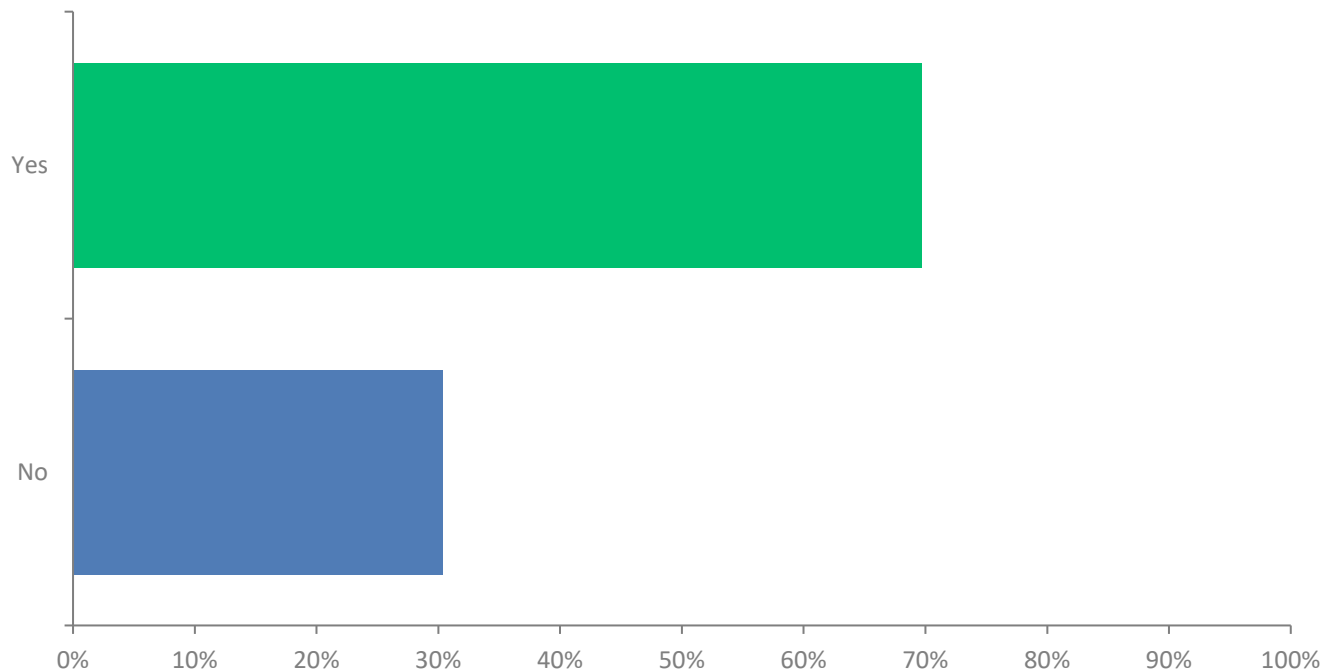
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under 18	9.39%	17
18-24	5.52%	10
25-34	17.68%	32
35-44	19.34%	35
45-54	13.26%	24
55-64	12.15%	22
65+	22.65%	41
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>181</b>



## Question 2: Do you live within the City of White Sulphur Springs?

Answered: 178 Skipped: 4

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	69.66%	124
No	30.34%	54
TOTAL		178

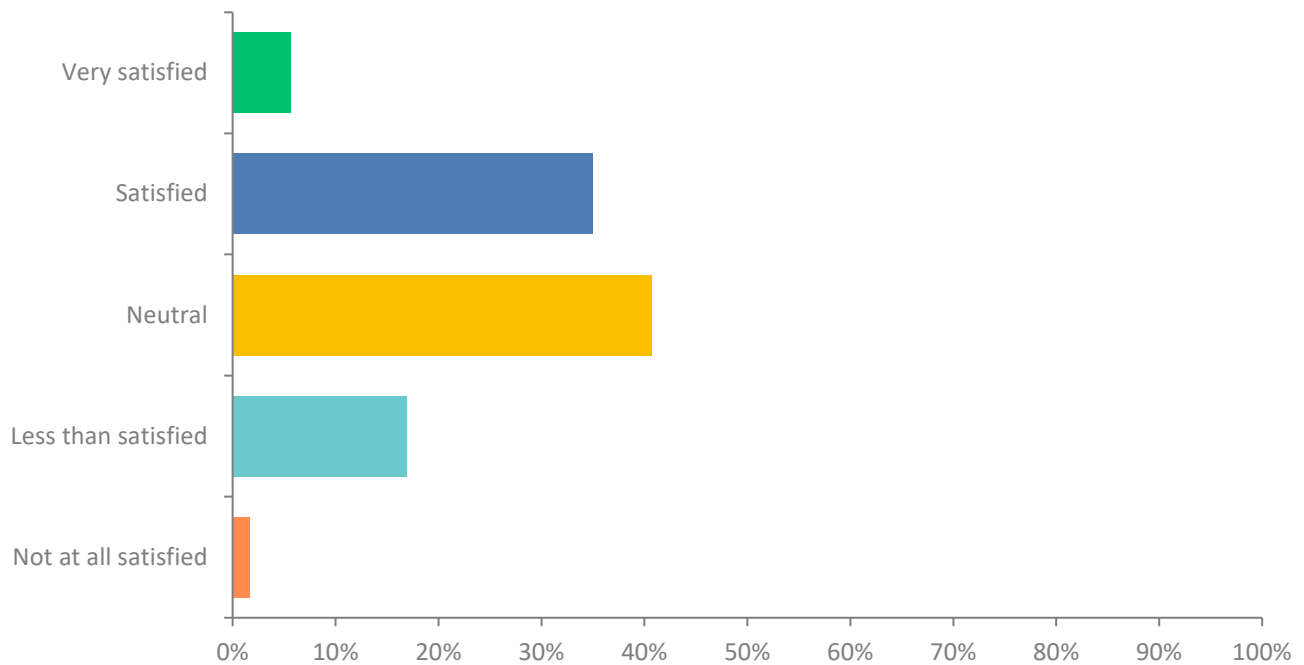




### Question 3: How satisfied are you with the City's parks and recreation facilities?

Answered: 177 Skipped: 5

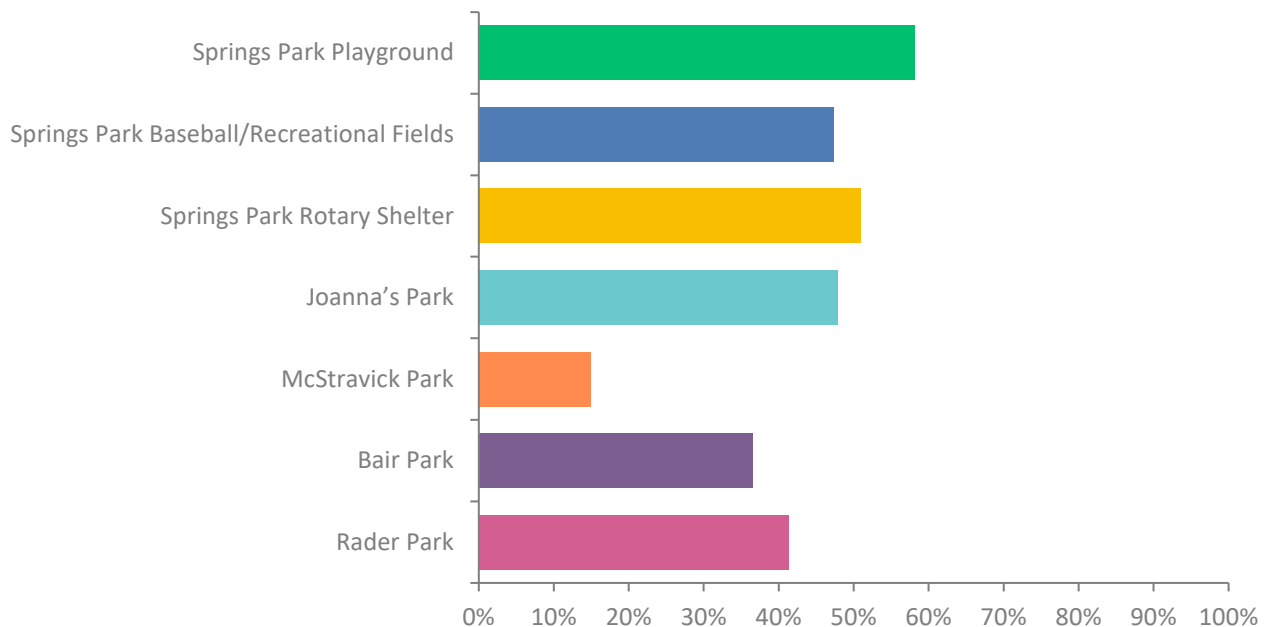
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very satisfied	5.65%	10
Satisfied	35.03%	62
Neutral	40.68%	72
Less than satisfied	16.95%	30
Not at all satisfied	1.69%	3
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>177</b>



## Question 4: Which Parks have you used in the past year? PLease select all that apply:

Answered: 167 Skipped: 15

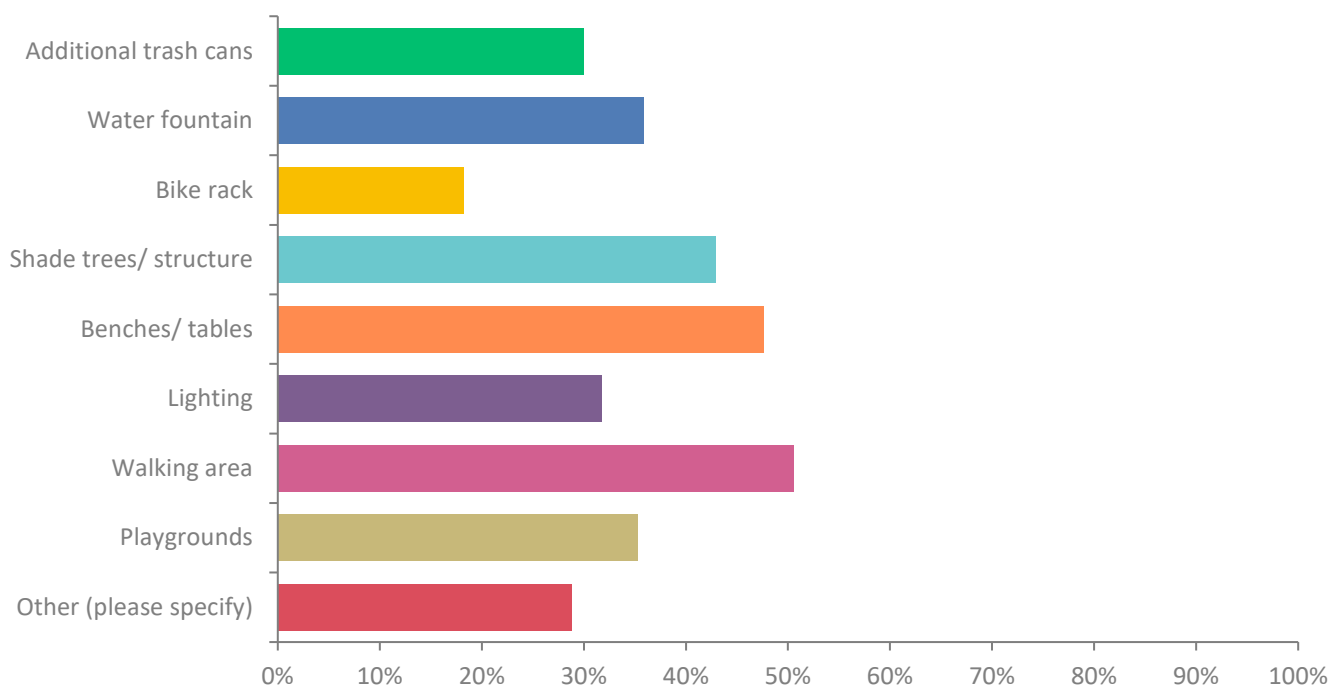
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Springs Park Playground	58.08%	97
Springs Park Baseball/Recreational Fields	47.31%	79
Springs Park Rotary Shelter	50.90%	85
Joanna's Park	47.90%	80
McStravick Park	14.97%	25
Bair Park	36.53%	61
Rader Park	41.32%	69
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>496</b>



## Question 5: What improvements or additions would you like to see at the City parks? Please select all that apply

Answered: 170 Skipped: 12

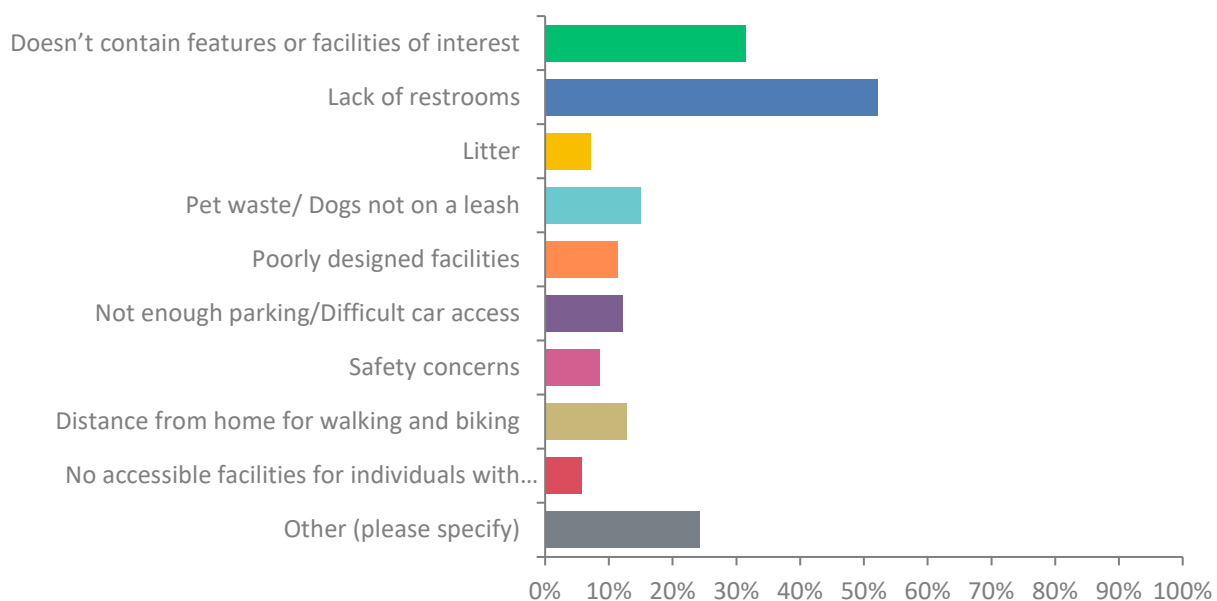
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Additional trash cans	30.00%	51
Water fountain	35.88%	61
Bike rack	18.24%	31
Shade trees/ structure	42.94%	73
Benches/ tables	47.65%	81
Lighting	31.76%	54
Walking area	50.59%	86
Playgrounds	35.29%	60
Other (please specify)	28.82%	49
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>546</b>



## Question 6: What prevents you from using the City's Parks and Recreational facilities more often? Please select all that apply.

Answered: 140 Skipped: 42

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Doesn't contain features or facilities of interest	31.43%	44
Lack of restrooms	52.14%	73
Litter	7.14%	10
Pet waste/ Dogs not on a leash	15.00%	21
Poorly designed facilities	11.43%	16
Not enough parking/Difficult car access	12.14%	17
Safety concerns	8.57%	12
Distance from home for walking and biking	12.86%	18
No accessible facilities for individuals with disabilities	5.71%	8
Other (please specify)	24.29%	34
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>253</b>

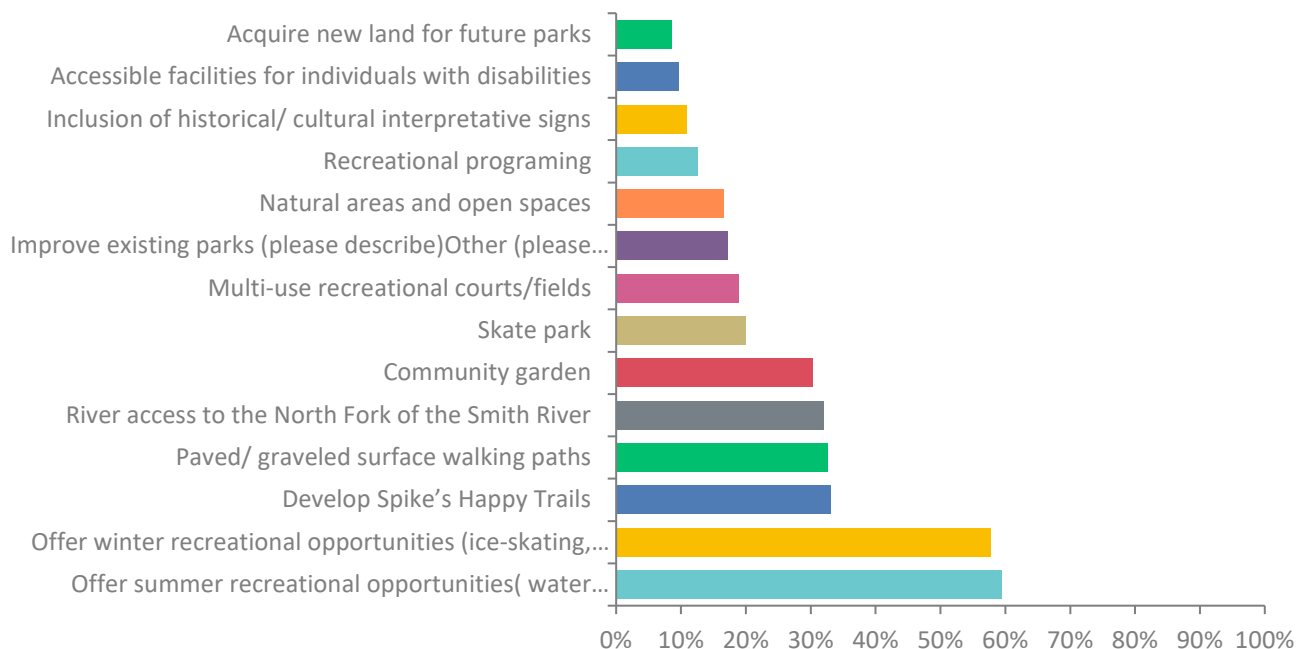




## Question 7: What should the City's priorities for park and recreation planning be? Please select up to three (3) answers.

Answered: 175 Skipped: 7

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Acquire new land for future parks	8.57%	15
Accessible facilities for individuals with disabilities	9.71%	17
Inclusion of historical/ cultural interpretative signs	10.86%	19
Recreational programing	12.57%	22
Natural areas and open spaces	16.57%	29
Improve existing parks (please describe)Other (please specify)	17.14%	30
Multi-use recreational courts/fields	18.86%	33
Skate park	20.00%	35



Question 7: Continued on the following page

## Question 7: What should the City's priorities for park and recreation planning be? Please select up to three (3) answers.

Answered: 175 Skipped: 7

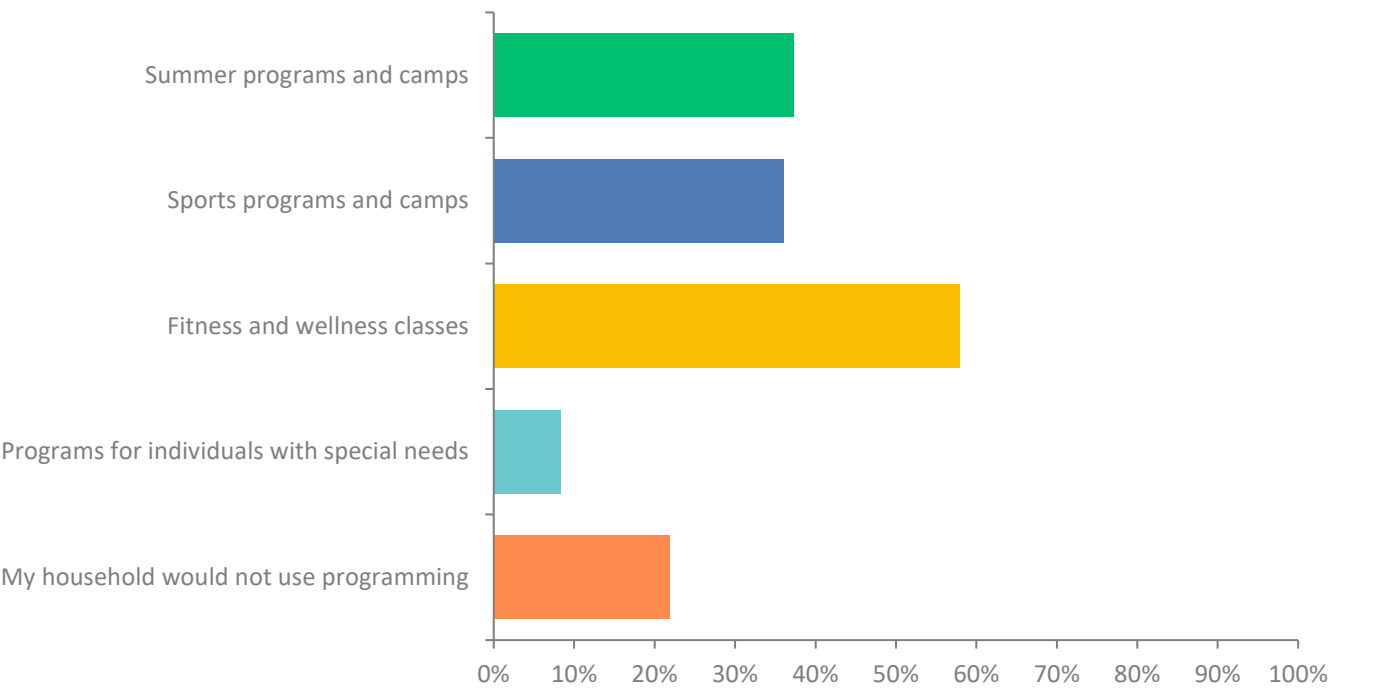
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
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Natural areas and open spaces	16.57%	29
Improve existing parks (please describe)Other (please specify)	17.14%	30
Multi-use recreational courts/fields	18.86%	33
Skate park	20.00%	35

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Community garden	30.29%	53
River access to the North Fork of the Smith River	32.00%	56
Paved/ graveled surface walking paths	32.57%	57
Develop Spike's Happy Trails	33.14%	58
Offer winter recreational opportunities (ice-skating, cross-country skiing, etc.)	57.71%	101
Offer summer recreational opportunities( water recreation, splash pad, etc.)	59.43%	104
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>629</b>

# Question 8: Which of the following recreational programming would your household use? Please select all that apply.

Answered: 169 Skipped: 13

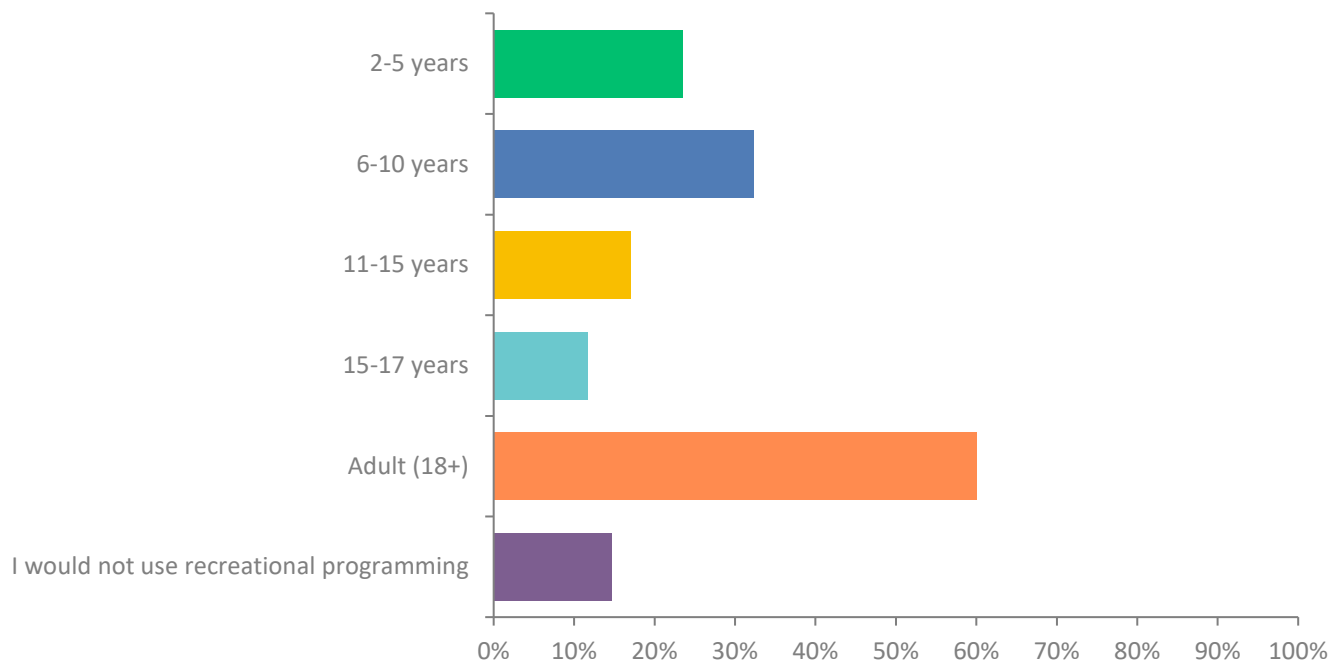
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Summer programs and camps	37.28%	63
Sports programs and camps	36.09%	61
Fitness and wellness classes	57.99%	98
Programs for individuals with special needs	8.28%	14
My household would not use programming	21.89%	37
TOTAL		273



## Question 9: Which of the following age ranges would your household use recreational programming for? Please select all that apply

Answered: 170 Skipped: 12

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
2-5 years	23.53%	40
6-10 years	32.35%	55
11-15 years	17.06%	29
15-17 years	11.76%	20
Adult (18+)	60.00%	102
I would not use recreational programming	14.71%	25
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>271</b>





**Question 10: Please provide any other comments you have on the City park and recreation facilities.**

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	thank you for keeping our parks clean!	12/19/2024 9:41 AM
2	Doing great!	12/19/2024 9:38 AM
3	Rock wall- Bigger slide	12/19/2024 9:21 AM
4	N/A	12/19/2024 9:17 AM
5	nothing	12/18/2024 4:50 PM
6	None	12/18/2024 4:44 PM
7	sports equipment	12/18/2024 4:43 PM
8	pool pond	12/18/2024 4:30 PM
9	lots of hammock	12/18/2024 4:29 PM
10	pretend snow in summer, pretend fashion show	12/18/2024 2:55 PM
11	Walking and biking paths would be nice	12/13/2024 7:41 PM
12	The improvements so far have been good. Involve the public in future decision-making about the types of activities or events being offered.	12/13/2024 1:23 PM
13	I think it is important to demonstrate the different dynamics of what a park can provide. Different sports programs or groups could potentially bring the student population to the parks and show what they have to offer in a beneficial way.	12/13/2024 1:13 PM
14	All of these sound wonderful	12/5/2024 4:35 PM
15	Shade trees, splash parks are amazing	12/5/2024 4:34 PM
16	I feel the streets are of more importance to fix at this time.	12/5/2024 3:25 PM

## Question 10: Please provide any other comments you have on the City park and recreation facilities.

Continued

17	basketball facility	12/5/2024 3:17 PM
18	thank you for your effort on this endeavor!	12/5/2024 3:15 PM
19	I have been impressed how clean and mowed they are kept	12/5/2024 2:48 PM
20	The Parks were wonderful when my kids were young, Bible school time was quiet for the kids during playtime. Love Joan Park- It's use 4 the Farmer's Market & Bands are a good use there	12/5/2024 2:42 PM
21	park sidewalks	12/5/2024 2:39 PM
22	Spike's happy trail awesome!!!	12/5/2024 2:35 PM
23	We need a dog park- where we can exercise dogs + us.	12/5/2024 2:31 PM
24	would be a great addition to the city for recreating to have a small disc golf course! turning the tennis courts into a hockey rink would be awesome!	12/4/2024 5:40 PM
25	City doesn't need more parks. Maintain and Update current parks as needed. Most of the City parks aren't used.	11/28/2024 3:18 PM
26	A well maintained area is inviting for residents as well as visitors	11/28/2024 2:15 PM
27	A specific dog park would be great for the community and limit people from having their dogs in areas where dogs aren't wanted.	11/28/2024 12:11 PM
28	Thank you for caring about our parks! They look great!	11/27/2024 11:57 PM
29	I think we need a dog park.	11/26/2024 7:58 AM
30	The fire department could flood the baseball field to create an ice rink with minimal preparation. Add an outhouse and you would have a winter activity for families that would be outstanding. You could even sell hot chocolate to raise money for the park or for the water the fire department used.	11/26/2024 5:28 AM
31	I think the largest this that WSS is missing is a walking/biking/etc path that is free of vehicles.	11/25/2024 10:18 PM
32	Thanks for working on this!	11/25/2024 9:55 PM
33	Access to river would be huge. Hiking trails with benches. Wss advertises all about the Smith so highlight the asset	11/25/2024 9:22 PM
34	.	11/25/2024 8:23 PM
35	My dream is a swimming pool in town	11/25/2024 7:05 PM
36	A walking/ biking trail would be great. See that in many other places now days and think it would really add to the tourist as well as local experience.	11/25/2024 5:14 PM
37	I really want to see an ice skating rink/xcountry ski area for multi ages in winter and a splash park for summer	11/25/2024 2:25 PM
38	I wish that you could keep some of the old playground equipment while adding new playground equipment, specifically the slide and meri-go-round. Those two pieces are very low maintenance and kids and adults both enjoy them, and they have lasted so much longer than any of the "new" plastic playground equipment coming out.	11/25/2024 2:02 PM
39	Bair park needs to be a more level surface due to the gopher problem and also sprayed better.	11/25/2024 1:54 PM

## Question 10: Please provide any other comments you have on the City park and recreation facilities.

Continued

39	Bair park needs to be a more level surface due to the gopher problem and also sprayed better.	11/25/2024 1:54 PM
40	Thank you!	11/25/2024 1:44 PM
41	We use Springs park all year and often leave the park when the kids have to go to the bathroom. Year around bathrooms would be so cool!	11/25/2024 1:35 PM
42	Splash pad and reuse the water to water the fields.	11/25/2024 1:07 PM
43	Theater or kids shows Winter activities for kids	11/25/2024 11:06 AM
44	Hot springs is much too costly for locals. All age groups would benefit from year round indoor swimming pool	11/25/2024 8:58 AM
45	I love going to the Snowfill Recreation area in Bozeman, it has benches, a walking path, and is fully fenced.	11/21/2024 7:01 PM
46	I love all of the areas we have available. It would be really nice to have a fenced in area to take my dog.	11/21/2024 6:58 PM
47	Would love to see a dog park or safe facility where dogs can run unleashed. Oftentimes parks with so many kids can be rowdy and dangerous for dogs and children. I don't have a large yard so I need somewhere fenced in to play and run with my pup!	11/21/2024 10:13 AM
48	Love it, just want a good place for my friends dog to poop without her being worried tbh	11/20/2024 9:43 PM
49	We are really in need of a dog park.	11/20/2024 9:34 PM
50	We really need a dog park for the community	11/20/2024 6:30 PM
51	I really like our city park facilities. I use the Springs park a lot more now that I have children. I'm looking forward to the improvements but my 2 year old never complained. We love it there. I think a water feature like even a really small splash pad would be SO helpful in the summertime and I bet tons of people would use it.	11/13/2024 8:10 PM
52	Keep doing the good work you are doing Parks Committee.	11/12/2024 4:41 PM

**The most common themes amongst the open-ended responses that were provided by residents are as follows:**

- ✓ Dog Park, fenced dog area
- ✓ Splash pad or other water recreation
- ✓ Ice rink
- ✓ Basketball court
- ✓ Restrooms
- ✓ Walking, hiking, and biking path or trail



# APPENDIX B

## Sample Decision Matrix - CORR Report Matrix

GUIDING CRITERIA	1	2	3
SERVES ALL ABILITIES	Low impact on serving a range of abilities	Moderate impact on serving some abilities in community	High impact on serving all abilities; all in community would use
YOUTH FOCUSED	Low impact on youth	Moderate impact on youth; creates some new opportunity for youth	High impact on youth; youth generated and supported; enhances youths well-being in community
SUSTAINS LOCAL ECONOMY	Low impact on local economy	Moderate impact on enhancing economy; could generate some funding	High impact on local economy; encourages financial growth in community; saves financial resources
QUALITY OF LIFE FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY	Low impact to quality of life	Moderate impact to quality of life; some well-being benefits	High impact of quality of life; impacts wellness and health of residents; abstracts new people to community
ENHANCES SAFETY	Low impact on safety	Moderate impact on safety; addresses less serious safety issues	High impact on safety; addresses serious safety issues; has widespread safety impacts