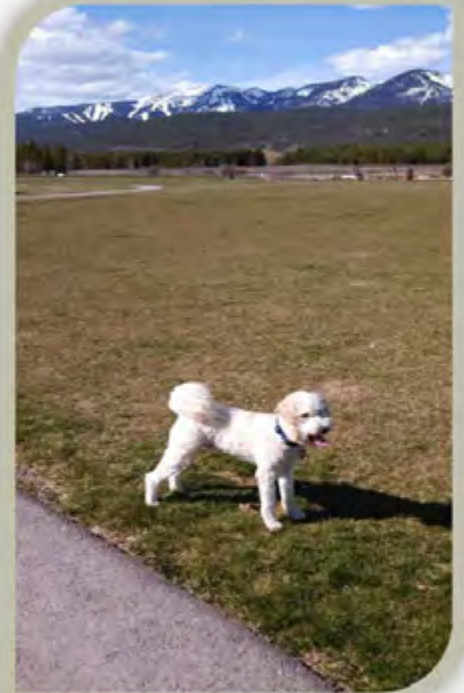




City of Whitefish Parks and Recreation Master Plan



September, 2013

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I. Overview

A. Purpose

The purpose of the City of Whitefish Parks and Recreation Master Plan is to present a vision for the development of future parks and recreation services as well strategic direction regarding the role of the Park and Recreation Department. This vision will provide the foundation for goals, policies and action items to guide public officials in making decisions on land acquisition, budgeting, programming, partnerships, recreation facility upgrades and park development. The Plan is a dynamic document and contains processes to meet future challenges. Based on a needs assessment and public input, the plan establishes priorities to meet community needs for the next 20 years. This document also reviews resources, funding strategies, and partnerships to implement the recommendations of the plan.

Figure 1.1: Baker Park



B. Planning Process

The following graphic illustrates the planning process used to develop the master plan. This is the first Parks and Recreation Master Plan that Whitefish has adopted. Public input was an important component of the planning process. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan planning area coincides with the city growth policy.

Figure 1.2: Planning Process



C. Relationship to Other Plans

1. Growth Policy

The City of Whitefish Growth Policy was adopted in 2007 and included an action item to develop a Park and Recreation Master Plan. This plan will be adopted as element of the Growth Policy. Relevant goals and policies in the Growth Policy include:

Parks and Recreation Goals:

1. Expand the diversity of parks, open spaces, and high-quality recreational opportunities for the growing Whitefish area.

Parks and Recreation Policies:

1. The City of Whitefish shall only accept viable park land as dedications in subdivisions when said land will be further developed for active or passive recreation.

2. The City will continue to encourage private open spaces in order to broaden the range of open spaces available to the Whitefish community.

2. Whitefish Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan

In 1999, as part of the Transportation and Storm Drainage Master Plan, the Whitefish City Council adopted a Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan. The plan included recommendations for future trails as well as design standards. The goals of the trail plan include:

- Linking the downtown to tourist facilities and lodging accommodations
- Connecting City parks and natural features
- Enhancing recreation facilities within the City's parks; and
- Providing opportunities throughout the community for outdoor exercise

The trails referenced in this document reflect the recommendations of that plan as amended. The goals and policies of the Park and Recreation Master Plan supplement the Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan. An updated trail map is included in the Chapter 5. The Bike and Pedestrian Committee is an advisory committee that oversees implementation and updates to the plan.

3. Park Master Plans

The City of Whitefish has adopted master plans for specific parks. These plans provide a guideline for how the park should be developed and improved. Following is the status of these plans.

- Amory Master Plan – Adopted In 2006 Several projects have been completed. Dog park to be expanded. Coordinate drainage improvements with road improvements.
- Depot Master Plan – Adopted in 2012. Recommendations to be phased in beginning in 2013.
- O'Brien Bluffs Master Plan – Adopted in 2010. Implementation dependent on funding.
- City Beach Master Plan – Outdated. Plan should be updated.
- Mountain Trails Park Master Plan – Outdated. Plan should be updated.

4. Neighborhood Plans

The following neighborhood plans were adopted by reference in the Growth Policy and may provide additional guidance in development of parks in that area.

- Whitefish Downtown Business District Master Plan (2005 – Updated in 2013) – The plan calls for the development of a “public square” providing downtown green space and community space across from the train station. The City has since purchased this land and completed the Depot Park Master Plan. The Plan also recommends connecting the downtown to the trail system west of Baker Street and for a recreational trail loop around the downtown. Elements of this system have been constructed. Finally, the plan recommends a development of a park in the Railway District.

Figure 1.3: Depot Park is an amenity for Downtown



- Big Mountain Neighborhood Plan (2006) - Big Mountain Ski Resort has since been renamed Whitefish Mountain Resort. It is a privately owned, full-serviced, ski resort and provides an important recreational amenity for the community. Winter recreation primarily includes alpine skiing and cross-country skiing. Summer recreation includes hiking, bicycling and new attractions such as an alpine slide and zip lines. The resort coordinates with the schools and city on youth programs. The plan has a goal of connecting hiking and biking trails at the resort to the Whitefish Trails system.
- South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan (1998 and amended in 2000) - This area generally encompasses the corridor along south US 93 from the Mountain Mall to Highway 40. The Whitefish River forms the easterly border. The plan calls for improved pedestrian access and creating connections between pathways. It calls for parks or green space to buffer residential uses from the more intense commercial uses on US. 93.
- Riverside at Whitefish Neighborhood Plan (1999) – The area is bordered by Hwy 40 to the south, the Whitefish River on the north and Hospital Way on the east. The plan provides for a

neighborhood park, greenbelt and athletic fields. The athletic field has been developed as Smith Complex. The greenbelt along the river has been partially developed.

- Iron Horse Resort Neighborhood Plan (1996) - The Iron Horse Resort encompasses 826 acres located approximately 2 miles north of downtown Whitefish east of Wisconsin Ave. The neighborhood plan includes a private 18-hole golf course, clubhouse, residential units and conservation/open space. According to the plan a 60-acre conservation easement in the southeast portion of the property was created in lieu of parkland dedication. The plan also called for dedication of trail easement that would be open to the public. The plan indicates that if a trailhead is constructed it should be located on the southern 10 acres of this area.
- North Valley Hospital Neighborhood Plan (2009) – This plan is for the medical campus that includes the hospital and medical offices. It also includes open space and trails. The plan has a stated goal of, “Maintain and enhancing high quality in built and open spaces including landscaped and natural areas, including public facilities such as the trail system which is and will be continuous and contiguous with the trails serving the larger community.”
- Whitefish School Trust Lands Neighborhood Plan - Adopted by the City as part of the Growth policy in 2005. The plan covers the state trust lands surrounding Whitefish and recommends the development of a recreational trails system. A trails master plan for the state trust land was adopted by the City Council in 2006. The City of Whitefish is a partner with Whitefish Legacy Partners and the Montana Department of Natural Resources(DNRC) to develop the trail system. The City currently holds a land use license from DNRC for the trails on state trust lands in the Lupfer and Swift Creek areas and holds a permanent recreational easement for trails on state trust lands in the Skyles Lake and Beaver Lakes area. The Legacy Land Advisory Committee (LLAC) oversees implementation of the trail system.

Figure 1.4: Whitefish Trail Segment



D. Guiding Principles

In January, 2013, the Park Board conducted a workshop and developed guiding principles for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Guiding principles help establish a shared sense of direction for the community and facilitates communication by providing a framework to evaluate projects and set priorities. Following are the guiding principles for the Whitefish park and recreation system.

Table 1.1 Guiding Principles

P	Preserve • Preserve the quality of parks so they are amenities to the community. • Preserve the public access to the lakes and rivers. • Preserve the level-of-service so the community always has convenient access to facilities that are not overcrowded.
	Add • Add future parks and expand existing parks to meet the needs of future growth. • Add facilities, equipment and programs to meet the needs of all age groups. • Add connections between parks and trails to provide connectivity. • Add water access sites to meet the needs of future growth.
R	Rehabilitate/Retrofit • Rehabilitate and modernize aging facilities to meet current safety and accessibility standards and to lower maintenance costs. • Retrofit undeveloped or underdeveloped parks according to site specific plans. • Rehabilitate shorelines and maintain vegetation to improve water quality and meet other environmental objectives.
C	Collaborate • Continue and strengthen existing collaborations. • Coordinate with other city projects to advance common objectives for parks. • Coordinate with other public agencies, non-profits and civic groups to upgrade facilities and develop new parks or programs. • Coordinate with private developers to identify opportunities for new parks to meet future growth.

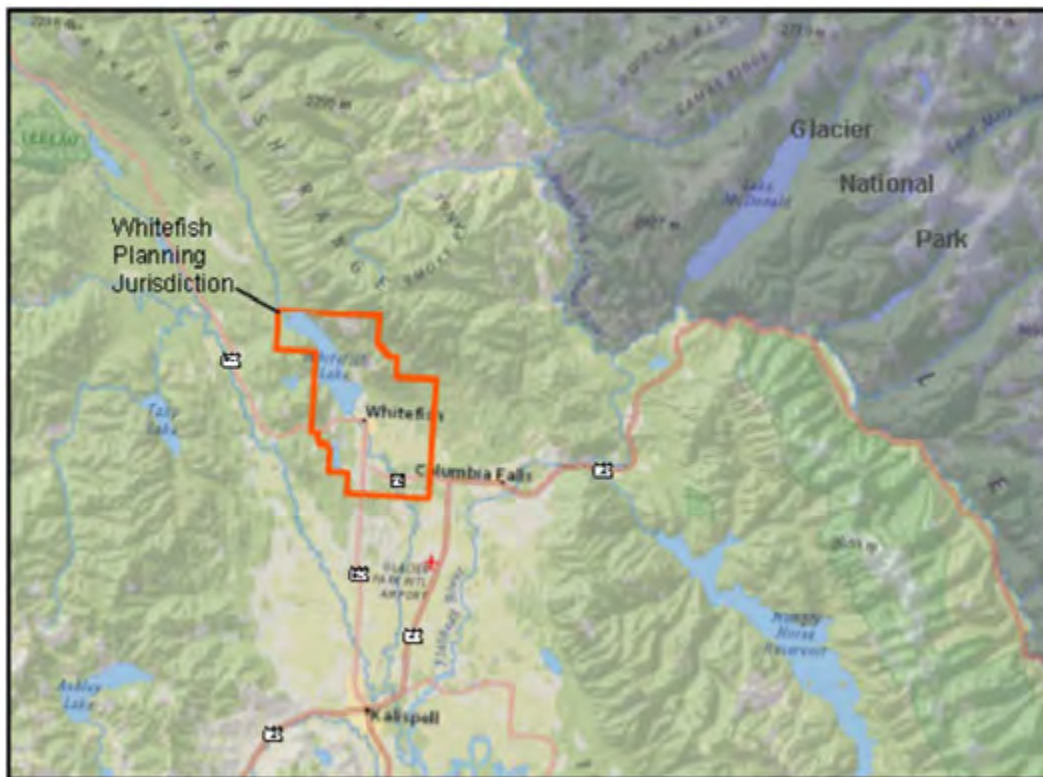
II. Community Profile

A. Geography

Whitefish, Montana is located in the northwest portion of the state in Flathead County. U.S. Highway 93 is the main transportation corridor through town connecting the city to the county seat of Kalispell, 12 miles south of Whitefish and to Eureka, MT located about 50 miles northwest of the city. The Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad is a major east-west route for both freight traffic and Amtrak. It dissects the city into distinct north and south sections. The BNSF railroad operates a maintenance facility in Whitefish at the north end of the downtown core.

The city is situated at the south end of Whitefish Lake with views of the Whitefish Mountain Range to the north, Glacier National Park to the east as well as mountain views to the west and south. Glacier National Park is located 25 miles east of Whitefish. Additionally, the city is closely situated to the Flathead National Forest and state forest lands both providing abundant outdoor recreation activity. The city holds a permanent recreation easement on state trust land for the development of trails and associated amenities. Whitefish Mountain Resort is a destination ski area located within minutes of the downtown.

Map 2.1: Location Map



B. Water Features

Abundant lakes and streams are present in Whitefish area. Swift Creek flows into Whitefish Lake from the north while the Whitefish River flows southward through town draining the lake toward a confluence with the Stillwater River then the Flathead River, prior to their draining into Flathead Lake. The watershed that surrounds and drains into Whitefish Lake comprises approximately 151 square miles (97,000 Acres) of mostly U.S. Forest Service, State Forest lands, and privately owned forestland. Whitefish Lake itself covers approximately 5 square miles (3,299 acres).

The Whitefish River forms an open space corridor with trails and parks that are treasured by the entire community. In addition to recreational opportunities, this corridor provides wildlife habitat. Smaller streams such as Cow, Viking, Hellroaring, Swift, and Haskill Creeks provide critical resource value and wildlife habitat that contribute to Whitefish's unique sense of place. South and west of Whitefish are smaller lakes with limited public access. These lakes include Blanchard Lake, Sampson Lake and Lost Coon Lake. Although, Skyles, Beaver and Murray Lakes are located on State School Trust Lands outside of the planning area, access to these lakes are part of a permanent recreation easement that the City has negotiated with the Montana Department of Natural Resources to implement the Whitefish School Trust Lands Neighborhood Plan.

C. Climate

The climate in the vicinity of Whitefish is typical of low-elevation intermountain basins of the Northern Rocky Mountains west of the Continental Divide. Based on Western Regional Climatic Center data for the period of record, annual precipitation averages 22.42 inches. Monthly average precipitation ranges from 1.34 inches in March to 3.13 inches in June. Summer rain events and winter snows provide a majority of the precipitation in the area. The annual mean snowfall in Whitefish is 74.0 inches. Periodic drought cycles (defined as annual precipitation averages less than 10 inches) occur in the region at approximately 10 to 20 year intervals.

D. Demographic Trends

1. Population Growth

According to U.S. Census data, the population of Whitefish grew by 26% from 2000 to 2010. This compared to a 22% growth rate for Flathead County and 9.1% for the State of Montana. Due to the economic downturn that began in 2008, it is projected that the rate of growth for the next decade for the county will be slightly lower and average about 1.8% a year. The planning horizon for this plan is 20 years. Based on an annual average rate of growth of 1.8% per year, the population for both the city and the surrounding planning area is projected to be around 15,121 people by the year 2030.

Table 2.1: Whitefish Projected Population

Jurisdiction	2000	2010	2020	2030
City of Whitefish	5,032	6,357	7,501	8,852
Planning Area	3,691	4,503	5,313	6,270
Total	8,723	10,860	12,851	15,121

- Notes: 1. Source: U.S. Census - City of Whitefish Population in 2000 & 2010
2. Planning area population in 2000 calculated from U.S. Census – Census block population
3. Planning area population in 2010 estimated by multiplying base population in 2000 by the growth rate experienced in Flathead County from 2000 to 2010 (22%)
4. Growth rate from 2010 thru 2020 is 18% each decade. The growth rate based on the projected growth rate Flathead County the Montana Census and Economic Information Center/ NPA Data Services Inc. www.ceic.mt.gov/Demog/project/proj_mt_pop_total_08.pdf.

2. Age Distribution

One of the most significant demographic trends in the nation, and in Whitefish, is the aging of the population. In Whitefish, the median age has increased from 30.5 years of age in 1980 to 40.1 years of age in 2010. The number of residents over age 65 in Whitefish increased 723 people to 911 from the 2000 to the 2010 Census. This represents an increase of 26% in this age category. In addition to the overall aging of the baby boom generation nationwide, some of the increase in median age is likely attributable to Whitefish being a popular community for retirement age individuals. The young adult age group, from 25 to 34 years of age, comprises the largest age group with 16.1% of the population.

Table 2.2: Whitefish Age Distribution - 2010

Age Group	#	%
Under age 5	365	5.7
5 – 18	878	13.8
18-24	454	7.1
25-34	1,026	16.1
34-44	886	13.9
44-54	930	14.6
54-65	907	14.2
65 years and over	911	14.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of the Population 2010

3. Household Occupancy

Whitefish has a higher proportion of renters compared to the rest of the state. In 2010, 48.1% of housing units were renter occupied compared to 32% renter occupancy rate for the rest of the state. Whitefish also has a significant number of seasonal/recreational housing. According to the 2010 Census, there were 773 seasonal units in the city. This comprised about 19% of all housing units.

Table 2.3: Housing Occupancy

	#	%
Total Housing Units	4,086	100%
Occupied Units	2,982	73%
Owner Occupied	1,548	51.9
Renter Occupied	1,434	48.1%
Vacant Units	1,104	27%
Seasonal/Recreational	773	18.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of the Population - 2010

4. Household Characteristics

The portion of family households in Whitefish is 52.4% compared to 62.8% for the state of Montana. About one in four households have children under the age of 18 while about one in five households have an individual 65 years or older. In addition to non-family households, there are an increasing number of non-traditional family households. These include single parent households, women, grandparents raising their grandchildren, adoptive families and families headed by same-sex couples. Park designs and programs should accommodate the recreational needs of the variety of households in the city.

Table 2. 4 : Household Characteristics

	#	%
Total Households	2,982	100%
Family Households	1,562	52.4%
Non-Family Households	1,420	47.6%
Households with children under 18 years of age	731	24.5%
Households with individuals 65 years and older	642	21.5%
Average Household Size	2.1	--
Average Family Size	2.77	--

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of the Population – 2010

5. Disability

According to U.S. Census, the population over age 65 is more likely to have a disability. The Census classifies disability into sensory, physical, mental or self-care disability. The most common disabilities are physical and mobility disabilities. Increasingly, people with disabilities are leading active, independent lives, and are requiring recreational facilities and programs that are accessible and inclusive. Universal design and access should be provided whenever and wherever feasible, and in many instances is mandated by law.



E. Economic Profile

1. Income

According to the U.S. Census – American Community Survey, the median household income in Whitefish in 2011 was \$41,940 compared to \$45,324 for the State of Montana and \$45,588 for Flathead County. Median income in Whitefish is likely to be lower than the County due to the high number of rental units located within the city limits that are providing housing for service workers. The median household income for Whitefish is higher than the other incorporated cities in the county.

Table 2.5: Median Income

Montana	\$45,324
Flathead County	\$45,588
Whitefish	\$41,940
Kalispell	\$39,205
Columbia Falls	\$37,196

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey – 2011

2. Economic Base

More Whitefish residents are employed in arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services than any other industry. These services are typically associated with a tourism based economy. The North Valley Community Hospital is located in Whitefish and this is represented in the high portion of residents employed in the health care industry. A higher percentage of residents are employed in the finance, real estate and insurance sector compared to the rest of the state but a lower percentage of employees are in the manufacturing, agriculture/forestry, wholesale and public administration sectors.

Table 2.6: Percent of Employment by Occupation

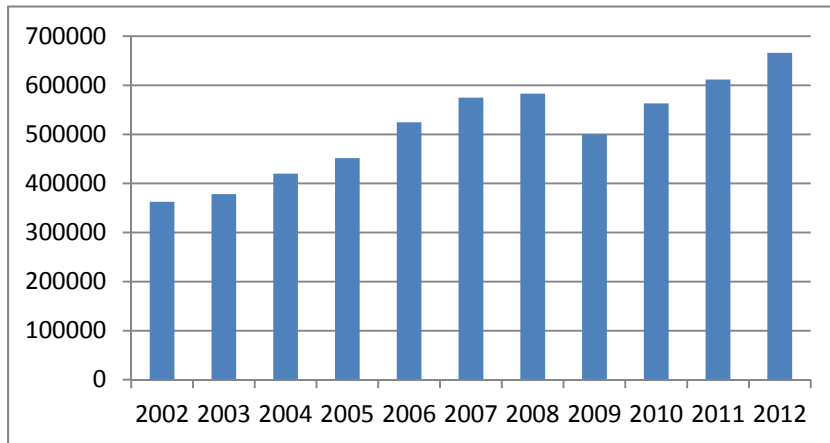
	Whitefish	Montana
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining	3.0	7.1
Construction	11.0	8.5
Manufacturing	1.4	8.5
Wholesale	0.5	2.7
Retail	12.5	12.3
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	6.5	5.0
Information	2.6	1.9
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, rental and leasing	9.7	5.7
Professional, scientific, management and administrative	12.7	8.1
Education - Health Care Services, Social assistance	14.1	22.4
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food service	17.8	10.6
Other Services	4.4	4.7
Public Administration	3.8	6.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey – 2011

3. Visitation

Tourism and visitation have become an increasingly important component of the local economy. Except for the years of 2008 – 2009, bed tax revenues collected by the State of Montana have increased every year since 2002. Due to the amount of visitation the community receives,, the local park system must meet demands from local residents as well as demand from a significant number of visitors.

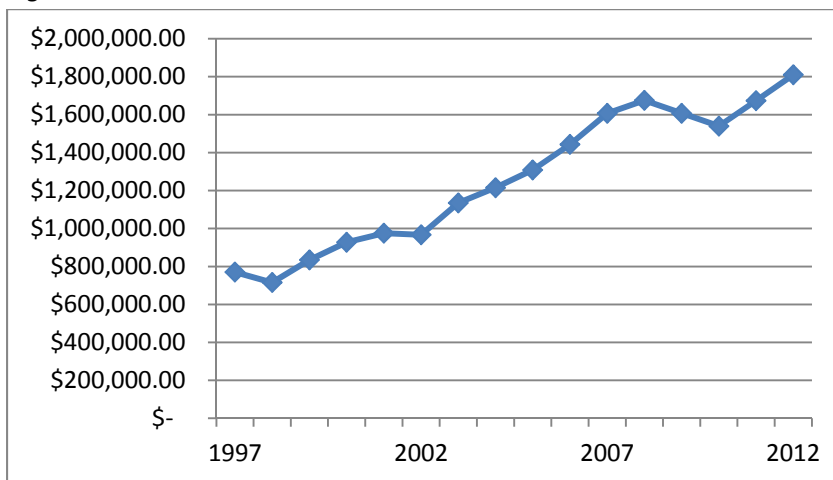
Figure 2.1: Bed Tax Revenue for Whitefish, Montana



Source: http://www.travelmontana.org/newsandupdates/bed_tax_revenue/ltrhome.asp

Due to the impacts from tourism, the City of Whitefish is authorized under Montana Code Annotated to collect a resort tax on sales at motels, bars and restaurants, and retail establishments. The resort tax was first collected in FY 1995/1996. Except for the economic downturn in the years 2009 and 2010, the collections have steadily increased. Collections in the most recent fiscal year of 2011/2012 rebounded and represented the highest amount of collections to date amounting to \$1,809,903 in resort tax revenue. The resort tax is structured so that 5% of the collection is allocated for the park and recreation budget. The resort tax must be spent on park development and can not be used for maintenance.

Figure 2.2: Resort Tax Collections 1997-2012



Source: City of Whitefish – Finance Department

III. Public Input

A. Survey

1. Survey Methodology

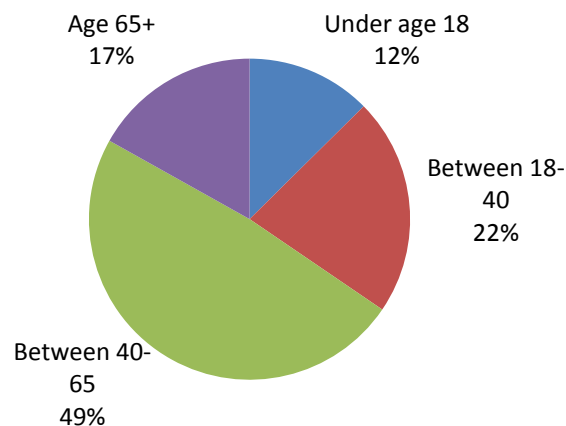
From July, 2012 through January, 2013, the Whitefish Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department conducted an on-line survey to provide residents an opportunity to have input on the plan. The survey was publicized through various community oriented list-serves, city website, newspaper articles and several open houses. A total of 261 surveys were completed. (See Appendix A for a blank survey and written comments.)

2. Respondent Profile

The survey collected demographic information about respondents in order to determine how closely the respondents corresponded to the general population. Comparing the respondent profile to the US 2010 Census data for the City of Whitefish, respondents were skewed towards women, homeowners and an older demographic. In order to account for this variation, it will be important to sort answers according to demographic groups. Following is a summary of the respondent profile.

- 55.2% of respondents were female compared to 49.7% in the 2010 Census.
- 87.7% of respondents were homeowners compared to 68% in the 2010 Census.
- 65.9% of respondents lived within the city limits while 23.4% lived within two miles of Whitefish. 9.65% lived elsewhere in Flathead County.
- 86.2% of respondents were year-round residents. 9.5% were primarily summer residents, 2.4% were primarily winter residents and 2% were visitors.
- The largest percentage of respondents had persons in the households between age 40-65.

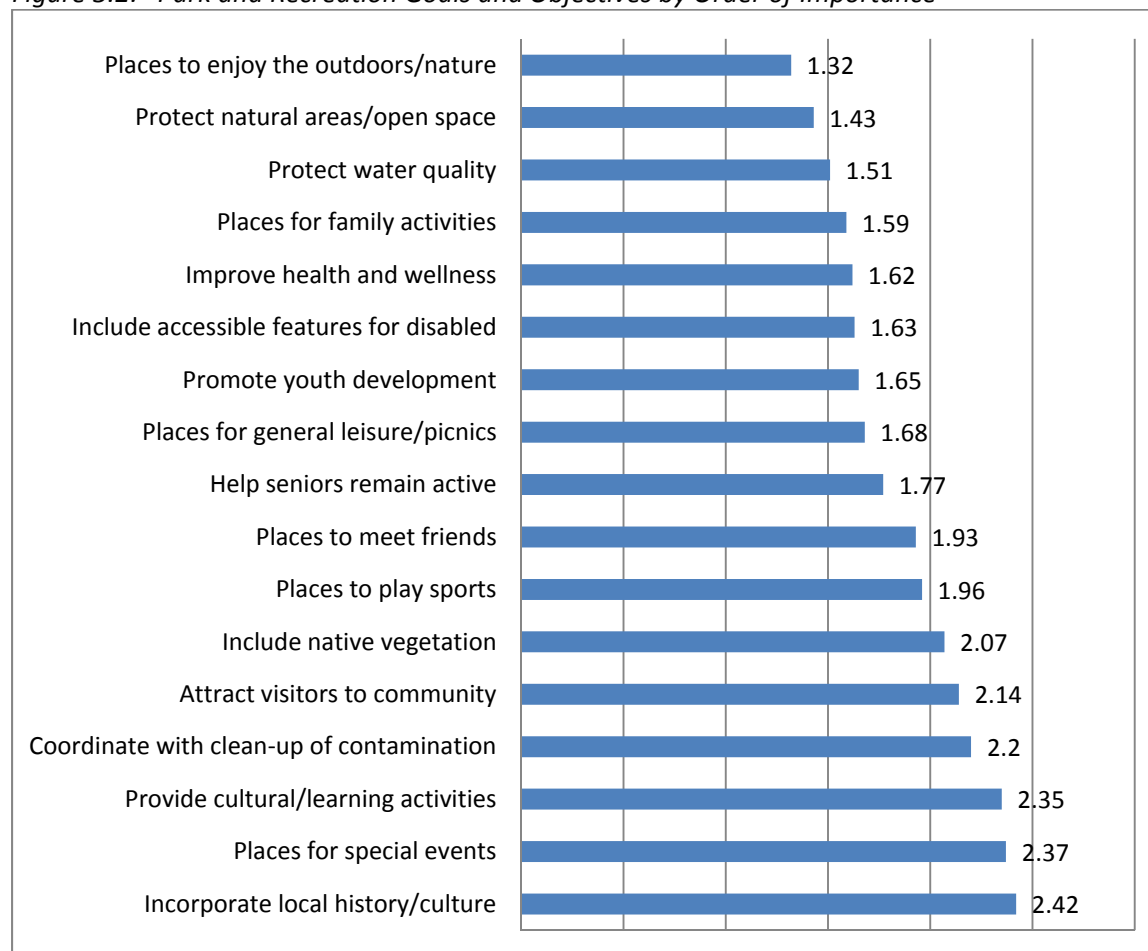
Figure 3.1: % of Respondents by Age of Persons Living in Household



3. Park Goals and Objectives

Respondents were asked to rank the importance of goals and objectives for parks and recreation. A ranking of one was equivalent to “Very Important” while a five was “Not Important”. Figure 2 provides the rankings in order with the most important rankings at the top of the chart. Places to enjoy outdoors and nature and protecting natural areas/open space were ranked the most important objective while providing places for special events and providing cultural and learning opportunities were ranked the least important. The order of the rankings from respondents who lived in the city to those who lived in the planning area were not significantly different.

Figure 3.2: Park and Recreation Goals and Objectives by Order of Importance



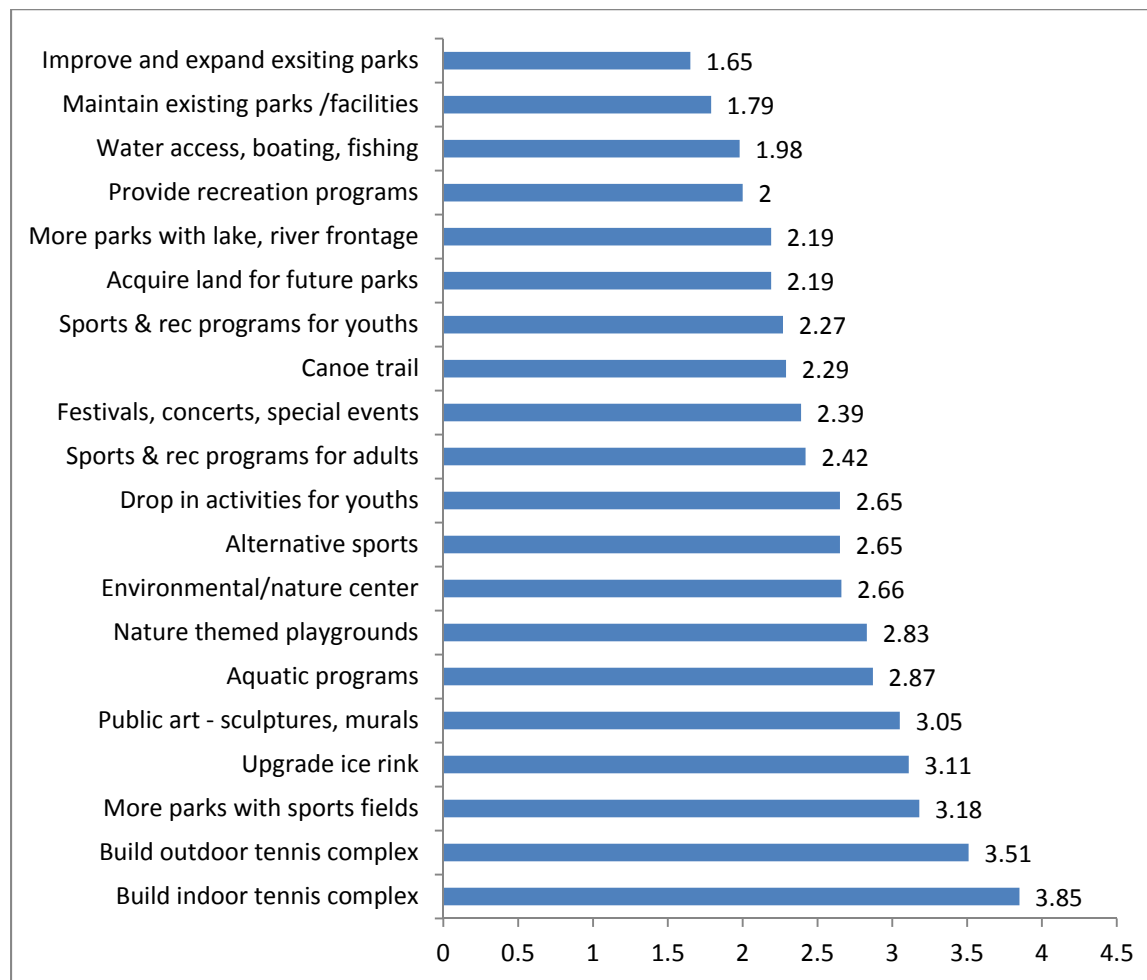
4. Importance of activities and facilities.

Respondents were asked to rank the importance of goals and objectives for parks and recreation. A ranking of one was equivalent to “Very Important” while a five was “Not Important”. Figure 3.3 provides the rankings by city residents with the most important rankings at the top of the chart.

Improving and expanding existing parks and more parks with water access ranked highest among city residents while a new tennis complex ranked the lowest.

City respondents were more likely than county residents to give higher importance to water access, parks with lake and river frontage, and acquiring more land. County residents were more likely than city residents to give higher importance to sports & rec programs for adults and more parks with sports fields.

Figure 3.3: Ranking of Park and Recreation activities and facilities



5. Programming

The survey asked respondents about programming options. Following are the results.

- Respondents indicated that weekday evenings were the most convenient time to participate in programs. Weekends were the second most popular time. Weekend evenings was the least popular.

- The most common way for respondents to find out about programs was through word of mouth (60.4%) The city mailer that is sent to every household was the second most popular method. (46.9%). The newspaper was another common avenue for finding out about programs. (39.1%)

6. Park Usage

The survey asked respondents how often they visited parks during peak season. The following table indicates the parks in usage with #1 receiving the heaviest use. The bike/pedestrian trail system receives the most use followed by Depot Park and City Beach.

Table 3.1: Frequency of Park Usage

	Weekly	Monthly
1. Bike/Pedestrian Trails	69.1%	20.9%
2. Depot Park	41.4%	43.8%
3. City Beach	34.4%	42.0%
4. Whitefish Trails on State Trust Lands	44.6%	28.7%
5. Riverside Park	24.6%	37.1%
6. The Wave	45.4%	14.5%
7. Wag Dog Park	29.3%	14.6%
8. Amory (Skateboard, bike jump, softball, Amory Building)	17.3%	37.6%
9. Baker Park	20.9%	21.8%
10. Grouse Mountain Park	12.0%	19.4%
11. Smith Sports Park	17.0%	15.8%
12. Ice Rink	14.6%	16.6%
13. Sorooptimist Park	5.4%	20.4%
14. Kay Beller	9.7%	19.1%
15. Memorial Park - Playground/Tennis Courts	8.2%	16.0%
16. Riverwood Canoe access by Rocksund Gazebo	5.8%	16.5%

7. Underserved Groups – Top 4 for each group

The survey asked respondents to identify groups that were underserved by current recreation services. Overall, seniors were the group most likely to be identified as underserved. Among seniors, 78.1% indicated that their age group was underserved. Almost half of households with middle school age children identified this group as underserved. Among the top reasons for not participating in recreation programs was, “Too Busy”, “Not aware of programs”, and “Do not have activities I’m interested in.”

Table 3.2: Underserved Groups

	Pre-School	Elementary	Middle School	High School	Young Adults	Mature Adults	Seniors	Families	People with Disabilities
Overall	13%	20%	24%	18%	18%	25%	40%	17%	24%

8. Individual Park Review

Respondents were asked to identify issues with individual parks and facilities. The following table summarizes the top issues with each facility.

Table 3: Issues by Park or Facility

Park/Facility	Issues
Baker Park/Kiddie Park	Litter Facilities not maintained Restrooms
City Beach	Not enough parking Litter Restrooms Park is overused
Kay Beller Park	Only 14 responses. Ten people noted restrooms as issues. Other issues did not receive more than one response.
Grouse Mountain Park	Facilities outdated
Riverside Park	Facilities outdated Facilities not maintained Restrooms
Soroptimist Park	Facilities outdated Restrooms Facilities not maintained Weeds
Depot Park	Restrooms Park is overused Not enough parking
Skateboard Park at Amory Park	Restrooms Litter
Bike Jump at Armory Park	Weeds Grass overgrown Facilities not maintained Restrooms

Softball Fields at Armory Park	Restrooms Facilities not maintained Facilities outdated Grass overgrown
Armory Building	Facilities outdated Not enough parking
WAG Dog Park	Restrooms Park is overused
Riverwood Canoe Access	Grass Overgrown
Whitefish trails on State Trust Lands	Only 17 responses. Six people noted safety as an issue.
Memorial Park – Playground/Tennis Courts	Facilities Outdated Facilities not maintained Restrooms
Ice Rink	Restrooms –Not maintained Facilities not maintained
Saddle Club at Mountain Trails Park	Thirteen responses. All responses indicated facilities outdated
Smith Sports Park	Only two responses.
The Wave	Only six responses
Bike/Pedestrian Trails	Weeds Vandalism

9. Recreational Activities by Age Group

The following group of tables indicates the most popular recreational activities by age group. The most popular activities were similar for households with children, young adults, and mature adults. Activities that were most popular among these age groups included bicycling, walking and swimming. Skiing was most popular for households with children under the age of 18 and declined in popularity in households with more mature adults. Rafting, tubing and wakeboarding were most popular with young adult households while attending cultural events was more popular with mature adults. Households with seniors, however, engaged in markedly less activities overall and were more likely to participate in lower-impact recreational pursuits



Tennis is popular for all ages

Figure 3.4: By % - Most Common Recreational Activities for Households with Children Under Age 18

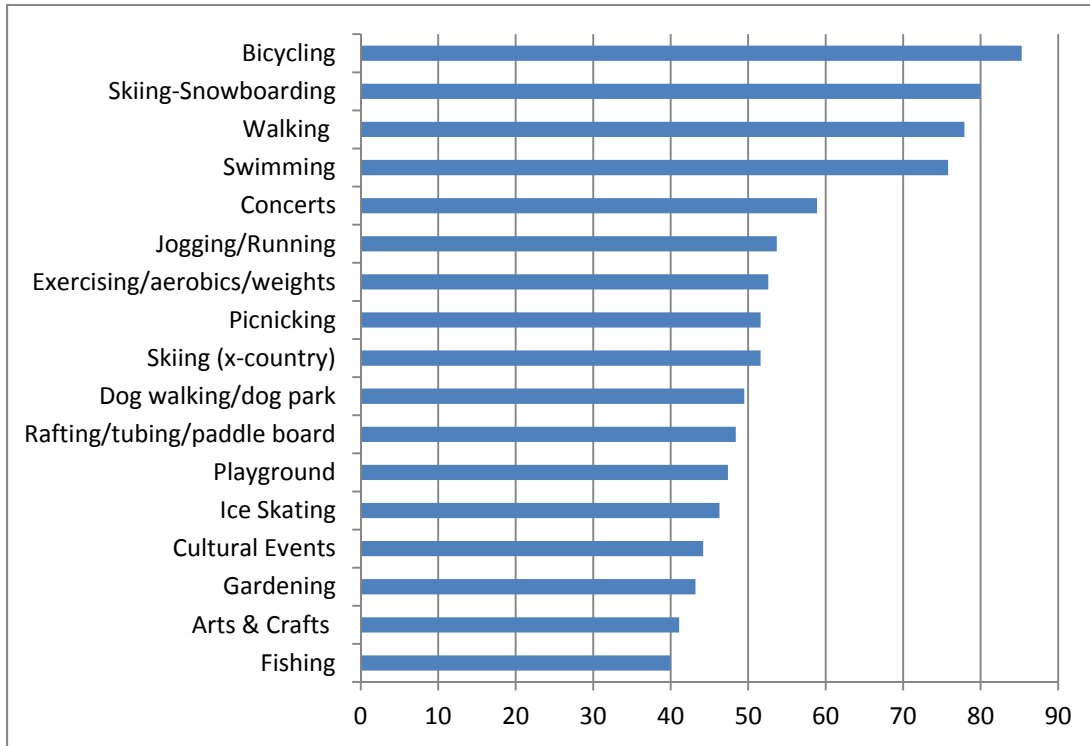


Figure 3.5: By % - Most Common Recreational Activities for Households with Young Adults (18-40)

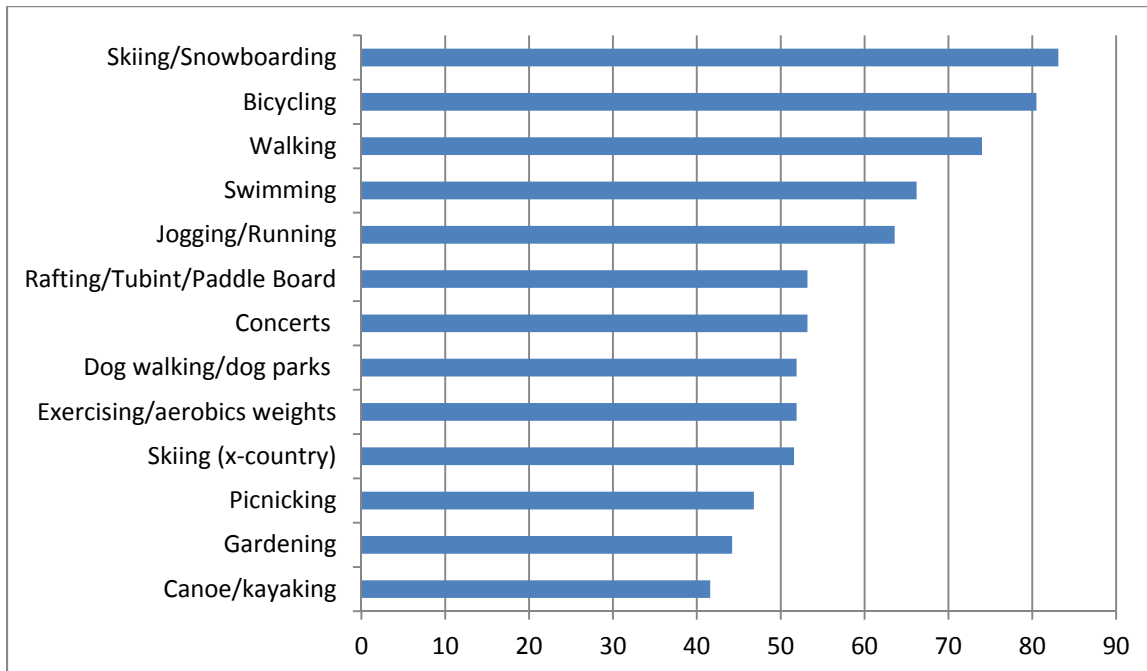


Figure 3.6 : By % - Most Common Recreational Activities for Households with Mature Adults (40-65)

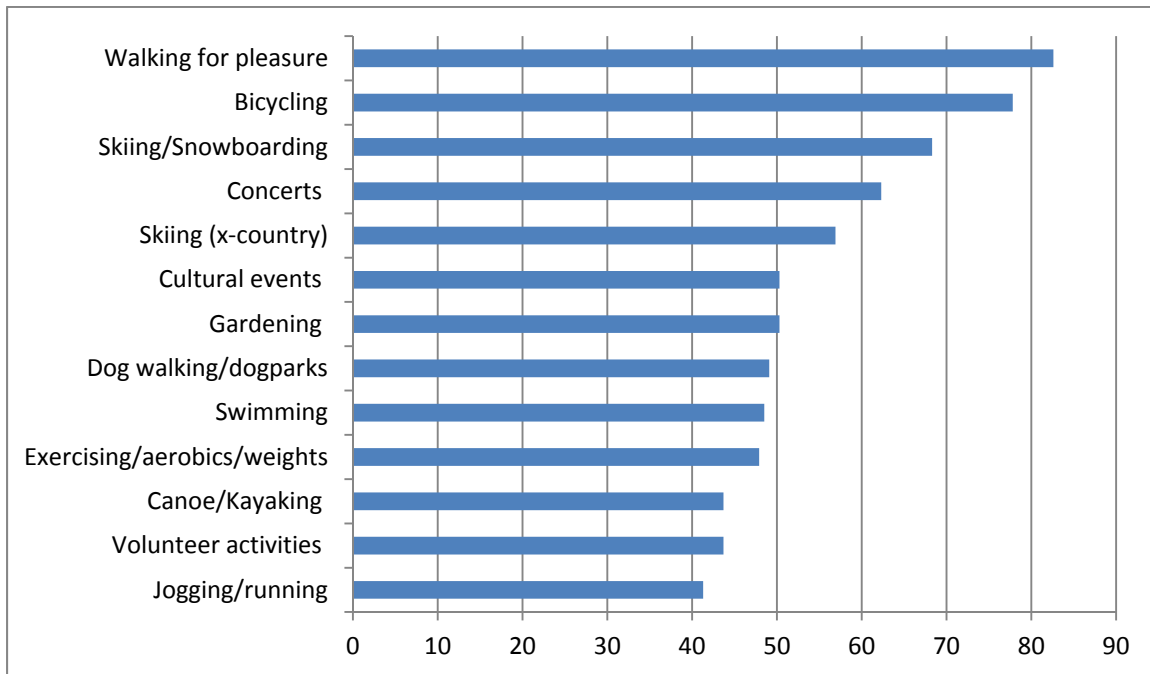
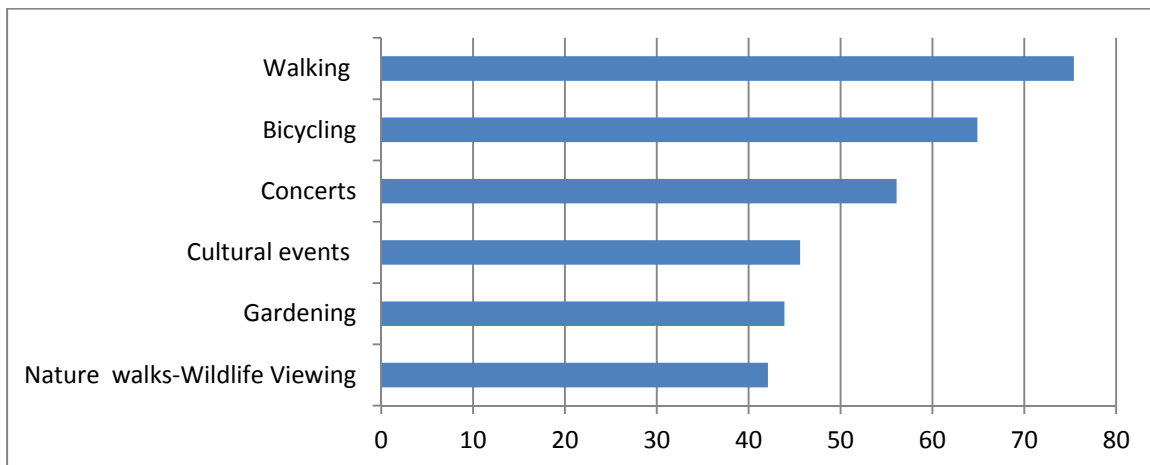


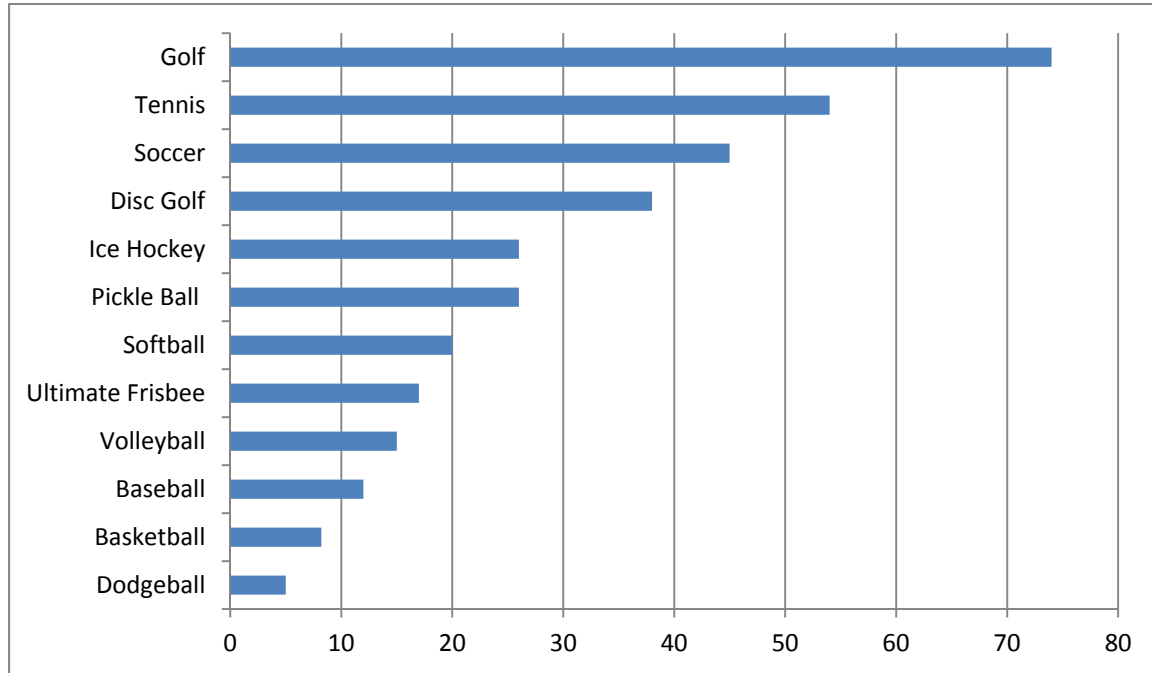
Figure 3.7: By percentage - Most Common Recreational Activities for Households with Seniors (65+)



10. Competitive Sports

According to the survey, golf and tennis were the most popular competitive sports while soccer was the most popular team sport. Lacrosse teams are using the Grouse Mountain soccer fields. This is becoming a more popular sport.

Figure 3.8 : Competitive Sports by popularity

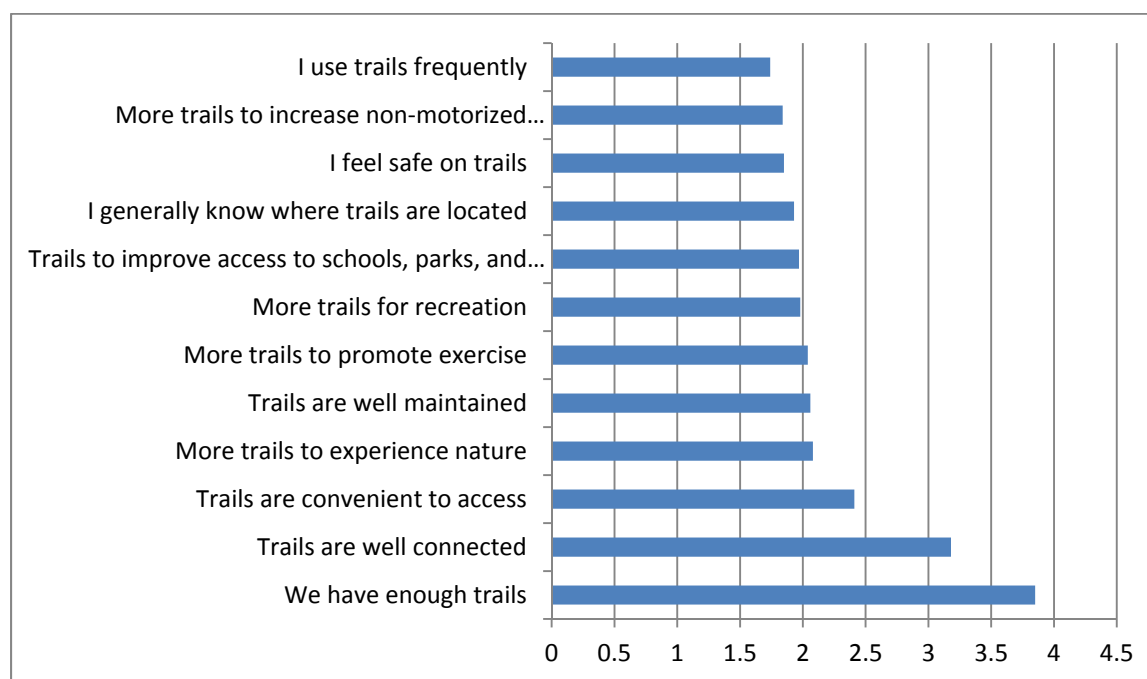


Softball field at Amory Park

11. Trails

The trail system includes both the bike and pedestrian trails in the city and the Whitefish Trails on state trust lands. The survey questions did not distinguish between these trails. In the following chart, the longer bars indicate that respondents were more likely to disagree with the statement. This chart indicates that most respondents used trails frequently, felt safe on the trails and generally knew where trails were located. Respondents also indicated that they were in favor of more trails for recreation, to improve access to schools and to promote exercise. Respondents were more likely to disagree with the statement that trails were well connected and also strongly disagreed with the statement that there were enough trails.

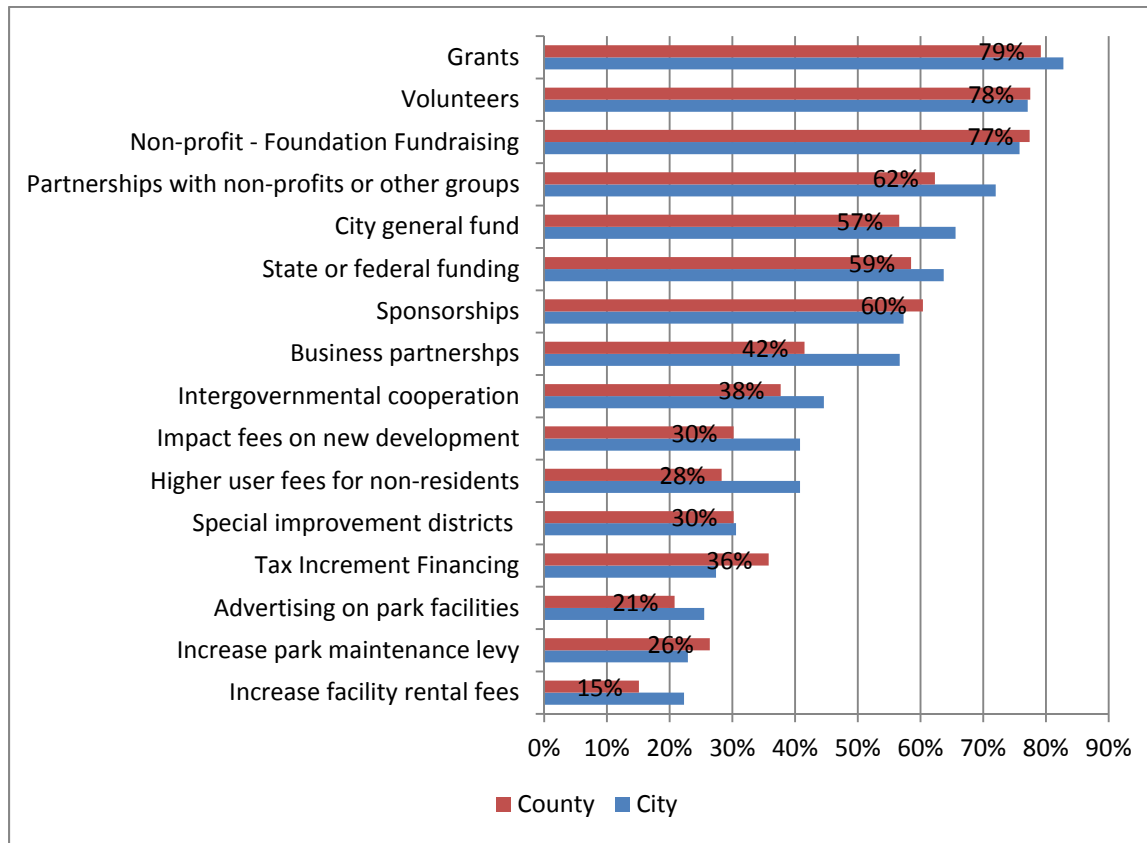
Figure 3.9: Trails



12. Funding Sources

The most popular funding mechanism for respondents, regardless of where they lived, were grants, use of volunteers and non-profit fundraising. City residents were more likely to prefer partnerships with other groups and businesses as well as use of the city general fund for parks. Increase in facility rental fees, increasing the park maintenance levy and advertising on park facilities were the least popular funding choices.

Figure 3.10: Preference for Funding(listing percentages on bars is redundant)



B. Stakeholder Groups

In the fall of 2012, the city staff and consultant team met with the following stakeholder groups.

- Dog Park Committee
- Ice Den Committee
- Bike and Ped Committee
- Planning Board
- Business Groups
- Public Agencies
- Recreation Groups
- Tree Committee
- Whitefish Legacy Partners

Each group identified current needs, potential areas for coordination and opportunities for expanding the park and recreation system. Funding of the park and recreation was a common concern among all of the groups. Meeting demands of a growing population over a 20-year planning period was an additional concern. The stakeholder groups also discussed that park and recreation objectives for fitness and conservation. Meeting notes from each of the stakeholder groups is included in the appendix.

IV. Organization

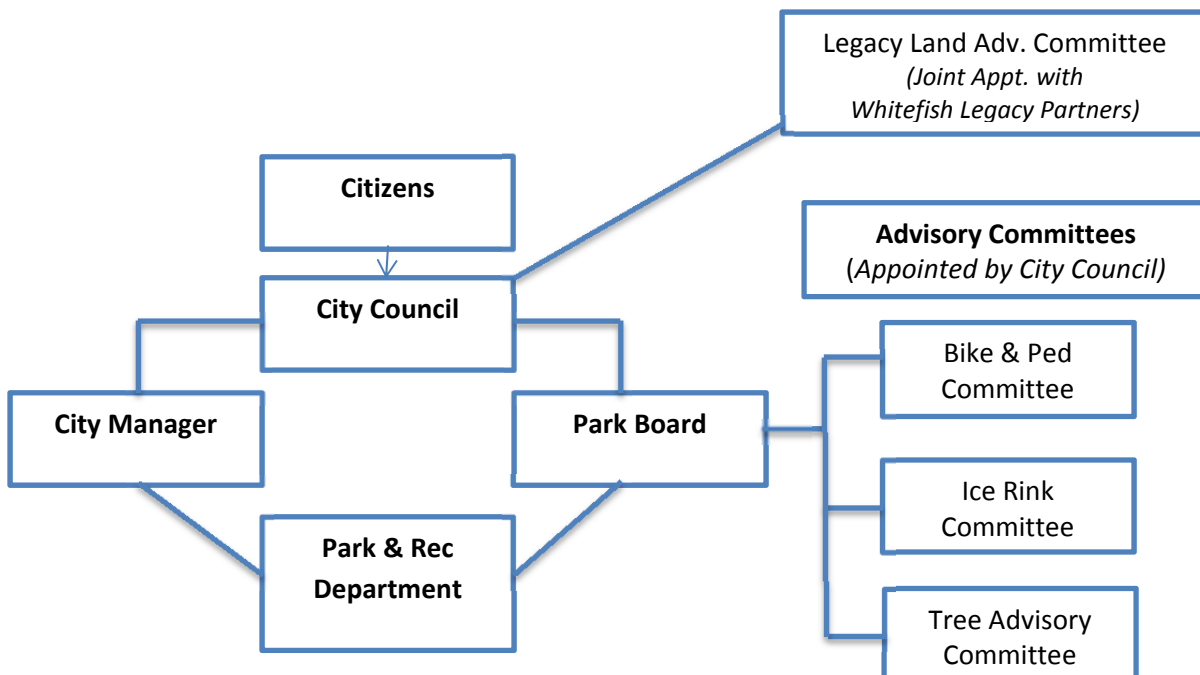
A. Governance

According to the City of Whitefish budget, the purpose of the Whitefish Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department is to maintain the parks, trails and property owned by the City, operate community facilities, provide recreational programs, and provide other beautification and community services as needed. The objectives of the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Fund are to:

- (1) maintain and, operate various City park and recreation facilities and program services.
- (2) provide a series of recreation programs and special events
- (3) provide maintenance for boulevard trees and pre-planting administration
- (4) maintain the Hwy. 93 right-of-way landscape, and provide weed spraying services on City property and right-of-ways as needed
- (5) provide other general beautification and community services as needed.

The Whitefish Park Board is appointed by the City Council and advises the Park and Recreation Department on policy and operational matters. The Park Board meets the second Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. There are also several Advisory Committees that provide input to the Park Board. The City Council appoints members of the Advisory Committees. A Park Board representative is on each committee. Following is an organizational chart for the Park & Recreation Department.

Figure 4.1: Organizational Chart



B. Staffing & Budget

1. Staffing

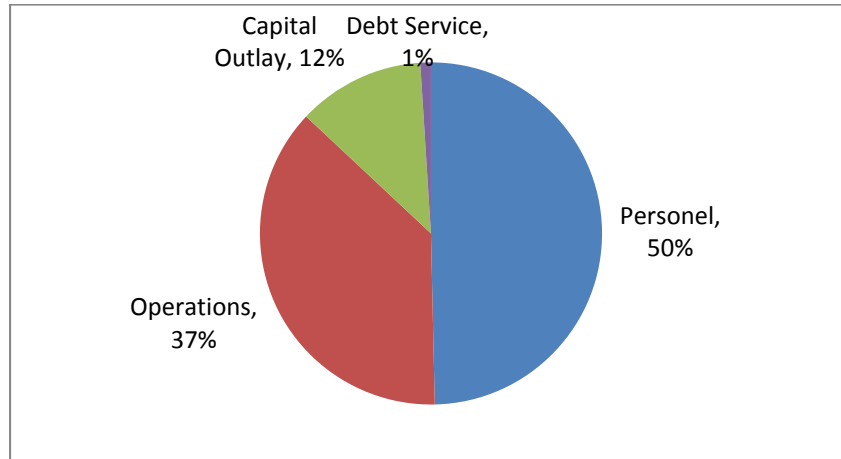
The City of Whitefish organization chart indicates that the Whitefish Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department is budgeted for eight full time positions. According to the National Recreation & Parks Association (NRPA), the average staffing level for communities with less than 20,000 populations is 7.45 full time employees. Whitefish has eight full-time park and recreation employees as well as part-time and seasonal employees for the recreation programs and ice rink maintenance. Although it may appear that staffing levels for Whitefish are comparable to national averages for park and recreation functions, the NRPA notes that there may be variation from the standards based on department responsibilities, seasonal fluctuations and programming. In Whitefish, for example, the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department also maintains all undeveloped city property, trees and shrubs in the right-of-way and the grounds for the library, O'Shaunessey Center, water treatment plant, and wastewater treatment plant. Whitefish parks also have high usage from visitation. These additional functions may require a higher level of staffing than what the national standards would suggest. The current full time positions are listed below:

- Director
- Administration Assistant
- Recreation Coordinator
- Park Superintendent
- Recreation Facilities Manager
- Park Foreman
- Custodial
- Parks Maintenance

2. Expenditures

According to the City of Whitefish 2013 Budget, 50% of the Park and Recreation expenditures were for personnel costs. This is slightly less than the national average of 56% for communities with less than 20,000. Operations cost comprised 37% of the budget and were comparable to national averages. Projected capital outlays in 2013 comprised 12% of the budget and exceeded the national average of 6%. This capital outlay budget, however, varies from greatly from year to year. Overall, expenditures for the City of Whitefish appear to follow national trends.

Figure 4.2: Whitefish Park & Recreation Projected Expenditures – 2013



Source: City of Whitefish Budget – 2013

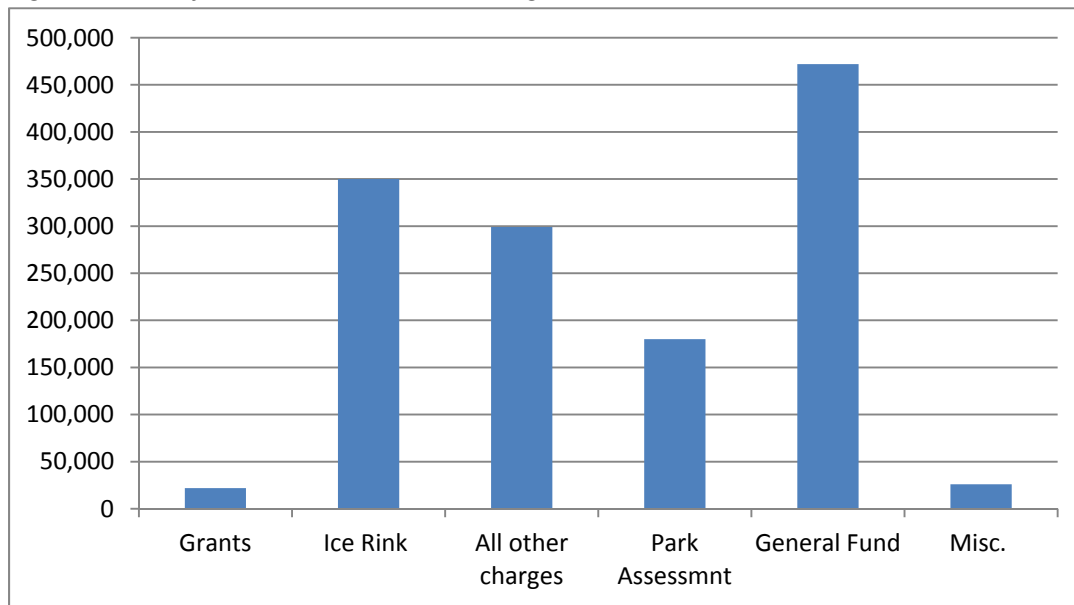
3. Revenues

Analysis of the 2013 budget indicates that fees collected for recreational programs such as youth sports, adult sports, summer camp and the after school program do cover the cost of operating the programs. Although the ice rink represents the largest expense operational expense for the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department, entry fees, rentals and concessions from the ice rink generally cover the operating cost for that facility. This revenue stream does not, however, cover the capital outlays for repairs and outlays to the ice rink. The 2013 budget projected a \$150,000 capital outlay for the ice rink.

Park maintenance accounts for the second largest expenditure. A greenway assessment and transfer from the general funds (property tax) are the primary source of funds for maintenance. Facility rentals income from the Armory, Saddle Club, City Beach Gazebo and use of other park facilities is projected at \$13,550 in the 2013 budget. Revenues from these facilities comprise only 4.5% of the revenue stream from the total charges for services -not including the ice rink. The percentage of revenue from facility rentals was significantly lower than the NRPA national average of 14.2%.

Revenue from grants varies from year to year ranging from only \$750 in grants in 2012 to \$59,759 in grants in 2011. According to the community survey, funding through grants received the highest ranking as a preferred funding mechanism yet represents a small part of revenues.

Figure 4.3: Projected Revenues – 2013 Budget



Source: City of Whitefish Budget- 2013

Note: Misc. includes Program Guide revenues, donations, special assessments

4. Tax Increment Fund

Section 7-15-4282 MCA authorizes the use of Tax Increment Financing for Urban Renewal purposes. Resolution 87-3, establishing the Whitefish Urban Renewal Plan, was adopted by the City Council on May 4, 1987. The Tax Increment Finance district is projected to expire in 2020. In 2013, Tax Increment Fund expenditures for parks include:

- Sky Park Bridge - \$600,000
- Depot Park - \$525,000
- Riverside Park Trail Lighting - \$10,000

5. Whitefish Trail Fund

The purpose of the Whitefish Trail Fund is to provide budget authority to support efforts to design, construct and maintain the Whitefish Trail network on State Trust Lands, private land and federal land. Funds provided to the effort are primarily through private contributions. Local resident Michael Goguen contributed a \$3,000,000 donation in 2008 as part of a three-way land trade and trail development project. Part of the contribution was used to establish a permanent endowment to fund maintenance of the trail. This fund is a restricted trust fund and expenditures are limited to the purposes of the trust fund.

6. Land Acquisition Fund

The Parkland Acquisition and Development Fund is a capital fund designed to accommodate the purchase of parkland and enable park improvement projects funded through contributions, grants, and payments made in lieu of park land dedication requirements. Authority for the Parkland Acquisition and Development Fund derives in the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act, specifically Section 76-3-621 (5) MCA. In order to comply with the proximity requirements of the law, the City has designated three quadrants in the City where the funds are spent (Resolution 07-10). The Whitefish budget for 2013 indicated that the fund had \$411,332 and that projected expenditures for the year would use all of these funds. The majority of the expenditures are designated for trail improvements in the City. The subdivision regulations contain standards for accepting park land dedications.

Figure 4.4: Park Acquisition Areas



C. Programs

1. Recreation

Public skate sessions at the Stumptown Ice Den have the highest participation rate. The summer day camp and the afterschool programs each attract more than 2,500 participants. Recreation programs are primarily targeted to competitive sports activities. According to the community survey, there is a demand for fitness activities, outdoor recreation activities and programs targeted to seniors. The survey comments also expressed an interest in new recreational sports such as pickleball and folf.

Table 4.1: Participation in Recreational Programs

Activity - Stumptown Ice Den	#	Participant Days
Youth Hockey (Glacier Hockey Assoc.) (Ages 5-18)	150	
Whitefish Figure Skating Club	25	
Adult Hockey (Men & Women)	350	
Glacier Nationals Junior Hockey	25	
Public Skate Sessions (approx. 75 dates)		11,100
Learn to Skate	165	
Whitefish Curling Club	60	
Stick and Puck (140 Dates)		1,400
Recreation Programs		
Adult Softball (12 teams)	180	
Adult Soccer - Co-Rec	33	
Men's	75	
Youth Flag Football	35	
Youth Basketball	105	
Tennis Lessons (summer)	90	
Youth Sports Camps (Total)	140	
Soccer	100	
Tiny Dawgs	15	
Mini Dawgs	25	
Skatefish	26	
Summer Day Camp		2,560
After School Programs		2,700

Source: Whitefish Park and Recreation Department - 2013

2. Trails

The Park and Recreation Department is responsible for maintaining bike/pedestrian trails in the city. “Fish Trails” is the name of the pedestrian bike path system within the town of Whitefish. At present there are about 12 miles of trails in the Fish Trail system. (See map in Chapter 5) The Trail Maintenance budget for 2013 was \$35,935. Funds for new construction of these trails come from a variety of sources including the, Tax Increment Fund and Federal Highway Funds. In the past, the city has utilized Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) funds and other grants to build trails. In the past, a community group called Fish Trails also conducted fundraising for the trails system.

3. Maintenance

The Park and Recreation Department is responsible for maintenance of all city parks and properties. Maintenance activities include landscaping, weed control, building maintenance, upkeep of park and equipment and athletic facilities. The City has partnerships with several organizations that maintain and operate special use facilities such as Smith Fields, Glacier Twins Stadium and the Whitefish Lake Golf Course. The city is responsible for maintenance of the Ice Den. The park maintenance shop is located on Moneghan Road. The Park and Recreation Department administrative offices are located in Depot Park.

4. Urban Forestry

The Whitefish Parks, Recreation and Community Service Department is also responsible for maintaining the city’s urban forest. The urban forest includes trees located within the city parks and on city properties as well as street trees within the city right-of-way. The City has a Tree Advisory Committee which advises staff and City Council on matters related to the urban forest. The City manages the forest in conformance with standards established by Arbor Day Foundation -Tree City USA program.

Figure 4.5 Street Trees in Whitefish



D. Partnerships

Increasingly, park and recreation departments across the country are relying on partnerships with other government agencies, civic organizations, non-profit groups and private businesses to accomplish the goals of the plans. Partnerships can create cost efficiencies through pooling resources, sharing costs, and joint programming. Multiple partners can generate a broader base of community support for projects. Grant makers are more likely to fund projects that are leveraging community resources from several partners. The City already has established a number of successful partnerships with a variety of organizations. Additionally, a number of potential partnerships and collaborations were identified during the planning process.

Table 4.2: Partnership Opportunities

Organization	Comments
Fish Trails	Community group. Fundraising for trails. Bike Week.
Flathead County Health Dept.	Fitness programs. Champion for Healthy Kids Grant (General Mills), Let's Move program, Healthy by Design.
Flathead County Park & Rec	County Parks on Whitefish Lake. Coordinate on bike/pedestrian trail planning.
Flathead County Planning - Trails Program	CTEP Grant Program.
Flathead Fat Tire	501(c)(3). Involved in dirt jumps at Amory Park. Working with Whitefish Trails to build, maintain and patrol trail system at Spencer Lake.
Glacier Twins	Fundraising for Glacier Twins Stadium Project to build new grandstand at Memorial Park. Manages & Operates stadiums.
Heart of Whitefish	Coordinates on events – Farmers Markets & Implementation of Downtown Plan.
Montana Dept. of Natural and Resource Conservation	Manages state trust land around Whitefish. Coordinates on Whitefish Trail system. Participates on Legacy Lands Advisory Committee. DNRC Urban Forestry Grants.
State of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks	Recreational Trails Program. Operates two state parks in the planning area with access on Whitefish Lake. City input on goals for State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.
North Valley Hospital	Wellness program – Plane Tree. Trails on hospital property. Community Health Assessment.
Project Whitefish Kids	Manages Smith Fields and operates sports programs.
Skatepark	Fundraising for skate park.
The Wave	Coordinates on programs with Parks and Recreation Department. There is a need for fitness programs for school age youth. O'Brien Park potential for programs. Climbing wall is a possibility.

Great Northern Veterans Peace Park	Connect to trail system. Events. Potential future amphitheater. Public-private partnership.
Volunteers	Board members, advisory groups, volunteer coaches, assist at special events. Potential adopt-a-park.
Whitefish Animal Group (W.A.G.)	Fundraising and planning for Dog Park. Sponsors events at parks. Volunteer clean-up/maintenance.
Whitefish Chamber of Commerce	Special Events in parks. "Clean the Fish" trash pick-up event.
Whitefish Community Center	Coordinate on senior programs, senior volunteers
Whitefish Convention and Visitor's Bureau	Produce and distribute maps and information to visitors about trails and parks in Whitefish.
Whitefish Curling Club	Curling league at Ice Den.
Whitefish Figure Skating Club	Coordinates on programming.
Whitefish Hockey Assoc.	Coordinates on leagues and programming.
Whitefish Housing Authority	Maintains trail along river adjacent to Mountain View Manor. Coordinates on senior programming.
Whitefish Lake Institute	Manages Averill's Viking Creek Wetland Preserve. Includes trails and interpretive areas. Coordinates on trailhead at Crestwood Park. Coordinates on water quality issues for parks on Whitefish Lake and Whitefish River. Potential to assist in land acquisition & grants for water quality. Program with High School students to volunteer on planting vegetation and testing for water quality.
Whitefish Lakes Golf Association	Leases land from city for golf course. Nordic skiing in winter. Partner with Whitefish Nordic Club on trail grooming.
Whitefish Legacy Partners	Constructs and operates trail system on State Trust Land. City is the easement holder. Funding partner.
Whitefish Library	Coordinate on special events in Depot Park. Can provide meeting space. Distributes information about programs.
Whitefish Mountain Resort	Manages and maintains their own trail system. Coordinates on rec programming.
Whitefish School District	Safe Routes to Schools. Fifth grade ski program. After school programs at Muldown – possibly expand at middle-school. Ropes Challenge Course. High School students looking for volunteer opportunities. Coordinates on rec programming for high school age. Coordinates on improving tennis courts at Memorial Park. Coordinates on incorporating healthy living principles in programs. Whitefish Care program. Football games at stadium at Memorial Park. Joint use of facilities.

V. Needs Assessment Analysis

A. Park Classifications

Park Classification Types are assigned to each inventoried facility. The park classification descriptions are based on National Recreation and Park Association descriptions and customized to reflect the unique qualities of the Whitefish. The term 'Park' is used to refer to physical systems. Parks are typically open, accessible land areas with both structured and unstructured outdoor activities occurring in them. The inventory includes parks within the City of Whitefish and in the surrounding planning area. In order to assess the level of service that is provided, parks owned or operated by city, county, state agencies are included in the inventory. Some park and recreation facilities are operated in partnership with non-profit entities and these are included as well. Following is the classification system used for this inventory.

Pocket Parks: Pocket Parks, mini-parks, tot lots, and children's playgrounds are small, single-purpose play lots generally less than two acres in size. They are generally located within ¼ mile of a residential area, provide some passive open space for local residents and provide a small amenity where there is limited land for a larger park. Park features usually include a small open grass area and may include a children's playground or a picnic area.

Neighborhood Parks: Neighborhood parks are a combination playground/park designed primarily for non-organized recreation activities. Located within walking and bicycling distance of most users, they are generally moderate in size (about 3-10 acres) and serve people living within walking distance of about one-half mile of the park. Neighborhood parks provide access to basic recreation opportunities for nearby residents, enhance neighborhood identity and preserve open space. Facilities typically found in neighborhood parks include playgrounds, picnic tables and benches, trails, open grass areas/information play areas, basketball courts and tennis courts.

Community Park: A community park is a larger park that provides active and structured recreation opportunities primarily for young people and adults. These parks may range in size from 25 acres up to 100 acres. Community parks have a larger service area of approximately a one to two mile radius around the park. Community parks typically include facilities to support large group activities, and most often include sports fields. Also, they are large enough to allow for passive recreation opportunities as well as individual and family use. Community parks may provide swimming pools, community gardens, or indoor facilities to meet a wider range of recreation interests. As a result, they require support facilities, such as parking and restrooms.

Sports Complex: Sport complexes are athletic facilities that include parking lot area, drinking water, lighting, multiplied organized ball fields, courts and bathrooms. They serve people from the city and county. A minimum size of at least 20 acres is recommended for optimum use. They are designed for active recreation use and are often managed in partnership with athletic associations and other user groups. Athletic fields and facilities can be used for a variety of sports so as to be inclusive of more participants.

Special Use Park: This park classification covers a broad range of parks and recreation facilities oriented toward single-purpose uses, such as a nature center, aquatic center, equestrian facility, arboretum, campground and golf course. These parks serve a broad cross section of the community. Often these parks offer fee-based activities and may or may not be public parks. The size of these parks is dependent on facility requirement and specific uses. Special use park and recreation facilities may also include cultural/heritage features or attractions.

Figure 5.1: City Beach



Natural Areas/Open Space: This type of park that may include environmentally sensitive lands, steep terrain, forested areas, water bodies, flood plain and other natural areas that are only minimally developed and may serve as conservation areas, educational and wildlife watching opportunities. The size range of this park type varies but should be linked to other open spaces and parkland to maintain park system connectivity. Trails, wildlife viewing areas and other amenities can be integrated to provide passive recreation opportunities.

“There are no specific standards for how much conservation land a community ought to have. Instead, it is dependent on the number and quality of natural and historical resources in the area, public desire to preserve these valuable sites, and the willingness of the elected body to provide funds for their preservation.” Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, National Recreation and Park Association.

Linear Park: Linear parks and trails provide non-motorized transportation and recreation opportunities and connect parks, open spaces and other areas with greenways to form a cohesive park system. Linear Parks may be in a healthy, natural state or developed landscape areas and other lands that follow corridors such as active or abandoned rights-of-way, creeks, canals, power lines and other linear, elongated features. These parks may compose portions of a system of green infrastructure and serve as links from one park to another.

Water Access Park: Water Access Parks range in size from small to large sites. These parks can include road rights-of way, riparian areas, or be a component of other park types, like a regional park and others described in this chapter. This type of park is primarily designed to provide fishing, boat or swimming access. Often these parks inhabit environmentally sensitive areas. Planning, design and development should be conducted carefully to ensure the protection of natural systems, water quality and habitat.

B. Parks by Category

Table 5.1: Pocket Parks

Name	Size in Acres	Ownership	Comment
Kay Beller	0.6	City	Informal river access. Next to senior center. On the river trail. Planned trail expansion under bridge.
Soroptimist Park	0.8	City	Chemical free park. Update Play equipment
O'Brien Bluffs Park	1.0	City	Undeveloped. Concept plan completed.
Total	2.4		

Table 5.2: Neighborhood Parks

Name	Size in Acres	Ownership	Comment
Baker Park	1.5	City	Aka Kiddie Park, play equip. River access
Riverside Park	3.9	City	River access. Tennis courts. Pond. Trail access
Memorial Park	9.5	City	Stadium, tennis courts, play equip, basketball
Crestwood Park	2.5	City	Undeveloped
Total	17.4		

Table 5.3: Community Parks

Name	Size in Acres	Ownership	Comment
Amory Park	29.3	City	Softball fields, dog park, skate park, bike jump, Armory Building. Master Plan adopted.
Total	29.3		

Table 5.4 : Natural Area Parks

Name	Size in Acres	Ownership	Comment
Averill's Viking Creek Wetland Preserve	28.82	Whitefish Lake Institute	Wetlands, trail, preserve
Unnamed	0.344	City of Whitefish	North of Wisconsin Ave. & Reservoir Rd.
Iron Horse Conservation Easement/Trail	60	Private	No parking. Public easement for trail. No parking for trail.
Cow Creek Wetland Area	1.66	City	Not maintained by Park & Rec, natural drainage, wildlife corridor
Total	90.82		

Table 5.5: Sports Complex

Name	Size in Acres	Ownership	Comment
Smith Fields Sports Complex	39.1	City leases to Project Whitefish Kids	Baseball, soccer, softball, play equip
Grouse Mountain Park	7.9	City/WGA	Tennis courts, soccer fields, restroom
Total	47.0		

Table5. 6: Special Use Facility

Name	Size in Acres	Ownership	Comment
City Beach	2.6	City	Lake access, beach, picnic area. Master plan should be updated. Limited parking.
Depot Park	1.9	City	Pond. Used heavily for events. Master Plan adopted by City Council.
Mountain Trails Park	4.3	City	Ice Rink, Saddle Club meeting space, sand volleyball
Total	8.8		

Table5. 7: Linear Park

Name	Acres	Ownership	Comment
Riverwood Park	4.4	City	Bike trail & River access
River Trails Park	3.5	City	Requires revegetation
Creekwood Park	4.5	City	Undeveloped
The Lakes Park	16.6	City	Linear park and Paved Trail, detention pond, River access
Rivers Edge Park	4.7	City	AKA River's Park
Total	33.7		

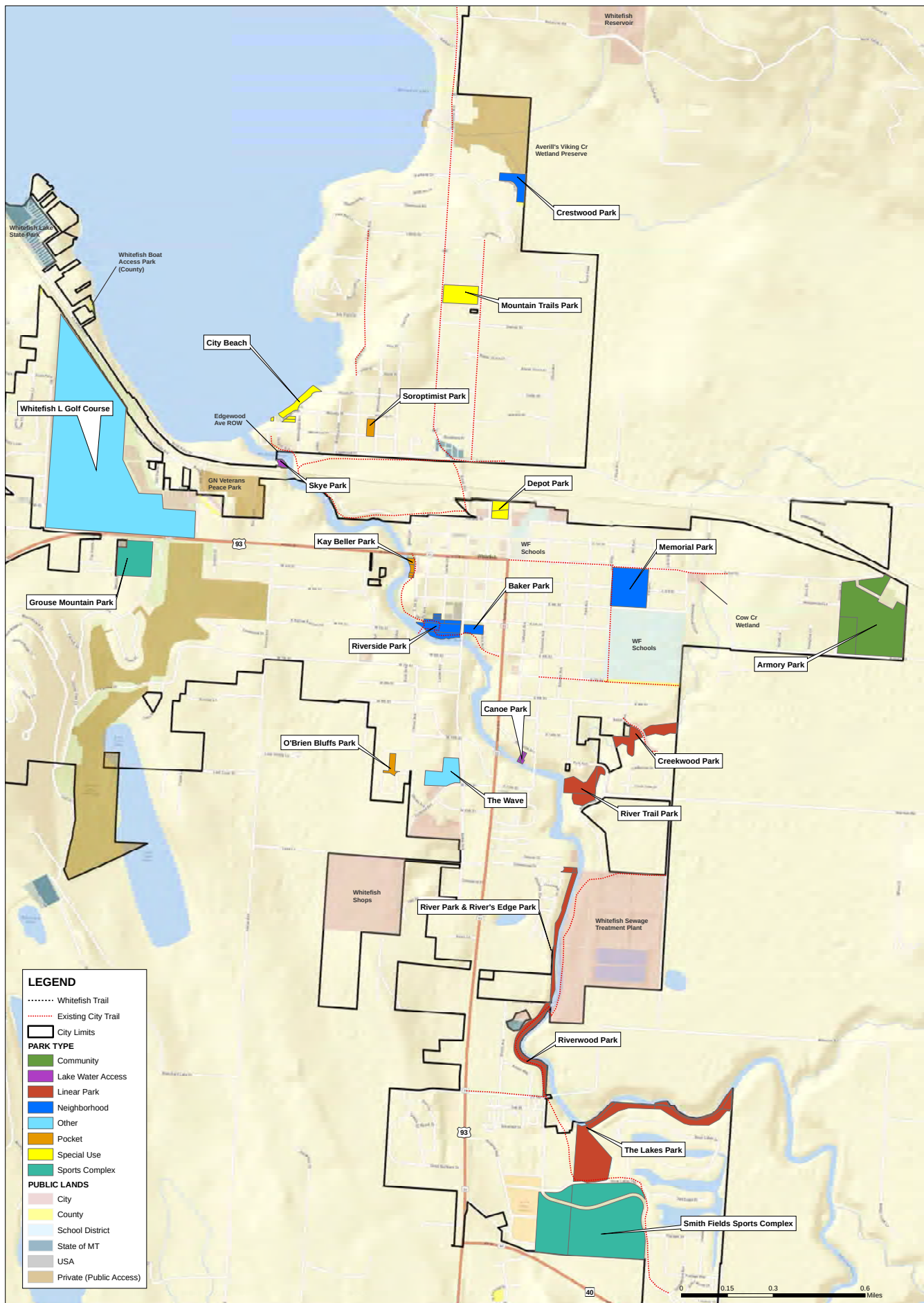
Table 5.8: Lake/Water Access

Name	Acres	Ownership	Comment
Samson Lake	< 1 acre	Private Subdivision	Lake access granted as part of subdivision approval. No parking. Walk-in access only.
Whitefish Lake Boat Access	<1 acre	County	Picnic area. Dock. Boat access & walk-in access
Blanchard Lake Boat Access	<1 acre	State	Boat launch. Parking.
Canoe Park	0.4	City	Undeveloped river access

Lazy Bay Boat Access	3.0	County	North side of Whitefish Lake. Parking. No facilities.
Skye Park	0.3	City	Undeveloped. River Access. Ped bridge planned.
Boat Club/Edgewood Ave ROW		City	Partial Development with the Skye Park Bridge & Trail project (2013)
Whitefish Lake Boat Access		County	Walk-in access from West Lakeshore Drive. Boat dock. Vault toilet. Picnic table. Handicap parking space.
Eagle Point Park		County	Undeveloped steep terrain. Not accessible. No parking.
Total	4.0		

Table 5.9: Other Recreation Facilities

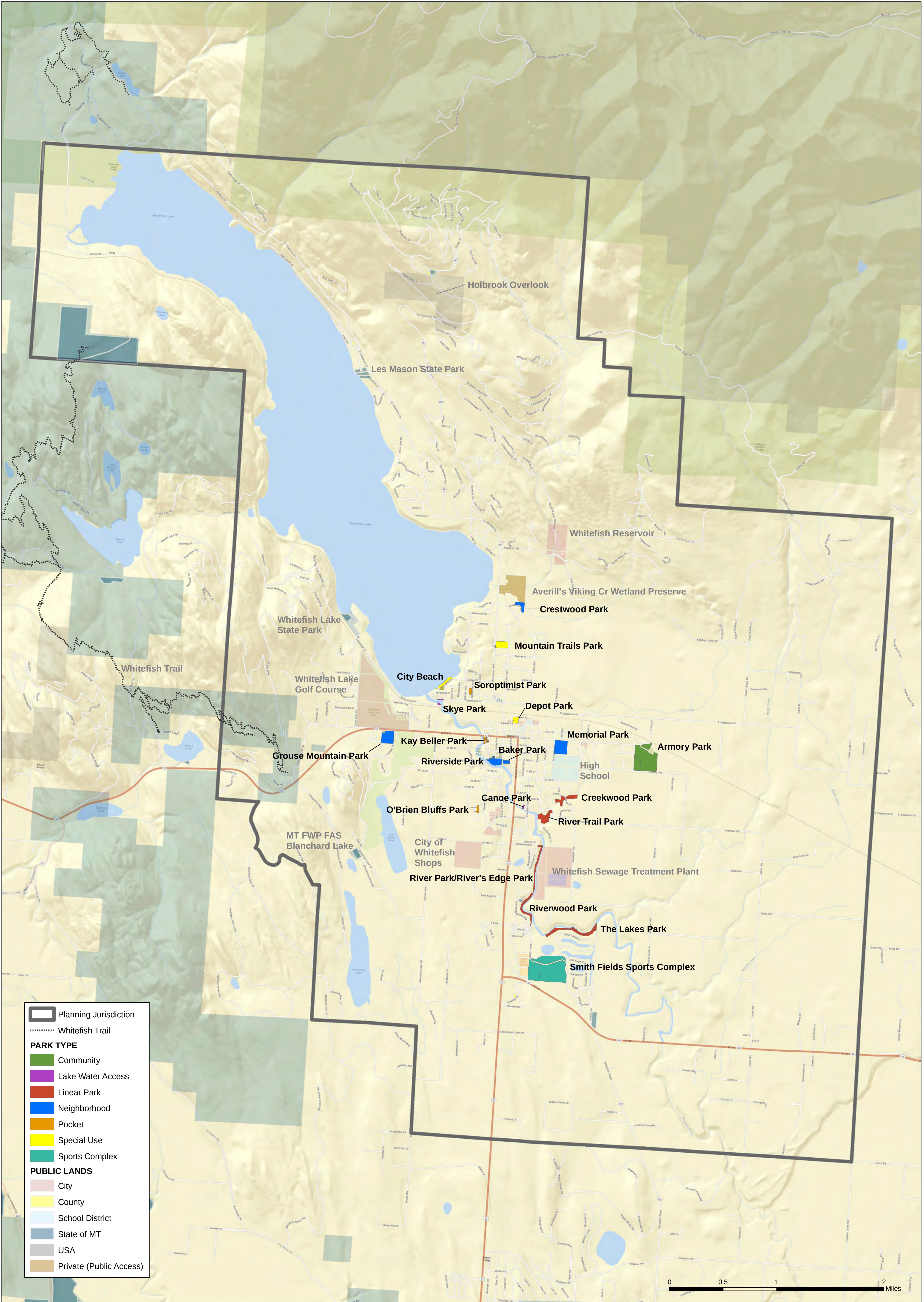
Name	Acres	Ownership	Comment
Whitefish State Park	7.42	MT FWP	Campground. Lake access.
Les Mason Park	3.7	MT FWP	Beach – Picnic – Fee area
The Wave	5	City leases to non-profit	Fitness – Indoor pool – Gym Fee based
Whitefish Lake Golf Course	60 (north course)	City & WGA	36 holes. City owns north course leases to WGA
Veteran's Peace Park	7.4	Private	Undeveloped. Park in design phase. Access allowed by permission of owner.
Bike & Pedestrian Paths		City	Continue to work on connectivity



WHITEFISH PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN

Map Data:
Parcel data from the Flathead
County Cadastral dataset
(10/2012) provided by the Flathead
County GISD department, 800 S
Main St, Kalispell, MT. Whitefish
Planning Jurisdiction from the City of
Whitefish. Whitefish Trail from the
Whitefish Legacy Partners.

Bruce Boody,
Landscape Architect Inc.
301 E 2nd Street, Suite 1B
Whitefish, Montana 59937
Phone: (406) 862-4755
Fax: (406) 862-9755



C. PER CAPITA ANALYSIS

A per capita analysis provides an indication of the level of service that is being provided based on the amount of park land compared to the population base. It is important to note that this is only one measure in a needs analysis and per capita figures must be considered along with other functional criteria. Additionally, national standards vary considerably. Unique community characteristics should be accounted for to determine the appropriate standard for each individual city. The per capita standards in the following table are compiled from a number of sources including the National Park and Recreation Association, American Planning Association and community park plans in Montana. The standards represent a range that can be used for comparison purposes. According to the following table, Whitefish currently does not meet per capita standards for pocket or neighborhood parks.

Table 5.10: Per Capita analysis

Park Classification	Existing Acres	Existing City (Acres per 1000 population)	Existing City & Planning Area (Acres per 1000 population)	Recommended Per Capita Park Guidelines (Acres per 1000)	Projected acreage or to meet per capita guidelines in 2030
Pocket	2.4	.37	n/a	0.5 – 1.0	4.5
Neighborhood	17.4	2.7	1.6	3.0 – 5.0	45
Community	29.3	4.6	2.7	4.0-5.0	60.5
Sub-totals	49.1				110
Sports Complex	47.0	n/a	n/a	20 acre min.	
Special Use	8.8	n/a	n/a	Varies per city	
Linear	33.7	n/a	n/a	Varies per city	
Total All Parks	138.6		21.8	10 acres	

Notes: 1. Compiled by Applied Communications -2012

2. Per Capita Standards – NRPA

3. Pocket park per capita needs based on city population



Figure 5.2: The play equipment at Baker Park was recently upgraded by the Whitefish Rotary

D. ATHLETIC FACILITY LOS

National benchmarks for athletic facilities are based on participation rates for each type of sport. These rates may vary from community to community. For example, a community that host tournaments typically has a higher proportion of athletic facilities than would otherwise be expected. Although well served by athletic facilities, Whitefish is a resort community and visitors put additional pressure on athletic facilities. The standards in Table 5.11, should be supplemented by public input to determine where there may be demand for facilities that exceed the national standards.

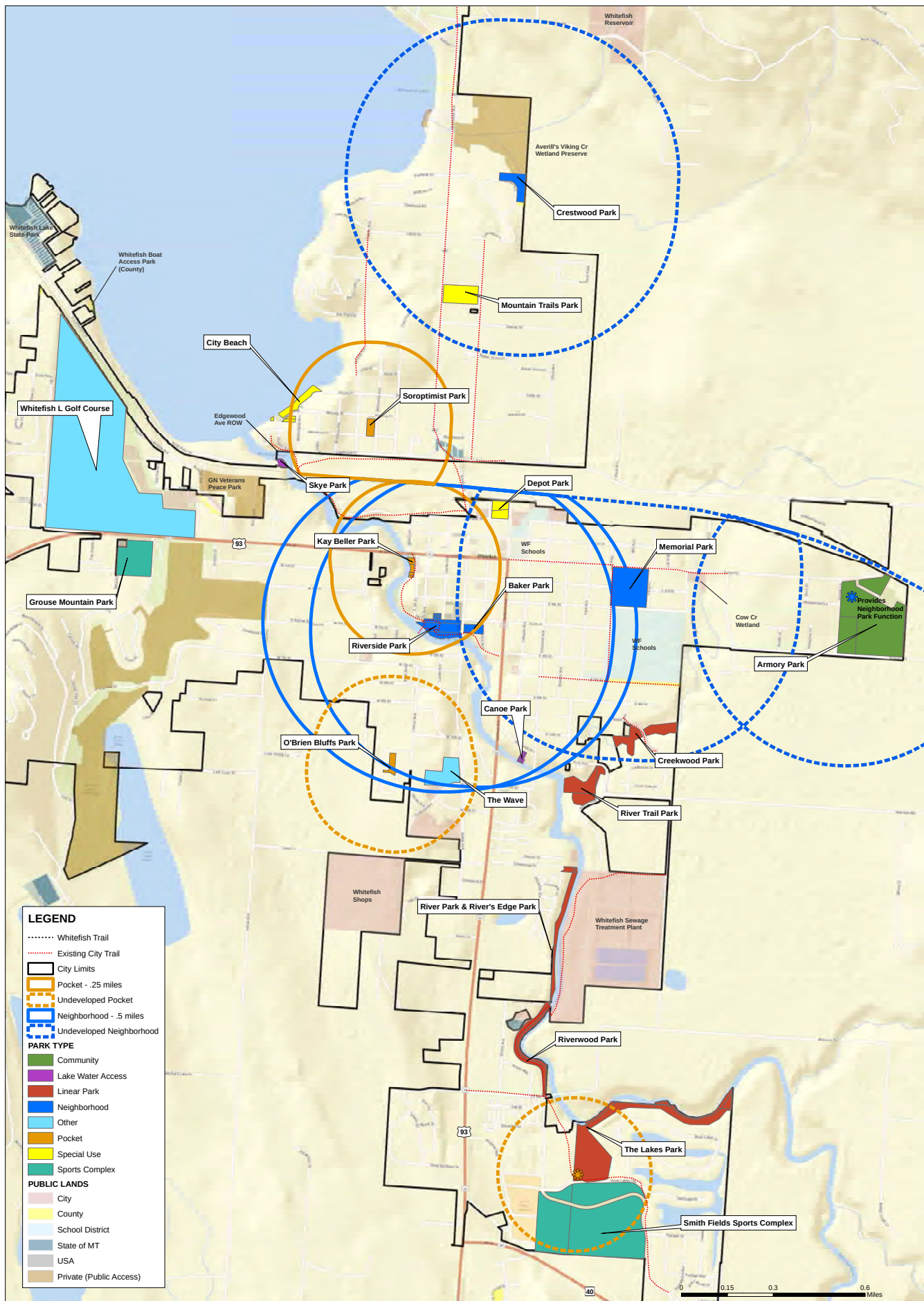
Table 5.11: Athletic Facility

Facility Type	#	Standard	Comment
Baseball –Little League High School	4 2	1 per 3000	Smith Fields host alsp tournaments.
Softball – Youth Adult	2 4	1 per 3000	Youth Fields – Smith Fields Adult Fields – Armory Park
Soccer Fields	12	1 per 6000	Exceed Standards
Tennis Courts	6	1 per 2000 to 3000	High school uses city tennis courts for tournaments. Meets Standards.
Basketball Courts	2	1 per 5000	Meets standards
Golf	36 holes	1 18 hole course per 50,000	Public course. Exceeds standards.
Swimming Pool	1 indoor	1 per 30,000	Membership at the Wave is required to use pool. City beach provides public swimming area in summer.
Skateboard Park	1	1 per community	Meets standards
Ice rink	1 indoor	1 per community	Meets standards but demand for ice time is exceeding capacity

Source: Compiled by Applied Communications. Standards compiled from park plans in Montana

E. Service Area Analysis

The service area analysis is a spatial analysis to determine if park and recreation facilities are conveniently located to all residential areas of the city. Service Area is measured as the radius from a park location outward in to the community. Neighborhood Parks are located within walking distance of the neighborhood residents. The Service Area for Neighborhood Parks is defined as a ½ mile distance uninterrupted by nonresidential roads and other physical barriers. Community Parks serve a larger area and may be reached by car, by bike or walking. Service Area for Community Parks is defined as a two mile distance. The National Recreation and Park Association recommends a system of neighborhood or pocket parks that are within convenient walking distance for all residents in order to address child health and obesity issues and eliminate “recreation deserts”. The following service area maps shows that currently underserved areas are located in the Colorado St.-Edgewood Dr. area and the area south of Voerman Road. A park would also be necessary to serve potential future development south of 7th St./Karrow Ave. intersection. Some areas such as have parks that have been dedicated but are still undeveloped. These include Crestwood and O’Brien Bluffs. Fees for subdivisions within the service area of these parks may be a source of funding to improve these parks.



F. FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS

Analyzing the need for parks according to function provides a community with a way to assess if the park system contains all of the components to meet the various open space and recreation needs of the community. The following table identifies the various park functions and groups parks accordingly. According to this analysis, the park system supports most of the critical functions but many facilities are overcrowded or outdated. Additionally, the community survey noted the need for restroom facilities in the parks.

Table 5.12: Functional Analysis

Function	Parks or Rec Areas	Comments
Play Park – Playground	Soroptimist Park, Baker Park, Memorial Park	Equipment at Memorial Park and Soroptimist is outdated
Sports park – Ballfields, organized sports	Grouse Mountain Park, Memorial Park, Smith Fields, Armory Park, Ice Rink	Smith Fields & Memorial Park operated in partnership with athletic groups
Passive – Gardens, formal landscape, picnic areas,...	Kay Beller, Depot Park, Baker Park, City Beach	Picnic tables at Kay Beller. Shelters at Baker Park & City Beach
Festive – Events group gatherings	Depot Park, Armory, Mountain Trails Park	Depot Park used for outdoor concerts & farmers markets but overuse is damaging turf. Indoor facilities at Amory & Mountain Trails parks but both facilities need upgrades.
Plaza – Urban design features	Depot Park	Master Plan adopted
Heritage – Museum, Interpretive Center	Stumptown Historical Museum	Non-profit operates museum. Some interpretive signs in parks but there are opportunities to expand signage.
Conservation – Wetland	Averell Wetland preserve & misc. natural park areas	Maintained by Whitefish Lake Institute (privately owned).
Water Access – Fishing, boating, swimming	Riverside Park, City Beach, & miscellaneous undeveloped sites	Overcrowding at beach & lack of parking. Bank erosion at Riverside park. Many water access sites re undeveloped. Water sites offer an opportunity to develop a canoe trail.
Alternative Recreation (Skateboard, Disc Golf, bike jump, rock climbing ...)	Armory	Skateboard, bike jump. Proposed climbing area for O'Brien park. Interest expressed in developing folk and other alternative sports.
Connectors – Trails	Whitefish Bike & Pedestrian Path System	Gaps in trail connections. Bike & Pedestrian Master Plan has been adopted by City
Fitness – Gym, exercise equipment	The Wave	Fee based. City leases land to non-profit. Other private gyms
Dog Park	Armory	Planned expansion and access to pond.
Wilderness-Hiking – Camping – Wildlife	Flathead Forest, State Park & State Trust Lands Undeveloped water access sites	Whitefish Trails on State Trust Land. City holds easement and land use license to build and maintain trails

G. Accessibility Analysis

The following tables indicate that almost each of the city parks have some shortcomings (various degrees of accessibility) regarding accessibility. These may range from insufficient parking, lack of facilities for people with limited mobility, or limited access from the street. The analysis only includes city facilities and does not evaluate other recreation facilities.

Table 5.13 : Accessibility Analysis

POCKET PARKS	Road Access	Parking Access	ADA	Pedestrian Access
Kay Beller	Road frontage	Off-street parking	ADA access from parking area to trail and boardwalk/river overlook	City bike/ped trail
Soroptimist	Road frontage	On-street parking	Needs improvements	Road Frontage

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS	Road Access	Parking Access	ADA	Pedestrian Access
Baker	Road frontage	On-street parking	ADA access to restrooms, playground areas, & picnic shelter	Sidewalks & City bike/ped trail
Riverside	Road frontage	Off-street parking	Handicap parking spaces, ADA asphalt trails	Sidewalks & City bike/ped trail Trail needs repair
Memorial	Road frontage	On-street & off-street parking	Needs improvements	Sidewalks & City bike/ped trail (only on north and west side of park)

COMMUNITY PARKS	Road Access	Parking Access	ADA	Pedestrian Access
Armory	Road frontage	Off-street parking. gravel parking area	Handicap parking, ADA sidewalks & trail, Dog Park – ADA trail	Proposed City bike/ped trail connection

SPECIAL USE PARKS	Road Access	Parking Access	ADA	Pedestrian Access
City Beach	Road frontage	Off-street parking	Handicap parking spaces; ADA trails and access to	Sidewalks & City bike/ped trail

			restrooms, concessions, and gazebos	
Depot	Road Frontage	On-street parking, overflow parking area to east	Handicap parking spaces on-street	Sidewalks
Mountain Trails	Road frontage	Off-street parking	Needs improvements	City bike/ped trail
Smith Fields Sports Complex	Road frontage	Off-street parking	Handicap parking, ADA trails	Sidewalks
Grouse Mountain	Road frontage	Off-street parking	ADA access to restrooms/rest area and tennis courts	Future access from proposed City bike/ped trail

LINEAR PARKS	Road Access	Parking Access	ADA	Pedestrian Access
Riverwood Park	Limited, from cul de sac	None	Future ADA trail from cul de sac to trail	City bike/ped trail

UNDEVELOPED/	Road Access	Parking Access	ADA	Pedestrian Access
Canoe	Road frontage	None	N/A	None
Creekwood	Road frontage	None	N/A	Paved trail
Crestwood	Road frontage	None	N/A	None, but trail connections have been proposed
The Lakes	Limited road frontage	None	N/A	None, but trail connections have been proposed
O'Brien Bluffs	Road frontage	None	N/A	None
River Trail	Limited road frontage	None	N/A	None
Rivers Edge/River Park	Limited parking on Greenwood Court	None	N/A	Trail access at Greenwood Court
Skye	Limited	None	N/A	None

H. Condition Analysis

The City-owned parks in Whitefish are maintained by the Whitefish Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department, athletic associations, and service organizations. The Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department primary maintenance duties include mowing, weeding, irrigating, trash removal, and snow plowing.

The table below is a compilation of comments from the Parks & Recreation Staff, observation by Consultants, and from public input. This condition analysis for each park was conducted in regards to safety, accessibility and conformance with weed ordinances. Some concerns that should be evaluated include:

SAFETY

1) Aging trees, dense vegetation, older play equipment, broken sidewalks and trails, and proximity to vehicular traffic influence the real and perceived safety for park users.

2) Older play areas need to be evaluated for conformance with current playground safety requirements and playground design objectives. References to use for this evaluation include:

- U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Public Playground Safety Handbook, <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/325.pdf>
- National Program for Playground Safety, University of Iowa, www.playgroundsafety.org
- ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) for Play Areas, <http://www.access-board.gov/play/index.htm>
- International Playground Equipment Manufacturers Association (IPEMA). IPEMA provides third party Product Certification services for U.S. and Canadian public play equipment and public play surfacing materials in the U.S. www.ipema.org
- 'Boundless Playgrounds', a national non-profit dedicated to helping communities create barrier-free playgrounds; and
- 'Center for Creative Play', a national leader in the design and development of all inclusive play environments, with a mission of promoting the importance of play for all children.

Table 5.14 : Condition Analysis

POCKET PARKS	Maintenance	Vegetation	Condition/Upgrades
Kay Beller	City Parks Dept.	Lawn area; riparian area; naturalized plantings	Weed control needed in naturalized planting areas; Erosion control required at shoreline/river access area
Soroptimist	City Parks Dept.	Lawn area; shade trees minimal shrub plantings	Existing play equipment and fall zone area needs to be upgraded to conform to current safety regulations

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS	Maintenance	Vegetation	Condition/Upgrades
Baker	City Parks Dept.	Lawn area; shade trees, shrub hedge	Trees are in various states of health
Riverside	City Parks Dept.	Lawn area; shade trees; riparian area; naturalized plantings	Paved trails are in poor condition. Tennis courts need rebuilding. Pond needs dredging & weed control.
Memorial	City Parks Dept.	Lawn area; shade trees; minimal shrub plantings	Play equipment is outdated. Basketball court needs resurfacing; streetscape improvements on east and south sides of park. Replace tennis courts.

COMMUNITY PARKS	Maintenance	Vegetation	Condition/Upgrades
Armory	City Parks Dept.	Lawn area; shade trees; ornamental landscape around Armory building	Armory building needs floor improvements & HVAC system; improved drainage for ball fields; restrooms & concessions. Dog Park needs improved drainage & pond expansion.

SPECIAL USE PARKS	Maintenance	Vegetation	Condition/Upgrades
City Beach	City Parks Dept.	Naturalized plantings; riparian areas; lawn areas; shade & evergreen trees; shrub plantings	Lakeshore areas need stabilization, retaining wall improvements, develop dock & boardwalk system
Depot	City Parks Dept.	Lawn area; shade trees	See Depot Park Master Plan (Appendix X)

Grouse Mountain	City Parks Dept. maintains tennis courts, restrooms and irrigation system. Golf course mows soccer fields.	Lawn area; shade trees	City monument/entry sign reconstruction (with new landscape area)
Mountain Trails	City Parks Dept.	Lawn area; shade & evergreen trees; shrub plantings; small raised garden plot (summer camp)	Outdoor plaza is in disrepair. Saddle Club building needs remodel.
Smith Fields Sports Complex	Project Whitefish Kids (PWK) leases property and performs all maintenance work	Lawn areas; shade trees	PWK plans to replace play equipment & install safety surfacing/containment

LINEAR PARKS	Maintenance	Vegetation	Condition/Upgrades
Riverwood	City Parks Dept. & Fish Trails	Native & naturalized vegetation	Needs weed control

UNDEVELOPED/ OPEN SPACE PARKS	Maintenance	Vegetation	Condition/Upgrades
Canoe	None	Mowed lawn area, native & naturalized vegetation	Undeveloped
Creekwood	None	Native & naturalized vegetation	Undeveloped
Crestwood	None	Native & naturalized vegetation	Undeveloped
O'Brien Bluffs	None	Native & naturalized vegetation	See the Play Area Conceptual Design
River Trails	None	Native & naturalized vegetation	Undeveloped, forestry management required
Rivers Edge/ River Park	None	Dense native & naturalized vegetation	Trail needs maintenance and connectivity
Skye	None	Native & naturalized vegetation	Proposed bike/ped bridge & trail connections

I. Trails

The following map show the existing and proposed trails for the City of Whitefish. On the north end of town, the trail along Wisconsin Avenue starts from Edgewood (and the BN Loop) and goes north paralleling Wisconsin Avenue all the way to Houston Point providing much safer access to the Big Mountain Road and the ride to the head of Whitefish Lake. On the south end of the trail system, a bridge across the Whitefish River at the north end of the Rocksund section of the River Trail was completed in 2009. This section of trail continues along the east bank of the river along city property and connects to Monegan Road. Planned expansions to the trail system include extending the East Second Street trail from Armory Road to the WAG Dog Park, extension of trail west along U.S. 93 from Kay Beller Park to Spencer Lake and construction of the Sky Bridge to provide a connection over the Whitefish River near the City Beach trail segment

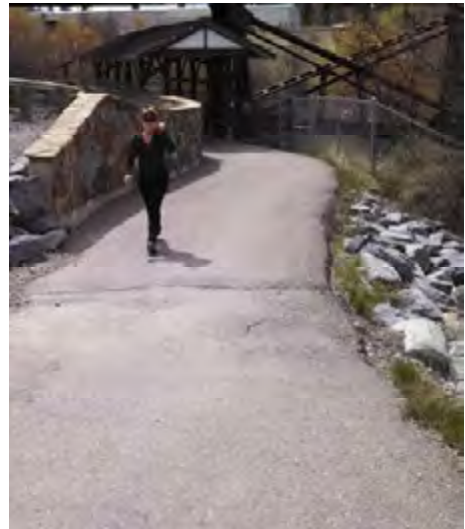
The City adopted the “Whitefish Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan” as part of the Transportation Plan over 10-years ago. Those involved in developing the plan include the City Council, the Whitefish Parks Board, the Whitefish Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee, the Whitefish School District, Cross Currents Christian School, Whitefish Chamber of Commerce, and Whitefish Housing Authority.

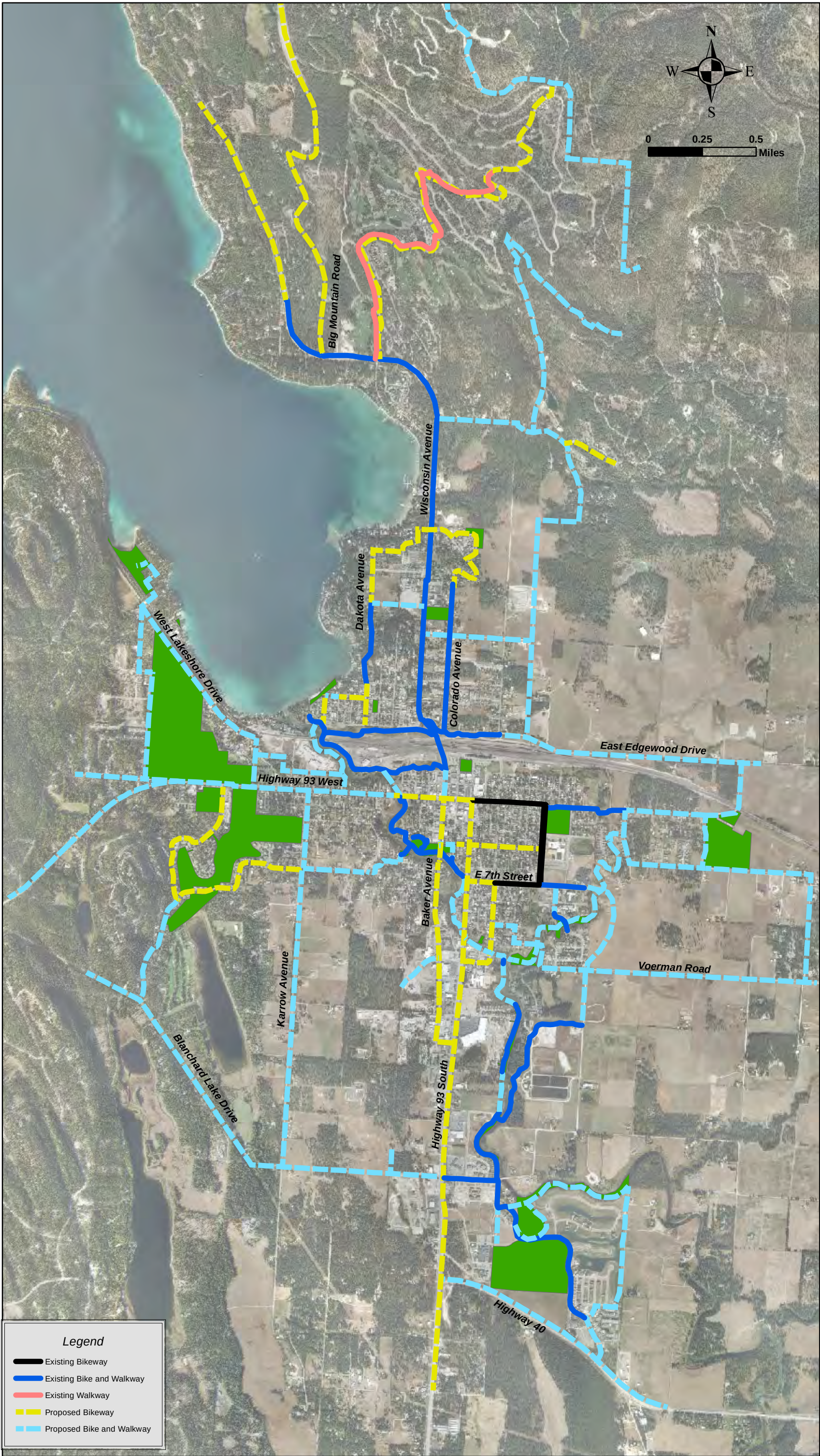
There is a need to update the Master Plan to reflect the improvements that have been made to the trail system since the original plan was adopted and to reflect new priorities. Completing the trail system to fill in gaps between existing trails and providing connectivity to schools, parks and recreation sites were a top objective of the community survey. There is also an opportunity to coordinate development of the trail system with the Safe Routes to Schools program, Whitefish Trails and other transportation improvements.

The Transportation Plan adopted in 2009 discussed the potential for non-motorized transportation to be part of a transportation demand management system. The Transportation Plan also recommended the bike and ped plan be updated in order to provide the foundation for concurrency requirements.

An important aspect of trail development is to provide access points to the trails where there would be parking and other trailhead amenities. The city should consider requiring these access points prior to accepting new trail easements.

Figure 5.3 : Whitefish Trail





Whitefish Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan Trail Map

J. Summary of Needs

1. Whitefish does not meet the Level of Service per capita standards for pocket parks and should identify opportunities to develop additional pocket parks in the city to serve underserved areas. Whitefish does not meet Level of Service per capita standards for neighborhood parks within the city limits. The City will need additional parks to meet projected growth needs. Parks should be located in underserved areas and in new developing areas.
2. Current underserved geographic areas for both neighborhood and pocket parks are the Colorado Street/Edgewood Drive area and the area south of Voerman Road. Future development south of 7th Street and Karrow Ave. creates a need for a neighborhood park in that area. Pocket parks or a neighborhood park are needed in the Grouse Mountain area.
3. Whitefish generally exceeds national standards for athletic facilities. The number of basketball courts is below national standards but the community survey did not indicate a strong demand for this facility. The number of soccer fields exceeds national standards but since Whitefish is a destination to host tournaments, there may be demand to add fields if warranted by a feasibility study. The number of tennis courts exceeds national standards but the courts are spread out and not conducive to hosting tournaments. The number of ice rinks meets national standards but there is a high demand for ice time by a variety of interest groups. A feasibility study to expand the ice rink would be needed to determine the best way to meet this need. There is a growing demand for alternative sports facilities – such as disc golf.
4. The functional analysis indicates the city parks provide a wide range of both passive and active recreational opportunities. There is a high demand for these facilities, however, creating a need to expand facilities to address crowding issues. Additionally, some facilities are underdeveloped or outdated and need to be upgraded and modernized.
5. The accessibility analysis indicates that the pocket parks, neighborhood parks and the community park generally have good road and pedestrian access.
6. Inadequate parking is an issue for City Beach and Depot Park. Pedestrian access and parking are generally an issue for the water access sites. The city should prepare site plans for existing water access parks to address these issues. When accepting dedication of any park land in the future, pedestrian access and parking plans should be required as part of the dedication. Site plans and master plans for individual parks should also include ADA features.
7. An on-going issue for most park departments is maintaining and updating existing facilities with limited budgets. Whitefish is no exception. Most of the parks are showing signs of wear and tear due to the high usage and consequently parks require upgrades to facilities and maintenance to improve the health of existing vegetation.
8. The Whitefish bike and pedestrian path system is expanding every year. Providing connectivity between segments of the trails and expanding the system to growth areas are major objectives.
9. There is a demand for more water access sites. There is a need for improvements in undeveloped parks that were accepted with subdivision developments but have not been improved in accordance with the neighborhood plans for these areas.

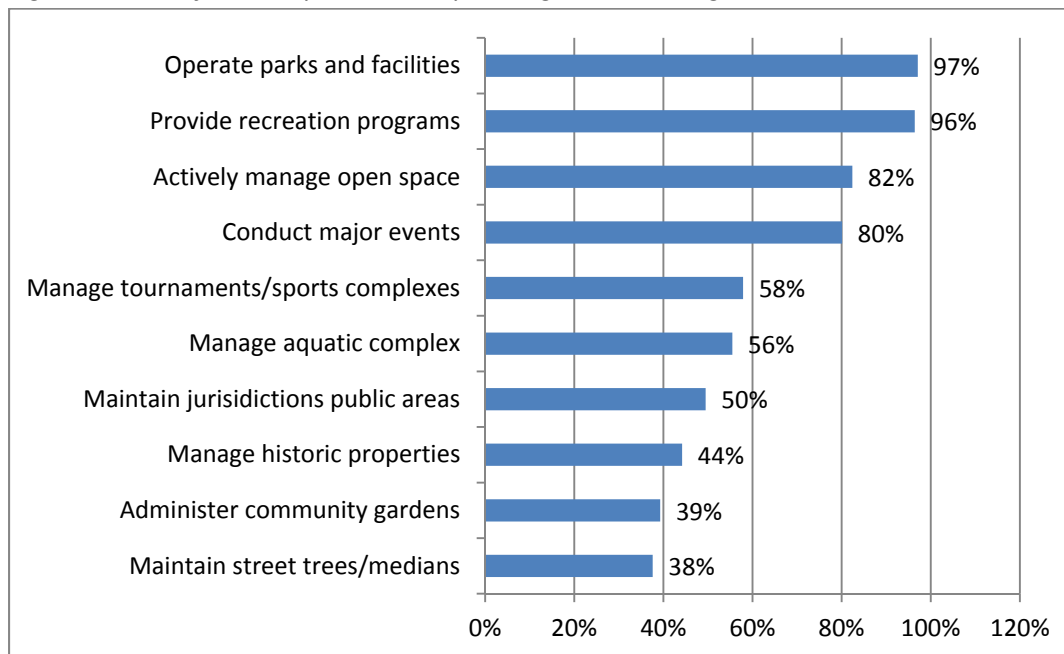
VI. Trends

A. Recreation Trends

1. Parks and Recreation Programming

According to a survey by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), the most common types of responsibilities for parks and recreation departments is operating parks, recreation programming, managing open space and conducting events. Less frequent, but a growing trend is to manage other community facilities such as historic properties, sports complexes and community gardens. The NRPA survey also indicates that park departments are relying more on nonprofit partners, private vendors and contractors for the operation and maintenance of facilities. These partnerships are forming in part because of reduced funding from federal, state and local governments. The NRPA notes that while partnerships represent an opportunity to expand program offerings, the challenge to this approach is to make certain that access to public parks and programs are open to households of all income levels and not just those groups that can afford to subsidize the effort.

Figure 6.1: % of Park Departments Operating Selected Programs and Facilities

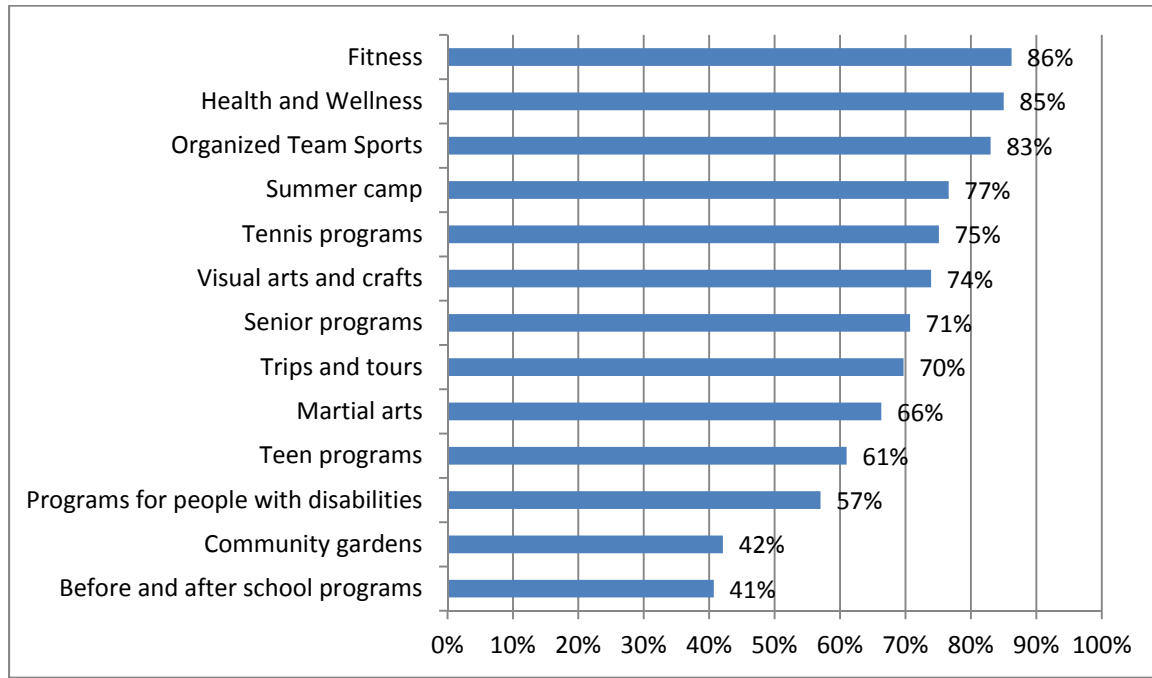


Source: National Recreation and Parks Association, "National Database Report", 2012

2. Recreation Programming

Park and recreation programs are serving a more diverse constituent base and consequently are providing a wider array of programs than in the past. The NRPA data is useful to compare program offerings with other communities. The most common programs are fitness/wellness, team sports and summer camps. The NRPA notes that programs offerings are often evaluated on a cost-revenue analysis. Partnering with other agencies to offer programs is becoming more common.

Figure 6..2: Park and Recreation Program Offerings



Source: National Recreation and Parks Association, "National Database Report", 2012

3. Outdoor Recreation Participation Rates

Montana, along with the Whitefish area, has exceptional opportunities for outdoor recreation activities. The most common type of outdoor activity is jogging. Other common activities include bicycling, skiing, canoeing, kayaking, hiking, skiing (Alpine and Nordic), wildlife viewing, hunting and fishing. Activities such as adventure racing, paddle boarding, mountain biking and climbing are becoming more common. Facilitating outdoor experiences can be an important aspect of physical fitness.

According to the Outdoor Foundation, outdoor recreation reached the highest participation level in five years. Outdoor recreation in 2011 experienced a significant improvement over the past few years when participation either dropped or remained stagnant. Residents in the Rocky Mountain West are more likely to participate in outdoor recreation opportunities than other parts of the country with

61% of residents engaging in outdoor activities as opposed to 50% nationwide. Younger age cohorts are more likely to participate in outdoor recreation. The age group from 6-17 reports 63% outdoor participation rates compared to 56% for the 18-44 age group and 38% for the over 45 age group. (Source: “Outdoor Recreation Participation Report-2012”, www.outdoorfoundation.org)

B. Public Health

According to the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), “Summary of Research Papers: Key Benefits of Parks”, more than one-third of adults in this country are clinically obese while one third of American children are overweight and one in six is obese. There is a strong correlation between health and participating in outdoor activities and recreational programs. People of all ages realize physical and mental health benefits from exercise. Parks provide the venues for organized sports, running, biking, gardening, hiking, swimming and many others activities. Multiple studies indicate that time spent outdoors is the strongest predictor of children’s physical activity. Diabetic individuals taking 30-minute walks in a forest experienced lowered blood glucose levels than the same amount of time spent exercising indoors. Additionally, parks and tree-lined streets promote psychological well-being. The NRPA cites studies that demonstrate green views and outdoor natural environments can improve cognitive functioning, impulse control, resilience to stressful life events, and overall mental health. Conversely, studies report a link between low nature access with increases in attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), clinical depression, stress, and anxiety.

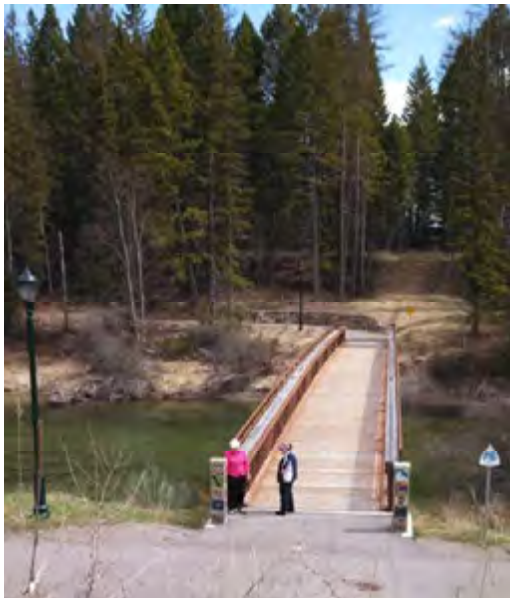
Figure 6.3 Fitness equipment in parks is becoming more popular – Below are examples from the North Valley Hospital Fitness Trail



In recognition of this connection between health and the built environment, a number of national, state and local initiatives are promoting exercise through greater access to parks and natural areas, including:

- Let's Move Campaign (www.letsmove.gov/) – National initiative to promote nutrition and active lifestyles. The campaign has partnered with the National League of Cities to provide resources for local governments. www.healthycommunitieshealthyfuture.org
- Montana Nutrition and Physical Activity Program (MNPAP) – Administered by the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPPH) and funded by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The program focuses on environments and efforts to create better daily opportunities for physical activity and healthful. <http://mtnapa.com/>
- Flathead City-County Health Department – Department has nutrition and physical activity program. <http://www.flathead.mt.gov/healthpromotion/?new>
- Children and Nature Network – National non-profit was created to encourage and support the people and organizations working nationally and internationally to reconnect children with nature. Missoula has adopted a No Child Left Inside initiative that is based on these programs. Montana has a license plate to help fund activities. (www.childrenandnature.org)
- Whitefish CARE Program - CARE is a non-profit organization sponsored by the Whitefish School District. It is committed to healthy & drug free schools and encourages a tobacco free community. http://wfps.k12.mt.us/CARE/about_us_CARE.htm
- North Valley Hospital – Planetree Program promotes wellness and healing including a walking trail adjacent to the hospital. <http://www.nvhosp.org/nv.nsf/View/Planetree2008>

Figure 6.4 – Pedestrian Bridge over Whitefish River



Convenient access to trails promotes walking and fitness.

C. Economic

Investment in parks as a component of the community infrastructure has been proven to have positive economic benefits for a community. These benefits range from visitor spending to increased property values. Attractive parks and a variety of recreational programs contribute to a high quality of life in the community and can be a factor in attracting retirees, businesses and employees. This section documents some of the economic benefits of parks and recreation services.

1. Tourism

Many tourists travel to Flathead County to visit a Glacier Park but there are many visitors that engage in activities that take place in a city park or participate in a local sporting event. Attractions in city parks may entice out-of-state visitors to extend their vacations and spend more dollars at local businesses. Visitors spend money on a variety of expenses including admission fees, eating out, food, shopping, lodging, gas, and other entertainment. The income generated from visitors generally stays in the local economy creating employment opportunities and supporting local businesses.

The economic impact of visitors to parks or sporting events can be significant. According to data from the University of Montana, the average expenditure per day for a single visitor ranges from about \$100 to \$150 depending on the nature of the trip. For example, a soccer tournament that attracts 100 out-of-town visitors for a weekend tournament has the potential to generate up to \$150,000 of visitor spending per day. Likewise, if 100 visitors per year extend their stay in Whitefish by just one day to enjoy a special event or ride the Whitefish Trail, that would also amount to \$150,000 of direct spending in town.

Table 1: Expenditures and Average Length of Stay by Purpose of Visit for Montana Visitors -2011

	Avg. Length of Stay	Avg. Daily Expend.	% of Visitors to Flathead County
Vacation/Recreation/Pleasure	5.75	\$151.50	61%
Visiting Friends/Relatives	6.20	\$135.15	21%
Passing Through	0.89	\$99.84	11%
Business/Convention/Meeting	8.03	\$128.99	7%
Other	11.62	\$112.38	1%
Shopping	1.09	\$455.22	n/a

Source: Institute of Tourism and Recreation Research, University of Montana, <http://www.itrr.umt.edu/expendVisitation.htm>

2. Proximate Principal

An increasing number of studies indicate that properties located adjacent to or near an amenity such as parks or open space have higher resell values and consequently generate more property tax revenues. This phenomenon is known as the “Proximate Principle”. Real estate developers use this principle to design subdivisions with amenities such as golf courses or common areas/green spaces.

To have a positive effect on property values, a park must be managed to be an amenity to nearby residents. Parks that are not well maintained, poorly designed, or have problems with traffic congestion and vandalism can negate potential for increased land values. When properly managed and designed, however, the increase tax revenues that are generated by premium locations to a park can greatly offset the costs of land acquisition and development of the park.

D. Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure is an approach to promote water quality, provide healthy ecosystems and support sustainable communities. Green infrastructure uses vegetation, soils, and natural processes to manage water and create healthier urban environments. At a city-level green infrastructure refers to the patchwork of natural areas that provides habitat, flood protection, cleaner air, and cleaner water. Parks, open space and the urban forest are important components of green infrastructure. Key principles for green infrastructure include:

1. Creating an interconnected system of parks and open space is more beneficial than creating parks in isolation.
2. Cities can use parks to help preserve essential ecological functions and to protect biodiversity.
3. When planned as part of a system of green infrastructure, parks can help shape urban form and buffer incompatible uses.
4. Cities can use parks to reduce public costs for stormwater management, flood control, transportation and other forms of built infrastructure.

(Source: American Planning Association “City Parks Forum - Briefing Papers”)

Proximate Principle

Following are the conclusions from a review of studies on the impact of parks on land values:

- The effect on property values does correlate with the size and use of the park.
- Properties that are located near a large – community park with significant areas of passive recreation and natural features can increase values by more than 20% for properties up to a half-mile away.
- Parks that are small and have a heavy amount of use may have less than a 10% impact on property value and the increase in value is limited to a few blocks.
- Studies generally agreed that there was no negative impact from properties located adjacent to a greenway trail.
- The potential positive impact on property from a greenway is dependent on design of the linear park and perceived benefits from access to a trail system.

Source:

John L. Crompton, American Planning Association, PAS Report Number 502, 2001

There are multiple benefits to developing a system of green infrastructure that includes parks and open space. A green space system simultaneously provides recreation benefits and has positive environmental benefits through improved water quality, reduced maintenance costs, enhanced wildlife habitat and better air quality. A growing number studies have documented the positive cost benefit of investing in green infrastructure. Since green infrastructure serves many purposes, from community revitalization to habitat protection, project sponsors can tap a variety of funding sources to finance improvements. The implementation of green infrastructure principles is most effective when the design is customized for the city, when construction is done properly and when routine maintenance is performed. A commitment to funding maintenance is important to realize the benefits of green infrastructure. The following table indicates some of the options for incorporating green infrastructure into park plans and urban areas.

Table 2: Green Infrastructure Planning and Design

Benefit	Features	Comments
Water Quality	Natural drainage and vegetation to improve the quality of stormwater and wastewater discharge. Stream bank stabilization. Source water protection.	Coordinate with stormwater, water treatment and wastewater facility plans. Partner with Whitefish Lake Institute. Address fertilizer and weed control methods.
Air Quality	Trees and other vegetation function to remove pollutants from the air and mitigate the effects of urban heat islands.	Coordinate with urban forest program
Enhanced built environment	Green design reduces impervious areas, improve stormwater function and creates amenities for residents.	Green design can add economic value to a community
Public health	Interconnection between parks lead to improved access to trails and recreation facilities	Natural areas and park systems encourage wellness through fitness, clean air and clean water
Habitat Protection	Interconnect green space so habitat is less fragmented. Natural vegetation provides habitat.	FWP and conservation groups are potential partners.
Open Space	Protects open space and provides public access to natural areas. Contributes to scenic views and rural – small town character.	Coordinate with land use planning.
Flood Control	Parks, wetlands and natural areas provide natural retention areas and limits building in floodways	FEMA offers flood insurance discounts for coordinated park and floodway planning.

Source: Compiled by Applied Communications from literature review. 2012

E. Active Transportation

The National Recreation and Parks Association report, “Parks and Recreation: Essential Partners in Active Transportation”, notes that transportation agencies are more frequently incorporating active transportation modes into transportation plans. Incorporating active transportation elements into park and transportation plans can help promote fitness by providing a convenient and fun way to exercise. It can help reduce congestion and pollutants by providing alternative modes of transportation. Many studies have found that bike-pedestrian trails are an amenity that has positive economic impact. Coordinating these amenities with urban design to create walkable communities serve a diverse population from school children walking to school to seniors citizens that are more likely to require accessible features. Programs to fund active transportation include:

Active transportation is defined as human powered modes of transportation. The most popular modes of active transportation by far are walking and bicycling, however, skate boarding, canoeing, roller skating, etc. can all be considered forms of active transportation.

Source: National Parks and Recreation Association

- Safe Routes to Schools - The Safe Routes to School Program is a federally funded, competitively awarded, reimbursement program that encourages and enables children, including those with disabilities to walk and bicycle to school and makes bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative. The City of Whitefish has adopted a Safe Routes to School Plan. (<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/saferoutes/>)
- Community Transportation Enhancement Program – The Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) is a Montana program that funds transportation related projects designed to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of Montana's intermodal transportation system. The CTEP allows for the implementation of a variety of non-traditional projects. (<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/business/ctep/>) CTEP will be replaced by MAP-21 “Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century” in the new federal transportation bill and potential funding source (Oct.2, 2012 through October 1, 2014).

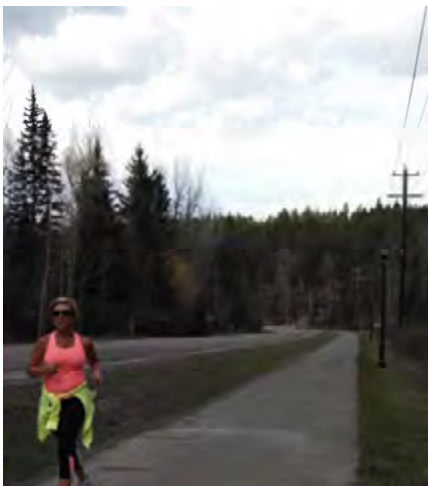


Figure 6.5 Runner on Wisconsin Ave. Trail

F. Disability - Mobility – Age Friendly

The population in the nation is growing older and the aging trend is more pronounced in Whitefish than the rest of the state. The population over age 65 is the group that experiences the highest rates of disability. It is important to design facilities for the aging population. The most common types of disabilities among seniors are physical disabilities and mobility. The U.S. Census defines physical disabilities as a condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities, such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting, or carrying. A mobility disability is defined as limitations for mobility such as - going outside the home alone to shop or visit a doctor's office.

Some cities are now designing parks to including features for older age cohorts. These parks feature low-impact exercise equipment designed to promote balance and flexibility, such as elliptical machines, static bikes and body flexors. The National Center for Accessibility has an on-line database with a variety of resources and brochures for designing accessible recreation facilities. (<http://www.ncaonline.org/about/index.shtml>). The World Health Organization recently published a checklist of the elements a city needs in order to be a place where residents can age comfortably. Following are those items that would apply to the design of parks and outdoor spaces.

- Public areas are clean and pleasant.
- Green spaces and outdoor seating are sufficient in number, well-maintained and safe
- Pavements are well-maintained, free of obstructions and reserved for pedestrians
- Pavements are non-slip, are wide enough for wheelchairs and have dropped curbs to road level
- Outdoor safety is promoted by good street lighting, police patrols and community education
- Buildings are well-signed outside and inside with accessible features
- Public toilets outdoors and indoors are sufficient in number, clean, well-maintained and accessible
- Venues for events and activities are conveniently located, accessible, well-lit and reached by public transport
- Plan for a wide variety of events to appeal to a diverse population of age groups and interests

(Source: www.governing.com/topics/mgmt/qov-age-friendly-city-checklist.html, 11/30/12)

The Americans with Disabilities Act recognizes and protects the civil rights of people with disabilities.¹ Titles II and III of the ADA require, among other things, that newly constructed and altered State and local government facilities, places of public accommodation, and commercial facilities be readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. Recreation facilities are among the types of facilities covered by titles II and III of the ADA. State and local governments who provide recreation facilities have a separate obligation under title II of the ADA to provide program accessibility which may require the removal of architectural barriers in existing facilities. See 28 CFR 35.150 (<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/reg2.html>). Private entities who own, lease (or lease to), or operate recreation facilities have a separate obligation under title III of the ADA to remove architectural barriers in existing facilities where it is readily achievable (i.e., easily accomplishable and able to be carried out without much difficulty or expense). See 28 CFR 36.304 (<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/reg3a.html>).

G. Benefits Based Management

This “Benefits Based Management” approach represents a significant departure from the traditional parks planning model. The benefits based model acknowledges that there are multiple providers of parks. Planning will be most effective when public agencies work collaboratively. Rather than competing to fill market niches, agencies work together to evaluate parks and recreation facilities as part of a regional system. Decisions to acquire and improve parks are based on management objectives that reflect the benefits the community derives from parks. By identifying a wide range of benefits, park agencies can identify a broad array of partners and funding sources to help them meet their goals.

Figure 6.6: Benefits of Parks and Recreation



More often, city leaders are acknowledging that parks are essential and vital elements of a healthy community. Recognizing the many benefits and roles of parks can result in a number of positive outcomes such as:

- Defining a broader scope of park functions broadens citizen and leadership support for parks;
- Identifying new purposes and roles for parks opens new funding streams for planning and management
- Articulating the broader functions creates a more effective use of space and a better integrated urban environment.

(Source: American Planning Association, “From Recreation to Re-Creation: New Directions in Parks and Open Space System Planning”, PAS Report #551.

VII. Goals and Policies

A. Recreation

Community members rely on the City of Whitefish Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department to provide affordable opportunities for recreational programs such as group activities, fitness programs, competitive sports and organized activities geared toward specific age groups. In ranking park activities, the community survey indicated that providing recreation programs was among one of the top priorities for park programs and recreation services. Responses to the community survey indicate that promoting youth development through recreational activities was a high priority objective but it also indicated that some groups such as senior citizens and middle school students were underserved by current recreation programs in the community. Current trends indicate that partnering with other community organizations was an important strategy in providing recreation programs. The comment section of the survey indicated there is a growing interest in sports such as pickleball and outdoor/adventure recreation.

Goal A: Continue to meet the recreation needs of all households through a variety of quality recreational offerings.

Objectives:

1. Provide diverse recreational opportunities to meet the needs for people of all age groups and abilities.
2. Partner with other community groups such as the school district, civic organizations, health agencies and others to develop and operate a variety of recreational opportunities.
3. Monitor recreation trends and continue to provide opportunities to meet different lifestyle needs for competitive sports, fitness, cultural and outdoor activities.
4. Solicit feedback from the community on a several year basis to adjust programming for evolving/changing needs.
5. Establish fees for recreational programs that are affordable to all income levels and look for opportunities for partners or sponsors to offset costs of programming.
6. Programming priorities should be given to those activities where there is a highest demand or where there are partners or sponsors that can provide funding to reach niche groups.
7. Design neighborhood parks to meet the demographic needs of the neighborhood.

B. Connectivity

Connectivity can be provided between parks through trails and greenways that provide open space and function as part of the green infrastructure system. Connectivity between parks and water features

has many benefits including improving access to the park and water amenities, less fragmentation of wildlife habitat, providing safe walking/biking routes and buffering between different land uses. The community survey noted that gaps in the trail system were a concern. The survey also indicated strong public support for connectivity between parks and schools and shopping areas.

Goal B: Expand the trail and linear park system to provide connectivity between all parks, water features, schools and major destinations in the community.

Objectives:

1. Continue the implementation of the Whitefish Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan and review and update as necessary to identify opportunities to expand trails to fill connectivity gaps between park facilities.
2. Identify greenway corridors that can be incorporated into the park and recreation system to provide connectivity between natural areas.
3. Work with developers to include trails and greenways in new subdivisions to provide the connectivity between parks and fill gaps in the trail system.
4. Natural areas to be integrated in the park system should have high conservation values and provide connectivity to other public lands, greenways, conservation lands, riparian corridors or wildlife corridors.
5. Promote connectivity of natural areas through trails, public lands, conservation easements, protection of riparian areas and other means.
6. Coordinate with the Safe Routes to School programs including signage of roadways that are designated bike routes.
7. Trailheads and provisions for parking should be incorporated as part of the trail system design.

C. Water Access

Whitefish is fortunate to have a variety of water features both in the city limits and within the planning area. Whitefish Lake, Whitefish River, several smaller lakes and creeks create an opportunities for outstanding recreational, environmental and open space amenities. The survey respondents indicated that public access to these water features was a top priority. The needs assessment indicated that where there are currently water access sites, there is often limited parking or the site is undeveloped with no functional access for the public. The primary access to Whitefish Lake at City Beach experiences high use and overcrowding will become more severe unless the city can expand the area.

Goal C: Preserve and improve existing public access points to water features while adding additional public access sites for lakes, streams and rivers to relieve overcrowding and provide an amenity to the community.

Objectives:

1. Providing public access to lakes and rivers should be a top priority and subdivision developments with lake frontage should provide for public access as part of the land dedication requirements.
2. Support the development of water access parks by other public agencies and identify potential partnerships for development of these parks.
3. Identify water access sites that are high priority for expansion and pursue opportunities for acquiring additional land to add to these sites.
4. Designate City Beach as a high priority site and update the master plan for this facility.
5. Include land and site plans for parking and adequate pedestrian access before accepting dedication of water access sites.
6. Create site plans and improve existing water access sites and create a canoe trail with appropriate signage, parking, and improvements to facilitate their use for canoeing and kayaking.
7. Develop water access sites to meet environmental objectives for water quality, erosion control, native vegetation and wildlife habitat.

D. Park Development and Acquisition

The needs assessment indicated that there are several residential areas that do not have walkable access to either a pocket park or neighborhood park. On a per capita basis, the city is underserved by pocket parks. As the city population grows over the next 20 years, there will be a need to add more neighborhood parks to meet per capita standards. The needs assessment also indicated that several parks such as City Beach and Depot Park are overcrowded. Other parks have outdated equipment and some have deferred maintenance that should be addressed. Lack of restrooms was mentioned frequently in the survey as well as poorly maintained restrooms at the Ice Den and City Beach. Respondents to the survey gave the highest ranking to improving and expanding existing parks. They also gave high priority to acquiring more land for parks.

Goal D: Develop and add to the park system as needed so that residential neighborhoods have walking access to a park that is well maintained with updated equipment and expand special use and community parks to relieve overcrowding.

Objectives:

1. Existing parks and recreational facilities should be operated and maintained in quality conditions for a safe and enjoyable experience and consistent with design standards elsewhere in this document.
2. Investigate grants, partnerships and other funding opportunities to address the issues for individual parks that are identified in this plan.
3. Identify opportunities to expand existing parks through acquisition of neighboring properties and open space.
4. Develop and/or update individual master plans for parks to reflect current use patterns and provide strategies for improvements.
5. Work with community organizations to identify upgrades to current park facilities to meet the park development criteria in this plan and identify funding sources to complete upgrades.
6. Use the needs assessment to determine priority areas for developing new target acquisition through land dedication from subdivisions, donations or purchase to those areas with the highest need.
7. Only accept land dedications or donations that meet the design standards in the Parks & Recreation Master Plan.
8. Develop standards for park signage, information kiosks and wayfinding signs as part of the park and recreation system.
9. Prioritize park improvements, acquisition and capital projects by evaluating against established criteria for need, functionality, funding and partnerships.

E. Public Health

Chronic health problems linked to obesity such as arthritis, heart disease and diabetes comprise the major public health issue in the nation. Exercise and outdoor recreation can help combat obesity trends and an active lifestyle can alleviate many of the symptoms of these chronic illnesses. Numerous studies have shown that walkable communities and convenient access to parks relates to overall fitness. The community survey indicated improving health and wellness should be a top park and recreation goal. Health and wellness priorities ranging from sports programs for youth to helping seniors remain active all received strong support from respondents to the survey.

Goal E: Parks and recreation facilities and programs should encourage fitness and an active lifestyle.

Objectives:

1. Parks and trails should be part of an urban system that promotes walkability.
2. Park designs should accommodate the population with disabilities and consider mobility issues for the senior population and shall comply with state and federal laws for accessibility.
3. Include features and equipment in parks that promote wellness and fitness.
4. Work with local organizations to develop programs and facilities that promote health and wellness.
5. Parks should be well maintained and safe places where people of all ages feel comfortable and are more likely to engage in active lifestyles.
6. Coordinate with other community groups to develop recreational programs that provide a healthy alternative to drug and alcohol use for school-age kids.
7. Consider healthy living policies such as tobacco free facilities, nutritional snacks for afterschool programs, sunscreen stations in parks, and other healthy by design measures.

F. Environmental Well-Being

In addition to recreational benefits, parks have long been recognized to have many environmental benefits. These range from improved water and air quality, providing wildlife habitat, conserving green space and promoting better flood management. Protecting natural areas and open space and protecting water quality were top objectives among respondents to the community survey. In meetings with stakeholder groups, a number of opportunities for specific projects to incorporate conservation design techniques into park design were identified. The needs assessment indicated that there are a number of parks where vegetative health is an issue.

Goal F: Recognize environmental benefits and design parks as part of a green infrastructure system that promotes conservation, protects water quality and preserves natural areas where appropriate.

Objectives:

1. Coordinate stormwater plans, wastewater treatment plans and flood control plans to develop a comprehensive system that filters stormwater and wastewater to improve water quality while providing natural areas that can be enjoyed by wildlife and the community.
2. Park design should consider water quality issues by incorporating features such as buffers for wetlands, riparian corridors and bank stabilization to control erosion along shorelines.
3. Discourage practices that result in poor water quality such as nutrient loading from fertilizers, contamination from motorized watercraft near public swimming areas and introduction of invasive species in lakes and rivers.

4. Public and private detention areas should be considered part of the green infrastructure system and should be designed as amenities that include native vegetation, reduce nutrient loading, filter stormwater and provide habitat.
5. Vegetation management should include promoting a healthy urban forest and should consider detrimental impacts resulting from overuse.
6. Promote native vegetation within environmentally sensitive areas to reduce invasive/non-native species and minimize the use of pesticides.
7. Consider impacts on wildlife by improving habitat where possible, interconnecting green space so habitat is less fragmented and designing natural areas to reduce human-wildlife conflicts.
8. Conserve natural resources through energy efficient designs, water conservation, and reducing waste.
9. When feasible select durable materials that are sustainable, resource efficient and non-toxic for construction of new facilities.
10. Discourage creating isolated islands of natural areas unless there is an opportunity to acquire critical land that would be part of a larger system or vision.
11. Continue to manage the urban forest in accordance with Tree City USA standards and to maintain Tree City USA status as well as promote environmental benefits such as air quality.

G. Organization

The City of Whitefish relies on citizen boards and advisory groups to provide input to staff and City Council on park and recreation services. Additionally, partnerships with a variety of organizations are important in providing services, maintaining programs and coordinating on projects. The stakeholder focus groups identified a number of potential opportunities to expand on these partnerships. The partnerships are essential for the city to provide services at affordable costs. While program fees generally cover the operating costs of recreation programs and park assessment/general funds are allocated for maintenance costs, these funds do not cover construction, capital outlays and land acquisition costs. Coordinating park and trail improvements with other public works projects has been a successful strategy along with utilizing various funding sources such as the Tax Increment Funds. The survey indicated support for grants, sponsorships, fund raising, volunteers and partnerships as resources to meet future needs of parks.

Goal G: Develop adequate funding sources and other resources to support the existing and future needs of the park and recreation system.

Objectives:

1. Increase the funding from sources such as grants, non-profit fundraising, sponsorships and public-private partnerships.
2. Fees for recreation programs should generally cover the cost to operate the program.
3. Facility rental fees should be set to offset the cost of staffing, utilities and wear and tear.
4. Adopt guidelines to maintain and strengthen existing and new partnerships with community groups to build and manage parks and recreation facilities and operate park and recreation programs.
5. Encourage parks, planning, maintenance and development coordination with other local jurisdictions, state and federal agencies.
6. Consider potential park improvements and opportunities for coordination in the design phase of infrastructure projects or roads, parking lots, water system upgrades, wastewater treatment facilities, stormwater facilities and other public improvements.
7. Develop volunteer guidelines and utilize volunteers for recreation programs, maintenance, and construction of park equipment. Partner with schools and other civic groups to recruit volunteers.
8. Explore the development of a memorandum of understanding for programs such as adopt-a-park/trail for community groups that want to undertake such efforts.
9. Provide adequate staff support and training to the Park Board and advisory groups so they can effectively perform their duties.
10. Review and update the plan every three to five years to reflect changing needs and opportunities and to coordinate with the updates in the Growth Policy, state statutes, and transportation plans.
11. Commit adequate funding to maintain facilities at a level of service that provides a quality user experience and captures the economic and environmental benefits of parks.
12. Design new facilities that incorporate revenue-generating opportunities to offset operational costs and/or enhance the recreational experience of participants. (i.e. concessions, leasing, rentals ...).

H. Community

In addition to the many positive aspects of the parks systems, the survey and stakeholder groups did note that events and some activities in parks have an impact on surrounding properties. It is important to work with adjacent property owners and neighborhoods to meet their concerns. Throughout the planning process it was noted that in addition to health, environmental and recreation benefits parks were valuable in building community. Parks can act as an economic driver by attracting tourists and offer a place for people to gather and for community groups to host special events. Parks offer a way for citizens to volunteer, participate in events and become engaged in the community.

Goal H: Develop a park programs and special events that engage citizens while minimizing impacts on adjacent properties and incorporating features that will be an asset to the neighborhood.

Objectives:

1. Plan events to minimize the impact on the Whitefish Community Library, Whitefish Historical Museum, and O'Shaughnessy Center and other surrounding properties.
2. Incorporate local historic and cultural signs and features into park facilities.
3. Seek community participation in "clean up, fix up" events and days to keep the parks in prime position to support a strong visitor base appeal.
4. Parks designs and improvements should be an integral part of the surrounding residential neighborhoods and should be operated and maintained to be an asset to the community and minimize impacts on nearby residents.
5. Regulations and rules regarding park use should be clearly posted.
6. Recognize parks as an economic drivers and partner with CVB, Chamber of Commerce, Heart of Whitefish and businesses to develop special events in the parks while considering impacts to the parks and neighborhoods.
7. Formalize agreements between the city, school district and other entities on the shared use of facilities.
8. Revise the zoning code to establish development standards for parks and open space that account for different requirements for signage, parking and other features.

VIII. Implementation

A. Action Plan

The action plan is a matrix that lists the task and identifies staffing, resources, and timeframe parameters for each task. Resources may include funding sources, technical assistance, partnerships and other resources available to help achieve the action item. Timeframe indicates whether this is a near term strategy that is expected to be accomplished within the next two to three years or a longer term strategy. Some strategies may not have a specific time frame but may be opportunity driven and will require action when the occasion arises. The steps in the action plan are related to advancing specific goals and objectives. Following are criteria for evaluating future action items and park projects.

- Does the action relate to a need or issue identified in the needs assessment?
- Does the action reflect priorities based on responses to community survey, feedback from public meetings and existing community plans?
- Are there sufficient resources available to undertake the effort?
- Does the action build on existing assets, take advantage of funding opportunities, or leverage outside resources?
- Does the action bring facilities into compliance with state and federal requirements?
- Does the project have an acceptable cost to implement?
- Is the project a pilot or model for other park projects?
- Will the project lower current maintenance costs?
- Does the project provide multiple recreation, conservation, social and economic benefits?
- Does the project advance other goals and objectives of the Parks & Recreation Master Plan?

A. Park Improvements & Land Acquisitions

Action	Staffing	Resources	Timeframe
1. Bank stabilization at Riverside Park – Potential water quality pilot project. Coordinate with improvements to pond and storm water assessment to improve this amenity.	Staff & contractors	WF Lake Institute, grants, Maint. Budget, MT FWP, Neigh. volunteers	Near term
2. Improve Amory Park per master plan – coordinate grading plan with 2 nd Street road improvements	Staff Contractors Volunteers	Fundraising, Sponsors, Partners, grants	Dependent on funding
3. Improve O'Brien Park per site plan- Potential to partner with Wave on outdoor programs for youth			
4. Improve Depot Park per master plan	Contractors	TIF Funds	Near term
5. Acquire land in support of City Beach	City	City funds – fundraising – Land acquisition funds	Opportunity Driven

6. Acquire land to expand Armory Park	City	Land acquisition funds	Opportunity Driven
7. Work with neighborhood to identify upgrades to Soroptimist Park & find funding partners	City & volunteers	Sponsors – city funds	Near to mid-term
8. Do site plans and improve access sites along the Whitefish River to develop Canoe Trail	Staff & Contractor	Tourism Grant, Water Quality Grants, Coordinate with BNSF clean-up	Near term
9. Riverside Park. Consider removing west tennis court over water main and expand open space by pond	Staff	Coordinate with improvements to Memorial Park tennis courts	Near term to mid-term
10. Develop park in railway district per Downtown Master Plan	City	Coordinate with BNSF	Opportunity Driven

B. Planning and Policy Actions

Action	Staffing	Resources	Timeframe
11. Update Master Plans, City Beach and Mountain Trails Parks	Contract	Operating budget, CDBG Grants	Near term to mid-term
12. Develop master plan for Memorial Park and coordinate with school district on potential for tennis complex	Contract	Coordinate with school & Glacier Twins, USTA Grant	Near term to mid-term
13. Enact a non-motorized restriction on the Whitefish River	City	Coordinate with bank stabilization efforts	Near term
14. Coordinate with the planning process & upgrades for the wastewater facility plan to identify opportunities for open space	City	Water quality grants -	Near Term
15. Update the Whitefish Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan to reflect amendments, new opportunities and partnerships and to coordinate with Transportation Plan	City/Contractor	Coordinate with Transportation Planning – Safe Routes to schools planning grant	Near to mid-Term
16. Amend zoning ordinance to create Public Lands and Facilities zoning district	City	Planning Dept.	Near Term

C. Partnerships & Intergovernmental Coordination

Action	Staffing	Resources	Timeframe
17. Continue to work with Whitefish Legacy Partners on maintenance and expansion of the Whitefish Trail	City – WLP - DNRC	Fundraising, grants endowment	On-going
18. Establish non-profit organization to support parks & conduct fundraising	City & community	WF Community Foundation	Opportunity Based
19. Develop a canoe trail map & distribute to community & visitors	City	Whitefish CVB & Tourism Grant	Near Term
20. Develop MOUs with the school district regarding joint use of facilities	City & Schools	Sample MOUs from peer communities	Near Term

D. Recreation & Programming

Action	Staffing	Resources	Timeframe
21. Work with the School District to identify volunteer opportunities for high school students and program opportunities for middle school students	Parks & Rec Staff	School Dist. Staff	On-going
22. Work with Whitefish Community Center and North Valley Hospital to identify opportunities to partner on recreation and wellness programs for seniors	Parks & Rec Staff	Community groups, wellness grants	On-going
23. Prepare an annual report to track participation in recreation programs, seek community input and monitor rec trends in order to respond to demands for recreation services	Parks & Rec Staff	Surveys, benchmark data	On-going
24. Identify a location and develop an 18-hole disc golf course designed to Professional Disc golf Association (PDGA) standards	Parks & Rec Staff	Grants, partnerships, volunteers	Opportunity Driven

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C. Funding

Table 1 indicates the type of available funding mechanisms and how these can be allocated to different park and recreation functions. As noted in the table, there are a variety of funds that can be used for land acquisition and park development. It is becoming more common for local governments to use a combination of these funding sources to meet their goals for developing a park system. Once the land has been acquired and parks have been developed, there are fewer funding options to cover the operation and maintenance costs of these facilities. The primary source for operation and maintenance costs is the mill levy. A review of the Park and Recreation Department current revenue sources is contained in “Chapter 4 – Organization”.

Table 1: Park and Recreation Funding Mechanisms

	Operating & Maintenance	Land Acquisition	Park & Trail Development	Recreation Programming
General Fund	x	X	X	X
Park Mill Levy	x	X	X	
General Obligation Bond		X	X	
Land Dedication		X	X	
Cash-In-Lieu		X	X	
Impact Fee		X	X	
User Fees	X	X	X	X
Resort Tax			X	
Grants		X	X	X
Donations - Sponsorships	X	X	X	X
Partnerships	X	X	x	X
SID		X	X	
Park Main. District	X	X	X	
Concessions	X			X
Tax Increment Finance		X	X	

The community survey indicated support for pursuing more grant opportunities. Potential grants:

- Community Transportation Enhancement Program** - The Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) is a Montana program that makes federal funds available for transportation related projects designed to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of Montana's intermodal transportation system. The CTEP allows for the implementation of a variety of non-traditional projects.
- Land and Water Conservation Funds** - The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 established a federal grants program encouraging a full partnership between national, state, and local governments in planning and funding outdoor recreation projects. The Land and Water

Conservation Fund Program (LWCF) is administered by Montana State Parks, a division of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP). Since 1965, Montana has received over \$34 million for outdoor recreation.

- **Recreational Trails Program** - The Recreational Trails Program is currently funded through the federal *Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users* (SAFETEA-LU). Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks administers the RTP funds at the state level, while the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) provides program oversight at the federal level. The State Trails Advisory Committee (STAC) is a council that advises FWP on things such as RTP Program expenditures and a variety of recreational trails issues. An advisory committee such as the STAC is a federal requirement in order for Montana to be eligible for RTP funds.
- **Safe Routes to Schools** - The Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) program is funded through an annual Federal-aid Highway apportionment that includes expenditures for non-infrastructure (behavioral) and infrastructure (construction) projects.
- **Montana Tourism Grant (TIIP)** - Recreation related projects that can be shown to enhance tourism. A 2:1 match is required. <http://travelmontana.mt.gov/forms>
- **Other Federal Programs and Grants** - There are numerous other federal programs and grant opportunities that could help finance recreational facilities and programs. For example, Community Development Block Grant (CBDG) funds from the Department of Housing and Urban Development may be available for improvements directed towards economic development. Or, National Institute of Health funds might be available for programs developed to promote community health or senior health.
- **Foundations** - There are a number of private foundations, many of which make grants available for recreational facilities and activities. Some examples include:
 - o National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – www.nfwf.org
 - o Home Depot Foundation (Tree planting) – www.homedepotfoundation.org
 - o Walmart (Health & wellness) – <http://walmartstores.com/communitygiving/203.aspx>
 - o BNSF Foundation – www.bnsffoundation.org/giving/html
 - o Wells Fargo (Water resources) – www.wellsfargo.com/about/communityindex.html
 - o Bullitt foundation – <http://bullitt.org/grantmaking/inquire>
 - o M.J. Murdock – www.murdock-trust.org
 - o Lowe's Charitable & Educational Foundation – www.lowes.com/community
 - o Steele-Reese Foundation – www.steele-resse.org/how.html
 - o Adidas – www.adidas-group.com/sustainability/community_affirs/default.aspx
 - o Farmers Insurance – www.farmers.com/FarmComm/farmers_community.html
 - o United States Tennis Assoc. – www.usta.com/About-USTA/USTA-Serves/USTAServes/
 - o Women Sports Foundation – www.WomensSportsFoundation.org

B. Partnership Guidelines

Partnerships can create cost efficiencies by pooling resources, sharing costs, and joint programming. Multiple partners can generate a broader base of community support for projects. Grant makers are more likely to fund projects that are leveraging community resources from several partners.

There are a variety of partnership models that are available to local governments. Types of partnerships are described below.

- **Intergovernmental Agreements** – Agreements with other government agencies may range from leases, maintenance agreements, joint purchase programs to joint development of park and recreation facilities. Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and leases are common means of formalizing these arrangements. Such documents should be reviewed periodically to ensure that they continue to address new issues.
- **Public –Private Partnerships** – These often include partnerships with other government agencies or private organizations to develop new facilities. Financing arrangements, maintenance responsibilities, and other roles and responsibilities are set forth in a contract or memorandum of agreement. Development agreements are sometimes used to construct new facilities as part of a large subdivision. The Smith Sports Complex is an example of a public-private partnership.
- **Foundations** - In some jurisdictions, citizens have formed non-profit foundations to raise fund for park projects. Foundations that are formed as a 501(c)(3) organization can accept donations, apply for certain grants, and conduct fundraising activities. Whitefish Legacy Partners is a non-profit that raises funds for the Whitefish Trail.
- **Intergovernmental Coordination** – Within the County all three municipalities, Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, Montana Dept. of Natural Resources, Flathead National Forest, and Glacier National Parks all provide recreation facilities and programs. Montana Department of Transportation administers the CTEP program. Coordinating with the agencies to identify common issues and goals can suggest ways to work together to achieve these goals.

Keys to a Successful Partnership

Following are recommended criteria for evaluating potential partnerships.

1. A Commitment from Executive Leadership:

A successful partnership can result only if there is commitment from leadership of both the government and private sector organization to work together. Well-informed leaders play a critical role in developing effective partnerships.

2. A Statutory Foundation for Partnering:

There should be a statutory foundation for the implementation of public and private partnerships.

3. Direct Public Sector Involvement:

Once a partnership has been established, the public-sector must remain actively involved in the project. On-going monitoring of the performance of the partnership is important in assuring its success.

4. A Well-Crafted Plan:

A carefully developed plan will substantially increase the probability of success of the partnership. This plan should clearly describe the responsibilities of both the public and private partners and have provisions for dispute resolution

5. Effective Communication with Stakeholders:

More people will be affected by a partnership than just the public officials and the private sector partner. It is important to communicate with and involve all stakeholders. These may include affected employees, the portions of the public receiving the service, the press, and relevant interest groups. Successful implementation should positively affect the work environment and relationships with sponsoring organizations, employees and other stakeholders.

6. The Right Opportunity:

Not every situation is ripe for a true partnership. Partnerships should be carefully evaluated and both parties should set reasonable expectations.

7. The Right Partner:

The "lowest bid" is not always the best choice for selecting a partner. The partner's experience, long-term viability, and willingness to work with local governments are important factors in identifying the right partner.

8. Well-Defined Management Processes:

It is critically important that both public and private sector parties agree on key management

IX. Park Development Guidelines

A. General Guidelines

The following park classifications and their associated development guidelines and design standards are intended to be used to inform decision-making pertaining to park development, land acquisition, and recreation opportunities within the Whitefish Planning Jurisdiction area. These parks can be developed as stand-alone types or as hybrids (example: a Special Use Park could be developed adjacent to a Neighborhood or Community Park for a larger park fabric; or a Lake/Water Park could be developed within a Community, Neighborhood or Linear Park). City of Whitefish park classifications are:

- A. Pocket Parks
- B. Neighborhood Park
- C. Community Park
- D. Natural Area/Open Space Park
- E. Sports Complex
- F. Special Use Park
- G. Linear Park
- H. Lake/Water Access Park
- I. Cultural/Heritage Park

The City's park classification system is similar to that identified by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). Other information is referenced from several parks and recreation documents developed by various cities and counties in the State of Montana.

The City of Whitefish classification system corresponds with the inventory and level of service maps in the Appendix. The City adopted the Whitefish Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan in 1999. Limited City trail information is indicated on the level of service maps. For trail information and proposed locations, please reference the Whitefish Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

Several factors that influence the type of park system that should be developed in the City of Whitefish are 1) growth trends and public demand; 2) currently limited funding and staff dedicated to the maintenance of existing parks, and limited funding available for land acquisition and the development and maintenance of new parks; 3) the opportunities to develop equitable partnerships with other agencies and organizations; 4) the large amount of public lands within the Flathead Valley area that provide recreational opportunities and amenities; and 5) recreational trends.

Based on these factors, the following general guidelines should apply:

1. All parks should be developed in accordance with other goals, guidelines, and policies within this plan.
2. Parks should be developed and upgraded in a manner that minimizes maintenance efforts over time. These efforts include preserving, to the greatest extent possible, areas of naturalized

and/or native landscape, an emphasis on hardy, drought-tolerant plantings and low-grow grass mix, and minimizing lawn planting to areas that are appropriate.

3. Parks that have significant infrastructure components should receive careful consideration regarding long-term operations and maintenance commitments.
4. The Park Board can use this information in evaluating the maintenance of existing parks, development of new parks, land acquisition and the acceptance of park land dedication by developers.

B. Specific Guidelines

1. Pocket Parks

Description: Pocket-parks are small, single-purpose play lots generally less than 2 acres in size. They are generally located to provide some passive open space in areas where there is limited land for a larger park. Park features usually include a small open grass area and may include a children's playground or a picnic area. These parks can also be highly developed, with amenities like hardscape/walkways, benches and seating areas, artwork, interpretive signage and other more urban public amenities

Planning Guidelines and Design Standards:

1. These parks should have good access and visibility from a public street.
2. Safe walking and biking routes should provide access.
3. Appropriate facilities include:
 - Children's playground area
 - Open grass area
 - Picnic area
 - Hardscape/walkways
 - Public art/interpretive signage
 - Benches/seating areas
4. Off-street parking is not required.

2. Neighborhood Park

Description: Neighborhood parks are a combination playground/park designed primarily for non-organized recreation activities. Located within walking and bicycling distance of most users, they are generally moderate in size (about 3-10 acres) and serve people living within walking distance of about one-half mile of the park. Neighborhood parks provide access to basic recreation opportunities for nearby residents, enhance neighborhood identity, and preserve open space. Facilities typically found in neighborhood parks include playgrounds, picnic tables and benches, trails, open grass areas/informal play areas, and outdoor basketball courts.

Planning Guidelines and Design Standards:

1. This park should have a balance of active and passive park uses. Active recreation facilities are intended to be used in an informal and unstructured manner.
2. Neighborhood parks should have at least 100 continuous feet of street frontage for access and good visibility.
3. Safe walking and biking routes should provide access.
4. At least 50% of the site should be flat and usable for both active and passive recreation.
5. Parcels of land that have aesthetic value are desirable for neighborhood parkland.
6. These parks should contain areas of landscape with trees and grass where appropriate. Areas of natural vegetation should be preserved to increase aesthetics and habitat value.
7. A site should accommodate 7-10 parking spaces. On-street or off-street parking, or a combination thereof, is acceptable. On-street parking is acceptable only if the street is adjacent to the park.
8. Appropriate facilities may include:
 - Multi-use field(s)
 - Children's playground area
 - Paved courts or multi-use hardscape area
 - Picnic area with shelter building
 - Open grass area
 - Benches/seating area
 - Natural open space
9. Restroom facilities are encouraged.
10. To minimize noise and lighting impact on adjoining homes, active and noisy facilities, and those that may require lighting, should be located a minimum of 75 feet from the property line.

3. Community Parks

Description: A community park is a larger park that provides active and structured recreation opportunities primarily for young people and adults. These parks may range in size from 25 acres up to 100 acres. Community parks have a larger service area of approximately a one to two mile radius around the park. Community parks typically include facilities to support large group activities, and most often include sports fields. Also, they are large enough to allow for passive recreation opportunities as well as individual and family use. Community parks may provide swimming pools, community gardens, or indoor facilities to meet a wider range of recreation interests. As a result, they require support facilities, such as parking and restrooms.

Planning Guidelines and Design Standards:

1. This park type should have a balance of active and passive park uses. Active recreation facilities are intended to be used in an informal and unstructured manner.

2. Maintaining a large portion of natural open space should be a priority. Trails and other appropriate amenities can connect the open space with other developed portions of the park, and also provide buffering between the park and adjacent residential areas.
3. Safe walking and biking routes should provide access.
4. The site should be accessible from an arterial or major road.
5. Off-street parking should be provided. On-street parking can supplement off-street parking and is acceptable only if the street is adjacent to the park.
6. These parks should be located on the edges of residential areas rather than in the interior of developments because of the traffic and noise they generate.
7. Appropriate facilities may include:
 - Multi-use field(s) for informal active recreation
 - Children's playground area
 - Paved courts or multi-use area
 - One or more picnic areas, with one or more picnic pavilions of varying size
 - Restroom facilities
 - Internal trails or pathways, connecting to a community trail system
 - Facilities for cultural activities, such as plays and concerts
 - Natural open space and natural features

4. Natural Area/Open Space Parks

Description: These parklands may include environmentally sensitive lands, steep terrain, flood plain and other natural areas that are only minimally developed and may serve as conservation areas, educational and wildlife watching opportunities. The size range of this park type varies but should be linked to other open spaces and parkland to maintain park system connectivity. "There are no specific standards for how much conservation land a community ought to have. Instead, it is dependent on the number and quality of natural and historical resources in the area, public desire to preserve these valuable sites, and the willingness of the elected body to provide funds for their preservation." (*Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines*, National Recreation and Park Association)

Planning Guidelines and Design Standards:

1. The primary function of this park type is to conserve open, natural space (including sensitive ecosystems and species, natural resources, wildlife habitat, and viewsheds).
2. The secondary function is to provide passive recreation opportunities with trails and other amenities.
3. Parking areas – Dependent on park use.
4. Natural areas should be integrated in the park system should have high conservation values and provide connectivity to other public lands, greenways, conservation lands, riparian corridors or wildlife corridors.
5. Promote connectivity of natural areas through trails, public lands, conservation easements, protection of riparian areas and other means.
6. Creating isolated islands of natural areas is discouraged, unless it is an opportunity to acquire critical land

7. Appropriate facilities may include;
 - Natural open space and natural features
 - Trails
 - Interpretive signage
 - Scenic/wildlife viewing areas

5. Sports Complex

Description: Sports Complexes are athletic facilities that include parking lot area, drinking water, lighting, multiple organized ball fields, courts and bathrooms. Serves people from the city and county. A minimum size of at least 20 acres is recommended for optimum use. Designed for active recreation use.

Planning Guidelines and Design Standards:

1. This park type is strategically located and solely for active and programmed recreation.
2. Sports Complexes should be located adjacent to non-residential land uses. Where these parks are adjacent to residential areas, buffering (topography, vegetation, etc.) shall be used.
3. Safe walking and biking routes should provide access.
4. Site should be easily accessible from major thoroughfares. Park access through residential areas should be avoided.
5. Topography and soils should be appropriate for developing sports facilities.
6. Natural vegetation along the perimeter of the park or in non-field areas may be preserved to increase aesthetics and wildlife value.
7. Parking areas should be off-street and be large enough to accommodate an identified number of participants and visitors.
8. Appropriate facilities may include:
 - Multiple ball fields and courts
 - Parking lot
 - Play structures
 - Restroom facilities
 - Multi-use buildings/shelters
 - Concession stand
 - Internal trails or pathways, connecting to a community trail system
 - Lighting
 - Drinking water

6. Special Use Parks

Description: Special use parks are sites most often occupied by a specialized facility oriented toward single-purpose uses. Uses that fall into this category include boat ramps, nature center, historic/cultural site, plaza, urban square, memorials, community gardens, sites geared toward a specific athletic activity, or sites occupied by buildings. The size of these parks is dependent on facility requirements and specific uses.

Planning Guidelines and Design Standards:

1. Safe walking and biking routes should provide access.
2. Parking areas – Dependent on park use.
3. Special use parks are often developed with partnerships.

7. Linear Parks

Description: Linear parks may be in a healthy, natural state or developed landscaped areas and other lands that follow corridors such as abandoned railroad right-of-ways, creeks, canals, power lines, and other linear, elongated features. This type of park usually provides non-motorized transportation and recreation opportunities and contains trails, landscaped areas, viewpoints, and seating areas. These parks may compose portions of a system of green infrastructure and serve as links from one park or community place to another.

Planning Guidelines and Design Standards:

1. In the public input process, trails were identified as a highly desirable component to the City parks system.
2. Trailhead parking areas should be strategically located and sized appropriately.
3. Appropriate facilities may include:
 - Trails
 - Natural open space and natural features
 - Wayfinding signage
 - Interpretive signage
 - Scenic/wildlife viewing areas
 - Restroom facilities may be desired at trailhead areas

8. Lake/Water Access Parks

Description: These parks range in size from small to large sites. These parks can include road rights-of-way, riparian areas, or be a component of other park types, like a community park and others described in this chapter. This type of park is primarily designed to provide fishing, boat or swimming access and/or protect riparian areas which provide wildlife habitat and enhance water quality. Often these parks inhabit environmentally sensitive areas. Planning, design and development should be conducted carefully to ensure the protection of natural systems, water quality and habitat.

Planning Guidelines and Design Standards:

1. The primary function of this park type is to provide public water access on a variety of water bodies in the Whitefish area.
2. In the public input process, water access parks were identified as highly desirable components to the City park system.
3. Safe walking and biking routes should provide access.
4. Parking is dependent on use and facilities provided.
5. Appropriate facilities include:
 - Trails/trailheads
 - Natural open space and natural features
 - Boat ramps
 - Designated swimming areas
 - Picnic areas

9. Cultural/Heritage Facilities

Description: The Cultural/Heritage Park classification recognizes that Whitefish and the surrounding region have a rich history which could be incorporated into the City park system. Cultural and heritage facilities include interpretive signage areas along trails, specific sites that are historically significant and may or may not contain remnants of historical significance, and areas incorporated into larger park types where appropriate.

Planning Guidelines and Design Standards:

1. The primary function of this park type is to preserve, enhance and educate park users about the cultural and historical foundation of the City of Whitefish and the surrounding region.
2. Parking is dependent on the facilities provided.
3. Safe walking and biking routes should provide access.
4. Appropriate facilities may include:
 - Interpretive signage
 - Seating and/or picnic areas

Appendix A. Whitefish Parks Inventory

A park system is one made up of different types of parks, open space areas, and recreational venues, each designed to provide a specific type of recreation experience and opportunity. A park classification system helps a community to assess the current level of service, identify gaps in service and project future needs. The inventory is organized according to the classification system that is commonly used for a community the size of Whitefish.

A. Pocket Parks

Pocket-parks, tot lots, and children's playgrounds are small, single-purpose play lots generally less than 2 acres in size. They are generally located to provide some passive open space in areas where there is limited land for a larger park. Park features usually include a small open grass area and may include a children's playground or a picnic area.

1. Kay Beller Park

Size	0.6 acres
Location	South Side of 2 nd Street on Whitefish River, next to Senior Center
Amenities	Bike/pedestrian trail, observation deck, informal river access area
Park Furniture	Benches (2), picnic table (1), bike rack (1)
Parking	Paved parking lot (15 cars + 1 handicap)
Management Partners	N/A
Comments	Noxious weeds in landscape areas along path, banks eroding at river access. Starting in 2013 the park will be disturbed due to construction activities for the West Second Street & Bridge reconstruction project. Anticipated 2-year closure (park & trail section). After construction, the park will be restored to its current condition.



Kay Beller Park



Informal river access and eroding banks

2. O'Brien Bluffs Park

Size	1.0 acres
Location	O'Brien Bluffs Subdivision on O'Brien Avenue
Comments	Undeveloped open space; The "Woodland Play Area" Conceptual Design was adopted in 2010.



The east end of O'Brien Bluffs parkland



The north end of O'Brien Bluffs parkland

3. Soroptimist Park

Size	0.8 acres
Location	Minnesota Avenue
Amenities	Playground, ½ basketball court, small picnic shelter, informal active play/soccer area, perimeter fencing and gate
Park Furniture	Picnic table (1 moveable), trash receptacle (1), grill, soccer goals (2 moveable)
Parking	On-street
Management Partners fundraising	Soroptimist does occasional



Soroptimist Park Playground



Picnic Shelter

Planned Improvements	Replace outdated play equipment with new equipment & install safety surfacing material & borders (comply with current national safety standards) – pending fundraising
Comments	Chemical-free park

B. Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are a combination playground/park designed primarily for non-organized recreation activities. Located within walking and bicycling distance of most users, they are generally moderate in size (about 3-10 acres) and serve people living within walking distance of about one-half mile of the park. Neighborhood parks provide access to basic recreation opportunities for nearby residents, enhance neighborhood identity, and preserve open space. Facilities typically found in neighborhood parks include playgrounds, picnic tables and benches, trails, open grass areas/informal play areas, and outdoor basketball courts.

1. Baker Park

Size	1.5 acres
Location	Baker Avenue & 5 th Street
Amenities	Two playground areas (toddler & preschool age appropriate), seasonal restroom, small gazebo, Whitefish River access with fishing dock
Park Furniture	Benches (5), picnic table (2 moveable), trash receptacle (1), mutt mitt dispenser, interpretive signage (Kootenai Indians)
Parking	On-street (approximately 15 spaces)
Partners	Rotary Club. Playground donated by the Patterson Family.
Planned Improvements	N/A
Comments	AKA Kiddie Park. Separated from Riverside Park by Baker Avenue. Bike trail along river connects to Riverside Park. Fishing dock has limited accessibility and dock is in disrepair. Mature evergreen and deciduous trees in various states of health.



Baker Park Playground



Baker Park Restrooms

2. Crestwood Park

Size	2.5 acres
Location	Crestwood Drive
Amenities	Horseshoe pits, volleyball area and a moveable picnic table and benches, expansive grove of mature aspen trees
Comments	Undeveloped open space; located in County. Crestwood parks connects to the Averill's Viking Creek Wetland Preserve's trail system via a small trailhead/parking area.



Horseshoe pits and volleyball area at Crestwood Park



Edge of aspen grove towards the south end of Crestwood Park

3. Memorial Park

Size	9.5 acres (approximately 5 acres = baseball stadium and 4.5 acres = park)
Location	Bounded by East 2 nd Street, Pine Avenue, 4 th Street, & Fir Avenue (north of Whitefish High School)
Amenities	Restroom and concession at stadium are only open for events at the stadium, playground area
Park Furniture	Moveable picnic tables (2) in playground area.
Sports Facilities	Basketball court, two tennis courts, Jack Zerr field (youth baseball field), Glacier Twins Baseball Stadium. Stadium is also used for high school football games.

Parking	Paved lots around Glacier Twin Field (approximately 50 spaces + 2 handicap spaces)
Management Partners	Glacier Twins Baseball and School District 44 use and maintain stadium and restrooms.
Planned Improvements	Rebuild tennis courts. Construction of grandstand for stadium is underway.
Comments	Potential site for high school tennis courts. Play equipment is underused and outdated. Basketball court needs resurfacing. Streetscape improvements (street tree/lawn boulevard, sidewalks, pedestrian lighting, etc) needed on the east and south sides of park.



Glacier Twins Baseball Stadium at Memorial Park



Playground Area at Memorial Park



Jack Zerr Field at Memorial Park

4. Riverside Park

Size 3.9 acres (incl. 5th Street right-of-way)

Location Baker Avenue & 5th Street, adjacent to the Whitefish River

Amenities Whitefish River access with two fishing docks. Pond (used for stormwater treatment) with public artwork. Bike/pedestrian trail with footbridge crossing the river.

Park Furniture Benches (8), trash receptacles (6), mutt mitt dispensers (2), picnic table (1 moveable). Drinking fountain & spigot at tennis courts. Bollard & decorative pedestrian lights.

Sports Facilities Three tennis courts

Parking Off-street paved parking lot (10 spaces + 1 handicap). Two parking spaces on O'Brien Avenue.

Management Partners N/A

Planned Improvements Rebuild tennis courts. Repave parking lot. Install lighting on bike/pedestrian trail.

Comments Separated from Baker Park by Baker Avenue. Algae growth in pond. Spraying pond for yellow flag iris (2012). Noxious weed growth around pond. Pond needs dredging. Portions of trail paving in poor condition due to tree root upheaval. Significant erosion occurring on river banks.



Paved trail at Riverside Park



Riverside Park Pond with public art sculpture



Severe erosion occurring on river banks at Riverside Park

C. Community Parks

A community park is a larger park that provides active and structured recreation opportunities primarily for young people and adults. These parks may range in size from 25 acres up to 100 acres. Community parks have a larger service area of approximately a one to two mile radius around the park. Community parks typically include facilities to support large group activities, and most often include sports fields. Also, they are large enough to allow for passive recreation opportunities as well as individual and family use. Community parks may provide swimming pools, community gardens, or indoor facilities to meet a wider range of recreation interests. As a result, they require support facilities, such as parking and restrooms.

1. Armory Park

Size 29.3 acres

Location Armory Road

Park Areas Roy Duff Memorial Armory building (a multi-purpose facility with kitchen), Dave Olseth Memorial Skate Park, Armory Dirt Jumps (bike jump area), Hugh Rogers/WAG Dog Park

Park Features/Furniture Armory Park: Armory building, war memorial (unfinished), water fountain and dugouts by ball fields
Skate Park: Benches (Sponsor's name engraved on bench), trash receptacles, signage
Armory Dirt Jumps: fencing, signage
Dog Park: fencing, pavilion, benches, mutt mitt dispensers, benches
Walking trails connecting different park areas

Sports Facilities Armory Park: softball fields (4), ballpark maintenance shed.
Skate park
Bike jumps

Parking Off-street parking. 2nd Street parking lot (gravel, approximately 50 spaces);



Roy Duff Memorial Armory & War Memorial at Armory Park



Dave Olseth Memorial Skate Park at Armory Park

	Armory parking lot (paved, approximately 30 spaces + 2 handicap); softball field parking lot (gravel, approximately 30 spaces)
Management Partners	Softball Association; Skatepark Group; WAG - Dog Park; Flathead Fat Tire Assoc. (bike jump)
Planned Improvements	Armory – The Amory building needs floor improvements and heating system; improve drainage for ball fields; restrooms and concession stand. Dog Park – improve drainage and pond expansion.
Comments	The Armory building is used for youth basketball and sports camps, adult sports activities (incl. pickle ball), and can be rented for private events. Flathead Rapids use the Armory building for indoor soccer programs for youth and adults. Noxious weed issues. Proposed Second Street Reconstruction (2014) may include the construction of Veterans Way and other improvements to the southwestern portion of the park. The Armory Park Master Plan was adopted in 2006.



Hugh Rogers/WAG Dog Park at Armory Park



Armory Dirt Jumps at Armory Park



Agility course at the Hugh Rogers/WAG Dog Park

D. Natural Area/Open Space Parks

These parklands may include environmentally sensitive lands, steep terrain, flood plain and other natural areas that are only minimally developed and may serve as conservation areas, educational and wildlife watching opportunities. “There are no specific standards for how much conservation land a community ought to have. Instead, it is dependent on the number and quality of natural and historical resources in the area, public desire to preserve these valuable sites, and the willingness of the elected body to provide funds for their preservation.” (*Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines*, National Recreation and Park Association)

Currently there are no City parklands that function primarily as natural area/open space.

E. Sports Complex

Sports Complexes are athletic facilities that include parking lot area, drinking water, lighting, multiple organized ball fields, courts and bathrooms. Serves people from the city and county. A minimum size of at least 20 acres is recommended for optimum use. Designed for active recreation use.

1. Grouse Mountain Park

Size	7.9 acres
Location	2 nd Street west of Grouse Mountain Lodge
Amenities	Public Restrooms & Rest Area
Park Furniture	Picnic table (1 moveable), mutt mitt dispenser
Parking	Off-street paved parking lot (20 spaces + 4 handicap). 30 angled spaces on Fairway Drive.
Sports Facilities	Two soccer fields with moveable goals, three tennis courts
Management Partners	Whitefish Lake Golf Association and Montana Department of Transportation (MDT)
Planned Improvements	N/A



Grouse Mountain Park Public Restroom/Rest Area

Comments

City maintains the tennis courts, restrooms and irrigation system. Whitefish Golf Association mows the soccer fields. City monument/entry sign, with new landscape, will be rebuilt in approximately the same area.



Grouse Mountain Park Soccer Fields



Grouse Mountain Park Tennis Courts

2. Smith Fields Sports Complex

Size	39.1 acres
Location	River Lakes Parkway, east of North Valley Hospital
Amenities	Playground area (Whitefish Community Foundation Playground), seasonal concession/restroom buildings (2), perimeter fencing with internal fencing by area
Park Furniture	Benches, picnic tables, trash receptacles, mutt mitt dispensers, interpretive signage (Kootenai Indians), storage sheds throughout complex
Sports Facilities	Lyman-O'Shaughnessy soccer complex (moveable goals and electronic scoreboard), Atkinson soccer field (moveable goals), softball/baseball quad (with electronic scoreboards &



East entry area



Concession/restroom building at the baseball/softball quad

	bleachers) & 2 additional baseball/softball fields, batting cages, tee-ball/youth area with 2 small fields	
Parking	Off-street paved parking lots (2 lots with internal paved connector roads): approximately 400 parking spaces	
Management Partners	Leased to Project Whitefish Kids (PWK) who manage and maintain the facility	
Planned Improvements	PWK plans to replace outdated play equipment with new equipment & install safety surfacing material & borders (comply with current national safety standards).	
Comments	Utilized for a soccer and softball tournaments, and high school softball, baseball and soccer programs	

The Lyman-O'Shaughnessy soccer complex

F. Special Use Parks

Special use parks are sites most often occupied by a specialized facility oriented toward single-purpose uses. Uses that fall into this category include boat ramps, nature center, historic/cultural site, plaza, urban square, memorials, community gardens, sites geared toward a specific athletic activity, or sites occupied by buildings.

1. City Beach

Size	2.6 acres (approximately 2.2 acres beach and 0.4 acres parking)
Location	South end of Whitefish Lake (Washington Avenue & Skyles Place)
Amenities	Public swimming area on Whitefish Lake, lifeguards, public boat launch, three gazebos, seasonal restroom,



City Beach

and concessions. Services include lifeguards, boat rentals, and hover craft storage shed.

Park Furniture	Picnic tables (5 moveable), trash receptacles (9), bike rack (1), benches (4), drinking fountain, interpretive sign (Kootenai Indians), grills
Parking	Parking Lot Across Beach- paved (21 spaces + 3 handicap), Overflow Parking Lot on Edgewood (6 trailer spaces, 9 car spaces +1 handicap space)
Management Partners	N/A
Planned Improvements	Stabilize east bank – retaining wall improvements, develop expanded dock and boardwalk system.

Comments

Potential to add additional acreage to west of beach. Issues noted in “Resource Assessment” include parking, garbage problems, congestion, and overuse of facility. Master Plan was completed in the early 1980s and needs to be updated. Skye Park bridge and trail will provide trail connection.



City Beach Restrooms & Concession Building

2. Depot Park

Size	1.9 acres
Location	Central Avenue & Railway Street – downtown next to the train depot
Amenities	Open green space, pond with public artwork (temporary location), picnic area, and public artwork/bronze sculpture



The park is primarily open green space with shade trees

Park Furniture Benches, picnic tables, trash receptacles, mutt mitt dispensers, bike racks, decorative pedestrian lighting, newspaper boxes

Parking On-street parking, public parking lot across Spokane Avenue

Management Partners N/A

Planned Improvements The Depot Park Master Plan was completed in February 2012. A tree inventory/arborist's report was conducted in August 2011 and tree removal recommendations were part of the park's master plan. The old bank drive-thru and associated paving was removed in Summer 2012 and sodded lawn was installed.

Comments Venue for community festivals and farmers market. Current location for the City of Whitefish Parks & Recreation and Planning Departments, with a designated off-street parking lot. Park contains 8 groundwater monitoring wells for the BN Superfund project. Lawn areas are damaged due to high intensity/event use. Public restroom location identified in master plan process (O'Shaughnessy Center area identified as preferred location). Park Board is developing an interim management and maintenance plan for addressing overuse and lawn damage until the master plan can be implemented. The Depot Park Master Plan was adopted February 2012.



Pond with 'Whitefish Rising' sculpture

3. Mountain Trails Park

Size 4.3 acres

Location Wisconsin Avenue & Colorado Avenue

Amenities Stumptown Ice Den (indoor ice rink), Saddle Club meeting space building, outdoor plaza with grills, & warming hut building

Park Furniture Benches, picnic table (3 moveable), trash receptacles, decorative pedestrian lights in the Ice Den area

Sports Facilities	Indoor ice rink and outdoor sand volleyball court	
Parking	Off-street paved parking lots: Stumptown Ice Den lot (85 spaces + 3 handicap), Saddle Club lot (20 spaces)	
Management Partners	Ice Rink Advisory Committee	
Planned Improvements	TBD pending master plan update	
Comments	Ice Den used for summer day camp programs. Glacier Nationals (amateur youth hockey team) rents the STID facility. Ice time is maximized with various programs (generally 6am-midnight, 7 days a week).	

The Stumptown Ice Den (with entry reconstruction)

G. Linear Parks

Linear parks may be in a healthy, natural state or developed landscaped areas and other lands that follow corridors such as abandoned railroad right-of-ways, creeks, canals, power lines, and other linear, elongated features. This type of park usually contains trails, landscaped areas, viewpoints, and seating areas. These parks may compose portions of a system of green infrastructure and serve as links from one park or community place to another.

1. Creekwood Park

Size	4.5 acres
Location	On the Whitefish River along Creekwood Drive
Comments	Undeveloped open space



Creekwood Park, west of road, and adjacent to paved trail



Creekwood Park, east of road

2. The Lakes Park

Size	16.6 acres
Location	River Lakes Parkway, adjacent to The Lakes subdivision
Comments	Undeveloped open space, contains a pond/wetland area adjacent to the senior center property, and property between the Whitefish River and northern edge of The Lakes subdivision.



The pond at The Lakes Park

3. Rivers Edge Park & River Park

Size	2.7 acres
Amenities	Bicycle/pedestrian trail, decorative pedestrian lighting and bollard lighting, and river access area
Location	Whitefish River access, across the street from the Smith River access
Comments	Undeveloped open space. Two parks are linked by .32 mile of paved bicycle trail and easement at east end of Greenwood. Requires forestry management and revegetation.



A portion of Fish Trails at River's Edge parkland



Whitefish River access on the River's Edge parkland

4. River Trail Park

Size	3.5 acres
Location	Whitefish River between Voerman Road and Columbia Avenue
Comments	Undeveloped open space; requires forestry management and revegetation. This parkland is a major link in the City bike/ped trail network, providing a connection from River's Edge/River Park to area schools.



Dense vegetation at River Trail Park

5. Riverwood Park

Size	4.4 acres
Location	Follows Whitefish River between JP Road and Voerman Road
Amenities	Bicycle/pedestrian trail, decorative pedestrian lights, shelter, and a picnic table
Management Partners	Fish Trails
Comments	Noxious weeds and weedy grasses along portions of trail. Possible future canoe access area and ADA-accessible trail down from cul de sac.



Bike/pedestrian bridge over the Whitefish River



The Rocksund Trail shelter

H. Lake/Water Access Parks

These parks are primarily designed to provide fishing, boat or swimming access and/or protect riparian areas which provide wildlife habitat and enhance water quality.

1. Canoe Park

Size	0.4 acres
Location	West of Columbia Avenue on the Whitefish River
Comments	Undeveloped open space



Canoe Park



The Whitefish River at Canoe Park

2. Skye Park

Size	0.3 acres
Location	Whitefish River access; east end of Birch Point Drive
Comments	Undeveloped open space. Currently, a pedestrian/bike bridge is planned to cross the Whitefish River and provide paved trail connections for Fish Trails, connecting the Birch Point area with downtown.



Looking north across Whitefish River from Skye Park



The BNSF train trestle over the Whitefish River at Skye Park

I. Other Recreation Facilities

These facilities are City-owned properties that are operated by private/non-profit entities and serve the public. These facilities have a single-purpose use and are fee-based.

1. The Wave

Size	3.0 acres (1.4 acres developed; 1.6 acres undeveloped)
Location	Northwest corner of 13 th Street & Flathead Avenue
Amenities	Indoor pools/aquatic center; gym space, fitness center, exercise studios; racquetball, handball & squash courts; locker rooms; children's day care area; party rooms
Management Partners	
Comments	Fee-based indoor fitness facility

2. Whitefish Lake Golf Course

Size	220.6 acres total (City-owned North Course = 112.2 ac; WGA-owned South Course = 108.4 ac)
Location	2 nd St West/Highway 93, approximately 1 mile west of downtown
Comments	Thirty-six holes total. City owns the north course and leases it to the Whitefish Golf Association (WGA). WGA owns the south course.
Management Partners	Whitefish Golf Association
Comments	Fee-based

Summary of City –Owned Sports Facilities

In addition to the acreage of parks it is also important to look at the types of facilities that are being offered. This will determine if there is a need for certain types of facilities that should be incorporated into the design of future parks. (*Includes Smith Fields Sports Complex)

SPORTS FACILITIES (BY TYPE)	Quantity
Baseball/Softball Field	12
Baseball Field (Youth)	3
Basketball Court (Full)	1
Basketball Court (Half)	1
Bike Jump	1
Indoor Ice Rink	1
Skateboard Park	1
Soccer Fields	12
Outdoor Tennis Courts	8
Volleyball Court (Sand)	1
Volleyball Court (Grass)	1

Whitefish Parks and Recreation Department

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Please participate in this survey so the City of Whitefish can better serve you.

1. Gender: Male Female

2. What is your housing Status? Homeowner Renter Other

3. Please write in the number of persons living at your residence in each age category.

_____ Below age 5

_____ 5 - 10

_____ 11 - 15

_____ 16 - 18

_____ 18 - 25

_____ 26 -40

_____ 41 – 55

_____ 56-65

_____ 66 - 75

_____ 76 +

4. Circle where you live: Within the Whitefish City Limits Elsewhere in Flathead County

Within 2 miles Whitefish

Outside of Flathead County

5. Whitefish Residential Year-Round resident Primarily Summer Resident
Status: Visitor Primarily Winter Resident

6. Please rank the importance of the following goals and objectives for parks and recreation.

	Very Important			Not Important		
a. Parks should promote youth development	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
b. Parks should promote health and wellness	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
c. Parks should protect natural areas/open space	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
d. Parks should provide cultural/learning opportunities	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
e. Parks should help seniors remain active	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
f. Parks should attract visitors to the community						
g. Parks should be places to enjoy the outdoors/nature	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
h. Parks should be places for general leisure/picnics	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
i. Parks should be places for special events	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
j. Parks should be places for family activities	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
k. Parks should be places to play sports	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
l. Parks should be places to meet friends	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
m. Park designs should include accessible features for the disabled population	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
n. Park designs should include native vegetation	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
o. Park designs should protect water quality	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
p. Park designs should be coordinated with efforts to clean-up nearby contaminated properties	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
q. Park designs should incorporate local history	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion

7. Please rank the importance of each of the following activities or facilities to you.

	Very Important			Not Important		
a. Acquire land for future parks	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
b. Maintain existing parks/facilities as they are	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
c. Improve and expand existing parks/facilities	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
d. Provide recreation programs/activities	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
e. Build outdoor tennis complex	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
f. Build indoor tennis center	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
g. More parks with lake, river or creek frontage	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
h. More parks with sports fields	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
i. Sports & rec programs for youths under 18	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
j. Sports & rec programs for adults	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
k. Nature themed playgrounds	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
l. Public art such as murals and sculptures	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
m. Community festivals, concerts and special events	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
n. Environmental education or nature center	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
o. Water access for swimming, boating, fishing	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
p. Modernize and Improve Ice Rink	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
q. Aquatic programs (swimming, scuba diving, water fitness. . .)	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
r. Alternative Sports (Folf, ultimate Frisbee, bicycle polo, rock climbing wall, . . .)	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
s. Drop-in activities for youths (gym, game room, computers...)	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
t. Canoe trail along Whitefish River	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion

8. What are the most convenient program times for you and others in your household? (Circle all that apply)	9. If you participated in services and programs offered by Whitefish Parks Dept., how did you learn about them? (Circle all that apply)
a. Weekday mornings	a. From the City's mailer of program/activities
b. Weekday afternoons	b. From the local newspaper
c. Weekday evenings	c. From friends or word of mouth
d. Weekend mornings	d. Information distributed at schools
e. Weekend afternoons	e. Posters/Flyers
f. Weekend evenings	f. City Website
g. Drop-in format, rather than ongoing activities	g. Other (Please specify):
h. Other (specify):	

10. How often do you use the park or facility during **PEAK** season?

	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely if ever	Don't know where park is located
Skateboard Park at Amory Park				
Bike Jump at Amory Park				
Whitefish Softball Complex at Armory Park				
Armory Building				
Baker Park - Kiddie Park				
City Beach				
Kay Beller Park				
Grouse Mountain Park				
Playground and tennis courts at Memorial Park (The park where high school football games are played)				
Riverside Park				
Soroptimist Park				
Riverwood Canoe Access by Rocksund Gazebo				
Depot Park				
WAG Dog Park				
Whitefish Trails on State Trust Lands				
Ice Rink at Mountain Trails Park				
Saddle Club at Mountain Trails Park				
Smith Sports Park (Soccer complex by hospital)				
The Wave				
Bike/Pedestrian Trails				

11. Indicate any of the following groups that you feel are underserved by current recreation services? (Circle all that apply)	12. If you do not participate in recreation programs offered by Whitefish Parks Dept. what are your reasons? (Circle all that apply)
a. Pre-schoolers b. Elementary youth c. Middle school youth d. High school youth e. Young Adults (20 to 40) f. Mature Adults (40 to 65) g. Seniors (65+) h. Families i. People from diverse cultures j. People with disabilities Other (specify):	a. Not aware of programs b. Do not have activities I'm interested in c. Poor quality of programs d. Held at inconvenient times e. Held at inconvenient locations f. Classes or programs are full g. Need child care to participate h. Too busy; no time i. Lack of transportation j. Too expensive Other (specify):

13. If you are familiar with the parks or facilities below, are any of the following items an issue with that facility?

	Litter	Vandalism	Weeds	Grass Overgrown	Safety	Facilities outdated	Facilities not maintained	Park is overused	Not enough parking	Restrooms
Skateboard Park at Amory Park										
Bike Jump at Amory Park										
Whitefish Softball Complex at Armory Park										
Armory Building										
WAG Dog Park										
Baker Park (AKA Kiddie Park)										
City Beach										
Kay Beller Park										
Grouse Mountain Park										
Riverside Park										
Soroptimist Park										
Depot Park										
Riverwood Canoe Access at Rocksund Gazebo										
Whitefish Trails on State Trust Lands										
Playground and tennis facilities at Memorial Park <i>(The park where high school football games are played)</i>										
Ice Rink at Mountain Trails Park										
Saddle Club at Mountain Trails Park										
Smith Sports Park										
The Wave										
Bike/Pedestrian Trails										

Comments:

14. Please indicate the activities in which you participate. (Check the box for all that apply)

☐	Jogging/Running	☐	Skiing/Snowboarding (downhill)	☐
☐	Swimming	☐	Skiing (x-country)	☐
☐	Walking for Pleasure	☐	Rafting/Tubing/Paddle Board	☐
☐	Exercising/Aerobics/Weight Training	☐	Baseball	☐
☐	Gardening	☐	Softball	☐
☐	Bicycling (pleasure)	☐	Soccer	☐
☐	Dog Walking/Dog Parks	☐	Volleyball	☐
☐	Bird Watching/Feeding	☐	Ice Skating	☐
☐	Nature Walks – Wildlife Watching	☐	Picnicking	☐
☐	Volunteer Activities	☐	Basketball	☐
☐	Photography	☐	Golf	☐
☐	Boating (power)	☐	Tennis	☐
☐	Yoga/Pilates	☐	Skateboarding	☐
☐	Cultural Events (attend)	☐	Orienteering/Geocaching	☐
☐	Canoe/Kayaking/Sailing	☐	Horseshoes	☐
☐	Arts and crafts	☐	In-Line Skating	☐
☐	Concerts (attend)	☐	Disc Golf - FOLF	☐
☐	Fishing	☐	Ultimate Frisbee	☐
☐	Pickle ball	☐	Ice Hockey	☐
☐	Dodgeball	☐	Waterskiing – Wakeboarding	☐
☐	Playground (visit/play)	☐	Rock Climbing	☐
☐	BMX Biking	Other: _____		

15. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding trails.

	Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree		
a. We need more trails to increase non-motorized transportation options	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
b. We need more trails to experience nature	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
c. We need more trails to improve access to schools, parks and shopping	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
d. We need more trails to promote exercise	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
e. We need more trails for recreation	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
f. We have enough trails	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
g. Trails are convenient to access	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
h. Trails are well connected	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
i. I feel safe on trails	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
j. Trails are well maintained	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
k. I use trails frequently	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
l. I generally know where trails are located	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion

16. Please indicate the types of resources you would support the City using to fund and implement the Parks and Rec Master Plan. (Circle all that apply)

a. City General Fund	j. Tax Increment Financing
b. Grants	k. Partnerships with non-profits & other groups
c. Non-profit/foundation fundraising	l. Business partnerships
d. Volunteers	m. Sponsorships
e. Open space bond	n. Advertising on park facilities
f. Higher user fees for non-residents	o. Intergovernmental Cooperation with County & State
g. Increase facility rental fees	p. Increase park maintenance levy
h. Special improvement districts for new subdivisions	q. Impact fees on new development
i. State or federal funding	
Other:	

17. Are there any other comments you would like to share?

18. Provide your e-mail if you would like to receive an e-newsletter on the plan.

Appendix C: Acquisition Criteria

Park land acquisition or protection, through the subdivision dedication process, purchase, or land exchange is a critical component of an effective parks system. The City must thoughtfully consider each acquisition. The following questions evaluate potential acquisitions. A proposed acquisition need not meet all listed questions to be acceptable, and some questions are more important than others. The list is meant to provide guidelines for making educated choices.

RECREATION PARKS

Basic Attributes

1. Is the land of an appropriate size and shape?
2. Is the character of the land (topography, drainage, soils, etc.) appropriate?
3. Does the land have inherent economic value comparable to the lands adjoining it?
4. Is this land suitable, upon development, to provide the recreation experiences needed in the area?
5. Would the use of this land (as guided by its classification) harm the natural environment?

Location

1. Is the land in an appropriate place?
2. Would this land contribute to the equitable distribution of parks in the planning region?

Access

1. After dedication, would this land, upon casual observation, be easily identifiable as a public park?
2. Will the land be appropriately accessible to the public?

Developments

1. Is the supporting infrastructure (utilities, access, etc.) available in the appropriate form and scale needed?
2. Is the land free of infrastructure (high-tension power lines, sewage lagoons, etc.) that would limit appropriate park uses?
3. Is the land free of easements (drainage, effluent disposal, mineral extraction, motorized access, etc.) that would limit appropriate park uses?
4. Does the land have any special cultural or historical significance?

Hazards and Costs

1. Are there physical hazards, limitations or restrictions that would hinder the intended use of the land?
2. Would the benefits offered by this land outweigh the potential liabilities?
3. Would the benefits offered by this land outweigh foreseeable maintenance costs?

Contribution to the Park System

1. Does the land complement other nearby park lands?
2. Does the land serve as a linkage or corridor to other park lands?
3. Do non-motorized travel-ways exist between this park and residences, schools, and other parks and open space?

Harmonious Existence with Built Environment

1. Would the use of this land (as guided by its classification) conflict with adjacent land use?
5. Does adjacent land use conflict with the intended uses of this land?

CONSERVATION PARKS

Physical Landform

1. Does the land contain a riparian area?
2. Does the land contain unique geomorphic features?
3. Is the landform essentially in its natural state, or can it be returned to such a state?

Flora and Fauna

1. Does the land serve an important biological purpose in the area?
2. Is the majority of the vegetation native to the area?
3. Is the habitat unique to the area?
4. Does a diversity of plant species exist on the site?
5. Does a diversity of animal species exist on the site?
6. Is the land large enough and of high enough quality to provide self-contained habitat?
7. Does the land provide for wildlife linkages to other habitat areas?
8. Do any sensitive or rare plant or animal species live on or use this land?
9. Does the land buffer adjacent lands that contain sensitive or rare plants or animals?
10. Is the habitat largely unaltered from its natural state, or can it be restored to such a state?

Human Uses

1. Will human use of this land harm the natural habitat?
2. If the land is intended to serve as a non-motorized linkage to other areas, is it suitable for such a purpose?
3. Does the land provide educational opportunities?
4. Is the land threatened by other uses?

Contribution to the Conservation Land System

1. Is the land in an area identified as having important resources?
2. Does the land link other conservation lands?
3. Does the land contribute to the diversity of conservation lands in the area?

Harmonious Existence with Built Environment

1. Does (or will) adjacent land use degrade the naturalness of the land?
2. Will it be possible to prevent intrusions from exotic plants, domestic animals, and other threats?